

Coaching helps a person make positive changes in their life. Read about how a coach can help you achieve your goals and reach your full potential.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a coachee
2. to restructure
3. the desired destination
4. to merge
5. to track someone's progress
6. a perspective
7. to prioritise
8. objectivity

Definition

- a. to join together (especially when two companies become one)
- b. to reorganise a company
- c. a person who receives training from a coach
- d. to decide which things are most important so you can do them first
- e. the place you want to arrive at
- f. to record someone's development over a period of time
- g. an approach based on facts and not personal feelings or opinions
- h. a particular way of looking at things

Coaching

Coaching is about making positive changes in your life. A coach helps you identify your goals and become your own expert in how to achieve them.

Coaching is a useful tool in today's challenging world of business. Companies are merging and restructuring and people change jobs far more than before. Our work has changed and we might feel less prepared or demotivated, unsure if what we have been doing is the right way forward. So we might consider hiring a professional business coach to help us get where we want to be and feel happier at work.

A coach is sometimes compared to a mentor and a consultant. However, unlike having a mentor, working with a coach is normally for a short, specified amount of time. A coach is also quite different to a consultant, who looks at the whole team or company and how it does things. In addition, mentors and consultants often give advice – something a coach doesn't normally do.

So what *does* a coach do? Here are five things.

1. A coach allows the individual to determine the direction of their conversation. When the coachee meets the coach for a session, the coach doesn't come with a fixed plan. It is the individual that leads the conversation; the coach observes and listens. As the coach starts to understand the individual's context, they might ask more questions and talk about their observations. This helps the individual see the situation clearly, as if the coach is holding up a mirror.

2. A coach helps the coachee to identify goals and prioritise them.

Before we can decide on our path to development, we need to first understand what our desired destination might be. A coach can help the individual link their business goals with their personal plans and dreams. And in doing so, they can improve motivation and focus. The coach then helps the individual identify the practical steps they need to take.

3. A coach asks questions to guide the individual and help them understand the issues they're facing.

By asking the right questions, a coach can help the individual to focus the conversation and truly explore the relevant issues. However, a good coach does not ask leading questions that suggest a particular answer, for example, *Do you think x might be a better idea?* or *How do you feel about doing it this way instead?* Good coaching questions do not tell the coachee what to do. Instead, they help them to reflect, see things clearly and discover their own way forward. A coach might ask, for example, *What is your biggest challenge at the moment?* *What would be a successful outcome for you here?* or *What could you do now that would be a step forward?*

4. A coach notices the emotions behind the issues and helps the individual understand them.

In a coaching conversation, hidden emotions often come to the surface. A good coach would help the individual become aware of their emotions and allow them to explore their feelings when needed.

5. A coach guides the individual to move forward, taking them from where they are now to where they want to be.

Many coaches set the coachee tasks to complete in between sessions. Over a series of sessions, the coach helps motivate the coachee to follow steps towards success, tracks the coachee's progress and keeps them focused on the end goal. The coach does not do the work for the coachee, nor do they advise them. They act as a guide to help the individual find the appropriate strategies in reaching their goals.

There are many benefits to employing an external business coach, like their objectivity and fresh perspective. But business leaders and managers have also discovered that if they acquire coaching skills themselves, this can help them improve the performance of their teams. Managers are now taking coaching training in order to have internal coaching conversations with team members who might be having difficulties, and many are now seeing the power of coaching as a way to help their businesses grow and ensure their staff are happy and motivated.

Sources:

- <https://smallbiztrends.com/2016/02/difference-mentor-coach.html>
- <https://www.thealternativeboard.com/blog/business-coaching>

Tasks

Task 1

Which of these things do business coaches do? Choose the seven topics that are mentioned.

- _____ help with decision making
- _____ support the development of an individual's career
- _____ provide an objective analysis of problems
- _____ give advice
- _____ prepare an agenda before the session
- _____ let the coachee lead the conversation
- _____ get the coachee to consider their individual goals and dreams
- _____ ask leading questions
- _____ explore emotions
- _____ set tasks for coachees to do
- _____ keep coachees focused on their end goals
- _____ give coachees strategies to achieve success

