

How to choose a coach checklist



Be clear on what coaching is and isn't

Coaching differs from therapy, counselling, mentoring and advice. In a coaching relationship, the client is seen as having the resources to identify the answers to the challenges they wish to address. Unlike therapy and counselling, which typically reflects back on the past, coaching is more future-oriented. And unlike mentoring and advice, it is not about the coach providing you with solutions. Rather, it is the role of the coach to raise your self-awareness so that you can identify the solutions that are right for you, and ultimately help you to fulfil your potential.



Consider your goals and objectives

Before engaging a coach it is important to reflect on what outcomes you are looking for from the coaching, and what work you are prepared to put in to achieving these outcomes. As with any investment, the more you put in, the more you are likely to gain as a result. Don't worry if you haven't identified crystal clear objectives at the outset – most coaches will use the first session to help you clarify the objectives for the coaching.



Ensure your target coaches are appropriately credentialed

Coaching is largely an unregulated industry, which means anyone can set up a website and call themselves a coach, without any training or credentials. Rigorous research is therefore helpful in ensuring you find a coach with the right experience and skills to help you – see the tips that follow.



Speak with or meet at least 2-3 prospective coaches

Chemistry is key! Research shows that the quality of the relationship between the coach and the coachee is a critical factor in achieving positive coaching outcomes. Therefore, choosing someone you trust and feel you can open up to is important. Most coaches will offer a complimentary chemistry session – either in person or by phone or Skype – to help you get a sense of the coach's style and personality. Always speak with more than one coach to ensure you find someone that you can work well with.



Consider asking prospective coaches about...

- Their level of experience
- Their speciality (i.e. career coaching, executive coaching, life coaching)
- Typical clients (e.g. women, working mums, professionals, creatives, etc.) and their level of seniority (e.g. first-time managers, middle managers, senior executives)
- What psychometric assessments (if any) is the coach accredited to use
- Whether they are a member of any of the three key coaching professional bodies: International Coach Federation (ICF); Association for Coaching; European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)
- Any relevant qualifications they hold (e.g. coaching qualification, psychology background, etc.)
- Fees for coaching and typical structure of coaching (is there a 'programme' or is the coaching session-by-session)
- How is coaching delivered: face-to-face, via Skype, by telephone. If in person, what is the location.



Check testimonials and/or conduct reference checks

References and testimonials from past clients will help you get a feel for how the coach works and the results they have helped others to achieve. Always check the testimonials on the coach's website and where possible ask to speak with previous clients for a reference (note: this may not always be possible).



Treat coaching as an investment

Coaching IS an investment. Costs can vary considerably and before you sign up to coaching you want to be clear on what you hope to achieve and whether the coach you have selected is likely to be able to help you to achieve this in the timeframes you have in mind. This also means you being prepared to find the time and space to really reflect on where you are, where you want to be, and what changes you may need to make to get there.

Want to know more?

Give me a call and let's talk about how Shape Talent can help you.

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