

6 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Coach

Hiring a coach to work with you for your personal performance at work is a big step. If you are taking this step alone, you'll want to check that you are hiring someone with solid qualifications and a broad range of experience. Remember, you are not hiring a mentor who's been in your shoes before and you are not hiring a consultant to tell you what to do. You are hiring someone to help you see your own situation clearly and to help you determine your own strategy and create your own solutions. Use the following questions as a guideline and interview more than one coach, then make your decision.

What qualifications do you have to be a coach? (When and where did you get them?)

There are many different types of training to become a coach and many different styles of coaching. Methods and techniques vary depending on the training. Some training programs are only a few hours spread over a few months. Others are more than a year long.

What experience do you have which lends itself to my situation?

Again, remember you are not hiring someone for his or her expertise to tell you what to do; rather, you are looking for a background of experience which allows the person to support you in your specific situation. For example, if you are a 50 year old manager with 20 years of team experience and you've just hired a 30 year old coach who has never managed a team before, you might be in for a surprise.

What are your professional affiliations and certifications?

Coaching as a profession is relatively new. In 2000, there was just a handful of coaching education facilities, while today that handful has increased tenfold. Today there are several international coaching organizations making headway in professionalizing the industry. Additionally, there are other professions which lend themselves to creating a strong foundation for any professional coach.

What is your track record in regard to situations similar to mine?

You can never be assured of success, but you can try to inform yourself about the background and previous experiences of your potential coach. Don't just ask one question. Ask a few open ended questions to gain information for your decision.

Can you provide references?

Again, there is never a guarantee that success will be the same for one person as for another. What is important is to give yourself a broad base from which you gather your information. Should you contact any of the references provided, use this guide as a support for your questions.

Do you have a coach?

Coaches who are serious also understand the value of peer support and peer review.

What are your fees and payment plans?

Look for flexibility and structured process. Serious coaches use information sheets, contracts, payment plans etc. Payment for serious coaching is never based on results of your success.