



# HOW TO BE A **BUSINESS** COACH

BY JOHN MASON AND STAFF OF ACS DISTANCE EDUCATION

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The information in this book is derived from a broad cross-section of resources (research, reference materials and personal experience) from the authors and editorial assistants in the academic department of ACS Distance Education. It is, to the best of our knowledge, composed as an accurate representation of what is accepted and appropriate information about the subject, at the time of publication.

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# CREDITS

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**Photos:** John Mason / Stephen Mason

**Layout:** Stephen Mason

**Editorial Contributors:**

John Mason - Supervision Cert. ie. John Mason Dip.Hort.Sc., Supervision Cert.

Tracey Jones - B.Sc.(Hons), M.Soc.Sc., Dip. SW, PGCE

Jacinda Cole - B.Sc., Cert.Garden Des.

# CHAPTER 1 BUSINESS COACHING FUNDAMENTALS

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*Business coaches help people to improve how they manage a business. Their role is not just to provide advice or information; but also to motivate the client, help them focus and become more decisive and confident in their work.*

Business coaches frequently work with people who are already in business, but they may also be working with someone planning to start a new business.

A business coach might not be more knowledgeable or skilled in running a

business than their client, but they can bring a fresh perspective, and in looking at a business from the outside, free of prejudice, a coach may see things that are unseen or neglected by the business owner or manager.



Business coaching has become more popular in recent decades along with many other forms of coaching. Most of the evidence to support the benefits of coaching comes from research in the

behavioural sciences but when it comes to learning, which underlies the reason for coaching, there is also evidence from the business sector.

## Where are Business Coaches Found?

- Business coaches may be independent freelancers or work in-house.
- Larger organisations may have their own in-house business coaches, or train managers to be skilled in coaching.
- Organisational Psychologists or Occupational Psychologists may be involved in business coaching.
- Some organisations will use business coaches on an as and when basis. Some business consultants will provide a business coaching service. For example, a business coach may offer regular sessions with businesses until they improve their business.

## What is a Business Coach?

Business coaching is a broad term used for anyone who provides coaching services to people who work in business. Business coaches may sometimes use other terms to describe their services though, such as executive coaching, leadership coaching and corporate coaching. There may be subtle differences in how people construe these different terms.

Business coaching may be described as a means of improving the effectiveness of organisations and individuals within them by focussing on business leaders. It relies on forming a partnership

between the business coach, business leader and the leader's organisation.

*The goals of business coaching must always align with the goals and objectives of the leader's organisation.*

A business leader can broadly speaking, be anyone who makes a significant contribution to the goals of the organisation. This may be an executive, the business founder, managers, team leaders or sometimes groups of employees. Often, they are just referred to as the client.

The purpose of business coaching is to:

- Provide feedback, advice and support to individuals or groups, and
- Enhance effectiveness in the organisational setting by achieving goals. Goals can involve things like meeting performance targets, career transitions, career management, team building or better communication.

A business coach is not there to tell an organisation or business leader what they are doing wrong. They are there to look at what they are doing right, the positives in their business and give advice on areas that need improvement.

Coaches will also work with individual business leaders to help improve their own areas, such as work-life balance, how they manage, how they delegate and so on. A business is made up of many people and getting one person to be more effective can have a dramatic effect on the organisation as a whole.





## Difference between Occupational and Organisational Psychology

Knowledge of both occupational and organisational psychology can inform a business coach, helping them understand a business and human resource issues within that business.

**Occupational Psychologists** are those that look at the performance of people at work and in training, they aim to develop how organisations function, how individuals and teams behave at work. Their aim is to increase work satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency.

**Organisational Psychologists** are now more often known as industrial-organisational psychologists (or I-O psychologists for short). They use

psychological principles to solve problems in the workplace and help improve quality of life for staff. They will look at management and employment working styles, workplace productivity, morale and so on.

As you can see, there is significant overlap between business coaches and organisational and occupational psychologists. The main difference is that the psychologists will focus more on the psychological side of the business and how to improve it, whilst the business coach may look at a broader spectrum, including psychological aspects.

## How do Business Coaches differ from other coaches?

Business coaches differ from other types of coach insofar as they always have the goals of the organisation to work towards. Like other types of coaching, business coaching is concerned with the individual client and their goals, but business coaching also includes the organisational context.

Although different types of coaches work with clients and their goals, they have different agendas. For example, a life coach is focussed on all areas of a person's life not just work. A careers counsellor may help a person to work out a future career path or they may help a client to find ways to advance in their career, but they don't do this with the organisation's goals in mind.

Also, unlike coaches a mentor maintains an open and evolving agenda that may not be time limited, whereas a business