

LESSON 1 BUSINESS COACHING FUNDAMENTALS

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. This course will focus mainly on the GROW model of coaching, which we will discuss more shortly.

Suggested Tasks: ▼

Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column.

Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.

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.

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Suggested Tasks

When deciding to take this course, you would have probably had your own idea of what a business coach is. After reviewing what you have learned so far, spend five minutes writing down what you think a business coach is now.



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

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

coach sticks to specific objectives and a specific timeframe.

Of course, business coaches do employ different styles of coaching throughout the course of a coaching relationship with a specific client, so they may use life coaching, succession coaching, team coaching, and so forth.

A Case Study

Let's look at a case study of how business coaches can help clients –

Giving Advice

Simon is the owner-manager of his business. He employs 20 people. He does all the book-keeping and banking for the firm as he “does not trust anyone else to do it right.” He is frequently stressed. If staff come to him, which is very rare given his behaviour, he tends to shout at them and tell them they should already know what to do. He does not give clear advice and instructions, but expects his staff to know what he wants. He comes into work when he wants to and leaves when he wants to, but expects his staff to stick to strict times and always be punctual.

There are several problems here, but let's look at the main one. Simon is not happy with his staff, he thinks they do not do their jobs properly. However, he is not clear on how he wants them to do it. The main problem here is that he is not clear, he does not give them advice, or support them or encourage them. He does not provide the training they need to do the job in the way he wants to. They are reluctant to seek out his

help, as he will shout, so they often ask colleagues for help, which can make the problem worse.

Simon needs to learn to start giving clear, detailed instructions. He needs to be calm and precise in what he expects from his staff. He needs to give them time where they can talk through any help they need. By offering them this help and support, they become more efficient and better workers. We should see the manager or owner of a business as a tree. They are the roots, who encourage the business to grow by helping their staff to bloom and develop.

By giving better and clearer advice, Simon may also resolve another issue he has, being unwilling to delegate. If he feels his staff are capable and able, then he is more likely to delegate, which also relieves pressure on him.

Finally, Simon is not a good role model. He gives the impression that he comes in late and goes early, which does not look good to his staff. They do not realise that he often leaves work and works another five or six hours. He works on average, 10 – 12 hours a day. He does not tell them this because he thinks it is none of their business, but it gives the wrong impression to them. By being more honest and open, talking about the work he does at home, this may change the staff's opinion of him and create a more harmonious work environment.

Dealing with Feedback

Harjeev had worked as a manager for two years in a business and thought he was doing well. He overheard staff criticising him and sought the help of