

## How to choose an executive coach

You may be reading this because a mentor, peer, or friend has advised you to engage an executive coach. Or, perhaps you have decided of your own volition to explore coaching. Under whatever guise you come to coaching, we can surmise you want answers, possibly new perspective, or an environment where you can discuss issues off the record, away from your echo chamber. This article aims to fortify and shape the start of your coaching journey.

Coaching involves putting yourself in a space for challenge and growth through thought-fuelled discovery. There are many roads to that discovery. When choosing a coach, I advise keeping your selection process thoughtful and focused on actionable advice.

Questions are the foundation of good coaching. Here are some things you should consider and questions you should ask of yourself and your potential coach to get the most out of your coaching.

- **What is your desired outcome? What do you need?** Establishing this before researching the different coaches will help you develop personal criteria for choosing your coach. Without this intention, it is too easy to subconsciously be influenced by a coach's narrative or what other coaching clients say.
- **Which coaching method would suit you best?** Would a systemic approach or innate-skill approach work best for you? Do you want to be tested and analysed under a specific empirical framework, perhaps specific to your industry, and allow the coach to guide you through the results and how you apply them to your situation?
- **What is the potential coach's priority?** Are your purposes aligned?
- **What outcomes do you expect?** What results does the coach deliver?
- **Does the coach's method enable you to make decisions,** or does the coach make decisions for you?
- **How should the engagement feel financially?** Affordable? Like an investment with measurable gains? Like a transfer of wealth?
- I would argue that you go into coaching because you need to see more of yourself in expanded and refined ways - does the coaching allow you to get closer to yourself? **Do you need to see yourself in the coach?** Do you want a coach who is a version of you? If the answer to either of these questions is affirmative, I recommend re-assessing your needs. Perhaps, an advisor or mentor is more suitable.
- **Does the coach articulate the benefits and results of their practice?** Ask for examples of client 'wins' following coaching.
- Hype is good, but reputation is more critical to making an informed decision. Before your first contact with a coach, **write down the testimonial you want to write** after an excellent coaching experience. Testimonials tell you about the experience of others with that coach. Let them form your basis for framing further questions to find your best coach.

Choose a coach who will help you distil what is pertinent and possible for you.