



# Coaching Handbook

Your ready reference guide to  
know everything about  
Coaching

## Innervolve

Coaching is one of the most powerful ways to invest in oneself to grow and to succeed. At the same time, it is also one of the most misunderstood terms, if one has not experienced coaching earlier. We as coaches, many a time say, to the best way to understand coaching is to experience it. Also, many times to understand coaching is to understand what is not coaching.

In this e-book, I have attempted to talk everything about coaching with the emphasis on Executive coaching. Hope it helps... 😊 . There is more information in this guide that will be useful to you. This has been compiled in the form of questions and answers.

Happy reading...

In case, if you have any further doubt about coaching, please reach out to me...

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## What is coaching?

ICF (International Coach Federation) defines coaching as:

“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential”

So, coaching is a powerful conversation between the Coach and a Client where the Coach uses the tools like questioning, listening, intuition, observation and feedback.

Through this self-exploration process which happens in the safe space, the Client gets complete clarity and motivation to identify what is coming in the way, and work on actions that are required to move forward. Clients find their ‘own’ solutions.

This approach helps them to

- Build self-awareness,
- hold them responsible and accountable for themselves
- Unlocks their potential

Sir John Whitmore, called the father of coaching in the professional world, and a globally renowned and respected coach, says

“Having or working with a coach helps you to remove the internal obstacles so that you can perform much better than you currently are. Coaching is helping you to learn rather than teaching you, as it focuses on bringing out your inherent natural learning capability.”

## How is coaching distinct from other interventions like consulting, counselling, etc.?

Professional coaching focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes and managing personal change. Sometimes it's helpful to understand coaching by distinguishing it from other interventions.

**Consulting:** Individuals or organizations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will diagnose problems and prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions. With coaching, the assumption is that individuals or teams are capable of generating their 'own' solutions, with the coach supplying supportive, discovery-based approaches and frameworks.

**Counselling:** Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways.

Coaching, on the other hand, supports personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific actionable outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal or professional success. Coaching is future-focused. While positive feelings/emotions may be a natural outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphases in a coaching relationship are on action, accountability, and follow-through.

**Mentoring:** A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counselling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counselling and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and reaching their 'own' objectives.

**Training:** Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Though objectives are clarified in the coaching process, they are set by the individual or team being coached, with guidance provided by the coach. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum. Coaching is less linear without a set curriculum.

**Athletic Development:** Though sports metaphors are often used, professional coaching is different from sports coaching. The athletic coach is often seen as an expert who guides and directs the behaviour of individuals or teams based on his or her greater experience and knowledge. Professional coaches possess these qualities, but their experience and knowledge of the individual or team determine the direction. Additionally, professional coaching, unlike athletic development, does not focus on behaviours that are being executed poorly or incorrectly. Instead, the focus is on identifying opportunity for development based on individual strengths and capabilities.

## What are the different types of Coaching?

A certified coach can work with any client, irrespective of the area of work. However, coaches typically depending upon their interest in work, past work and experience, coaches create a niche for themselves.

These areas are Business, Executive / Leadership, Life, Wellness, Team, Performance, Career, Relationship, Image building, Communication, etc.

The fundamental approach remains the same for all these areas as Coaching coaches the person and not the problem. By helping the client look inside, building self-awareness of what is coming in the way and what actions to take to move forward, a client can work with any good coach to move forward.



## What is Executive Coaching?

Executive Coaching is about leadership development and delivering results at work. It helps the client to grow professionally, take more responsibilities and being more effective and efficient. It is for individuals in any managerial positions, entrepreneurs, business owners. A certified coach will provide a safe, confidential and challenging environment for the client to clarify about self, goals, roadblocks. The Coach and the Client co-create a roadmap to achieve the desired outcomes for self-growth and results at work. For sustainable growth and success.

## How Executive coaching is different from other leadership development interventions?

In an organization, there are several other developmental experiences like assessment and development centres, executive education, training, job rotations and stretch assignments. L&D department in your organization would have scientifically arrived at a combination of experiences for you. Each will have a role to play and will tackle a particular aspect of leadership development very effectively. And one experience cannot be substituted by another. However, the benefits that coaching offers are hard to replace. Given its one-on-one nature and the safe space it creates for honest exploration, reflection and change, it can provide highly customized development like no other intervention. Coaching helps to develop capabilities and new ways of thinking that will have a lasting impact. It is 'learning how to learn' which means developing skills and habits of self-reflection that will ensure that the process of learning continues even after the coaching engagement ends. Coaching has to be used wherever appropriate and has to be skillfully integrated with other interventions.

## How is Executive coaching delivered? What does the process look like?

Coaching typically begins with a discovery/chemistry session (face-to-face is preferred if possible or by video call) to assess the individual's current opportunities and challenges, define the scope of the relationship, identify priorities for action and establish specific desired outcomes. Subsequent coaching sessions may be conducted in person or over the telephone, with each session lasting a previously established length of time. Between scheduled coaching sessions, the individual may be asked to complete specific actions that support the achievement of one's personally prioritized goals. The coach may provide additional resources in the form of relevant articles, checklists, assessments or models to support the individual's or business' thinking and actions.

**Assessments:** A variety of assessments are available to support the coaching process, depending upon the needs and circumstances of the individual. Assessments provide objective information that can enhance self-awareness, as well as awareness of others and their circumstances; provide a benchmark for creating coaching goals and actionable strategies; and offer a method for evaluating progress.

**Concepts, models and principles:** A variety of concepts, models and principles drawn from the behavioural sciences, management literature, spiritual traditions and/or the arts and humanities may be incorporated into the coaching conversation to increase self-awareness and awareness of others, foster shifts in perspective, promote fresh insights, provide new frameworks for looking at opportunities and challenges, and energize and inspire forward actions.

**Appreciative approach:** Coaching incorporates an appreciative approach, grounded in what's right, what's working, what's wanted and what's needed to get there. Using an appreciative approach, the coach models constructive communication skills and methods to enhance personal communication effectiveness. Coach incorporates discovery-based inquiry, proactive (as opposed to reactive) ways of managing personal opportunities and challenges, constructive framing of observations and feedback to elicit the most positive responses from others, and visions of success as contrasted with focusing on problems. The appreciative approach is simple to understand and employ, and its reach can be profound, opening up new possibilities and spurring action.

## Does Executive coaching address only work issues?

Coaching can have a life-changing effect. Because it scratches below the surface and seeks to understand the root causes, the outcomes often transcend the workplace. Many a time, executives are victims of their circumstances, sometimes childhood experiences, which could end up impacting their interactions with people in general, be it in the workplace or their personal lives. Coaching has been known to help people deal with issues ranging from the ability to understand and manage one's emotions to self-esteem and confidence to derailing irrational beliefs. Naturally, a transformation in any of these areas is likely to be all-embracing and will affect every aspect of one's life.

## How long does a coach work with a Client?

The length of a coaching partnership varies depending on the individual's needs and preferences. For certain types of focused coaching, three to six months of working may work. Coaching works best if invested upon for a period of nine months to one year. Factors that may impact the length of time include the types of goals, readiness to look inside, working style, the frequency of coaching meetings and financial resources available to support coaching.

## Within the partnership, what does the Coach do? And the Client?

### The Coach:

- Provides objective assessment and observations that foster the individual's self-awareness and awareness of others
- Listens closely to fully understand the individual's circumstances
- Acts as a sounding board in exploring possibilities and implementing thoughtful planning and decision making
- Champions opportunities and potential, encouraging stretch and challenge commensurate with personal strengths and aspirations
- Fosters shifts in thinking that reveal fresh perspectives
- Challenges blind spots to illuminate new possibilities and support the creation of alternative scenarios
- Maintains professional boundaries in the coaching relationship, including confidentiality, and adheres to the coaching profession's code of ethics.

### The Client:

- Envisions personal and/or organizational success
- Creates the coaching agenda based on personally meaningful coaching goals
- Uses assessment and observations to enhance self-awareness and awareness of others
- Assumes full responsibility for personal decisions and actions
- Utilizes the coaching process to promote possibility thinking and fresh perspectives
- Takes courageous action in alignment with personal goals and aspirations
- Engages big-picture thinking and problem-solving skills
- Takes the tools, concepts, models and principles provided by the coach and engages in effective forward actions

## What does coaching ask of a client?

To be successful, coaching asks certain things, all of which begin with intention. Additionally, clients should:

- Focus on one's self, the tough questions, the hard truths and one's success.
- Observe the behaviours and communications of others.
- Listen to one's intuition, assumptions, judgments, and to the way one sounds when one speaks
- Challenge existing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and develop new ones that serve one's goals in a superior way
- Leverage personal strengths and overcome limitations to develop a winning style
- Take decisive actions, however uncomfortable and despite personal insecurities, to reach for the extraordinary
- Show compassion for one's self while learning new behaviours and experiencing setbacks, and to show that compassion for others as they do the same
- Commit to not take one's self so seriously, using humour to lighten and brighten any situation
- Maintain composure in the face of disappointment and unmet expectations, avoiding emotional reactivity
- Have the courage to reach for more than before while engaging in continual self-examination without fear

## How can the success of the coaching process be measured (ROI)?

The measurement may be thought of in two distinct ways: external indicators of performance and internal indicators of success. Ideally, both are incorporated.

Examples of external measures include achievement of coaching goals established at the outset of the coaching relationship, increased income/revenue, obtaining a promotion, performance feedback that is obtained from a sample of the individual's constituents (e.g., direct reports, colleagues, customers, boss, the manager him/herself), personal and/or business performance data (e.g., productivity, efficiency measures). The external measures selected should be things the individual is already measuring and has some ability to directly influence.

Examples of internal measures include self-scoring/self-validating assessments that can be administered initially and at regular intervals in the coaching process, changes in the individual's self-awareness and awareness of others, shifts in thinking that create more effective actions, and shifts in one's emotional state that inspire confidence.

### **What factors should be considered when looking at the financial investment in coaching?**

Working with a coach requires both a personal commitment of time and energy as well as a financial commitment. Fees charged vary by specialty and by the level of experience of the coach. Individuals should consider both the desired benefits as well as the anticipated length of time to be spent in coaching. Since the coaching relationship is predicated on clear communication, any financial concerns or questions should be voiced in initial conversations before the agreement is made.



## What can be the reasons for me to work with an executive coach?

You might choose to work with a coach for many reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Something urgent, compelling or exciting is at stake (a challenge, stretch goal or opportunity)
- A gap exists in knowledge, skills, confidence or resources
- A desire to accelerate results
- A lack of clarity with choices to be made
- Success has started to become problematic
- Work and life are out of balance, creating unwanted consequences
- Core strengths need to be identified, along with how best to leverage them
- To discover your life vision, passion and purpose.

## I am a leader in my organization. How will Executive coaching help me?

Executive Coaching offers a range of really helpful and positive opportunities for leaders to:

- understand themselves and others better
- build effective work relationships
- reflect to access and work on their limiting beliefs, behaviours, conscious and subconscious fears.
- use a quiet, safe space in a busy schedule to think clearly
- remember their strengths and helps them use them more fully
- explore the opportunities that they have open to them
- Expand mindset to take higher responsibilities
- focus purposefully on a key goal
- organise their thoughts and actions, to achieve the impact they seek
- re-enter the workplace with renewed purpose, vision and vigour.
- build capabilities of their team

Coaching will help you to think deeply and honestly about what you want to achieve, and the way that you can achieve this to make the best impact possible. This isn't a personal impact necessarily, but the most "win-win" beneficial outcome possible. Sometimes, you really "reset your mind" as a result of the reflective practise you undertake.

Coaching also offers the time and intellectual and emotional space to consider and revisit value systems, beliefs and motivators. Keeping these refreshed and relevant is crucial to successful leadership.

## Will coaching change my personality?

What coaching will change is behavior. It will explore dimensions of your personality that may be undiscovered or underutilized and can be instrumental in maximizing potential. Coaching will help you develop new perspectives, acquire new skills or modify styles. Coaching can bring about a dramatic shift in the way individuals approach their lives – from being reactive to being proactive, from being fixers to being preventers and from being followers to being initiators.

## When is the right time to hire a coach?

Let's talk about your readiness to get coached here. This is a very important aspect to look into before you want to start getting coached.

When you are open to do self-exploration and work on yourself.

When you are ready to take help from outside in whatever your current needs/wants are.

You want to work on something now which you want in future.

When you want to use the current situation at hand to learn and grow.

When you are in self-doubt and less confidence.

When you are ready to listen to observations from others and challenge your thoughts.

## How do I select a coach for me?

Following are the three critical factors that you need to consider:

### **Certification:**

Certified coaches are typically highly qualified people with decades of industry experience in leadership roles. Professional coaches are highly proficient in the art and science of coaching and will have many hundreds of hours of very diverse coaching experience to their credit. The combination of on-job experience in top management, a deep desire to help and bring out the best in others and finely honed coaching skills is what makes a good coach. Most companies will seek coaches who have been certified by institutions that are dedicated to the cause of coaching because they would have gone through a lot of rigour to attain their skills.

ICF is the premier body who certifies professional coaches. Not only they have a robust program of training coaches through their accredited programs, but they also have an elaborate and rigorous mechanism through which the coaches practice coaching and are evaluated on the coaching skills.

ICF has defined competency list which each of their coaches has to demonstrate before they certify their coaches.

ICF coaches promise ethics, trust and intimacy

## **Chemistry:**

This is one of the top criteria to select a coach. You as a client should be able to connect to the Coach, as a person. Understand your similarities / dis-similarities, values, perspectives, background, etc viz yourself. Some of this can be done before you meet the coach but this is usually assessed in the chemistry/discovery session before the start of the engagement.

## **Coaching Process:**

Depending on the outcome/objective of coaching, many coaches adopt different ways of coaching. Depending upon your need, please have a conversation with the coach on the coaching process and assess if that work for you.

## **Does my coach need to be from the same industry as I?**

You may choose to have a coach who has hands-on experience in your industry. Or you may choose a coach from a completely different background. Both will bring depth and dimension to your coaching experience. Because coaching spotlights the individual and not problem at hand, it doesn't matter what the coach's background is. What does matter is his or her expertise and ability to understand your needs and support the coaching process right from reflection and challenge to concrete actions and change.

## How do you I get the best from my coaching relationship?

### Focus on What You Want

Coaching works best when you have clear goals that are based on what you want to achieve. Firstly, you need to consider deeply what you want your work and life to look like. Secondly, it is important to identify the gaps between the way things are now and how you would like them to be. Many people indeed struggle with this, and the coaching relationship can help you work this through if necessary.

### Understand that You Will Develop

Working with an empathic and professional coach is a definite way to grow and develop. Most clients take on a coach to work on specific goals and much of their time and energy is directed towards this. However, the coaching relationship may allow you to discover something more about yourself. This is just a natural consequence of the coaching process and you do not need to concentrate on it, but just recognize that it is likely to occur. Accelerated personal and professional growth is the hallmark of coaching.

## **Increase Your Willingness to Step Up**

Part of Coach's responsibility is to ask a good deal of you. This is not meant to exhaust you or extend you beyond your bounds, but simply to ask more of you than perhaps maybe you have asked of yourself recently. You must be willing to experiment with fresh approaches and try new beliefs. A coach will encourage you to be honest with yourself, raise your standards and set higher goals. However, you are the best judge of what is right for you. Nevertheless, the more you are willing to grow and develop, the greater will be the benefits of coaching.

## **Come Prepared to Each Coaching Session**

To get the most value out of each coaching session, you must prepare an agenda or write down some simple notes for each session regarding those matters you would like to discuss during the session, update of previous action point, etc. Preparing your agenda does not have to be time-consuming, but experience shows that if you spend 10-15 minutes preparing, it has a significant impact on our session together.

## Complete Your Homework

After each session, you will decide on the actions or goals you want to focus upon. A coach will expect you to keep the commitments you make and will work with you to make sure that you are setting worthwhile, realistic and achievable goals. If you know that you have a busy week or two ahead, your homework might be as simple as thinking about a new perspective. If you have more time, you might decide to handle a bigger task. Irrespective, your coach will hold you accountable and encourage you to do your best.



**That's all!**  
**Hope you found this useful...**

If there are any more questions, I will be pleased to add them here. Kindly send them across to me at [sunil@innervolve.com](mailto:sunil@innervolve.com).

If you want to connect with me for any other queries or if you want to schedule a free session please write to me. It will be my pleasure to connect with you.

Have a nice day!

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