

How To Choose The Right Sales or Business Growth Coach

You only have to look at the impact Alex Ferguson had on Man United, Dave Brailsford had on British Cycling and John Wooden had on UCLA to understand the impact of effective coaching.

Bill Gates famously uses Warren Buffett as a coach and mentor, while Mark Zuckerberg turned to Steve Jobs for mentoring advice. More and more business owners, managers and sales professionals are seeking out effective coaches to help them achieve their business and financial objectives.

The US market for business coaching is currently worth US\$11 billion, while growing at an estimated 17% per annum. That's a reflection of the seismic shift that is taking

place in the hypercompetitive world of business.

Everybody understands that a business professional cannot be expected to have the complete portfolio of skills to succeed in their chosen profession. Everybody needs help and that is where a proven business or sales coach can add measurable help.

Once you have made the decision that you want to find the right coach for you, there are two important areas you need to assess when selecting your coach. I refer to them as the **two coaching pillars**.

- Select the right coach for you
- Select the right coaching system.

7 Steps To Select The Right Coach For You

Industry research reveals that your ability to select a credible coach will have the greatest impact on your ability to produce the results you are looking for. Here are 7 criteria to look for when selecting your coach.

1. TECHNICAL SKILLS:

If you are hiring a tennis coach you would definitely want somebody who has played tennis previously. That experience gives them a level of insight when it comes to the technical skills of the game.

If you are hiring a sales coach in the B2B sector, you want somebody who has extensive experience selling and running sales teams in that sector. If you are selecting



a business coach, you would want to look for somebody who has experience running a business with P&L responsibility.

2. COACHING SKILLS:

Coaching skills are very different to technical skills. Unfortunately, because the coaching industry is unregulated, the vast majority of coaches have no formal coaching training.

The number one job of a coach is to create what's referred to as behavioural change. In order to produce new and better results, the coaching client has to generate new behaviours. If the coach has not been trained in how to generate behavioural change they will simply be unable to produce long-term sustainable results.

3. INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE:

Every industry has specific nuances and your coach must understand the specificity of your industry. You do not want to be hiring and paying for a coach who is experimenting in your business because you cannot afford to take risks like that.

Your coach needs to understand the fundamentals of your industry so they can give appropriate recommendations based on their previous experience in companies similar to yours.

4. NON-INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE:

You also want to find a coach who has extensive experience outside of your industry. If all of their expertise is based on your industry, you will simply be coached to do what everybody else in your industry is already doing.

It's impossible to get new perspectives which produce breakthrough results simply by repeating what everybody else in your industry is already doing. You need a coach who has the ability to cross pollinate ideas from a completely different industry and translate their use for your specific industry.

5. DELIVER MEASURABLE RESULTS:

Your coach needs to be able to demonstrate that they have the ability to produce measurable results. The best way to assess that is to ask to see a number of success stories from previous clients.

When you look at those client success stories you are looking for one primary set of criteria. Does the client success story clearly demonstrate that measurable financial results were produced as a consequence of their coaching?

While it's very nice to see a testimonial that says that your potential coach is a lovely person and great coach... you can't take that feedback to the bank and deposit it in your account. You can however deposit financial results in your bank account, and that's what you are looking for.

6. GUARANTEE:

If you select the right coach they will know how to guarantee coaching results for you. Simple guarantees are the best guarantees.

For example, if you get to a stage where you think the coaching is not going to work for you, you should be able to get a hassle-free refund. You must remember however that effective coaching is a partnership, so you must be financially invested into the partnership as well.

7. COACHING SYSTEM:

This is a critically important part of your selection criteria. Your potential coach need to be able to clearly demonstrate that they are following a proven coaching system. You cannot afford to risk working with somebody who is winging it on your dime and in your business. In part two I will reveal 7 criteria you need to look for when evaluating a coaching system

The 7 Criteria For Evaluating An Effective Coaching System

The coach and the coaching system are two sides of the same coin. It's like combing an F1 driver and an F1 car. Put a great driver in a bad car and you make it impossible for them to win. Conversely, put a poor driver in a great car and it's also impossible to win. To be successful, you need both the car and the driver to be great.

The same is true in coaching. You need a great coach with a great coaching system. Here are the 7 criteria you need to use when evaluating a coaching system.



1. CURRENT REALITY ASSESSMENT:

All journeys start at the beginning. Failure to accurately assess the current situation will result in a poor coaching outcome. That current reality assessment needs to be completed using effective audit tools.

Imagine for a minute you have a health challenge, what's the first step in the process. We all know the diagnosis comes before prescription. The better the diagnosis, the higher probability that you will get a good outcome following treatment.

When the assessment has been completed your coach needs to work with you to determine realistic future aspirations. This helps you determine what the end of your journey looks like in terms of a measurable outcome from your coaching.

Check carefully that your coach is using effective audit tools to get an accurate reflection of your current reality.

2. SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

The space between the beginning point and the endpoint is called the gap. The purpose

of the coaching is to bridge the gap between where you are and where you want to get to.

To bridge that gap you will need to acquire new skills and implement new systems so that you produce new results.

Check that your coach has clear methodologies, skill training materials and implementation systems that enable you to bridge the gap.

3. COACHING ROADMAP:

This is a simple, yet very important part of your evaluation. Your potential coach needs to be able to explain the coaching roadmap so you can get a realistic expectation of what will happen by when. You do not want to be married to your coach. Your ideal scenario is that there is a clear roadmap with a specific outcome by a specific timeframe.

4. BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE:

Jim Rohn once said that in order for your life to get better, you have to get better. He went on to say that if you want things to change in your life, you must be the first thing that changes. That's a very simple concept

to understand and a very difficult idea to implement in the real world.

Fortunately, we now live in a time where we know more about the inner workings of the brain than at any time in history. We understand more about why people resist change and what motivates people to change. In the world of coaching, this is sometimes referred to as gamification.

If the coaching system you are looking at does not use very specific gamification tools which produce behavioural change, then the results you are looking for will not be sustainable. After the coaching is finished, you or your team will simply revert back to the old behavioural paths of the past

5. ACCOUNTABILITY:

People mistakenly believe that one of the core tenants of coaching is that it has automatic accountability built in. Real accountability is not a default part of the coaching process. Accountability has to be engineered into the coaching system. It has to use a combination of tools and process.

Your potential coach needs to be able to clearly demonstrate how the accountability process will work in their system. If the only thing they can say to you is that they will meet with you regularly (face-to-face or phone) to follow through on your commitments, that is simply not enough.

The accountability process has to be more robust than that and your coach needs to be able to demonstrate how effective accountability works in their coaching system.

6. VIDEO & MOBILE LEARNING:

As a coaching client, you and your team needs some flexibility in terms of how coaching is delivered. In today's technologically advanced world, using a combination of video and mobile learning is critical. You need to be able to use the technology you are already using (tablets and smartphones) to access some of the core coaching material.

Ask your potential coach to demonstrate how they use video and mobile as part of the coaching process.

7. RESULTS TRACKING:

Ultimately, you choose to become a coaching client because you want to produce measurable results in your business. Coaching results come in two phases.

First, you get process improvement. These should be tracked using leading KPIs. If you are hiring a running coach this is where you would be tracking your training times and training distances.

Next, you get outcome improvement. These should be tracked using lacking KPIs. Continuing with the running coach metaphor, this is where you would track your actual race results.

Ask your potential coach to demonstrate how they track results in their coaching system.

Please use the twin checklists on next page, when you are assessing a potential coach for your business.



7 Steps to select the right coach for you

TECHNICAL SKILLS:

They have quality experience actually doing what you need to be done. That means they have a deep working knowledge in the area in which you need help.

COACHING SKILLS:

They have been formally trained as a coach, which means they know how to get the best results for you.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE:

They understand the specific nuances of your industry. They won't be experimenting at your expense.

NON-INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE:

They have deep experience outside your industry which means they can cross-pollinate new ideas that your competitors are not using.

DELIVER MEASURABLE RESULTS:

They have a significant number of success stories from previous clients demonstrating measurable, financial results were produced.

GUARANTEE:

They put their money where their mouth is and backup their system was a hassle free guarantee.

COACHING SYSTEM:

They can clearly demonstrate they are following a proven coaching system and can show you the roadmap you will follow.

7 Steps to select the right coaching system for you

CURRENT REALITY ASSESSMENT:

They use formal diagnostic tools to get an accurate assessment of your current situation.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

They can demonstrate the use of specific methodologies with supporting materials to develop the new skills you will require.

COACHING ROADMAP:

They can show you their coaching roadmap and give you a realistic expectation of what will happen by when.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE:

They should be able to show you a series of gamification tools that are used to create long-term, sustainable results.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Ask your potential coach to explain how accountability is formally built into the coaching system.

VIDEO & MOBILE LEARNING:

Look for specific examples of where video and mobile learning is built into the coaching system and coaching roadmap.

RESULTS TRACKING:

Ask your potential coach to demonstrate how they track results as a formal part of the coaching system.