

# Coaching 101: Will coaching be beneficial?

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In today's competitive marketplace, retention of key employees is critical. Occasionally, those vital employees run into challenges that prevent them from being as effective as they could be. This doesn't mean we always cut the cord and let the employees go. It is oftentimes a better investment to help employees through their challenging situations.

This article explores the value of coaching and how to decide if you have an employee that will benefit from one-on-one coaching.

## What is professional coaching?

While informal coaching- or mentoring programs- have been present in most organizations for quite a while, the practice of hiring an outside professional to coach an individual on a one-on-one basis is a fairly recent development. This type of coaching has become more popular as organizations realize that becoming a leader is not second nature-- principles must be taught and skills must be honed. Many times, the higher up you go in any organization, the more difficult it is to find training programs that are cost-effective and address the employee's specific challenges. This is why many organizations have turned to individualized coaching.

There are several types of professional coaching an employee may require.

### Intervention for Corrective Action

Provides targeted help and support for a leader facing a "must change" or critical turn-around situation.

### Specific Skill or Leadership Style Improvement

Helps a leader develop a particular skill set or address a particular problem or situation.

### Preparation for Specific Assignment

Helps prepare a leader for a new assignment or a change in job status.



### Continuous Education and Professional Development

Extends over a longer period of time and helps the leader continually focus on the key critical factors that affect bottom-line results.

Following are a few environmental factors that could indicate to you that one of your employees may need the assistance of a coach:

### Declining Business Indicators

These could include a decline in production, safety, quality, profit or other key business measures.

### Negative Influence

Leaders can exhibit behaviors that negatively influence the organization's culture, evidenced by such factors as worsening employee morale, high employee turnover, lower production or other negative factors.

### **Leader Lacks Necessary Skills**

Leaders may need to upgrade their skills to support the organization's values, goals and customer expectations.

### **Need for Positive Environment**

Leaders need to create a positive environment and culture that encourages job ownership and self-motivation.

### **The Value of Coaching**

One-on-one professional coaching is intense and often-times expensive, but it produces results that in most cases far exceed the investment. A recent study by Manchester, Inc., a career management consulting firm out of Jacksonville Florida, entitled "Executive Coaching Yields Return on Investment" found that a company's investment in providing coaching to its executives realized an average return on investment of almost six times the cost of the coaching.

This study found that the benefits to companies that provided coaching to executives were improvements in:

1. **Productivity (48%)**
2. **Quality (48%)**
3. **Organizational Strength (48%)**
4. **Customer Service (39%)**
5. **Reducing Customer Complaints (34%)**
6. **Retaining Executives who Received Coaching (32%)**
7. **Cost Reductions (23%)**
8. **Bottom-line profitability (22%)**

This study also found the benefits to the executives who received the coaching included:

1. **Improved working relationship with direct report (77%)**
2. **Improved working relationships with immediate supervisors (71%)**
3. **Improved teamwork (67%)**
4. **Improved working relationships with peers (63%)**
5. **Improved job satisfaction (61%)**

6. **Improved conflict reduction (52%)**
7. **Improved organizational commitment (44%)**
8. **Improved working relationships with clients (37%)**

Another, often hard to measure, benefit of the coaching relationship is the resulting loyalty of the leader to the company providing the coach. Your organization is in effect furthering the employee's professional development by helping the employee improve their managerial and/or leadership skills. This greatly increases the likelihood of retaining the employee and increasing loyalty to your organization.

### **Selecting a Coach**

If you have decided to hire a coach for your employee, the next step is selecting the coach. Selecting the right coach for your employee is critical to the success of the coaching effort. Trust is the most important factor in a coaching relationship. If your employee does not trust the coach you have selected, a symbiotic relationship cannot occur and no progress can be made. That is why it is advisable, if possible, to have the employee involved from the beginning in the selection process.

Here are some criteria to consider before selecting a coach:

- **Degree of trust.** The employee must trust the coach. Any professional coach should keep all session information confidential. This principle in and of itself should inspire a degree of trust. However, sometimes personality differences can prevent this relationship from becoming open, honest two-way communication, which can hinder the relationship. If your employee tells you he or she is not comfortable with the coach, this is important information and should not be discounted.

- **Experience in the field of coaching.** Ask to see references and testimonials. Ensure the coaches' experience extends beyond a few years. Certification is actually a very controversial topic in the coaching industry, and should never be considered to replace experience.
- **Experience in your particular industry.** This criterion is optional, and should mostly be considered in cases where a coach is brought in to help with a specific technical problem or situation. Coaches that specialize by industry tend to come with a heftier price tag.
- **Cost.** Remember you get what you pay for. There is a reason why some coaches have fees way below the industry average, and it often relates to their experience level or past successes. It is worth the investment to hire a coach that falls along the industry average or higher.



- **Use of a Systematic Approach.** Almost any coach you interview is going to have a different method for coaching. The important part is ensuring they are using a systematic approach in the coaching process. This process should include an initial assessment

The coaching process can be intense and expensive. But, the improvement seen in an employee whose potential outshined their challenges makes the coaching effort worthwhile.