



# Superb Coaching

*Working with you to take back your life*

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## Business Coaching – What is it all about?

How many of you have or have had young children? Think back to when they played soccer or netball and as parents some of you volunteered to be the team coach. You knew they had potential which invariably as kids they didn't appreciate or understand themselves. As their coach you encouraged and lead them, enabling them to realise their potential – not necessarily to be the best straight away – but to exceed their own expectations. You encouraged them to raise the bar to overcome their own beliefs and limitations, to excel.

Now translate this if you will into your own lives as an adult in the business environment. How many of you recognise the parallels? Business and Executive Coaching is much the same but it is applied in business and your own personal lives. As coaches we work with you to exceed your expectations, overcome your personal limitations and become more effective than you competition.

Many of you have probably heard about life coaching. Is this the same? No isn't. I will say however that as a business coach we can not ignore the principals of life coaching and invariably we will incorporate these into our sessions with our business coachees. These same principals can be applied in business coaching in order to achieve the overall result of a transformation within you as the coachee.

Coaching is a process of transformation. It is no quick fix. It is about you learning skills that you apply. It is not about someone teaching you how to do something. Let me explain...

Many of you are probably familiar with business or management consultants. Some of you have probably engaged them on various occasions. I am not denigrating their value as, having been a management consultant myself for many years I recognise that they have a valuable role to play in certain circumstances. Typically you engage such a consultant for a specific job. In the end they leave after you have paid a huge fee and they have hopefully achieved a positive outcome for your business. They may have even taught you something that you can take away and use yourself in the future. Very soon you have forgotten what they may have taught you. Why? Because there was no process to enable you to learn for yourself and to have this learning reinforced through a process of awareness, application, encouragement and validation. Herein lays the big difference. Generally speaking this is not the function of consultants.

It was once said to me that "a coach is the management consultant you should afford yourself when you can't afford the consultant". Coaching is a method of skills training that is delivered via a proven model supported by rigorous processes, techniques and tools. Coaching is about teaching rather than learning. It is about retention of skills for future application.

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It is important that if you wish to engage a business coach (I will take the liberty of grouping business and executive coaches under this one banner for simplicity's sake) you are not only comfortable with that person as an individual, but they also carry the appropriate business skills and experience to support your requirements and their coaching methods. It is important that you check their qualifications as a business coach. Have they been trained by a recognised body or coaching school? What sort of accreditations do they have? What other training have they received? What formal qualifications do they have in business? Most importantly, what business skills and experience do they bring to the table?

I will be frank - there are as yet no formally recognised accreditations or qualifications for business coaches by industry or government either here in Australia or overseas. The best you can do is to check out where they received their coaching from. They should be able to tell you and you should be able to find the web site of the coaching institute or school from where they received their qualifications. Peruse this carefully and form your own opinion as to the suitability of the school. Was the training they received provided on a formal basis or was it self taught? Also look into the coach's business background and consider whether the supporting training or courses they have attended are appropriate to your needs. Is the additional training relevant to their role as a business coach?

I have already made reference to life coaching or lifestyle coaching, business coaching and executive coaching. As far as the difference between corporate coaching and organizational coaching and business coaching and executive coaching, it is clear that key employees have needs that are different than the needs of small business owners, and CEOs have needs that are different than managers. Those who work with executives around their particular needs are known as executive coaches. Those who work with small businesses are known as business coaches. Coaches who work with managers and key employees at larger companies are known as corporate coaches.

Another question that quite often comes to people's minds is – Is a coach a therapist? Well not quite. A good coach will know where to draw the line between the two although it can not be denied that there are certain commonalities in approach and at certain points a coach will be a therapist to some degree. In understanding the difference let me share with you my view — a coach identifies where you are at in the here and now and what contributes to that position. A coach should not concern themselves so much with understanding how you got there or what occurred in the past that contributed to how you got there and dealing with that. If this is a serious concern then the coach should refer you to someone qualified in this area. Your coach should work with you to allow you to become aware of where you are now, where you want to be and then work with you to get to that point. Coaching is about taking you forward from where you are at. This will involve many aspects generally focussed on your behavioural patterns and identifying how to transform these as needed.

The results of coaching are largely up to you as the coachee. Yes, a lot does depend on the quality and skills of your coach however at the end of the day it is you that makes the difference.

Let me share with you a very simple but also very powerful concept — if I may.

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***“Everything that occurs in your life is the direct result of a decision that you, and only you, have made. It is never the fault or result of anyone else but you”***

This very statement has been made by a number of authors such as Stephen Covey, Dr Phil McGraw and Deepak Chopra, all with slight differences but with the same inference.

I would like you to just think about that statement for about 10 seconds...

How many of you had an initial reaction of “this is all rubbish” or “Yeah right, but what about when so and so did such and such...”? Now how many of you still felt the same way after thinking about it for the 10 seconds?

This is a difficult concept to grasp at first and to live by it takes a great deal of personal commitment. After a while it all becomes second nature. Please be assured — if you remember only one thing and this statement is it, then you will notice a tremendous change on your own behaviour and of those around you as a consequence.

Ok, I have digressed somewhat but I did want to share that small piece of insight with you and leave you with something to walk away with. That one was free. Any other advice given would be on a fee basis as your coach.

So what does a business coach really do or how can they help you in business? Maybe I can provide you with a list of statements. Read through the following list and as you do so, consider whether any of these apply to you. OK here we go.

- I just don't seem to have enough time to get on top of everything!
- My business is running me – I should be running this business!
- I feel like I'm existing – I should be living!
- Some days I just seem to be spinning my wheels and not achieving what I want!
- I have a great job but I am not enjoying it. It should be better than this!
- I know that this business has so much potential but I can't figure out where to start!
- My life seems to be all over the place!
- I enjoy my work and want to succeed but there is just no time for me!
- I have a great team working with me but we just don't seem to get it all together!
- I am so just overwhelmed with everything – I can't find a way forward!

Any of these sound familiar? If you could relate to at least any one of these, then you probably are a candidate for business coaching. Not for sure, but a candidate. If of course several of these apply to you then you should definitely consider engaging a business coach!

Business coaches can work in a wide range of areas but generally focus on a limited group with which they have a particular expertise or interest in. Typical areas of focus would include the following.

- Career Management
- Work / Life Balance
- Leadership / People Management
- Managing Team Performance
- Thinking skills – Problem Solving & Decision Analysis
- Self Development

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- Interpersonal Effectiveness – Personal Mastery
- Business Processes & Service Quality Procedures
- Strategic Planning
- Goal Setting
- Business Growth / Starting a New Business
- Stress Management

At the end of the day it is the role of the coach to work with their client to enable them to be a more effective person as an individual in the achievement of valuable and sustainable changes. This will enable you to become more effective in your business than your competitors. The spin-off of all this is that you will also be more effective in your personal life. This is where, as I said earlier, the principals of life coaching apply. We can not separate the individual from the job. They are interwoven and together make up the whole.

Is coaching for everyone? No it isn't. Some people are in fact quite in control of their destinies and manage themselves quite well. They have vision, they are driven by goals and work to their action plans. They prioritise their lives in such a way that they have achieved balance and control.

Real success in coaching comes most effectively to those who recognise that it is for them and they have a desire to follow the process. You must be ready for it within yourself.

If you are unsure then by all means make an appointment with one or more coaches to discuss with them how they work and what they believe they can do for you. Coaches are individuals and not all coaches are suited to all people. Coaching is a personal relationship and the significance of this relationship should not be treated lightly. Check out any potential coach; question them about their background and credentials for being a coach. In the end it is a personal decision that you make for yourself. It is an important decision that should lead to a positive transformation in you so choose who you are most comfortable with.

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