



5 Critical questions to ask before you hire a Leadership Coach

Coaching is a conversation. And as such, here are some guidelines for that first conversation with a potential coach.

Since a coaching conversation starts with asking powerful questions, this article starts with questions for you, followed by some for you to ask the coach.

Please note these questions can be relevant to both individual leadership coaching, and group or team-based coaching.

Questions for you:

Because coaching is a relationship-based process, we invite you to consider your role in the relationship. These first two questions ask you to reflect on your goals and readiness for coaching.

1. What do you want to achieve in coaching?

Coaching is a process to achieve growth and change, so being clear about what you want to achieve will be an effective starting point. Working with your coach you will clarify this question further, getting clearer about the importance, and the nuances of what you mean by that achievement, including how you will know you've achieved your goal(s).

2. What makes you (or your team) ready for coaching?

Achieving growth - and its partner change – requires a commitment to yourself, and to the coaching process. What kind of commitment? First, it requires commitment to the time for sessions. Most Leaders and Teams are very busy; in fact so busy that it's part of what gets in the way of achieving the growth they desire. When you engage in coaching, you are engaging in a commitment to step out of the day-to-day, to step back and look more broadly and deeply at where you are and where you want to go. So the first commitment is the commitment to doing just that – honouring the coaching sessions.



Being ready for coaching also requires a commitment to the coaching conversation. What does that mean? It means you bring a willingness to engage in a more meaningful level of dialogue than often happens in business. And it means you/your team are ready to be open and transparent, about your strengths and your vulnerabilities – in service of your growth as a Leader or a team of leaders.

Questions for the Coach:

3. What is the depth of your professional training as a coach?

Why is coach-specific professional training important to you? Professional coaching is a unique skill-set that can help you grow your capacity as a leader. Coaching is not consulting, or ‘telling’ clients what to do, it’s about engaging clients to access their own brilliance and wisdom, to grow in their own way that’s relevant to their own situation. In coaching, the coach will challenge you, may brainstorm answers with you, or if invited, the coach may even share a perspective – and – it’s you that chooses and you that takes action. That’s how you grow your personal Leadership capacity.

4. What did you learn about yourself and about leading others by being a leader?

This question will give you an understanding a potential coach’s experience and growth as a leader in their own life and in leading others. By hearing how the coach has developed and reflects on their leadership growth, you will get a sense of the leadership perspective the coach is bringing. The answers will also help you to learn how the coach may understand your context – or be able to relate to you and your situation. Coaching skills can be applied to a wide variety of contexts and circumstances – and direct experience in your industry is not critical. What’s important is how the coach brings both a meta-view and a micro-view of your development as a leader.



5. What is your style as a coach?

Each client is unique, as is each coach – even those with similar training apply their training in their own way. Finding a match that works for the individual client is the key to success. The answers from the coach will help you to understand what their own way of coaching people to success would look like. The answers will provide insight to make an informed choice of the right match for you. Think about how that style will jive with your style. Will the coach's style find the right balance of challenge and support for you?

In conclusion, these questions will help you to go beyond the basic questions of business background and coaching experience to get more to the core of building a productive relationship with a coach.

Best of success in your coaching relationship!

And naturally, we would be happy to engage in a conversation to answer some of these questions about coaching with you. Please contact us via email at info@beyondsuccessleadership.com or call 416-256-7958 to start the conversation.