

# Critical Questions to Ask Before You Invest in a Coach

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It seems that these days everyone is calling themselves a “coach.” I recently attended a professional business conference and was astonished by the number of people who were calling themselves “coaches.” As I made my way through a variety of groups and introduced myself, I met more and more “coaches.” *I thought coaching was a somewhat new profession?* I knew I wasn’t that out of touch so I decided to do some inquiries. I began asking these people questions around what type of coaching they did; where they got their certification, what background and experience did they have, etc. I was absolutely amazed by the number of people who were calling themselves “coaches” and who were not certified through an accredited coaching institution. My first thought was: these people are influencing other people’s lives. And my next thought: this is a disservice to the professional coaches who have spent countless hours and several thousand dollars getting certified through an accredited institution. So my mission became clear - I felt I would be doing a disservice to the public at large, myself and the coaching profession if I didn’t step up and do some educating around the field of coaching.

Professional coaching is a fairly new profession – only about ten years old. Ten years ago if I had told someone I was a coach, their first question would be, “Oh really, which sport?” Currently, coaching is one of the fastest growing professions in the nation and is estimated to reach 50,000 by 2006. It is different from consulting, mentoring, or counseling. Coaching is a uniquely skilled process. Generally, people are familiar with coaching such as executive coaching (also formerly known as “charm school”). Today there are coaches for just about anything you want in life: relationship coaches, business coaches, fitness coaches, spiritual coaches, wellness coaches, couples coaches... well, you get the picture. Coaches are hired for a variety of reasons, but mainly because someone wants to make a lasting change in their professional or personal life. They want the support, objectivity and accountability a coach can bring. Research shows that partnering with a certified coach can help you not only achieve your goals, but can actually help to increase your business bottom line. For this you pay a price, as coaches are not cheap. You can pay anywhere from \$100 per session upwards to \$1200 for executive coaching. So when looking for a coach, here are some critical questions to ask them:

- 1) What is your education and background?
- 2) What type of assessments are you trained in?
- 3) What type of certifications do you possess?
- 4) Is your coaching certification from an institution that is accredited through the International Coach Federation? If so, which one?
- 5) How long have you been coaching?

If you are thinking of hiring a coach, it is best to interview three or four to see if you have a natural “fit” or “connection” and beware of those coaches who “guarantee” results. Results are dependent on the individual’s or team’s intentions, choices and actions and then supported by the coach’s application of coaching skills.

There is no question that partnering with a certified coach can be very valuable. But a little work on the front end can save you a lot of headache down the road. Make sure when you spend your hard earned money to hire a coach that you are getting your money’s worth.

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