

Could You Use A Coach?

Business owners, managers and employees are using personal coaches now more than ever. Even Phil Jackson, former coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, elicited the help of a coach to assist him through team issues. As people seek better lives for themselves, either personally or professionally, or both, they are more likely to seek outside help to get them there: A professional coach.

What kind of coach is right for me? There are executive coaches, business coaches, corrective action coaches and life/career coaches.

Executive coaches typically work with owners, leaders and business management. They provide support, guidance and business improvement suggestions. Managers are often promoted to management based on excellent technical skills, but very little interpersonal skills training. Coaches can assist you by sharing experiences from similar challenges, or they can provide that confidential sounding board on a strategic issue.

Career/life coaches on the other hand, represent the “I want to be happy” side of business, populated with people trying to balance their personal and professional lives. Delegation, control and conflict are some of the significant issues addressed in these discussions.

Corrective action coaching is increasing in popularity. A company sends a historically, overall good employee, experiencing trouble, to a coach to discuss how behavior or approaches to the current issue can be modified. It often takes an outside perspective to provide honest reflection.

Who needs a coach? One client turned to coaching last year to help him fix what he felt was an increasingly ineffective leadership style. He had the fundamental part of his job down, but fell far short when it came to inspiring employees to follow him. This client required honest, reflective feedback, something he says only an outsider could have done. Another client requested monthly meetings to keep her on task in implementing a new strategic plan. The result, a faster completion timeline and effective action plan.

What should you expect? Many coaches say what they do is best explained by saying what they are not. It is not a substitute for therapy. Only some coaches are experienced in business practices and when they can offer valuable and sound advice in this area. If this is what you are looking for, be sure to clarify this up front. Coaches define their own approach but it usually involves one hour meetings, once or twice per month with homework required in between meetings. Managers are often offered coaching to assist them in transitioning from one position to another. Offering coaching in these situations should be seen as an investment by the employer in your future success.

Coaches must possess the ability to earn trust and demonstrate credibility within the first fifteen minutes or the sessions can be tests of will versus productive self reflecting opportunities for improvement. People considering coaching need to assess the reasons for wanting to utilize this service. Clients willing to let their guard down, earnestly listen to suggestions and follow through with homework will be successful graduates!

If you are interested in knowing how this service may benefit you, your employees or you organization, please contact Stephanie Barganz at Bodilly CPAs & Consultants, LLP by telephone (608-664-1047) or by email (stephanie.barganz@cpamadison.com).