



## HOW TO SELECT THE BEST COACH FOR YOU

If you're considering using a coach for your own development, there are two questions to prepare you for the experience. The first is, "Why might I need or benefit from a coach?" The second is, "What do I, personally, want to gain from the experience?" If you can answer these questions in concrete terms, you may be ready to explore the use of a coach and gain major dividends from the investment of your effort.

There are three broad categories that are important to consider to insure optimal results:

1. *Credentials*: Review professional memberships, training, experience, and references. Questions you might use include "What are some of the developmental opportunities or challenges you have worked with in the past?" "What results did you achieve?" "What categories of people have you worked with?" "What memberships do you hold?" and "What kind of training have you received?"
2. *Personal Chemistry*: an area where you take into account such things as empathy, questions asked, and listening skills. Even more than *Credentials*, your willingness to accept the coach as a guide is most important. This is the area that invites questions such as "With what kind of personalities have you been most effective?" "How do you approach individuals who don't seem to 'get it' during your sessions?" "Who would you turn down, how and why?"
3. *Techniques to be Used*: include topics such as activities, logistics, time commitments, and flexibility. Questions significant to this area can include "How will you determine what I need to work on?" "How can you help me learn new ways to do things?" "Where, when, and for how long will we meet?" and, "How will we measure the effectiveness of the coaching relationship?"

Once you've covered these categories, you may be ready to move forward. Compare more than one coach's answers to your questions. Then agree on a timeframe for your initial venture into a coaching relationship. The timeframe needs to be long enough to insure a full commitment on your part, at least for that time period, and for you to be able to judge the effectiveness of your coach. Once you reach the end of that timeframe, you can renew your relationship, but you are also free to pursue a more effective one should you feel the need to.

Involvement in coaching is a personal commitment and an organizational one as well. Most important, it's a commitment to yourself and to your growth as an effective manager or person. Second, it's a commitment to another individual with whom you will work to achieve specific goals. Third, it's an investment you and your organization are making. This is, essentially, a promise that you make to become more effective for the benefit of all stakeholders. Take it seriously.