

The Truth

About

Executive Coaching

By

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The Truth about Executive Coaching

I thought it might be useful to address the 'Truth about Executive Coaching'. Coaching is, after all, my day job, and something that I am truly passionate about. Whilst 'Coaching' per se has received significant press over the last several years, there is generally a poor understanding of what is involved when it comes to 'Executive Coaching'.

What is fundamentally important is not, in fact, 'what it involves', but how YOU specifically would BENEFIT from an interaction with a Coach. This is where most explanations come unstuck, as Coaching is a bespoke intervention, I would need a tailored response to everyone reading this article!

Having said that, I am going to attempt to demonstrate some of the specific benefits that our clients (or any Senior Executive or Manager) would gain from Business Coaching as well as some of the reasons you may think it is not for you...

The market for 'Coaching' has become very confusing...!

The idea for 'coaching' as a personal development approach started to gain wider popularity in the USA around 15 years ago. For a population already familiar with 'therapy' and where sport plays such an important role in the national identity, coaching found a fertile field in which to grow especially amongst Senior Executives wishing to 'improve their game'.

It took a while longer for the notion of 'Coaching' to take hold in the UK and Europe and the first training courses for Coaches started to appear around the turn of the century.

Since that time, the awareness and the market for coaching has grown exponentially, as many have come to understand the value that working with a coach can bring for accelerating personal performance.

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With this growth though, has come an enormous amount of confusion as the definitions of coaching have become blurred due, in the main, to the large variety of people who have decided, almost overnight, that they too qualify as a coach.

Here then I offer some plain explanations as to what Executive Coaching is and more importantly, what it isn't.

4 things Executive Coaching is not...

Executive Coaching often gets confused with other better know interventions, namely:

- 1. Training**
- 2. Consultancy**
- 3. Counselling**
- 4. Life Coaching**

Executive Coaching is NOT....

- **TRAINING**

- Training provides off-the-shelf information aimed at imparting new skills or knowledge about what you need to do or how you should do something. More often than not, the end of the training course is the end of your training experience; the rest is left to you. Research has shown that within 3-months of having attended a training course, less than 5% of the material covered can be recalled.

- **CONSULTANCY**

- Consultancy brings in outside expertise, normally for a specific project or to identify a specific problem and then ideally implements a solution. At the end of the consulting engagement the consultant leaves taking their experience with them, leaving little (if any) of the knowledge, skills or insights that they might have accumulated, with the client.

- **COUNSELLING**

- Counselling is a specialist activity that should only be conducted by specially trained counsellors. As an intervention, counselling tends to look backwards in

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time to address specific personal problems by providing an opportunity to explore deeply felt concerns and issues. Due to the emotional nature of this type of intervention, somebody stepping into this role without having had specific training can cause great damage to an individual.

- **LIFE COACHING**

- Life Coaching focuses solely on clients' personal goals and aspirations. Whilst there is great value in this from coaches that have professional training, there are many that have decided that their own 'life-experience' is qualification enough for them to coach others. This simply isn't the case, as professionally trained coaches have an armoury of tools and frameworks at their disposal and are taught questioning techniques to help their clients determine a course of action that is right for them. I'm afraid too, that a number of poorly trained coaches believe themselves able to perform as counsellors, and this can be particularly dangerous.

Executive Coaching is a world away from any of the interventions above but is still difficult to wrap into a single sound bite. Here instead is a collection of my best attempts:

- **Executive COACHING:**

- Is a bespoke one to one programme specifically designed to accelerate the success of the individual (and the organisation) engaging in the process. As it is a bespoke intervention, each individuals' experience will be different
- Can help you to define a powerful vision for yourself and give you the motivation to drive for it, setting better goals, reaching them faster, making better informed decisions, and improving the effectiveness of your overall relationships within the workplace and further abroad.
- Is about the future, discovering your potential and achieving it – faster. Your Executive Coach will support you and encourage you to deliver higher performance by getting you to FOCUS on what is fundamental and

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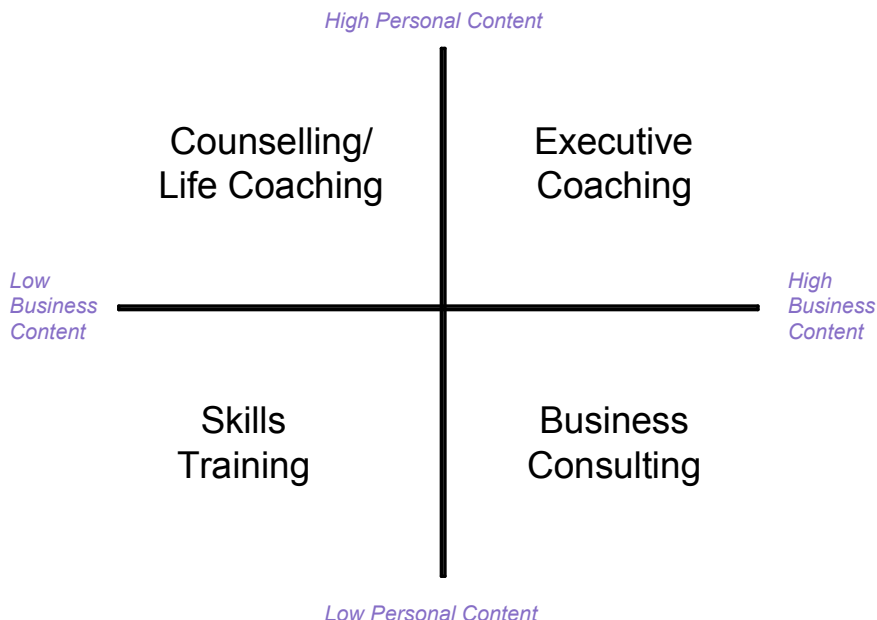
most importantly, take consistent ACTION towards achieving performance goals.

- Tools, knowledge and new skills are developed as a part of your Executive Coaching programme so that you can implement these in the business (and in your life) for immediate and longer-term success.
- will help you to develop the tools and knowledge that you need and then practise putting newly developed skills into effect
- is not for the faint hearted or for those who aren't prepared to strive for their success

Due to its sustained attention on improvement, Executive Coaching is rapidly becoming the preferred intervention for Senior Executives and Managers because it is considerably more time efficient and focuses totally on their individual needs. As Executive Coaching is entirely outcome focused it can generate rapid results.

This simple matrix is another way to understand the relationship between Executive Coaching and other popular interventions, in relation to both their Personal Content and Business Focus.

Interventions



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Before I move on, let me explain 'Our Version' of Executive Coaching

Before you view further information and explanations about Executive Coaching in general, I thought it was worth a paragraph or two to explain how our executive coaching differs from perhaps other companies and other independent coaches.

It's not just about the Executive...

Clearly we will deliver excellent coaching that will transform the executive's performance, we take that as table stakes for any Executive coaching firm worth their salt, however, we fundamentally believe that any interaction should also be beneficial for the organisation too. Our primary focus is organisational growth, or helping an organisation to achieve significant performance improvements, and therefore we design programmes that align the executive's individual goals with the organisational commercial goals.

That's why we call Our Executive Coaching '**Executive Business Coaching**'!

It's not just personal it's business - we take a hard pragmatic view that coaching needs to deliver to the business as well as to the individual, so all our coaches, as well as being highly qualified and very experienced coaches, are also senior business mentors who have worked as MD's, at Board Level or in very senior roles in organisations of different sizes from global companies to family run businesses.

The great benefit of this approach is most apparent on large scale programmes when a change wave can be created across an organisation in a very short time frame, however it is equally effective for an individual Executive or Senior Manager whose performance improvements can quickly impact the bottom line of their department or division.

Our Executive Business Coaching is particularly focused on delivering a great return on investment and therefore we work hard to ensure that our executive coaching programmes deliver and make commercial sense for the organisation. Our executive coaching should never be considered an indulgence and we will

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always work with a client to design the most effective delivery within a budget.

As you might expect, not everybody can make a good Executive Coach. Just as you will find many hypnotherapists and counsellors now styling themselves as Life Coaches, you will also find many ex-consultants and other redundant managers who will venture that they are now Executive Coaches and that they too can help you to develop yourself!

In this market it is buyer beware, so I offer you here the following criteria that I myself look for before considering anyone for my own business:

- 1) Demonstrable business experience with a track record of personal success and career growth
- 2) Range of industry sectors they have experience within so that they can draw inspiration and insights from the widest possible field
- 3) Proven desire to be an Executive Coach demonstrated by having sustained themselves, full-time, as a Coach for at least 3 years (NB. all of our coaches have much longer experience than this!)
- 4) Businesses or organisations coached that are relevant to your own including SMEs, Corporates and Public Sector – again allowing for the widest possible field of experience
- 5) Have appropriate qualifications or affiliations that demonstrate that they have passed industry-standard selection criteria and have trained in the skills necessary to be an effective Coach
- 6) Have glowing references and testimonials that matter, clients that are willing to attest to their success from having worked with the Coach
- 7) To have developed a personable and affable style borne out of their genuine desire to be a Coach and help others to succeed

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- 8) Are naturally inquisitive and daring, motivating others to step outside their comfort zone and then supporting them to do this
- 9) And above all, you have to like and respect them; don't underestimate this, as any relationship that you build with a Coach is likely to be a close one!! I have chosen not to proceed with a coach based simply on the fact that whilst everything else checked out, we simply didn't hit it off when we met!

As you can see, this is a pretty tough list, but it does serve to sort the wheat from the metaphorical chaff that is out there in the market. Your success is simply too important to entrust to a relationship with somebody that falls a whit below these criteria.

If at this point you're feeling a bit daunted, you can relax somewhat because, at Notion, we have done all of this vetting work for you. This is the **minimum** selection criteria that we apply to screen out potential coaches to work with us; the one's that make it through have to exhibit so much more!!

If you've made it this far, I'd like to look at some examples of where executive business coaching can help you most and how to answer some of the questions that you'll raise!

7 Most Common Reasons why Business and Senior Managers should consider Executive Coaching:

1. **Because you are already good and recognise that it's going to take that bit extra to become Outstanding!** - In the same way that top sportsmen and women will always seek out the top coaches in their field, you too should have an Executive Coach that will encourage you to reach your potential. Your Executive Coach will hold you accountable for the actions that you agree to complete, will make demands of you that will continually stretch your performance and will push, challenge, cajole and motivate you to achieve them. They will also be there to be the first to congratulate you on a job well done!

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2. **You have a lot of business experience but have neglected your own personal development** - You may work hard to ensure that people in your team receive all of the appropriate training, but your own development needs have moved beyond generic training. As a result, you have neglected your own development. Choosing to work with an Executive Coach from Notion is not a personal indulgence but a significant investment in your rapid development. Your coaching relationship will focus like a laser on the key aspects that will make a difference to you and your performance, now. Together, you will establish key measures of improvement and work diligently at removing any obstacles that might prevent you from achieving the desired results i.e. ensuring that there is a return on that investment.

3. **You feel that you have reached a plateau in your current role and need to reignite your passion to strive for the next level** - Working with your Executive Coach can help you build a strong impression of the value you have to contribute to your organisation and together help you discover career avenues that will allow you once again to contribute at your highest capability level.

4. **You believe that you simply aren't getting the best out of your people and that your team as a whole isn't as effective as it could and should be** - 'Leadership' is the new watchword for career success, but defining the elements of leadership that you need to build upon in order to motivate your team's performance is an area that can be explored more fully through working with your Executive Coach. For example, striking the balance between professional aloofness and intimacy with your team has a significant impact on the respect you are accorded as a leader.

5. **You are swamped by ideas, tips, buzz words, mantras and philosophies** - like any modern Executive, we are bombarded by new ideas and techniques but implementing any of these on a consistent basis seems to be almost futile before the next 'new wave' comes along! As an outsider to your department or division, your Executive Coach can act as a sounding board and offer an alternative perspective that it can sometimes be difficult to gain for yourself. Together you will work to identify the fundamental issues that need to be

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addressed and select activities with confidence that you know will make the difference.

6. **You feel that you are married to your work and that it demands working all hours** - If you are ready to start taking control of the hours that you contribute to your career and still get better results, then you should consider Executive Coaching.
7. **The results that you achieve don't seem to justify your efforts** - If you want to continue doing what you have always done it should come as no surprise that you will get the same results. Notion's Executive Coaches will challenge your status quo and get you focused on taking action now that will enable you to make the improvements that matter. We call this 'focusing on the fundamentals' and it will involve change, so you need to be open to this for it to be successful – the results can often be dramatic!

Some Additional Benefits of Executive Coaching....

Aside from encouraging your performance, one of the many roles your Executive Business Coach can play is that of sounding board and confidant. As someone who genuinely cares about your development and helping you to resolve any issues you face, the value of having someone 'in your corner' shouldn't be overlooked. It may not be their main function, but it can be an invaluable one.

Executive Coaching is often the favoured route of Business and Senior Managers because it is considerably more time efficient and effective than any other intervention. It is individually tailored to your needs and entirely outcome focused.

Take this opportunity to accelerate your personal improvement by working with an Executive Coach

4 questions you may want to ask

1. How does it work in practise?

You and your Coach will meet to decide if you would enjoy working together and if Coaching will help accelerate your success. If you both want to progress then you will meet on a regular basis, initially

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to establish your Goals and Action plans and then to ensure you deliver them! Every meeting ends with a committed set of Actions that you will deliver and your Coach will hold you accountable to completing them!

2. Does my Coach tell me what to do?

Not exactly. Your Coach will ask you questions, which in many cases can be the ones that you have been avoiding! It is often through the process of questioning and your joint discussion that ideas are generated and you will decide what really needs to be done to improve the situation. This then creates your set of actions. If your Coach has specific insights to share that might help you (or speed up the process) they will always share them with you.

3. How long would we work together?

This is entirely up to you and your organisation. Our work is results focused. If you weren't getting great results you wouldn't want to continue! Executive Business Coaching is not a "quick fix" solution and requires hard work on both sides (the greatest athletes don't get there by chance!). We have some clients that meet their goals within 3 months and others who have worked with us for over a year.

4. Are there any guarantees?

Unfortunately the honest answer is no. This is because Executive Business Coaching is designed to make YOU more successful and at the end of the day, only you can Guarantee that you will do what it takes to make that happen.

If you were working with the best Tennis Coach in the world but you never practised between your coaching sessions, you'd be unlikely to become a world-class tennis player. It is the same with Executive Business Coaching... if you don't complete the Actions you commit to take, you won't see the same levels of success.

If you like the idea of getting a regular nudge on how to improve your business and yourself [contact us](#) to learn more about our 1-to-1 Business Coaching Programmes.

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Some comments from our clients!

"Peter Bernard allowed me to become clearer on my core skills and role motivators, and then supported me to delegate more effectively and manage my time more efficiently." *Senior IT Director, Royal & Sun Alliance*

"Being coached by Martin Goodyer has been an outstanding experience and has been significant in helping me be successful" *David Thorpe-Tracey, Director, West Ham United Football Club*

"Carol McLachlan is flexible in approach and able to draw out the real issues with you and then work with you on setting the goals to achieve them. Appropriately challenging whilst giving you the motivation and making it easy for you to achieve and take action - which is the key" *Malcolm Lewis, Training & Development, AXA*

"The changes that I have made while working with Steph have unquestionably improved my performance. The coaching helped me to rebuild trust with the organisation and recognise my own capabilities and strengths. As a result I have taken on a leadership role and delivered a significant change programme successfully in the past 6 months." *Jayne Hannan, NUL, Aviva*

Next steps – taking Action

If you have read this far then you have nothing to lose by taking one simple action.

Call us on 0845 456 8217 and take us up on our special offer of a completely complimentary consultation with one of our Top Coaches and see if Executive Business Coaching could help to accelerate your success.

If you would like to read more then log onto our website www.BusinessCoaching.co.uk

Our contact details are printed below... Don't be shy!

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