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# Do you Need a Business Coach?

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IF YOU or your children paddle canoe, you know the importance of a good coach. A coach motivates everyone to do their personal best for themselves and their team, creates accountability (you do show up for practice!), and places people in the canoe where their natural gifts enhance the quality of the team. Most people agree that you and your team would not achieve maximum results without a good coach.

In the great regatta of life, a Business Coach can help you keep your head above water and steering towards the right direction. Metaphors aside- a Business Coach works with you to develop and achieve personal and/or professional goals. A coach can work with the business owner, manager, project team, or the whole company.

## What kinds of problems does a coach help me to solve?

In a coaching relationship the client always defines the agenda and the coach helps to drive towards the solution. Some business owners and managers use a coach to jump start their “big picture”, “dream project”, or “what I really want to be doing” projects. Other people find that they are overworked and that their work/recreation mix is out of balance. A coach has tools to help you manage your work/life flow and to develop strategies to maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Coaches also help people and businesses to “walk the talk” by aligning actions with values. Both individuals and businesses have values or guiding principles. These values could be focused on environment, community, customers, ethics, communication, creativity, employees, spirituality, excellence, etc... There are many successful businesses today (Pata-



gonia and Stonyfield Farm to name the brightest stars!) that are driven primarily by social and environmental values. In working with teams, a coach can work with a project team to keep the communication clear and a project focused through completion. Many medium and large size companies have internal coaches who work full time with employees on leadership, communication, personal and professional development.

A coach is not a therapist or consultant (although some coaches are also consultants) and does not solve your problems for you. Rather, a good coach will help to elicit solutions from the world’s foremost expert on you – you!

## What makes someone a good coach?

Business and Life Coaches can obtain professional accreditation through the International Coach Federation (ICF) which administers a certification program for coaches. A coach with ICF certification has completed a rigorous professional training program, has demonstrated ability through practice, and adheres to the ethics and standards of the ICF. Some of the skills that a coach is trained in are: active listening, powerful questioning, designing actions, planning and goal setting, managing accountability, and ethics. In addition to the core coaching skills, a coach also brings the cumulative experience of their professional life to the table. Coaches come

in all flavors with backgrounds in marketing, human resources, environment, non-profit, health, education and many other fields. They key is to find a coach that you feel resonant with. Most coaches offer a free introductory session so you can try the approach and relationship on for size.

According to workforce.com, 52 percent of U.S. companies surveyed, said they had business coaching programs in place and another 37 percent said they would be implementing coaching programs in the future. Clearly, businesses are finding a worthwhile return on the investment in coaching with greater employee retention, meeting of performance goals, better follow through, and management excellence.