

Flawless Coaching:

How to Get Maximum Results from Your Coaching Experience

By Mike Jay

For years, when most people heard the word "coaching," they thought of athletes training on the field or people in the arts learning to perfect their craft. Coaching in the business arena was rare and something only the very elite executives indulged in. However, in the mid-1960s, a mindset shift started to occur as the business world began to adopt the sports coaching model. And during the last twenty years, the field of business coaching has evolved into an indispensable service that professionals at all levels rely on to increase performance and drive results.

As such, business coaching is growing at a rate of approximately ten percent each year. Current estimates state that over one million people worldwide are being coached right now in business matters. So why the large increase in such a short timeframe?

Today's business arena is much different than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. Most business professionals will freely state that they often feel they're in "over their heads," and that there's too much complexity in companies today. In addition, the pace of change and the acceleration of progress and technological advancements are too rapid for most people to keep up with. And even though we're in a global economy, many people feel more isolated than ever before, whether they're an entrepreneur, an independent professional, or a business executive. That's why many people are acknowledging that they need a thinking partner or someone who can ask them the questions that need to be asked so they can deal with the pace of change and the sheer number of things taking place in the marketplace today.

Unfortunately, these same people don't know what to expect when being coached or how to gauge if it's working for them. They don't know how to make their coaching experience and relationship with their coach flawless-that is, to the point when they perceive that the coaching is perfect for them.

Whether you are one of the million business professionals currently being coached or are in the process of finding the right coach to help you, the following guidelines will enable you to have a flawless coaching experience.

Know yourself.

To make coaching flawless, you first need some knowledge about yourself-knowledge that goes beyond the surface. Therefore, set aside some time and sit down with pen and paper. Write out your answers to the following questions: Who am I (go deep to uncover what you value and what makes you "tick")? What do I want in business and in life? Where am I going professionally and personally?



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Yes, your coach will likely help you fine-tune your answers to these questions as the relationship progresses; however, if you begin coaching without this self-knowledge, then your chances of having coaching success are greatly lowered.

- **Be authentic.**

The more open you are to feedback, the more flawless your coaching experience will be. Being authentic means you have the ability to receive feedback without getting defensive. You can accept what other people's opinions are of you, and you can use their insight to improve. Even though you may not agree with everything people tell you about yourself, you need to be able to acknowledge their perceptions and analyze what they tell you objectively. Ultimately you may decide to discard their suggestions and opinions, but at least you took the time to evaluate their feedback and decide whether it applies to you.

- **Have a structure.**

A coaching structure involves meeting with your coach on a frequent basis-either every week or every other week. Such a structure holds you accountable and keeps what you and your coach are working on in the forefront. Meeting less than every other week makes it easy for you to forget your goals. When that happens, the coaching process will falter and you'll wonder if it's worth the time or expense. Therefore, have a structure so your objectives are always top of mind.

- **Enlist the help of a support team.**

You need to receive regular feedback from your support team about what you're trying to accomplish and whether you're making progress. Your support team can include anyone you know as long as they meet three important criteria: 1) They must be accessible to you and able to respond whenever you ask. 2) They must be vested in your growth, development, success, and happiness. 3) They must always tell you the truth no matter what. Once you've identified the correct people to be on your team, tell them, "I've hired a coach to help me work on _____. I'd like your help. In 30 days I'll come back to you and ask you how I'm doing on _____." Make sure you keep your support team up-to-date on your goals and objectives so they know how to measure your progress, as they see it. Then, call upon them at least once a month for some honest feedback on how they perceive your coaching results.

Flawless Coaching for Flawless Results

The beauty of flawless coaching is that the process is perfect, but neither you nor your coach have to be. That's because coaching is a methodology that works to keep "the main thing" in the forefront. Flawless coaching is not about knowing; rather, it's about inquiry, discovery, disclosure, and acceptance. That's what ultimately makes it flawless. So no matter where you are in your coaching journey-whether you've been coached for years or are just starting the process-put these suggestions to work for you and your coach today. By doing so, you'll greatly improve your results and your ability to reach all your professional and personal goals.

About the Author:

Mike Jay is a professional business coach, consultant and entrepreneur who has logging more than 10,000 hours of coaching sessions, serving business leaders in more than twenty-seven countries. Mike is the author of several books on executive coaching, leadership and resilience including "COACH2 THE BOTTOM LINE: "An Executive Guide to Coaching Performance, Change and Transformation in Organizations." " More info at www.mikejay.com or contact generati@msn.com

