

Chemistry counts – the coach matching process

A document by Blue Edge Consulting Ltd



The benefit

Experience shows that the rapport and chemistry between coaches and coachees is crucial to developing a positive and trusting coaching relationship. With this in mind, Blue Edge has developed a unique matching process.

The matching process

To help coachees to identify their coaching needs and to ensure an excellent fit, we would first need to understand their individual coaching requirements. This is done through a coach matching questionnaire based on the following minimum criteria:

- Level of coaching
- Expertise in the required coaching issues
- Rapport, chemistry, style.

Using this information, coaches are selected based on their match with the coachee requirements and the CVs sent. Our experience has shown that 3 is an optimum number to give candidates a choice whilst not overloading them with too many options.

As stated above, best practice suggests that coachees should be asked to identify the coaching style which they feel would be most beneficial to them, we do this using the following five continuums.

Directive: Coach readily shares own views, coach leads and directs the discussion

Vs. Facilitative: Coach encourages coach to arrive at their own conclusions and to lead and direct the discussion

Challenging: Coach frequently challenges and questions the coachee's thinking and approach to situations

Vs. Supportive: Coach provides support and acts as a sounding board for coachees to describe their planned approach

Reflective: Coach encourages early reflection and thinking with a focus on mentally rehearsing and preparing for situations

Vs. Action oriented: Coach encourages early experiments and a quicker pace with relatively less emphasis on reflection

Structured: Coach encourages a structure approach, adopting a planned approach to addressing issues.

Vs. Fluid: Coach encourages an exploratory, flexible approach where agenda evolves and focus changes

Conceptual: Discussion focuses on broader issues and themes that underpin success by asking 'why'

Vs. Practical: Discussion focuses on providing practical solutions and strategies by tackling challenges and asking 'how'



To help candidates make the right decision it is advisable to inform the coachee on the relative benefits of working with a coach who is both:

- a. **Very similar in style to them:** for example, rapport may be more immediate, communication and perspectives more similar and therefore can be one less thing to think about
- b. **Different in style:** for example, this presents an opportunity to learn and be challenged by someone with a very different perspective.



Experience has shown that this is an important aspect of the matching process to avoid any misconceptions.

Ultimately, the decision on coach selection rests with the coachee. Our role is to offer carefully vetted coaches who will deliver what is required.

Coach assessment

Blue Edge's coaching brand has attracted some of the country's most skilled and expert coaches who have sought to join our team. Our assessment of coaches follows a structured, rigorous process and covers a range of different criteria, such as:

- **Coaching credentials:** coaching qualifications and accreditations
- **Coaching models:** e.g. strengths-focused coaching, action learning, cognitive-behavioural
- **Coaching track record:** clients worked with, level worked at, industries
- **Areas of expertise:** e.g. leadership, organisational change, executive coaching, work-life balance, career development, performance coaching
- **Coaching style and approach:** e.g. facilitative, directive, problem-solution focused
- **Quality and professional development:** e.g. memberships, supervision, courses.

This provides clients with the confidence and reassurance that they are working with individuals who are best in class and who are working to best practice standards and ethics.

To vet these criteria we have developed a stringent and robust screening process which involves an initial CV sift followed by a structured questionnaire and one-to-one interview. All our interviews are conducted by Chartered Occupational Psychologists with coaching backgrounds and expertise. Our minimum assessment criteria are:

- **Adding business value:** coaches' experience is assessed in terms of direct value added to the business, through measurement of improvement in coachees and ability to evidence this
- **Coach risk:** professional indemnity insurance, named supervisor, ability to comply with contract
- **Coach competence:** e.g. assessed via coaching experience, client profile and level, coaching accreditation or equivalent*, 'live' demonstration of coaching skills
- **Coach credibility:** track record of coaching senior executives, experience of working in relevant sectors, coaching style and cultural fit
- **Coach professionalism & ethics:** professional memberships.

* *Coaching/psychology/counselling/mentoring qualification from a professional coaching body or institution.*

Our assessment process has been informed by best practice in this area, based on our own practical experience as well as on learning from participation in/evaluation of coaching selection processes for such organisations as Unilever and MoD. Our process has also been informed by guidance laid down by professional representative bodies such as APECS, CIPD, EMCC and others.

