

A brief educational article complements of John Myers based on his experiences as an Executive Coach for over 20 years. John is a founder and Managing Partner of Kensington International www.kionline.com, and past chairman and current board member of Career Partners International. CPI is the largest global partnership of executive coaching and career management firms with over 200 offices worldwide.

Got Coach?

Coaching is not for everybody and does not fit every situation. But, it is an important tool for executives and can have great impact if applied properly. In this short article, I hope to educate you just enough so you know when coaching is a good investment and when it is not the right solution, and what to look for in a coaching relationship.

Let's start off with a quick definition. **Coaching is a process**, helping an executive understand their strengths, weaknesses, blind spots and development opportunities as seen through the eyes of the constituents they serve. It is one part assessment, two parts feedback and eight parts application (in the context of the organizational environment and an executive's unique role challenges and development opportunities). Coaching helps executives understand and leverage their strengths and minimize the impact of their weaknesses. Great coaching benefits the executive and the organization.

Executive coaching is best applied in the following situations:

- **On Boarding** – When an executive is new to the company or new to a role that has greater scope/scale, unique challenges or where the stakes are generally high (high levels of risk/reward to the company).
- **High Potential Executive Development** – For executives who the company has identified as part of a succession plan and will benefit from developing higher levels of emotional intelligence relative to their strengths and developmental opportunities.
- **Executive Team Building** – As support for a newly formed team, a team that seeks to work more effectively together or where there is a conflict between members.
- **Executive Performance Improvement** – In situations where an executive has a behavioral “blind spot” or a specific developmental need that is impacting their current effectiveness or ability to grow into a role with greater responsibility.

Coaching is a unique relationship between an executive and an Executive Coach and starts with trust. Trust that the Coach will always: operate in the best interests of the executive; maintain critical confidentiality; be transparent relative to thoughts and observations, and work to enhance the executive's effectiveness in direct connection with role and business challenges. A Coach must always work in the best interests of the coachee (which by the way is in the best interests of the organization 99% of the time).

Buyers beware, not everyone is suited to be an Executive Coach. As the owner of an executive coaching firm and as an executive coach myself, I recognize that there are many self ordained Coaches out there without the requisite skill set. Even the coaching certification organizations graduate everyone who completes their curriculum. So the message here is to be careful, interview the coach, dive into their tools processes and experiences. And most importantly ask for and check both client and coachee references.

I hope this article has given you some new insights into coaching.

At Kensington, our team of coaches has extensive experience in all coaching applications and we will work with you to find the right coach for each unique situation. Please let me, or your Kensington representative, know if you have questions or can be of assistance to you or a member of your team.