

Casting your Coach

By Katherine Tulpa, Chair of the Association for Coaching & Director of Urban Calm®

With today's coaching market growing at a significant pace, identifying the right Coach can be more confusing than ever. In this article, Katherine looks at the motivation for coaching, as well as ways organisations can match the best Coaches for their culture and the Executive's needs.

From start-ups through to multi-nationals with complex environments, coaching is becoming one of the most effective ways to increase business performance. Part of this is due to leaders at mid to senior management levels preferring a more tailored, 1:1 development programme, with a process that encourages results.

There is also a workforce engagement benefit. In cases of group coaching or working with boards, bringing in a qualified Coach from outside the organisation is a good way to synergise the goals of the team members with the objectives of the business.

In the 2004 CIPD training & development survey, 92% agreed, "when coaching is managed effectively it can have a positive impact on the organisation's bottom line."

Some of the areas include: *learning new skills, improving productivity & individual performance, motivating staff, growing senior future staff, work/life balance, career planning, and accelerating change.*

This can be done at all levels, however a good way to embed change and promote a learning culture starts at the top, through a flexible Leadership or Executive coaching programme. Below are guidelines for casting the right Coaches for your organisation.

Suggested Guidelines:

1. Identify the purpose of the coaching programme

What is the coaching for? What are the objectives and how will it be measured? A professional Coach will request this information, so it's best to start thinking about this at the onset with your management and leadership teams.

2. Identify the organisational climate or culture

What is the context for coaching? If you compare the job of selecting a Coach to that of a casting director, one where the setting, audience and other parts are understood before bringing in the right person for the role, this is a useful benchmark.

3. What are the specific requirements of the individual being Coached?

Is the Executive or Leader preparing for a bigger role? Do they have a need to refine or acquire new skills such as influencing, making presentations, time management or public speaking? What gaps can you help them identify in their current portfolio?

4. Is the individual or team Coachable?

Will they make *time* for their own development? Do they see value in working with someone from outside the organisation who will provide confidential support and challenge them to reach their objectives? What concerns might they have?

5. What is the communication style of the individual being Coached?

What coaching would work best for the Executive? Do they prefer communications that are direct and task-focused, or ones that are non-directional and reflective? Do they display big picture thinking or detail; feeling based relationships or analytical?

6. Does the Coach being considered have presence and impact?

At senior levels especially, the Coach being considered needs to adapt to the environment quickly, build trust, and make an impact with the Executive or team. Will their personality and style be suitable for the Leader being coached?

7. Does the Coach being considered have the relevant experience?

What background, skills and experience will be a good match for your Leader? Recognise that having a similar profile (i.e., a Coach who worked in a similar role in finance coaching a finance executive) isn't always what's best. Look at the gaps.

8. Does the Coach belong to a professional body, adhering to a code of conduct?

What standards does the Coach abide by? What is their breadth of coaching training, approach, and techniques or models used? Do they participate in frequent cpd; have their own Supervisor or Mentor? A professional Coach will be able to answer these.

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About the author: Katherine Tulpa is Chair of the AC, Director of Urban Calm® a Wellbeing and Coaching practice specialising in Leadership, Performance and Health, and is the recipient of the 2004 Honorary Award for *Influencing the Coaching profession*. She is also a sought after Speaker, Mentor and Author.

For further info: www.urbancoaching.com or www.associationforcoaching.com

As one of UK & Europe's lead professional bodies, the Association for Coaching is an independent and non profit organisation whose aim is to promote best practice and raise the awareness and standards of coaching. *Don't miss their next International Conference being held at the London Victoria Park Plaza on the 24th of March 2006.*