

‘Vetting’ the Executive Coach: What You Should Know Before Deciding on a Coach

Hiring an executive coach requires that the senior executive utilize the same expertise he or she would apply to any thorny business problem or to implement any new program. That is, the senior executive would most likely develop short- and long-term goals; identify project needs; brainstorm expected outcomes; anticipate potential problems; examine tangential stakeholder needs; compare the relationship of the intended actions or changes with known and expected internal and external customer needs and post implementation, monitor the results.

These steps are standard operating procedure and should also be employed when the senior executive is contemplating engaging an executive coach. Some of the questions that also need to be answered include:

1. Does the coach have P&L experience?
2. Has the coach managed a functional area, operation or a business team?
3. Does the coach have business/corporate experience?
4. Does the coach possess deep industry experience in one industry or does he/she have business experience from a number of industries?
5. Does the coach have certifications in a number of leadership and 360 degree assessments and/or does he/she have a PhD in psychology or related field or have an associate relationship with a PhD psychologist?
6. Has the coach studied with any reputable or certified coaching higher education institutions?
7. Does the coach have relevant business consulting experience?
8. Is the coach certified through the International Coach Federation, Institute of Management Consultants USA, or other certifying organizations; or does he or she have documented broad expertise derived through a number of coaching experiences?
9. Does he or she have a number of referrals or references?

Taking a problem solving or new program implementation approach and carefully investigating the coach’s background will ensure the senior executive makes an informed hiring decision.

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