

## What is the value of a **Business Coach**



### The definition of Coaching and Coach

The derivation of the word coach in the teaching/training/developing context is fascinating and interesting. And why not amusing. Coach, meaning personal private tuition, was originally *university slang*. It was based on the metaphor that to move from one point to another swiftly you would ride on a coach, (at that time a horse-drawn coach), which would require the help of a coachman (today a driver). (Chambers dictionary says) Coach was first recorded in the sense of a private tutor in 1848, and in the sense of an athletics coach in 1861. Brewer's 1870 dictionary says: "... Coach - A private tutor - the term is a pun on getting on fast. To get on fast you take a coach - you cannot get on fast without a private tutor, ergo, a private tutor is the coach you take in order that you get on quickly (University slang)..."

Today we do not think of a coach as a particularly speedy vehicle, so the metaphor (Brewer says pun) seems strange, but in the 1800s a horse-drawn coach was the fastest means of transport available.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2005 revised) definition of a coach is:

"An instructor or trainer in sport. [or] A private tutor who gives extra teaching."

The verb to coach is defined more helpfully and fully as:

"Train or instruct (a team or player). [or] Give someone extra teaching. [or] Teach a subject or sport as a coach. [or] Give someone instructions as to what to do or say in a particular situation. [or] Give someone professional advice on how to attain their goals."

### Business Coaching

I rather prefer to focus on the subject of Business Coaching.

Business coaching is the act of providing support and advice to an individual or group in order to help them recognize, understand and construct ways in which they can improve the effectiveness and impact of their business, working, communication and leadership. Business coaches work to improve leadership, employee accountability, teamwork, sales, communication, goal setting, strategic planning and more. There are opinions, that a business coach must not understand the business and role of the coaches.

Personally, I do not agree on this. In my own personal experience, if a Business Coach has being in executive roles going through the varied life cycles situations of companies, having absorbed their cultures and understand that all industries are just different, this is for sure a huge advantage, towards a psycho-trained professional with no business experience.

The point is different. Sometimes I do hear that line managers must be coaches or have coaching functions in their leadership and management roles. Does this really work? Like in sport, rarely the coach is inside the playfield. By keeping distance he is able to read the game and being emotionally centered and neutral. A manager can take some coaching functions, however at the end, he is too near to the game. Either he is inside the playfield or outside.

I can tell you this, because I also operate as interim manager and I see, that my role just change. Certainly the quality of coaching influences my leadership, however in this role, I'm certainly a manager and not coach. Business Coaching, must consequently contain the subject business. It is about business, money, clients, shareholders and products. On the other side, business is about people.

Business Coaching can be provided in a number of ways, including one-on-one tuition, group coaching sessions and large scale seminars. Business coaches are often called in when a business is perceived to be performing badly, worst when the battle horse is already dead. However, I have observed since 1998, that many businesses recognize more and more, the benefits of business coaching even when the organization is successful. Why? It is already hard to have success. It is however harder to keep successful.

I often see Business Coaches colleagues specialized in different practice areas such as executive coaching, corporate coaching and leadership coaching. Others have a 360 degree approach, combining all three areas, which usually solves at 90% all situations. Personally I like the last and if requested and needed, I bring an external colleague in.

In the business world, managing as a coach is a necessity not only for your company success, but also for your survival. Business coaching is about helping employees become more effective — and supporting and involving your employees in the process. Coaching influences employee adaptability, productivity, and retention. It helps you make better use of your time.

As said, I have seeing many companies where managers were expected to act and to be (attitude and behavior) a coach. Very rarely this works out and creates frustration. While a modern leadership style is situative (means adapted to the people I'm leading, to the company and culture, to the life-cycle of the firm and to the industry), the business coach is "centered", independently of the situation and environment. I have seeing very good turn-around managers, who are very bad developers. Or funders, who are genius in their starting phase, but not so good in the maturity and development. Therefore, the role of a manager is and must be different as the one of the coach.

A manager's task is simple – to get the job done and to grow his staff. Time and cost pressures limit the latter. Coaching is one process with both effects."  
*(John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance)*

**So, what is Business Coaching in concrete:** The definition of coaching, in a business context, has the two following aspects:

- Coaching is an approach to management — how one carries out the role of being a manager.
- Coaching is a set of skills for managing employee performance to deliver results.

**Key note: Being a coach means that you see and approach the role of manager as a leader** — one who **challenges** and **develops** the employees' skills and abilities to achieve the best

performance results, and to function as self-sufficiently as possible. In other words, a business coach, will support your staff members learn, grow, and work hard, too.

As a coach, you have developed and possess various skills and efforts that are aimed at guiding employees to achieve high productivity and positive results. .

Few important skills of a business coach is

Listening rather than talking

Focusing on objectives, rather than the problems

Giving feedback, rather than critic

Observing, rather than judging

Empowering, developing supporting to reach self-sufficiency rather than being dependent

### **Mentoring**

In the business world, the terms "coaching" and "mentoring" are often used synonymously. But that's not always the case. When you hear employees talk about wanting a manager who is a mentor, they're essentially talking about wanting a manager who carries on as a coach. They want a manager who cares about their development and who challenges them to grow and perform to their best — in brief, what managing as a coach means.

- Coaching is the sum of all the coaching skills — giving performance feedback, delegating, motivating employee performance, and so on.

- Mentoring is one set in the overall skills of coaching. It's a significant part of coaching and the set that focuses on guiding employees to do for themselves. Mentoring promotes self-development and self-sufficiency

### **Business Coaching of leaders**

I have seen many managers and leaders who think 100% they are right. In their decisions, acting, thinking, communication. Just because they are the boss. This is a truth with very short legs. And a map is not the landscape.

I remember a case where a President assigned me to be at this side during the budgeting phase, related to the restructuring. I have observed that his managers were anxious to not lose or risking their jobs. The effect was, that he did not get a real useful feedback, once trying to find the right solutions and decisions, while he was asking feedback. Their answers and reactions were filtered.

Some years ago, I was assigned by an American CEO, who had taken the role of an Italian branch, during the early financial crisis. I was contacted by him, recommended by a friend of mine. The first encounter was a walk along a nice lake. I came to know, that the person was highly dynamic and convinced of himself – which per se is perfect and necessary. However he did not understand why the Italian managers did not understand his way. Two of seven left the job in the first three months, after he started. I remember that one of the very first questions was: John: How do you create trust? How do you convince them to follow you? His answers were related to his position and his experience in the US. Only after my question: What do you have to do in order they leave you? We started to change the tone and structure, and fixed together some objectives and outcomes. What I'm saying with this, is that I understood well his position as turn-around manager, US educated and related business mindset. On the other side, having worked in Italy and led Italian managers, I was able to create a bridge of understanding and facilitate the common ground. He invited me afterwards to join the board team as coach, helping to establish a road map and supporting him and the management team growing together and achieving their targets.

### **Conclusion:**

A professional and experienced business coach will cost you some money. Please do not ask him to be cheap. However if he is able to turn the right wheels, he will leverage the value and performance of your people and of your leadership, communication, creativity. And this is priceless.

Interesting survey of Harvard Business Review  
<https://hbr.org/2009/01/what-can-coaches-do-for-you>

## Did you know...

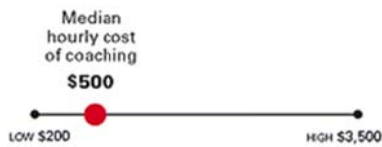
### Top 3 reasons coaches are engaged

Coaches are no longer most often hired to usher toxic leaders out the door.

- 1 Develop high potentials or facilitate transition **48%**
- 2 Act as a sounding board **26%**
- 3 Address derailing behavior **12%**

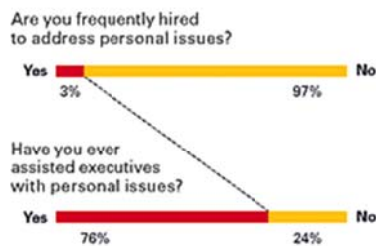
### How much it costs

Most often you can expect to pay about \$500 an hour – the cost of a top psychiatrist in Manhattan.



### Is coaching personal?

Companies may not hire coaches to attend to issues in executives' personal lives, but more often than not, personal matters creep in.



### What to look for in a coach

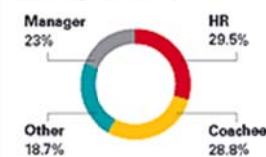
Respondents had mixed views on what qualifications are important.



### Who is involved?

Though they acknowledged that confidentiality was central to successful coaching, respondents said that in most cases, they gave updates on coachees' progress to other stakeholders in the organization.

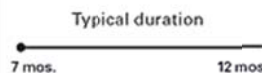
#### Who typically initiates the coaching relationship?



#### Who is kept apprised of progress?



### How long it takes



**The Editor:**

Nelson M Peña has almost 20 years experience in business coaching and interim management, and worked in over 25 countries in all five continents.

His specialty is jumping into complex, change management, post-integration situations. A particular strength is his international experience and linguistic skills.

If you are interested in talking to me, I'm more than happy to support you and to be at your side.

Nelson M Peña, August 2017

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Since 1998 Executive interim Manager in 16 executive mandates, mostly as CEO. Further led or co-signed projects for over 50 companies. Worked in all five continents and over 25 countries. Experience in supporting as advisor, coach and sparring partner to CEO's, business owner, multinationals as well as SME's.

**Specialties are interim management, post-integration assignments of M&A operations, project financing, commercial and business development, strategy, leadership, restructuring, change management.**

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	Retention	Quality Management	Leadership	Product Communication	Disinvestment	New Segments
	Right Profiles	Production	Management Techniques	Brand Communication	M&A activities	Expansion
	Technical HRM issues	Operations	Efficiency	Sales Force	Reporting	M&A
	Culture	Planning	Improvement	Pricing	Pricing	Company Settings
	Management Capabilities	Business Intelligence	KPI's	Promtion	Cost-Management	Optimizing
	Team Building	CRM	Balance Score Card	Distribution	Taxes	Restructuring
	Client	Organization	Strategies	Offline Communication	Legal	Reengineering
	Stakeholders	Outsourcing		Online Communication	Balance Score Card	Alliances
	Reputation	Insourcing		Internet	KPI's	Cooperations
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	Strategies			Brand Reputation		

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