

Frequently asked questions



What is Executive Coaching?

It is useful to first distinguish coaching from similar activities.

Coaching

Coaching is a partnership between coach and client. It is forward focused and primarily concerned with the client achieving their personal best and producing the results they want in their personal and professional lives. Coaching ensures the client can give their best, learn and develop in the way they wish. The coach need not be an expert in their clients' field of work.

Mentoring

Mentoring is when a senior colleague, seen as more knowledgeable and worldly wise gives advice and provides a role model. Mentoring involves wide ranging discussions that may not be limited to the work context. A mentor is a sponsor with great professional experience in their client's field of work. Both mentoring and coaching are concerned mainly with achievements in the present and the future.

Training

Training is the process of getting knowledge skills or abilities by study, experience or teaching. The trainer by definition is the expert, and the training course is likely to be targeted on specific skills for immediate results. Training is also likely to be one to many rather than one to one.

Consultancy

A consultant provides expertise and solves business problems, or develops a business as a whole. A consultant deals with the overall organization or specific parts of it and not individuals within it. Consultants only indirectly affect individuals.

Counselling

Counselling is working with a client who feels uncomfortable, or dissatisfied with their life. They are seeking guidance and advice. A counsellor works remedially on a client's problem.



Therapy

Therapy is working with the client who seeks relief from psychological or physical symptoms. The client wants emotional healing and relief from mental pain. Therapy deals with the client's mental health. Coaching deals with the client's mental growth. The client's motive for entering therapy or counselling is usually to get away from pain or discomfort, rather than moving towards desired goals.

Coaching is not remedial; it is generative. Both therapy and counselling are more likely to involve understanding and working with *past* experiences than coaching.

How is “executive coaching” different to ‘life coaching’?

Primarily executive coaching unlocks a person's potential to maximise their performance. Executive coaching has the added dimension of a business stake being intrinsic to the relationship and outcomes. So while both approaches are concerned with the wellbeing of the client, in executive coaching the organizational objectives, and alignment to values, achievements of goals and outcomes that impact the business are taken into account.

My personal view is that if you select a coach who has had significant organizational responsibility they are more likely to empathise with the responsibilities, structures, ambiguities, language, value conflicts, ethical dilemmas and other complexities inherent in a commercial environment.

Where are the similarities?

Fundamentally it is about the interplay between deep insight and action.

So what about Leadership Coaching?

Most executives need help in the leadership space, not just in understanding the mindset shift from management to leadership, but learning tools and frameworks to help them lead. But note, leadership is not about learning a new a set of theoretical skills. Self-awareness and mastery is critically important to enable effective leadership. Put bluntly, to lead you need to “get over yourself”. True leaders serve others.



What kinds of people work with an Executive/Leadership coach?

Top athletes don't move without a coach and thus it follows that now some of the world's more admired companies invest in executive coaching for their senior players and rising stars e.g.

"I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably finds a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable."

John Russell, Managing Director, Harley-Davidson Europe Ltd.

"What's really driving the boom in coaching, is this: as we move from 30 miles an hour to 70 to 120 to 180...as we go from driving straight down the road to making right turns and left turns to abandoning cars and getting motorcycles...the whole game changes, and a lot of people are trying to keep up, learn how not to fall."

John Kotter, Professor of Leadership, Harvard Business School

"Executive coaches are not for the meek. They're for people who value unambiguous feedback. All coaches have one thing in common, it's that they are ruthlessly results-oriented." Fast Company

What outcomes can you expect?

Coaching outcomes vary depending on the assignment. But include:

- Clarity over “who I am” and where to next
- Clarity and mastery over self-limiting beliefs
- Consciousness/self-awareness
- Greater alignment to organisational values
- Better conflict resolution
- Improved interpersonal and professional communication
- Goals are achieved faster and easier than if going at it alone
- Improved team building
- Sharper strategic thinking
- Enhanced scope for innovation and creativity
- Enhanced confidence*

* You will probably feel more confident IF you really go on the coaching journey. But it must be noted that confidence is not something that can be strapped on like a gun holster. **Leaders aren't conscious of having confidence. Their focus is elsewhere.**



Why do coaches always use that “journey” word?

Coaching is an interplay between insight and action. And thus it is as much about what happens within a coaching session as what happens between the sessions.

To even come to a coach in the first place infers that something/some way of being is not working for you. We look to disrupt the patterns, experiment with new ways of being, get you out of your comfort zone. Often these actions are subtle shifts rather than radical actions.

How long is a coaching assignment?

Most coaching assignments are over a 6-12 month period. After this time the client may choose to come back intermittently as a ‘check-in’/review. For certain assignments half-day/full-day workshops are more pertinent

What qualifies me to coach?

Apart from extensive commercial and leadership experience I chose to attain a global certification in coaching through the International Coaching Community. Note that as part of this organization I am bound by a code of ethics, which I am happy to send to you. I am a registered practitioner in Myers Briggs Type Indicator psychological assessment of personality type.

Note that all coaches are different and what is important is that you select the right coach for you.

Is it confidential?

Again, I have a non-disclosure agreement as part of a coaching contract we can sign if you have any concerns regarding confidentiality.

Why do I coach?

It is a vocation - a vocation being an occupation one feels strongly about doing, despite remuneration or other influences. A true vocation will characterize how you operate in general. I limit my individual coaching work to 1.5 days a week allowing me to also pursue other professional and personal interests (which incidentally all are connected back to leadership coaching). I also work as the Director of Leadership Development at Global Women and study gender at Auckland University.



A quote I love: *“A vocation requires surrender. In order to pursue a vocation, one must give up on the notion of success, prestige, and recognition....As the Quakers say, “Tis a gift to be simple tis a gift to be free.” In short, there’s a lot less pain and anxiety in a vocation. The challenge is wrestling one’s ego and pinning it to the mat”.*

Who do I coach?

I mainly work with senior executives of companies and individuals who are interested in reinvention and innovation. My current client base spans media, communications, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and retail industries Testimonials can be supplied on request.

Do I only coach women?

No! I make no secret that I have a particular interest in diversity, gender and the social development of women. However as a coach, my work is about my client’s life and interests not mine. Thus my client base is only very slightly weighted toward women.

Any other questions? [email me: sandy@sandyburgham.com](mailto:sandy@sandyburgham.com)

“The definition of insanity – doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. *Albert Einstein*
