



An Introduction to the Executive Coaching Engagement

Coaching is a collaborative process driven by the needs of the client and their organization. As a coach, I bring structure, accountability, strategic thinking, learning resources, empathy, creativity, and insight. The client's organization provides feedback and support to make sure developmental goals are achieved in a timely way.

Coaching generally proceeds in 4 phases:

1. Assessment
2. Coaching Plan
3. Action and Reflection
4. Completion

Assessment entails gathering the right information to set the right goals. Here, robust feedback is essential. Recent organizational feedback, such as a 360 or performance review, may be sufficient, or feedback may be gathered from a custom survey or a verbal 360 in which I interview my client's colleagues and write a report summarizing the findings. In this phase, my client and I are also building our relationship and exploring the best ways to work together. We are in dialogue with their manager and any other key stakeholders to ensure everyone's expectations of the engagement are clear and will be met.

The **Coaching Plan** is where feedback turns into actions and goals. We write the plan using "SMART" Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound). Each goal has a clear measure of success, and the coaching plan is reviewed by the manager before being finalized. We plan for how the client can better leverage their strengths, address opportunities for improvement, and broaden their overall skillset.

Action and Reflection is the heart of coaching. The client completes their identified actions and reflects on learning gained and obstacles encountered. The coaching plan may be revised in light of new discoveries. In this phase, the client also brings day-to-day challenges to sessions where they gain fresh insight and strategic approaches. The manager has an opportunity to check in and provide feedback on progress. During this phase, I support my clients in a variety of ways: I may observe them, convene a "rehearsal" of an important presentation, help them navigate a challenging relationship, or introduce techniques to help them communicate better or manage stress.

Completion is when the agreed upon engagement is coming to a close and we evaluate progress and plan for the future. The goal of coaching is to "teach a person to fish" so that new attitudes, skills and habits are internalized. That said, sometimes coaching can start again around new goals, or a check in a few months out can help to solidify the gains. The manager is involved to recognize and celebrate wins, identify work still to be done, and help the client keep growing their skills and their career.

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Other key aspects of my coaching process include:

Philosophy: Coaching addresses both external behaviors and internal beliefs. While it is distinct from therapy, robust coaching examines not only actions but also the mindset that causes them. I help my clients understand, interrogate and alter thoughts and beliefs that can limit them as professionals. I also help my clients process their emotions in a healthy way so they may approach challenges with a clear mind and purpose.

Confidentiality: Anything a client shares with me is kept confidential. I urge everyone involved in a coaching engagement to communicate openly and honestly, and I am there to facilitate such interactions as needed. Yet the coach-client relationship is founded on trust, and the process only works in a container of confidentiality.

Duration: A 6-month engagement is standard, but other arrangements occur based on the individual situation.

Unlimited Support: During a typical engagement, the client has unlimited access to sessions with me, whether in person, virtual or by phone, and also unlimited email support.

Feedback: Not only do I give feedback, but I also ask for it as well! I am continuously honing my approach to better fit each client's unique needs.

Questions? Get in touch with me at margie@zohncoaching.com!