

Difference between Coaching and Mentoring

Simply coaching and mentoring is an interactive, results oriented, enlightening process that brings about change. The change may be personal or it may be professional or it may be organisational.



Although the words coaching and mentoring have been around for many years, it was only in the 1980's and 1990's that the concepts of mentoring and coaching were formulated.

Research today highlights a number of differences between coaching and mentoring. All our research confirms that although the recipient of coaching or mentoring learns and develops their skills and performance, neither coaching nor mentoring can be considered as formal training.

An article published in Forbes explains that a coach will help their client learn the requisite attitude, behaviour, and skills needed to perform the job successfully, with a specific outcome pre-defined, and works with the client to make the required changes in small manageable sub-tasks. Whereas a mentor focuses more on the individual and the interaction can be more philosophical and focuses on attitudes and behaviours more than it does on specific skills.

Coaching and Mentoring is described by the BREFI Group as industries that use the same skills and approach, but that coaching is more short term task/goal-based and mentoring is a longer term relationship.

Eric Parsloe in his book 'The Manager as Coach and Mentor (1999) explains that 'Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance will improve'. To be a successful Coach, the Coach requires a knowledge and understanding of the process, as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.'

While D Clutterbuck and D Megginson explain in their book 'Mentoring Executives and Directors' (1999) that mentoring is off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.'

The International Institute of Coaching and Mentoring have provided this definition:

	Coaching	Mentoring
Supports a client move from where they are today to where they want to be in the future.	✓	✓
Working with the client to support the client in defining their own goal or goals.	✓	✓
Providing a level of support while allowing the client to make their own decisions, take their own selected actions, and successful achieve their own goals.	✓	✓
Learns skills to elicit answers i.e. questioning.	✓	
Works with the client to take one step at a time to achieve their goal.	✓	✓
Non-judgemental.	✓	✓



	Coaching	Mentoring
Non-directional.		Is allowed to use their own experience and knowledge to provide examples and make suggestions.
Can work in any industry or with any topic.		A mentor can only work in an industry or with a topic in which they have knowledge and experience.
Uses their knowledge and experience to provide examples or make suggestions.	A coach is trained to use skills which elicit answers from the client, whether the coach understands the answers or not.	
Believes that the client has their own answers.		
Retains confidentiality.		
Upholds the industry Code of Standards and Ethics.		

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Additional differences include:

	Coaching	Mentoring
Relationship	Coaches do not need to have first-hand experience and are more often an independent and sometimes external professional with the expertise in coaching skills.	Mentoring is more often the careful pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a less experienced person, in the same field.
Personal and Professional Development	Coaching is designed to help the client learn by experience rather than teach or guide.	Mentoring draws on the knowledge and experience of the mentor to help the client develop their skills, knowledge, career, and expertise.

Coaching and Mentoring are both developing industries and these differences and similarities will continue to be debated over the years to come, but the biggest difference between the two industries is that mentors will use their own knowledge and experience to guide their client, whereas coaches will use their coaching skills to elicit the answers from within the client.

About the IRCM:

The IRCM is the first independent body to create a register to include coaches and mentors world-wide who are currently performing a service as a coach or mentor; and has a duty of care to the coaching and mentoring buying public. It is for this reason that the IRCM provides you with the **Register of Coaches and Mentors** to enable you to verify the qualification and competence of the coach or mentor you hire or are working with.

The register shows information which is held in the public domain or may have been updated by the coach or mentor; and shows their qualifications and competence as a coach or mentor. The qualification will be through a training company, whereas the competence is demonstrated by the independent recognition provided by an Accreditation Body or Trade/Professional Organisation.

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