

## Questions to ask when hiring a Coach or Mentor



Coaching and Mentoring each have its own unique set of skills. Without the formal regulation of a Regulator such as the International Regulator of Coaching and Mentoring, there are many individuals and organisations representing themselves as coaches or mentors; where some of these are individuals without any formal coach-specific or mentor-specific training. In some cases they will be transferring their skills from other professions into their Coaching or Mentoring. Coaches and Mentors often have to 'unlearn' old skills from their previous professions before they can competently learn the skills required for to be an effective coach or mentor. Therefore selecting to work with a coach or mentor who has no formal coach or mentor training, may result in an inadequate or in-effective coaching or mentoring experience for you.

Whether you are selecting a coach or mentor to work with you or to work with individuals within your organisation, it is important that you select the right Coach or Mentor. The end result will depend on it.

We would recommend interviewing more than one Coach or Mentor, and below is a range of questions that you may select to ask during the interview:

1. How clear are you about the differences between Coaching, Mentoring, Training and other disciplines?  
*It is important to understand what you are looking for. Please read the IRCM's Report – the differences between Coaching and Mentoring.*
2. What are you looking for – Coaching or Mentoring or both?  
*Once you are clear about the differences, take your time deciding what type of person can help you. Is it a Coach? Is it a Mentor? Is it someone who has training and experience in both?*
3. How important is the type of experience or background of the Coach or Mentor to you?  
*If it is important then you are looking for a Mentor.*
4. What experience is a pre-requisite to understanding the complexity of your scenario?  
*This is important when selecting a Mentor. One of the pre-requisites of a top quality Mentor is that they have training, knowledge, and experience in your scenario.*
5. What coach or mentor specific training does the Coach or Mentor have?  
*There are many individuals and organisations representing themselves as coaches or mentors; where some of these are individuals have no formal coach-specific or mentor-specific training. By selecting to work with someone who has no formal training, you may not get the results you expect from this relationship.*
6. What is the coaches or mentors Competence?  
*Has the Coach or Mentor provided independent verification of their coach or mentor training, knowledge, and experience through an independent verification from an internationally recognised Accreditation Body or Professional/Trade Body?*
7. Is the Coach or Mentor transparent about their coaching or mentoring status?  
*What information have you found about the Coach or Mentor on the IRCM's Register (<http://www.ircm-register.org>)? Transparency is demonstrated by providing as much information in the public domain.*
8. Has the Coach or Mentor been recommended to you from someone or an organisation that has been successful when working with them?  
*Recommendations are the best form of reference that you can get for a Coach or Mentor. Recommendations come from people you know, who will provide you with their experience as it actually happened.*
9. What references, testimonials, or independent feedback can you gain from and about the Coach or Mentor?  
*References and Testimonials are provided by satisfied clients to the coach or mentor. At a minimum they should explain the process and the satisfaction experienced by the client, as well as their name and*



contact details. Independent feedback from one or more of the Coach or Mentors clients will give you a range of feedback. Some of the feedback may not appear to be positive, but where this is the case; always ask whether the outcome was successful. What you are looking for in this feedback is the support provided by the Coach or Mentor and the success of the client.

10. Has the Coach or Mentor satisfactorily provided details of their background, training and experience? When you researched the Coach or Mentor were you able to easily and simply find out about their background, their coach or mentor specific training, and their experience? If not, what did the Coach or Mentor provide you with when you asked the question. If this information is not in the public domain, how can you verify it?
11. What style of coaching or mentoring are you looking for? Coaches and Mentors often describe themselves as a specific type of Coach or Mentor. If how they describe themselves resonates with you, then maybe this is the type of coaching or mentoring that you are looking for.
12. What format of Coaching or Mentoring are you looking for? Face-2-Face \* Telephone \* Internet \* Skype \* Email \* Individual \* Group \* Team
13. What do you expect from this coaching or mentoring relationship? Coaching or Mentoring will take time and incur a cost; so before you search for a Coach or Mentor, it is important that you are clear about what you expect from this relationship. It may also provide you with an insight of what you expect from this relationship when you interview a number of coaches or mentors. Don't worry about changing your expectations or requirements as you go through this process.
14. Does the Coach or Mentor understand the brief and boundaries of what you are searching for? It is important to get the Coach or Mentor you are interviewing to repeat back to you what you are looking for, what your expectations are, and what the boundaries in this relationship will be.
15. What does the Coach or Mentor expect from you? It's often easy to look for someone else to help with resolving a problem, achieving a goal, or making a change; but in this relationship the Coach or Mentor will be expecting you to fully participate; so now is the time to find out what they expect from you.
16. If you are looking for a Coach or Mentor for individuals in your organisation, how well does the Coach or Mentor understand organisational structures? Coaching or Mentoring individuals within an organisation often brings with it an underlying challenge of confidentiality. The organisation paying for the coaching or mentoring requires a level of feedback to ensure that the individual is benefiting, while the individual wants to be able to share their dreams, aspirations, fears, concerns, with someone who will retain their confidentiality. Therefore interviewing a Coach or Mentor who has experience of working within an organisational structure and who can satisfy both the coaching or mentoring relationship with the individual while providing the right level of feedback to the organisation will support the organisations requirements for their staff development.
17. If you are looking for a Coach or Mentor for individuals in your organisation, how does the Coach or Mentor work with different personalities? The decision whether you employ one or more than one Coaches or Mentors will come down to how well you relate to each Coach or Mentor you interview. Each person within your organisation has their own personality and it's important that the Coach or Mentor you employ will be able to relate to and work with the individuals in your organisation.
18. How does the Coach or Mentor work with different cultures? Working with different people in one organisation doesn't always mean that you are working with people of the same culture. In today's business world it is important that where you are looking to hire Coaches and Mentors to work within your organisation that they fully understand how to work with individuals of different cultures.
19. When you are interviewing this Coach or Mentor, how well do you feel that respond to you? Beyond the qualifications, independent verification, skills, knowledge, and experience; it is important to feel that you have a connection with the Coach or Mentor.



20. Does the Coach or Mentor belong to an officially recognised Accreditation Body or to a Professional/Trade Body?  
*There are thousands of training organisations all providing Coach or Mentor training; some of which is ½ a day whereas others are hundreds of hours. It is difficult to understand what training an individual has received if you are not aware of the exact training details of that training. Therefore one way of understanding the training and experience that a Coach or Mentor has is to understand their level of accreditation or credential issued through an officially recognised Accreditation Body. There are also a number of Professional/Trade Bodies who also provide a standard.*
21. Does the Coach or Mentor have Professional Indemnity Insurance?  
*Professional Indemnity Insurance is not a requirement in every country, but where a Coach or Mentor does have Professional Indemnity Insurance they are demonstrating their commitment to running a professional business.*
22. What is your anticipated length of commitment for the coaching or mentoring relationship?  
*There are no fixed guidelines about how long a coaching or mentoring relationship will take. Some say that the coaching relationship will take less time than the mentoring relationship; while others quote this round the other way. What is important here is that you understand how long your relationship with the Coach or Mentor will take; which maybe from a set number of sessions to a long term relationship spanning years.*
23. What is the Coach or Mentors Terms of Business?  
*It is important that the Coach or Mentor provides you with their Terms of Business which should cover a clear definition of the service they offer, costs (exclusive/inclusive of sales tax/VAT), payment terms, timelines or timeline guidelines, confidentiality, complaint procedures, term of the service, and which law governs their terms of business.*
24. What procedures does the Coach or Mentor have in place to formalise your coaching or mentoring relationship?  
*It is important that the Coach or Mentor formalises your relationship within their Terms of Business. There are a number of ways in which this can be done, from an email confirmation from them to you, and your acceptance of this; to a formally signed agreement.*
25. Return on Investment.  
*It is argued that a financial return on investment is an unreliable and insufficient measure of coaching or mentoring outcomes. An over-emphasis on the financial returns can restrict the client, and where applicable, the organisation from benefiting if they are unaware of the full range of positive outcomes possible through using the services of a Coach or Mentor.*

Whichever Coach or Mentor you select to work with it is important that you understand the relationship you are entering, so that you benefit from the relationship and achieve your expected outcome.

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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