



Coaching Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is coaching?

A: Embraced by a wide range of individuals, businesses, and organizations, coaching is quickly becoming one of the top tools that today's leaders, executives and entrepreneurs use to run successful organizations and lead great lives. Part personal advisor, part sounding board and part strategist, a professional executive coach is specifically focused on you and your success. As professional athletes have known for years, having someone work directly with you to point out things you can't see and keep encouraging and challenging you to achieve your greatest potential is invaluable. Coaching is a way to create the highest performance through reflection, planned action, measured risk taking, and ongoing personal support. Some of the benefits of coaching include:

- Become clear about their vision, mission, objectives and priorities
- Get and stay focused and on task
- Learn and gain a more empowering perspective through experience, including challenges
- Set and accomplish specific goals and timeframes
- Analyze, evaluate options and brainstorm solutions to challenges
- Make (and stick with) decisions and action plans
- Recognize and celebrate your own achievements
- Shift from self-defeating into powerful perspectives
- Hear the truth in a safe environment so development can begin

A coach points out things the individual may not see or be aware of in a supportive, safe, and collaborative environment. Each coaching relationship is customized to the individual needs of the client.

Q: Is coaching primarily for struggling executives?

A: In short, no! Some executives may seek out coaching because it was recommended by their CEO or someone else in the organization who feels the executive needs assistance with development opportunities. Certainly coaching is very effective for these leaders. In addition, high performing executives will get just as much value and results from coaching. In fact, many of our clients are very successful executives who are looking to sustain their success and perform at the highest level possible. These leaders hire a coach to enable them to get results faster and perform at their peak. The only requirement for executive coaching is that the leader be committed to the process, be open to change, and be ready to take action.

Q: What is the coaching process?

A: When coaching leaders and executives, typically we start off by conducting a 360 degree assessment. This assessment allows us to gain feedback about the leader's effectiveness from different layers of the organization. The 360 degree assessment is an excellent tool used to understand the perceptions about the leader, and allows the coaching relationship to begin at a deeper and more productive level. The coach debriefs the 360 degree assessment in a confidential, one-on-one session with the executive. During the session, the executive and coach begin to create a development plan.



After the initial 360 degree debriefing session, the ongoing coaching relationship begins. The coach sends the executive a packet of questions and exercises to complete. The purpose of this packet is to get the executive thinking about their professional and personal development and what they want out of the coaching relationship. The coach and executive then meet in person for approximately two hours to conduct an “individual strategy session”. This session is used to lay the groundwork for the coaching relationship by discussing goals, challenges, and the primary focus of the coaching relationship. In addition, the coach and client design their partnership and discuss how they will work together.

Following the initial “individual strategy session”, the coach and client schedule two one-hour sessions per month. Most of our clients prefer to conduct these sessions by phone; however, in-person coaching is available upon request for local clients. Although there are two scheduled sessions per month, our coaching package includes short coaching calls in between sessions, e-mail exchanges, reviewing documents, or any other support requested by the executive. Our clients consistently tell us this level of support is extremely beneficial to them.

Q: How is ongoing coaching structured?

A: Individual coaching can take place in person or on the phone. Most of our clients have their ongoing sessions over the phone because they like the privacy and convenience. Sessions generally last 60 minutes and take place two times per month. Because coaching is about making sustainable changes, many coaches ask for a six to nine-month commitment from new clients. After the initial coaching agreement, many of our clients choose to continue the coaching relationship.

Q: Is the coaching process a blanket approach for the leader, or customized?

A: The coaching process is customized to the needs of each executive. During the initial “individual strategy session”, the coach and executive design what the primary focus of the coaching relationship will be based on the 360 degree feedback results, and challenges and goals of the executive. Usually there are a few areas the coach and executive focus on. Some examples may include interpersonal and leadership skills, developing employees, prioritizing and delegating, better time management, taking on a larger role in the organization, creating more collaborative environment, and developing better peer relationships. These are just some examples of areas to focus on, and each individual will come to the coaching relationship with their own set of priorities.

The executive has control of the agenda of the sessions, and sometimes will bring a pressing challenge they are facing at that moment. We encourage this with our clients so they can work through problems and challenges as they arise.

Does the coach need to have experience in the client’s line of work?

A: No. We assume our clients are experts in their functional area. The coach’s job is to provide different perspectives, point out what they see, and challenge and support the client. Coaches do not provide specific advice on a client’s line of work. The coach provides feedback and guidance and helps the executive develop new ways to attack old problems.



Although direct experience in a functional area is not needed, it is helpful for an executive coach to have a business background. A coach who has a business background often understands the challenges and pressures an executive faces.

Q: How is coaching different from consulting or therapy?

A: A consultant is hired to be an expert, to specifically tell the client how to do something. A coach holds the client as resourceful, creative and capable. A coach does not diagnose or treat like a therapist does. Unlike therapists, coaches do not delve into past wounds or work with clients on "issues." Coaching focuses on the present and future, while therapy generally focuses on the past and present. Accountability is important in coaching, and the focus is on evolving and manifesting potential.

Q: Do you discuss the sessions with the executive's boss?

A: All sessions with a client are confidential. Trust is extremely important in the coaching relationship; therefore, the coach does not divulge any information from the coaching sessions to a third party. We find the confidential nature of the relationship allows the executive to be completely honest with their coach, which is a benefit to the relationship and their growth. Some of our clients choose to discuss their progress with their immediate manager or the CEO, and we leave this up to the discretion of the executive.

Q: Should a coach have professional training?

A: There are many people out there who call themselves "coaches". We believe professional training is very important and contributes to the standards of the profession. Laurie Maddalena is a trained professional executive coach who completed her training through *The Coaches Training Institute*, one of the largest and most respected coach training organizations in the world.

Please contact Laurie Maddalena at (240) 605-7940 or lmaddalena@envisionexcellence.net if you have additional questions about coaching. We would be happy to answer your questions and talk with you about how coaching can benefit you and your organization.



Laurie J. Maddalena, Owner & CEO

Professional Biography

Laurie Maddalena is a seasoned executive who uses her unique blend of management, organizational development, and coaching experience to assist executives and managers in reaching their highest potential. In her over 10 years of management, human resources, and organizational development experience, she has developed and led major change initiatives in organizations by coaching and assisting executives and managers through significant transition. Laurie has also assisted leaders and teams in successfully navigating through human resource and organizational challenges. She has developed strategic and learning and development programs to grow and enhance the management and leadership skills of managers. She has a keen sense of business awareness and knowledge combined with a compassionate understanding of people that allows her to lead executives to create a larger impact in their organizations.

Prior to establishing her own coaching and consulting business, Laurie served as Vice President of Human Resources/Organizational Development at Montgomery County Teachers Federal Credit Union (MCT) where she transformed the human resources function into a department that added value and impact to the organization. While in this role, she assisted in orchestrating and implementing a major organizational alignment effort that increased the effectiveness of the organization and reduced costs. She also developed numerous learning and development plans and workshops to enhance and upgrade the leadership skills of the management team. Laurie's passion lies in building an outstanding organizational culture where employees love to come to work. Under Laurie's leadership, MCT was awarded the "Excellent Place to Work" designation by the Maryland Work~Life Alliance for seven years in a row.

Laurie earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree and a Master of Science degree in human resources/organizational development from The University of Maryland, University College. She also earned a Bachelor's degree in speech communication from Syracuse University. In addition, Laurie holds the designation of Professional Human Resources (PHR) from the Society of Human Resources, completed her executive coaching training through The Coaches Training Institute, and completed team and organizational coaching training through The Center for Right Relationship and Team Coaching International. Laurie is certified to administer *The Leadership Circle Profile* (360 degree assessment and culture survey), *The Team Diagnostic*, *FIRO-B*, *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and several other assessments.