



Ten Vital Questions to Ask if you're thinking of Hiring a Coach

There are thousands of coaches out there. And choosing the right one for you can be a minefield. Soon, only people who have trained with the best schools and hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct will be able to call themselves coaches. But until then, it's important to conduct your own checks.

The following questions are designed to keep you safe. You want to make sure your hard earned cash will give you the service you need and the results you want. You are advised to interview at least three coaches to make an informed decision.

- 1. Who did you train with?** CoachU, CTI, Newfield, and Results Coaching are some of the most well-known life coaching schools in the UK. If your coach mentions another training provider, check to see if their programme is accredited on the ICF website http://www.coachfederation.org.uk/actp_programmes.phtml Ask how long they have trained for. CoachU graduates usually take 2 to 3 years to get their qualification. Some coaches are also certified NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Practitioners. NLP techniques are especially powerful when used to resolve mental blocks (limiting beliefs or fears holding a client back). But most NLP programmes are *not* coach training certifications.
- 2. Are they a member of the recognised professional body known as the International Coaching Federation (ICF)?** If they are, they are bound by the ICF's standards and guidelines. To check out these guidelines go to www.coachfederation.org/ Other recognised bodies include the **EMCC** and the **Association for Coaching**.
- 3. Do they specialise in the area you want coaching on?** Many coaches claim to be both life and business coaches. And they might be. But a coach who has **specialist** experience, knowledge or contacts is especially valuable. If you want to fast track your career, might you want to know if your coach had demonstrated this ability in his/her own working life? If you work in the media, you might prefer a coach who understands your

profession because either they have worked in broadcasting – or they have had experience coaching broadcasters.

- 4. Can they offer you a level of service that suits you?** Can they offer the number of sessions you want per month, at times that are convenient to you? Some coaches only work 9-5. If you want coaching out of normal hours, will they work early morning or in the evening? You will probably pay a premium if you want your sessions to be in person instead of on the phone.
- 5. Ask what other services and support they offer over and above your regular calls.** Can you call or email them between sessions for no extra charge? If you have a big interview you may want a quick confidence booster before you set off. Are assessments and other resources included? What other extras are offered – and are they relevant to you?
- 6. Do they offer a complimentary initial consultation?** This is vital. Before making any commitment to coaching, you need to be sure that your coach understands you and the problem at hand. That means you feel heard, and safe talking to him or her. You must also feel completely confident that your coach will be able to resolve your issue. If the call leaves you feeling cold, walk away. Find another coach with whom you do connect with and trust.
- 7. What do you charge?** If all you can afford is a one off session, then don't be talked into a six month deal. Then again if you are serious about coaching, you must be prepared to budget for a minimum of three months for really good, sustainable results. Coaching is an investment that pays amazing dividends emotionally (what price can you put on knowing yourself and what you really want out of life?) and often financially too (you could recoup the cost in your next pay rise). Also be aware that just because one coach is more expensive than another doesn't necessarily mean their service is better. Shop around as you would for any other service and consider whether the total package is a good deal for you.
- 8. Do they offer a guarantee?** Not all coaches do – and it's no reflection on the quality of the coaching. However if the only thing stopping you from signing up is that this is new to you and you're just not sure if coaching will work for you, why not ask if the coach offers a "no questions asked, full money back guarantee" at the end of the first month? That way there's no risk to you if either the coach or the work doesn't meet your needs.

9. Are they insured? Like any other professional, a good coach will be insured for professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

10. Would you be happy if I called one of your former clients? Again, a good coach will be delighted to refer you to a past client. Ask about the nature of their issue and how it was resolved. You might also want to ask about the coach's style, way of working, and their overall professionalism.

We hope you have found this guide useful. If you would like to send this to a friend or colleague, may we ask that you tell them you got this from thecareercoach.co.uk? Thank you.

You might be wondering how The Career Coach would answer these questions. So you know, here's what we'd say:

1. We trained with CoachU and Newfield, and are NLP Practitioners. We also trained with the BBC
2. We are accredited at PCC level with the ICF – you can verify this on the UK website:
www.coachfederation.org.uk/community/mccaccpcc_terms.html
3. We specialise in career and leadership coaching, and prefer to refer you to other expert coaches if you are looking for say relationship coaching. We have a business background in law, media and financial services.
4. We coach before, during and after normal office hours. Most clients prefer the convenience of phone coaching. However we are available for face to face coaching on Mondays and Thursdays during the day in north London.
5. We offer unlimited email support between calls and quick 5-10 minute calls between main coaching sessions at no extra cost. All assessments are included in the monthly fee.
6. We offer a free initial consultation. There is no charge for us to simply get to know each other.
7. Our fees are completely transparent – there are no hidden extras. They are as they are on the Booking and Fees page of our website (under Services)
8. We offer a full money back guarantee for the first month when buying any coaching programme of two calls per month or more. This includes our Career Change Programme.
9. We are insured
10. We are delighted if you call one of our previous clients. We have lots of happy clients who have given us permission to do just this. Ask us.