



IMPACTFACTORY
More than just training

Coaching and Mentoring

A View from Impact Factory

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"Lately I've been thinking about becoming really good at something."

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Coaching and mentoring

Understanding how coaching and mentoring works, benefits of using a coach or mentor, hints and tips on using one and being one.

- Increase in coaching and mentoring in the workplace
- Coaching and mentoring overview
- Coaching and mentoring development
- Using a coach or mentor

Increase in coaching and mentoring in the workplace

The current trend

Coaching and mentoring, whether on an executive level or for overall staff, are increasingly being recognised as important in employee development. It is acknowledged by senior management in many organisations that their company will thrive if they offer some form of coaching and mentoring to their staff.

We are particularly aware at how much this trend for coaching and mentoring has grown in the UK, as this is where most of our clients are based.

We work with companies who automatically assign a mentor to new employees, some who leave it up to the employee to seek out a coach for themselves, some who don't or won't see the advantage of having coaches for their people and just about everything in between.

Fortunately, many more companies are giving their people an understanding of the benefits of coaching and mentoring, of which there are many, and more people are training and acquiring qualifications in coaching and mentoring than ever before.

What coaching and mentoring training is available?

People can get a professional qualification in coaching and mentoring, a certificate in coaching and mentoring; there are many courses offering training in coaching development, creative mentoring, career coaching, face to face training, on-line training, workplace mentoring, becoming a coaching and mentoring consultant, building a coaching network, business approaches to coaching and mentoring, distance learning, management mentoring, staff coaching, in house training courses, 'out' house training courses. There are basic courses and advanced coaching and mentoring training and qualifications.

The list truly is endless!

It seems as though everyone from business schools to the corner shop is getting on the coaching and mentoring bandwagon.

This isn't a bad thing.

How do I know what to do?

The only problem is that for someone who has never used a coach or mentor before, it can all be very confusing.

For those who want to train to become a coach or mentor, the choices can seem daunting: 'Where do I begin?'

For companies who want to initiate a coaching and mentoring programme, they want reassurance of the tangible benefits and return on their investment.

What we aim to do here is to give you a brief overview, understanding and insight into just exactly what coaching and mentoring means, some coaching and mentoring theory and to give our view on what it takes to be a good coach or mentor.

Coaching and mentoring overview

Is there a difference between coaching and mentoring?

We're going to cop out here and say there probably can't be a definitive answer to this. The two terms seem to be increasingly linked and are often used interchangeably.

These happen to be our definitions, but we're sure you'll find a bunch of others if you look around.

Coaching: we see a business, corporate or executive coach in much the way we see a sports coach. This person sets specific goals and objectives, sees what you need to do to achieve them and works with you on target setting, professional and personal development, expansion of your skills base and offers practical and relevant advice and guidance.

Mentoring: a mentor can almost be seen as a wise, experienced friend or favourite aunt or uncle type person. A mentor leads by example and is a role model. They might be very good at helping you see the big picture and understand the politics of the organisation you work for.

A coach can be a mentor and a mentor can be a coach, or the role can be rolled into one. The key is that whatever term you use, the person being coached or mentored gets unbiased support and guidance.

Benefits of coaching and mentoring

When you work with a coach or mentor you will benefit in many ways:

- Have a safe place to offload
- Develop skills you already have
- Learn new skills
- Gain insight into yourself and the people you work with
- Get unbiased, confidential support
- Gain fresh perspectives on your issues
- Get advice, suggestions and options

Coaching and mentoring theory

We're probably the wrong company to ask about coaching and mentoring theory. As a matter of fact, we're not too hot on theory since we believe that you can't pigeonhole people and impose a template of how coaching and mentoring should look.

On one level, we suppose that you could say that having a counselling skill is a good 'theoretical' place to start. The principles that a good counsellor needs to have are equally true for good coaches and mentors:

- Maintains confidentiality
- Excellent listening and responding skills
- Non-judgemental
- Objective outlook
- Advises rather than tells
- Has the 'mentee's' best interests at heart

Coaching and mentoring development

Coaching and mentoring training

As we said earlier, the list is endless when it comes to 'stuff' around coaching and mentoring. There are stacks of training courses, programmes, qualifications, certificates and workshops all claiming to provide you with the skills needed to become a coach and/or mentor.

We can't say which of these is any good. There are some essentials to look for when finding the right training for you.

- No promises about outcomes.
- It shouldn't cost the earth.
- It needs to have a high degree of integrity.
- It should be practical and experiential.
- You should feel a compatibility with the people running it.
- You should be given lots of individual suggestions on how to develop yourself as a coach/mentor.

Trust your tummy! Meet up before you sign up and ask lots of questions.

An example of someone who's 'doing it'

We can, however, give you an insight into one of the people within Impact Factory who is a coach and mentor and the range of skills she has which help her do the job.

Jo Ellen Grzyb, one of the founding partners, has an eclectic background, which we believe is a good place to start when thinking about training to become a coach and mentor.

We say this because the more experience you have, obviously, the more you bring to the job.

Jo Ellen has worked in the business and arts communities in one form or another, and on both sides of the Atlantic, for 30 years. She trained as a psychotherapist and ran career development courses for a number of years before founding Impact Factory with Robin Chandler 14 years ago.

She has had years of personal psychotherapy and has a monthly session with her own supervisor. She has also changed careers a number of times and has real insight into how to 'take the plunge' and move one when something isn't working well.

She writes, appears on radio and telly.

She's a brilliant networker and isn't particularly self-deprecating about what she can offer people.

Through all her years of experience, one consistent theme has been her focus on enabling other people to do their work better.

Most importantly, she has never sat around waiting for someone else to make it happen for her - she's just gone and done it, success or failure being far less important than the doing.

All of that makes her excellent in her role as a coach and mentor.

So what's the point?

Why we've given you that thumbnail sketch is that we get lots of enquiries from people wanting to become coaches and mentors who are looking for someone else to make it happen for them.

That ain't going to work.

If you want to train as a coach and mentor, you need to take a good, impartial look at yourself to see if you've got what it takes.

Remember earlier we said that everyone seems to getting on the coaching and mentoring bandwagon? Well, we feel pretty strongly that a lot of them should get off. Having said that, the profession is open for good, committed people.

You may be one of them.

Using a coach or mentor

How do I get one?

As we can see there's no shortage of people wanting to become coaches and mentors. But what if you want to use one. Where do you begin?

Of course, the best place to look is your workplace. If they already have a corporate coaching and mentoring programme that you aren't accessing, get yourself to HR ASAP and ask to be assigned one.

You could also look around your company and identify someone you think would make an excellent coach or mentor and ask them if they'd be willing.

Using either a formal or informal approach is equally effective. The key is working with someone you like, admire and with whom you feel comfortable.

Anything else I should be aware of?

There are a few important things that will help you make the most of your coach or mentor.

- Meet with them on a regular basis - whether fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, etc.
- Set clear objectives
- Rely on them for guidance, not answers
- Be honest
- A mentor isn't a dumping ground

Using a coach or mentor is one of the best ways to develop yourself and is a great way not to have to go it alone.

If you are interested in talking to us further about our work on presenting please phone: 020 7226 1877 or e-mail: enquiries@impactfactory.com