

## **GETTING VALUE FROM ORGANISATIONAL COACHING**

### **20 QUESTIONS FOR HR / OD / L&D / PROGRAM MANAGERS**

#### **Establishing the Program**

1. How will the coaching program support your organisational goals or link to key strategies?
2. What is the development need you are wanting to address?
3. Who are your key stakeholders and are they advocates (or at least supporters) of the program?
4. Is there an appetite for development amongst sponsors and potential participants?
5. Have you considered a range of development options? Why coaching?
6. What resources do you need, what do you have? (budget, people, time)
7. How will the program be evaluated?

#### **Selecting your Coachees**

8. Who is the target cohort for the program?
9. How should potential participants be identified and selected?

#### **Establishing Your Coaches**

10. How do you define coaching; does this align with what your coaches do when they say they're providing coaching?
11. What unique qualities are you looking for in a coaching provider?
12. Do you want to use coaches who are trained specifically in coaching techniques and/or who have attained a coaching credential from a recognised professional body such as ICF?
13. Do you expect your coaches to engage in ongoing professional development and adhere to a coaching code of ethics?
14. How will you source and select your coaches?
15. How will you engage your coaching provider or individual coaches?

#### **Establishing Individual Coaching Assignments**

16. How will coaches and participants (coachees) be matched?
17. How will participant coaching goals be identified; Who will decide on the coaching goals?
18. How will participant coaching goals be monitored and measured?
19. Will the participant's line manager be involved in setting goals and/or monitoring progress?
20. How will privacy and confidentiality be managed?

## A LITTLE MORE DETAIL .....

### Why coaching?

There are a range of development tools you might employ – first decide if coaching is the best fit, or whether training, consulting, mentoring or even counselling might better suit your needs. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as *partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential*. Coaching creates insight and empowers the coachee to find and implement changes, solutions and new behaviours – the coach does not inform, advise or instruct the client.

Coaching is an effective tool when you're looking for something that's individually focused rather than generic; when you are seeking vertical rather than horizontal development; and when you want to maximise the application of learning in the workplace. Coaching can be scheduled at a time and place that suits the coachee, rather than bringing them out of the workplace for large chunks of time to attend training, and has the advantage of being 'just in time' allowing staff to use the coaching session to solve specific issues that are pertinent in the here and now.

### Scope Your Program

Your coaching program may be a fully scaled, organisational-wide, recurring program, or you may decide specific individuals or groups may benefit from a single coaching program. The scope will depend on the resources available – whether a specific budget has been allocated, your capacity to develop and implement the program, the capacity of participants to engage in coaching – as well as the buy-in from your Executive, coachees and line managers, and the return you expect to get on your investment. Not every coaching program needs to be a Rolls Royce version. If you have the resources, need and buy-in, or you're coaching interventions are reasonably mature, you may be offering more of a systemic program. On the other hand, you may decide to focus a coaching intervention on a single site or cohort for a specific reason at a particular moment in time, or you may start with offering short coaching programs to specific individuals with identified development needs.

### Who Should Participate?

First define your coaching cohort – are you targeting your executive, aspiring leaders, high performers, new people managers, managers with a specific challenge such as those leading change, or those from a particular demographic such as indigenous staff? The cohort may have been already identified as part of your strategic HR or L&D plan, or may arise in response to an emerging challenge, for example a large change initiative may prompt the need to develop resilience and adaptability. To ensure maximum buy-in, participants and stakeholders need to view coaching as a significant developmental opportunity (for current or future role), rather than a remedial or performance management strategy. Remember that anyone can benefit from coaching not just senior executives or those in the pipeline.

### Selecting Participants

Decide whether you'll call for expressions of interest and select from those applying, or whether staff will be invited to participate. Staff who have been co-opted to participate in a coaching program against their will are unlikely to engage in, and benefit from, the program.

You should be as transparent as possible in defining your criteria for participation and the method of selection, to maximise engagement in, and support for, the program. Who will make the final decision on participants – you, a member of the Executive or a selection committee? The number of participants in each iteration of the program will generally depend on a cost-benefit analysis. You would generally aim for the maximum number of participants considering the cost in both dollars and time. If this is the first coaching program you've run you may want to start with a small number of participants to build awareness and support.

## Procuring Coaches

If you already employ staff with specialist coach training and expertise you may decide to use internal coaches. Or, if you are looking to embed a coaching culture, you may decide to recruit to an internal coaching position on a contract or permanent basis. The advantage is an internal coach understands the business and is already on salary. External coaches may suit if you're doing a one-off program, if participants (particularly senior executives), will feel uncomfortable with an internal coach, or if you need very specific expertise for a specific target group. The expected value of the program and your procurement requirements will determine whether you need to undertake a full or selected request for tender, or procure via direct approach. If you anticipate needing a range of coaches over time you may choose to procure for a pool or panel of coaches, from whom you may draw as the need arises.

## Sourcing and Engaging Coaches

If you're not required to formally tender you may choose to direct source via your professional networks, linkedin, an established coaching provider or a Coach Broker (who can source coaches for you). The International Coaching Federation website includes a directory to find individual credentialled coaches in your area. [ICF Australasia Member Directory](#) Selecting specific coaches in this way allows you more oversight of who you use, but may require more resources to establish and manage your own panel. You might find it easier to enter into a service agreement with a larger coaching provider, and rely on that provider to source, engage and manage their coaches.

## Selecting Quality Coaches

Coaching is a specific discipline with defined competencies. Coaching is a different skill to mentoring, consulting, advising or counselling. As an unregulated profession however, anyone can call themselves a coach whether or not they utilise evidence-based coaching interventions and possess accredited coaching competencies. It is common for professionals who provide advice, training, mentoring or therapy to describe aspects of their work as coaching. Be clear about what you mean by coaching, and ensure your coaches are aligned with your requirements before engaging them to ensure your expectations regarding program outcomes can be met. If you're not sure, ask to see them coach.

Engage a coach with academic or professional qualifications that include a component of coach specific training, A credential from the International Coaching Federation (ICF) provides assurance that an established level of coaching competence has been reached, and ongoing membership of the ICF or an equivalent professional association demonstrates a commitment to continuing professional development as a coach, and to a professional code of coaching ethics. ICF credentialled coaches will have maintained a log of coaching hours which can give a sense of coaching experience, and you may wish to ask for testimonials, recommendations or program evaluations which can attest to a coach's proficiency. An effective coach does not have to have worked at the level or in the same role/industry as the coachee – they need to have a good understanding of organisational processes, experience (often demonstrated through logged hours) of dedicated coaching, and established competence in the discipline of transformational coaching. Check that your coaches are aware of, and align their programs with, the Australian Standards Handbook on Coaching in Organisations (2011), as this sets out important guidelines on establishing and getting value from organisational coaching.

## Is Accreditation in a 360 or Psychometric Tool the Same as Coaching?

No. Most 360 or other psychometric assessment tools are designed to provide the client with information and/or feedback to help them gain insight into certain aspects of themselves – patterns of thinking, personality traits, ways of behaving – that they may be unaware of. Those accredited to administer the tool are skilled at helping the client to interpret the results of that particular assessment so they gain maximum insight and benefit from the information. This is just the start of the coaching process. A coach will help the client use the information gained to identify meaningful goals and to successfully undertake a process of

change over a period of time. If you are wanting a coach to work with your staff on changing habits and behaviours, and you want to use a particular tool to support that process, ensure that those administering the assessment are also specialist coaches (see above), rather than just being accredited in the tool.

## Defining Coaching Goals

Each participant will have their own unique coaching goals that will be defined and agreed at the start of their coaching program. Goals are identified through conversation between the coach and the coachee, and may take into consideration any feedback available through internal programs or a formal 360 assessment. The coachee must voluntarily engage with the coaching goals as a critical success factor for the program. Of equal importance, the line manager or organisational sponsor should be engaged via a 3-way conversation to provide input into finalisation of coaching goals. Even a highly self-aware coachee will have blind spots, and engaging the line manager is the preferred way to ensure the goals are both personally meaningful to the coachee and organisationally relevant. This also helps secure line-manager buy in to the coachee's development, and allows them to support the coaching by helping to monitor progress and providing real time feedback in the work environment.

## Confidentiality

Coaching assignments are based on the principle that the coaching conversation is confidential between the coach and the coachee. This allows for complete honesty and trust in the relationship and is optimum for achieving coaching goals. The coach will generally only share broad observations with the client organisation, such as coachee engagement, coachability and high-level progress toward agreed goals. If your expectation is that the coach will share details or notes relating to the content of the coaching program you will need to ensure you request and negotiate this with the coach and coachee at the start of the assignment. Generally, Feedback to and from the organisation is generally handled via three-way meetings in which the coach facilitates the coachee and manager to share relevant information between each other.

## When Things Don't Go To Plan

The success of coaching assignments will depend to a large degree on the quality of the relationship between the coach and the coachee. If either party doesn't feel the relationship is working for them, the agreement should provide an opportunity for the arrangement to be reviewed, and an alternative coach arranged if appropriate. You'll also want to build in a mechanism for getting feedback about your coaches to ensure your staff are satisfied, they're progressing toward their goals, you're getting value for money and your coaches are working professionally and ethically.

You need to remain cognizant that coaching is an unregulated profession, and situations may arise in which a coach is behaving unprofessionally or unethically, or where coaching practice is considered below professional expectations. Whether you have direct sourced your coaches or engaged via an agreement with a provider or broker, you should have an agreed means of addressing issues where your needs or expectations are not being met, and potentially removing the coach from your pool. Utilising coaches who have gained a coaching credential, and who are members of a professional association such as the International Coaching Federation minimises the likelihood of below standard or unethical practice, and also provides an external avenue for reporting a potential ethical or professional breach if required.

## In Summary - 5 Critical Success Factors

1. Ensure alignment between what you want from coaching and what the coach will deliver
2. Engage International Coaching Federation credentialed coaches (identified by ACC, PCC or MCC)
3. Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the coach, coachee and organisation sponsor
4. Establish agreed coaching goals for each participant, with line-manager buy-in to the goals
5. Agree on the behavioural indicators of success for each coaching assignment.

## Help and Further Information

If you're thinking about establishing or reviewing an organisational coaching program, and you need some advice or want to brainstorm ideas, please get in touch – I'm happy to have a chat and offer some suggestions. If you're further advanced and you're ready to outsource some of the components of establishing or delivering a coaching program, I can provide you a proposal that suits your needs.

## Jo Saies ACC

**Director and Principal Coach, PB Performance and Development**  
**Immediate Past President, ICF Australasia SA Branch**  
[www.pbperformance.com.au](http://www.pbperformance.com.au)

Jo Saies is Owner, Director and Principal Coach of **PB Performance and Development**, an SA based company dedicated to helping local employers to develop positive, productive and high performing people. With qualifications in Psychology, Human Resource Management and advance level Executive Coaching, Jo's 30 year career has been dedicated to optimising human performance – coaching and inspiring people, teams and organisations to achieve their full potential. As an experienced HR manager, OD practitioner and HR consultant, her skills include: leadership effectiveness, high performance, career development; workplace well-being; positive psychology; and change management.

Jo coaches for development, performance, resilience and wellbeing. Her coaching practice is evidence based, utilising a strengths-based cognitive-behavioural, solution-focused, reflective inquiry framework, and incorporating broader positive psychology and resilience interventions where relevant to the achievement of coaching goals. Her coaching practice is informed by contemporary leadership, human resource management, change management, organisational development and career development research and practice. All coaching is undertaken in accordance with ISO Guideline on Coaching in Organisations (**HB 332-2011**).

Jo has been a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) since 2006, holding leadership positions with the SA Branch over a number of years, including Branch President. As an ICF credentialed coach, Jo demonstrates alignment with an international standard of coaching competence attained through meeting stringent requirements including: certified coach specific training, logged coaching hours, continuous professional development requirements, participation in mentor coaching and adherence to the ICF code of ethics. Maintaining an ICF credential requires that the coach undergoes a re-credentialing process every three years. Jo is also a Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute.

## References

### **International Coaching Federation Core Coaching Competencies**

<https://coachingfederation.org/core-competencies>

### **International Coaching Federation Code of Ethics**

<https://coachingfederation.org/about/icf-ethics>

### **International Coaching Federation – Credentialed Coach Directory**

<https://coachingfederation.org/find-a-coach>

### **Handbook on Coaching in Organisations (HB 332-2011)**

Published by Standards Australia; 05-18-2011, ISBN 978-0-7337-9858-0

Available via [https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-us/standards/hb-332-2011-126993\\_saig\\_as\\_as\\_268139/](https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-us/standards/hb-332-2011-126993_saig_as_as_268139/)

### **Building Strong Coaching Cultures for Change**

Published by HCI and International Coaching Federation; 26-09-2018

Available via <https://coachingfederation.org/research/building-a-coaching-culture>