



How does career coaching work

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People come for career coaching for any aspect of their career they want to work on. Some coaches work on specific aspects such as leadership coaching or coaching to help you find the right career for yourself. Career counsellors also help with this. In general, most careers coaches, and this includes me, focus on helping clients deal with a broad range of career issues. These could be helping you move into a job better suited to you, dealing with problems with colleagues or managers, managing conflict situations, building new skills, preparing for a promotion, dealing with a retrenchment or loss of a job, and understanding why you may not be making the progress you would like in your career and how to remedy this. Most career coaches, unless they specify a particular niche, will help you with most of the problems you are likely to experience in your career.

Coaching always starts with getting clear on what you want to achieve from coaching. Sometimes this is not as easy to do as you may think. In order for coaching to be effective it is necessary to understand the problem so the right approaches can be applied to solve the problem. If the true problem is not identified, then the wrong issue is dealt with, and the problem still remains. Sometimes people say that even the first two sessions for coaching should deal with identifying the real problem. Sometimes identifying the problem is all that is really needed. A lot of people can go on and sort the problems out themselves, or the solutions may clearly present themselves. This in itself can be useful for people because in doing so they learn how to coach themselves to identify the true cause of their problems. And for a lot of people the problem is identifying the real problem. Once that is done, often the solution is apparent, and they know how to go away and solve it.

Career coaching can include the use of a variety of methods. Psychometric tests and assessments can be used to understand strengths, personality, interests, and career values. Practice and behaviour rehearsal can be used to learn new skills and behaviours. Reflection and rehearsal can be used to change mindsets and create more useful ones. Feedback and reviews can shed light on the perceptions of others and how people come across in the workplace. Strategies can be worked on to develop career paths and prepare you for promotions and leadership roles. Then action plans can be drafted with actions and timelines in place to achieve the desired outcomes. Tools to teach new ways of thinking, new skills, and new behaviours can be utilised to change what is not working for you.

Career coaches will have different approaches and processes to help you achieve what you want, but generally they will work with you to:

1. Identify what is not working in your career and what you are unhappy about and want to change.
2. Clarify the end state in terms of exactly where you want to be.
3. Set goals that fit with the end state you want to realise.
4. Coach you through the process, using various approaches and tools to achieve the goals you set.
5. Give you the support and resources you need or show you where to get them, in order to achieve your goals.
6. Check in with you and monitor and understand progress towards your goals.
7. Help you understand where you are thinking and acting in ways that self-sabotage your progress.
8. Help you adapt your plan and make changes that are needed if you are not progressing towards your goals.
9. Work with you on any negative beliefs or mindsets that are holding you back in your career and changing them to beliefs and mindsets that help you win at work.
10. Work with you on any negative habits and behaviours that are holding you back in your career and changing them to habits and behaviours that help you succeed at work.

The duration of the career coaching can vary. Sometimes people just want to have a discussion about career choices. In which case I have had clients only need one session. Sometimes there are a lot of skills to be learned and changes in thinking to be made, and people need quite a few sessions. Most of what you want to achieve can be done in six to eight sessions even if there are new skills and behaviours to be learned. Deciding on the right career, or a new career for yourself could be two sessions. The number of sessions required or the number of sessions you would like, can often be decided in the first session once the problem and solutions are identified. There are also people who decide to have regular career coaching (for example once a month) to deal with issues at work as they crop up, and to learn and develop new skills and behaviours that will help them succeed in the workplace.

While a lot of coaching is about helping people deal with specific issues in their life that make them unhappy, coaching can also be something that is done to make you much better in life. So, you don't need to come with a specific work problem. You can have career coaching because you want to get ahead and you want to learn how to be successful in your own career. Career coaching can also help you accelerate your career success by coaching you through the skills and behaviours that are needed to be successful in the workplace, and in giving you these skills you can progress faster and smarter than those around you.

If you are looking for a career coach and you are unsure about what to expect and want to find out more about how the process will work for you, then when you make contact to look at setting up an appointment explain what you want from coaching and ask the coach if they are able to assist you with your particular problem. If you have questions, then always ask the coach upfront. Almost all coaches will answer any questions you have, and if they don't, then you want to consider if that person is the right coach for you. Like all coaching you need to feel comfortable talking to the coach and be able to deal with the real issues. You need to be assured of confidentiality as well as receive the support and understanding required if the process is to benefit you.