

THE CLINIC COACH

Strategies to Sculpt Your
Beautiful Business



Seven Questions



TO ASK A BUSINESS COACH BEFORE YOU ENGAGE WITH THEM

- ① What support do you access personally and professionally?
- ② Do you use a formal programme to help your clients or do you develop it as you go along?
- ③ What additional courses, classes and workshops have you found useful, and what are you currently doing?
- ④ Are you a member of a professional organisation?
- ⑤ Have you won any awards or accolades?
- ⑥ Have you written any books or published any materials?
- ⑦ How do you think you can help me best?



What support do you access personally and professionally?

There's no doubt that everyone performs better when they're able to access external support and when they have someone to hold them accountable, and it's a great example of a coach walking their talk. Any coach you consider should be investing in coaches of their own – personally and professionally – to demonstrate their belief in the return on investment of coaching, and how much quicker it makes everything happen. The other great advantage is that they'll be learning from their coach and will be able to pass that on to you and their other clients. I regularly engage with two hugely-successful multi-millionaire business mentors, and also engage coaches in specialist areas such as professional speaking, digital communication, and PR, as well as life coaching to help me achieve my goals. Your ideal coach should be open and proud about their own investment, so don't be shy to drill down. And beware any 'finished articles'...



Do you use a formal programme to help your clients or do you develop it as you go along?

While it may sound positive for a coach to 'craft' something specifically for you, it's actually in your interests for them to be following an overarching programme, but for them to have the experience and expertise to deliver this in a completely personalised way. I choose to use a process that I've honed and perfected over several years as a coach, but I deliver it exactly as each and every client needs. That way I can ensure that every area of their business is covered, but also that we only spend time on those most important to their business goals and aspirations. It may be that something slightly less structured works for you, but give some thought to it beforehand and make sure you know what 'success' looks like for you.



What additional courses, classes and workshops have you found useful and what are you currently doing?

The first rule of coaching is to never stop learning yourself, so what you're ideally looking for here is a coach who is investing strongly in their own learning and development regularly. And ideally not in a tiny niche sector either, but wider. They should be able to talk about the books they've read and loved – or loathed – plus the seminars they've attended, the workshops, the webinars and events. And that's not even to mention the qualifications. Anyone who presents themselves to you as the 'finished article' is already out-of-date, and what you really need to be looking for is a genuine thirst for knowledge. I spend at least two full days per month on my own development, travelling extensively to hear from true experts in fields as diverse as sales and marketing, business strategy, finance and digital. Consider your business and what you'd be looking to learn from a coach – how current do you want and need them to be, and make that a core part of your initial decision-making process.



Are you a member of a professional organisation?

Be sure to look for a coach who is a member of a professional organisation as they're likely to have had to meet – and maintain – a variety of criteria. This way you can trust that they operate to best practice, that they adhere to other standards, and that, if you have a problem, there's someone to complain to! Because of the various facets of my role with clients, I'm a member of the Chartered Management Institute, Association of Professional Coaches Trainers & Consultants, and the International Business Personal Development Association, but give some thought to the types of organisations you'd like your coach to be aligned with.



Have you won any awards or accolades?

Awards are a great way of seeing how a coach is perceived by his or her industry peers, essentially benchmarking them against their competition. Every sector will have its own awards and accolades, but look for something which demonstrates their expertise, their approach, and ideally the value that they add to their own clients. I've picked a few up personally, but it's my ranking as one of the Top 50 Coaches in the UK from Enterprise Nation which has helped me stand out for lots of clients. Think about what's important to you and look for that in your own coach.



Have you written any books or published any materials?

OK, so not every coach will have published a book but they should be expert enough in their area to have authored at least some workshops and a white paper or two. Ask them to share copies with you and take the time to have a read through – I promise that there's no better way to truly experience the coach's 'voice' and approach, and to check that it's congruent with you and your business. I've published three books now – one of which is an Amazon bestseller – plus piles of articles, PR pieces, white papers and workshops. I use them as a brilliant way to prequalify potential clients and mentees, and I'm always happy to share. What's important to you? How much do you want your coach to have authored? How important is it that they have something to say? These are all things that are worth giving some real thought to before you meet up for the first time.



How do you think you can help me best?

This isn't the sort of answer that you can reasonably expect after just 20 minutes or so with you, and you should expect your coach to invest the time in really getting to know you and to understanding the challenges and the opportunities facing you right now. I invest in two pretty full-on questioning sessions and only then am I confident that we're on the right track. Beware anyone who gives you a quick answer or offers a silver bullet – I promise that there really is no such thing. And beware also the bloke at the end of the bar, offering seemingly eloquent advice and guidance. A quick drill-down of your own around any of the questions above should show him (or her) for the expert or otherwise that they are. Value yourself and your business, and in the same way that you'd expect a full medical to take longer than five minutes before any diagnosis, expect to invest some time – and honesty – in the business health check process too.



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