

# What is a Business Coach?



**How A Business Coach Can Enhance  
Your Business Success**

## What is a Business Coach?

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Printed in the U.S.A.  
Revision 1

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Academy for Business Success  
21000 NW Quatama Rd., #164  
Aloha, OR 97006

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## What is a Business Coach?

### Introduction

A Business Coach is a professionally trained coach with a background in small business issues who oversees, assists and guides you—the small business owner—in developing, starting, and growing your small business. The Business Coach helps you clarify your business goals and objectives and helps you develop the skills and acquire the resources needed to operate a successful enterprise.

Your Business Coach meets with you on a regular basis, either in person or over the telephone, to discuss the current and future business and life issues you are facing. This structure keeps you and your business on the track you have set — continuously moving forward toward your goals and objectives. The results are that you experience clarity of what success means to you, and the means to create success.

Typically, Business Coaches work in one of the following areas:

- **General Planning** — This Business Coach works with you on stabilizing and developing your Strategic Planning, Marketing and Promotional Planning, Financial Management and Planning, and general Administration and Personnel issues.
- **Marketing and Promotional Planning** — This Business Coach specializes in helping you develop and implement your Promotional Action Plan, Advertising Plan, and Public Relations plan.
- **Financial Planning** — This Business Coach specializes in helping you understand Financial Statements, Cash Flow Management, Pricing Strategies, and Employee Compensation plans. However, this Business Coach is not a tax advisor.

## What is a Business Coach?

# What a Business Coach Does For You, the Small Business Owner

Business owners seeking the expert guidance of Business Coaches typically look for coaches who not only are successful Business Coaches and professionals, but who also have a genuine interest in assisting them.

Your Business Coach:

- Helps you look at the big picture for your business and life.
- Guides you in enhancing your business skills and intellectual development.
- Provides candid feedback to you about your strengths and weaknesses.
- Helps you identify business opportunities.
- Links you with professionals and organizations that can assist you in solving problems.
- Helps you through the transitional periods in starting and growing a small enterprise.
- Assists you balancing your personal with your business life.
- Listens to the problems you are facing, helps you set goals and develop a plan, and requires you to carry out and implement your plans.
- Encourages and motivates you, building your sense of self-worth and confidence.

# What Are the Characteristics of a Good Business Coach?

The following characteristics are crucial traits in a Business Coach and can make the difference between the success or failure of your partnership with your Business Coach. A good Business Coach is:

- Professionally trained in coaching skills by an ICF-recognized Coaching School. The ICF is the International Coach Federation, which is a professional association for professional coaches. See the list of accredited schools at <http://www.coachfederation.com/>
- Experienced in identifying and solving the issues facing small businesses, particularly in the areas of small business in which you are seeking assistance; able to offer guidance on the resolution of the issues you are facing.
- Supportive of your business needs and aspirations, encouraging you to accept business-related challenges and to overcome the difficulties of operating a small business.
- Patient and willing to provide adequate time to interact with you to ensure the success of your business.
- Respected by other business professionals and business owners.
- People-oriented with a genuine interest in people and a desire to help others and knows how to effectively communicate and listen actively.
- Good motivator who inspires you to reach your fullest potential through encouragement, feedback and effective guidance.
- Effective teacher who helps to manage and guide your learning — that is, actively recognizes and uses teaching and learning opportunities to enhance your performance in operating your small business.

## What is a Business Coach?

- Self-confident and appreciative of your developing strengths and abilities; enjoys being involved in the growth and development of your business.

## What Is Effective Business Coaching?

Your Business Coach helps you learn and master specific business management concepts and techniques for overcoming performance difficulties.

An effective Business Coach does the following:

- Clarifies the business management skills you want to acquire.
- Reminds you why these business skills are important.
- Works with you to determine in detail how to approach a business task/activity.
- Observes your performance.
- Evaluates your performance by giving feedback.
- Ensures your growth through challenges, requests, and homework.



# What Is Most Important in a Coaching Relationship?

The key to an effective relationship between your Business Coach and you is commitment by both parties. Both must be willing to devote their time to establishing trust and nurturing a good rapport.

Other essential traits which enhance the relationship are:

1. **Respect** - established through the recognition of the coach's knowledge, skills and abilities and your desire to develop your capabilities and experiences.
2. **Trust** - built through communication, availability, predictability and loyalty between the coach and you.
3. **Partnership building** - established through the recognition that the coach and you are professional partners.

Natural barriers that the partnership can face include miscommunication or an uncertainty of each other's expectations. Measures which can be used to overcome these challenges are:

- Maintaining an open line of communication
  - Resolving obvious problems
  - Forecasting how decisions may affect business goals
  - Monitoring action plans
4. **Realistic expectations** - established as the coach encourages you to set and meet realistic, attainable business goals.
  5. **Time** - recognized as perhaps the most crucial of all elements in a coach/small business owner relationship. You both set aside a specific time to meet, initially as often as once or twice weekly; as the relationship develops less time may be needed.

## **What Are Some Signs of a Successful Coaching Relationship?**

- You, the small business owner, are open to change and transition, to exploring business possibilities, and to learning from others. Both you and your Business Coach are inspired by the relationship and gain a great deal of satisfaction from it.
- There is a commitment to understanding and growing, and to confronting and working toward solutions to business problems that may arise.
- You feel a bond or connection with your Business Coach, experiencing the relationship as one of value in which mutual interest, respect and straightforward communication are constants.
- Your Business Coach brings to the relationship his or her experience, skills and success. It is through the guidance and support of your coach that you acquire the in-depth knowledge and skills to operate a successful enterprise.
- You bring a desire to succeed to the relationship and have a commitment and willingness to learn from your Business Coach.

### What Are the Stages of Coaching?

Coaching consists of different stages that reflect your learning and growth needs as an owner of a small business. Each stage may require your Business Coach to assume different coaching roles. And each stage blends into the other. As described next, roles of the coach are not exclusive to any particular stage, but indicate when coaches are most likely to be performing that role.

The four main stages of coaching are:

- Prescriptive
- Collaborative
- Persuasive
- Confirmative

To determine at which stage to begin the relationship, you and your Business Coach must consider these issues:



What are your knowledge, skills and abilities relative to operating a small business?



What is your level of business experience?



What type and amount of business-related guidance and support do you need?

These questions are answered through ongoing sessions between you and your Business Coach, usually on a weekly basis.

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Coaching relationships may follow all four stages or only several of these stages. In fact, there is such a fine line between each stage that frequently it is difficult to tell when one stage ends and another begins. The Business Coach continuously re-evaluates the coaching relationship as it evolves to determine when it is time to alter coaching roles. The perceptive Business Coach is aware that the relationship will stagnate if the coaching style remains in a stage that the small business owner has outgrown.

### Prescriptive Stage

In the first stage of coaching, you usually have little if any experience in owning and operating a small business. During this stage the Business Coach directs and advises you, assuming the role of both teacher and motivator and aiding in building your self-confidence. The Business Coach devotes more time to you in this stage, focusing on providing detailed information to you on business-related issues and on business management concepts and techniques. Your coach shares many of his or her own experiences, trials, approaches to and solutions for operating a successful enterprise. Examples of how he or she and others have handled similar business issues and problems, and the consequences of these approaches, are shared with you.

### Persuasive Stage

The second stage requires the Business Coach to actually persuade you to find answers and seek challenges, rather than getting them from your coach. At this time, you usually have some experience but need firm direction. You may need to be prodded into taking risks. Your coach accomplishes this task by suggesting new strategies, questioning and challenging—pushing you into discoveries.

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### **Collaborative Stage**

In this stage, you have enough experience and ability to work with the coach to jointly solve your business-related problems and to participate in developing and implementing new business strategies. You actively work with your Business Coach in business planning strategies and in the day-to-day operation of your firm. During this stage of the relationship, your coach encourages you to work more independently. He or she allows you to handle each situation with little guidance from the coach. Should a problem arise which you are unable to handle, your Business Coach is there to assist by guiding you through the situation.

### **Confirmative Stage**

This is the stage in which you have acquired a lot of experience and have mastered the principles and techniques for operating a successful small business. In this capacity, your Business Coach works with you in defining future goals, objectives and the direction of your business. He or she also provides links to business and industry experts and resources. Your coach may continue performing many of the previous roles, but most important, the coach is a sounding board and empathetic listener. The Business Coach gives encouragement in a non-judgmental manner about business decisions and assumes his or her most significant role as a champion for you.

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### How Does Coaching Work?

The coaching partnership begins with a lengthy startup session in which the coach learns all about you and your business. Following that, you and your coach will meet on a regular basis, either in person or on the telephone, to assess the changes that have occurred, to set strategy, to clarify your current problems and goals, and to set your goals and objectives.

#### The Startup Session

Your Business Coach will schedule a startup coaching session in which the coach will ask you many detailed questions about your business and your life. You can expect this startup session to last at least two hours. Some Business Coaches will provide you with a list of questions, a contract, and other tools prior to the startup session. This session sets the tone and style for the coaching partnership. This is the session in which you set the goals and objectives for the coaching partnership.

#### Continuing Coaching Sessions

On a regular schedule, you and your coach meet to:

- Check in on any homework assignments or agreements you made in the previous session.
- Identify and clarify the goals and objectives for you and your business for the next coaching period.
- Create a plan for meeting your goals and objectives during the next coaching period.
- Check in on your work/life balance.

### Patricia Clason, RCC

For over twenty-five years, Patricia Clason has traveled across the continent doing speeches, workshops and media appearances as a professional speaker, trainer, writer, consultant and coach, giving over 3,000 presentations for corporations, associations, government agencies and non-profit organizations and taking businesses to new level of success. As the Director of the Center for Creative Learning which offers programs for personal and professional development at offices in Milwaukee and Madison, Detroit, and Indianapolis, Patricia has written many training programs and personal growth seminars and is a sought-after guest for radio and television. Currently she is the also the owner of Great Ideas! Speakers Bureau and Accountability Coaching Associates. As a consultant and business coach she works with large and small companies, as well as individuals, in the areas of start-up, marketing, and management skills and career building. Ask the Coach, Patricia's Q &A column on career and business coaching appears monthly in Employment Times and multiple internet career sites. Her articles also often printed in business/trade publications and websites. As a charter member of the National Association of Business Coaches, she serves on its Advisory Board and teaches the Registered Corporate Coach (for "external" coaches) program and the Registered Internal Coporate Coach (for business managers and executives). In addition to being a member of the International Coach Federation, Patricia is also a founding member of Coachville.com and part of Coachville's research and development team.

The focus of her work is on alternative methods of teaching and learning that produce high quality results. Her search for the best in the technology of human resource development has taken her as a student on many adventures through traditional and some not-so-traditional training programs.

## What is a Business Coach?

Patricia often receives letters and phone calls from the participants in her programs, thanking her for the insights and inspiration she has shared in these presentations. One of the reasons people are so enthused about working with her is that she shares personal and real stories - so people know that her practical wisdom comes from experience, not just books and good ideas.

To keep all this together, and still have time for her family and herself, Patricia must truly practice what she teaches in the areas of communication, time management, and motivation, as well as business marketing, management and ethics.

Patricia Clason, RCC  
Accountability Coaching Associates  
2437 N Booth St,  
Milwaukee, Wi 53212  
(414) 374-5433  
(800) 236-4692  
fx(414) 374-3997  
[www. lightly.com](http://www.lightly.com)  
[patricia@lightly.com](mailto:patricia@lightly.com)



## Testimonials for Patricia Clason

### ABOUT COACHING with Patricia

"I have accomplished more with Patricia's guidance than I ever could on my own. My dreams became her dreams and together we made them happen. I found that a storefront flower business was not the best use of my talents and passion. Business is more abundant than ever now that I am doing custom work that I truly enjoy. Thank you Patricia!! —Mary Angela Theys, Unique Plants and Floral

"As a coach, Patricia offers just the right blend of support, assertiveness and a wealth of good information on time management, organization, self-motivation and goal setting to help me stay on track. The coach concept is extremely effective and so is Patricia. I highly recommend her to anyone serious about being accountable for and actually achieving their goals and dreams." —Laurel Kashinn, Graphic Designer/Writer, Blue Rose Digital

"Patricia has helped me move rather easily through the fears and resistances I face in building my business that used to stop me dead in my tracks before. After our coach call, I am once again a locomotive at full steam!"—Jay Edgar, Edgar Resources, Coach

"Thank you for all you did for me. I feel much more confident about marketing. It has become a way of life." —Colleen Lantzy, Psychotherapist

"The business coaching our management team has received from Patricia Clason has been invaluable. She has helped us to focus on our goals, develop clear processes to achieving those goals and have fun while making it all happen. Patricia has guided through being a company to becoming a team! I would recommend her business coaching to anyone that wants to succeed"— Mark Krause, Krause Funeral Homes

## What is a Business Coach?

### ABOUT SPEECHES and TRAINING

I was highly impressed with Patricia's conversational and personal style. She offered a variety of activities, with meaningful examples that kept my attention throughout the session, including action activities to ensure that we would use the information after the class. We want her to keep coming back! —Dorothy Valentine, Education and Learning Specialist, Harley-Davidson Motor Company

We found the Ethical Type Indicator to be both introspective and informative - and we really enjoyed her interpretations and personalized answers to members' questions.—Beth Grzesiak, Program Director, Wisconsin Women Entrepreneurs

Using a variety of techniques including group discussion, writing, activities, and small group play the entire training day became a challenging growth experience for the participants. I recommend Patricia's services to anyone who wants to process productive change in their working environment.—Bert Stitt, President, Bert Stitt & Associates, Inc.

Patricia's training was relevant to employee's concerns, very helpful in offering practical solutions, and was presented in a "different light" from other training sessions they had attended in the past. Her flair for speaking in "down to earth" terms and her enthusiasm of the topics certainly added to the satisfaction of the group.—Al Lorenz, Director, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Thank you so much for conducting the fantastic Time Mastery workshop for my team. We all agreed it was a great success - interesting information, realistic tips and a much appreciated holistic approach. I was very pleased with the outcome. I will keep you in mind for future sessions and would recommend you to others with confidence.—Jenny Johnson, Agilent Technologies

## What is a Business Coach?

### Patricia's Coaching Offer

My coaching clients consist of small business (2 - 50 employees) owners and management teams, self-employed professionals and corporate managers and supervisors. The focus is not on troubled businesses or careers.

Instead, we work toward increasing success, changing cultures and careers or developing and expanding business skills.

Over twenty-five years of professional speaking and human resource development experience adds the dimension of consulting and training to the assets I bring to my work with you and/or your company.

While potential clients have thought that business coaching was not an expense they could add to their budget, once they experienced coaching and its great rewards many of them found that the Return on Investment made coaching invaluable and it has become a permanent part of their budget. You can choose the frequency and duration of your coaching process and therefore control the costs as well.

As someone who has been successfully self-employed for almost thirty years, I know that making a business profitable and creating longevity for that business requires focus and consistent, persistent and enjoyable work.

So I invite you to take your business success to the next level. A personal trainer is the ultimate in fitness - a personal coach is the ultimate in business. Give yourself what you need to succeed.

Contact me at (800) 236-4692 or via email "patricia@lightly.com" to obtain a free assessment of how coaching can help you get where you want to go!

Patricia Clason, RCC

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost, that is where they should be. Now put the foundation under them."—Henry David Thoreau

## What is a Business Coach?

### Booklets in This Series

Ask your Business Coach to provide you with these booklets as part of your Business Coaching program:

#### Small Business Audit Booklets

- *Is Your Business in Trouble, or Heading for Trouble?*
- *Do You Have the Right Customers for Your Business?*
- *Are You Managing Your Money?*
- *Is Your Pricing Strategy Working?*
- *Is Technology Working for Your Business?*
- *Are You Ready to Grow Your Business?*
- *Where Can I Find Financing?*

#### Small Business Information Booklets

- *Women in Small Business: Is Now the Time for You?*
- *How to Use Consumer Reports as an Employer*
- *So You Want to Start Your Own Business?*
- *What is a Business Coach?*
- *Is It Time to Add Products or Services?*
- *Got a Customer Retention Plan? Or Are You Paying Too Much for Each Customer?*
- *Why Do I Need a Mission Statement?*
- *What's the Fuss About Trademarks and Service Marks?*
- *So You Want to Sell Your Business?*