

Introduction

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Getting the Most from This Resource

Purpose

The purpose of this book is to help human resource professionals and their clients become more savvy consumers of coaching services. With the wide array of coaching services now available in the marketplace, HR professionals need information to allow them to sort through options, ask discerning questions, and understand what constitutes successful coaching engagements.

Audience

This book is written for human resource professionals who need to know what coaching is and how it can be helpful. Some of you are responsible for bringing coaching services to your clients.

Another group that may find this book interesting is the prospective clients themselves, since they need to know what they're getting into and how to use coaching to best effect. We are aware that the term "client" is used by some people to refer to the employer generally, or to the HR professional, or even to the boss. In certain ways, of course, they are clients as well as the person who is the focus of the coaching. These people certainly receive value from a successful coaching assignment. For the sake of clarity, and because we believe he or she should be the *primary* client, we use

that term to refer to *the individual who receives the coaching*. The “executive breakaway section” (found in the Appendix) contains information specifically tailored for prospective clients of coaching services.

The clients’ bosses also have a key role to play in successful coaching. They constitute a third potential audience. Although most chapters are written directly to the human resource professionals, many are relevant to all three groups.

For HR professionals: This book will serve as your guide as you decide if and when to use coaching to help a client. The book contains very practical chapters on selecting a coach, setting up the relationship, supporting the process, and evaluating the outcome.

For prospective coaching clients: Our goal is to give you what you need to know in advance so that you can receive the greatest value from this investment of time and energy. Coaching can be a wonderful experience, offering life-long value, or it can be a marginal, mechanical ritual. The discussions and cases in the book will make you a knowledgeable consumer of coaching services. This knowledge will allow you to better manage your own expectations and to co-manage the coaching relationship in a proactive, productive way.

For the client’s boss: As you know, helping your staff to solve performance problems and to develop their individual potential are central aspects of your responsibilities to them and to your employer. This book will help you with those tasks when you use professional coaches to help your employees. We identify the things only you can do to make coaching a successful experience for them.