

Coaching versus Mentoring

Category	Coaching	Mentoring
Definition	A <i>performance-focused</i> partnership with the coaching clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires the clients to maximize their personal and professional potential	A <i>development-focused</i> relationship with a domain relevant mentor (an experienced and trusted advisor) who passes on their skills and experiences to a mentee
Role and Relationship	Paid, trained, highly-specialized professionals that serve their clients	Either paid professionals (external) or volunteers (internal) who help mentees develop skills
Timeframe of Relationship	Relationship is more likely to be <i>short-term</i> (up to 6 months or 1 year) with a specific outcome in mind. Some coaching relationships can last longer, depending on goals achieved	Relationship tends to be more <i>long-term</i> , lasting a year or two, and even longer depending on the mentee's needs and growth
Agenda	The coaching agenda is co-created by the coach and the client in order to meet the specific needs of the client	The mentoring agenda is set by the mentee and the mentor supports support that agenda
Measurement	<i>Evaluative</i> – based on measuring behavioral or performance change through performance reviews or coaching tests	<i>Non-evaluative</i> – focuses on hands-on training of the mentee on how to effectively handle more fluid leadership situations
Process	Questioning and drawing out knowledge that resides with the coaching client; traditionally more structured, with regular sessions and measurable improvement	Sharing knowledge based on mentor's experience; generally, meetings tend to be less structured, more informal based on "as needed basis" required by the mentee
Timing	Regularly scheduled, ongoing interaction and accountability	Highly dependent on mentor availability
Focus	More <i>performance driven</i> , designed to change specific behaviors or improve specific skills to achieve performance goals	More <i>development driven</i> , looking not just at the mentee's current job responsibilities, but beyond, and taking a more holistic approach to career development
Expertise	Coaches are hired for their expertise in a given area, one in which the client desires improvement (e.g., leadership, interpersonal communications, emotional intelligence)	Mentors have more experience and expertise in specific areas than the mentee; the mentee learns from and is inspired by the mentor's experience
Questioning	The coach asks thought-provoking questions, which helps the coaching client make important decisions, recognize behavioral changes and take action	The mentee is more likely to ask more questions, tapping into the mentor's expertise or experience
Outcome	Outcome is specific and measurable, showing signs of improvement or positive change in the desired area(s)	Outcome can change over time; there is less interest in specific, measurable results or changed behaviors and more interest in the mentee's overall development



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Training	Coaches generally receive special training to guide people in any field toward achieving their goals	Mentors generally do not have formal training in mentorship; their main focus is passing on specific skills and expertise to their mentees so that they can be more successful
Solution Mindset	Coaches are trained to help the clients find their own solutions rather than offering their own advice or opinions	Mentors are also focused on helping their mentees find their own solutions, but become more direct when needed
Assessment Tools	Coaches often use formal assessments like a 360-degree feedback review	Mentors often use informal formal assessments for understanding the goals of their mentees
Networking Benefit	The coaches are unlikely to share their personal contacts (maintain strictly professional relationships)	The mentors may open their network for development and/or advancement opportunities
Employer Focus	Focuses on developing skills of the coaching client for the current role and future roles	Focuses more on long-term growth, regardless of current position or organization
Supporting Resources	Some coaches offer cohort-level analytics and other helpful resources (e.g., best practices in leadership)	Up to the mentor, depending on the mentee's development needs

When to use coaching:

- Help leaders or professional who are not meeting expectations/goals
- Improve leadership behavior or sharpen specific leadership competencies in a short period of time
- Help leaders in coping with large scale change, new systems, or complex and dynamic challenges
- Train leaders and create a more robust organizational culture

When to use mentoring:

- Inspire new leaders to adjust well to their new settings, achieve better work-life balance, and exhibit more supportive leadership
- Improve employee engagement, performance, commitment, morale, trust, and respect
- Enhance employees' leadership development
- Transfer knowledge from experienced to less experienced leaders