

## Definitions: What is coaching?

John Whitmore, a pre-eminent thinker in leadership and organisational change, who works globally with leading multinational corporations to establish coaching management culture, defines coaching: *“At its broadest level, coaching can be defined as unlocking a person’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.”* (Whitmore 2002)

In its **Guide to Coaching**, the **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development** has this to say: Although there is a lack of agreement about precise definitions, there are some core characteristics of coaching activities that are generally agreed on by most coaching professionals:

- It consists of one-to-one developmental discussions.
- It provides people with feedback on both their strengths and weaknesses.
- It is aimed at specific issues/areas.  
It is a relatively short-term activity, except in executive coaching, which tends to have a longer timeframe.
- It is essentially a non-directive form of development.
- It focuses on improving performance and developing/enhancing an individual’s skills.
- It is used to address a wide range of issues.
- Coaching activities have both organisational and individual goals.
- It assumes that the individual is psychologically healthy and does not require a clinical intervention.
- It works on the premise that clients are self-aware, or can achieve self-awareness.
- It is time-bounded.
- It is a skilled activity.
- Personal issues may be discussed but the emphasis is on performance at work.

From the CIPD’s perspective, coaching is developing a person’s skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual’s private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills, competencies and goals.

## Definitions: What is team coaching?

Team coaching is for boards or senior teams who have, in parallel, to run the business they are in and also to focus on transforming the business and its wider system. Its focus is on the issues that must be done collectively and includes helping teams to:

- Clarify its purpose, mission, vision, values and goals
- Define ways of working, roles and expectations
- Understand and develop their approach to collectively engaging the commitment and participation of all major stakeholder groups in change that delivers the vision
- Expand their collective capacity to manage systemic conflict

## What is the difference between mentoring and coaching?

Coaching is different from mentoring. The CIPD defines the differences in the table below:

<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Coaching</b>
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long period of time	Relationship generally has a set duration
Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some advice, guidance or support	Generally more structured in nature and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis
More long term and takes a broader view of the person	Short term (sometimes time-bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues
Mentor is usually more experienced and qualified than the 'mentee'. Often a senior person in the organisation who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities	Coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused
Focus is on career and personal development	Focus is generally on development/issues at work
Agenda is set by the mentee, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles	The agenda is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals
Mentoring revolves more around developing the mentee professionally	Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues

### **Benefits of coaching**

NHS Institute's<sup>1</sup> analysis of reported benefits from coaching:

<b>Reasons organisations engage executive coaching</b>	<b>Reported benefits for individuals accessing executive coaching</b>	<b>Overall benefits for organisations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ accelerated development</li> <li>▪ implementation of change</li> <li>▪ critical friend/sounding board</li> <li>▪ underpin wider development programmes and</li> <li>▪ as a means of retaining and rewarding key staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ continuous one-on-one attention</li> <li>▪ expanded thinking through dialogue with a curious outsider</li> <li>▪ self-awareness including blind spots</li> <li>▪ personal accountability for development and</li> <li>▪ just-in-time learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ team member satisfaction</li> <li>▪ increased staff retention</li> <li>▪ increased productivity</li> <li>▪ increased quality of work</li> <li>▪ accelerated promotions</li> <li>▪ increased coachee satisfaction and</li> <li>▪ increased diversity.</li> </ul>

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<sup>1</sup> The NHS Institute supports the NHS to transform healthcare for patients and the public by rapidly developing and spreading new ways of working, new technology and world-class leadership.