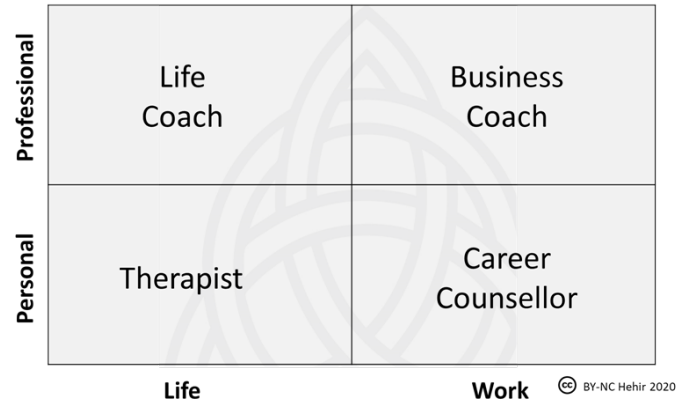




Adult - Growth Grid



Business Coach *by Patrick Hehir*

7 Attributes of a Business Coach

Most significant business improvement initiatives involve leveraging external professional support. In recent years a new role of Business Coach has emerged. The book *Trillion Dollar Coach*, written by Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google along with two other Google Exec's explains the role well. The book is a tribute to their coach Bill Campbell. This is my take on the role. Figure 1.0 helps explain how a business coach is different than other types of coaches or support professionals that adults use. Listed below are key characteristics of great Business Coaches.

Great Business Coaches are people who:

1. **Work on the Business:** The business coach usually contracts with senior leadership. Much of the work involves improving the **leadership's effectiveness**. All efforts are ultimately about how the leader can better enable the business to operate better to the benefit of all the stakeholders.
2. **Work with the Execs AND their teams:** CEO's or Snr Executives are only as good as the people and teams that they lead. Exec power and potential do NOT come from the position or the role. It comes from empowered motivated people working together on the right stuff. **Misalignment, frustration, bureaucracy and politics** exist regularly and can be insidious. Business coaches tackle these issues head on. They look at the whole organizational and business system. They identify obstacles to high performing teams doing their best work, and help teams make meaningful progress.
3. **Have real life business experience:** Effective Business Coaches have business experience at Exec levels. Their stories and coaching sessions come from a **credible base of personal professional experience**. They leverage the learnings and mistakes that they themselves and others have made. The best also tend to be industry agnostic. They know that there are a handful of core business fundamentals that apply to ALL businesses.
4. **Are results and performance driven:** Great coaches keep their eye on the prize. That prize is **business performance and results**. They seek a path to maximizing the potential of the company. They are intuitive about what blocks progress and growth. They help develop **pragmatic action plans**. Their highest-level strategic goal/metric is almost always **company valuation increase**.
5. **Strive to improve differentiation:** Great coaches know that enduring great companies must continue to innovate and stay differentiated in their market. The business coach tends to have the **wisdom and street smarts** that help Exec's with the processes to decide where to make the best bets. They also help build organizational resilience and develop the leader's **capacity to change and adapt**.
6. **Listen, think and challenge:** Coaches are **not mentors and are rarely passive**. They listen and become thinking partners with execs. They have and follow a coaching process. They can sit in a non-judgmental space seeing everything through the lens of others. They always work to **challenge/stretch the leader's thinking**. They regularly push execs beyond their sometimes-limiting beliefs. They speak truth to power and hold the CEO accountable, when others inside the system cannot.
7. **Have impeccable integrity and build trust fast:** The Business coach's effectiveness is a function of the trust that he/she builds with the people. To do that they need to be people of impeccable integrity. They nearly always have strong influence and are in **possession of sensitive information** which could cause harm to others. They are **respectful, responsible and fair** to all stakeholders as they help architect paths forward that benefit the team and the business as a whole.

