



Executive Coaching vs. Business Coaching

Understanding the difference - and choosing the right support for your next level of leadership or business growth

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The right coach should not simply tell you what to do. Great coaching creates the space, structure, accountability, and perspective to help you make stronger decisions - and then turn those decisions into action.

Two Types of Coaching - Two Different Starting Points

Executive coaching and business coaching are often used interchangeably, but they are not exactly the same. Both can help leaders gain clarity, strengthen decision-making, overcome obstacles, and move forward with greater confidence. The difference is usually the primary focus.

Executive coaching focuses first on the leader. Business coaching focuses first on the business. In practice, the two often overlap because a business cannot outgrow the leadership, decisions, systems, and behaviors guiding it.

What Is Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is designed for CEOs, executives, senior leaders, business owners, emerging executives, and other professionals whose leadership decisions have a significant impact on people and organizational outcomes. The work is highly individualized and often centers on how a leader communicates, influences, delegates, makes decisions, handles pressure, navigates conflict, builds trust, and shows up in high-stakes situations.

Executive coaching may address executive presence, leadership confidence, difficult conversations, communication style, team performance, accountability, strategic thinking, time and priority management,

career transitions, board relationships, organizational change, and the move from being a strong individual contributor to becoming a leader who develops other people.

A strong executive coach also provides something leaders do not always have internally: a confidential outside perspective. Senior leaders can be surrounded by talented people and still have very few places where they can openly test an idea, admit uncertainty, challenge their own assumptions, or work through a difficult decision without organizational politics entering the conversation.

What Is Business Coaching?

Business coaching is generally more focused on the organization itself - where the business is going, what is preventing growth, and what needs to change to reach the next stage. It can be especially valuable for founders, entrepreneurs, small and mid-sized business owners, and leaders responsible for growing a division or organization.

Business coaching can include strategy, revenue goals, service positioning, pricing, operational structure, accountability, leadership infrastructure, hiring, delegation, client development, business development, scaling, process improvement, and translating a big vision into an executable plan.

The goal is not to hand a business owner a generic formula. It is to help the leader examine what is happening in the business, identify the real bottlenecks, determine priorities, and build an action plan that makes sense for that organization's goals, resources, market, and stage of growth.

Executive Coaching vs. Business Coaching: At a Glance

Executive Coaching	Business Coaching
Primary focus: The leader	Primary focus: The business
Leadership style and executive presence	Growth strategy and business direction
Communication, influence and confidence	Revenue, positioning and opportunities
Team leadership and accountability	Systems, structure and scalability
Conflict and difficult conversations	Operations and organizational priorities
Decision-making under pressure	Execution and measurable action plans
Career and leadership transitions	Founder or owner decision support

Where the Two Come Together

For many leaders, the most valuable coaching relationship does not fit neatly into one category. A CEO may begin a session wanting to discuss a business growth problem and discover that delegation is the real obstacle. A founder may think the company needs a new strategy when the deeper issue is an inability to hold the leadership team accountable. An executive may want to strengthen their presence, only to realize that unclear organizational priorities are making it difficult to lead confidently.

That is why effective coaching needs to be responsive. The conversation should be able to move between the leader and the business while staying focused on meaningful outcomes.

Which Type of Coaching Is Right for You?

Executive coaching may be the better fit if your biggest questions involve how you lead: your confidence, communication, influence, team relationships, decision-making, leadership effectiveness, or next career step.

Business coaching may be the better fit if your biggest questions involve where the organization is going: growth, strategy, operations, revenue, scaling, priorities, structure, or turning ideas into a practical plan.

You may need both if the challenges facing your business are directly connected to how you are leading it. For founders, CEOs, and senior executives, that overlap is common.

The Still Standing in Heels Approach

At Still Standing in Heels Consulting, coaching is built around the individual or organization in front of us - not a one-size-fits-all script. We work with leaders to understand where they are today, what they are trying to accomplish, what is getting in the way, and what needs to happen next.

Our coaching can support executives navigating complex leadership challenges, professionals preparing for greater responsibility, and business owners who need an outside perspective as they grow. Sessions are

designed to be practical and action-oriented while still creating room for the candid conversations leaders often need most.

Sometimes you need someone to challenge your strategy. Sometimes you need someone to challenge your thinking. And sometimes you need someone who can help you recognize that the problem you walked in with is not actually the problem that needs to be solved.

Ready for your next level?

Whether you are developing yourself as a leader or building the next stage of your business, the right coaching relationship can help you move forward with greater clarity, confidence, and intention.

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