



The best time for coaching? When you're too busy for coaching

Why times of classic change are when you can benefit most from business coaching.

Recently we've all experienced a massive shift in the way we live and work. But the truth is, while hopefully not as dramatic as the Covid-19 crisis, all through our lives we will experience unpredictable and uncertain times – from new roles to new companies or even a new career.

It's the quality of our response in these times that defines our individual success. It was Darwin who said it's not the strongest or the most intelligent who survive, but the most adaptable. Yet it's often in these periods of change when people feel least able to take time out with a business coach to reflect and adjust.

So what are the classic moments of change we're all likely to face at one time or another? And how can coaching help with the unique pressures and demands these present?

'I'm now leading a team'

A classic moment of change. One minute you're part of a team, the next minute you're on the outside, leading one. Whether you're tasked with running a new team or establishing yourself as the leader amongst former peers, it can present its own very unique challenges. The changes can often be quite personal and a coach is an invaluable sounding board to manage that transition successfully.

One of the biggest benefits a coach can bring in times like these is structure. At Berkeley we use coaching tools and techniques to help leaders navigate the intricacies of a new role. They often give a clear process for working things through to pragmatic, achievable actions, avoiding knee-jerk reactions or paralysis by uncertainty.

A business coach allows you to explore key issues and concerns, such as how to reshape working relationships when a teammate becomes a direct report, ways to boost productivity, and how to balance your personal and professional life when you're focused on proving yourself. By spending time looking at things on a macro and micro level, it lays the building blocks for future success.



“Coaching helped me establish a completely different type of relationship with my boss and with my peers as I moved from the line into a full-time project role. It also helped me deal with a lot of uncertainty and anxiety as the programme took shape, and to navigate some difficult but critical early decision taking.”

Senior Commercial Manager



‘I’m part of a new leadership team’

Just because a group of people are individually successful, it doesn’t mean they’re going to naturally work well as a team. If you’ve recently established or joined a leadership team, there can be a number of challenges and obstacles to address.

A business coach is a useful ally in the forming, storming, norming and performing of a team. They can help to shape how you want to work together and address any sticking points straight away.

We were recently approached by a CEO who felt her executive management team weren’t performing as she hoped and needed them to. As a result, she was overworked and constantly diving too deep into the detail. Coaching was used to explore the root causes behind the underperformance of her team. We unpacked this into a combination of factors that included her personal style and preferences, the capability of her key executives, and levels of trust across the team. The benefits of taking time out to work through these issues with a coach helped the entire team and contributed to the overall success of the business.

“Renewed clarity enabled me to tackle each factor in turn, quickly, and to great effect. I became a better CEO.”

CEO

‘I’m moving to a new company’

Moving to a new company inevitably comes with all sorts of challenges and expectations. How do you develop relationships with key stakeholders? Or make a strong, positive impression in those crucial first few months?

One of the myths surrounding business coaching is that it’s for times when you’re struggling – either with personal performance or when you’re wrestling with a difficult decision. As a result, many people are not recognising the benefit of a coach when they need to make a statement or strong impression in a new place.

From our own experience, many of the most successful CEOs see a big career change as an opportunity to invest in coaching. They use it as a positive part of their everyday support network to develop and fine-tune key areas such as leadership skills or stakeholder engagement. In fact, the further you go, the more accepted it is to have a business coach on speed dial.



It’s a missed opportunity for leaders at all levels. Moving to a new company is an ideal time to take a step back and think, ‘how do I get this right?’ And a coach can be an effective – and objective – person with whom to have these conversations. Without any ties or alliances, they can be an independent sounding board for your insights and ideas.

We recently helped a new CEO through their first three months. Their specific challenges: how to create a strategic ‘first 100-day plan,’ how to prep for initial board meetings, and how to deal with one particularly difficult team member.

For one hour a week, we provided a neutral sounding board for each of these issues. The relationship quickly became a useful part of the rhythm of preparing for board meetings, while supporting the development of a solid leadership team and firming up plans for the year ahead.

“The coaching sessions provided me with a confidential, safe way of exploring things I couldn’t discuss with anyone else – in my leadership team, or on my board. It’s been really useful in helping to think through what each of my stakeholders will be looking for. I’m now confident in my new post and have established a solid leadership team with firm plans for the year ahead.”

CEO



'I'm at a career crossroads'

Lots of us will find ourselves at a career crossroads at least once in our lives. When looking to change jobs it's important to think about both the medium and longer term perspective, as well as answering the short-term 'where to next?'

The value of a coach is that they can give you a framework for those horizons, as well as providing an independent perspective. We often work with individuals who are considering a change in career, and it's important to understand if that really is the best option to address the questions they are facing. Sometimes we find the issue is more to do with the specific situation they are in, or a mis-alignment between their personal goals and those of the company they work for.

Coaching helps you develop a well thought through and considered plan of action – in confidence – before you announce your intentions to the outside world. It's an opportunity to take some time out to think strategically, so you can be really clear on your career direction and what you're trying to achieve.

"As a leader, it is important to have time to reflect, work through areas of personal development or difficult choices you have to make. Coaching helped me to both improve personally deliver greater business success."
Senior leader, global FMCG

Pause, process, prioritise

In the business world, change is the only constant. Throughout our careers we will experience shifts in the way we work, the roles we are doing, and even the people and organisations we work with. At these pivotal moments, a business coach can help you establish what that change means. Giving you the opportunity to pause, process and prioritise.

Learn more about how Berkeley's professional coaching approach can help you or your organisation through times of change [here](#). Alternatively contact **Richard Marsden, Partner** to discuss your requirements in more detail.



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