



## When & How to Hire an Executive Coach

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December is an excellent time to envision what you want for 2011. It's a time to reflect on this past year. What goals became a reality? What stood in the way of unaccomplished goals? This data is fresh in your mind.

If you are serious about accomplishing more in 2011 than in 2010, consider hiring an executive coach, aka, confidant, sounding board, motivator, strategic advisor, muse.

Almost daily I am asked the following two poignant questions:

**When do I know it's my time to hire an executive coach?  
How do I know which one is right for me?**

Anyone who has worked with a qualified coach can tell you that it's a rare relationship. Your coach is there for you no matter what, supporting and stretching you toward your goals. It's a safe environment wherein feel free to explore ideas with no fear of judgment or backlash.

The above two questions of 'when and how' are integral to the success of your coaching experience.

**When to hire a coach:** We all have a vision of whom and what we want to be. The challenge is that this vision is often blurred.

Here's a sampling of times when working with a coach will benefit you:

- **You have a new set of goals.** As in the beginning of a New Year
- **You feel the 'lonely at the top' syndrome.** There are people all around you willing to say 'yes'. Yet what you need is a confidant with whom to brainstorm, vent your frustrations and provide valuable feedback.
- **You're ready to make a major change.** You've learned from experience that it's tough to accomplish this on your own. You need support and accountability.
- **You've been promoted.** You've worked hard for this new position and now want to master it, but fear you don't have the complete set of expertise to do so.
- **You're change was not your idea.** This divorce, demotion or firing was not of your doing. You're lost, perhaps angry. During this period your clear focus on *who and what you want to become* moving forward is vital to your success.

**How do you know which coach to hire:** Hiring an executive coach is no different from hiring any other professional. Your careful choice will make all the difference in what you are able to accomplish. Be very careful in your selection process.

Look for:

- **Credentials:** as with a Dr. or attorney, look for credentials. Unlike these two professions, coaching is not regulated. Credentials help you separate truly qualified coaches from the rest.

- **Experience & track record:** What sort of experience does this executive coach have in relation to your needs? If you are a CEO ask if this 'coach' has worked with other CEO's or C-level clients? What has his or her success rate been?
- **References:** LinkedIn is a great way to read up on your prospective coach. Ask to speak with references and be armed with questions aimed at your needs.
- **Chemistry test:** Make sure you and your prospective coach have chemistry, are able to communicate clearly and that you feel heard and your goals understood.

**Dangerous example of hiring a coach without these guidelines:** Early in my coaching career, a yoga instructor hired me to help with a crisis. Two months into our work he proudly announced that he was an 'executive coach'! I was shocked.

He then took out an impressive full color advertisement in his local newspaper promoting himself as such with no education, expertise or experience. How were prospective clients to know his lack of qualifications unless they looked into his credentials, experience and references?

Clients often tell me that their coaching is among their top '10' professional investments. If you intend to make big changes, or even small ones in 2011 I urge you to consider the support, guidance and accountability that a proven executive coach can provide.

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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