

HOW TO ASK

FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING

Asking for executive coaching or professional development for yourself can be an uncomfortable conversation. Here are some tips on how to prepare for making the ask:

- **Reference Your Development Plan/Discussion:** Approach your manager to “revisit the professional goals” that you’ve likely discussed in your annual review. Suggest that the company invest in these goals by engaging an executive coach.
- **Be Proactive and Forward-Thinking:** Demonstrate that you are a strategic thinker by discussing what is on the horizon for the business and suggest that your continued professional development will be an asset. Some key phrases might be:
 - ✓ *As we enter into a significant time of leadership change...*
 - ✓ *As I take on this new leadership position...*
 - ✓ *I’d like to be sure that I am aware of any ‘blind spots’ which might impact my success. I know that engaging a coach will ensure a smooth assimilation and can be of great benefit to the newly formed team.*
- **Cite Specific Skills:** Mention skills that will be advantageous to you professionally and also to your organization: *I would like to focus on ramping up some critical skills, such as delivering feedback, conflict resolution, building a high-performing team, etc.*
- **Remind Your Manager of Positive Successes:** More than likely, your company has invested in coaching for senior executives or other employees and seen the benefits: *I have seen the positive impact to other leaders who have worked with an executive coach; it has lifted them to another level. I’m interested in engaging in a similar process.*
- **Have a Business Case:** Address what an investment in your professional coaching can bring to the company and your team: *I am confident that working with a coach will improve my effectiveness as a leader. It will also demonstrate to my team the organization’s commitment to our professional development and investment in talent.*
- **Be Confident:** Practice your approach so you can speak confidently: *I am interested in, and would LIKE the opportunity...etc.* Also take note of your body language (approach the conversation with poise, a relaxed and confident posture and energy) and remind yourself of the incredible value you bring to the business/organization.
- **Acknowledge the Bottom Line:** Coaching is an investment. There may be other development opportunities that you can temporarily put aside to make the investment in coaching now: *Instead of going to the XYZ conference this year in Minneapolis, I’d like to earmark those funds to engage a coach.*
- **Do Your Research:** There are demonstrated benefits of using an external coach who has strong business acumen and will provide you with a personal and corporate perspective. Research a renowned coach in your area and bring your recommendation to the table.

Remember to begin the meeting by stating your commitment to your organization and affirm how much you enjoy your work there. And at the conclusion of “the ask”, reiterate how committed you are and your desire to become a more effective contributor as you grow in your leadership.