

15 Trends That Will Redefine Executive Coaching In the Next Decade

Having an executive coach to help your professional career move forward makes perfect sense in today's marketplace. Having someone who will push you and hold you accountable can make you strive for success and never become complacent.

However, as you look towards the future, the world of executive coaching may take on a new shape. There may be more automation or a stronger focus on mental status or the psychology aspect of your career. As the executive coaching industry continues to grow, so does the number of ways in which this niche is going to change in the not-so-distant future.

Below, 15 members of Forbes Coaches Council share the various ways they expect executive coaching to evolve in the next five to 10 years and the main trends to keep an eye out for in the industry.

1. Rise of The Automated Coach

They say, in real estate, success is based on location, location, location. Well, in coaching, we will be saying technology, technology, technology. Coaches will differentiate themselves in the future by connecting through platforms and being able to meet almost anywhere and anytime regardless of their physical location. Coaches will engage clients through micro-learning sessions, gamification and will add value by providing clients access to content beyond their counsel. - Brad Federman, F&H Solutions Group

2. Intersection of Industry Skills And Coaching Methodology

At least in business and executive coaching, I believe we will see more coaches who have strong industry and line experience. As leaders face increasing pressure to deliver results in the short term and create exciting futures for the long term, all while developing leaders, they themselves will require coaches and advisers who can help them think deeply through this range of complex issues. - Rose Cartolari, Rose Cartolari Consulting

3. Increasing Regulation Will Define Different Coaching Types

The coaching industry is currently non-regulated, which means anyone can call themselves a coach. Increasing regulation will likely begin to define various types of coaching. From career coaching to life coaching to executive coaching, required standardized training and credentials will likely become the norm. - Barbara OMalley, Exec Advance LLC

4. Coaching Will Overtake Consulting

It might take the full 10 years, but coaching will begin to rise in popularity over consulting. Aging demographics will demand a vast transfer of institutional, industry and professional wisdom. Consulting augments gaps in knowledge, but coaching emphasizes the transfer of wisdom. Smart young leaders will seek to learn, as talent becomes harder to "rent." - Jim Vaselopulos, Rafti Advisors, Inc.

5. Ability To Demonstrate Measurable Results

What will set successful executive coaches apart from others in the coming years is their ability to demonstrate measurable results. Savvy clients will only choose executive coaching organizations that can clearly demonstrate how they helped their coachees move the needle. Pre- and post-360 interviews, structured feedback and other tools will be used to quantify and qualify results. - Loren Margolis, Training & Leadership Success LLC

6. Greater Acceptance by Executives

It's not uncommon for industries to spring up and have a long acceptance period for the public. Executive coaching is one of those arenas where frequently, only those met with challenges have embraced its value. In the next five to 10 years we will see coaching become a necessary focus among executives respecting the ROI and wishing to propel themselves further faster. - Laura DeCarlo, Career Directors International

7. Experience Coaching Will Gain Prominence

Experience is the best teacher. In the future, executive coaching will move from explaining to experiencing. People will desire to learn in a format that is memorable and fun. Breakthrough thinking and new information will be driven by executive individualization based on what experience the executive needs in order to achieve new patterns of action. - Ken Gosnell, CEO Experience

8. Increased Focus on Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is the scientific study of what's right with people, of what makes people thrive and flourish. In the coming years, executive coaches will be using the scientific principles of positive psychology to help their clients create more positive, more productive, and more profitable workplaces, and also apply these principles to their own lives. - Laura Belsten, CEO PARTNERSHIP

9. Laser-Sharp Focus on Interpersonal Skills

A lot has been written about how the future of work will focus on artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, etc. Some describe a future where most of the work still done by human beings will require strong interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. Since organizations will be placing a premium on those skills, it's very likely that executive coaching will be in high demand and focus even more on those types of skills than today. - Kathy Bernhard, KFB Leadership Solutions

10. Content over Process

Asking insightful questions to help people achieve their goals will always be central to good coaching. However, it is insufficient. We will see more operators with deep industry or leadership experience serve as coaches. The demand for "been there, seen that, done that" coaches will continue to rise, as they are better positioned to help leaders look around the corners. - Shoma Chatterjee, ghSMART

11. Relationships, Results, and Rewards

Clients will seek out coaches with practical wisdom they can quickly weaponize against their most pressing concerns. Time frames for success and expected gains will be tighter. The demand for pithy insights and proven strategies anchored by relationships, results, and rewards will increase. A coach's ability to build mutually accountable relationships quickly will be paramount to their success. - Hayward Suggs, Commonquest Consulting

12. Working with a Coach Will Be Norm

Because of shows like "Billions," the need and desire for coaching has expanded tremendously. The idea that someone can help you build muscles in the gym is now relating to someone coaching a C-suite executive through pivotal decisions while managing stress. Now that is huge progress. Who wouldn't want less stress and more productivity in their lives? - Neeta Bhushan, Global GRIT Institute

13. Digitalization of Coaching

As our culture changes, so will the delivery methods of coaches to clientele. The days of in-person coaching are dwindling. Webinars, online training, and digital coaching delivery methods for clients will become the norm. Professionals will want coaching that is easily accessible and fits into their schedule. Be prepared to diversify in order to remain valuable and relevant. - Erin Urban, UPPSolutions, LLC

14. Specialization Will Take Over

I believe coaches will be hired for more niche work as the coaching industry becomes more integrated into corporate and professional life. Saying you're an "executive coach" will likely lead to questions like, "What specialty?" much more than they do now. - Jared Lafitte, Lafitte Coaching

15. Executive Coaching Not Just For the Elite

Due to the increase in certified coaches, the improved ROI that results from pairing coaching with leadership training, and the normalization of coaching rates due to a supply and demand shift in the market, coaching will become more commonly used in employee and leadership development at all levels. Coaching will no longer be viewed as something that is only available at the executive level. - Amy Douglas, Spark Coaching, LLC

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Forbes, 2018