



The Big Blue Box Ltd

Preparing for your first coaching session

Here are some ideas and actions to consider before we meet for your first coaching session, and thereafter.

1. It's all about you

We believe that the primary role of coaching is to focus on you the coachee and your needs!

Your coaching sessions are about, and for, you. Coaching is an investment in you, by you and your organisation, and everyone wants it to succeed.

Consider what you would like to get out of the coaching and identify any particular areas into which you would like to focus. Perhaps your colleagues or leaders may be able to advise you. We will discuss and agree together what are the key issues and achievable outcomes – our discussions may offer new interpretations!

2. What we aim to help you with

Your coaching project is a three-way **contract**, between you - the coachee, your organisation (for example: the project's sponsors, HR, your manager etc) and the coach.

It is not unusual that the coach will have been given a broad **coaching project briefing** by the 'project's sponsor'. This will help define the project's aims and objectives It will probably include ideas from your line manager who may also be the organisation's project sponsor, from HR processes and from you. This may or may not be the same as your own set of expectations.

3. How we work with you

It is our view that **the coachee is the client**, even though the organisation might be investing in you and paying any coaching fees.

We will undertake **our diagnostic process** with you and together we will decide and act upon your coaching priorities.

The coaching is **confidential**. We don't report the details back to the organisation. There are of course some circumstances where ethics, responsibility, legality etc may mean that we would have to consider our position on this, but we would indicate that as appropriate.

Both you and the coach must feel willing to engage in the coaching process together. Its success will depend significantly on 'willingness to engage' in the process. We have a **2-way 'Chemistry Test'** in the first coaching session. We would like you to be very clear that if you are uncertain about entering into the process, for whatever reason, then you are free to 'walk away' with no obligation.

Similarly, if for any reason the coach feels uncertain then the coach too can 'walk away'.

Coaching project sponsors understand that this is the way that coaching works.

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4. Where to meet

The session's **location** can be important. Some people may feel uncomfortable having a deep conversation in a 'glass office' or public space. A quiet meeting room is usual. For some, a place 'off site', away from the office works better. Assess the balance of personal safety, privacy of the conversation, ambient noise, access to refreshment – water etc and other comfort considerations.

Coaching can be equally as effective on either **video or face-to-face**. Indeed, some international projects are entirely 'virtual'. However, these choices will be explored, and a preference identified.

5. How we structure our coaching

Initially, we typically undertake a **series of four sessions**, where each session is of **indeterminate duration** - as long or short as it needs to be. This limited series sets up an 'imperative' and results focus and avoids procrastination!

Our indeterminate duration coaching **sessions are not timed**. We don't 'start the clock' and run to a fixed duration. Each session is as long – or as brief – as it needs to be. Typically, a session early in the series may be longer than later sessions. This can however be varied according to your circumstances and the flow of the sessions.

The series of coaching sessions will be planned according to your needs, but we may initially want to **consider 3 to 4-week intervals** between each session. This ensures that the coaching doesn't interrupt your work too much, but keeps it in your mind and focus, yet allows time for reflection, practice, challenge and change.

A steady **pace** or coaching session frequency helps to support the development and change process. Towards the end of the first session, we will agree to arrange the dates for future sessions, so having access to a diary would be useful.

6. Preparing for the coaching session

Before each session consider making time to prepare.

The coaching sessions are a 'short, sharp' intervention and focused upon delivering results for you – quickly. Whilst coaching is essentially a conversation, it can, nevertheless, be quite tough, challenging and emotional. You will need to be prepared for it. It would also be prudent to allow some 'clear diary space' for reflection and note taking after the session.

This also gives us the flexibility to run the session to a natural conclusion, to allow for eventualities, and for you as the coachee to 'normalise' afterwards. The sessions can be very tiring and are sometimes emotional!

Consequently, you should allocate sufficient space and time for each session in your diary.

Part of the early activity in the process will probably involve looking back through your **timeline** to understand your 'story to date'. Having a CV to hand may be helpful. Perhaps you have some current development plans, psychometrics or other documentation that you might consider making available.

It may be useful for the coach to understand the organisation structure and your (the coachee's) role within it, so consider bringing some materials that would provide this information, perhaps a job description, an organisation chart etc.

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You should **consider making notes**. Indeed, it may be worthwhile having a separate place where you can maintain these notes – a separate notebook or place in a daybook or journal is worth considering. Ideas will come to you in the sessions, and it is often helpful to capture your thoughts, reflections, actions and reactions between the sessions.

There may be **homework** to complete between the sessions.

Consider consulting with trusted and confidential colleagues and peers. Talking through the coaching conversation's content and insights with your '**stakeholders**'; – especially life partners and independent, honest friends can be very helpful and supportive. Bring these discussions into the session.

If appropriate and by agreement, towards **the conclusion** of our coaching project series we may jointly consider inviting your line manager and /or project sponsor to join our conversation. This can be a powerful moment of sharing, updating, influencing and **re-contracting** between the project sponsor/line manager and coachee.

7. Evaluation of the investment

Evaluation of the coaching investment is essential for all participants in the contract. During the series, we will invite you to begin completing an **evaluation questionnaire**. This will record your insights, progress, actions and outcomes and is also a benchmark for your future reference.

We will ask you for comments and feedback regularly during the coaching project, checking in with you on your feelings, reflections, actions and outcomes.

As mentioned above, we may jointly consider inviting your project sponsor or line manager into the conversation, to review progress and contribute to the evaluation of the investment.

We will also seek to check in with you at some point in the near future, after the conclusion of the coaching series, to re-assess the sustained outcomes and areas of impact.

Please visit our website for more information about [Our Coaching Process](#).