



Gateway Guide Questions to Ask a Career Coach

Gateway Career Management is a team of career coaches and development specialists based in the South East.



GATEWAY GUIDE

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE CHOOSING A CAREER COACH

Deciding on the choice of your career coach is very personal and individual. Getting it right needs time and care.

Often it is the immediate gut feeling or positive vibe you have arising from that very first encounter or meeting. Remember that you are in control and take time to be as certain as you can that the fit is right and that the personal chemistry will work. Also that they understand your situation and can really help you. Your career is at stake and should not be messed with!

Here are some questions that you might ask to help ensure that you get it right first time.

1. What previous experience do you have of working with people with my background and from my sector?

It is always useful to know how much experience your career coach has of your sector and it is especially good if they have also worked in it themselves. Be prepared for many career coaches to have quite varied experience across a number of different sectors, both public and private, as well as their training in career coaching. Don't worry if they have not worked in your particular sector. As important nowadays are the softer skills – being able to relate to, work with and influence people. Critical also is their knowledge and insight into the job market and what skills and approaches people need to do to progress their careers effectively.

2. How many people have you successfully placed in the past year, and from what backgrounds? What is your track record?

This is always a good question to ask. At the end of the day there is no substitute for previous experience and the more people your career coach has worked with the more they will have

placed in jobs. Don't forget that being "placed" may not necessarily have meant going into employment with another organisation. Many people nowadays in fact often decide to make a complete change of direction in their career – for example starting up their own business, taking on a consultancy role, becoming an interim manager or setting up a portfolio career. Others choose to go into further training and development to enhance or gain further skills and then use these as a platform for securing their next position.

3. Can you provide me with the name of someone who has received career support and coaching from you who can give you a testimonial?

This is important and if you can get testimonials before committing to a career programme that will help you decide on whether or not to proceed. Better to find this out than go in cold. Ask them and also look at their profile on LinkedIn and see if they have any recommendations from previous satisfied clients.

4. In what ways are you different from other career coaches? Do you have any particular style or approach?

Every career coach will have their own distinctive style and personal approach. No two coaches are the same. They will also have a different combination and blend of industry experience and the requisite softer skills required to be an effective coach. Look out for the signs of a good and proven previous track record and also an ability to relate quickly with people. Think about that you are wanting from them given your own situation? Ask them what process they use. At the end of the day the fit and chemistry needs to be good and you need to feel that your coach understands your position and is going to be able to deliver what you require and in the way that you need it.

5. What training / experience have you had to be a career coach?

Most career coaches will have several years of industry experience behind them and some will also have obtained a formal coaching accreditation or other coaching relevant qualifications. Ask them to give you details.

6. How do you maintain momentum during a programme, when progress becomes slow, in order to keep your client on track?

A good question. Career coaches should be and are experienced in keeping momentum going during career programmes and they will know how to keep on track when things reach a cross roads. Get them to give you an example of a previous client who perhaps lost focus and ask them how they maintained their client's enthusiasm and drive during the programme when it may have started to stall.

7. Do you provide follow up and support in between coaching sessions? How is this managed?

This may depend on what kind of programme you have bought. Some programmes consist of a few sessions or meetings. Most coaches will be keen to follow up by telephone or email (as well as text) and provide support in between these sessions.

8. What do you look for when you first meet a new client?

This question will give your career coach a chance to tell you how they approach new clients. Look for signs of adaptability and openness to different circumstances. Coaches are trained and inherently competent at adapting to each situation using a combination of proven coaching and counselling skills coupled with a well developed knowledge of the job market. Don't forget that just because a coach might initially come across as having the opposite personality, temperament and style to you or the one that you were seeking that this might actually be exactly what you want. We all tend by nature to clone ourselves and quite possibly the most effective coach for you might be someone who sees things from a totally different perspective.

9. If I want to work with another coach can I do that?

If you are not happy with your career coach and prefer to work with someone else then ask them if you can change coach. This can be arranged before you start a programme. It is essential that you feel that the personal chemistry is good, that the vibes are positive and you can work with them before you get going.

10. How do you assess the quality of your work as a career coach? Do you get feedback from peers?

A fair question to ask. It is always a good thing to check how your coach keeps their skills honed and up to date. You don't need to know chapter and verse here! What you learn will give you a good insight into their values and how they transfer the benefits of one client's programme to enhance another client's career. Do they use formal client feedback forms to check how the sessions are going? What happens at the end of the programme? How do they keep in touch? Look for evidence of follow up meetings or questionnaires. This will tell you that the coach is not only professional but committed to providing a good level of service during and after the programme. Who knows you could be the source of their next client.

For more information please contact us on 0845 459 0035 or send us an email with full details to: info@gatewaycareers.co.uk