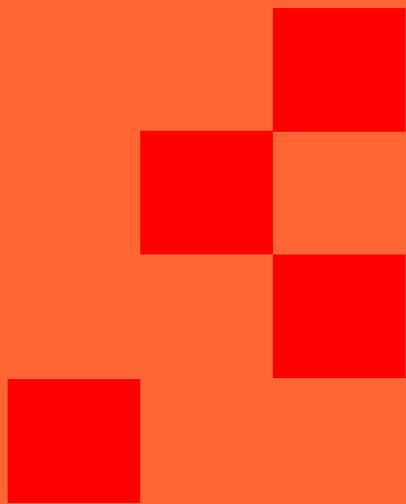


WHAT IS A CHEMISTRY SESSION IN COACHING?



BOLDLY
GET A COACH



A chemistry session is the first time you meet a coach, to decide if you have a mutual fit. You might meet for coffee or online, and you're both assessing the rapport you have to work together on your development goals.

A chemistry session should have clear objectives and outcomes, and you should take some time to prepare your questions, and know what you're looking for in a coach, to ensure you get the most out of the time together.



How might the session run?

Chemistry meetings are typically 30 minutes (sometimes an hour) and will follow some variation of the following agenda. Don't hesitate to outline and agree the agenda with the coach up front!

- **Introductions** - share your professional background in brief, and hear about theirs. Keep it high level
- **Your goals** - share the objectives for coaching, and why this is important to you
- **Success factors** - if coaching is effective, how will you know? Set out some clear behaviours, ways of thinking and working, or relationship wins you will ideally have by the end
- **Approach of the coach** - what methodologies do they use, and what style should you expect as a coachee?
- **Stakeholders** - who will be involved, and who do you both need to keep abreast of progress? How and when will you update them?
- **Engagement plan** - How will coaching happen? When and where, and how much time you should expect to dedicate. Any assessments or resources you should expect?
- **Next steps** - depending on how you're engaging coaching (personally or through your company) you should let the coach know the time horizon for your decision, and who they'll hear back from



What To Look For In A Coach

With this chemistry session agenda in mind, what should you then be looking for in a coach?

Rapport

You're trying to work out if you get along! Remembering that your coach is not there to be your friend - this relationship should be challenging and have some tension, but

you should see your coach as someone you connect with on the same wavelength, whose background and point of view you respect, and whose demeanour suits your own.

Qualifications

Coach qualifications are essential in this emerging profession. You want to know you're working with a coach who has extensive training and who abides by an internationally recognised code of ethics. Most coaches who are accredited by the ICF or EMCC have met this, standard however there are also coaches with masters degrees in coaching psychology who are also qualified.

Just as you wouldn't put your tax return in the hands of an accountant with a 3 day course, you shouldn't work with a coach who is purely qualified by experience, with a 'passion for people'. If a coach is training towards their qualifications, that's perfectly OK, however their skill (and fees) should reflect as such. We take a hard line on this point - you should expect the best!

Methodology

Following on from qualifications, an experienced coach will be able to talk you through their approach. They need to hear your goals and objectives first, but you should then ask them what coaching style, methods and theories they will be utilizing to work with you. Don't be bowled over by

proprietary models or big words - ask them to break it down for you. You're looking for confidence that they will be using research-backed approaches to working with you, to ensure you get your outcomes. Listen out for solution-focused approaches, and they might mention cognitive behavioural methods.





Confidentiality

Depending on how you're engaging with this coach, you'll have a different expectation of confidentiality. This should be agreed between you up front. For example, if your company is paying for the coach on your behalf, they can probably expect a status update from you, and to confirm with the coach how the engagement is tracking, however they shouldn't be privy to the contents of your discussion. If you're taking on a coach personally, then there's no circumstances where your confidential

conversations should be exposed. In both cases, the exception is where the coach has a concern about your wellbeing or the wellbeing of those close to you. We suggest you ask the following question to each coach who you meet for a chemistry meeting, and compare and contrast their responses: *'What is the confidentiality level of this engagement? When would you break this confidentiality, and what types of situations would cause you to take that step?'*

How To Make A Decision On A Coach

Using the information you've collected from the chemistry meeting, you'll then need to make a decision as to which coach you want to progress with. If you meet with three coaches for a chemistry meeting, you should confidently be able to select one, having compared and contrasted with the other two. Take rapport, qualifications, methodology and confidentiality into consideration, but also sum up your overall instinct: *Will this person challenge me? Do I feel engaged and excited to work with them?*

Ideally you should get back to the successful coach within a week of meeting and completing your chemistry sessions. It's also important to share brief feedback with the coaches who weren't successful, so they can consider their approach for future sessions and be of service to other professionals. As the chemistry meeting is a free meeting on their part, your feedback is invaluable to them.

BOLDLY is here to help you make the decision on your coaching partner.

Reach out to us at connect@boldly.app for further support. Happy coaching!

