

HOW TO ASK YOUR BOSS FOR A COACH



We often get asked the question: ‘how can I approach my boss to request a coach for my professional development?’

Because coaching involves time and money, many people feel some apprehension in making the request, especially because coaching is a 1:1 development experience and might be viewed as preferential treatment over and above colleagues. However getting a positive outcome is more common than you might think - there's a few things to consider about your workplace first, and then getting the approach and follow through right.

Before we get there...

- Make sure you're performing. Coaching is an experience that companies pay for on behalf of their high potential employees.

Performance is a baseline requirement for coaching, so make sure you're satisfying all the KPI's of your role first! Coaching is a reward, because it is expensive and time-intensive - money well spent! But companies will naturally decide to spend this resource where they anticipate a return on investment. That means, if you're already doing a good job, but you have potential to perform at a higher level, you're an ideal candidate for coaching.

- Know 'why' you want coaching. Make sure you've identified how you want to learn, what you want to develop, and a rough goal or vision statement for the coaching. Who will you become as a result of this journey? Make sure you connect your career development goals to the business needs. Coaching isn't just a feel-good nice to have - it's a strategic method for accelerating your skills, so make sure you're rock-solid on why you need it, and why now!



Workplace Considerations

Once you've confirmed you're performing at the highest level of your role, then start to consider your workplace. Consider the following aspect to get a better plan of attack when you make your request to your boss:

Does the company already offer training?

- If yes - great! Make sure you've taken all the courses available to you, and demonstrated how you've brought the learning back to your job. Ideally, you will be able to show your boss what the training has covered, and where you believe the gaps are for your personal career development? Try to keep this related to the requirements of your role. For example, if the company offers communication training, and stakeholder relationship building, but your job also needs negotiation skills, then you might position to your boss that your coaching can focus on filling the gap in negotiation.
- If no - that might mean they have a budget for discretionary spending on staff development. As coaching typically comes out of the L&D budget, OR from a boss' own P&L, you'll ideally want to understand if there's an allocation for learning (sometimes the boss can't tell you - that's OK!). In this case, you'll want to position the value you can get from coaching, as opposed to a generic online course or classroom meetup.

Do you get a lot of 1:1 career planning and development time with your boss?

- If your boss already spends a lot of time on your career - then you're very fortunate! Acknowledge and thank them for it. This shows they really believe in the value of career planning. You can potentially position the value of coaching in addition to their time, to work through more deeper development issues in parallel.
- If you don't get this time, then you might gently position that this is an opportunity for you to impact your performance, without taking up more of boss' time.





Are other resources available, such as a mentoring programme?

In addition to training, companies might look to mentoring or peer coaching to get you the 1:1 focused development time that you need. These resources are really valuable, and you should take each opportunity that comes your way!

However it's important to know the difference

between mentoring, training and coaching. You can check out our guides here:

- [How does mentoring differ from coaching](#)
- [What's the difference between career counselling and career coaching](#)

Has anyone else in the business had coaching before?

- If yes - great! That means there's a precedent. Get to understand the conditions under which that person / people got coaching - what's their level, role, performance, etc. If your boss has seen positive outcomes from coaching (or had a coach themselves!) then they're definitely going to understand the value.
- If no - then try to gauge their understanding of coaching - there's lots of resources on our website and blog about the role of the manager, when to get a coach involved, and the ROI - you might want some of this information to hand for your approach.

The Ask

Once you've ensured you're performing, and you have a strong rationale for the coaching request, then it's time to think about the ask. Your approach here will completely depend on your relationship with your boss, however here's a few general tips:

Tell them what you're going to ask for

It's great timing off the back of a positive performance review or career planning discussion to introduce the idea of coaching, before you actually make the request. You might start by asking:

- *What resources are typically available to people like me?*
- *Have you (boss) considered coaching before?*

This will help you to gauge the coaching landscape of the business, and prime the discussion. Based on what you hear, you might say:

- *I've been researching the impact of coaching and I believe it's a good fit for this stage of development in my career. I'm putting some ideas together - I'd like to present this to you in our next 1:1*

Consider what's in it for them

Always go into any request with a clear point of view on the benefits to the boss. In this case, there's no time burden on them, but they will stand to benefit from your increased engagement, performance, and your readiness

to move to the next level in your career. Does this involve taking pressure off their plate? Does it mean elevating the profile of the Business Unit? Think about why they should be even more invested in your development.

Prepare your key talking points

Keep it brief and to the point. When the meeting comes, take a deep breath and just ask! *'Boss - off the back of my last performance review, I've been thinking about the plan to take my contribution to the next level. I've decided it's the right time to take on a coach - do I*

have your backing? How will this be managed by the business in terms of resources - is there anything you need from my side to get approval?' Put this into your own words of course, but the tone should be assertive, and to the point.



Don't be deterred if the answer is 'not now'

If your boss isn't familiar with the power of coaching, they may need some time to get onboard. Share the resources you have found with them, and establish a time to revisit the conversation. They might want to take counsel from HR, so let the process take its due course.

Even if you seem to get a 'hard no' (like: the company doesn't support coaching, or the

boss has had a bad experience with coaching) then don't give up! Continue performing, and find ways to develop through training, mentoring, and on the job experience. Find ways to put the discussion back on the table at future performance reviews. Showing you're persistent about your development plan can't hurt.

Engaging Coaching Yourself

If you don't get the outcome you want through the conversation with your boss, you can consider investing in coaching personally.

You have the most to gain personally from coaching, and there's an increasing trend towards employees taking on a coach directly. There are benefits to being the 'client' in your own coaching engagement, however there's also investment.

Reach out to us to discuss your options: connect@boldly.app

