Achieve with a mentor

In his coaching series for CAM practitioners dedicated to "The difference that makes the difference", NLP coach **Mark Shields**, director of the Life Practice Group, explains the ins

and outs of mentoring.

ill you be enlisting the services of a mentor to help give you that extra motivation to succeed you so desperately lacked in 2011?

It is a disappointing fact that on average 85 % of us go into the first quarter of each new year determined to make some positive change to our practice yet only 12% actually achieve what they set out to do. That's some slippage.

Is it time to hire in some professional help?
It's my experience that the profile of one
to one mentoring has grown considerably
over the last twelve months, with famous
entrepreneurs such as James Caen adding
their names to initiatives to support and
encourage this expanding trend.

With private mentoring becoming more available and more affordable, and the need for mentors now greater than ever, perhaps it's time you joined an expanding group of people who have found a new and effective way to help them unlock that potential that we all have inside

What is mentoring?

"Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be." – Eric Parsloe, the Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring.

The word "mentoring" comes from the earliest of historical times. The Greek storyteller Homer wrote about the king of Ithaca who asked his friend Mentor to take care of his son Telemachus while he went away to fight.

What's the difference between coaching and mentoring?

A mentoring relationship can often last for a long time with no fixed period, while coaching tends to have a set duration. Mentoring is less formal and meetings and interaction tend to follow the needs of the client, where it is common to have regular face to face, telephone, email and text conversations. Coaching is far more structured, with meetings set on a regular basis, for example weekly.

Mentoring tends to focus on the development of the mentee as a person,



where coaching works on the development of a skill or a set of actions

What's in it for you?

Some of the key benefits you can get out of mentoring are:

- Being able to change/achieve your goals more quickly and effectively than working alone.
- Building a network of expertise to draw on, to benefit both yourself and others.
- Drawing on the skills and knowledge of an expert in your field, saving yourself time and energy otherwise spent "reinventing the wheel".
- Modelling the success of your mentor using proven success strategies and ideas that work.
- Feeling you are part of a team with an expert team leader working in partnership to assist you with your own personal development needs and goals.
- Having an expert at your fingertips with unlimited contact, there as you need them.
- Objective feedback on your existing business plans and skills to enable you to change plans and improve skills as appropriate.

How much does it cost?

When researching this topic to enable the Life Practice to open its own mentoring part of the business, I found that costs vary enormously.

It is important to establish from day 1 what your needs are as a mentee and make sure your mentor has the time and capabilities to meet your needs. In order to work, this relationship has to be free of any time constraints, logistical constraints and financial constraints.

In addition, trust and rapport are vital ingredients in any relationship and are no different in this one

It is normal today to find a good mentor offering unlimited contact and support from around £300 per month, depending on agreed objectives and support from the outset.

More and more personal development organisations are adding mentoring to their list of services. I have always supported mentoring and feel it is one of the most important "must haves" for business success. I believe we should all have a mentor to help support us when we feel lost, inspire us when we are feeling low, and motivate us when need that extra push to get going.

We are often put off by the potential cost of a professional mentor and this prohibits us from even reaching the investigatory or enquiry stage – but don't be afraid to ask; often the fees for good mentors are negotiable, depending on exactly what you need and require.

About the author

Mark Shields, life coach, author, media expert and motivational speaker, is managing director of Life Practice UK, specialists in Personal and Business Coaching.

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