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## Put me in coach!

### Winning in the workplace

Coaches push buttons and challenge comfort levels. They could be a punching bag during a hard practice, a mentor during a difficult time and a hero after a big win. Some may not realize the value of a coach until they are standing on a podium or reflecting on the glory days, but their lessons influence us years after we have retired from the game.

In today's fast-paced society, coaches are no longer reserved for athletes. There are life coaches, career coaches and even relationship coaches.

So when is a career coach the right call to make? Whenever you recognize the need for a mentor or adviser to help you set, reach or reset goals – from making tough decisions within your organization to setting the strategy for a new business direction or career change.

Jennifer Whitaker, an executive coach at Halogenex, says, "Utilizing a coach is an investment in yourself." Whitaker considers herself a "success partner," and points to the partnership and bond that forms between a client and coach.

Mickey Parsons, certified career coach and founder of

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Parsons Associates Coaching, also underscores the value of the relationship that career coaches form with clients. Parsons believes the collaborative nature of coaching helps propel clients' careers forward faster than they normally would progress on their own.

"Career coaching supports individuals in identifying their ideal career choice, transitioning into a new career or reinvigorating their chosen career," Parsons says.

Lissa C. Veersteegh, president of Georgia Sales Development Inc., agrees. "A good coach is tuned into a client's wants and needs. They walk the fine line between nurturing and challenging, and push clients to reach their goals."

The use and role of coaches in the business world is growing. Executives and entrepreneurs, like athletes, often benefit from an outsider identifying the problem and setting up a structured action plan focused on identified goals.

Coaches become valuable sources of information and irreplaceable mentors, but they are only one part of the equation.

Whitaker stresses that coaching is also "dependent on an individual's drive for success."

The famous lyric may be "put me in coach," but an equally, if not more important piece of the puzzle is, as John Fogerty sings next, "I'm ready to play!"

