

An Investment In Coaching Yields A Great Return

Coaching is an investment in yourself, your church and the people you wish to reach. It is one of the few things in which every planter needs to invest. A coach is not a luxury. On the contrary, the presence of a skilled coach is often the difference between a successful planter and a frustrated one. All church planters have skills and abilities. A great coach can help the planter maximize these and use them in ways most likely to lead to success.

While there are many reasons to have a coach, here are ten great reasons to invest in a coach.

1. To get an opinion from someone (the coach) who has no vested interest in the situation's outcome.
2. To point out what the planter can't, won't, or doesn't see.
3. To have a compassionate, secure and confidential outlet to vent problems and frustrations.
4. To provide a clear line of communication between the planter and the sponsoring agency.
5. To conduct reality checks on the planter's vision, values and strategies.
6. To walk with the planter through conflict when it arises.
7. To implement the master plan in proper sequence.
8. To ask the questions that no one else is asking.
9. To develop strategies for recruiting, launching and fund-raising.
10. To help the planter balance the demands and stresses of a church plant while maintaining a healthy family life.

Like all decisions, if a planter chooses to not invest in a coach, there are some probable outcomes. The lack of an outside perspective may hinder the development of the church plant. The mistakes made by the planter which could have been avoided by the presence of a coach often cost significantly more than would have been invested in the coaching contract. Additionally, the people the planter does not attract due to the lack of a coach almost always would have contributed far more than the cost of a coaching contract.

Coaching is usually provided on a contract basis. The contract clearly spells out the responsibilities, expectations and costs of the coaching relationship. The

formation of the contract involves as many of the following as possible: the coach, the planter, the planter's spouse (if they have one), at least one member of the launch team and the representative(s) of the sponsoring organization. Coaching contracts are usually twelve months in length and can be renewed if desired.

If possible, an on-site visit by the coach can be very beneficial. It does, however, represent a significant investment (fee, travel, lodging, food, etc.). If at this point in time one simply can not afford the cost of an on-site visit, a coaching relationship is still an option. Beyond any on-site visit, almost all coaching is done via phone and email. A coaching contract in which interaction with the coach occurs via phone and email is almost as good as one that includes an on-site visit. Some phone appointments may be scheduled (such as a "check up" every 1-2 months) while others will be initiated by the planter in response to situations that arise during the work of planting the church.

As stated above, coaching is an investment. People often ask, "How much will it cost me to have a coach?" My first response is, "How much will it cost you to not have a coach?" Beyond that, however, the cost of a coaching contract can vary greatly. The fee should be based, at least in part, on the training, skill, experience, certification, breadth of knowledge and ability of the coach. A phone/email-only contract often requires an investment of \$2000-3500 per year. An on-site visit will add an additional \$1000-\$2000 (plus expenses). Some coaches offer a discount on the coaching contract if they make an on-site visit at the beginning of the contract (something we do to assist the planter and to underscore the value we place on personal interaction with the planter and the experiencing the planting context).

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