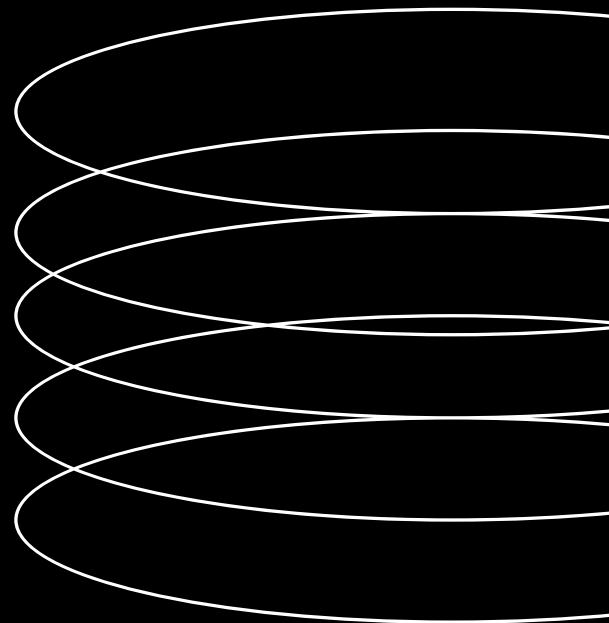




How to become a career coach



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
To Launching Your Coaching Career





The International Association of Career Coaches

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CAREER COACHES

The International Association of Career Coaches (IACC) was founded for people who feel called to help others navigate meaningful work and want the skills, confidence, and support to do it well.

We believe career coaching is more than a certification. It's a responsibility. One that requires empathy, clarity, ethical judgment, and real-world skill. That's why IACC was built differently. Our programs are grounded in practice, not theory alone, so you don't just learn about coaching, you become a coach through doing.

Our mission is to set the global standard for career coach training by preparing coaches who don't just hold a credential, but lead with purpose, coach with confidence, and create meaningful change in the world of work.



CHAPTER N.1

Understanding the Role of a Coach

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Career coaching is a fulfilling profession that empowers individuals to achieve their personal and professional goals. Coaches provide guidance, support, and tailored strategies, making a significant impact on clients' lives.

As a career coach, you will help clients navigate challenges, explore options, and develop actionable plans. This process not only fosters growth but also enhances your skills in communication and leadership.

WHAT YOU DO

Guide & Clarify

- Help clients identify values, strengths, and priorities
- Support career clarity and direction
- Explore aligned roles, industries, and paths

Navigate Change

- Support career transitions and pivots
- Help clients move through uncertainty and fear
- Reframe limiting beliefs and patterns

Design Action

- Build practical, realistic career plans
- Create job search, networking, and growth strategies
- Support interview and negotiation preparation

THE IMPACT

For Clients

- Greater clarity and confidence
- More aligned, intentional career choices
- Faster, less stressful transitions

For You

- Stronger communication and leadership skills
- Deeper emotional intelligence, awareness, and marketable skills
- A flexible, meaningful, and scalable career

For the Workplace

- Healthier workplaces
- More engaged, fulfilled professionals
- Better long-term career outcomes

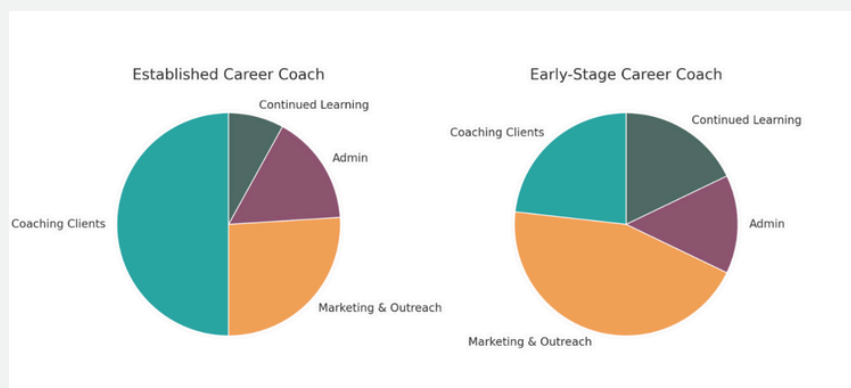
CHAPTER N.2

7 Steps to Becoming a Career Coach

N.1 Get Clear on What Career Coaching Involves

Most people get into coaching because they love the idea of helping others grow through meaningful conversations. And it's true that this is the backbone of the job, but it's not all that goes into it.

If you want to work as a self-employed coach, be prepared for everything else that comes with running a coaching business.



HOW MUCH YOU'LL MAKE

Your income will depend on your time commitment, niche, and pricing. But here's a rough benchmark:

The average career coach salary is \$96,000/year.

Coaches certified with the International Association of Career Coaches (IACC) average around \$137,000 per year thanks to their certification and network.

COACHING SESSIONS

If you work with a client one-on-one, a typical arc starts with helping them clarify their dream job, reflect on their values, past roles, and deeper life desires.

Once they've found their north star, you'll guide them in taking the action required to get that dream job, which might include job search strategy, practicing interviews, teaching them networking tactics, or rewriting résumés.

N.2 Build Your Coaching Skill Set

1. **Empathy.** Clients need to feel safe sharing their deepest career dreams and challenges with you.
2. **Motivating clients to take action.** A big part of coaching is helping people overcome their resistance and doing the thing.
3. **Strategic understanding of the job market.** For many clients, the main goal will be getting hired. So the more you understand job search strategy, industry trends, and how recruiters think, the more value you can offer.
4. **Résumé and cover letter writing.** Knowing the ins and outs of a good résumé will help your clients get interviews.
5. **Interview prep.** Most clients will face interviews, so you'll need to know how to help them practice and feel confident.
6. **Negotiation practice.** Once a client gets an offer, you can help them negotiate for the best package they can.



N.3 Choose to Get Certified or Not

Technically, anyone can call themselves a coach. Unlike therapy, there's no governing body that regulates the coaching job title.

When you go through a training program, you get to learn firsthand from experts who have built the exact career that you are trying to build. You'll learn coaching frameworks, gain practical tools, and train with practice sessions.

Some certification programs also allow you to join a coaching community that offers ongoing learning, personalized support, and open dialogue about hiring trends, market wobbles, or unexpected opportunities. **Even if you've worked as a life coach or similar, doing a deep dive into the specifics of career coaching will probably make you a better coach and help you find more clients.**

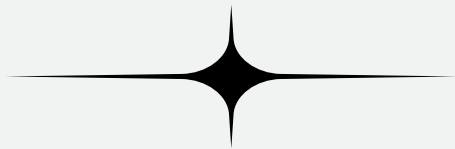
N.4 Get Real Client Experience

As you get started, any coaching experience you can find is gold.

Some coaches feel ready to start working with paid clients from the get-go. And others like to work with free practice clients before charging.

I had a student who challenged themselves to schedule 50 free coaching sessions in 3 months. They got a ton of free practice, and some of those pro bono clients turned into paid ones.

You can read as many books as you want, but really, there's no better practice than sitting with a real person, helping with real problems.



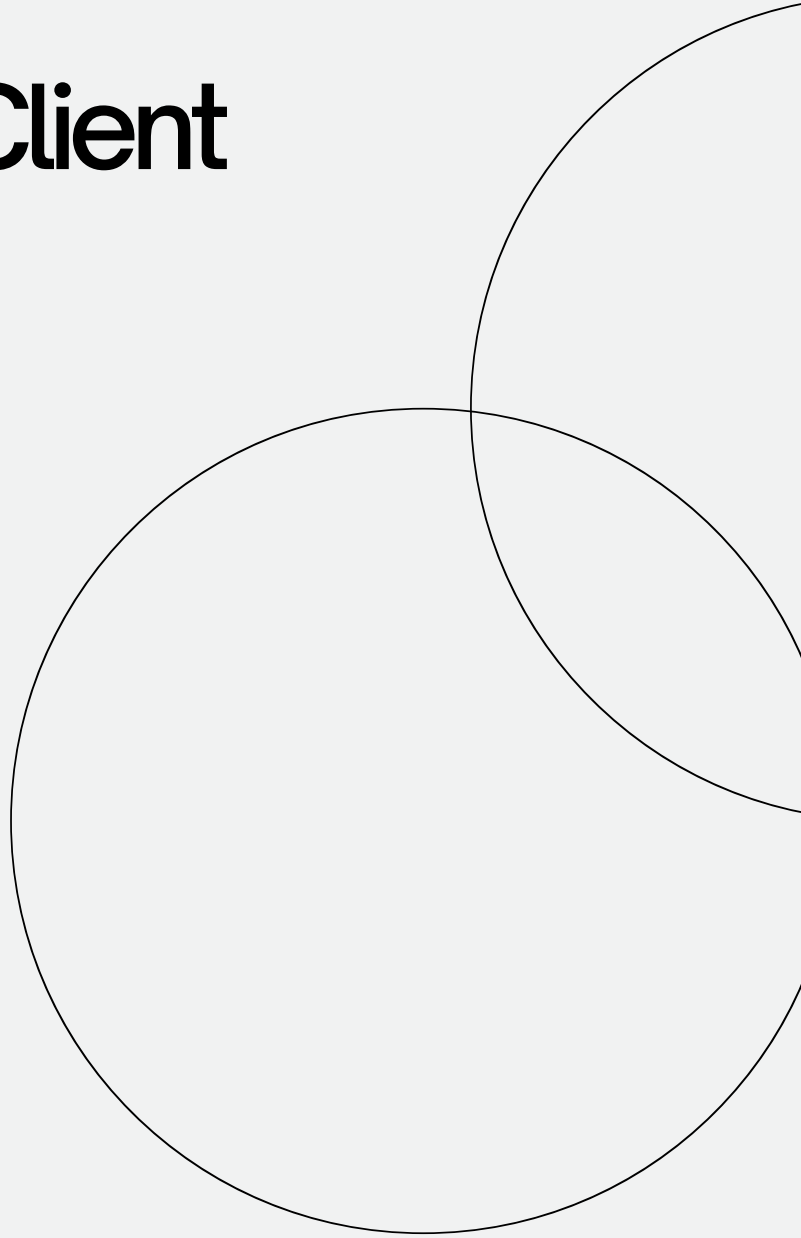
HOW TO FIND YOUR FIRST CLIENT

There are likely plenty of people in your warm network who would love to be your first client. You just have to let them know you're looking!

Try posting something like this on LinkedIn: "I'm opening up a few spots for career coaching this month. If you (or someone you know) wants clarity about your next career move or help pursuing your career goals, shoot me a message."

Or send an email to former colleagues, classmates, and friends who may want to try out coaching (or know someone who does).

If you'd like more ideas, here are [The 10 Most Effective Ways to Get Career Coaching Clients](#).



N.5 Choose a Starting Niche

Your niche refers to the specific type of client you serve and the career challenges you help them solve.

For many new coaches, picking a niche feels like pulling out teeth. They have so much to offer to so many people that the idea of cutting off possibilities sounds horrible!

But the truth is, picking a niche doesn't mean you can only ever work with one type of person. Rather, niching helps you focus your marketing and offerings to more effectively draw potential clients to your work.

Here are just a few examples of niches: Clients with ADHD and neurodivergence, or Women of color who want to thrive in the upper tiers of the corporate world

N.6 Design Your Coaching Offering

Are you going to offer one-on-one coaching, group coaching, or a mix of both?

One of the beauties of this field is that you get to customize your career coaching sessions and be in control of how you work with people.

Finding your right offering will take some trial and error, but just start with an offering and treat it like an experiment. Keep what you like, and shift what you don't like.

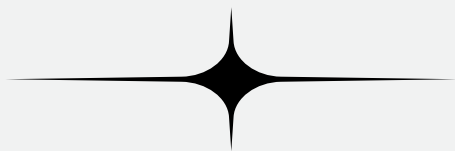
Keep trying out offerings until you home in on what fuels you and your clients most.

N.7 Share Your Work With the World

Marketing is where the rubber meets the road.

And the good news is there's an authentic way to approach marketing that can actually be creative, fun, and values-aligned.

Effective, feel-good marketing is really just about sharing your knowledge in a way that's genuinely useful to others. When the right people know who you are and how you can help, lots of them will want to go deeper and hire you as their coach.

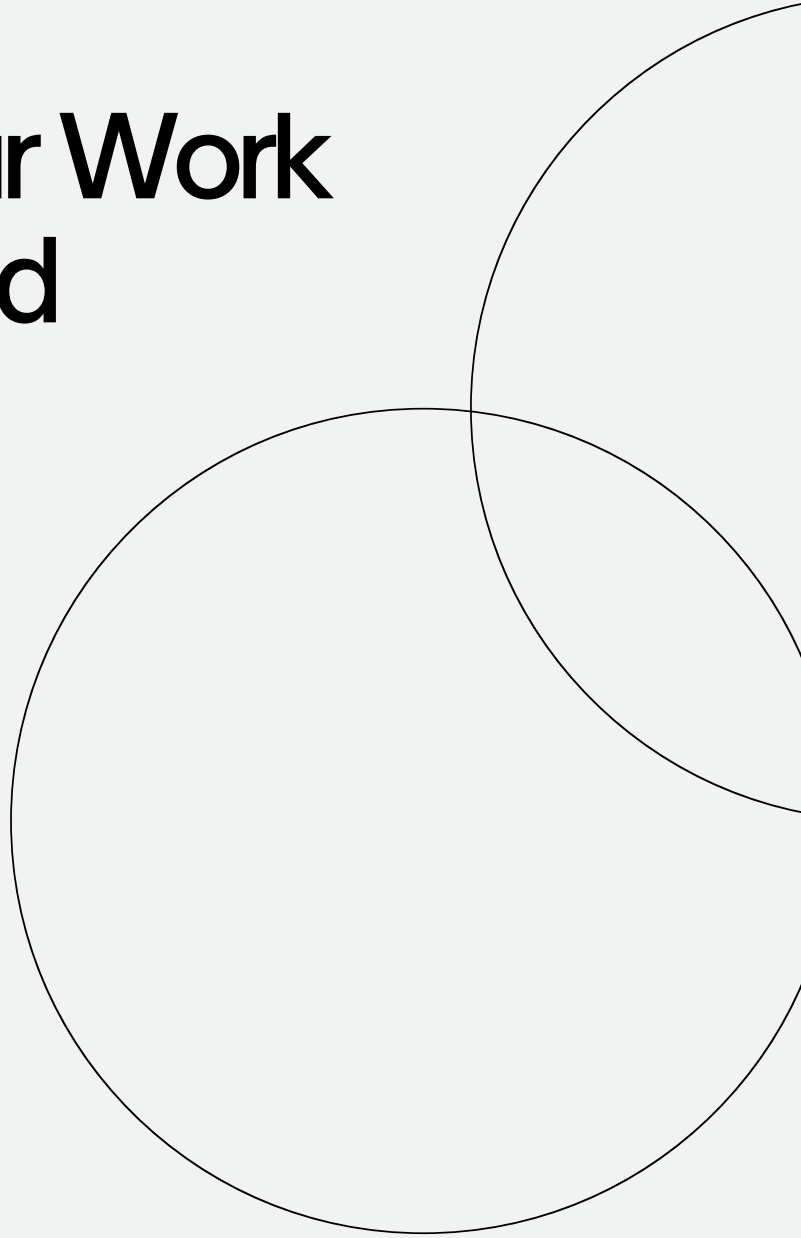


MARKETING APPROACHES

- Hosting workshops
- Writing blog posts
- Posting on LinkedIn
- Building a referral network

You don't need to do all of it at once. But you do need to show up somehow, especially early on.

Plus, one great thing about being a career coach is that if you do a good job, your clients often become your marketing department. Plenty of coaches fill their coaching practice through word of mouth alone.

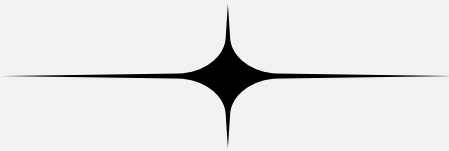


CHAPTER N.3

How to start career coaching in 7 steps

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- 1.GET CLEAR ON WHAT CAREER COACHING INVOLVES
- 2.BUILD YOUR COACHING SKILL SET
- 3.CHOOSE TO GET CERTIFIED OR NOT
- 4.GET REAL CLIENT EXPERIENCE
- 5.CHOOSE A STARTING NICHE
- 6.DESIGN YOUR COACHING OFFERING
- 7.SHARE YOUR WORK WITH THE WORLD



YOUR NEXT STEPS

If you're wondering if career coaching might be right for you, it could help to look into some career coach training programs and see if you feel excited by the idea of doing them.

Here is the [accredited training](#) from the International Association of Career Coaches to consider.

If you're still on the fence and have questions about the certification process, you can book a free [30-minute consultation](#) with me to figure out if this training is the right step for you or not.

Either way, career coaching is a rewarding profession for those who feel called to it, and I wish you the best of luck.