

The High Growth Coach

Competency Framework



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Why a Framework?

Governments both within and outside of Europe have a strong interest in and are committed to creating and supporting the development of High Growth Companies. Despite this, there is no definitive model setting out the competencies required by High Growth Coaches: this framework defines such a set of competencies.

The Framework sets out the minimum behaviours, skills, and knowledge that High Growth Coaches need to demonstrate, apply and understand. The Framework has several potential applications, for example it can be used to:

- Underpin the recruitment and selection of High Growth Coaches
- Conduct an initial assessment of the competencies of High Growth Coaches
- Assess the practices and performance of High Growth Coaches
- Inform personal and professional development planning
- Benchmark the competencies of High Growth Coaches
- Underpin the design of a High Growth Coach development programme
- Inform the design of High Growth Coach qualifications
- Improve the effectiveness of High Growth Coaching services offered by suppliers

What do we mean by Competencies?

Competencies are defined as 'sets of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results.' (Bartram et al, 2002). In the context of the High Growth Coach, they are behaviours that support the delivery of High Growth Coaching. Competencies are the knowledge, understanding, practical and thinking skills needed to perform effectively. They are identified and demonstrated through sets of behaviours that encompass the skills and knowledge that are critical to successful performance of High Growth Coaching.

Note: It is important to note that the focus of the High Growth Competency Framework is on behaviours and not on the results or consequences of those behaviours.

The Construction of the HGC Framework

High Growth Coaches require a balance of behaviours, skills and knowledge enabling the delivery generic and specialist High Growth Coaching services. They undertake a variety of roles during the course of the delivery of a High Growth Coaching programme including the coach, facilitator, mentor, trainer, advisor, broker and consultant. Whilst each role has a different focus, they each draw upon a set of core or fundamental skills. Although not impossible, it is unlikely that most High Growth Coaches will be competent in each of these roles, however they are likely to be component in two or more of the roles.

High Growth Coaches need to possess a minimum level of business acumen and be able to support High Growth Companies through the High Growth Coaching Process. Above all else High Growth Coaches behave professionally and ethically.

The HGC Framework comprises three levels of hierarchy: **Specialist Knowledge and Capability; High Growth Coaching Competences;** and **Professional Behaviours.**

Specialist Knowledge and Capability: comprising the functional and sector specialist expertise that High Growth Coaches possess.

High Growth Coaching Competences: comprising the core High Growth Coaching skills, tools, and techniques essential in delivering High Growth Coaching services.

Professional Behaviours: comprising the professional and ethical behaviours High Growth Coaches need to be able to demonstrate.

Each of the levels is subdivided into a series of behaviours and knowledge, skills and roles providing a comprehensive High Growth Competency Framework.

The Framework provides a structure within which potential and existing High Growth Coaches can assess themselves not for the purpose of improving and developing their knowledge, skills and competencies. The Framework is not about being competent or not, it is a framework of good practice and development.

Feedback and Consultation

The draft Framework was disseminated and discussed with over 40 business coaches and High Growth Coaching suppliers.

The main points of feedback were:

- *The Framework is comprehensive*
- *It is clear and detailed providing a delivery methodology as well as competencies*
- *It is quite long, but very detailed*
- *Does every High Growth Business Coach possess everything?*
- *I can see this working well as a personal development tool*
- *It doesn't include anything about time management or mentoring*
- *This describes pretty much what I do as a High Growth Coach*
- *Would this be used to select High Growth Coaches?*
- *It seems to cover some of the ICF competences, but goes beyond them*
- *I would like to see how it links to some sort of development or training*
- *A great tool – it gives too much away!*
- *Great to see business acumen in the model as coaches need to have this to be able to coach companies especially high growth ones*
- *This a very useful reference across all the competencies and actions of business coaching*
- *Is it possible that this could be pulled into some sort of qualification possibly through ECMC or the ICF?*

Appendix 1 captures some of the longer comments and feedback.

The final version of the Framework was modified in light of the feedback.

The High Growth Coach Competency Framework

Specialist Knowledge and Capability							
Functional Specialism				Sector Specialism (key sectors in local markets)			
Partners to insert – country specific				Partners to insert – country specific			
High Growth Coaching Competences							
HG Coaching Roles	The HGC as a Coach	The HGC as a Trainer	The HGC as a Facilitator	The HGC as an Advisor	The HGC as a Mentor	The HGC as a Broker	The HGC as a Consultant
	Building Rapport	Client Dialogue	Questioning Strategies	Active Listening	Challenging	Critical Thinking	Reflection
Fundamental Skills	Goal Setting	Action Planning	Review and Recognition	Feedback	Coaching Resources	Knowledge Transfer	
	Finance and Accounts	Human Resource Management	Strategic Planning	Operations Management	Marketing	Management & Leadership	Change Management
HG Coaching Processes	Stage 1: Engaging	Stage 2: Exploring	Stage 3: Visioning	Stage 4: Implementing	Stage 5: Reviewing and Sustaining		
Professional Behaviours							
Client Relationships	Professional Networking	Personal Effectiveness	Personal Development	Evaluation			
Ethical and Professional Practices							

High Growth Coaching Roles	
Coach	<p>The Coach Role involves one-to-one and group coaching activities enabling clients to solve problems themselves.</p> <p>"Together we will explore the issues and agree how you will proceed"</p>
Trainer	<p>The Trainer Role involves the delivery of structured workshops or training courses for clients. The Trainer Role involves the transfer and development of knowledge, skills and understanding based upon a pre-determined agenda or syllabus.</p> <p>"I can show, explain and train you so you can do it yourself"</p>
Facilitator	<p>The Facilitator Role involves helping individuals and groups explore a range of issues and challenges through the use of a variety of tools and techniques.</p> <p>"I will help you as a group to explore the problem and reach agreement on a way forward"</p>
Advisor	<p>The Advisor Role involves analysing client problems and providing guidance and advice on specific issues. The Advisor Role involves a limited amount of knowledge transfer.</p> <p>"Let me give you my analysis of the problem and recommendations on what you can do about it"</p>
Mentor	<p>The Mentor Role involves sharing personal experience with clients. The Mentor Role involves sharing the benefit of personal experience, wisdom and contacts.</p> <p>"I have been there and got the t-shirt, so let me share my experience with you"</p>
Broker	<p>The Broker Role involves identifying potential sources of help and support for clients</p> <p>"I am not able to help you with this, but I know someone who can"</p>
Consultant	<p>The Consultant Role involves analysing client problems and developing and implementing solutions on behalf of clients. The Consulting Role is about solving a problem and not about transferring knowledge to clients.</p> <p>"I will devise and implement the solution for you"</p>

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Fundamental Skills	Behaviours
Building Rapport	<p>High Growth Coaches establish rapport with clients. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show genuine interest in clients 2. Demonstrate empathy and understanding 3. Respect the needs, values and opinions of clients 4. Respect client communication methods 5. Build on common ground with clients
Client Dialogue	<p>High Growth Coaches manage client dialogue to generate understanding, insight and decision making. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage the development and progression of client dialogue 2. Use a range of techniques and tools during client dialogue 3. Use client dialogue to explore and re-frame issues, and to challenge client thinking 4. Stimulate debate and reflection during client dialogue 5. Facilitate a forward focused conclusion to client dialogue
Questioning Strategies	<p>High Growth Coaches devise and implement effective questioning strategies. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use questions at all stages of the High Growth Coaching Cycle 2. Use questioning strategies to achieve specific outcomes 3. Utilise a variety of different question types 4. Ask simple, clear and insightful questions 5. Ask pertinent questions linked to client responses 6. Manage client responses to questions
Active Listening	<p>High Growth Coaches actively listen to clients. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notice client use of language, tone, pace and intonation 2. Observe and interpret client non verbal communication 3. Use a range of active listening techniques 4. Encourage clients to provide full and considered responses 5. Utilise pauses and silence during dialogue 6. Summarise and paraphrase key points during dialogue 7. Make notes of key points without distracting clients
Challenging	<p>High Growth Coaches know when and how to challenge clients. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage clients to take responsibility and to be accountable 2. Use a range of tools and techniques to challenge clients 3. Challenge client assumptions, beliefs and understanding to provoke new insight 4. Validate client understanding, perception and commitment to plans 5. Hold clients to account for progress and follow through
Critical Thinking	<p>High Growth Coaches encourage critical thinking. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p>

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Reflection	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage clients to use critical thinking2. Use a range of tools and techniques to support critical thinking3. Use a range of data collection methods to ascertain facts and supporting evidence4. Question the reliability, validity, authenticity and meaning of data and supporting evidence5. Base decisions and recommendations on validated data
	<p>High Growth Coaches encourage clients to reflect on their experience. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Help clients to progress through each stage of the learning cycle2. Use a range of tools and techniques to engage clients in reflection3. Help clients to discover for themselves new insights and levels of understanding4. Enable clients to make connections between feelings, behaviours and performance5. Support clients to capture and act on new insight and understanding
Goal Setting	<p>High Growth Coaches help clients to formulate well constructed goals leading to success. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Help clients to define and clarify their vision of success2. Help clients to specify success in terms of goals3. Support clients to compose well structured goals4. Validate client commitment to goals5. Ensure congruency between client goals, values, needs and vision
Action Planning	<p>High Growth Coaches help clients prepare clear, goal oriented action plans. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify specific actions to meet agreed objectives and deadlines2. Support clients to identify strategies to address potential barriers3. Support clients to access resources4. Support clients to plan for contingencies5. Agree SMART action plans (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resourced and Time bound)6. Confirm client commitment to action plans7. Agree how and when to review action plans

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Review and Recognition	High Growth Coaches engage clients in reviewing and recognising client progress. High Growth Coaches must be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engage clients in reviewing progress2. Evaluate progress and achievements with clients3. Support clients to modify and update plans, if appropriate4. Encourage clients to learn from successes and experiences5. Acknowledge client success and progress
Feedback	High Growth Coaches provide clients with objective and constructive feedback. High Growth Coaches must be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage clients to obtain feedback from a diverse range of sources2. Use a range of tools and techniques to provide feedback to clients3. Provide feedback in an appropriate format at an appropriate time4. Provide constructive feedback free of subjective judgement and bias5. Ensure clients acknowledge and reflect on feedback
Coaching Resources	High Growth Coaches have access to a variety of High Growth Coaching resources. High Growth Coaches must be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Negotiate coaching agreements with clients2. Adopt a structured approach to the delivery of interventions3. Use a range of coaching tools and techniques4. Prepare thoroughly for planned client interactions5. Maintain accurate records of interventions and actions
Knowledge Transfer	High Growth Coaches ensure clients possess the know-how to take action. High Growth Coaches must be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gain client permission to share prior experience and knowledge2. Offer guidance, advice and potential solutions with client permission3. Define client knowledge, learning and development gaps/needs4. Agree with clients the optimum method of knowledge transfer5. Confirm knowledge, learning and development gaps/needs have been addressed6. Ensure clients transfer newly acquired knowledge and learning

High Growth Coaching Processes	Behaviour
Stage 1: Engaging	<p>During the engaging stage of the High Growth Coaching Cycle, High Growth Coaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take time to build rapport with clients 2. Invite clients to review and reflect on the previous action plan (if this is not the first coaching session) 3. Help clients to define their requirements 4. Discuss client expectations of the coaching to be delivered 5. Explain the role and responsibilities of the High Growth Coach 6. Clarify client roles and responsibilities in the coaching process 7. Agree the coaching process with clients 8. Explore with clients what they want to achieve from the coaching 9. Agree with clients the planned outcomes of the coaching 10. Confirm understanding of client requirements and planned outcomes before moving on
Stage 2: Exploring	<p>During the exploring stage of the High Growth Coaching Cycle, High Growth Coaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage clients to reflect on their circumstances 2. Use a diverse range of diagnostic tools and techniques 3. Help clients to review current and past performance 4. Help clients to analyse current and past performance 5. Help clients to reflect on their experiences, feelings, knowledge and skills 6. Encourage clients to explore issues and problems 7. Encourage clients to examine the root cause of issues and problems 8. Support clients to draw their own conclusions about the root cause of issues and problems 9. Enable clients to reflect on their conclusions 10. Confirm understanding of client conclusions before moving on (by summarising or asking questions)
Stage 3: Visioning	<p>During the visioning stage of the High Growth Coaching Cycle, High Growth Coaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage clients to explore their beliefs and feeling about the subject of the coaching 2. Help clients to develop a clear understanding of what they want to achieve 3. Help clients to envisage and to define what success looks like 4. Encourage clients to explain why it is important they are successful 5. Support clients to define clear goals and objectives 6. Help clients to identify potential resources they can use to achieve success 7. Help clients to identify potential barriers and risks to achieving success 8. Help clients to explore options for overcoming any barriers 9. Support clients to identify options and solutions 10. Confirm understanding of identified options and solutions before moving on

Stage 4: Implementing	During the implementing stage of the High Growth Coaching Cycle, High Growth Coaches: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask clients to summarise their goals and objectives2. Support clients to assess all of the options and solutions to achieve success3. Support clients to reflect on the merits of each potential solution4. Enable clients to select one or more options to achieve success5. Help clients to define actions needed to implement their chosen option6. Help clients to identify additional resources needed to achieve success7. Encourage clients to identify actions they will take to secure required resources8. Assist clients to draft action plans to achieve success9. Challenge clients to validate plans and commitment to implementation10. Confirm understanding of plans before moving on
Stage 5: Reviewing and Sustaining	During the reviewing and sustaining stage of the High Growth Coaching Cycle, High Growth Coaches: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Invite clients to reflect on progress achieved2. Encourage clients to reflect on their vision (goals and objectives)3. Encourage clients to reflect on why it is important they are successful4. Summarise key points and actions arising during coaching5. Acknowledge progress made by clients6. Agree with clients strategies to monitor the implementation of the plan7. Test client commitment to sustaining improvements and performance8. Confirm the client ownership of plans and activities9. Seek feedback from clients to identify the added value derived from coaching10. Agree with clients the timing of future coaching

Professional Behaviours	
Client Relationships	<p>High Growth Coaches build strong relationships with clients. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand client values, needs and requirements 2. Establish mutual trust and respect 3. Create an open and honest, two-way flow of ideas, opinions and information with clients 4. Manage client expectations 5. Agree with clients the processes and protocols to be used 6. Agree the contractual nature of the relationship with clients 7. Communicate with clients using a diverse range of communication methods 8. Maintain accurate records of interactions with clients 9. Reflect on the quality of the relationship periodically with clients 10. Manage the closure of the client:coach relationship
Professional Networking	<p>High Growth Coaches develop a diverse network of contacts which they access for the benefit of their clients. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the type of network contacts that will be of value 2. Actively identify opportunities to make new network contacts 3. Build new network contacts using a range of networking techniques 4. Assess the benefits that new contacts could offer 5. Provide information and assistance to network contacts 6. Maintain up to date records of network contacts 7. Use network contacts to seek information and advice 8. Use network contacts as a source of referrals and introductions 9. Introduce clients and others to appropriate network contacts 10. Evaluate the costs and benefits of networking opportunities and use to inform future networking
Personal Effectiveness	<p>High Growth Coaches take responsibility for their own personal effectiveness. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritise activities and objectives 2. Plan and review how to achieve activities and objectives 3. Honour commitments and promises made to others 4. Schedule sufficient time and resources to honour commitments and promises 5. Take responsibility for completing activities and objectives to the agreed quality standard 6. Prepare for all planned interactions with others 7. Discuss and agree changes to plans with others when unable to honour a commitment or promise 8. Reflect on own personal effectiveness 9. Act on own reflections to improve personal effectiveness 10. Achieve a work life balance

<p>Personal Development</p>	<p>High Growth Coaches invest in increasing their knowledge, skills and experience to improve personal performance. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep up to date with trends and developments in business and coaching practice 2. Obtain performance feedback from clients 3. Reflect on own performance and processes with other professionals 4. Reflect on own skills, knowledge and competence 5. Identify own learning and development needs 6. Plan learning and development activities to meet own identified needs 7. Undertake learning and development activities to meet identified needs 8. Reflect on the effectiveness of learning and development activities 9. Identify improvements to be made to own practice and processes 10. Implement improvements to own performance and processes
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>High Growth Coaches evaluate the impact of their activities and interventions. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define planned outcomes and results on commencement of activities 2. Review progress and performance with clients at agreed intervals 3. Encourage clients to communicate areas of concern or underperformance 4. Identify areas of concern or underperformance 5. Investigate areas of concern or underperformance 6. Implement corrective action to address areas of concern or underperformance 7. Monitor corrective actions to confirm their effectiveness 8. Evaluate the effectiveness of coaching processes 9. Evaluate the impact of coaching against planned outcomes and results 10. Identify changes to processes and activities to implement with other clients
<p>Ethical and Professional Practices</p>	<p>High Growth Coaches behave in an ethical and professional manner. High Growth Coaches must be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strive for excellence in all aspects of the role 2. Operate within both the letter and spirit of the law 3. Behave with honesty and integrity 4. Protect confidential information and respect confidences 5. Treat everyone equally 6. Do not benefit or profit from confidential information 7. Be aware of potential real or perceived conflicts of interest 8. Only undertake work within limits of own competence 9. Never knowingly violate others' values, beliefs or principles 10. Be objective, truthful and transparent

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Business Acumen Areas		Knowledge and Understanding	
Finance	1. Profit and loss accounts and Balance sheets	6. Invoicing and credit control	
	2. Budgets and forecasting	7. Pricing strategies	
People	3. Working capital and cash flow	8. Ratio analysis	
	4. Profit and cost centres	9. Investment appraisal	
Planning	5. Costing	10. Sources of finance	
	1. Human resource management	6. Succession planning and talent management	
Operations	2. Employment policies and practices	7. Motivation	
	3. Equality of opportunity, diversity and social inclusion	8. Performance management	
Marketing	4. Recruitment and selection	9. Negotiation	
	5. Team working and team development	10. Conflict management	
Management and Leadership	1. Strategic planning	6. Management information systems	
	2. Managing growth	7. Contingency planning	
Change and Project Management	3. Business planning techniques	8. Monitoring plans	
	4. Analytical and diagnostic techniques	9. Resource identification	
Management and Leadership	5. Business plans	10. Assigning roles and responsibilities	
	1. Quality management	4. Business process improvement techniques	
Marketing	2. Procurement	5. Managing performance and control systems	
	3. Supply chain networks	6. Lean management techniques	
Change and Project Management	1. The Marketing Plan	6. Price sensitivity	
	2. Competitive advantage	7. Building brands	
Management and Leadership	3. Market research	8. Competitor analysis	
	4. The Product Life Cycle	9. Public relations	
Change and Project Management	5. Marketing mix	10. The Sales Cycle	
	1. Director responsibilities	5. Delegation	
Management and Leadership	2. Developing the Board of Directors	6. Objective setting	
	3. Management and leadership models and theories	7. Problem solving	
Change and Project Management	4. Decision making		
	1. Change management models	5. Leading change	
Management and Leadership	2. Transformational and transactional change	6. Planning and implementing change	
	3. Catalysts and barriers to change	7. Project management	
Change and Project Management	4. Risk management		

Appendix 1: Examples of Feedback Comments/Observations from Coaches and Suppliers

Very interesting. I have had experience of designing and developing competence frameworks in the past (I chaired a company that did just that for lead bodies, corporates and government agencies). This one is comprehensive and thought provoking. I guess however, that the existence of the competence or characteristic may be a necessary condition for effectiveness but by no means sufficient. The crux of the matter is therefore the capacity to engage and make progress with the coachee to attain the goal. And that depends upon shared analysis and sufficient clarity and committed agreement amongst those directly associated with the attainment of the goal.....

The coach and coachee need to be aligned and personally compatible to get the best from the coaching process. I am glad to see the finance topic is at the top of the Knowledge and Understanding Business Acumen Areas page. However, the main issue I have with all competency frameworks and process driven assessments is about the breadth and depth of knowledge and skill that needs to be possessed by high growth coaches, or even business advisers. Is it A level or degree equivalent or even higher that is required? This is difficult to establish let alone assess in any "Acumen" area, but particularly in finance. I train in business finance and for many years delivered the IBA / IBC Finance for Business Advisers workshops and other programmes. I generally found that financial knowledge, skill and application was lower in the area of finance for both advisers and business owners than other disciplines such as marketing. However, finance was often the most required / beneficial to have when trying to assist many businesses. The lack of adequate financial "literacy" and "numeracy" possessed by advisers and owners often looked like the partially sighted leading the blind.

What a comprehensive, interesting and very useful framework. And I completely agree with the recognition that a High Growth Business Coach needs to be multi-faceted - being able to pure coach, performance coach, train, advise, broker, facilitate and consult as needed. Each mode is a tool in the toolbox and the skill is knowing which ones to use at what times and being flexible & competent enough to choose the best one to get the desired result. I'll be printing off the competencies to us as a benchmark to work on my own development.

A useful framework as far as the attributes to look for in coaches and a route map for the coaching process as a whole. It would be helpful if there were some suggestions on how you could evaluate a coach's suitability as it stands you could both praise an individual for the attributes they possess or dam them for the ones that they did not.. I am also concerned that the framework implies that coaching comes before training. To me pure coaching is guiding individuals on how to apply the theory and tools that they have learnt to the specific tasks and problems that they face, so that they become fluent in their use. In my view what comes before training is a combination of mentoring and consultancy to identify the key opportunities, pinpoint the direction, competencies, resources and motivation needed to realise the opportunities and plan their delivery