



On BOS Coaches

WHAT THEY DO AND HOW THEY HELP



On BOS Coaches | Ninety



A Message from the CEO

At Ninety, we get how hard it is to build and run organizations. Our cloud-based Business Operating System (BOS) platform contains each of the essential concepts, tools, and disciplines needed to become great company builders.

We believe we're moving into a new age of Work – what we refer to as [the Age of Understanding, or Work 8.0](#). The coming of this age was inevitable, but the pandemic accelerated its arrival by about ten years as so many people transitioned to remote or hybrid work models.

When we say Work, we mean finding value and purpose in our occupational roles – not just punching a time clock.

One of the most notable characteristics of Work 8.0 is that we now have an almost infinite array of opportunities to find Work. This shift will see more and more people reshuffling where and how they Work.

The good news is we've been studying business building for decades and have a well-informed, time-tested understanding of the essential concepts, tools, and disciplines needed to master great company building.

In short, great companies understand who they are, what they are, where they are, where they want to go, and what it's going to take to get there.

This guide is all about how to master a particular skill, discipline, or toolset. It's one of an array of guides associated with how to build a great company.

Across all our content, rest assured that our relentless focus will always be to simplify the hard work of aligning and focusing teams so organizations can thrive.

Gratefully,

Mark Abbott
CEO + Founder, Ninety.io

Purpose

This Ninety Guide is all about the business coaches who help organizations upgrade their Business Operating Systems (BOSs). Upgraded BOSs reduce the degree of difficulty associated with getting an organization to the point where it's focused, aligned, and consistently thriving. To learn more about BOSs, read our [On Business Operating Systems Guide](#), which previews major BOS options, newer BOS options, and BOS platform options.

Adopting a Business Operating System is a significant step in a company's development. BOSs offer time-tested **concepts, tools, and disciplines** that help organizations master critical competencies, grow, and achieve their Vision.

BOS coaches guide businesses through the BOS upgrade process. It's a methodical, designed process, one validated by tens of thousands of successful implementations and the innumerable, lasting, positive results that ensue.

The world of BOSs is large, diverse, and ever-evolving. It also happens to be one of our specialties. At Ninety, we put our knowledge to good use every day by creating – and continually enhancing – a platform that serves any BOS.

If you're considering employing a BOS Coach to help your organization upgrade your BOS, this guide can serve as a resource and potential launching pad.

We're happy to share our roadmap because delivering free, high-impact company-building information is part of our mission to help organizations focus, align, and thrive.

LET'S DIVE IN.

- **Read it**
 - » We've designed this guide to make it easy to quickly absorb the information. Skim for highlights, glance for big ideas, or dive in for a deeper understanding.
- **Save it**
 - » Continue to use this guide as a high-value reference. Highlight, underline, or circle what's most useful. We've even left space for notes.
- **Share it**
 - » The information and advice on these pages should be shared. We deeply believe that useful resources should be accessible to all.

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What is a BOS Coach?

In business, a **coach** is a trained, experienced professional skilled at guiding individuals and organizations toward the achievement of their goals. Working with the benefit of an outside perspective, a coach inspires growth and makes development easier.

“Business coaching” is a broad term, though, and it can sometimes be confused with other roles. Since this guide focuses on Business Operating Systems and the specific type of business coach who helps companies implement them, it’s useful to start with a few important distinctions.

BUSINESS COACH

In the broader “business coach” category, there are many types: executive coaches, mentors, consulting firms, peer groups, and more. Some focus solely on helping individuals become more effective, while others work with teams.

BUSINESS OPERATING SYSTEM (BOS) COACH

This type of coach is usually associated with a specific Business Operating System. Some coach a single system, while others are licensed to teach several. Their system expertise is vital.

One additional distinction relates to other development-inclined business professionals, such as consultants, advisors, and facilitators. While such individuals can provide significant value to the organizations they serve, it’s helpful to outline the ways in which their services differ from those of a BOS coach.

WHAT A BOS COACH ISN'T	WHAT A BOS COACH IS
Unlike a business consultant , a BOS coach typically does not engage with the client in executing solutions.	The BOS coach works extensively with the client on the business, not in it.
Unlike a business advisor , a BOS coach typically does not simply deliver solutions to the client.	The BOS coach prioritizes helping the client learn to identify their own solutions.
Unlike a business facilitator , a BOS coach typically does not only have constructive conversations.	The BOS coach teaches concepts, tools, and disciplines while providing accountability.

What Does a BOS Coach Do?

While approaches may differ, a BOS coach enables an organization to upgrade their Business Operating System and roll it out to the entire organization.

This work begins with the organization's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) mastering core competencies that focus on processes, people, and value creation. The SLT must be ready to embrace change and work diligently to continually improve on its competencies.

As the organization strengthens each competency, the BOS Coach helps the company move from an Accidental or Intentional BOS to a Designed BOS.



More broadly, though, a BOS coach's job is to help their client effectively implement their chosen BOS. Throughout that process, while utilizing their knowledge, experience, training, and skills, they perform a variety of valuable functions.

1. **Teach** the time-tested concepts, tools, and disciplines of the BOS.
2. **Ensure** that the client implements their BOS effectively and comprehensively.
3. **Provide** accountability for the client's stated goals, priorities, and processes.
4. **Guide** the client through solving problems themselves. (Teach a person to fish!)
5. **Inspire** deeper-level thinking by exploring new ideas, methods, and opportunities.
6. **Identify** blind spots, resulting in reduced complexity and fewer roadblocks.
7. **Challenge** the organizational status quo while providing fresh perspective.
8. **Help** the client address specific issues and accomplish long-sought objectives.

ISSUES THE BOS COACH SOLVES

Another way to express what a BOS coach does is to consider problems the coach frequently resolves. These are familiar issues often encountered by business leaders and organizations that warrant the use of a seasoned coach.

- **Lost Direction** — A BOS coach establishes organizational direction by helping set goals with clear courses of action.
- **Uncomfortable Situations** — A BOS coach navigates personnel challenges with measured, assertive clarity.
- **Lack of Accountability** — A BOS coach creates a culture of accountability to agreed-to standards and processes.
- **Lack of Know-How** — A BOS coach presents the right concepts, tools, and disciplines to the right people at the right time.
- **Over-Complication** — A BOS coach identifies unnecessary roadblocks and complexities and helps simplify them.

Do You Need a BOS Coach?

A BOS coach represents a strategic investment in an organization's development, particularly if that organization desires to upgrade its Business Operating System. To determine if your organization could benefit from the services of a BOS coach, you can ask yourself and your team the following straightforward questions. Answering "No" to any of them suggests that engaging a BOS coach may be a great idea.



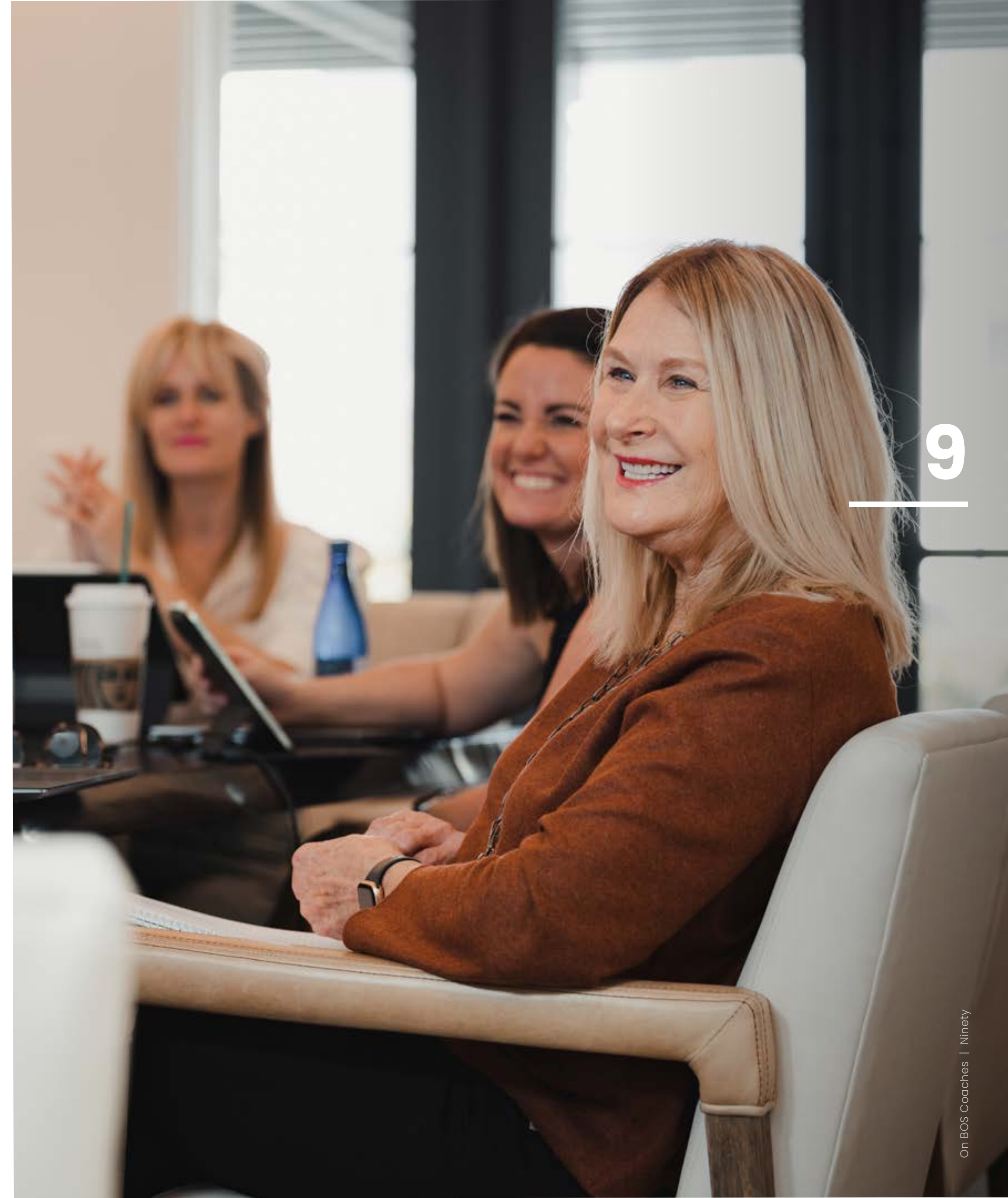
SELF-DIAGNOSTIC

1. Are your **financial results** meeting or exceeding your expectations? Do you have enough net profit for distribution and/or reinvestment into the business? Is your revenue sufficient to attract and retain talent? Is your cash flow stable and rarely causing stress?
 YES NO
2. Is your **market penetration** meeting or exceeding your expectations? Are you satisfied with your market share? Does the overwhelming majority of your customers view your business positively? Are you emerging as one of the top players in your industry?
 YES NO
3. Is your **talent engagement** above 90%? Is your talent engaged uniformly across the organization? Does your business measure talent engagement regularly, multiple times each year? Do you measure it with a specific tool?
 YES NO
4. Does your organization **execute plans** optimally? Are more than 90% of your goals completed on time? Are your organizational objectives accomplished at all levels? Is your leadership confident in the execution capabilities of their departments?
 YES NO
5. Do **reactive actions** take up less than 20% of your organization's time and energy? Are you rarely fighting fires or operating in emergency mode? Are your business's leaders able to make effective decisions quickly and proactively?
 YES NO

Every BOS coach has their own definition of an [Ideal Customer](#). For those associated with a coaching company, the company sets the ideal. Among independent coaches, the ideal varies widely. Regardless, most BOS coaches account for similar factors when engaging potential clients.

ENSURING A GREAT FIT

- **Size** — Most BOS coaches classify a client's size based on the organization's number of people or annual revenue. A smaller business may have 5-10 people and/or bring in \$500k, while a larger one may have 500 and/or \$50M. A coach can work with any size.
- **Industry** — Most BOS coaches work with clients in any industry, as company-building insights, disciplines, and tools are often universal. Some coaches leverage their industry experience and focus on an area of expertise, such as technology or manufacturing.
- **Geography** — Most BOS coaches prefer to work with clients in a specific geographic area, whether it's a state or province, region, or linguistic area. Some welcome traveling to their client's location and/or offer their virtual coaching services worldwide.
- **Chemistry** — Most BOS coaches aim to work with clients with whom they connect. It's easier to overcome organizational challenges when you operate on the same wavelength. Often, the presence of such a connection is apparent even in preliminary conversations.
- **Coachability** — Most BOS coaches see the greatest progress from clients who are open to change and follow through on the work. Coachability is represented by everything from releasing entrenched processes to a willingness to be uncomfortable. The SLT must be fully committed to this process.



A BOS coach can be a game-changing addition to any organization. That said, getting the most out of the coach's involvement depends on several factors. Before engaging a coach, it's worthwhile to evaluate the organization's readiness for the work and commitment required.

OWNER/CEO BUY-IN

To succeed, the business owner or CEO must be 100% committed to the endeavor. Adoption starts from the top. If the person in charge does not trust the coach, embrace the system, and fully support the implementation process, nobody will. (Constructive insight and criticism are certainly accepted.)

LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

The high majority of the organization's leadership, including other executives and management, must also be committed. What does that look like? Rallying around new ideas and changes and focusing on implementation, not getting mired in debate about the merits or drawbacks of the new system.

GROWTH MINDSET

A BOS coach can only impact an organization that's willing and able to grow. That means being open to change and recognizing that new concepts, tools, and disciplines can help the organization turn its [vision](#) into reality. When ownership and leadership assume a growth mindset, development occurs.

FULL COMMITMENT

It takes time to upgrade a BOS, implement new processes and tools, and have new routines become second nature. It also requires real effort to see these changes take effect across the entire company. To succeed, the organization should be ready to commit to the long haul.

"WORKING ON" TIME

Leaders in the organization should plan to spend at least 10% of their time working on the business (as opposed to spending 100% of their time working in it). "Working on" can often feel like orchestration, as the focus is on installing and mastering the BOS's concepts, tools, and disciplines.



Top 5 Questions to Ask a BOS Coach

When searching for the right BOS coach for your organization, it may help to ask the following questions in preliminary conversations. You may also benefit from exploring the coach's personality, tempo, and delivery style, just to ensure they'll be a good fit for your company's culture.

1. **Best Client** — What's the best experience you've had working with a client? Is that experience repeatable?
2. **Experience** — How many leadership teams have you worked with? What's your own leadership experience?
3. **Results** — What percent of your clients produce measurable, positive results? How long did it take to achieve them?
4. **Referrals** — What percentage of your clients refer you to their friends and colleagues? What do they say about you?
5. **Tough Client** — What's a negative client experience you've had? As the coach, what was your role in this failure?

With a clear understanding of the world of Business Operating Systems and BOS coaches, you might be ready for the next step. It's a big one! As you conduct additional research and consider your BOS options, here's a useful roadmap to follow.

CHOOSE A BOS

1. Identify five to seven things you would want in a BOS. What is it that your business needs?
2. Use the information here on BOS options to guide your additional research. Be sure to follow the steps.
3. After discussing the top BOS options with your team, choose one. Congratulations! You've taken a huge step toward growing your business.

CHOOSE A BOS COACH

1. Consult your BOS for information on coaches licensed to implement it. Conduct preliminary conversations.
2. Once you have two to three top BOS coach candidates, meet up to dig deeper. Remember the top five questions to ask.
3. After discussing the BOS coach candidates with your team, make your choice. You're officially on your way!

Takeaway

A BOS coach brings a fresh outside perspective and unique skill set, helping organizations eliminate inefficiencies and adopt new systems, tools, and processes that help their teams focus, align, and thrive. Before looking for a BOS coach, make sure your company and Senior Leadership Team are ready to embrace change. Employing a BOS coach requires a commitment from all internal stakeholders, but in our experience, most companies find the investment well worth it. Choosing the right BOS coach — someone who fits your culture, needs, and goals — is one giant step toward building a great company.



Key Terms

- **Business Operating System (BOS)** — A broad term used to describe how an organization operates. It represents everything from the organization’s structure to how its projects are managed and its people are led. By default, every business has some kind of BOS.
- **BOS Platform** — A cloud-based platform or application that integrates the major components of a best-in-class BOS.
- **Business Coach** — A trained, experienced professional skilled at guiding individuals and organizations toward their goals. In the broader business coach category, there are many types, including executive coaches, mentors, consulting firms, peer groups, and more.
- **BOS Coach** — A business coach associated with a specific coaching company and Business Operating System. Some coach a single system, while others are licensed to teach several. Their BOS experience and expertise is vital.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Thank you for taking the time to explore this guide. Now that you have a sense of how these concepts and their related tools advance a company's Vision, you may be eager to implement them in your own organization. We're here to help! Find more company-building information in the [90u Library](#) or [try Ninety today](#).