Understanding Coaching in its truest essence

ICN Magazine

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“The Number One Magazine for Life and Business Coaching”

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WITH A PURPOSE
AND MUCH MORE!
Editor’s Note

International Coaching News publishes articles about life and business coaching. It is initiated by Noble Manhattan Coaching, Ltd, the longest established company that trains Life Coaches and Executive Coaches in the world. We need articles that embrace the development of life and business coaching. Each issue published by ICN is based on a specific theme that embodies the whole world of coaching.

The THEME of our first issue will mainly talk about an overview of coaching. This would basically include definition, classes, types, pros and cons, difference from mentoring, therapy and counselling. It would also inform our readers why coaching is important and its effect on individuals, groups or businesses.

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Slowly but surely I started to understand why certain relationships in my life weren’t healthy and what was lacking, nine times out of ten it was bad communication. I adjusted my behaviour and worked hard at it. My mother once said “you can’t change others, and you must never try to, you can however change yourself” I was about 14 when she told me this and I recall thinking “yeah yeah, whatever” now this came to bite me!

It has taken me 8 years to learn and grow and I am still doing that and shall continue to until the day I die, Coaching for me is not just a vocation, it’s a way of connecting to myself, others and the world, it’s my way of making a difference no matter how small or big.

I recently attended a seminar about selling – whenever this word was mentioned I noticed the reaction of some of the delegates, they either cringed or became excited, the speaker; Joanna Martin, talked about connecting with your purpose, she explained that if you don’t connect with your work then you’re missing the passion you need to be able to sell your product which ultimately can impact how many sales you get, from personal experience it can also de-motivate you. This seminar really helped me to refresh my connection for coaching; it reminded me why I got into coaching in the first place acknowledging my personal journey thus far.

Connecting with your purpose in life, no matter what field you are in is really powerful, you really hone in on why you are doing what you are, this releases emotions which either make you realize you need to re-evaluate or confirm why you’re in it.

Here are a few simple questions that I use to connect with my purpose:

- Why am I doing this?
- What am I uncomfortable doing and why?
- What am I comfortable doing and why?
- What am I gaining out of this?
- How am I helping others?

The answers change your perspective on the spot, so today I leave you with a thought;

What’s your purpose and are you connecting with it?
What can a COACH do for me?

What is the challenge you are currently confronting with?

This is a key question in understanding the role of a coach. The challenge can be on a personal or professional level. It can be about you and your lover (or the search for one), you and your boss, your colleagues and your career (or the lack of it), your money, self-confidence or creating harmonious relationships in your life. With all these challenges, a coach can help.

A coach is not going to ask you “why” that challenge occurred. Nor is he going to analyze your childhood stories which might justify pretty much all the bad (or good) stuff happening to you today (there are enough psychologists out there taking care of it, anyway). A coach is not going to tell you what to do and how to do it as if you don’t have the ability, intelligence and the gift to figure it out for yourself (consultants might be better placed for that).

A coach is a partner who very much believes in you, your creativity, your resources, your dreams, ambitions and aspirations. He understands that you can feel stuck at times and that, as Einstein puts it, “problems cannot be solved by the level of awareness that created them.” A coach can therefore support you in finding different angles to tackle challenges. He can help you access a different level of awareness where new perspectives unfold, where changes can happen and real solutions occur.

In order to achieve that, a coach truly listens to you, asks effective questions, creates a space where you can feel safe, where you can open up and focus on what really matters to you. There you can find the solutions which better reflect your true, authentic self.

So, a coach proposes you a journey. On the way, you might dare live your true potential to the max, be successful and have the life you deserve.
A coach does for the mind what a personal trainer does for the body

As a master coach specialising in health, I’m honoured to support clients achieve better results with both their mind and their body’s.

Going back over a decade, I admit the coaching profession found me rather than the other way around. During training I heard many definitions of coaching, one of my favourites is “Coaching is about moving from uncertainty and self-doubt into certainty and self-belief!” Fiona Harrold. I also learnt how to distinguish coaching from my other people skills. Consequently, I discovered that while my sales management role meant I was training and mentoring teams, I was actually coaching them too, albeit intuitively.

A few years later having made the successful transition from coaching part-time to full-time, the opportunity arose to relocate from the UK to France. Relocating made me re-evaluate my coaching skills. This time I decided to coach in a field I was passionate about which meant re-training.

Since then I’ve become a perpetual student in all things holistic and health related. It’s been important to diversify and expand my tool kit of skills. Not least because of the global financial situation being what it is today, but to ensure I continue attracting and meeting the individual needs and expectations of clients.

Now an established health coach and living foods practitioner, I offer clients a wider range of holistic support. Responding to client’s needs for 1-2-1 tailored retreats and group workshops means I’ve merged my idyllic homestead with my business.

That business has evolved into something quite special and unique. That’s the beauty of creating my own coaching practice. I’m free to merge and use my skill set to suit the different types of work I enjoy doing.

Likewise, my passion for providing perfect retreats and training workshops means I educate, encourage and empower clients to develop healthier life styles. In addition, I enjoy being able to ‘pay it forward’ and be a volunteer trainer for Cancer Support France.

Of course the main downside to being freelance is quite simply if we don’t work, we don’t get paid. Hence, it’s important to build a global like-minded database to network with. Also to be prepared to diversify into joint ventures whenever the opportunity arises. Like me, just this month I’ve added something new to my repertoire so am co-authoring a book titled Breaking Free: Overcoming Self-Sabotage something the majority of us know a lot about!
In ancient times, kings and often businesspeople consulted monks and cardinals before taking crucial decisions. These monks were the original coaches - people who were seen as equals and sometimes even superiors in terms of their intellect. Coaching has evolved since then and today coaches are seen as partners that can help us uncover our potential, facilitate life transitions and act as our personal sounding boards.

Coaching today is essentially divided into two categories:

**Life coaching & Executive coaching**

While the underlying philosophy for both forms is the same - helping people achieve a shift in consciousness, so that they can adopt new and productive ideas/beliefs; there are certain key differences between the two.

Life Coaching

A life coach is someone who can help you create a more fulfilling life by:

- Assisting you in gaining clarity about your purpose, ambition and aspirations.
- Allowing you to uncover your potential so that you can realize your goals and vision.
- Finding the passion and motivation to work towards your goals persistently.

Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is rapidly gaining popularity in the corporate world. According to Harvard business review, most companies today are engaging coaches to develop the capabilities of high potential performers. HBR (Harvard Business Review) conducted a survey of 140 leading coaches, and also noted that the HR departments of organizations and the management have all become extensively involved in coaching and tracking its progress.

Executive coaching programs are conducted on two basic models: Individual or Group. The former is usually the preferred model for coaching high performers and in situations where confidentiality is essential. Group coaching, on the other hand, is usually recommended for teams grappling with common development issues. Individuals or organizations that do not wish to engage a full-time coach, usually explore options like spot coaching and coaching workshops.

Spot coaching is an apt solution for those who find themselves stuck literally in a spot and need coaching and guidance to get moving again. Coaching workshops, on the other hand, is another version of group coaching that and is focused on working towards one or two pre-determined issues. For example, an organization may engage a coach for a time-management workshop to help their employees become more productive and efficient.
Coaching is not a miracle solution for personal or professional challenges. However, it can certainly help you create miracles by tapping into your own hidden potential and power. Coaching in all firms work with the core belief that each one of us is capable of achieving whatever we set our minds to, the key lies in discovering our passion, motivation and unlimited potential.

Are Corporate Coaching Programs Worth It?

Corporate coaching thus appears to have become an important skill enhancement tool that is fast gaining acceptance and importance across the corporate spectrum.

Constant self-development is the key to success in any career, for those in management even more so. In fact according to the 2010 Personnel Today report, “in the next 10 years we will be seeing coaching departments in companies. These departments would be given the task of managing learning and development activities and will have a Chief Learning Officer at the helm of affairs. The CLO will have a place on the board.”

Corporate coaching thus appears to have become an important skill enhancement tool that is fast gaining acceptance and importance across the corporate spectrum. The development is hardly surprising, considering the kind of results corporate coaching programs have shown.

According to ICF’s (International Coaching Federation) 2009 research study conducted by Price Waterhouse and the Association Resource Centre Inc., 90% of those surveyed reported positive gains in the areas of motivation, self-esteem and confidence.

More recently, a 2011 QA Research (UK) reported that 80% of the organizations they surveyed are now using coaching. In addition to that 95% of the companies surveyed believed that coaching offered benefits to the organization.*

* Source: http://hbr.org/2009/01/what-can-coaches-do-for-you/ar/1

How does corporate coaching work?

Corporate coaching programs generally involve confidential weekly sessions, either with individual employees, or with a group of employees with similar coaching needs.

The first session of most coaching programs is about goal setting. The coach and employee usually set two to three goals to work towards; out of these at least one is a personal goal.

For example, corporate coaching for a sales manager may involve the following goals:

* Increase sales by x% in y months
* Improve communication and develop a better sense of team spirit in my department
* Manage personal and professional stress better

Once the goals are decided, the employees are coached extensively during a pre-decided time frame. The coach and the employees track the progress regularly. Based on the results, the organization may or may not decide to renew the coaching contract.

The payment policy for coaching varies from organization to organization. Some companies foot the entire bill, whereas in others, employees are expected to pay a certain percentage of the total fee.
Hiring external coaches, on the other hand, is considered more useful for training senior management and in situations where sensitive feedback may have to be shared with the board. Moreover, external coaches bring greater specialization and a wider experience to the table.

Seeing the different benefits that both in-house and external coaching offer, many organizations often choose a combination of both, i.e. they employ their own team of trained internal coaches and hire external coaches for additional support and training.

There is some debate about whether coaching should be done in-house. While the practice of developing a coaching culture in the organization offers several benefits, including more sensitivity to the organization’s culture and unspoken rules, easier availability/accessibility, better rapport building between the coach (manager) and employees, and creating role models for the employees within the organization, etc.

However, the challenge here is that the organization will have to arrange for consistent training and development of its in-house coaches.

You cannot teach humans anything. You can only help them discover it within themselves.”  
---Galileo

Galileo’s words hold the essence of what coaching is. Training, mentoring, and counseling are all different words that people tend to associate coaching with. None of these, however, aptly describe it.

SO, WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is essentially a partnership between two people, wherein the coach helps the client create a more fulfilling life. The whole process is based on sharing of experiences and knowledge.

It’s like training, is it??

No, it isn’t. Unlike training, the focus here is not teaching specific skills to the client, but facilitating their thinking so that they can imbibe new ideas, make powerful choices and choose new attitudes and perspectives. In essence, the outlook of a coaching program is broader than mere training.

Visualising a totally different perspective layout

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Are Mentoring and Coaching the Same? How different is coaching from counselling? How can coaching help?

Are Mentoring and Coaching the Same? A lot of people often get confused between coaching and mentoring as well. There is, however, a key difference - the mentor and the protégé are not equals in the relationship. To give you an example, if you decided to work with a coach to improve your attitude towards success and money, you would be sharing your experiences with the coach and he/she would help you view your ideas from a different perspective. The focus will be on helping you evolve by working towards your goal together. A mentor protégé relationship on the other hand, would involve learning from the mentor's experiences. In this case your mentor would be your guide and advisor, not a partner.

How different is coaching from counselling? Counselling is another word that often gets mixed up with coaching. The key point of difference here is that counselling begins with a problem and the focus of coaching is achieving certain goals. While your coach may counsel you occasionally, what you have to remember is that it isn’t his/her only job. The idea of coaching is to empower you to deal with your problems and challenges on your own. Moreover, coaching is a continuous process, unlike counselling, which is need based.

How can coaching help? Coaching can help you uncover your true potential, become more self-aware and enhance the overall quality of your life. The underlying philosophy of coaching is that each one of us is capable of building the life that we desire, all that we need to do is to take the blinders off and see the vast ocean of possibilities that we can explore. To be more specific, coaching can help us in the following key areas: • Navigate critical life situations with ease • Enhance our people skills • Uncover your value system • Overcome the barriers of conditioning to discard limiting beliefs • Choose new ideas and beliefs that can help you create the life you want • Help you discover your latent/hidden passion • Clear your mind so that you can sort your priorities and realize what you really want

All of us desire to lead more meaningful lives, while coaching cannot magically create that life for us, it offers us the tools to create one. Coaching, thus, is all about empowering yourself to devise a roadmap to a successful life.

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Coaching Cultures within Client Organizations

How to Influence the Development of Coaching Cultures within Client Organizations

As coaches we have a powerful influence on our clients and the organizations in which they work. The coaching profession is evolving and in our fast paced, highly technological world we can add value by introducing our clients to the most potent organizational change process for creating a high performance culture.

An organization’s culture can exert a powerful influence on business performance. By “culture” we mean the organization’s unwritten rules, values, norms, behaviors and other practices that collectively define how work gets done in the organization and how business strategies and goals are achieved. Many organizations have attempted to change their culture in order to better meet demands for improved performance and talent management in a complex, diverse and global business environment. Leading organizations worldwide now harness the benefits of using executive coaching both externally and internally to assist leaders in their personal and professional development.

Developing a coaching culture is a very real proposition for many organizations, but few ever understand or are aware that they have the intellectual capability within their own ranks to achieve their potential. Simply stated, most organizations fail to recognize that they could have a team of elite coaches to be called upon to take their organization to the next level. And this is only one benefit of developing a coaching culture within your client’s organization.

It is true that the average organization fails to capitalize on the knowledge, experience and skills of its people, placing too much emphasis on the high-flyer, or identified talent within the organization to the detriment of the majority of people within their business. Implementing a coaching culture enables your client to empower their workforce, harnessing the skills and talents of individuals at all levels within the organization to offer a consistent and stable form of development for the organization.

What is a coaching culture?

Firstly when you first begin to open the conversation with a potential coaching client, it can help to define the process of coaching itself, as an integrated development process which helps individuals to grow through the setting and achievement of goals - goals in which they believe passionately, both personally and professionally. You can then talk about tapping into the individual’s unique experience, talents, and wisdom, coaching out improvements, be it a new product, a new way of doing business, or a new way of interacting with and leading others. Simply put, coaching enables the individual to fulfill their potential, and a coaching culture enables the organization to do the same.

A culture of coaching is a culture of leadership, one that brings out the best in people. It is a culture that challenges people to continually grow, to search for new answers and new perspectives. It is a culture of high engagement and positively focused energy. It enables individuals to step back from the routines of their daily activity and identify new solutions to those insurmountable problems which can often be challenging to even acknowledge. A coaching culture is a constantly evolving and dynamic culture where learning and development is embraced as the norm, and all individuals understand and actively engage in their contribution to achieving the organization’s goals.

In recent CIPD research in the UK, Clutterbuck and Megginson describe a coaching culture as one where coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together and where commitment to improving the organization is embedded in a parallel commitment to improving the people.

You will know your clients have a coaching culture when:

- Personal growth, team development and organizational learning are integrated within the organization
- Learning and Development Strategy is fully aligned with the organization’s strategic objectives
- Coaching is considered a positive development opportunity rather than a remedial intervention
- Coaching is seen as a joint responsibility between managers and their direct reports
- Individuals are recognized and rewarded for knowledge-sharing and developing others
- Individuals are able to engage in constructive and positive confrontation
- Feedback is welcomed (even in the Senior Team) and actively sought for continuous improvement
- There is good understanding at all levels about effective coaching, roles and responsibilities
- There are strong role models for excellence in coaching practice
- Time for reflection is valued
- There are effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing barriers to learning

Strategies to achieve a coaching culture within your client’s organization

There are many options for achieving a coaching culture within your client’s organization, however there is no ONE right way to do it. No two organizations are the same, so the key to your success lies in defining the right way forward for YOUR particular organization.

You must always start from exactly where you are – which often means defining your client’s current organizational reality. This is a necessary prerequisite before you begin any process design as it not only gives a clear assessment of current metrics, leadership and culture to benchmark results against in the future but it also enables you to design an implementation plan which is fully integrated into the organization’s business and L&D objectives. A robust process where improvements can be captured, implemented and rewarded.

Our experience at Jayne Warrilow International LLC suggests that merely implementing coaching skills training throughout the organization and making coaching available to employees is not enough to create a coaching culture. As with any cultural change program it requires a serious commitment from the organization and a high level of engagement from the Senior Executive Team.

The stark reality is that even where coach training has been of a high quality, most managers put very little effort into coaching when the training is not fully aligned with culture change initiatives. Even though the company may have provided coaching skills training, unless there is a robust coaching culture, there will be very little overall impact on the performance of the business, on retention of talent, or on the achievement of strategic goals. The transition from the coaching skills workshop into taking action back on the job can prove challenging and must not be ignored within the design process.

Here are some points to be considered when in the early stages of design; they will not all be relevant to your client organization but are worthy of discussion in the early stages:

01 Clearly DEFINE “COACHING” within the business.

Remember coaching is not necessarily confined to one-on-one face-to-face interactions, there are many methods of delivery (telephone, internet) and you can utilize group, team and action learning methodologies.
Developing strategies to change a company’s culture soon leads to confronting the issue of scale and globalization. Specifically, how can a sufficient number of people in the organization gain the learning experiences they need in order to initiate, grow and sustain culture change? How will you approach issues of cross cultural coaching? The solutions here lie in selecting the right people, investing in their development and positioning them as role models for the new coaching culture. In turn, as these people coach others, who are coached, the organization will place special emphasis on utilizing and improving their own coaching capabilities. Many organizations opt for creating a cascading effect using leaders as role models and providing them with coaching skills training. Others define an internal cadre of elite coaches who are positioned across the organization for maximum effect. Either approach ensures maximum return on investment and leverages scale to an advantage.

Ensuring that all managers have at least the basic skills of coaching.

“SEED” the organization with leaders and managers who can role-model excellence in coaching.

Our master coach programs last a year and aim to equip these internal managers and HR professionals with a wide enough experience of coaching and related developmental approaches to tackle most problems they may encounter, both as coaches in their own right and in helping other managers grow in coaching skills. As a group, they also provide a valuable resource of experience to support each other and less experienced coaches. The core process is action learning – participants share the learning burden and explore issues together in a series of ongoing and parallel coaching and learning experiences. This also provides opportunities for contributions of knowledge from outside experts. At the end of the program, they have the confidence and experience to act as real champions for coaching.

Providing an ADVANCED COACHING SKILLS program for Senior Managers.

The more senior a manager is, the more important it is that they coach well – the costs of mistakes and lost talent rise exponentially the higher up the organization one goes. An Advanced Coaching Skills program builds on the existing knowledge and competence of the manager, providing a range of techniques and approaches that broaden his or her portfolio of responses. In some cases, a whole day is devoted to practicing these techniques, with expert feedback to each pair from a master coach, who observes them.

Choice of coaches is critical to SUCCESS.

Coaching is becoming a dominant element of the culture, then the choice of coaches is critical. Focusing on recruiting those who are high performers sends clear signals to the rest of the business. One would expect that top performers have been fast tracked (as a direct result of their achievements), and this communicates the message that specific focused behaviors are encouraged and rewarded. It is also important to focus on those who have promise as new leaders – who may not have the experience but do have the willingness and confidence to be included in this team. You need to decide what will identify a good choice of coach within your organization. Some critics may see some approaches as elitist, or you may prefer the counter argument about counter-coaching with feedback and refusing to dilute standards of high performance. Whatever your decision it should facilitate the achievement of goals and convey clearly how the culture will evolve.

Our experience has been that this can make all the difference to the outcomes of any cultural development. Senior leadership teams whose members focus on providing each other timely feedback, learning together and building upon their interdependent strengths typically show greater capacity to achieve organizational improvement than teams who do not follow these practices.

Choosing traits and systems barriers to developmental behaviors.

The excuses managers give for not devoting sufficient time to coaching or to encouraging coaching between members of the team are many. Top of the list is usually inadequate time. Much can be achieved by helping managers develop better prioritizing skills, general time management and establishing regular and sacrosanct periods of reflective space. Other barriers to coaching behavior are often more subtle – for example, a general reluctance to address difficult behavioral issues or to admit to weaknesses. Initial research to establish these common barriers can prove invaluable. From this understanding, it is possible to conduct educational and motivational campaigns and to coach managers to overcome their own specific barriers.

Ensuring that top management provides strong, positive role models.

Integration of coaching modules into the leadership strategy.

Organizations that are committed to creating a coaching culture go one step further, and integrate coaching modules into their leadership development programs. It is essential to bridge the gap between the importance and effectiveness of demonstrating the business value of coaching and linking coaching outcomes to business objectives. Any coaching needs to be fully integrated into the business strategy and the L&D initiatives.

Measuring and providing feedback on the quality, relevance and accessibility of coaching.

It’s important to have a clear picture of what coaching is happening and how effective it is, especially from the perspective of the coachee. Identifying pockets of good and poor practice allows for remedial action. Coaching supervision needs to be considered as a process to sustain quality and high performance of individual coaches.
Recognize and reward coaching culture behaviors.

Once any behavior change kicks in, it is important to reinforce the change to increase its sustainability. If managers who do not coach or invest significant effort in developing others still receive promotions and high rewards, it sends a very negative message. Some organizations are now making developmental performance an integral part of their succession planning and annual bonus systems.

EQUIPPING all employees with the skills to be coached effectively.

Current research indicates that coaching works best when the coachee is both a willing and an informed participant. The more the coachee understands about the coaching process, the easier it is to help the coach help them.

For example, effective coachees learn how to phrase questions in ways that will elicit the kind of help they want. Greater impact can also be gained by regarding coaching as a team activity (most coaching is actually done by peers, not superiors, anyway) and engaging the whole team in learning how to make coaching a day to day activity.

Integrate coaching with other people-management processes including Learning and Development, job-competency and talent/knowledge management processes.

At the beginning of implementation individuals will be seeking levels of trust within the process. They will form perceptions of the overall supportiveness of the organization towards this development activity. Communication is critical, as is identifying measures which can act as a broad benchmark of progress towards a coaching culture.

Measuring the overall success of coaching culture implementation.

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The need for a coherent approach.

Institutionalizing the culture change is critical for sustainability. Coaching approaches and behaviors must be integrated with the appropriate people processes so that these become a natural way of doing business.

Coaching flows in all directions up, down and laterally.

For a coaching culture to exist coaching needs to flow in all directions, making a networked web across the organization consisting of many connections between people in the same departments, across departments, between teams, up and down across the hierarchy.

The organization has a common coaching practice and language.

Many organizations use the GROW model of coaching as their basis of implementation. As a model it can be expanded to fit the organization culture clearly defining coaching practice, methods of practice, rules of engagement, even how to organize and conduct a coaching conversation. A singular approach and methodology enables a shared understanding of HOW to coach. It is essential to unpack the confusion which can arise around WHAT coaching is, WHEN to coach, WHEN NOT to and HOW TO WORK OUT the difference coaching is making to performance.

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The 10 Key Success Factors for the effective use of Coaching in Organisations

Coaching is one of the fastest growing business phenomena in the world and is increasingly used as a business tool and becoming ingrained into organisational life.

Companies have started to think through their coaching programmes in a more systematic way and to tailor their coaching initiatives more and more to their specific context and business strategy.

Accordingly, you find an increasing number of great coaching success stories in enterprises today.

But what makes coaching excel and produce the desired benefits in business?

Frank Bresser Consulting were the first to define the design, implementation and optimization of coaching programmes in companies as a distinct discipline and have developed a comprehensive set of management tools for the effective planning and realisation of coaching initiatives in business.

The most basic and most well-known one is the ’10 Key Success Factors Framework’ for the optimal use of coaching in organisations (Management Tool 1), which can be considered as a “must know” for everybody actively involved in coaching programmes today. Its earliest version was initially developed in 2005, and it has since continuously been further tested, refined and optimized.

According to this tool, managers and directors responsible for the design, implementation and optimization of coaching initiatives, need to have the following ten key success factors in mind for coaching in organisations to be successful:

1. Develop a company-specific understanding of coaching.
2. Adopt a systematic approach.
3. Choose an adequate level of organisational penetration of coaching.
4. Involve the top.
5. Promote coaching as a positive developmental tool.
6. Create an optimal win-win value for all stakeholders.
7. Achieve full consistency of coaching with business strategy.
8. Ensure complete transparency of the whole coaching concept.
9. Evaluate effectively and carefully.
10. Ensure high integrity and quality at all levels.

In addition, there are underlying factors that have impact on the application of all above key success factors and thus form some kind of their underlying base:

A. Consider the cultural dimension.
B. See the use of coaching as a continuous learning process.
C. Build coaching programme implementation and improvement intelligence.

* There are two main ways of making use of the 10 key success factors framework: on the one hand, it may serve you as a central thread and starting point to plan, design and implement new coaching programmes. On the other hand, you may use it as a measure and means to review and optimize existing coaching initiatives. Either way, you will find it an invaluable tool to support achieving outstanding results through coaching.
A lot of people I am meeting lately are flirting with the idea of changing their career and becoming a professional coach. The motives are diverse and often a mix of: not relating with the purpose of their current company and its day-to-day implementation, desiring a lifestyle allowing for more personal space, aspiring to find for themselves the secrets of a happy and successful life.

And many progress the flirting stage into serious dating (attending coaching communities), engagement (enrolling in a coaching school) and even marriage (activating as a coach). But how many of us coaches can boast a “happily ever after”?

The 2012 Global Coaching Study by the International Coaching Federation reveals that even in the most developed geographies (both overall economically and as a coaching industry) the average yearly income is around USD 50,000 (or EUR 40,000) in the USA and Western Europe, with the median at USD 28,000-29,000 (or less than 23,000 EUR), meaning that 50% of coaches earn below this threshold. And 50% of coaches earn below this threshold. And Western Europe, with the median at USD 28,000-29,000 (or less than 23,000 EUR), meaning that 50% of coaches earn below this threshold.

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What does it take to “make it” as a coach?

Not too many years ago, as a fresh graduate of Noble Manhattan, the oldest coach training school outside of the USA, I confidently started to bring forth my own dream of success and worked out through overwhelm, confusion of hopelessness some key principles which keep me on the way:

1. Become a skilful coach. Period. This is not coming as a surprise to you, certainly. Despite being at the foundation of a successful career, it is not necessarily the most critical factor. But hesitate no more:

   a. Choose a great school with tradition and great credentials and apply yourself to absorb all there is. Read and enrol in programs way beyond that. Never cease learning.

   b. Maybe first and foremost: keep coaching, coach loads while you’re in school, beyond the required amount of hours to graduate, coach loads before you formally launch yourself as a coach; for when you’ll do that you’ll want to feel confident that you will add great value to your clients and thus worth a high fee from the early beginning.

   c. Get feedback on your coaching and learn from observing others coaches. I’m sure you’ll find many ways to do that in your own case.

2. Figure out the essence of marketing and sales of a coaching practice. There is so much noise these days with social media, so many perfect lead generation techniques and so many messages and articles out there that you must have a sense that becoming a “social marketing expert” is not it.

   a. It would be good to discover a specific affinity to a target customer and a particular area of coaching, but it is not necessary. Niche-ing is mainly a mass marketing tool. You may want to choose a niche/specialty but you don’t need to, if none speaks to you (yet). Coaches are not supposed to be specialists in a field, right? Just specialists in making people thrive, no matter their objective.

   b. Create a system and a process around generating clients. It is great when you land your first paying client or a large contract, but you often find yourself in dead months afterwards. So apply yourself at creating a constant and continuous process of getting leads and converting them into clients.

   c. This may surprise you: No, having an overly-engineered (SEO-ed and all) website and using social media does not constitute the nuts-and-bolts of coaching marketing. And just how much web-traffic and “Likes” are enough for you? And how many result in actual clients? Also, talking about who you are, what you know, your certifications and your diplomas does not really serve the client.

3. Walk the talk, have an inspiring life and be an inspiring person yourself first.

   a. It is said that you cannot give what you don’t have, you cannot take your client where you haven’t been first. Would you choose a dentist with bad teeth? Or a fat nutritionist? Make sure that whatever areas you’re working with your clients on you’re already excelling at; or maybe not excelling yet, but you have a terrific personal progress story.

   b. Be a great person - with clear values, great attitudes and convictions which you shine whenever you enter a room, just through your simple presence. And of course live them even when no one is watching, be fully congruent with who you are as a coach. You cannot acknowledge a client in a session and then bitch about the cable guy on Facebook. You cannot pretend you are a listener (which coaches are) and then you don’t connect and cater to your audience when you hold a speech or a workshop. You cannot coach on a wonderful life if you’re a stressed out, self-absorbed and absent person yourself.

   c. Isn’t it obvious? Have a coach yourself. Not only because it builds the credibility of your profession, but because it will help you succeed! There are thousands of articles, books, programs, experts worth reading and following… But to what good if you don’t act on at least one of them? And what more wonderful method of taking big action other than being accompanied by a coach?

There is certainly much depth to the topic and every single point highlighted here.

write me at: magda@riseandshinecoach.com
if you’d like to know more.

There are certainly truths and myths you will discover for your self.

But in the end, all that counts is what you are committed to do: be a “happily ever after coach”?

Magda Niculescu

Truth or myth?

9 TIPS ABOUT BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL COACH

A lot of people I am meeting lately are flirting with the idea of changing their career and becoming a professional coach. The motives are diverse and often a mix of: not relating with the purpose of their current company and its day-to-day implementation, desiring a lifestyle allowing for more personal space, aspiring to find for themselves the secrets of a happy and successful life.

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How come that so many of the very people whose role is to assist others to thrive cannot thrive themselves?...
HOW CAN YOU
MAKE a Diamond
SPARKLE MORE?

SPARKLE COACHING
MODEL

Laura Komocsin &
Andrea Szabados

It is a common fact that most coaching frameworks originate from the English-speaking world. People are often keen on acronyms, especially if the initials form a relevant and positive word (like the most well-known GROW) or if every word has the same initial (e.g. the 7C’s framework from Mick Cope).

The framework Laura Komocsin from Hungary has created is called the “SPARKLE Model”. Similarly to other process frameworks, this model also demonstrates the typical stages of a coaching process, but if you review this short description you will see the difference. To make this model more attractive not only for coaches but clients as well, we collected songs for each stage to add value to the coaching process.

The author, Laura Komocsin studied and worked in the Netherlands for a few years. In Amsterdam she saw how enthusiastically diamond polishers work and realized how similar it was to the coaches’ job.

They start out with a piece of diamond in the rough and we all know how beautiful the end result is; the diamond sparkles like nothing else.

We also “polish” our clients to help them achieve their goals and really sparkle… That is the reason why this model is called ‘SPARKLE’.

Naturally, as we say, “Nobody coaches the way I do” (A motto of the Hungarian Organizational Development Society, see www.szmt.hu) No coaching model should be viewed too rigidly, and neither should the SPARKLE Model. This framework was designed only to assist in understanding and constructing the stages of the process and to serve as a reference on what a coach can do and what tools can be used in each stage as well as what the client can expect.
Below you will find a short description of each stage and a song recommended by Andrea Szabados who strongly believes in applying music in coaching processes. Obviously, coachees can leverage the most power from the music they really like.

In this stage, the coach and the coachee assess the starting point and the challenges faced by the client. To properly evaluate the current situation, you can choose from among multiple methods and a vast number of tools. First of all, however, it is essential to win the client’s confidence so that they know that they are not being badgered with questions (Questioning Technique), “spied upon” (Shadow Coaching), “investigated” (360 Degree Assessment) out of sheer curiosity, but rather this is all done to help them.

The song to listen to at this stage might be e.g. ‘Feeling good’ by Michael Bublé.

The Situation stage should include assessing the coachee’s openness and secret zones that are best avoided (for example, in business coaching, the coachee may stipulate that no personal issues should be covered). If you are aware of taboos, then you can employ opening methods and later perform detailed research based on this. Coaching tools coupled with psychological background as well as different creative writing techniques may be utilized in this stage. With all means at his or her disposal, the coach will effectively use the tools of Active Listening and Questioning Techniques.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIAMOND sparkle more?

S. Situation

In this stage, the coach and the coachee assess the starting point and the challenges faced by the client. To properly evaluate the current situation, you can choose from among multiple methods and a vast number of tools. First of all, however, it is essential to win the client’s confidence so that they know that they are not being badgered with questions (Questioning Technique), “spied upon” (Shadow Coaching), “investigated” (360 Degree Assessment) out of sheer curiosity, but rather this is all done to help them.

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P. Positioning (yourself)

In the next stage, the client, assisted by the coach, defines his or her desired vision, sets the direction and the aim. Here, the coach basically helps the client decide upon a reasonable objective that can be achieved (a SMART goal). Tools used in this stage can be divided into two large groups depending on how visual the client is. For instance, resuming the previous stage, Montage, Wheel of Life, Old House - New House techniques or Coat-of-Arms may be used. However, there are clients who bring to the first coaching session their individual SMART goal summarized in a few words.

This stage can be supported by listening to ‘Perfect’ by Fairground Attraction.

A. Alternatives

In this stage, coachee and coach focus on identifying and outlining options and possibilities to be able to determine how the goal could be accomplished. The importance of this stage lies in consideration. Instead of jumping to make a decision, the client should be able to consider several options and make a well-informed decision and Route in the next stage. The coach can inspire brainstorming using various tools such as Magnification, Consulting the Encyclopaedia, Ideal People, Action Plan, or the CREATE Model, although he or she might also achieve a satisfactory result using spontaneous Questioning Technique.
In this stage, the coach will support the client in making a choice from among the available alternatives. The best way to help may be applying Pros and Cons Analysis, but other options in the coach's toolkit should be also offered. You can deploy the Mercedes Symbol or the CHOICE Model if you have not used them in a previous stage, but it might be sufficient to project yourself as a challenging and/or "confrontational" coach.

At the end of this phase the coachee will have an action plan describing what to do, when and how.

**K. Key Obstacles**

In this stage, the coach supports the client in going the distance on the selected route to ensure that he or she would accomplish his or her goal instead of retreating upon meeting the first obstacle. Until this point, clients usually enjoy the coaching sessions. In general, neither the diagnosis (Situation), the goal-setting (Positioning), the working out of alternatives, nor the decision making (Route) are "painful" for them. No later than at this point, however, the client is required to leave his or her comfort zone. He or she may even start cancelling regular appointments. In this case, a coach should not take offense. It is a completely natural process, and it is advisable to make the coachee aware of it. To do so, a skilled coach has his or her tools, such as the Sailing ship, Magic Shop, Rubber Band, Buckets and Balloons provided they were not already deployed in the Positioning stage.

Why don't you use the power of music and listen to 'Everybody's Changing' by Keane?

**L. Leverage**

In this phase coaches support their clients taming self-defeating behaviors. There are plenty of useful tricks and tools to utilize when clients start thinking about giving up but there is no excuse they have to go on if they want to reach their desired outcome.

The dedicated song for this phase is 'Strong enough' by Cher.

**E. Evaluation**

Coaching engagements ideally come to an end when clients have accomplished their goal. In this case, the coach celebrates the accomplishment together with the client, and this is the point where (in a corporate coaching situation) they both report to the Sponsor (if any) on the joint efforts taken.