

COACH

Link

OCT/NOV 2013

Advancing the art, science and practice of professional coaching

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ICF Australasia Visibly Flourishing

What does this mean to you?

As I write my very first President's note as incoming president, I am sitting in a mood of ambition about the year ahead, buoyed in the knowledge I am surrounded by a talented team of volunteer coaches who are passionate about our profession and committed to making a difference locally, regionally and globally.

In late November, [Branch Presidents](#) and [Board members](#) gathered in Sydney to co-create a sustainable strategic plan for 2014-2015

focused on the theme, ***ICF Australasia Visibly Flourishing***. As a virtual leadership team spanning Australia and New Zealand, the opportunity to meet face-to-face with all twenty-three leaders, including newly appointed Branch Presidents and Board Members was a real privilege.

Coaching and ICF Australasia on everyone's lips

One of the aspirational goals to emerge during our strategic planning process was for Coaching and ICF Australasia to be on everyone's lips. All leaders passionately agreed that raising the profile of coaching and the ICF within Australasia was a priority focus for our members. Several project groups were formed to explore a range of initiatives to advance this goal and I look forward to sharing further details with you in the coming weeks.

As a member, I'd like to challenge you to consider one step you can take to ensure *ICF Australasia is Visibly Flourishing* and *Coaching and ICF Australasia is on everyone's lips*? I invite you to join us in bringing this aspirational goal to fruition.

Moving forward we will continue to build on the contributions and achievements outlined in the 2012-2013 [Annual Report](#) and work already completed to launch the new website.

Members Visibly Flourishing?

Equally important to me is to see you, our members, flourishing. So, as a one year ends and new one begins, what is it that will enable you to flourish as a coach – in your business, within your chosen profession, niche or vocation? In the spirit of appreciative inquiry, what are you grateful for and what are you making time to celebrate? To visibly flourish in 2014 what will you need to pay attention to and focus on the most? What might you accept, or let go of, to sustain your energy and momentum?

As coaches we support our clients in so many ways. We acknowledge their aspirations, encourage their learning and celebrate the progress they have made. My hope is for every member to also support themselves with equal amounts of presence, rigor and compassion.

Warmly,
Janine Warden
President ICF Australasia

Systemic Coaching:

A Shift in Organisational Coaching Practices

Exploring changes in organisational coaching practices, Josie McLean PCC discusses the organisation as a 'system' and the benefits of a dynamic-based coaching approach.

Current coaching practices in organisations assist one individual or one team at a time. The underlying assumption of this approach for coaches is that if you affect enough parts of the whole, the whole will be transformed.

Perhaps, instead, consider that it is the interactions *between* people, teams and divisions that contribute to the emergence of what we term organisational culture.

Recent books and training programs have introduced the concept of systems thinking to coaching. Thomas Kuhn observes in *'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions'* that scientists often cling to old paradigms while only making small changes at the margins to accommodate the new information. So it is with organisational coaching methodologies.

Changes in the industry now recognise that an organisation may be better viewed as a living system.

The next logical step for organisational coaching is to develop a new theoretical framework that reflects current understandings of this way of 'systems thinking,' combined with its near cousin 'the paradigm of complexity'.

The term that might be applied to this way of coaching is 'coaching systemically.'

What are the Benefits?

Understandably, before moving into such new territory, you may want to consider the benefits of changing your methodologies.

1. A potential increase in the success of implemented change.
Published in the Harvard Business Review in 1990, John Kotter's seminal article *'What Leaders Really Do'*, is one of the many to note the failure rate of organisational change initiatives. Subsequent studies show no improvement over the intervening 30 years. Between 70% and 90% of all organisational change initiatives fail to achieve the intended outcomes. Coaching systemically offers the prospect of improving this record.

2. Human energy and cost efficiencies
By seeking "leverage points" in the system – places where small changes can make big differences – you are able to be far more efficient than when employing the current practice of widespread individual coaching. Although systemic coaching will not necessarily replace individual coaching, depending on the size of the organisation, the ratio of coaches to employees may fall dramatically.

What is Required?

- Consider your client as a whole organisation. You can then focus on the dynamic within the 'system' rather than just the individual or team within the whole.
- Approach 'planning and goal setting' with a focus on your client's vision and intentions for themselves. Place an emphasis on learning as the path emerges.
- Manage progress and accountability through the process rather than deliverable outcomes.

These competencies and knowledge combined with courage and humility will enable you to let go of old management wisdoms and perform with predetermined outcomes as the exception rather than the rule.

Consistency and predictability, which encourage the desire for control, are now absent. Every event is a product of its own unique history and context.

The Process

The following is a possible process to allow you to coach systemically.

In addition to reflecting the principles of the behaviour of living systems it incorporates an understanding of Ron Heifetz's adaptive leadership framework, first published in 2009 by the Harvard Business Press.

1. Contract for extensive access. A long-term assignment with regular reviews and a partnership relationship takes its own time. Artificial time constraints can sabotage success.
2. Engage with your client to determine their vision for their organisation. Help them co-create a shared, values-rich vision. This story must emerge *from* rather than be imposed *on* the system (organisation).
3. Engage at the level of a values rich vision rather than concrete and pre-determined goals.
4. Talk with many people throughout the organisation and tap into the informal networks to gain a sense of your valuable leverage points.
5. Interpret observations from a systemic perspective rather than an individual perspective. For example, what does it mean that 75% of the high-flying recruits from 3 years ago are now 'out of favour'?

6. Make interventions based on your observation, then, observe again. This 'action learning' cycle will be familiar to many of you. Interventions are the coaching conversations. Ask what people understand by certain statements, what they really want, and maybe why they are holding back. Interventions are at the perceived leverage points and very few of you will be surprised that many leverage points are inside people's heads
7. Additionally, leverage points may be specific individuals, teams or networks – or the dynamics between the parts, in the form of what may be termed 'feedback loops'. The coaching provided at leverage points is directed at learning how to liberate the organisation's capacity to bring its shared vision into being and enables people (individually or in teams) to reveal their own solutions and paths forward.
8. Assess progress with the organisational sponsor(s) at regular intervals.

The above process is simplistic in theory. In practice, it is messy. It requires a heavy investment of time to develop a deep understanding of the system. Further, it requires a sponsor(s) within the client organisation who trusts you. Also, it benefits from you having a mentor or supervisor with an understanding of complexity, with whom to debrief (allowing the coach to self regulate and explore her own mental models).

Theory into action

The organisation: a local council with 400 employees.

Over a ten-year period, coaching systemically emerged from briefs that included: executive and group coaching; development and delivery of leadership programs; and a senior management team development program.

Coaching systemically was able to emerge due to the degree of trust and the enduring relationship between the coach practitioner and the organisation.

During this time some pivotal observations included:

- Many staff were reluctant to take risks and lead a change without authorisation - interpreted as a common mental model "it's not my job to change things" that appeared to reduce the organisation's capacity to deliver its vision.
- Despite the fact this organisation is nationally recognised for its positive leadership and culture, many staff displayed fear. This emanated from another mental model; "it's not my place to speak up." Staff shied away from providing feedback to the executive.
- The executive, trying to protect senior management from certain issues (mental model "its our job to protect"), created an unintended situation where senior managers appeared to withhold information from their staff creating the need for inefficient reworks. These observations and interpretations were 'tested' in different interventions, including:
 - Addressing the "its not my job to change things" mental model. Those participating in the leadership programs and in the team development program with the senior management group revealed they also thought that "shaping the wheels of the organisation" was not their job. Theirs was but to "keep the current wheels turning".
 - Strengthening of a feedback loop, by the coach being the messenger of the feedback to the executive team. Both the content of the feedback and the need for a third party to provide that feedback was discussed. The conversation challenged executives' mental models around being accessible. This heightened their awareness of 'authority' and how others perceived it.

The outcomes?

Direct cause and effect is problematic when employing the lens of complexity, so many other influences exist. Still, there appears to be a greater

sense of people taking personal responsibility for doing things differently.

A trend is emerging where more people are creating informal and less structured conversations and networks, reaching across functional lines, to talk about issues of common interest. Staff are inviting people who seem to be important (leverage points) to influence desirable outcomes. The CEO is engaging staff in free-flowing conversations about the organisational vision. The environment for more experimentation and innovation to bring the organisational vision into being appears to have been enhanced.

Moving Forward

Systemic coaching in practice challenges the current notion of what coaching is while resting comfortably within the 'paradigm of complexity'.

To coach systemically requires you to understand the behaviour of living systems and to have the courage to step out from behind traditional models, to acknowledge the dynamics between the parts as a means of understanding the organisation as a whole. ■

Let's Talk.

If this article has resonated with you, please join me on an ICF Australasia sponsored Virtual Professional Development call scheduled for 7th March 2014.

Josie McLean, PCC (2003 ICF Australasia President and 2009 ICF President's Award recipient) coaches individuals and teams and is the founder of The Partnership. Through doctoral research (University of Adelaide) in the field of organisational sustainability she has developed a deep understanding of complexity, change and leadership. Josie studied at Harvard University with Ron Heifetz. www.the-partnership.com.au

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Mentor Coaching or Coaching Supervision?

Tammy Turner MCC dissolves the confusion between mentor coaching and coaching supervision and explains how each offers individualised professional development.

The ICF Australasia Professional Standards' Committee receives regular inquiries from coaches looking to develop their skills.

While there are courses, qualifications and certifications available to suit everyone, if you want individualised, personal professional development you are looking for professional coaching, supervision or mentoring. Do you know difference?

In fielding questions, we've discovered there is a lot of confusion from coaches who think they want coaching or supervision but are really seeking mentor coaching.

The ICF defines 'Mentor Coaching' as "coaching for the development of one's coaching, rather than reflective practice; coaching for personal development or coaching for business development."

In the 2011 guidelines, the ICF also stipulates "all of the Mentor Coach aspects may be included in Coaching Supervision but it can and does include many more aspects, which a trained Coaching Supervisor is able to recognise and address. Issues which reach beyond those in Mentor Coaching and which are often brought to coach supervision at any point in a coach's professional life."

So knowing what you want as an outcome is the first place to start. Here are some clear guidelines.

Credentialing

If your goal is to become an ICF Credentialed Coach you are looking for mentoring as it focuses on assessing and developing your coaching skills against the ICF Core Competencies. According to the ICF and Association of Coach Training Organisations (ACTO) "mentor coaching means an applicant being coached on his/her coaching skills rather than coaching on practice building life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant's coaching skill ..."

As stated in the August 2012 CoachLink article Finding a mentor coach, Barbara Anderson MCC explains, "this requirement is intended to help applicants prepare for participation in the ICF exams and to develop their coaching skills."

The current ICF guidelines state that coaches in the portfolio path at all levels, except current PCC's, must receive 10 hours of mentor coaching over a minimum of a three-month period. As of April 2014 all ICF credentialed coaches must take the written

exam to re-credential. A qualified mentor coach can help you with this. It is recommended that the mentor coach be a level higher than the level you are seeking and perhaps also is an ICF assessor, having taught the ICF core competencies.

Finally, coach mentoring is often used in the early stages of a coach's profession to receive feedback specifically about their coaching style and skills. This may also cross over to coaching supervision.

Continuous professional development

If you want on-going individual development to broaden the perspective you bring to your coaching practice overall, then consider professional supervision. The supervision session should be a place to practice, feel supported and safe in making mistakes.

In the Change Agenda paper on coaching supervision in 2006, the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) concludes; "for coaches, coaching supervision is an essential piece of their continuous professional development. It's the pivotal link between theory and coaching practice."

Supervision is a reflective process that fosters what Edna Murdock, Director of the Coaching Supervision Academy, calls "who you are is how you coach." Many coaches moving from a PCC to a MCC style of coaching come to supervision specifically to develop what ICF terms "Coaching Presence: the ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident".

According to the Standards Australia Guidelines, "The purpose of professional supervision is to provide a regular (often weekly or monthly) forum within which a coach can reflect on their experience and practice, and develop strategies for improvement. Importantly supervision is designed to provide an external perspective to the dilemmas and issues facing the coach."

Though there are many reasons for coming to coaching supervision. Here are some common examples:

- Issues effectively coaching a successful or domineering client.
- Making assumptions about a client's problem and then being disappointed when they don't follow your advice.

- Dealing with erratic client emotions and being unsure about whether to refer or continue to coach.
- Feeling unsure about the impact of the interventions used in individual or team coaching assignments.
- Using the same techniques, models and/or approaches to all coaching assignments, regardless of the client need.
- Having the feeling that what's happening to your client is also happening to you and/or other clients in your portfolio.

Many coaches find both individual and group peer supervision useful. Adding professional supervision to your on-going development can add an additional level of quality for your clients. More experienced coaches find identifying and shifting parallel process, blind spots and/or transference in the coach/client context invaluable.

Furthermore, if you are coaching within an organisation, the 'Standards Australia Guidelines for Coaching in Organisations' states categorically: "All coaches should be engaged in professional supervision."

At this stage the ICF has not sanctioned coaching supervisor qualifications though has offered some recommendations on the [ICF website](#).

Given coaching supervision is relational and long-term, be sure you feel supremely comfortable both emotionally and with the qualifications of the supervisor you're hiring. Since supervision is reflective, come prepared to look at your own practices.

In 2009, Jonathon Passmore observed in the International Coaching Psychology Review, "One supervisor said that the coach plays an active and primary role in supervision and that 'it is the coach that makes it work'. The coach has a responsibility in the supervisors' eyes to be willing to stand back and reflect on their practice, reflect on themselves in the context of the coaching conversation. In essence the coach needed to be able to 'sit in a different seat in the room ... and look at their work from a different angle'."

A quick overview

To further clarify professional coach mentoring and supervision, the ICF Australasia Supervision Task Force has developed this useful matrix.

	Mentor Coaching	Coach Supervision
International Coach Federation Definition	For purposes of credentialing, mentor coaching means an applicant being coached on their coaching skills rather than on practice building, life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant's coaching skill.	Coaching Supervision is the interaction that occurs when a coach periodically brings their coaching work experiences to a coaching supervisor in order to engage in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning
Purpose	To reach a particular standard, or demonstrate specific coaching competencies and other credentialing requirements	To generate coach insights through guided reflective enquiry that will improve the quality of his or her coaching; expanding coach capability and confidence.
Outcome	Assessment	On-going support and development
Timing	Typically associated with a specific step in the coaches development, such as gaining a credential ICF requires 10 hours over a minimum of 3 months, 3 of which must be one-to-one mentoring	Throughout the coaches professional life, to uphold the highest professional standards. The ICF Australasia Supervision Task Force recommends 1 hour of 1-1 supervision for 20 client contact hours or 2 hours of group supervision for 20 contact hours
Scope	More specific	Broad ranging
Role of	Mentor Coach Passing on specific coaching knowledge, skills and methodologies. Your mentor coach will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your growth • Listen actively • Provide timely advice • Deepen your insight with regard to your coaching knowledge and skills • Review your coaching in relationship to the ICF's Coaching Core Competencies • Assist in identifying and solving problems around your overall coaching competency • Give support and guidance for your ICF application and exam • Guide you to extending your coaching comfort zone 	Coach Supervisor Guiding the coach discover ways of being more effective, observing and highlighting patterns. Your coach supervisor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your growth and exploration of ideas and personal reflections • Listen actively • Provide timely advice and constructive feedback • Refine and expand your coaching knowledge, skills and practices • Further your insights, confidence and capability through guided reflective practice • Work with you overcome any dilemma or issues you identify in your coaching • Guide you to extending your coaching comfort zone
Focus	More focus on coaching skills and demonstrating capability. Less focus on client interaction	More focus on coaches thinking and metamodels (around their self-confidence, their self awareness, relational and contextual awareness) and its impact on clients. Strong focus on client interaction.
Qualifications Required	For ICF purposes the mentor coach is required to hold an ACC, PCC, or MCC Credential and be a member in good standing. In 2014, a Credentialed Mentor Registry will be introduced by the ICF. ICF Australasia recommends that the mentor coach also be, if possible, an ICF assessor, a teacher of the ICF core competencies to coaches in training and have a track record of coaches they have successfully mentored through the credentialing process	While the ICF supports specific training for Coach Supervisors they recognise there is a limited number of trained coach supervisors and have suggested the following minimum requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an ICF member which implies that the Coaching Supervisor is familiar with and abides by the ICF Ethics and Standards and • Not be under any sanctions from the ICF Independent Review Board for violations of ethical conduct and • Be an experienced, mature, preferably credentialed coach - at least 3 years FTE practice and • Has continued expanding exposure to and knowledge of coaching approaches beyond their original coach training. ■

Tammy Turner has been working in the coaching profession since 2001 and is currently both a MCC and Certified Coaching Supervisor. She is the ICF Australasia Director of the Professional Standards' Committee and Leader of the Coaching Supervision Task Force. Contact Tammy on professionalstandards@icfaustralasia.com.



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MEMBERS' Corner

Credential Legacy competition

Find out why more than 11,000 coaches worldwide attest to the professional and personal value of achieving an ICF Credential. Our members share their credential legacy stories. [Click here](#) to be inspired.

2013 ICF Organisational Coaching Study

Have you seen the 2013 Global Organisational Coaching Study? Undertaken by the PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP International Survey Unit, the study was designed to gather reliable, in-depth information from people within organisations who make decisions about coaching. The objectives included:

- To find out how coaching fits into organisational structures;
- To find out how coaching is defined within the organisation and how the roles are defined;
- To find out the perceived pros and cons of different types of coaches;
- To discuss the criteria that organisations use to identify the most suitable coaches;

If you missed it you can Download the Executive Summary [here](#)

If you have any comments or questions, contact me via email:

professionalstandards@icfaustralasia.com

Promote yourself in Coach Link

Don't miss the advertising deadline for the next issue of Coach Link (Feb/Mar 2014). Book your advertising by **Friday 17 January, 2014**. For information on rates or to request a media kit, please contact admin@icfaustralasia.com.

Happy Holidays

On behalf of ICF Australasia and the team at Coach Link, we wish you a wonderful Christmas period and a happy, prosperous New Year.



Professional Standards Ethics Corner

By Peggy Chiu MCC, ICF Australasia Leader in Ethics and Standards

Ethics and Regulation

ICF has a clear definition and philosophy of Coaching supported by Ethical Standards and commitment by its members. It has combined the concept approaches of Professional Ethics and Self-regulation.

Process and commitment for Self-governance and adherence to our Code of Ethics are foundations to support the high standard of professional practice. After years of dedicated, continuous hard work, ICF has now established the current Guidelines and Requirements for members to refer to and use. These have helped members provide the highest possible professional services to clients.

You are invited to review the ICF stance on Ethics and Regulations, if you have not done so recently by [clicking here](#).

Your comments, observations and questions are welcome. Please contact me via email: ethics@icfaustralasia.com

The Art and Science of Coaching:

With the intention of collecting accurate research concerning the science of coaching and further supporting all ICF members, the ICF has launched a global search for a Director of Coaching Science. With the addition of a Director of Coaching Science, ICF will be able to collect and curate information around the science of coaching for members so they can better inform their clients about the theories and science that strengthens coaching.

[Click here](#) for further information.

Plan your continuing education

Continuing Education is an important and valuable part of being a coach and goes right to the essence of personal development. As you look to 2014, plan which events and topics will strengthen you as a coach. [Click here](#) to view upcoming events.

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**Contact – Belinda MacInnes, MCC Tel: +61 (0) 439 080 663 or
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10 Tips for a successful coaching business

Simon Smith offers ten tips to help you make your coaching business a success.

Building a coaching business is tough because coaching is a hard sell. The reality of building any business is often not what people envisage when they decide to start out on their own.

I have grown my company, Southern Cross Coaching and Development, from zero income and a blank laptop working from home in 2006, to 23 coaches and consultants providing services to NSW Government and large corporate entities, with no cash other than my own organic growth. Along the way I've had to learn many lessons.

Why did you become a coach and start a coaching business?

When I asked that question to 60+ coaches at a recent ICF event, I got the usual plethora of "to help people"; "to make a difference"; "I'm passionate about coaching"; "fed up with the corporate world and wanted to do something I believe in", "because coaching is amazing"; "I was fed up working for muppet managers." In my experience, an extremely large majority of coaches will say something similar.

In reality, many coaches struggle to make enough even to pay the bills, let alone earn a decent living. According to the ICF 2012 Global Coaching Study, the median annual coach's income in Oceania is US\$36,700. Many coaches end up having to supplement their income – or worse, go back to a job.

Why did I start a coaching business? All of the above of course, however, my primary reason was

to make money. My strongest motivator was (and still is) the need to make sure my business pays me an income and provides security to support my family. An income of US\$36,700 will not do that.

1. Think like a business owner, not a coach.

If you don't have the attitude that you are in business to make money, it is extremely unlikely to happen. You know this as a coach – if you don't have that as a goal, how can you achieve it?

Look at the numbers. To earn \$100,000 per annum you need to earn approximately \$133,000 to cover your wages and business expenses. That equates to an income of \$3,023 per week.

This figure is calculated based on 44 working weeks: four weeks holidays, two weeks over Christmas, a week of Public Holidays, a week sick/miscellaneous, etc. And that is being conservative.

Translate that to hours worked. It equals: \$75.57 per hour for every hour of coaching if you coach 40

hours per week; \$151.14 per hour if you are coaching 20 hours; \$302.27 for 10 hours; \$604.55 per hour for five hours; \$453.41 per hour for seven and a half hours per week.

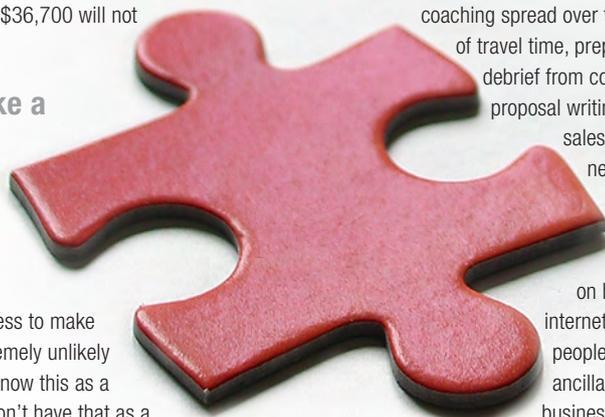
How often does your day include seven straight hours of coaching?

A more realistic business week would include coaching spread over the week, hours of travel time, preparation for and debrief from coaching, emails, proposal writing, marketing and sales meetings, invoicing, networking functions, phone calls, more emails, sorting IT issues, time on hold to your phone/internet provider, etc. Most people forget these entire ancillary – but absolutely business essential - tasks.

So, you're now likely questioning: "how the hell am I supposed to make money if that's the reality?"

2. Time management – get focussed

Set up processes and outsource. Your time is literally *your* money. Every hour is potentially worth \$453.41+ - if you waste 15 minutes, you are losing \$113.35! Would you throw away \$113.35? Learning time management skills was one of the most valuable things you can do.



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Ask yourself: "is this time I'm spending worth \$453.41/hour?" I used to spend more than five hours a month doing my books/BAS, etc. My bookkeeper does it in five hours a quarter. That's 10 hours per quarter I have back to do more important things.

3. Charge for your time. Charge what you are worth

Charge what you need to make the money you want to make (within what the market will bear, of course). If you charge \$200/hour, and do two free sessions, how much money will you make? Not enough is likely to be the answer.

If you coach seven and a half hours a week and need to make \$100k in your pocket, you need to charge no less than \$453.41/hour. Your time is money and every minute is precious, charge for it whenever you can.

4. Believe in what you do

You are a professional. You have a right to be there. Believe that you deserve to get paid a decent income for your services. If you don't believe it, why would a client?

We all start somewhere – I started coaching for free, then charging \$50/hour, then built the business to pay myself \$92,000 in my first year. If I'd believed in myself more early on, I'd have paid myself a lot more. Of course, confidence can take time to build – the important thing is that you make sure you're focussed on building it.

5. The 'S' word

It often invokes fear and strikes dread into the hearts of many idealistic coaches desperate to "make a difference". I'm talking SALES. Selling.

Like it or not, even if you have exceptionally well-established networks and the most amazing website on the planet, you *will* still have to sell - and sell *yourself*. You are a salesperson first and a coach

second. Accept it. If you can't sell yourself, you won't get to do much coaching.

Sales is 99% perspiration, 1% inspiration; there is no single magic formula. There are all sorts of methodologies you can learn of course, but none of them are effective unless you get off your backside and put in the hard yakka.

We are in the trust business. No matter how hard it is, make those uncomfortable follow up phone calls, put some shoe leather on the road and get your face in front of people. Then, ask for the business. Follow up – people are busy, they often need a nudge. If you get knocked down, get back up again! It's not personal, it's just business. You expect your clients to do all of this, right? Take some of your own coaching.

6. Use your coaching skills to sell

Your coaching skills are extremely powerful sales tools; if more sales people were trained as coaches, they'd be a lot more successful. Use your coaching skills to listen and delve into what people need; that's really the core of sales.

However, you still have to ask for the business and you still have to get off your backside, get out and meet people. There are no short cuts, "Nike it" – just do it!

7. Stop trying to teach people how fantastic coaching is

If you have to teach people what coaching is, you're usually wasting your [very valuable] time. Walk away. Two hours spent teaching someone about coaching, is potentially \$906 lost. Sell to people who know what coaching can do.

8. Lose the warm and fluffy coaching language

Use the client's professional business language, not coaching speak, especially with organisational and

business clients. Challenge thinking, yes, but talking about spiritual journeys is rarely going to get you the gig to coach their hard-nosed CFO. Talk for success.

9. You are not selling coaching

You are also not selling that you are a coach; the fact that you are a coach is a given. You are selling a solution, and you are selling your experience and expertise. That is what clients pay for.

For example, you may have left the IT industry to find a new path, and yes, you may be able to coach in any industry, but the reality is clients want and pay for your IT industry expertise. You are probably best placed to at least start coaching in your field of expertise and then branch out from there.

10. Be flexible and adapt your style

Coaching in the real world is rarely the pure coaching you were taught on your coaching course. This is certainly true when you are *selling* yourself, especially if you are selling to organisational and business clients. You can coach like that when you get there, of course, but clients rarely understand pure coaching. In reality when a client says, "coaching", what they actually mean is a combination of coaching, mentoring, consulting and expert advice. ■

Simon Smith was recently awarded the ICF Australia NSW Coach of the Year 2013. He is the CEO of Southern Cross Coaching and Development Pty Ltd, which he founded in 2006. Simon has since built the company into a profitable coaching and training practice, delivering services to NSW and Federal Government and Corporate organisations across NSW.

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A strengths approach to Coaching

Paul Allen and Claire de Carteret discuss ways to implement strengths-based coaching to uncover your client's hidden talents.

Growing up, I sometimes watched Popeye cartoons. Most episodes followed a simple pattern: Popeye, or someone he loved, was in great peril. Someone needed to be rescued.

Faced with seemingly insurmountable odds, Popeye had to draw on his incredible strength to escape from the bad guys, to save Olive Oyl or to rescue Swee'Pea. Just when he needed it most, a can of spinach would appear. He would gulp the spinach down and immediately use his strength to conquer the foe.

To fully unlock his great strength, Popeye needs spinach.

Perhaps more popular than Popeye is Superman: the Man of Steel. Every villain in every Superman movie somehow knew that if he or she could expose Superman to kryptonite he would lose his strength. Kryptonite saps Superman of all his powers, leaving him weak and helpless. To avoid losing his strength, Superman needs to avoid kryptonite.

While these characters are fictitious, the concepts are real. Every human being has talents that can develop into strengths. Every strength has needs and every strength can be enfeebled under certain conditions.

Strengths Are for Action

Natural talents, like strengths, look one way when you are at your best and completely different when you are disengaged. You can become disengaged if what your strengths need is not known or is never addressed.

When Popeye ate spinach it created action. He was able to DO something. When Superman faced kryptonite, it halted his ability to act. Strengths were created not for self-awareness alone, but rather to be actionable.

When talents are productively applied (action) to create a strength, people are 6 times more likely to be engaged at work, the productivity of teams goes up 12.5% and people who focus on using their strengths are three times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life.

What is Strengths-Based Coaching?

The Strengths-based development approach is unique and powerful. A person's most direct path to individual growth and improvement begins with a primary investment in his or her greatest talents.

The best coaches help others open the door to their potential. A person's talents — those thoughts, feelings and behaviours that occur naturally — are the source of his or her true potential and power. As a strengths coach, you can help your clients understand their talents and how to maximise them. By helping your clients more effectively apply their dominant talents you will greatly improve their potential to consistently act with confidence, direction and hope.

Conventional approaches to personal development typically identify improvement areas and develop an improvement plan. They focus on fixing people's weaknesses while neglecting their talents. On the other hand, a strengths-based approach to personal development focuses on people's strengths, developing them and applying them to goals and managing their weaknesses.

As a strengths coach, you can help your clients fully appreciate how their strengths influence their behaviours, actions and relationships.

Identifying Your Unique Talents

Decades of research have proven that when people develop their natural talents into strengths and have the opportunity to do what they do best every day, there is a powerful effect on individual, team and organisational performance. The problem, however, is that most people can't accurately identify their own talents and therefore can't intentionally use them.

The best way to identify natural recurring talents is to have your clients take a validated strengths finder assessment. Peter Drucker said 'Most people think they know what they are good at. They are usually wrong...and yet, a person can perform only from a strength.' In the absence of a strengths finder tool, or to validate the tool, there are ways to find 'clues' to talent just by observing behaviours and actions. The five clues to talent are:

1. **Yearning** – to what kind of activities is your client naturally drawn?
2. **Rapid Learning** – what kind of activities does your client pick up quickly?



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3. Flow – In what activities does your client seem to automatically know the steps to be taken?

4. Glimpses of Excellence – During what activities has your client had moments of subconscious excellence, when they thought ‘How did I do that?’

5. Satisfaction – what activities give your client a kick, either while doing them or immediately after finishing them, they think ‘When can I do that again?’

By asking your client to tell you about a peak experience in their life, such as one of those transformative moments when they were firing on all cylinders and when they were “in the flow,” you can mine for clues to talent. With focus and action, these talents can be transformed into strengths.

How to Apply a Strengths-Based Approach to Coaching

The most common reason many people never fully realise the benefits of strengths is that they do not put their strengths into action. They assume that learning their strengths was just for self-awareness. This is where the role of strengths-based coaching comes into play. The best strengths-based coaches:

- Apply an intense, intentional focus on the positive, natural potential and tendencies of their clients
- Strive to help their clients become better at being who they naturally are
- Spend time studying success rather than failure
- Understand that focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring weaknesses
- Apply their clients’ strengths to performance goals or objectives and have a follow-up and accountability plan

Most importantly, effective coaching starts with you. To be an effective coach, you must know yourself well. As you learn more about yourself, you are

more likely to offer the best of who you are while drawing out the best in each person you coach.

Effective coaches help a person direct his or her talents, skills, knowledge, energy, focus, determination and effort towards a specific goal or desired outcome. As a result, every coaching conversation has performance at its core and the person’s talents at its heart. A typical strengths-based coaching map looks like this:

1. Clarify what the client needs or wants to accomplish
2. Help the client create a plan for how he or she will get there
3. Check and chart progress
4. Help the client make course adjustments as necessary
5. Celebrate success. Appreciate the progress that has been made ■

To find out more, access strengths resources, take the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment and be part of the strengths movement, visit gallupstrengthscenter.com

Paul Allen, Gallup’s Chief Strengths Evangelist, is located in Washington, D.C. where he is dedicated to the task of taking the Clifton StrengthsFinder to the world. Prior to joining Gallup he co-founded Ancestry.com and served as its original CEO.

Claire de Carteret is a strengths-based performance manager for Gallup’s Australia, New Zealand and Thailand consulting teams. She has applied a strengths-based approach to individual and team development at Gallup for more than six years.



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