

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

HEALTH COACHING

Taking coaching into
the healthcare arena

WHEN THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN

Breaking down barriers
to communication

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

How coaching impacts
all areas of life

COACHING IN ALL PROFESSIONS

How coaching transforms
the way we lead & work

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

How coaching impacts all areas of life

How are people outside of the coaching profession using coaching? When and how can they use coaching? How do we bring coaching skills into all areas of our lives? How do coaches use coaching in all areas of their lives? Who needs coaching as a skillset? Join us as we explore the butterfly effect of coaching, for coaches, non-coaches and in non-coaching situations.



COACHING IN ALL PROFESSIONS

How coaching transforms the way
we lead and work

By Terry H. Hildebrandt, PhD, MCC, MCEC

How do we bring coaching into all professions? This is one of the important questions I have been exploring over the last year.

As the director of the Evidence Based Coaching (EBC) Program at Fielding Graduate University, I have been holding panel discussions via our monthly EBC Professional Series Webinars with leaders in multiple industries and professions, who are also professionally trained coaches. We have been exploring how these coaches are transforming their industries and professions through skillful coaching. We have explored

healthcare/wellness, leadership/management, human resources (HR), behavioral health, education, and inclusion/diversity.

What I have found through conversations with these professional coaches is that coaching has the potential to transform every industry and profession. Below I explore some of the key findings from my work in this area.

WHY COACHING?

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as “partnering with clients in a thought-

provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” By its very definition, coaching is about supporting our clients – and ourselves as coaches – to maximize our potential. This definition cuts across all professions and industries.

Coaching in the executive space, in all industries and professions, has the potential to transform entire enterprises.

In the field of executive coaching, the Association of Corporate Executive Coaches (ACEC) defines master-level corporate executive coaches as “Enterprise-Wide Business Partners.” Coaching in the executive space, in all industries and professions, has the potential to transform entire enterprises. This transformation occurs in multiple domains, including communication, leadership, performance management, coworker relationships, and customer service. Next, I will explore how coaching can deliver on this promise of transformation.

COACHING CHANGES HOW WE COMMUNICATE

At the most fundamental level, coaching involves asking thought-provoking questions and active listening to create safe spaces for deeper self-awareness, creativity, and realization of our most important visions and goals. In a world that has become dominated by soundbites and constant distractions, creating time for us to think about what really matters is more important than ever.

Coaching transforms the way we communicate in dyads, in teams, and potentially in whole organizations. By asking powerful questions, as opposed to telling, we create space for reflection. Reflection enables us to consider not only our current state of thinking, but allows us the freedom and permission to dream big. Through thought-provoking questions, coaches can challenge others to go further in their visions and hold others accountable to reach their goals.

Through active listening, we no longer argue with each other, but instead create opportunities for shared meaning and understanding. Rather than fighting for our own agendas, we come together to support each

other in collaborative spaces. Active listening helps others clarify and deepen their own understanding and create spaces for shared understanding.

COACHING CHANGES HOW WE LEAD & MANAGE

Taking a coaching approach to leadership and management changes some of the foundational concepts of leadership.

- › Leaders move from expert to empowering others to bring their own expertise.
- › Leaders change from having power over others to shared power that values the brainpower of others.
- › Leaders shift from primarily driving the conversation to facilitating a dialogue.
- › Leaders move from bringing all the answers to asking the right questions to develop collective answers to challenging problems.
- › Managers move from telling employees what to do to empowering them to creatively develop solutions and actions.

COACHING CHANGES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management traditionally involves an annual performance evaluation, mostly written by the boss, and a short list of performance and development goals for the next year. This traditional top-down approach to performance management is now being replaced at progressive organizations by quarterly check-ins.

These check-ins are really more coaching conversations that are designed to be a meaningful dialogue between the manager and employee to reflect on recent performance and to set goals for the next quarter. Here are some differences between traditional performance management and a coaching approach, based on more frequent performance conversations:

Timing The old performance process was an annual event, often tied to pay, where the quarterly check-in is more frequent and is typically not tied to salary and bonus management.

Owner Traditional performance systems are driven by the boss, who writes the evaluation based on personal observations, occasionally with feedback from key stakeholders and the employee. In the new check-in approach, the conversation is a collaborative effort between manager and employee with possible stakeholder input.

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.

Content

The old method was primarily focused on critical evaluation driven by the perspective of the boss. In a coaching conversation, the focus is on the employee's contribution and success stories supported by the perspective of the boss and possible stakeholder input.

Goal Setting

Traditional performance goals were set by the boss in a top-down approach. By contrast, in a coaching conversation goals are collaboratively developed with the manager and the employee. More frequent check-ins allow these performance goals to be more dynamic and meet the needs of the ever-changing business environment.

Accountability

Traditional approaches to accountability often lacked enough timely feedback for employees to make required course corrections to meet annual goals. With the check-in process, using a coaching approach, accountability is an ongoing conversation.

I like to think of accountability as “caring enough to ask.” The conversation centers around reflection on past progress and identifying what needs to change to continually meet new goals. The manager-coach has an opportunity to support the employee in identifying and removing barriers to meet goals. Other forms of support can be identified in the coaching conversation during these more frequent check-ins.

Active listening creates trust and intimacy with customers who often just want to be heard.

COACHING CHANGES OUR COWORKER RELATIONSHIPS

Using a skillful coaching approach with coworkers fundamentally shifts the relationship we have with others. Skillful coaching involves holding others with unconditional positive regard.

This attitude fundamentally shifts how we think about others and our relationships. Seeing everyone we work with as a potential coaching client shifts the relationship. Here are some important characteristics of how this coaching approach might look in an organization:

- › We ask more questions to understand others' contexts and to support them in exploring their own perspectives.
- › We believe that others have the power within themselves to develop their own solutions. This means we spend less time trying to tell others what to do and giving advice.
- › We spend more time building rapport with people that we meet in order to build trusting relationships.
- › We partner with others to help them clearly articulate their visions and goals.
- › Through active listening, we help others bring forward their best thinking.
- › Through direct communication, we offer our own perspectives to serve as a thought partner with coworkers.
- › We help others develop action plans that support individuals and teams to reach their goals.



COACHING CHANGES OUR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Coaching also can transform how we experience our customer relationships. Seeing customers in the context of a coaching client has some significant implications:

- › Having unconditional positive regard for the customer creates an attitude of respect that enables us to serve them in a loving and caring way.
- › Powerful questions can help both us and the customer more fully understand what their goals and desires are in any context.
- › Active listening creates trust and intimacy with customers who often just want to be heard.
- › Direct communication allows us to bring in our best thinking and perspectives to broaden and deepen collective understanding of critical issues.
- › Designing actions creates solutions for customers in a way that empowers the customer to be a partner in the solution. Coaching also creates a collaborative partnership with customers, supporting more creative solutions to challenges and problems.

SUMMARY

Using a coaching approach with employees, coworkers and customers has the ability to inspire them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Using the core competencies of coaching in our professional relationships transforms how we see others. It also changes the way we communicate, lead, manage performance, and build relationships.

Coaching in all professions and industries transforms the way we work together by creating more caring and loving communities to achieve our individual and collective goals. •