BY MARIA ESPOSITO

The Evolution of Coaching

The International Coach Federation's 2012 Global Coaching Study was unprecedented, in that the organization received responses from coaching professionals in 117 countries.

Tackling some tough issues, the survey asked questions such as whether coaching should be regulated, and what obstacles untrained individuals calling themselves coaches presented to the future of the industry. Among the respondents, 53 percent agreed with a growing need for regulation, while 43 percent acknowledged that untrained coaches were a major stumbling block.

Tom Lemanski, President of Chicago Executive Coaching, would add other issues facing the future of professional coaching. One of these is certification. According to Lemanski, "There are more certification processes and I see them varied in some cases. You go to an organization for certification and it means you've written them a $50,000 check, gone through their boot camp training and when you walk out of that, now you have a piece of paper that says you're certified. (You) haven't actually coached anyone and don't necessarily have significant experience, but you have certification. There may be some (who are) looking deeper. Should there be certification and what does it really mean?"

How coaching services need to evolve over the coming years in order to create additional value for the client is another of Lemanski's concerns. He personally adds value to the coaching experience through a series of talent assessment tools. He has used these tools for the last eight years to enable clients to understand themselves more fully. Viewing the tools as an antidote to being one's own worst enemy, Lemanski said, "If we look at the concept that we all are inherently our own worst enemy, what is it about the way we behave, our skill set – the way we're wired – that can potentially get us into trouble in certain scenarios? And what are those scenarios? As we enhance our awareness of those things, we can become more effective as executives." This need for awareness is what Lemanski believes will spur the evolution of the assessment tools coaches will use in the future.

Given his concerns, then how can one find the coach with enough professional chops to raise awareness? Lemanski recommends that an individual seeking a professional coach conduct in-person interviews. Doing this will help potential clients decide if they can communicate their expectations of the coaching engagement and also determine whether the coach understands them, cares that they gain something from the session(s) and has enough personal experience to help them reach their goals.

Lemanski adds that an individual should be comfortable, but not too comfortable. Coaching should not consist merely of "friendly conversations." If it does, then individuals won't step far enough outside their comfort zones to accomplish real growth. ■

Our coaching clients achieve breakthrough results by discovering and overcoming what's really getting in their way.
[Tom Lemanski]

Chicago Executive Coaching

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