A Worldwide Association of Business Coaches®

Business Coaching Worldwide

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FEATURE EVENT

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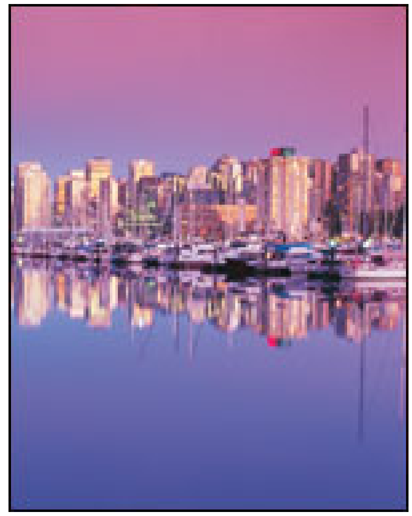

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Change Is Easy

by Dr. Laurence S. Lyons

Major organizational change presents the business coach with an especially complex coaching context. Operating at many levels, the coach must help the client find a career fit in the newly emerging organization. But this great challenge brings great opportunity. Larry Lyons shows how a strategic, principled approach can make this difficult task easy.

↘ **Complete Article**

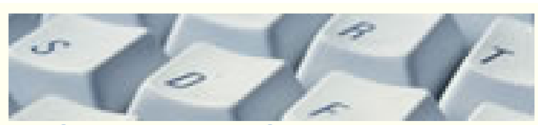
COLUMN

Coaching Great Leaders

by Marshall Goldsmith

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to our success in coaching is the person we see when we look in the mirror!

↘ **Complete Column**



FROM THE EDITOR

The label of 'business coaching' has been applied worldwide to a variety of practices, including training and mentoring. As business coaches, we are challenged to define, exemplify and communicate the best of our emerging profession.

↘ **Complete Letter**

COLUMN

The ROI of Business Coaching Revisited

by Bronwyn Bowery-Ireland

Are we really coaching, or are we offering consulting and training services and calling it coaching? If so, how does this inclusion of non-coaching services impact the measurement of coaching results? This column examines the way we measure the value of business coaching, and how those results will affect the future of business coaching.

Complete Column

COLUMN

Assessment Corner

by Roberta Hill

Even though your clients may be jaded by the inundation of assessments on the market today, don't let that fact deter you from considering one or two 'signature' assessments for your own coaching business.

Complete Column

SUCCESS STORY

Innoventor Engineering = Innovation + Invention

by Stan Herman

Business owners are prone to blind spots when dealing with the performance of employees and executives who are also personal friends. Those blind spots can create obstacles to company goal achievement. Working with business coach Stan Herman, Innoventor CEO Kent Schien takes clear, solution-oriented action steps to generate unprecedented company growth.

Complete Article

TAKE THE POLL

Has an email miscommunication ever caused a significant problem for you?

- Yes
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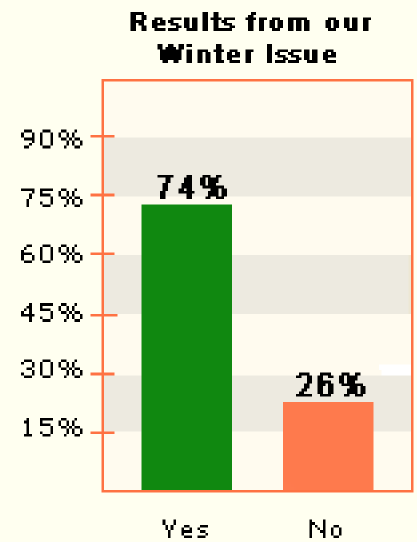
Select Yes or No and click Vote!

POLL RESULTS

Do you coach or manage individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ significantly from your own?



DID YOU KNOW?

... That email recipients correctly interpret the intended tone of an email message only 50% of the time?

Complete Article

GET THE EDGE

Think Bigger About Being a Business Coach

by Michael Port

Michael Port states that within the coaching industry, a standard method of presenting your talents and running your business has emerged. In this article, however, he challenges you to 'think bigger'—both about your coaching practice and about yourself as an individual.

Complete Article

HOT TOPICS

Multitasking (Part 3 of 3): Managing Multitasking

by H. Les Brown, *BCW* Regular Contributor

Responding to pressure to do more with less by attempting to 'multitask' is counterproductive—to the person and to the organization. These practical ways to 'work smarter, not harder' can help coaches and clients manage their workloads more effectively.

Complete Article

BUSINESS BOOK REVIEWS

The Starfish and the Spider The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations

By Ori Brafman and Rod. A. Beckstrom

In **The Starfish and the Spider**, entrepreneurs Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom offer that organizations fall into two categories: traditional "spiders," which have a rigid hierarchy and a top-down organization, and revolutionary "starfish," which rely on the power of peer relationships, a shared ideology, and a catalyst - not a traditional leader. What happens

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Are you a WABC Member? Did any of the *Business Coaching Worldwide* articles stimulate thought or a desire to take action? Discuss it with your business coaching colleagues in the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches All Members' eCommunity!

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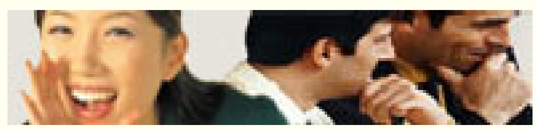

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when no one is in charge, when there is no hierarchy?

↘ **Complete Review**

Coming In Our Next Issue!

Feature: Kate Lanz will discuss some effective strategies for coaching a client who may present some unique challenges—the 'alpha male.' Learn more about Kate in the WABC Coach Directory.

Hot Topics: Kim Benz and Sasmita Maurya, *Business Coaching Worldwide* researchers, present some interesting insights regarding the importance of including a spiritual component when providing business coaching in India. Learn more about Kim in the WABC Coach Directory.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Change is Easy

by Dr. Laurence S. Lyons

Turn to the *change* section in any management textbook and it will be sure to tell you one thing—major change is horrendously hard. However arduous you might think it will be to re-organize operations, introduce a new business model, or beef up global customer service, accepted wisdom will tell you to think again. Estimate the effort needed to bring about the desired change. Treble it. Then add some. You will find that making change happen in the real world will be much, much harder than you'd ever imagined.

If you, or one of your clients, have ever instigated major change, you will wisely nod your head in agreement with all those textbooks. There are well over a million excellent reasons why change is so very difficult and always takes far longer than expected. People have a natural resistance to change. They cannot be rushed through the laborious emotional processes which major change unavoidably requires. The Senior Management Team—often the instigators of change—will be thinking one or two steps ahead of their announced plans, which skews their perception about the speed at which change can take place towards the madly-optimistic. Change is difficult, it looks difficult, and it takes a long time.

Yet this need not be the case. There is some good news; there is another way. While coaching may not eliminate the amount of client reflection that is required when change comes along, it does offer a better and more enduring return from the investment in its efforts. We of course know that coaching almost always encourages dialog, and that early warning is particularly important for reducing risk in change situations. So a coaching context is generally beneficial during change. But coaching can go beyond simply setting a culture conducive to lubricating the change initiative. By helping the client find her authentic voice, a coach may encourage a leader to take a less reactive and more robust stance. To achieve this, the leader may probe and test the organization's ambition in an effort to interpret its intention in a way which finds a desirable role for her in the emerging scheme.

A Question of Coaching

Traditionally, major organizational change is the practical answer to a set of three strategic questions:

- Where is the organization today?
- Where do we want the organization to be tomorrow?
- How does the organization get there?

Organizational change methodologies built on these three questions have undoubtedly stood the test of time. These are good questions. They are the right questions. The top team's answers to these three questions—together with the quality of change implementation they bring—will deliver to any organization the future it deserves.

Yet, however beneficial this approach may seem to be for the business, the coach may feel stymied by it. Having a client respond without challenge to the organization's perceived demands may leave residual feelings of weakness or inadequacy. Additionally, it may be frustrating to find that the textbooks dictate that there is nothing important for the business beyond the realm of strategy. Where, then, can the coach find a space in which each client can be empowered?

I propose a coaching question, the fourth question of strategy:

- Where do I (the client) fit in the picture?

The great thing I find about this additional question is that it is also strategic—but this time squarely in the interest of the client. To get to work on this new question, simply take the original three questions and change the word 'organization' to 'client.' Your discussions will produce an initial draft of a personal strategy. Importantly, it has now been made explicit. It will be almost impossible for the client to answer these questions without bringing to the surface a much deeper one: *Who am I?*

Asking this fourth question puts what could have been an important hidden issue right on the table. With all that done, it's now time to explore common futures. Ask this: *Within the proposed organizational change, is there any gap between the client's career and the organization's ambition which needs further exploration?*

Playing with Fire

Just in case you might have any qualms about asking this extra question in a live coaching session, remember that the ethical justification for doing so is compelling. At worst, it will quickly emerge that your client is the best person for meeting the new organizational challenges. In that case, your conversation only took a moment and you've squeezed out risk to both your client and the organization. Rest happy that your client is in exactly the right job, fired up with opportunity and enthusiasm, and that the organization is well resourced for its future. This represents a fine return on the investment of a few seconds' coaching time. Celebrate!

What if your client is uncertain about the method of change implementation, or even holds serious reservations about some of the assumptions in the change plan? Here is another great coaching opportunity! You encourage the client to go into research mode, which means setting up conversations with colleagues outside the coaching room. Perhaps it simply turns out that some detail or interpretation needs clarifying, and once that has been done all is then well. Great outcome. Or, maybe it emerges from business discussions that it is necessary to modify some part of the original change program. It could be that a major piece of the change plan eventually gets jettisoned or replaced. Having your client set this research in motion doesn't mean that all risks will evaporate, but it *does* mean that you and your client have done your level best in addressing all inherent, and foreseeable, risks. You did good work. In the real world, it often doesn't get better than this. Celebrate!

What if it should become clear that there is no fit for your client in the organization's future, and no hope of re-negotiating the change plan? It is difficult to see how you wouldn't want to celebrate even more than before! I expect to hear the champagne corks flying. You have just identified an extremely significant and dangerous risk, and are already on your way to avoiding a predictable disaster. Remember: *If it ain't going to work, then it ain't going to work.* Get started on the exit strategy today. Better to spot and avoid the dead end right here and now in the coaching room than to leave it festering unnoticed until it grows into the full-blown catastrophe of a failed implementation. Working the mismatch issue now will prevent serious organizational embarrassment and disruption in the future, and it may even save a career.

Principled coaching begets principled leadership. The principled way can at first seem frightening, but is often the best for both client *and* organization. Business coaches are often asked, "What is it that coaches actually *do?*" That question offers no quick and simple answer. But one element of coaching is crystal clear: Coaches encourage their clients to walk the talk by living their values and by being authentic. One route to that goal starts with a major change announcement and the fourth question of strategy.

I freely admit that the search for those core personal values can often involve the client in a long and tortuous inner struggle. Often a situation of impending major organizational change will be the only device able to prompt such consistent and deep reflection. Finding the limits of Self can be hard. But the reward for the client is enormous: Authenticity. Authenticity is the foundation of principled leadership. Because the principled leader knows herself, she has no cause to worry about change.

She is to be found anywhere in an organization, not only at its top and not only among the management elite. She feels no need to take a long and protracted journey to some unwanted organizational destination. She is self-secure. Organizational change may present her with a fantastic opportunity to grow her leadership skills and get closer to her personal ambition. If so, she and her organization will reap huge rewards, which multiply as each feeds on the success of the other. But if, after researching all possible alternatives, she still cannot find herself within the emerging picture, she will simply start work on the construction of another picture. It will be her picture, in which, for the time being at least, she can clearly see herself, and which she is prepared to share with the world. Organizations hold no monopoly on change.

Is it not the quest of business coaches to create such leaders? Leaders who are at home with themselves? Change is a gale which extinguishes the candle or spreads the bush fire; its effect depends entirely on the material it meets. Who said the flame must always die? Authentic leaders are prepared for change; for them, being true to self presents no difficulty at all. Change? What is change? Change is easy.

Laurence S. Lyons, PhD, founding director of The Metacorp Group, has extensive experience in coaching senior teams during major change. A member of the WABC International Advisory Committee, Larry is a scheduled panelist at the WABC 10th Anniversary International Conference. His most recently published book, co-edited with Marshall Goldsmith, is the second edition of *Coaching for Leadership: The Practice of Leadership Coaching from the World's Greatest Coaches* (Pfeiffer, 2005). Read more about Larry in the WABC Coach Directory. Larry can be

As a reader of this column, and potentially a WABC coach, you are probably a well-educated, experienced professional. You have a sincere desire to help people and care deeply about their developing into better leaders. You have learned a lot, and you believe that you have a lot to give to your clients. If you are successful, you are also probably good at selling yourself—pointing out your qualifications and noting how you can help leaders improve.

Having great qualifications and believing in ourselves are positive qualities, and proficiency at personal marketing and sales is a basic requirement for success in our field. However, these same positive qualities that have helped us to become successful ourselves can get in our way when it comes to helping others.

Our *Client's* Dedication Means More Than *Our* Wisdom

Of all of my clients, the client that was viewed as improving the most was the client with whom I had spent the *least* amount of time! He was the CEO of a huge organization and managed about 50,000 people. After our coaching engagement, I said to him, "I have spent less time with you than any client that I have ever coached, yet you and your team have shown the greatest improvement. What should I learn from my experience with you and your team?"

He thoughtfully replied, "Marshall, you should realize that success with your clients isn't all about you. It is about your clients, the people who choose to work with you." He continued, "In an important way, my situation is the same. I manage about 50,000 people. Every day, as a leader, I tell myself, 'The success of our organization is not about *me*. It is about *them*—the great people who are working with me!'"

This remarkable leader taught me a powerful lesson. I have coached clients who, like him, have achieved dramatic improvements. I have also coached clients who didn't change at all. I, the coach, was the same. The difference was not that I was appreciably better or worse. The difference was *their* dedication to achieving positive, lasting change—not *my* great insights or wisdom.

One of My Embarrassing Screw-ups

In spite of understanding the theory of 'make it all about them, not you,' I can still let my own ego get in the way of my work.

I was recently honored by Alliant International University (formed by the merger of the California School of Professional Psychology and United States International University). They decided to name their schools of business and organizational studies the 'Marshall Goldsmith School of Management.' Our school's mission is to be a world leader in practical training related to the human side of organizations.

I love what I do, love my family, love where I live and love our new school. Everyone who knows me sees that all of my emails end with 'life is good.' I was brought up in a very poor neighborhood. Sometimes I cannot believe how lucky I am. Although it is good to be thankful and grateful about our own lives, it is not always good to assume that our blessings are the major topic of interest for the rest of the world!

Shortly after this school naming I was interviewing the team members of a client executive that I was going to coach. I really loved the company and was looking forward to working with the executive. As I introduced myself to each team member during our one-on-one sessions, I was so enthusiastic about myself, our new school and my great life, that I forgot why I was there! The person who had hired me called to send her regrets, noting that the team thought I seemed to be more interested in myself than I was in them. To put it bluntly, I was fired!

I should have been fired.

Learning for WABC Coaches

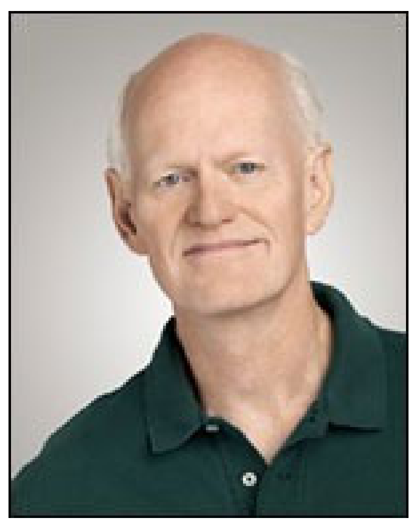
Wise people learn from their mistakes. Wiser people learn from others' mistakes. Learn from my stupid mistake! Don't get so wrapped up in your own ego that you forget why you are there. Never forget that client success is more a function of their dedication than your wisdom. Don't make the coaching process about *you*—keep it all about *them*.

One of the greatest coaches that I have ever met has the fewest credentials—on paper. In fact, I am not sure that he could even 'make it' as a WABC coach. On the other hand, he keeps getting great results with his clients. Why? He makes coaching about helping them learn from their direct reports, co-workers and family members. He plays the role of a caring facilitator rather than a 'know it all' expert.

The next time your start feeling 'smart,' 'qualified,' or 'wise,' remember this warning.

Get over yourself!!!

Marshall Goldsmith, MBA, PhD, founder of Marshall Goldsmith Partners LLC, is a world authority on helping successful leaders achieve positive, lasting behavioral change. His executive coaching expertise has been highlighted in *Forbes, Fast Company* and *Business Week*. The most recent of his 22 books is *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* (Hyperion, 2007). Learn more about Marshall in the WABC Coach Directory. Marshall can be reached by email at Marshall@MarshallGoldsmith.com.



THE ROI OF BUSINESS COACHING REVISITED

Measuring Your Coaching

by Bronwyn Bowery-Ireland

In my last column, I invited WABC members to contact me if they were interested in participating in the trial team to evaluate my VOI model. What a tremendous response I have received! So many of you have offered your time and resources, and I sincerely appreciate your generosity. This experience started me thinking at a whole different level about the measurement of business coaching. In the midst of that thought process, an interesting range of people and experiences helped me to clarify my thinking, and I wanted to share those thoughts and conversations with you.

First, I spent several weeks in December working extensively in China, developing the coach training school of which I am CEO. I met many business coaches there, and one common theme emerged—some individuals in China are actually coaching, but others are really consulting and 'adding on' this new thing called coaching. The conversations then moved to the differences between coaching, consulting and training. I know that this conversation is not only occurring in China—it is occurring all over the world.

Secondly, I was in the United States meeting with my staff and interviewing trainers (who are also coaches for our school). It was a wonderful experience to meet so many coaches! Not surprisingly, the conversation about coaching, consulting and training came up again. We also discussed whether or not the coaches measured their coaching or their clients' outcomes. While some business coaches mentioned measuring their coaching, most were not measuring their coaching with any formal measuring tool.

Meanwhile, responses to my last column kept pouring in—and one particular response really struck me. This respondent said that he both consults and coaches, but only measures coaching results. He said that since consulting was outcomes-based, it didn't require measurement. So I started to think—how many coaches are formally measuring all of their services (i.e., consulting, training, etc.), and measuring each service separately? How many coaches are measuring their coaching, but are actually only offering consulting services? And then the final question—if coaching is not being measured separately, or is not really being conducted, but instead is consulting or training that is misnamed coaching—then how pure are the results of the ROI measures? And how is this affecting the future of business coaching as a profession?

From there, I decided to conduct some research on the Internet by accessing websites of business and executive coaches. I reviewed the scope of services they offer and identified how many mention the tools they use to measure coaching. This is actually a great exercise, and I encourage each of you to carry out this search and see what it reveals to you. I discovered that most websites describe a range of outcomes resulting from coaching, while few explain their system for measuring these outcomes.

With these thoughts in mind, here are some questions that I would like to consider:

- How are you defining your coaching services?
- What structures do you have in place to measure your coaching?
- What value do you place on measuring your coaching?
- What value does your client place on measuring your coaching?
- What value do you believe measuring your coaching services has on the future of coaching?

In May, I will be in Vancouver for the WABC conference, speaking on the ROI of business coaching. I would love to see you all there to further this discussion. One thing I know for certain is that overall, our intent is good, and we each want to offer our clients the best services we possibly can. Further, we often demonstrate extraordinary results. The way forward seems to be to ensure that we belong to professional groups where we can have these kinds of challenging discussions, making certain that we are at the leading edge of accountability to be our best.

If you would like to respond to the questions posed above, please email me at bron.bi@icoachacademy.com, and I will include your thoughts and comments in future columns!

Bronwyn Bowery-Ireland is the CEO of International Coach Academy, an international coach training school. She has been an executive coach for over 10 years. Read more about Bronwyn in the WABC Coach Directory. Bronwyn can be reached by email at bron.bi@icoachacademy.com.

ASSESSMENT CORNER

Is the Assessment Market Glutted?

by Roberta Hill

The short answer is yes—the assessment market is glutted. But the real question is, "What difference does that glut make to you?"

A Google search on "free assessments" nets over 64,000 hits. If that feels overwhelming to you, imagine how your clients feel after taking the MBTI™, DiSC®, Clifton Strengths

Finder™, Emotional Intelligence, and 360° assessments to help them improve their on-the-job performance!

I used to think that this over-exposure to assessments and instruments resulted in a watering down of the valuable tools that I offer to my clients. Then I asked myself, "Why are people accessing assessments to begin with?" Perhaps they are seeking self-awareness, help with a major career decision, or insights into working better with their management teams. Generally, they are trying to find answers to the questions they cannot easily answer on their own. Since exploring various assessments can be a great place to start that inquiry process, mass access to these tools does not worry me as much as how results are interpreted.

Some of my colleagues are also concerned that various untested instruments and assessments present a danger because they provide erroneous data. I believe that the danger more often lies with the interpretation of the data, rather than with the instrument or the data itself. I have seen people derive meaningful insights from a tool that was neither valid nor reliable from a research perspective, but which nevertheless presented some information that was useful to them at that particular point in time. In addition, the assessment often leads to a more in-depth exploration of a topic or question. Conversely, I have seen excellent assessments misused by 'qualified' administrators and others who have not been properly trained, interpreting results regardless of the ethics involved. The inappropriate organizational use of the MBTI™ is an excellent example of how a reputable assessment can develop a 'bad name' in some circles.

Bear in mind that it can be difficult for business people to evaluate the vast scope of instruments available. Many assessments are used to provide information on some aspect of an individual's personality. There is the additional complication of the assessment continuum, ranging from the subjective 'soft data' of surveys and checklists to the objective 'hard data' of polygraphs and biofeedback. Generally speaking, the more objective the tool, the greater the controls on its use. However, it is extremely difficult to monitor the use of a particular assessment or the individual who administers it.

Ultimately, what was once the privy of 'experts' is now readily available to anyone with access to the Internet. For example, anyone can purchase a blood pressure monitor from a major retail outlet. My dad bought one when his doctor mentioned that his blood pressure was a little on the high side. Dad has measured his blood pressure twice a day ever since. If it ever skyrockets, he'll be off to the doctor immediately—either to face a false alarm or to detect a serious medical problem. In the latter case, surely, this blood pressure 'assessment' was a valuable tool.

My point? Well, I have several. First off, as coaches, we can't prevent our clients from using whatever tools they want to use, and we can't guarantee how they'll use them. As professional business coaches, we can only ensure that we are using assessments in an appropriate manner. Secondly, like my dad, some people will become 'addicted' to gathering information, even if they only use it when the results cause concern. I call these people assessment junkies. This is neither a good nor bad thing—necessarily. Thirdly, one day such a client may take an assessment and feel compelled to talk to you about interpreting its results. This allows you to educate the client about the role and value of assessments. Finally, coaches who understand an array of instruments can provide valuable assistance by guiding clients toward those tools that are customized to the client's particular needs.

What does this really mean for business and corporate coaches?

The old adage 'you get what you pay for' is no longer true. Some assessments that were once only available from licensed practitioners can now be purchased online at very reasonable prices. This provides a great opportunity to educate clients about possible benefits and limitations of various products, and is one way to effectively leverage the easy access to assessments to create more knowledge about the merits of particular instruments.

A broad general knowledge of assessments—the types available and their express purposes—is important for business coaches. You, too, can explore the range of products in the marketplace by utilizing the Internet and its reasonable price points. Be sure to take advantage of any available resources that can keep you up to date on the latest trends. (One of those resources is my blog—www.AssessmentsToday.com.) Perhaps even more importantly, acknowledge what you *don't* know about a specific instrument.

Since few individuals who have taken assessments know what to do with the data, our role as educators takes on greater significance. Instead of 'telling' people how helpful an assessment might be to them, we can:

- Outline the expected benefits (rather than just features) of the assessment by demonstrating how to apply the information to help the client meet goals and objectives;
- Differentiate our services by reviewing the costs and anticipated ROI of the recommended assessment;
- Reduce clients' fears by describing how an assessment will be used, including reassurance regarding confidentiality;
- Analyze the trade-offs of one instrument versus another by comparing our assessment recommendation with other types of activities/services that clients may be considering; and
- Create value and meaning for our clients by effectively debriefing the assessment and developing an appropriate findings-based action plan.

What is the bottom line? When assessments are integrated into a service package, they can differentiate one coach from another. That said, the reputation of the coach generally carries more weight than the tools that he or she uses. So don't be concerned about the glut of assessments on the market. Instead, view assessments as an opportunity to build your reputation, educate yourself and your client, and perhaps develop additional business as well!

Roberta Hill, MBA, MCC, PMC, is the owner of Assessments Now, an online assessment provider with a network of more than 40 qualified coaches worldwide. As a partner in 1-Focus International, she currently consults on issues of change and leadership in Europe and North America. Roberta may be reached by email at roberta@wghill.com.

SUCCESS STORY

From Innoventor Engineering = Innovation + Invention

by Stan Herman

The Business/The Organization

Company owner Kent Schien founded Innoventor Engineering as a basement start up with only seven engineers. It has now grown to more than 60 engineers with a support staff of 10. Innoventor focuses on inventing and innovating products for an array of industries. Innoventor's strategy of diversifying into military, automotive, energy, and medical markets has served them well in growing their business.

The Partnership

In 2001, Kent began to realize that his company wasn't functioning as well as it could. During an event sponsored by Vistage (TEC) International, an organization which provides a CEO peer advisory board, professional speakers, and business coaching for its members, he met business coach Stan Herman. Kent was seeking a personal growth path that would outpace that of his business. Although coaching was something Kent had never considered, he was intrigued by Stan's thought-provoking questions. Those questions allowed Kent to identify the issues, determine what was at stake and what Kent had done so far, then clarify the ideal outcome and confirm the goals of the coaching process. Options became clearer as Kent and Stan worked together, and their coaching relationship has lasted for more than five years.

The Challenge

Kent had surrounded himself with engineers who were also friends. This presented challenges as the business grew and management demands were shared. Several areas needed attention—engineering excellence, project time lines, and budgets were all slipping. These were the challenges Kent faced:

1. Kent was an excellent engineer, but an inexperienced manager;
2. Kent was acting as the technical authority for all engineering problems;
3. Employee friends were not performing;
4. Neither Kent nor his executive team had personal development plans;
5. Hiring practices were focused on technical skill rather than management expertise; and
6. Kent needed to hire team members who were smarter than he was.

The Approach

Kent's initial coaching sessions focused on a detailed investigation of the precise role that Kent wanted to play in his organization. He completed the DiSC (Dominant, Influencer, Steady, Compliant) and PIAV (Personal Interest, Attitudes and Values) assessments, which increased his awareness of how he works best and what motivates him. How did he want his executives to respond to an increased pace of business decision-making? He knew he wanted them to increase the frequency with which they considered the implications of their decisions (e.g., who will the decision affect, how much time will be involved in its implementation, when should action be taken, etc.). But what did he expect of his management team, and how should the team be held accountable for meeting those expectations? And how should he deal with his feelings regarding his underperforming friends?

Kent and Stan began to explore Kent's vision of the ideal business situation. What does the ideal engineering team, executive team, and customer look like? The coaching conversations helped Kent to identify both an industry mentor and specific issues to bring to his Vistage Peer Advisory Board.

Kent began a formal strategic planning process using Quad Red-VCEO technology. This strategic planning online assessment allowed him to compare Innoventor to today's most successful businesses in 158 best practices areas, revealing the performance gaps between what would be considered excellent performance and what his company was actually doing. This information enabled Kent and his leadership team to address the most critical issues that were impeding his company's performance. Over the last five years, the strategic plan he has developed has served as a compass for his organization. Kent also completed a 360-degree personal assessment, which provided new insights to aid in his personal growth.

In addition, Kent implemented the following action steps:

1. Defined the CEO's role, both present and future;
2. Appointed a Chief Engineer;
3. Hired a Director of Engineering;
4. Established performance measurements for engineers, and tied those standards to compensation;
5. Required the executive staff, including the CEO, to implement personal development plans;
6. Upgraded hiring practices to include personality testing in order to build a more desirable workplace culture;

7. Replaced underperforming friends;
8. Recruited and hired a COO;
9. Increased the frequency and levels of communication; and
10. Moved underperforming employees to less significant business roles.

Value Delivered

With the establishment of performance expectations, and increased communication around those expectations, the company's engineering costs were reduced by 20%. Revenue grew from $2 to $13 million. A 'can do' culture was created around the newly established company benchmark: "It must be good for the customer, good for the company, and good for the employees." Quarterly Town Hall meetings were instituted as a communications tool for all employees. An 'open book' management style also increased communication opportunities.

To top it all off, competing with more than 100 other candidates, Innoventor was recognized nationally as the Small Business Association subcontractor of the year, receiving the USA Region VII award in 2006. In addition, Innoventor has placed in the St. Louis Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies list for the last four years.

Kent says that he now has a life, and is no longer serving as the resident expert on all engineering issues. As CEO/President of Innoventor Engineering, he says, "Every CEO/owner has strengths and weaknesses that affect the company. Coaching helped me—and will help any leade—to recognize blind spots. Most CEOs are aware of the impact of those traits on their companies. With increased awareness comes an increase in viable options, resulting in the confidence to aggressively pursue execution. A business coach in your corner is an asset every CEO needs!"

Stan Herman, MBA, CEC, President of Stan Herman, Inc., offers business coaching and CEO advisory services. A Chair for Vistage, he focuses on building better leaders by helping them make better decisions for better results. Read more about Stan in the WABC Coach Directory. Stan can be reached by email at Stan@Staninc.com.

GET THE EDGE

Think Bigger About Being a Business Coach

by Michael Port

Many proclaim that the coaching industry is one of the world's fastest growing professions—particularly sources who stand to profit from the growth of the industry. And certainly, that's a fair statement—if it's true. But regardless, what really matters is how you, as a business coach, see what's possible for you and the individuals and organizations that you serve.

Are you creating opportunities that many only dream of? Or is the business coaching profession just another in a series of ideas you've entertained regarding possible career choices? Are you building your coaching business based primarily on the way you have heard 'it's done'?

You may have just finished your training. You may have three clients and have been in business for as many years. You may have more clients than you can handle. No matter.

Regardless of what category you fall into, the big question is this: *How big are you really thinking about business coaching?*

Maybe you are worried about the difficult course ahead. After all, the learning curve can be daunting, and the great distance you must cover is hard to contemplate. You might feel like you're about to embark on a cross-country marathon. The business climate can be unpredictable. Conditions may end up far from the ideal. Doubts and worries may be overwhelming.

Have you ever heard of 'No Man's Land'? No Man's Land is a state of athletic training that does not actually increase physical fitness. If athletes are in No Man's Land, they feel as though they are working out—they are sweating, they are breathing more heavily, their heart rate is up, and their bodies may feel tired after their workout. But this place is neither easy enough to get the benefits of a recovery workout, nor difficult enough to reap the benefits of anaerobic threshold training. It's actually rather comfortable. In athletic training, when athletes spend most of their time in No Man's Land, that's exactly where they stay.

Might you be in 'Business Coaching No Man's Land'? In this sort of 'psychological' No Man's Land, you feel as though you are working hard, but you're not necessarily getting the results that you want.

If so, it's time to move out of 'No Man's Land' and into 'Big Thinking Land' and get comfortable with discomfort—the key to doing big things in business and in life.

Regardless of what the business of coaching means to you, you must become comfortable with discomfort if you want to play a bigger game. As you allow yourself to experience discomfort, you become more comfortable, then move on to bigger and bigger things, once again allowing yourself to be comfortable with the discomfort each new challenge presents.

You already know that the size of your thoughts influences your actions. This you know.

Small thoughts can get in the way and limit you. Big thoughts can push you to accomplish things that once seemed just out of reach, or perhaps even seemed impossible.

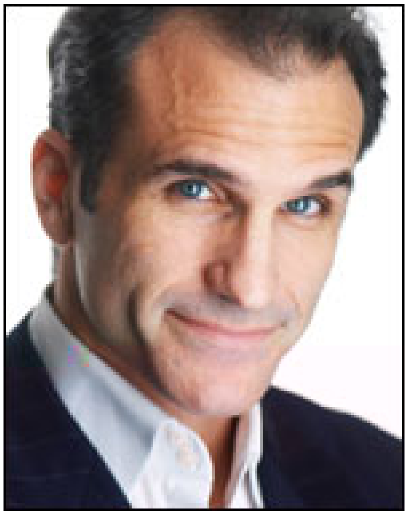
I invite you to redefine your approach to being a business coach in general and to building your coaching practice in particular. There is no standard model. It's up to you to create one for yourself. Imagine that there is no industry, that there is no standard way of delivering your services. As my friend and colleague Michael E. Gerber, author of *The E-Myth*, says, "Imagine a blank piece of paper and a beginner's mind."

Right now, write down your expectations for your coaching business. What past experiences have influenced your expectations? The stories you tell yourself about your past, your present, and your future either keep you thinking small or get you playing big.

Reset your past experiences and tell new, bigger stories; redefine your present offerings—what do you have to offer to your community? Finally, raise your expectations about what you can accomplish in the future. When you take these steps, you will think and act bigger about who you are, what you offer the world, and what sort of business coaching practice you want to build. You will give yourself the opportunity for more self-expression through your work. Thinking bigger is personal, is different for each of us, and draws on our unique individual talents. You will do bigger things if you view your coaching practice as a way to provide the most service to others—and as a means of expressing your own extraordinary gifts and contributions.

So, are you thinking as big as you can about being a business coach?

Michael Port, President of Michael Port & Associates, has been dubbed a 'marketing guru' by the *Wall Street Journal*. He has provided coaching, training, consulting and inspiration for over 20,000 small business owners, and is the author of the national bestseller *Book Yourself Solid: The Fastest, Easiest and Most Reliable System for Getting More Clients Than You Can Handle Even If You Hate Marketing and Selling* (Wiley, 2006). Michael can be reached by email at questions@michaelport.com.



HOT TOPICS

Multitasking (Part 3 of 3): Managing Multitasking

by H. Les Brown

Stop whatever else you're doing and read this! **Multitasking doesn't work!** We've already seen that a) multitasking is an illusion—the mind can only focus on one thing at a time; b) multitasking is actually rapid mental task switching; and c) rapid task switching degrades both the quantity and quality of the work.

How can we work effectively without multitasking? The secret is to limit the frequency of rapid task switching. Here are five strategies to use:

1. Manage expectations;
2. Plan effectively;
3. Work efficiently;
4. Rest frequently; and
5. Practice task- and self-awareness.

The best way to avoid the multitasking trap entirely is to become skilled at all five of these strategies.

Manage Expectations

The most powerful force behind multitasking is the uninformed expectations of others. Every manager, co-worker and client sees his or her own work project as critical. We therefore have to *negotiate expectations* and make our *commitments* clear by a) determining actual deadlines ("Could this wait until Wednesday?"); b) clarifying specifications ("What exactly are you looking for?"); c) resolving conflicts ("This will delay my work on Mary's project—would you check with her to see if she can live with that?"); and d) specifying what we've agreed to do ("OK, I'll get this out by tomorrow night.")

The real problem may be our fear of disappointing or confronting others—our own weak conflict resolution skills. When we can manage expectations effectively, we realize that no one is making us multitask.

Plan Effectively

Reactive behavior never works. By the time we become aware of a problem situation, we're already late! We feel the need to multitask when we're running behind. Ironically, attempting to multitask only makes matters worse. Planning enables us to work on tasks ahead of time. Even when 'stuff happens' (as it invariably will), by staying ahead of the curve, proactive planners can still meet deadlines.

Learn to say 'No.' Say it nicely, of course, and gently—but firmly. When standing dominoes are placed close to each other, topple one, and the rest of the row collapses. If they're placed far enough apart, knocking any one of them down leaves the rest untouched. Saying no to tasks that are not important (those with few or no consequences) can give us the space to keep our 'domino row' intact.

Work Efficiently

Top managers know how to work efficiently. The following five strategies improve efficiency and decrease the need to multitask:

1. *Use external memory.* An efficient information storage and retrieval system limits memory lapses, and also provides an effective disaster recovery system. Don't depend on your personal internal memory!
2. *Minimize paperwork.* Paperwork gets easily lost or misfiled, and it also requires resources to manage it: It's difficult to store and difficult to retrieve. Properly stored electronic files are simple to search and information can be retrieved easily. Essential paper documentation should be kept to a minimum. Everything else should be quickly processed and destroyed.
3. *Use technology.* We have an ever-increasing array of devices from which to choose. Choose reliability over novelty. Keep it simple: Choose the one system that works best for you.
4. *Delegate.* Many leaders fail because they believe they're the only ones who can do what they do. The first questions should be, "Do I really need to do this?" and "Who else could do it?" If no one but you can do a specific task, determine if it would be best to develop skills in others on your work team. Build capabilities for long-term success.
5. *Persevere to task completion.* Don't get buried in half-finished tasks. If a job is too big to fit in the time allotted for it, *break it down*. Plan in advance where you want to stop, then complete the job one task at a time.

Rest Frequently

There's a simple rule: If it's not scheduled, it won't happen. That goes double for downtime. Take scheduled breaks away from your desk. When switching tasks, get up and walk around. The mind needs time to 'switch gears,' or it will suffer in terms of reduced efficiency and accuracy.

Practice Task- and Self-Awareness

By attending to task demands and workstyles, we can streamline our work and avoid a number of pitfalls. Become more aware of these eight factors:

1. *Perceptual cues* (sights and sounds) trigger task switching. Eliminate extraneous cues that interrupt concentration. At the same time, use cues to signal important events.
2. *Operational complexity* determines the level of concentration required. Conversation won't interfere with simple operations. But when tasks are complex, we must minimize interruptions and distractions.
3. The *size of rule sets* refers to the number of separate operations that make up a task. While individual operations may be simple, together they may create a very complex whole. In this case, we must either break complex tasks down into simple, standalone operations, or insulate ourselves from distractions.
4. *Task dominance* means prioritizing—doing the most important tasks *first*. Importance

is easy to gauge: The more severe the consequences of failure, the more important the task.

5. *Task familiarity* determines the difficulty of a task. But familiarity takes time to develop. When task familiarity is low, we must focus undivided attention on the task, at least until we've passed the learning curve.
6. A short *attention span* produces all the negative side effects of rapid task switching. Since experts insist that a longer attention span can be self-taught, we can train ourselves to resist the urge to switch tasks until we come to a natural 'break' in the work.
7. We can expand our *response-stimulus interval* by using good planning to minimize urgency and stress. Moving at a quick but comfortable pace gives the mind time to recover from distractions.
8. Knowing our *cognitive style* allows us to work *with* our nature rather than against it. A field-*dependent* person needs to pay attention to details, while a *field-independent* person needs to avoid becoming fixated on details.

Conclusion

Multitasking—the most expedient approach—is seldom the best one. Faced with global pressures to do more with less, many businesses want to cram more work into less time. This approach does more harm than good. As coaches, we're uniquely qualified to ask the tough questions that will help our clients figure out what 'working smarter, not harder' means in practice. Once we've successfully employed the practices described above to banish multitasking from our own lives, we'll be equipped to help others create more rational and balanced work experiences.

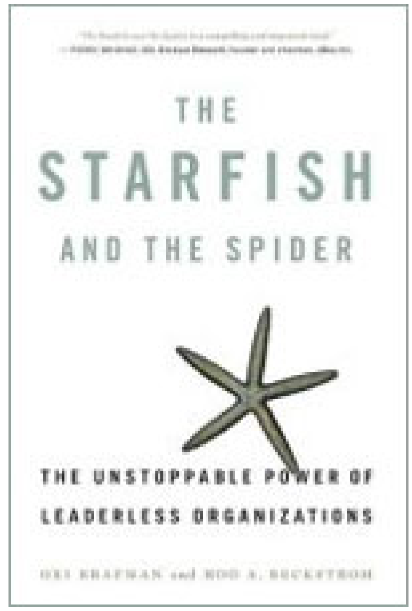
H. Les Brown, MA, CFCC, Researcher for Business Coaching Worldwide and co-founder of ProActivation, is an innovator and change strategist who helps clients to effect deep and lasting change in their personal and professional lives. Read more about Les in the WABC Coach Directory. Les can be reached by email at lbrown@proactivation.com.

BUSINESS BOOK REVIEWS

The Starfish and the Spider
The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations

By: Ori Brafman and Rod. A. Beckstrom

Review by Leslie Johnston, Business Book Review™



Consider a spider and a starfish. If a spider's head is cut off, it cannot function. If it loses a leg, it is significantly disabled. However, if a starfish loses an arm—or two or three—it regenerates them, and without a central brain at the top.

Organizations fall into these two categories, say the authors of **The Starfish and the Spider**. They are either spiders, with a traditional hierarchy and top-down organization, or they are revolutionary starfish, which rely on the power of peer relationships. What happens when no one is in charge in an organization? While, upon first thought, we think there would be disorder, and even chaos, a lack of traditional leadership is giving rise to powerful groups that are turning industry and society upside down.

With centralized systems, we know who is in charge, and these leaders make decisions in a specific place. In decentralized organizations, there is no leader, no hierarchy, and no headquarters; it is an open system. These systems are not complete anarchy, however. Rules and norms do exist, but they are not enforced by any one person. Rather, the power is distributed among all the people involved across any number of geographical regions. It comes as no surprise then that decentralized (starfish) organizations can sneak up on spiders—centralized organizations—because starfish are nimble; they mutate and grow quickly.

Decentralized organizations are circular in structure. These circles can be tied to a physical place, or they can be virtual. Once we get into a circle, we are equals, and we contribute to the best of our ability. In all open organizations there must be a catalyst, a person who initiates a circle and then fades away into the background, ceding control to the members. What makes members follow a catalyst and join a circle? There is usually not much money to be made in decentralized organizations; therefore, it is about ideology. Sometimes it is necessary, however, for spiders to draw upon the decentralized world for a "combo approach" to remain competitive. This "combo" approach, however, requires constant balancing. Organizations must seek and pursue the "sweet spot"–the point along the centralized-decentralized continuum that yields the best competitive advantage. Being on the "sweet spot" today is no guarantee that it will not shift tomorrow, for it is a tug of war—the forces of centralization and decentralization are continually pull the "sweet spot" to and fro. Understanding that it can move, and predicting the shifts, are two very different tasks for an organization.

With the open system movement (brought about largely as a result of the Internet), there are some discernible patterns. Traditionally, the larger the organization, the more power it wielded. Decentralization has changed that. Small size combined with a network of users gives an organization flexibility and power, and the effectiveness of a network is in its overall value, which is increased each time a new member is added—most often at no cost.

Because they are not structured and hierarchical, starfish organizations are incubators for creative and innovative ideas, ideas which attract new people to the network.

In these starfish organizations, knowledge, instead of being at the top, is spread throughout, and not only do the members have knowledge, they have a fundamental desire to share and contribute because ideology is the fuel that drives a decentralized organization. While they do not fill a CEOs role, catalysts are crucial to starfish organizations because they inspire people to action. When we take on a starfish, we must be beware—if we cut off one arm, another will grow in its place. There are ways to fight a decentralized organization, including changing the ideology of a starfish and centralizing them, but, most often, the best hope for survival for a centralized organization, Brafman and Beckstrom believe, is to decentralize themselves.

Decentralization will continue to change industry and society, and it is a force that can be harnessed for immense power.

FROM THE EDITOR

Challenge—Food For Growth!

by Donna Mills

Working with and learning from our first-class array of global citizens has always been the most fulfilling and interesting part of my position as Editor of *Business Coaching Worldwide*. In 2006, we covered issues ranging from a coaching program for Dutch penal institutions to the emergence of business coaching in South Africa. We examined coaching models, leadership strategies, multitasking and spiritual intelligence.

As *BCW* enters its third year of publication, the need for a global perspective and rigorous discussion of issues pertinent to the emerging profession of business coaching becomes ever more evident. Bronwyn Bowery-Ireland raises some significant, thought-provoking questions in her column this month. While those questions specifically address the measurement of the value or ROI of business coaching, she also highlights the broader issue of clearly understanding what constitutes true business coaching, separate and distinct from training or consulting.

Another issue to consider is differentiating between business coaching and life coaching.

While a coaching relationship may start out as a practical, objective approach to handling business challenges, it is impossible to separate the client as leader from the client as human being—and this is the point at which life coaching enters into the business coaching relationship. It seems to me that as business coaches, we are not only measuring the benefits to the organization; we are supporting the personal growth of individuals.

In a world that wants to address big issues and solve major problems on a massive scale, the 'one person at a time' approach may seem like emptying the ocean with a bucket. But building integrity and leadership skills (and we are all leaders in one venue or another), one person at a time, has the ripple effect of a pebble in a pond. You never know how far your reach will extend. And I hope that the solutions provided and issues discussed in *BCW* will create some widespread, intersecting ripples.

I believe that our future—as individuals, organizations, and societies—depends on it.

Donna Mills, BA, CFCC, is editor of *Business Coaching Worldwide*. As the owner of Creative Clarity, Donna helps her clients to discover their authentic purposes, define goals that are aligned with those purposes, and design and implement strategies for their achievement. Read more about Donna in the WABC Coach Directory. Donna may be reached by email at editor@wabccoaches.com.

Did You Know...

That email recipients correctly interpret the intended tone of an email message only 50% of the time?

While email can be an efficient means of communication, it is not always an effective one. Compared to face-to-face and telephone conversations, email is an impoverished communication medium. Without cues provided by a speaker's gestures, tone of voice, and inflection, recipients must rely solely on the text content of an email message to interpret its tone. Unfortunately, the verbal information provided can be easily misunderstood.

In a recent study, researchers Justin Kruger and Nicholas Epley asked participants to send either serious or sarcastic email to others. While 80% of email senders thought their tone could be readily identified, recipients correctly identified the tone only half the time. Even worse, the recipients believed they could accurately interpret the sender's tone 90% of the time. Overconfidence in our own ability to communicate and interpret emotional tone via email can lead us to take serious offense when none is intended. Even worse, because email is rapid and we cannot see the immediate reaction of the recipient, misinterpretations can lead to hasty, tactless responses.

In a survey of 1,000 employees conducted by Vault.com, 50% of respondents said they believe their emails are misperceived as angry, abrupt, or overly casual by recipients. Email may backfire for a number of reasons. First, email lacks cues like facial expression and tone of voice that help listeners decode the meaning of verbal information. Second, the expectation of instantaneous communication may pressure emailers to react and respond quickly. How often do we dash off a reply before truly thinking through what we want to say and how we ought to say it? To add to the difficulty, email is frequently exchanged between individuals with little (if any) personal rapport. Without the context provided by a personal relationship, the recipient must decode intended meaning in a vacuum. Stereotypes, preconceptions, and expectations may bias the recipient's interpretation.

While some studies indicate that participants make more complex offers when conducting negotiations via email, the ultimate outcomes suffer from the lack of rapport established. Those who negotiate by email report less trust in one another and less interest in working together in the future. These social consequences must be considered when deciding what communication medium is best for a specific task or topic.

To improve your email communications, practice good etiquette. Clearly identify the subject and purpose of the email, sending it only to appropriate recipients. Be direct and descriptive, but don't overwhelm your reader with unnecessary details. If you are particularly concerned that your message will be misinterpreted, try reading your message with the unintended tone in mind. How does it sound?

Even good etiquette can't ensure success. Some topics are simply better discussed face-to-face or via telephone. If your message is primarily emotional rather than factual, or your objective is more social (build relationships, establish trust) than task focused, ditch email in favor of a richer (if less efficient) communication strategy. You'll be glad you did.

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Want to ask a business question? A business coaching question? WABC eCommunity offers you one of the fastest and easiest ways to connect with and learn from your colleagues around the world!

http://www.wabccoaches.com/members/ecommunities/

WABC Coaches In the News!

Barry Zweibel, MBA, CEC, had an article published in the April 2005 issue of T+D Magazine, a publication by American Society for Training & Development (ASTD). The article, "A Strategic Coach," described the benefits of coaching, defined how coaching works, and gave some guidelines for choosing a coach. View the article at http://www.ggci.com/publications/ASTD-April-2005.pdf. | WABC Coach Directory Profile

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