

Supervision and the Future of Coaching

Welcome to this issue of *The Future of Coaching* magazine, whose purpose is to add more substance to the discourse of coaching—and to do so in a flexible and positive way. Our intent with this issue is to present a balanced perspective on coaching supervision, mentor coaching, and peer consultation within the coaching profession.

It wasn't all that long ago that when we wrote about coaching, our metaphor was of the Wild West. The ongoing joke was that, if you could hang a shingle with your name on it, you could be a sheriff or a coach. Sometimes, we now write about those days with a sense of loss (and sometimes with a sense of good riddance, too).

Our profession, it is clear, has evolved and is evolving. For one thing, when we say “profession” no one blinks or laughs because we are now a multi-billion dollar industry. More importantly, for most of us, our collective impact magnifies the output, the potential, and the joy of many other industries and many other leaders.

We will explore in this issue one of the ways coaching is changing: a current trend toward “supervision.” We'll look at the term itself; we'll check out the larger trends in which it occurs and some of the ramifications of supervision's possible growth; we'll explore some alternatives and some accomplishments; we'll hear from the pros and the cons.

One of us, in particular, our Guest Editor, Vikki Brock, has invested a good amount of time in charting this trend. It's particularly appropriate, since one of her claims to fame in our profession is her extensive and impressive charting of the history of coaching.

We're now talking about the future of coaching itself—appropriate, don't you think, given our magazine's title—and some may say that future is a Bureaucratic Wasteland or an Island of Order, the Wild West Returned or Camelot by Coaching. Regardless, it will serve our clients, our profession, and ourselves to make sure we know where we want to go and where we are headed—and if they are the same thing or not.

Here's Vikki on the subject:

When I completed my PhD research in 2008 I identified several paths coaching might take in the future. On one end of the spectrum was the field becoming institutionalized and bureaucratic, and the other was becoming the new worldview. For the past year I have been closely following the movement toward establishing coaching supervision as a standard within the coaching industry. And what I see happening seems to me to be symptomatic of a change within the entire field.

The movement toward coaching supervision and how it is taking place demonstrates that a trend toward “legitimate professionalism” pursued by professional coach associations and others who benefit from more regulations is the path coaching is on right now. Legitimate professionalism means to be supported by recognized institutions of learning, an accepted body of research, and well-understood processes of certification. Gone are the days of open and transparent dialogue that value the input of elder coaches alongside newer coaches.

Rather than forging our own path, the coaching field at 20 years is continuing to borrow from other fields to define coaching. Read the perspectives shared by the authors who contributed to this issue. You make your own decision – do we forge our own path or run the risk of being overtaken by a new field with the agility to adapt to ever changing world requirements.

Summary of contributions:

Garvey – Garvey explores the problem of competence in coaching; he looks at the reductionist nature of competencies finding they are inadequate to deal with the complexities of coaching. He proposes revisions to assessment and accreditation that are rooted in person centered humanism philosophy; and are dynamic, situational and peer led.

Reynolds – The author’s perspective is that the arbitrary use of supervision and mentoring are contrary to the broader definitions of credentialed coaches. Asks the bigger question as to why elders in coaching are not consulted in proposed changes before the decisions are made.

Stratford – This author argues that the ICF has been violating their own competencies and the soul of coaching in how they deal with their members (clients). In their quest for legitimacy as a profession, associations like the ICF went hierarchical and bureaucratic, rather than innovative and distinctive. In coaching language, we focused on solidifying the “what” rather than the “who” – which is demonstrated in copying one more professions system ... “supervision”.

Garvey – EMCC has shifted focus over the years from eclectic mix to rational reductionism of managerialism and commodification. This form of managerialist professionalism rips the soul out of coaching and mentoring, and drives out inclusivity and eclectic mix in favor of exclusivity and commodification. We must return to core values and principles of what we do as coaches and mentors.

Perry – The soul of coaching is the foundation of our industry and this author explores what has happened to the soul of the ICF. While this talks about the ICF, it could just as easily be for the entire coaching industry. We co-editors choose to be those who are "willing to push back, to ask questions, to challenge the status quo". He also introduces the concept that coaching is a ‘modeling’ rather than ‘service’ field.

Williams – Supervision in psychology is extensive and required for postdoctoral students in the US. Supervision is the wrong term for coaches and fulfills one of the duties of a fully engaged

mentor coach. Coaches are an unlicensed profession where peer consultation for professional development, self-reflection, challenges, etc. is a good ethical principle. Author suggests calling this process Coaching Consultation.

Lawrence – Australia guidelines for coaching in organizations requires all coaches to be engaged in professional supervision. Yet the industry does not agree what coaching supervision is nor who is qualified to act as a supervisor. Coaching borrows ideas from a range of disciplines. This author looks at research supporting supervision, identifies six approaches to coaching supervision, and shares results of it's own study with coaching clients.

Carr – Eleven coaching trends are identified that will have dramatic impact on future of coaching. These include (among others): glut of coaches; niche coaching; proliferation of credentialing schemes; and influx of parasites. While well-meaning, reasonable and making sense for individual practitioner survival, the big picture perspective appears to form an unintentional whole that results in a confused and at times baffled general public with regard to the coaching industry.

Brock – Published in the Spring 2015 *Journal of the Association for Management Education and Development* issue that focused on the future coaching and mentoring – evolution, revolution or extinction?, this article explores the potential for detrimental consequences and inappropriateness of imposing supervision on coaching practitioners, versus the established mentor coach approach. It also includes the chronology of coaching supervision within the coaching field.

Moral – The history, situation and trends of coaching supervision in Europe are factually presented, along with definitions and identification of the key coaching supervision associations in Europe. Accreditations for coaching supervision, the role of European Union, and scenarios for evolution of coaching supervision are included through a European perspective.

Goldvarg and Zuvanic – A key player in mentor coaching and more recently in coaching supervision is the ICF. This article describes the ICF approach to mentor coaching since 2010. Results of an interview survey administered to Latin American senior Mentor-Coaches for the purpose of building a model for mentor coaching competencies are shared.

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