

Get Focused, Get Visible, Get Clients

Coaching Is A Complex Process

Coaching is a complex process. It involves lots of agile thinking on the part of the coach, to enable clear thinking on the client's part. If a non-coach were to ask you what was going on in your head during a coaching conversation, it would be hard to put it all into words. If you could articulate it, it would be a wordy response. However, if you were to break it down into sections, you'd probably come up with something like the ICF Core Competencies, or those of any of our professional bodies.

(I realise that the following list isn't comprehensive but remember we're articulating this for a non-coach.)

- Ethics would be front and centre.
- Listening as carefully as possible, to what's not said as well as the words being used.
- Asking questions to allow the client to examine their current thinking in order to see if it's serving them well.
- Working with the client, framing new directions for their actions, moving them closer to the goal they want to reach.

It's fair to say that non-coaches have no idea at all about the massive amount of skill that a coach is using throughout what might look, from the outside, like a normal conversation.

Marketing Is Also A Complex Process

Here's the thing. Marketing is also a complex process.

In addition, there are a couple of very specific problems with marketing in the context of the coaching profession. One is that marketing is viewed as a bad thing (or even a scam) by many in positions of influence within our profession. The other is that no one understands what a coach does, or they think they do and they're wrong. These are two big reasons why so many coaches fail to build thriving businesses.

A Website Isn't The Answer

Marketing is a process, not an event. What I mean is that a website (for example) is a marketing tool and one piece of a marketing strategy.

What a website isn't, is all that's necessary to find clients. It doesn't matter how beautiful it is, or how detailed it is about you, your qualifications, coaching philosophy and packages, the fact is that vanishingly small numbers of people are searching for a coach.

And – here’s the crunch – people don’t care about you, your qualifications, your philosophy or even your packages.

What people do care about – what we **all** care about when we are the potential consumer of a product or service – is what’s in it for them. How will using your service benefit the client?

It Depends..

If your answer to ‘what’s in it for them’ is that it depends on what it is that they need help with, you’re going to struggle to find clients. The reason that you’re going to struggle is that if your answer is ‘I can help anyone with anything’, then you are unable to articulate a clear benefit of working with you.

I can hear some of you puzzling about what I mean when I ask you to define what’s in it for the people you coach. Your answer might be ‘clarity on any given situation’. This answer may well be correct, but it’s being answered about the *delivery* side of your coaching business. When you have a client sitting down in front of you, then what’s in it for them is whatever they want or need in the moment, and clarity may well be it.

All businesses have two halves in terms of skillsets required, the delivery half (which in our case is our coaching skills) and the *creating the opportunity to do the delivery* half. Marketing is the creating the opportunity part and it’s a full 50% of the skills you require.

Let me simplify the process for finding coaching clients and in particular the ones who will gladly pay a professional rate for your coaching.

Get Focused

In order to be able to answer the question ‘what’s in it for them?’ you need to be able to speak about specifics. Coaching is a powerful tool that can help in lots and lots of different areas of life, but unless the people you want to work with understand that you are exactly what they need, they won’t pay you for your services.

Let me make a list of what coaching can help with:

- Career development
- Relationships
- Financial management
- Health
- Confidence
- Leadership
- Resilience

- Time management
- Work/life balance

I could go on.

The thing is that not everyone is struggling with everything at the same time. In addition, someone who is at the start of their career (for example) needs very different help from someone who is at the end of their career. Yes, they could both benefit from coaching, but the answer to 'what's in it for them' is different for each one. Therefore, those two individuals need to hear different things to understand why they might want to be coached.

To become adept at finding coaching clients who can – and will - pay a professional rate for coaching means that you need to hone in on a particular kind of client, with a problem that coaching can resolve. When you know who you're talking to, it's much easier to articulate what's in it for them.

Mind Monkey Slayer: One of the reasons that coaches resist the idea of getting focused on a particular group of people who have a specific problem that coaching can resolve, is that they don't want to work with only one kind of client around one kind of problem.

The mind money slayer is this; we know that no matter what problem a client shows up with in session one, it's never the thing they're talking about by session three. What this means is that coaches can attract clients who share the same session one problem but will all have different session three problems because each is a unique individual.

Is this mind monkey dead now? I do hope so.

Get Visible

Once you have honed your focus onto a particular group of people and created a narrative that explains with crystal clarity what's in it for them, it's time to get visible. (The narrative you create is also known as a marketing message.)

Getting visible doesn't mean that you must be visible to everyone. It means that you only need to become visible to the kind of people for whom you created your answer to the question 'what's in it for me'. Getting visible means that you put yourself where the kind of people you can help hang out – on and offline.

Once you are visible, you need to stay visible and as long as you can do that, your business will grow.

Get Clients

Once you're visible to the people in your chosen target audience and they realise that you understand what they're struggling with and that you can help them, they will come to you for help.

Despite opinions to the contrary, marketing isn't a scam. Better yet, the marketing process is one you can trust in the same way that the coaching process is one you can trust.

Any ideas you might have that marketing is about uncomfortable bragging and boasting are incorrect. Bragging and boasting doesn't attract clients.

Good marketing on the other hand is both comfortable and effective. It also attracts clients.

That's a relief, isn't it?