

by Jessica Austin

# Form Follows Function

## What coaches can learn from designers

I recently bought an Eames chair for my living room. The caramel wood-backed leather lounge makes the perfect addition to the retro look of my décor. I am a fan of the modern art era, and I love objects with purpose and function. Design is something that has always fascinated and appealed to me, and I bring up the Eames chair for a reason. When designing the lounge chair, Charles and Ray Eames thought about function as well as the user experience. It turns out that design is as important to coaching as it is to furniture, fashion and architecture.

Most people wouldn't normally put the words coaching and design together, and frankly neither did I until a couple of years ago. Design thinking is not a tool that you can add to your tool belt. Rather, it is a process by which we create, innovate, and transform products or services with where the customer experience is of utmost importance. Coaches typically focus on their own goods, services and packages rather than on the way the client experiences these goods, services, or packages. Incorporating the concepts of design thinking can help you create a better client experience from the first touch point to

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the last. Design thinking is something that any coach can use to enhance their business. If done well, design thinking can help you transform the way you do business, and create an amazing experience for your clients.

Every product that is designed incorporates what is needed (purpose) and the resources that are available in



order to create options that are functional and useful. Every great designer then takes those options and decides on the best solution to fulfill the need and give the best experience to the user.

Take for instance the legendary Steve Jobs. He created the Apple Store so that customers would be able to experience Apple products before buying them. The Apple Store isn't your typical gadget retailer; it's designed differently. From the moment you walk in, you hear electronic music playing softly overhead, as people greet you from behind what appears to be a receptionist counter in the center of the store. As you look around, you see that there are large open spaces, furnished with wooden tables that are graced with laptops, iPhones, iPads, and other Apple devices. The products are available, inviting you to come tinker with them, and there are virtually no stock shelves. The layout of the store invites customers to experience the products rather than just look at them.

There are many common problems in the way coaches deliver services. One common mistake is over-promising. Setting judgment aside and simply considering the experience of your client can bring new insight to ways that you can enhance your practice using design thinking. As coaches, we know that coaching offers individuals the chance to make changes to their current situation. But not every client walks away with the same results. Yet many of us tend to over-promise on our websites. “Lead a more fulfilling life (by hiring me as a coach)” is exactly the type of promise we are talking about. It is impossible for a coach to deliver this to their client. Instead of over

promising, try offering something that is deliverable: “Together we can improve your current capabilities.” Offering improvement is something that is attainable and doesn’t have the same risks of breaking client trust. Another mistake that coaches make is having abstract statements on their sites that don’t really mean anything – “Make positive and lasting change.” What does this mean really? The statement is too vague. Instead you might say: “Together we can develop strategies to help you make better decisions.” This second statement is much more clear than the first, and tells the potential client what is involved: development and strategy.

When we focus on the client experience rather than what services we offer, we are better able to create



messages that build trust and confidence with clients. Every coach has the opportunity to design an experience for their clients. Whether it is how you market your services, to the

content on your website, using design thinking can help you create a great customer experience that is consistent with your brand, your message, and your delivery. The easiest way to do this is by looking at your website from the perspective of a client. Ask yourself, “am I overpromising” or “is the language on my site too vague?”

My challenge to you is this: scroll through websites of other coaches and look for overlap in messages, over-promises, and abstract statements. Next, take a look at your practice with a keen eye for areas that need improvement. Then use the steps of design thinking to make changes with your clients in mind. You and the clients you serve will see a noticeable difference in the changes that you make. •

# What Is An Intuitive Coach?



Colette Baron-Reid  
Best Selling Author

As an Intuitive Coach®, you will be using our patented process, IN-Vizion®, to help people stop over strategizing their desired outcome using the typical method of logical, left brain and show them how to effortlessly engage their intuitive, creative, right brain for more powerful results. Intuitive Coaching builds upon instincts, imagination and intuition, guiding clients to rock solid decisions and breakthroughs that they know will fulfill their true feelings, wishes and desires.

The Master Intuitive Coach® Institute is offering multiple modules in which you may become Certified or Master Certified, or you may choose to be Certified or Master Certified in all of them.

All Certified coaches will have their name, e-mail and website address listed directly on our website so clients may find them. And the best part of all of this, we do not take a portion of the money you make coaching.

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