

Coaching for Extraordinary Results

Darelyn “DJ” Mitsch

Organizations throughout the world are finding ways to integrate professional coaches and systemic approaches to coaching as ways to create desired changes in company culture. The applications of coaching are as varied as the providers and the companies who employ them. Implementing coaching as a consistent process has raised many questions, including how to define coaching competencies and expectations; how to distinguish coaching from consulting, training, and therapy; and how to determine the bottom-line impact or return-on-investment (ROI). In answer to these questions, this book includes a host of great coaching stories that embody the concepts and principles of organizational coaching.

When a coach is employed as a true partner, growth always occurs beyond ordinary performances and accomplishments. Quite often there is evidence of an extraordinary outcome, an alignment of values, and even a hint of magic in the results experienced by those coached and those they influence. The cases presented here are both the “study” of what happened as well as the “story” of what happened through the coaching process and partnership.

Coaching is a method of personal and professional development that at the core is primarily about conscious inquiry and learning. Many have turned this simple view of an important human need—for people to live meaningful lives and engage in significant, fulfilling work—into lengthy and eloquent definitions suitable for hanging on a paneled office wall. We try to make this need for fulfillment, one so organic to human nature, into something objective enough to duplicate and measure as a technology. We do this because we work in a world in which our minds have become trusted above the heart

and intuition. We inquire, “So what if coaching has opened a leader to a new view of his values in his work as the CEO of a manufacturing company? What does it matter that he works in alignment with values of service and beauty?” The answer is that through his discoveries in coaching conversations, he created a global company strategy to have a zero impact on environments his company once polluted and re-created the company to set a new course of leading the world in “green” standards. How do you measure this or any other profound leadership legacy in a formula?

Starting in the early 1990s, coaching became a new business and personal development term used by a handful of consultants, retired sports coaches-cum-authors, motivational speakers, financial advisors, therapists, and corporate refugees. There was a realization that people learn in different ways and that emotions drive behavior. There was also a great opportunity for many leaders to better manage professional development for their staffs and teams. Schools and programs were launched to fill the need for coaching skill development. Corporations launched programs to call their supervisors and managers “coaches.” Since then, coaching has been deemed a cost-effective way to offer customized leadership development, craft new career directions, and address performance concerns. Coaching has helped people gain language for self-expression—to “get real” in their workplaces, to expand the views of mandated goals for alignment with core values, and to gain perspective.

A Model for Extraordinary Coaching

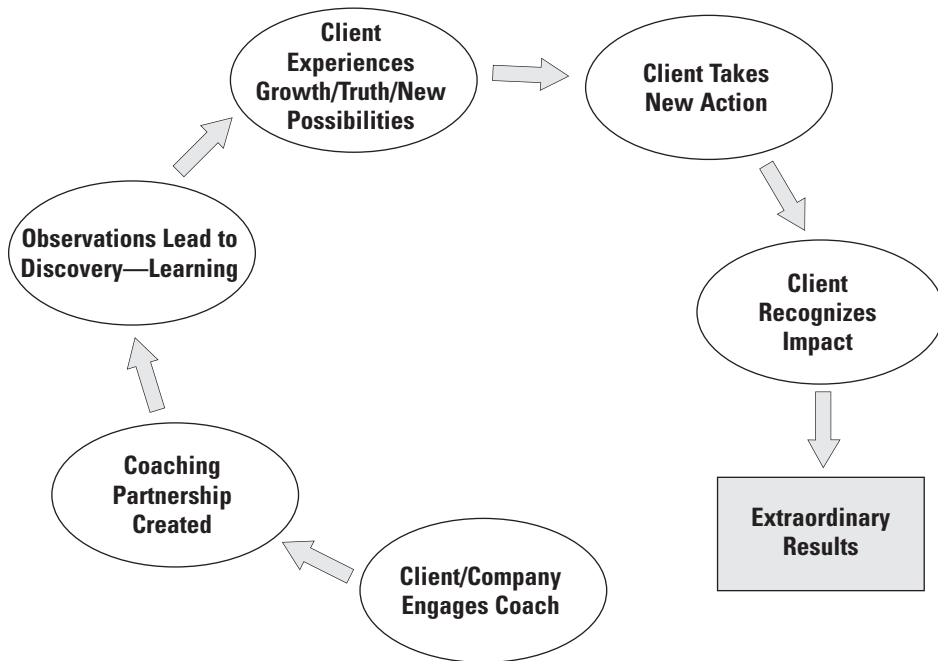
A model for extraordinary coaching could take many forms, but the one that seemed common to these cases is illustrated in figure 1.

Step One: Client Engages Coach

In the first step of the coaching model, the coach and client begin an engagement prompted by any number of people. The client can be an individual executive, a professional, a team of people, or a company. Examples in this book include

- a manager hiring a coach for development of a talented key player
- a CEO hiring a coach for personal and professional growth
- a new vice president seeking to find her “groove” with a newly inherited team and engaging a coach through HR)
- a coach offering a series of free sessions to a client
- a senior executive seeking an internal HR executive to coach him through a merger.

Figure 1. Stages of developmental coaching for executives or companies.



Executive coaching is one of the primary points of entry for all organizational coaching. Either an internal corporate coach or an external professional coach who partners with an executive or a group of executives will open the opportunity for further coaching in the organization. Many of the stories in this casebook describe the result of executive coaching initiatives. The International Coach Federation (ICF), the nonprofit professional society of coaches throughout the world, sponsors the annual Executive Summit, a conference of many prominent executive coaches. A white paper posted on the ICF Website (www.coachfederation.org), which was presented as a result of Executive Summit I, defines executive coaching in the following way:

Executive Coaching is a facilitative one-to-one, mutually designed relationship between a professional coach and a key contributor who has a powerful position in the organization. This relationship occurs in areas of business, government, not-for-profit, and educational

organizations where there are multiple stakeholders and organizational sponsorship for the coach or coaching group. The coaching is contracted for the benefit of a client who is accountable for highly complex decisions with wide scope of impact on the organization and industry as a whole. The focus of the coaching is usually focused on organizational performance or development, but may also have a personal component as well. The results produced from this relationship are observable and measurable, commensurate with the requirements the organization has for the performance of the person being coached.

Another point of entry for coaching in organizations is through a connection with the HR department or organizational development (OD) team. These professionals often have a mandate for leadership development and look to coaches to provide specific services to bolster key training objectives for developing core competencies in managers, either individuals or specific groups in which there is a focus on leadership development. For example, leaders are expected to be proficient in budgeting, projecting profit and loss, ensuring quality processes, and managing operational processes. OD professionals will often employ contract consultants, trainers, or universities to help create foundation programs for these core competencies or defined company expectations. Needs often surface during these processes for these executives to become seasoned leaders of the teams they manage. For example, the focus might be to influence, mentor, and retain key talent. Once these needs are identified as a point of entry for coaching, the HR or OD professional will seek to hire a qualified coach for the individual or the group.

Step Two: Coaching Partnership Created

The coach and client form a partnership based on open communication, intimacy, and trust. The coach is responsible for setting the stage, understanding the client's agenda, and clarifying expectations. The coach is not concerned with building a long-term friendship but in having the courage to explore untapped areas and challenging the client to take full ownership of desired outcomes. Because the focus is always on the client's agenda, the coach often will establish a nonreporting relationship with the company that puts the client in charge of expressing the value or impact of coaching. For this reason, and because many results are qualitative and self-reported, there have been few measures of the impact of coaching. On the following pages we have

cases that describe the qualitative and sometimes intangible impact as well as the quantitative ROI results.

Step Three: Observations Lead to Discovery and Learning

The contract or agreement in this partnership between client and coach is that the coach will serve as a guide to the client's inner wisdom, truth, and best answers. The coach only advises where she or he has the expertise, exploring other areas by asking powerful and sometimes "naïve" or "stupid" questions. This "quest" allows the client to become an observer, gaining perspective and new views of possibilities through the coach's eyes. When people become introspective and begin taking full ownership of their lives and actions, then—and perhaps only then—discovery, expansion, and re-creation begin. People become more aware of the impact of their decisions and through this awareness they learn to make better decisions.

Step Four: Client Experiences Truth, Growth, and New Possibilities

People are happiest, most fulfilled, and most productive when they take actions that are aligned with who they really are and what they most desire to do. They will accomplish much more with less effort when they move in rhythm with their passions, natural talents, and commitments. Because companies are so dynamic and changes occur daily, learning to tell the truth versus playing a political guessing game leads to growth and the exploration of new possibilities. Coaching prompts truth telling, even if it is difficult, so that clients can see a host of new opportunities or actions to take. It is the power of these choices that opens the path for better decisions and more productive actions.

Step Five: Client Takes New Action

Clients create new ways to accomplish the extraordinary through coaching partnerships. They often do this outside the normal or expected timeframes because they are compelled rather than pushed to take better and more meaningful actions. Awareness is the key to adult learning; when aware, people cannot fall back into old patterns of behavior without some "yuck in the gut." Coaches hold clients accountable to themselves for taking best actions.

Step Six: Client Recognizes Impact

New actions provide new and often extraordinary results. Whether it's a measurable ROI for a developmental coaching engagement

with an executive or an executive's visible determination to leave a meaningful legacy, coaching can accelerate a defined outcome and expected bottom line.

Step Seven: Extraordinary Results

In every case study written for this book, the results are extraordinary. Some can be calculated and defined. Others will resonate with the like-minded (or like-souled) and inspire both coaches and clients to have the courage for bolder actions and decisions. Some will prompt great discussions for future coaching initiatives.

The cases submitted for this book come from some of the world's most accomplished coaches. Some are recognized authors. Some are business executives and corporate refugees who have taken courses in coaching and bring many years of leadership experience to their work as professional coaches. Some work internally in large organizations to source leadership and coaching programs. All are the best possible authors for this first casebook on coaching and have been generous with their perspectives, stories, and processes. Each case is a gift to encourage coaches, executives, students, and OD professionals to continue defining a coaching path for extraordinary results.

The 13 cases featured on the following pages all have a stated and significant impact. In one breakthrough case, the company made a financial investment to develop key talent; in another, the company encouraged a group of employees to stretch toward a big goal. There are several stories that showcase individuals who achieved something extraordinary as a result of new perspectives gained through coaching. The bottom-line results from these cases cover a wide spectrum, ranging from the manufacturing CEO who changed a global company's strategy to have a zero impact on environments his company once polluted to the sales team that moved up three ranks in just four months.

Finding a Coach

Those who want resources to help find a coach or coaching company can refer to the following sources:

- This book's contributing coaches or authors can be reached easily through the biographical and contact information that follows each case study.
- The International Coach Federation's Coach Referral Service lists coaches by background, competencies, expertise, and focus area, so key words entered on the group's Website can produce a match.

Summary

In this casebook you will find great definitions for coaching that share a common theme: conscious learning and courageous actions that yield new results. The relationship described in all of the case-work involves an individual client, a team, or the people of a large company partnering with a professional coach who provides perspective and explores the discoveries made in simple conversations. It is these discoveries and observations that lead clients to take new and better actions and, in turn, to produce better results. These results always translate to more meaningful work, higher productivity, the right people in the right jobs, people who are challenged to do their best, a leadership legacy, and a positive effect on the bottom line.

It is the need for learning and growth that intrigues professionals in the fields of human development and has companies of all sizes searching for the best approach to integrate coaching. By some reports, the business of training and development generates more than \$70 billion annually, and self-help books about personal or professional growth are still the most popular bestsellers on nonfiction book lists. As a relatively new part of this training and self-help industry, coaching is not yet being measured to the degree of other business initiatives. However, coaching has been effective because it addresses the individual's specific needs for development, growth, and learning, which has a ripple-like effect in communication around and through the one being coached.

All of these emerging coaching applications address the needs people have to talk about their values, gain clarity about their futures, enjoy their lives, more gracefully manage the effects of mergers and other organizational changes in order to re-energize themselves and others, or to have some control in environments that seem out of control because of sped-up organizational changes. As success stories spread about people growing within organizations or accomplishing extraordinary results through coaching, the coaches who have been their guides are hired to create programs for other leaders and key talent. At some point, those who pay the bills pose the pivotal question: "How do we know this works?" The cases that follow answer this question.

