



# MAKING IT AS A COACH: Strategies for Success

## INTRODUCTION

The professional coaching industry is growing rapidly, creating new opportunities as well as challenges for both new and experienced coaches.

Experts suggest there are several key factors that have led to the explosive growth of coaching. Each provides opportunities as well as some challenges to **Making It as a Coach**.

Key factors contributing to the growth of coaching include;

- **THE NEED.** The type of work being performed and the way that work gets done have changed. We have moved from routine, repetitive measurable work, to work that involves critical thinking, analysis and creativity. The old ways of managing and leading are not effective in today's environment. What is more effective for this environment is competency in soft skills, i.e. coaching. Managers, leaders and their teams are seeking these skills.
  
- **A CHANGE IN CORPORATE CULTURE.** Companies that once provided coaching only to C-suite executives now offer it to middle managers and throughout the organization.
  
- **RESULTS.** Surveys as well as anecdotal information demonstrates coaching works. In an independent global survey released in 2016 by the ICF, 85 percent of respondents who had been in a coaching relationship said they were somewhat or very satisfied.
  
- **RELATIVELY LOW BARRIER TO ENTRY.** The industry is not regulated and there is no requirement that one attains a certain level of training or education prior to becoming a coach. Note: This is also one of the challenges faced by new and experienced coaches – how to establish credibility and set yourself apart.

## 1. Start by Building a Solid Foundation

Coaching has become a very competitive industry whether you are working within an organization or running a coaching business. Along with the explosive growth of the coaching industry has come an influx of coaches who vary widely in the amount of education, training and experience they bring. As a result, there is an increasing need to set yourself apart. One excellent way to differentiate yourself is to obtain a credential. A coaching credential will give you an excellent foundation to build upon and can be a great feature to promote when marketing your skills. Here is what having a credential can do for you;

- Ensure you have completed extensive training to give you the skills and confidence to succeed
- Demonstrate your commitment to the profession and coaching excellence
- Give you credibility and legitimacy to market yourself (within an organization or to potential clients)
- Enhance your professional profile

For more information on credentialing, check out our [Fast Track to ICF Credential Program](#) or visit the [International Coaching Federation \(ICF\) website](#).

## 2. Determine who your target audience is and what they are looking for

Your target audience could be managers, leaders and coachees within your organization or potential clients for your coaching business. Use your questioning skills to gain a clear understanding of your target audience. Questions to help you gain insights into what they are looking for include;

- What are the problems or challenges they are facing? *Within an organization you want to consider your managers and leaders as well as those you will be coaching.*
- What does success look like for them?
- What is their timeframe?
- Do they have expectations or preconceived notions about what coaching is and what it can do for them?

*Tip: Do the work yourself and be a role model. People are drawn to those who already have what they are seeking. For example, when you demonstrate success and perform at a high level coachees seeking these attributes will be drawn to you.*

## 3. Invest in Education

We've already mentioned this, but it bears repeating. An investment in education and training will not only give you the skills and confidence you need but it will also help you market yourself. And, it is important to keep the learning going. Even after you have the basics down it is important to refresh, enhance and refine your skills.

## 4. Leverage your Strengths

Each of us has unique strengths. The smart strategy is to leverage your strengths first. If you aren't sure what your strengths are, take an inventory, ask trusted associates and then put them down on paper. As you develop your list of strengths, consider all experiences; personal, professional, good, bad and neutral. For example, maybe you have had a lot of experience dealing with conflict and you are good at it. Write that down. Also, look at your accomplishments, in all aspects of your life, and identify what you can leverage. These could be professional accomplishments, but they could also be athletic, academic, hobbies or others.

## 5. Capitalize on Your Current Position

Whether you are working within an organization or already building your coaching business, find opportunities where you are today to start building your credibility. For example, you can start coaching trusted colleagues or business associates. Once you take that step you can then start to develop a track record of success as well as leverage those relationships for your word-of-mouth marketing.

*Tip: Be sure to always document the results of your coaching. Identify several key metrics at the start of the relationship and then measure the results at appropriate time points, for example, at 3 and 6 months.*

## 6. Experiment

Be willing to experiment and take risks. The best way to learn a new skill is to try it out under different circumstances and using different approaches. It is through this process that you will refine, enhance and improve your coaching skills. Don't be afraid to let your coachees know you are still developing your skills and ask them if it is okay if you make a mistake or two during the process.

*Tip: Do the work yourself and get a coach. Going through the process yourself will give you unique insights as well as a powerful success story to tell your potential coachees.*

## 7. Practice

Training and education are important, but nothing takes the place of practice. One approach for getting practice when you are starting out is to offer pro bono coaching sessions. However, a word of caution is needed here. It is important to be strategic about offering pro bono sessions. Make sure that you can leverage these coaching sessions / relationships for your benefit. For example, ask your happy coachees if you can use them as a reference and if they would be willing to provide referrals. Let them know how they can continue to work with you once the pro bono sessions end. You should have a coaching package ready to offer them including the price you will charge.

*Tip: Be sure to set limits around this and stick to them. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you aren't ready to start charging for your services or get the coaching recognition you deserve within your organization. You must pick a set number of sessions and / or time frame for offering freebies and then stick with it.*

## 8. Don't be a Secret

It may seem obvious but to be a successful coach you must let people know who you are and what you are doing. A good place to start is to let your close friends and associates know. This strategy allows you to develop advocates who will build your confidence and help spread the word. If you are working within an organization, in addition to sharing with your manager, you'll also want to let trusted peers know. And then you'll want to back up your words with actions by being a role model for coaching in your daily interactions.

If you are building your coaching business, think about where and how you will connect with people who might hire you. Remember to leverage your strengths and current relationships first. For example, if you are an excellent public speaker, offer to speak to relevant groups. If you have writing skills, offer to write articles for pertinent publications or online media channels.

## 9. Give Yourself Time

This strategy is straightforward but often one of the more difficult to apply. Most people, once they've made the decision to pursue coaching, want success right away. But, like most things worthwhile, becoming a successful coach takes time. If you are pursuing your coaching education and training while you are in your current position, that is a smart strategy. But you've got to give yourself time as you balance the responsibilities of your current position with those of your coaching development. Talk to others and determine what is a realistic time frame for you. Then break it down into achievable milestones.

The above strategies apply whether you are in an organization or starting your own coaching business. The next section includes three additional strategies that are helpful when starting and building your own business.

# STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING YOUR SUCCESSFUL COACHING BUSINESS

If you are starting or building your own coaching business, you not only need coaching skills but the know-how to start and run a successful business. These can be two very different skill sets so to help you with the business part we've added three specific strategies for building a successful coaching business.

## 1. Don't Try to Do It All

As a business owner, your time is best spent on acquiring new clients and coaching. To free up your time for these important activities you need to have systems or people in place that will take care of the other tasks. This is one of the biggest challenges, and often downfalls, of coaches who go into business for themselves. They believe they must do it all and end up falling short. They find out that by trying to do it all they actually can't get everything done and end up sacrificing quality.

There are highly experienced people available for hire to do just about anything you need help with including accounting, administration, marketing, information technology, legal and more. Hire the experts to do the work or at least have them set up systems that are efficient for you to manage.

*Tip: Talk to others who have hired the type of experts you are looking for to get insights and referrals. Take the time to do your research so that you know what you really need and the level of expertise required before hiring.*

## 2. Leverage Your Existing Network

As we mentioned above, besides coaching, your number one priority is to acquire new clients. Don't underestimate the power of your current network and don't be afraid to ask for referrals.

## 3. Craft Your Story and Be Really Good at Telling It – To Everyone, Everywhere

It is competitive out there. You need to craft your story about what makes you unique and why people should come to you for coaching. This story needs to be personal, compelling and concise.

Once you've crafted your story you then need to tell it to everyone, everywhere. For example, make sure your story is told in your bio, on your website, in your talks, and when networking. You may need to modify your story slightly to fit different audiences, but the message should be consistent.

## CONCLUSION

Starting a coaching career is exciting but it takes hard work, smart strategies and time. Use this guide to develop your personal strategies, get out there and talk to others who have been successful and take the leap. When you do take that leap, we are here to support you. If you have questions or would like to discuss these strategies for success in more detail, get in touch by sending an email to [info@coachingoutofthebox.com](mailto:info@coachingoutofthebox.com).

## TESTIMONIALS

Read what participants are saying about our programs and the power of coaching.

*"I not only feel that I am a better leader, I feel that I am a better parent, friend and person. I show greater respect to others through listening more intently, not making judgment calls, and asking the right questions to help them to find their truth. I am also able to better coach myself by asking questions that get to the core of issues so that I understand what may be in the way of achieving my desired goals. Very valuable skills for everyone! I wish I had taken this course many years ago."*

- Robin Raff, CEO/Founder and Chief Strategist, Boomers and Beyond

*"Coaching Fundamentals was essential to my growth as a Human Resources Professional. I feel like I have the tools I need to have powerful conversations with the people I work with."*

- Anonymous

## ABOUT COACHING OUT OF THE BOX®

We are a leader in teaching individuals and organizations to leverage the incredible power of coaching. To date over 33,000 leaders, managers and coaches have learned our easily adoptable 5.5.5 Coaching Skills Training Program™. The results of our work, as measured by internal evaluations and external objective consultants, have been so transformational we were invited to present at the Institute of Coaching, Harvard Medical School & McLean Hospital.

We are a world class team of industry pioneers and leaders and use our proven model to teach individuals and organizations to leverage the incredible power of coaching. Our programs are pragmatic, practical and highly transformational. We take a partnering approach with participants to ensure that coaching skills are not only learned but done so in a way that can be sustained for long-lasting results.

Many organizations offer coaching courses, but you get a lot more when you learn from COTBx.

- **Top-notch education and training.** You get world-class instruction from expert coaches with experience in both coaching and teaching. They deliver the course content expertly but also provide a wide perspective of real-world best practices, tips and techniques. Their experience plus the interaction with other participants adds significantly to your learning experience.
- **Convenient virtual classrooms.** Our convenient virtual classrooms feature cutting-edge technology to create an in-person, interactive classroom experience while you participate remotely.
- **Coaching programs for individuals and organizations.**
  - **For individuals** we offer six different courses in our virtual training room several times throughout the year.
  - **For organizations** we work with each client to develop an implementation plan that best suits your needs and resources. We can conduct the training, support you in developing internal capacity using your own internally developed people and offer an Enterprise License option. Training is offered in several formats to meet the needs of each organization. Choose from on-site, virtual or blended formats.
- **Expertise in healthcare.** We have worked with many healthcare organizations to help them create a coaching culture and in the process coaching skills have been developed in over 7,000 people to date.
- **Support.** In addition to our products and courses, we offer many different resources to support coaching skills development. This includes blog articles, free webinars, coaching videos, coaching guides and more. Just go to [Coaching Resources](#) to view our complete resource offering.



If you have any questions or want to learn more, please get in touch.

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Talk with our Program Advisor: [Connect here](#)

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