

COACHING 3.0 • ASSESSMENTS • INSTRUMENTS • EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

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Transforming LIVES

How measuring
impacts coaching

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Transforming LIVES

How measuring impacts coaching

You can't know how far you or your client has come or needs to go unless you measure along the way. Instruments today can assess either the client or the coach's progress and determine the gaps that can be further developed and the successes to be celebrated. What are the different types of tools available and what are they used for? How do you measure the effectiveness of your coaching engagement? How, when and what do you use to engage with your client to increase self-awareness? When do you use these measurement instruments? Join us for this exciting exploration.



COACHING DESIGN 3.0

Six ways to redesign your coaching for a new era

By Pam Boney, MA, PCC



THE SAME
OLD
THINKING


Imagine two people of the same general stature deciding to take a road bike trip together on a beautiful afternoon. One pulls out their old bike from two decades ago, dusts it off, fills up the tires, and waits in the driveway thinking, “it still works, so why get a new one?” The other shows up with a sleekly designed Impec Lamborghini Edition bike. Anyone can figure out that the person on the newly designed bicycle will outperform the one on a bike designed 20 years ago. The ride is destined to be an unequal pairing where the person unfortunate enough to be riding upon an old design has to work harder just to keep up with the one on the new design.

This contrast is what I was quietly thinking about during a Zoom meeting recently with an enterprise client while she was interviewing a new executive coaching program vendor. I had introduced this client to one of several top coaching contractors in our profession and the contractor was explaining the design of coaching in the same way it had been done several decades ago when I first entered the profession. As the person who connected the two of them, I was just as surprised as my client because I had forgotten that many coaching firms were still conducting engagements in this way. Long story short, I realized that the match might not be a good fit; having helped this client evolve their internal

coaching program over the years, their approach had long since been far more innovative and efficient than the contractor’s outdated view of coaching.

Adding to this contrasting perspective, it’s clear that the pandemic has forced our profession to shift to an entirely virtual delivery, calling for even more innovation and efficiency than ever before. Gone are the days when a company wants us to use 40 hours of their executives’ time interviewing their peers and coaching them. More long meetings are not the way of the future in a world where people spend too much time on-screen as it is.

Very simply, it’s time for our most prestigious firms to rethink the coaching



THE SAME OLD RESULTS

1 Inside-out Discovery

As an experienced coach, you are aware that setting things up well with a client sets the tone for the entire experience. Yet, if the first thing you tell them is that you are planning to spend the next 15-plus hours interviewing others to ask them what they think your client should work on, you've already set the stage for three mindset problems from the start.

The first is that you believe others are more right about their development needs than they are. Second, that without those subjective opinions, you might not know how to help them. And lastly, if you want to be their trusted partner, why begin the relationship with a process that is often fear-triggering and possibly even exacerbating the very behavior they have come to work on?

Research tells us that most feedback from others is a projection of one's own personality or beliefs onto another person (the "be like me" mindset). While interviews with a supervisor or HR partner can provide interesting data for blind spots or career development ideas, there are more efficient ways to get more objective behavioral evidence today. A rigorously examined feedback assessment on observable behavioral patterns can be much more efficient and effective.

Moreover, using evidence-based feedback addresses the essential need to build trust with your client as quickly as possible, which means making a meaningful connection with them in the discovery stage by using this time in more creative ways. Doing this in a virtual world is more challenging, but possible with some well-designed discovery tools that get them to open up to you about their career trajectory and inner world.

2 Objective Feedback

The most important feedback will come from your direct observations of the client in the coaching sessions, so it's crucial to start coaching immediately rather than focus on external discovery. You can certainly kick off the collection of some feedback during the first 30 days using a rigorous-

design because we are needed more than ever in an era of the highest levels of stress, anxiety and worry that any of us have ever experienced.

Imagine a coaching program that shrinks the discovery phase from 15 hours to one. And coaching sessions from 20 hour-long sessions down to 12 that are 20-40 minutes – all with even better results. Attention spans are short today, and the reality is that we are all inundated with too much information coming in and no time to come back to ourselves with the deep level of care we genuinely need. With the right approach, design, assessments, and measures of success, this faster, deeper approach is not only pos-

sible; innovators in our domain have well-established proof of concept. And companies are switching their business to them en masse.

As coaches ourselves, we can take practical steps to morph our design and join the wave of change instead of keeping our heads in the sand and hoping the world goes back to normal after the pandemic is over. People have changed, our perspectives have shifted drastically, and it isn't going to revert to how it was anytime soon. Maybe never.

So, what can we do? Here are five ways you can start to rethink and redesign your approach in new ways to offer your clients a fresh and relevant experience.

ly tested psychometric assessment. Then you have time to help them understand how to consider that information as an “interesting” way to find out what others are thinking, but in perspective with what’s more important – how they feel about themselves.

After all, our outward impressions are all extensions that arise from inner perceptions of ourselves. If our feedback is not to our liking, then the thing we can control is how to project our true intentions more clearly to others. That’s inside-out work, and experienced coaches can trust their own observations to provide in-the-moment feedback expertly in the sessions.

It’s time for our most prestigious firms to rethink the coaching design because we are needed more than ever in an era of the highest levels of stress, anxiety and worry that any of us have ever experienced.

Yes, this requires expertise, experience, and personal courage. And we must begin with this kind of boldness right at the outset to grow confidence we can help them with today’s complex problems.

3 Laser Coaching

Perhaps the most critical skill for coaches to master today is an innovative refinement called laser coaching. The 60- to 90-minute in-person coaching session is a thing of the past, and we must master being effective in less than half that time to compete for the attention of overly busy people today. The session should get focused quickly with a powerful question intended to help them go deep from the outset.

As experts, we know we don’t need the whole story or all the details clients think we do. Letting them tell us too much infers that we will eventually give them all the answers, placing us quickly in the wrong relationship with them. Learning the art of laser coaching has been the natural progression of evolved expertise by those coaching for decades,

and we all owe it to ourselves to learn the skills these master coaches can teach us about how to get right to the deeper part of the coaching. Lasering into the thinking that created our client’s problem quickly shows them how to help themselves and reframes their mental models about everything. The effect is to teach them to fish, rather than giving them a fish for one supper.

4 Neuroscience

Until recent advances in neuroscience corrected our assumptions, many of the precepts we anchored our work upon in the coaching profession have since been debunked. There is no

logical left-brain or creative right-brain. We don’t have three brains, and we didn’t evolve from reptiles with unruly lizard brains. We’ve learned how habits form, and emotions are our brain’s self-constructed mental formations, created to survive our specific circumstances.

Yet, I see blogs and articles published every day by those in our profession who have yet to educate themselves on modern scientific discoveries available to everyone. Investing in courses that help us understand how behavior happens is essential and mission-critical for coaches who want to work with the next generation of self-educating professionals. Our credibility will be crucial and each of us is responsible for evolving our own growth as science expands our understanding.

5 New Success Measures

A post-pandemic world operates from an entirely transformed mindset, where employers have learned that wellbeing, happiness, good sleep, mindfulness, physical health, diversity, hybrid work, and outstanding leader-

ship are now, more than ever, essential levers for success in today’s workforce.

Our clients want to see results in the form of human analytics that measure these constructs. A thriving coaching program will measure the before and after-effects of these concepts and enable immediate feedback for coaches during all phases of the work, not just at the end of a six-month engagement.

6 Systems Diagnostics

One final observation by master-level coaches signaling a change we should consider is that people behave differently in different human systems. When annoying behavior arises, it isn’t always the person exhibiting that behavior who is the source of the problem. More often, there is a fit problem with the role, the supervisor, the team, the work, and/or the norms of the culture.

If we don’t consider the fundamental attribution error of ascribing symptoms to the right variable, we will unwittingly help our clients place too much of the responsibility for behavior on an individual, when the system around them could be the specific variable causing inner conflict. Too often, we coach the wrong person when the team dynamics, structure or supervisor are part of the system dynamics causing relational discord.

Thus, a more comprehensive solution is to learn how to coach the human system (team), much like therapists do so often in family systems. Team diagnostics that enable periodic monitoring over time can then help the leader isolate and keep triggering moments in check before systemic dysfunctions arise again.

In summary, the best solutions to human problems must evolve as we do, especially when the external environment has forced epic change on people in general. And thinking ahead of that change is imperative for any profession that supports people through that change.

Hopefully, some of the ideas presented in this article will spur new ideas that will inspire more of us to listen to the ideas of innovators in our field. After all, it’s much more effective to ride toward the future on a Lamborghini-inspired design anytime! •