

REINVENTION • OPPORTUNITY • FUTURE OF WORK • RECIPE FOR CHANGE

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the magazine of professional coaching

REIMAGINING *Coaching*

How our profession is
pivoting



VOLUME 20 • NUMBER 1
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REIMAGINING *Coaching*

In what ways are you reimagining your coaching business? In what ways does our industry need reinvention? What part of your business is not serving you? What do you have to deconstruct in order to pivot to what is needed? What are the indicators that reinvention is needed?

How do you know? Join us as we explore this exciting topic.



feature

COACHING *for the* FUTURE *of* WORK

Reinventing the business of team coaching

By Michelle Chambers, MEd, CTPC, CHRL, CTD, CSODP & Carissa Bub, MSc, PCC, CTPC

There is no question that world events have had a great impact on the work of team coaching. Team coaches support teams within a “systems” context and every team has had to deal with new challenges and opportunities, including restructuring, impact of supply chain distribution challenges, growth or decline in services, and supporting one another during a pandemic. What has become abundantly clear is the need for

collaboration both within teams and across teams and to stakeholder groups. As we unlearn old traditional models and ways of doing business, teams have the greatest opportunity to use collective intelligence and innovate new ways of doing work to address business needs.

So how has this impacted the business of team coaching? Are team coaches reinventing their business models? What new practices have emerged? In the same way that we support our clients,

we must support one another and ourselves in being agile and adapting to new ways of doing work.

Team issues have become increasingly complex. Thus, the benefit of co-coaching has become more critical and important due to the complexity of change and transformation. Co-coaches can take turns supporting the process while balancing the “emerging dialogue.” The adoption of virtual team coaching has enabled team coaches to work with



co-coaches around the world versus being limited by a physical geography. As well, the need for team coaching within and across organizations has presented more opportunities to engage new and old clients.

One key area that is being highly requested is developing “resilience” in teams. Furthermore, like 1:1 or leadership coaching, team coaches have adopted new digital tools (e.g., MURAL, Zoom) to keep their clients engaged and to keep the process visual.

Team coaches must also examine their current business model in terms of their primary and complementary services, types of clients, industries targeted and more. For example, team coaches may offer strategic planning services or training, which can enhance relationship building and potential revenue with a client.

However, saying “yes” to these opportunities might also require saying “no” to others. Some team coaches have had to target different markets and change their marketing due to the decline in potential services as some industries were hit by

lockdowns and further disruption. As well, many team coaches work with their clients in six-month engagements, often using assessments and frequent team coaching to ensure sustainable changes in behavior.

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Teams that require more urgent support may benefit from shorter or more frequent engagements. Our colleagues, Ruth Wageman and Krister Lowe, employed a “fast team formation” process to provide 45 minutes of coaching

to healthcare teams to improve team effectiveness and reduce critical errors on those teams.

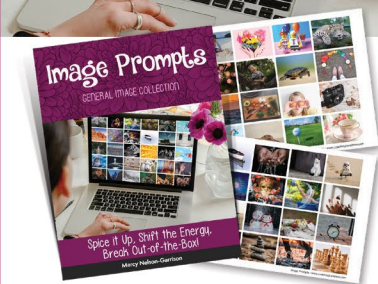
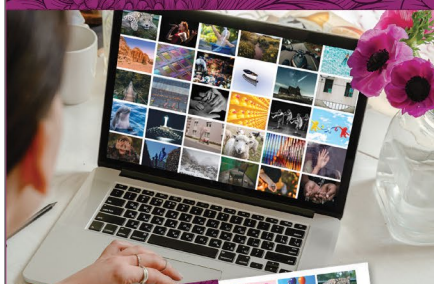
In addition, the field has seen a number of new entrants and providers of team coaching assessments in their industry. There are also new entrants in the marketplace for team coaching training, mentoring and supervision. Furthermore, coaching bodies have launched new competencies for team coaching. As clients become increasingly aware of the benefits of certification, this will continue to impact how team coaches provide their services and the marketing of those services.

Storytelling within teams has become increasingly important and the need for understanding each team’s journey or narrative has also risen. Team coaches have encouraged teams to revisit their “team purpose” and re-examine if they have the “right” people with the “right skills” for the work ahead. Teams continue to restructure and need support in realignment of goals and processes such as decision making. There is also an in-

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creasing need to support “team of teams” and smaller teams that are more agile and can better self-manage as a system to get work done.

Of course, this has also increased the opportunity of “systems inspired” leadership or leadership without authority. More members of teams are increasingly rotating the role of leader and better utilizing strengths and developmental opportunities by carrying out team functions.

We continue to see other opportunities within the context of team coaching as well. For example, as the workplace becomes more “human,” we as team coaches must support leaders to demonstrate more empathy and trust to build more meaningful relationships with team members.

We must also examine our own self-awareness and presence with clients. With the increasing complexity, we have found ourselves triggered by more assertive leaders focusing on the doing versus the being and focusing on goal attainment versus the process.

There is a real opportunity to coach team members and enable them to better understand their own strengths and contributions to both team purpose and their own “why.” Simultaneously, this also presents a challenge to team coaches to clearly define their roles as team coaches, not management consultants, and thus to hold the space for teams to safely explore their dynamics and business issues within the system.

While our industry continues to benefit from this reinvention, there are parts that are not serving team coaches well. For example, opportunities such as enhanced “digital coaching” bots that are really designed for 1:1 coaching versus “team coaching” and that address more than just “team norms” could provide greater support in between coaching sessions. Additionally, team coaches that have not adopted digital practices themselves or outsourced administrative support will not be able to support clients as easily as others.

Team coaches and clients have both had to question their mental models around “virtual coaching” and to try new ways of working in a virtual world.

Many agree that there is a different energy created when team coaching is done face to face and that we can observe more of the dynamics between team members. Also, virtual coaching can lead to more “team facilitation,” with people asking permission to speak from the coach versus dialoguing with one another. Team coaches can address this by removing their visual and observing the team interactions while intervening when appropriate.

Team coaches who are self-aware must also take time to reflect on their own practices and the impact of their work. In working with teams that are heavily engaged in disruption and change, this can also cause stress on team coaches as teams go through “languishing” periods and it might even take longer for team coaches to see the positive impact of their work through clients.

Furthermore, team coaches might suffer from burnout themselves if they are not able to separate the work of the clients from their own work. Both teams and team coaches must really align to business strategy and help teams prioritize what is most critical in terms of working effectively together to attain both short-term and long-term goals as we go through this unprecedented era of change.

Reinvention will continue to be required within team coaching. Factors include the changing digital technology of the workplace; the changing membership of teams due to the “great resignation”; burnout and exhaustion; the need for smaller and more agile teams; the need to support teams in a more ‘human’ experience; the opportunity to support culture change; and the employee experience as the future of work is redefined.

Finally, coaches have more opportunities to partner with clients and others who have shared goals around creating a greater impact within the world. For example, many coaches have chosen to partner with others to build capacity to address urgent global goals such as climate change and other UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). This perhaps might be the biggest shift and offer of team coaching collectively to a successful future. •