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The
ART,
Science & *Impact* of
COACHING

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The ART, Science & *Impact* of COACHING

How, when and why coaching works

How do we coach? Is it art, science, or both and more? What does a coach need to know, do, have, or be to achieve the greatest impact and make the most difference?

How do we prepare to coach in these rapidly changing times? What tips, tools and techniques enhance coaching? How do we measure coaching's effectiveness?

Join us as we explore the art, science and impact of coaching.



3 TOOLS FOR MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF COACHING

By Tommy Acierno, PCC, CPC, ELI-MP

Many people think coaching can't be measured. Yet those of us who are coaches know this isn't true. Of course coaching can be measured!

We see our clients grow from those ambitious and perhaps nervous individuals we talked to during our discovery session, only to watch them completely transform after only a few weeks or months. Something magical happens between our first conversation and that final transformation. That "something" is called the coaching process.

When I started my coaching journey, I was the Director of Knowledge Operations for SketchUp, a Trimble 3D software product. The people I hired were smarter and more sophisticated than me (thank goodness) and the challenges they faced were advanced. Being a "mentor" wasn't going to cut it anymore. It was time for a skills upgrade.

So that's what I did! I attended the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching (iPEC). With the skills I learned after the first weekend module

training (there are three modules in total), I not only applied coaching skills to my team, but I also told everyone in the organization that I was available for coaching.

Within six months, I successfully advocated to reorganize our teams, step out of my director role and step into the first ever Leadership Development Coach role at the company.

How did I successfully advocate for such a dramatic change? Well, it was built on many factors, but one of them was my ability to measure and demon-

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strate the impact that coaching had on the organization.

From the very beginning, I knew it would be critical to measure the benefits of my coaching. For example, one person I worked with was on the verge of quitting. After working together for three months, she not only stayed at Trimble but received a promotion.

Anecdotal evidence, like my example above, is a strong way to demonstrate the impact of coaching. Yet, there are three tools that I found most effective to understand the return on my organization's investment in coaching.

CLIENT SURVEYS

I sent a survey at the beginning of each coaching engagement, a different survey halfway through coaching (12 sessions total), and a third survey again at the end.

The survey I used in the beginning focused greatly on their goals, their experience working with a coach or

mentor in the past, descriptors of how others might see them, and, of course, descriptors of how they see themselves.

Halfway through the coaching engagement, I sent a new survey to my clients. In this survey, I assessed their satisfaction with their progress towards their goals on a scale from 1 to 10; where one is "totally dissatisfied" and 10 is "completely satisfied." With an average of 8.6, I found that the most common factor for clients giving themselves less than a score of 10 out of 10 was "self-criticism" for not consistently following through on their action steps.

This was helpful data for me to focus on strengthening accountability and clarity for sizing up my clients' goals.

At the end of the coaching engagement, I sent the client a final survey that asked one simple question: Complete this statement: "Before working with Tommy, I... and after working

with Tommy, I..." Here are a couple of the responses I received:

- "When I started, I felt much more discombobulated overall and was having a difficult time managing stress—as a result, it was affecting my whole self. Since participating in coaching, I have seen a huge benefit to how I approach and think about things at work, but have also seen it bleed over into my personal life in a positive way."

- "When I get frustrated or angry, I find myself taking it into my own hands to try to recognize how I'm viewing the situation, and explore how that view is helping or hurting my experience. This is life-changing."

When it comes to using surveys, the guidance I offer is to ask questions that give you the answers you need as the surveyor. This seems obvious, but my experience in corporate taught me that sometimes we send surveys to gather information without a plan of what to do with the information or to simply confirm answers we already know.

It's best to start with a hypothesis (for example, coaching reduces stress) and form your survey responses to help answer and test your hypothesis.

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

While I do have survey data from people I've worked with in the examples above, I wanted to actually quantify the impact of coaching with numerical data.

I researched and found the Perceived Stress Scale. Developed by Sheldon Cohen in 1983, shared in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* and hosted by the folks at Mind Garden. This short 10-question assessment assigns a numeric value to the amount of stress a person feels based on their experiences over the previous month.

My clients always took this assessment at the very beginning and again at the end of our 12 sessions together. On average, clients saw a 25 percent decrease in measured stress, with one client reporting a 69 percent decrease in overall stress.

The Perceived Stress Scale gave me the quantitative data point I wanted to have

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available to build my case for creating an internal Leadership Development Coaching role.

ENERGY LEADERSHIP™ INDEX ASSESSMENT

At that point, I had the anecdotal survey data, plus quantitative data thanks to the Perceived Stress Scale. Next, I wanted to include BOTH qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate the efficacy of coaching.

One of the (many) perks of receiving coach training from iPEC is receiving a certification in their proprietary tool: the Energy Leadership™ Index assessment (ELI). This assessment, which can only be administered by iPEC graduates with their Energy Leadership Index Master Practitioner certification (ELI-MP), measures four major areas: your current potential leadership ability, your current energy profile, your level of engagement in life, and your current level of consciousness or awareness of your own thoughts and emotions.

The ELI measures all four of these areas both under normal “day-to-day” circumstances as well as when you’re triggered by stress.

Because this is an attitudinal assessment (and NOT a personality assessment), our attitudes can fluctuate dramatically based on how we process any given situation. As a result, this assessment is not a predictor of the future, but rather a snapshot of a person’s level of energy and consciousness.

The data collected by this assessment has been thoroughly researched and it’s been found that if a person’s Average Resonating Level (or ARL) of energy is high, overall, the greater satisfaction that person has across 14 key dimensions of life, such as leadership ability, personal finance, freedom, and relationships. To learn more about this research, visit ipeccoaching.com/research.

So, with my ELI-MP certification hanging on my wall with pride, the third and final tool I used at the beginning of my coaching engagements was the Energy Leadership™ Index assessment. I had the guidance I needed to understand

what areas of life, leadership, thoughts, emotions, awareness, and consciousness we could focus upon to unlock more of their potential. And my clients had the results of their assessment in their hands to reflect on at any time.

“The Perceived Stress Scale gave me the quantitative data point I wanted to have available to build my case for an internal Leadership Development Coaching role.”

Being a Leadership Development Coach was a role that I thoroughly loved in the SketchUp organization. However, my own work with my own coach revealed a big surprise; a single intuitive message that simply said, “Bring coaching to the world.”

To which I said, “Are you sure?”

I wasn’t fully trusting of my intuition at the time, a lesson that I have since fully learned. And my intuition clearly said, “Yes!”

So as a result, two major events happened. Number one, I took the leap and transitioned from a 20-year career in the technology industry to start my own coaching practice. And number two – which I consider the cosmic joke of my intuitive message – I became a Lead Trainer for iPEC.

While I thought “bring coaching to the world” meant for me to coach “more” people, it actually translated into “facilitate and train new coaches.” I didn’t see that one coming.

When your intuition guides you to measure the impact of coaching, know that you can utilize surveys, assessments and other tools to seek out the deeper knowledge and clarity that will support your growth as a powerful, impactful and measurable coach. •