

Coaching – Pure, Approach & Culture

Paper 2 – Coach for Life Program

Covers the relevance of ICF competencies in different manifestations of coaching

Coaching and its associated concepts /competencies are finding use in different ways. This is not surprising -- considering the benefits they offer. The concept is too powerful to be limited to one manifestation. This write-up explores three manifestations -- 'Pure Coaching', 'Coach Approach', and 'Coaching Culture'. All three share a common foundation and work as performance multipliers and satisfaction creators. All three have their own use-case. Pure coaching is akin to what a specialist doctor would do while using a coach approach is what a general practitioner of medicine may offer. Propagating a coaching culture is akin to promoting a healthy society.

There are no internationally accepted definitions for the three manifestations so I have used my own interpretation where needed. For purposes of this write-up the International Coach Federation competencies are used as a reference. This write-up is based on my experience and secondary research.

Pure Coaching

It has the following key elements.

- a. An agreement between a coach and client, a coaching structure and a compensation in cash or kind
- b. Follows principles or rules for which the coach has been trained & it uses multiple disciplinary skills
- c. If the coach is not 'formally' trained he / she still follows a process or uses identifiable techniques in the coaching process
- d. There is a high degree of formality attached to the process
- e. In organisations a selected few are provided coaches
- f. In the hands of an effective coach probability of behaviour changes with life changing impact is high

This form of coaching has many versions -- Life, Executive, Business, Performance, Skills and others. They use similar principles but impact different areas of life or work.

In addition this form of coaching has many theories / models associated with it. Solution focused, value based, NLP, GROW and

many others. The broad principles of facilitative learning and making the client responsible for her own actions remain constant.

The competencies needed for being a coach have been documented in many different ways. One of the widely used set of competencies is those set out by the International Coach Federation.

The Coach Approach

The coach approach is a more generalised use of coaching competencies. It maybe used in many work and personal situations. Therefore, it maybe practised by coaches and other individuals in informal or formal interactions. Some of the situations in which the coach approach maybe useful is business meetings, interviews for performance assessment, motivational speeches, training programs, solving conflicts etc.

In contrast to pure coaching

- a. A formal coaching program is not mandatory
- b. There maybe no formal training needed for using the coach approach though a familiarity with coaching competencies is useful
- c. If there is training provided it maybe of a short duration.
- d. There maybe no compensation for using the coach approach. It can be considered to be a management tool in the hands of those who choose to practice this approach.
- e. Most ICF competencies are used but with a lower degree of rigour. And some may not be at all relevant.
- f. All leadership position holders can use the coach approach to increase their effectiveness. And a larger number of people can benefit from use of these techniques.
- g. Mind set and behaviour changes maybe limited to some areas and probability of long term is lower.

Use of ICF competencies in Coach Approach

Examples

Here are some examples where I have used the coach approach as opposed to formal coaching.

Working with a friend

There was no formal coaching relationship. I had two discussions with her to help in a career change decision. There was neither formal agreement nor any compensation.

The competencies that were extensively used were the ones related to communication – active listening, powerful questioning, and

direct communication. Some statements / questions from the conversation:

- ☞ it seems that you like your job but not your manager
- ☞ What would you do if you had similar issues with the future manager also?
- ☞ Is it possible that you are avoiding the unpleasantness of tackling this situation?
- ☞ If you exited this situation without attempting a solution what would you be?

She stayed on at her current job.

Peer Group

Assistance in planning / executing a major event. This person was having trouble with getting his team focused and moving them for action. I assisted him through a couple of planning sessions using the coach approach. Major competencies used were planning and goal setting. Some statements / pieces of conversation

- ☞ This is sounding like a lot of things together in your mind. When you disentangle a scarf from a thorny bush you have to move one thorn at a time. Can we work on them one by one?
- ☞ Which is the one thing if not done will render all others meaningless? In this case it was having a good array of speakers at the event.
- ☞ What is the first step that you can take to get six good speakers? He hired an agency which specialised in this service.
- ☞ What are the actions that your team has been clearly given and how are you monitoring them? He was using his existing system of information management – and this he found was not suitable for this huge event. He changed it and was able to execute his plans much more effectively.

The event was well appreciated with a galaxy of top speakers present – even though he lost some money on it!

Helping a Niece

She was unable to take a call about future educational avenues for herself. Main competency used here was creating awareness. Living in a small town she was not fully conversant with the variety of career options available. As a result she was completely stressed out. This was just one discussion over a lunch. Questions that moved her forward were broadly as below.

- ☞ How many different professions did you observe in your journey to this city?

- ☞ How many of these you can handle with ease?
- ☞ From these which are the ones that you interest you and your parents?
- ☞ Which are your first two preferences? This took some time for her to figure out.
- ☞ What education do you need for making a career of these?

She has moved forward and is now deciding between being a vet and / or a photo-journalist!

The table at end of article provides an overview of ICF coaching competencies and their relevance for those following a coach approach in their work / personal interactions.

Propagating a Coaching Culture

Developing a coaching culture is an important objective in many organisations. And like any other culture this grows over a period of time, has different manifestations in different organisations, involves multitudes of people and it's measurement is tough.

The major advantage of fostering this culture is that the use of coaching competencies becomes a way of work and not a one off intervention. It is a way of staying healthy rather than going for treatment when being sick.

The fostering of this culture needs many activities – all revolving around widespread use of coaching competencies and techniques. Some of these can be:

- a. Coaching provided to individuals – Normally to senior managers, high performers and where remedial action is sought.
- b. Team or group coaching – useful where team working is paramount. Can also be more economical.
- c. Encouraging coaching based leadership styles – many organisations are experimenting with providing first level coaching inputs to middle level managers. However, questions about subsequent usage of these inputs and it's effectiveness remain.
- d. Coaching to be made part of formal talent management process. While other leadership development tools have been in use for a long time coaching is the new guy in town. So it is not always invited to a party and when invited remains the outsider people do not know what to do with. Will change rapidly.
- e. Linking coaching to business goals. Essential to have a sustainable coaching culture. The budget makers have to be

convinced about the impact of coaching and they must get their Return on Investment – or Return on Expectations (RoE)

- f. Fostering the use of the coach approach in normal day to day life / operations.

Use of ICF Competencies in the Coach Approach

ICF Competencies	Coach Approach Relevance
A. SETTING THE FOUNDATION	
1. MEETING ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS	Recommended. But there maybe a lack of uniformity.
2. ESTABLISHING THE COACHING AGREEMENT	Not mandatory. Many competencies may just be used in on-the-go situations.
B. CO-CREATING THE RELATIONSHIP	
3. ESTABLISHING TRUST AND INTIMACY WITH THE CLIENT	Trust is mandatory. The coach approach will work only if there is trust and credibility. If not there because of earlier relations it has to be developed.
4. COACHING PRESENCE	Highly recommended. Meaningful coaching conversations only happen with this competency.
C. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	
5. ACTIVE LISTENING	Highly recommended. Important for all conversations.
6. POWERFUL QUESTIONING	Mandatory. Essential part of following coach approach.
7. DIRECT COMMUNICATION	Recommended. Is a good tool.
D. FACILITATING LEARNING AND RESULTS	
8. CREATING AWARENESS	Highly recommended. If no awareness is generated coach approach has not been followed.
9. DESIGNING ACTIONS	Not be needed in all situations Situational. One off coaching conversations may not need formal planning and goal setting.
10. PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING	Situational. One off coaching conversations may not need formal planning and goal setting.
11. MANAGING PROGRESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY	