

Client Survey Results and Press Release

Analysis of 1998 Survey of Coaching Clients by the International Coach Federation

In the first-ever survey of clients of personal and professional coaches, The International Coach Federation polled 210 clients of their members for their demographic data and opinions during 1998. Clients submitted completed surveys directly to the survey scorers - not via their coach - to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of answers. The poll was conducted by consultant Amy Watson, Principal, PROfusion Public Relations, with survey design assistance by Jackie Rieves Watson, Ph.D., professor of management and statistics, Amber University.

GENDER

65 males (31%) and 145 females (69%) answered the survey

YEARS OF AGE

Average: 41
Median: 40
Minimum: 24
Maximum: 67

OCCUPATION

Most coaching clients are employed professionals. Professionals: 197
Trades: 6
Full-time students: 2
Homemakers: 2
Unemployed: 2
Didn't answer: 1

EDUCATION

82% of coaching clients are degreed; over a third hold Master's degrees or higher.

Undergrad degree only : 38.3%
Graduate degree: 35.9%
Some college only: 13.9%
High School only : 3.8%
Some grad school: 8.1%

HOW CLIENT LOCATED THEIR COACH

Most coaching clients locate their coaches by meeting them during their daily routines, knew them already as a friend or business contact, met them at a party, networking function or saw them speak at a professional development seminar.

Other (as described above): 49.0%
Referral from a friend or colleague: 43.3%
ICF's Coach Referral Service: 4.3%
Through the media: 3.3%

HOW COACHING SESSIONS ARE CONDUCTED

By far, most personal coaching is done virtually -- via telephone. (This figure does not reflect corporate coaching -- coaching of corporate teams and divisions -- which is usually done in person.)

Telephone: 94.3%
Electronic mail: 45.2%
In-person: 35.2%
Other: 02.9%

COACH TRAINING

- * 81.9% of clients think their coach has been trained
 - * 17.1% don't know if their coach has been trained
 - * 1% don't think their coach has been trained
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IMPORTANCE OF COACH TRAINING TO CLIENT

Most coaching clients value special coach training

- * 81.9% said it was important to them that their coach has special training in coaching.
 - * 18.4% said training wasn't important.
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IMPORTANCE OF COACH CERTIFICATION

The watershed issue of the survey: Half of coaching clients say coach certification is important, while the other half say it isn't.

- * 51% say certification is not important to them.
 - * 35.3% says it's important, and their coach should be certified by an independent accredited body.
 - * 13.7% say certification is important, but the certifying organization doesn't need to be independent or accredited.
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LENGTH OF COACHING RELATIONSHIP TO DATE

Most clients who answered the survey had been working with their coach 6 to 8 months.

Average: 8.8 months
Median: 6 months
Minimum: 1 months
Maximum: 72 months

ROLE OF COACH

By far, most coaching clients pay their coach to be a sounding board - to really listen to them and give honest feedback.

Clients, who could select as many choices as were applicable, characterized the role of their coach as the following:

Sounding board: 84.8%
Motivator: 78.1%
Friend: 56.7%
Mentor: 50.5%
Business consultant: 46.7%

Teacher: 41.0%
Taskmaster: 30.5%
Spiritual guide: 29.5%
Other: 13.3%

COACHING ISSUES

Most clients turn to their coach for help on time management as well as career guidance and business advice. To a lesser but still significant extent, they seek coaching on relationships, family, wellness and spirituality.

Clients, who could select as many choices as were applicable, said they work with their coach on the following issues:

Time management: 80.5%
Career: 74.3%
Business: 73.8%
Relationships/Family: 58.6%
Physical/Wellness: 51.9%
Spiritual: 51.0%
Personal: 45.2%
Goal-setting: 39.5%
Financial: 38.1%
Creativity: 11.0%
Other: 01.4%

RESULTS OF WORKING WITH A COACH

The outcomes that clients most often attribute to their coaching are a higher level of self-awareness and self-confidence, a more balanced life, smarter goal-setting and lower stress levels.

Clients reported experiencing the following outcomes as a result of working with a coach:

Self-awareness: 67.6%
Setting better goals: 62.4%
More balanced life: 60.5%
Lower stress levels: 57.1%
Self-discovery: 52.9%
Self-confidence: 52.4%
Improvement in quality of life: 43.3%
Enhanced communication skills: 39.5%
Project completion: 35.7%
Health or fitness improvement: 33.8%
Better relationship w/ boss, co-workers: 33.3%
Better family relationship(s): 33.3%
Increased energy: 31.9%
More fun: 31.9%
More income: 25.7%
Stopped a bad habit: 25.7%
Change in career: 24.3%
More free time: 22.9%
Increased profitability of business: 17.1%
Other: 15.3%
Started new business: 12.9%

Empowered employees: 11.0%
Business turn around: 09.0%
Change in residential location: 05.7%

CONFIDING IN THE COACH

Half of coaching clients confide in their coach as much as their best friend, spouse or therapist.

- * 49.3% said they confide in (share private thoughts or details of their life) their coach as much as they do their best friend, spouse or therapist
 - * 35.4% said they confide some things to their coach
 - * 12% say they confide more in their coach than anyone else
 - * 3.3% said they don't confide in their coach
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VALUE OF THE COACHING INVESTMENT

A landslide of 98.5% of coaching clients said their investment in a coach was well worth the money.

- * 70% of clients said their investment in a coach was very valuable
 - * 28.5% said their investment was valuable.
 - * 1.5% said their investment in a coach had not been valuable.
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FUTURE OF COACHING

Almost every coaching client views coaching as a viable, emerging profession.

- * 94% of coaching clients believe coaching is here to stay and become a recognized profession
 - * 6% think coaching is just a passing fad
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 1998

Survey Reveals Emerging Profession of Coaching
Having Measurable Impact on Clients
Respondents Consider it a Worthwhile Investment

ANGEL FIRE, NM, SEPT. 15- Results of the first-ever comprehensive survey of clients of personal and business coaches underscored the value, impact and endurance this emerging profession is enjoying, still in its infancy. Coaches, the new breed of consultant/personal advisor that clients are hiring to help them succeed at their goals, have established fiercely loyal clientele and are, apparently, here to stay.

In 1998, The International Coach Federation polled 210 coaching clients for demographic data and opinions as part of its research effort into the legal, regulatory, and credentialing issues that it has confronted during its rapid growth. All respondents had a formal relationship with an ICF coach, regularly meeting for strategy sessions for an average of nine months.

The highlights of the survey findings include:

- * 70% of respondents said their investment in a coach was "very valuable"; 28.5% said their investment was "valuable".
- * 94% of respondents believe coaching is here to stay and become a recognized profession.

* Half of the respondents confide in their coach as much as their best friend, spouse or therapist; 12% say they confide in their coach more than anyone else.

* 84.8% of respondents said the main role of their coach is to be a sounding board - to listen to them and give honest feedback.

* 78.1% called the coach a motivator, 56.7% a friend, 50.5% a mentor, and 46.7% a business consultant and 41% a teacher.

* 80.5% of respondents say they turn to their coach for help on time management, 74.3% for career guidance, 73.8% for business advice, 58.6% on relationships/family issues, 51.9% on physical/wellness issues, 45.2% on personal issues, 39.5% on goal-setting, 38.1% on financial guidance and 11% on creativity.

* The outcomes that clients most often attribute to their coaching are a higher level of self-awareness (67.6%), smarter goal-setting (62.4%), a more balanced life (60.5%), lower stress levels (57.1%), self-discovery (52.9%), more self-confidence (52.4%), improvement in quality of life (43.3%), enhanced communication skills (39.5%), project completion (35.7%), health or fitness improvement (33.8%), better relationship with boss or co-workers (33.3%), better family relationships (33.3%), increased energy (31.9%), more fun (31.9%), more income (25.7%), stopped a bad habit (25.7%), change in career (24.3%), more free time (22.9%), etc.

* 197 out of 210 respondents are employed professionals.

* 82% of coaching clients have undergraduate degrees; over a third hold Master's degrees or higher.

Coaching seems to be the latest evolution in the self-improvement industry, but far more pervasive, as it reaches into corporations and organizations, not just the lives of individuals. Coaching works because the coach helps his or her clients set and reach higher and more appropriate goals, asks more of them than they would have done on their own and focuses them to produce results more quickly. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the client's level of awareness and responsibility, and provides the client with structure, support and feedback. Coaching is a form of consulting, but the coach stays with the client to help implement the new skills, changes and goals to make sure they really happen. However, coaches do not try to "fix" a client - it is entirely up to the client to take the action in order to change their life.

This poll was conducted by consultant Amy Watson, Principal, PROfusion Public Relations, with survey design assistance by Jackie Rieves Watson, Ph.D., professor of management and statistics, Amber University.

The ICF is the world's largest professional association of business and personal coaches, with 120 chapters in most U.S. states and 20 countries. The ICF is a non-profit virtual organization with board members, staff, volunteers and members located all over the world. The ICF offers a free Coach Referral Service via its website (www.coachfederation.org) [Coach Referral Service](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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