

Preface

“**The Essentials of Business Coaching**” is the textbook of the NC State University Business Coaching Certificate (BCC) program, a full professional training for business coaches. The program was established in 2002 and is designed to follow the International Coach Federation (ICF) guide lines for coach specific training required for certification as a coach. By 2010 we had launched the 14th program and graduated over 200 business coaches. Not only has the course produced competent coaches, but for many people it has also been a significant experience in their personal growth.

In this section we outline the background and structure of the BCC program, setting the context of the overall training so that readers—prospective participants, management trainers developing their own coach training and individuals embarking on an independent study to become coaches—can understand how to use the book better.

The BCC program grew out of our experience of training managers, social workers, counselors and adult educators. Our approach is experiential and group-based and emphasizes using the participant’s own experience. The BCC program is designed to create a group culture that supports the fullest learning and development.

Our goal is to develop competent business coaches, who at the end of the program feel confident in their skills as a coach and their ability to establish a practice, whether independently or in their organizations. This is an ambitious goal and one that we consistently achieve.

When we developed the initial proposal for our program, most coach training was conducted through tele-classes. Several training agencies, led by Coach U, developed innovative programs that were global in their reach. Both of us took part in and enjoyed Coach U programs. However, we

thought there was a place for a program that emphasized skill development and used the power of the face-to-face group. We knew that working in a cohort group over 10 months would enrich the learning considerably. Among the many factors in groups that foster learning, the face-to-face format offered great flexibility for intensive skills training.

A Layered Approach to Training

We have adopted a layered design for the Business Coaching Certificate program. These layers interact to support and reinforce the development of skills and knowledge required to be an effective coach.

The Structure of the Coach Training Program

1	A series of 10 monthly workshops
2	Coaching practicum
3	Group supervision of coaching practicum
4	Mentor coach

1. The Workshops

A series of ten workshops form the backbone of the program. We begin with a three-day session followed by nine two-day workshops at monthly intervals. Although the program could be delivered more quickly, we believe that it takes the best part of the year of practicing to master the skills. The time for trainees to practice coaching with their own clients consolidates the development of their skills.

There are lectures in the program, but the emphasis is on experiential learning (experiential exercises, skills practice in pairs and trios, role plays and group projects).

During each workshop the trainees work in trios¹ where they take turns being **Client**, **Coach** and **Observer** and are supervised by the program faculty. However, these sessions are not scripted role plays. We expect

1 Later in the program when the trainees coaching skills are competent they practice their skills in pairs.

participants to bring matters of significance in their own personal or professional life to be coached on. By working with real issues, they benefit both from being coached and gaining direct experience of what a client finds difficult or rewarding. An authentic coaching project—as opposed to a role play—gives their colleagues genuine opportunities to use their skills. Over time, trainees’ skills mature and trust grows in their relationships with each other. As a result the trios become a space for worthwhile personal and professional development.

2. Coaching Practicum

By the third month of the program we expect trainees to begin a coaching practicum. In order to receive their certificate, they are required to log 40 hours of coaching. This takes place in the trainees’ own time and provides them with the opportunity to practice what they learn in the workshops.

3. Supervision

During the workshops, time is programmed to supervise the trainees’ coaching of their clients. In small faculty-facilitated groups, trainees take turns presenting client case material, reflecting on what they are doing with the client and exploring how they manage themselves in the coaching relationship. Trainees use the supervision groups to gain insight into how they might be more effective. The presenter gains immediate ideas for improvement while the other trainees learn from the process and are better prepared for similar experiences.

4. Mentor Coach

In the fourth layer, each trainee is matched with a professional coach. Working with a seasoned coach and being in the client role enriches the trainee’s experience. Trainees can select whatever coaching topic that is important to them—as would any client. Many use this experience to help them develop their practice or transfer learning into their workplace. (This coaching is distinguished from the mentor coaching required by the ICF for certification, which focuses on exam preparation and is intended to polish the skills the coach learned in their initial training.)

Curriculum Tracks

The workshops' content is organized into four curriculum tracks:

1. **Coaching Theory and Skills** In this part of the program we present the theory of business coaching and practice coaching skills. This book serves as the curriculum for the theory and skills of coaching.
2. **Practice Development** A number of sessions in the program are given to the basics of setting up a coaching business, including documents, policies, procedures, legal issues and the ICF Code of Ethics. It also covers the essentials of marketing and selling coaching.
3. **Personal Development** In this part of the program the concepts of personal development and self-awareness are introduced and explored, both for the coach and the client, (see Chapter 7 “Use of Self” and Chapter 8 “The Coaching Relationship and Personal Development”). Participants have the opportunity for personal development in their work with one another during sessions and with their mentor coach. Specific sessions during the workshops focus on personal development and are reinforced throughout the program with exercises and assessments.
4. **Business Coaching Topics** Within the program we arrange a series of half-day workshops with established coaches to explore coaching in specific contexts such as executive coaching, career coaching, internal coaching programs, marketing and selling coaching, organization development and coaching owners of small businesses.

For those readers planning to join the BCC program, this account of coach training provides an orientation to the training experience and an appreciation of what will be required. For those readers who want

to develop their coaching skills without the full BCC program, this book should provide ideas for creating a structure for learning. We also want to share our thinking with trainers considering developing their own coach training programs. Our hope is that the scheme we have outlined will help them design an effective program.

The organization of the book

A central premise of our approach to training coaches is that effective coaching rests on three essential components: a process, a set of skills, and a relationship. The Essentials of Business Coaching is organized around these three components. In Chapter 1 we provide an overview of business coaching. Chapter 2 explains the coaching process involving a model to guide the coaching conversation. Chapters 3 through 6 cover the skills of coaching and investigate the model in detail. In Chapters 7 and 8 we explore how the coach builds a strong working relationship with the client through the use of self and self-development. Our approach to group coaching is set out in Chapter 9. Finally, in Chapter 10 we look at the relationship between coaching and therapy. Note, for stylistic simplicity, we use the pronoun “she” and “he” in alternate chapters.

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Cary, North Carolina, 2011