The Nature and Future of Coaching in Organizations: A Report to ICF from the Executive Coaching Summit

By Joan O. Wright (Editor of Original Transcript) and William Bergquist (Editor of Revised Transcript and Commentaries)

Moderator: Linda Miller

Panelists: William Bergquist, Bob Johnson, Mary Beth O'Neill, Jeannine Sandstrom, Val Williams, Klaus Zepuntke

In 2003, a panel of experienced executive coaches were brought together to share insights regarding the field of professional coaching as it was engaged in an organizational setting. Following is an edited version of the presentations that were made by these panelists – as informed by not only their own individual experience as executive coaches, as well as insights offered by members of the audience who participated in small groups discussions facilitated by the panelists.

The observations made by these panelists in 2003 still seem valid in many instances – after almost two decades. Even in those instances where the field has changed or the challenges faced by the clients being served by executive coaches have changed, there is still value in revisiting the observations offered more than a decade ago. Furthermore, the panelists have been invited in 2016 to review their original observations and to indicate which they think are still valid, which need to be modified, and what now has to be done in the field. With final comments being offered by John Lazar, a long-term leader and practitioner in the field, there is much to be gained from looking back in time and forward to the ways in which this field might yet evolve.

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Joan Wright (2003)

As an enthusiastic steward of the executive coaching profession I was elated when given the opportunity to design and manage an interactive panel discussion for the 8th ICF Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. I immediately began by contacting some of the finest executive coaches in the world and requesting their participation. As expected, each of the seven executive coaches I contacted eagerly agreed to participate. Six would serve as panelists and one as a panel moderator for a session entitled "Credible Executive Coaches Modeling Executive Coaching."

The team faithfully met monthly to share ideas and points of view that would offer the session its true distinctions and impact. New collegial connections and friendships were born out of these meetings. In addition to having some of the professions best, this tight teamwork gave me the confidence that this panel session could be good. I was wrong.

Given the audience reaction, it wasn't good ...it was truly excellent. The several hundred coaches in attendance witnessed two and one half hours of stimulating, thought-provoking interaction that offered countless benefits for new and seasoned executive coaches alike. Perhaps most impressive was the way these seven seasoned professionals willingly shared their strategic and tactical thinking, challenged each other respectfully, and modeled the role of executive coach in

a most credible way. My sincere thanks goes out to the "super seven" and I hope you find the following summary of their output useful in the ongoing development of your career.

Background

In November of 2003 a group of seven executive coaches representing the United States, Canada and Europe participated in a panel session that was part of the educational track offered during the 8th ICF Annual Conference at The Adam's Mark Hotel in Denver, Colorado. The objective of the panel was to provide an interactive learning and sharing environment for executive coaches who work with senior-level executives with fiduciary responsibility to multiple stakeholders.

The 150-minute panel session consisted of three distinct parts. The first segment involved the delivery of prepared questions by the moderator. The panelists responded with their viewpoints and typically shared methods and modus operandi that contributed to successful outcomes in real-world coaching. .

The second part of the panel event involved six group breakouts sorted by specific topics and facilitated by the six panelists. Topics included:
* Dynamic tension with the training and credentialing issue
* The distinctions of an excellent executive coach
* What is at stake for executives and their organizations who are being coached by people not meeting high standards of excellence
* How excellent executive coaches coach
* Models for organizations dealing with things like confidentiality, coaching in isolation, implementing organizational coaching and how to form a team of executive coaches
* The future of executive coaching

The third and final part of the panel activity was a Q&A session where panelists reassembled and proceeded to respond to questions posed by members of the audience. During this time, attendees were able to garner expert feedback on areas of the executive coaching discipline they deemed most significant.

To fully appreciate the breadth of experience and geographic diversity represented by the distinguished moderator and panel here is brief biography of each of these outstanding executive coaches:

Biographies (2003)

Linda Miller, MCC served as panel moderator. Next year, Linda will celebrate a decade of achievement in executive and organizational coaching. After many years of operating her own business, the Arizona resident joined the senior team with The Ken Blanchard Companies in 2000 where she is responsible for executive coaching along with hiring and deployment of coaches.

William Bergquist, Ph.D. has served as president of The Professional School of Psychology and as a consultant, coach and trainer of consultants and coaches throughout the world. He is the author of 36 books concerned with personal, organizational and societal transitions and serves as co-editor of *The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations.*

Bob Johnson, from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, has been coaching CEO's and senior executives since 1983. He is the founder of Leader Search, Inc., a Calgary-based group of leadership coaches and search professionals. Bob's philosophy is that there is a right person for every corporate culture and a right culture for every person.

Mary Beth O'Neill, MA, is a leadership consultant, executive coach and author who currently resides in the State of Washington. She works in Fortune 100 and 500 companies to help executives leverage their interactions with their teams to produce bottom line business results. She teaches internal and external coaches through her Executive Coach Training Series. Her book, *Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart*, is a textbook in many coaching schools and has been translated into 5 languages.

Dr. Jeannie Sandstrom, Ed.D. CEO of CoachWorks® International has been a business owner and international leader coach since 1979. A Texas resident, Dr. Sandstrom is co-author of numerous leadership and coaching books, articles and tapes. Her broad industry diversification allows her to coach effectively in virtually every area of business.

Val Williams, MCC, has been an executive coach for the past eight years specializing in coaching senior corporate executives and their teams. A New Yorker, Val has extensive experience in the healthcare industry and has authored several executive coaching books and audiotapes including Get The Best Out of Your People and Yourself.

Klaus Zepuntke, is from Hamburg, Germany. He has served for many years as an executive coaching and has worked with notable corporate executives throughout Europe. Klaus excels at coaching leadership skills and people development

Here now is a summary of the panel discussion. It is structured in a simple Q&A format so you are able to identify each individual response by panelist.

Captured is the good-natured humor, high intellect and wealth of experience that is part and parcel of this group.

A Bit of Panelist Personality (2003)

Moderator (Linda): One of the things we want you to know is that we are just like the rest of you. We have other interests. We probably could have gone in 14 or 15 different career paths, so we want to start out by asking the panelists to answer to the question "If you were not in the field that you are in now, if you were not doing what you're doing right now, what would you be doing?" I'll start, if that's ok. If l were not an executive coach and doing some of the things I am

doing, I would be a matchmaker because I love connecting people with resources--that's really my passion. So Jeannine, do you want to start?

Jeannine: I've thought about that a lot. I think I would be a high-wire performer or a trapeze artist in Ringling Brothers circus. And every time I say that it's like, now is that any different than being an executive coach?

Mary Beth: For me it would be some kind of architect. I'm a gardener and it would either be a landscape architect, or I also have a passion for community building so I think I would be a community building architect.

Bob: I tried to convince myself that what I would want to do is really prove that what we preach all the time works so that I would actually be a CEO of an organization and have a position of power so I could actually really make the coaching culture stick in organizations. But that sounds like a really tough job, so I wouldn't do that. So I think what I would actually really be is a monk on a motorcycle.

Bill: Well I think I have the privilege of being the oldest one on the panel so I actually am thinking about what I am going to do next. I have published several songs which is a real joy and I've actually started on two musicals.

Klaus: Well, either I would run a bookstore combined with a cafe or I would be a writer at a house by the sea and probably be starving by now.

Val: Well for me if l were not a coach there's no question I'd want to be Cher or Tina Turner. The only detail is I can't sing.

Topics of Interest

Moderator (Linda): Would each panelist now briefly comment on the topic you have been assigned to address during the breakout activity?

Jeannine: My topic concerns the differences in coaching-the different kinds of coaching and the distinctions of excellent executive coaches. We need to be able to move in many audiences perhaps many locations, many countries and appreciate the subtle differences. At this time, you are probably saying to yourself, "Yeah, of course." But beyond this line of distinction I put coaching differences in three buckets. The first is executive presence. The second is business acumen. And the third is coaching competencies at the senior level. Each one of these has many secondary points and together they create distinct variances in the way we talk and work with colleagues.

Mary Beth: My topic is best practices of executive coaches. To me, executive coaching is not personal coaching in the workplace. The development of the leader is necessary, but not sufficient. One of the key tasks of an executive coach is to make sure that the coaching is linked to strategic objectives. The best coaches help their clients closely examine the core tasks at hand

and then also identify the core emotional challenges. They are involved with the leader as they work together and discover how task and emotion are interrelated.

Bob: My topic is forming teams of excellent executive coaches. I suggest looking at it from different angles. Understand that most coaches work in isolation. We really have to focus on allowing independent coaches to survive along with our profession. We need to be working together and learn how an organizational coaching model may look with a team of coaches deployed. Thirdly, if we're all out there doing some work together inside the same organization, how do we deal with the issue of confidentiality.

Bill: I've been asked to talk about models of coaching in organizations--which means I'm going to step out a little bit from executive coaching. The differences between performance coaching, executive coaching and alignment coaching causes me to put executive coaching in a broader framework. We need to drill a little deeper and talk about three different models of executive coaching called reflective coaching and link that to training in relationship to executive coaching. We also need to consider instrumented coaching –in particular, looking at the relationship between 360 feedback processes and coaching. In addition, we have observational coaching and the link between executive coaching and strategic planning. Drilling down still farther into executive coaching, we can talk about three kinds of coaching issues: coaching around puzzles, coaching around problems, and coaching around mysteries. And relate that to the notion of internal and external locus of control.

Klaus: My topic is coaching executives verses true leaders. What I have noticed in my experience over the last few years, whenever I coached top executives, I was not always encountering true leaders. The coaching issues that surface when this occurs make this a very difficult issue. From a German perspective, the culture is to blame for this circumstance. My view on this is that it is not unique to Germany or Europe. The large variance that can sometimes exist between leadership skills and an executive title are quite challenging to deal with as an executive coach.

Val: I am addressing the future of coaching. The future of coaching to me is not anything that is a year from today or even five years from today. I've learned that if we're to be successful executive coaches, we can't just focus with executives on what's happening today. They need much more than that. I think as executive coaches we do a pretty solid job serving our clients. We help them communicate better and be better leaders. We assist them in the process of strategy development and even support the planning process by asking what's around the comer and what's ahead to make your business more profitable? I think the challenge for us as coaches is we've got to get ahead of the CEOs. Here's a provocative statement for you: right now, I think we follow along behind the executive to help and support them. I would like us to take a much, much bolder role and help executives know what's ahead and how to prepare for what's next. I think whether you're an experienced coach or a new coach, it's about how do we make our services more attractive, more meaningful so that they both help the bottom line and help executives individually.

[Following are the panelist's comments following their breakout meetings. Their comments incorporate their own perspectives as well as those offered by participants in their breakout meetings]

The Issue of Confidentiality

Moderator (Linda): How do you handle confidentiality?

Val: I haven't much problem with confidentiality at all. I was an executive myself for 13 years, so I'm pretty practical in how I approach coaching. I meet with the company and the manager of the client, initially. And in that initial meeting, before we do any anything, we go over the goals. I ask the boss to give feedback in front of me to the client right then. What I then say to the company is that I will not meet with you again without the client present and I asked not to be called without the client present. That has worked really well. So, we have that one three-way conversation and then anything on the content of coaching is confidential but I do update the company on the process, once again, with the client present. So, we'll say, here are our four goals, here is how we decided to measure progress on the four goals. We'll talk about the progress, not the content, just the progress, and then the coaching itself. I leave it to the client what they want to share. For eight years that's worked well, I haven't had any conflict with that.

Bob: I agree with all that except the first part. We're very clear that the client is the organization. The coachee is the benefactor of the process and we make that clear to both the organization and the coachee. So, what we look for is who writes the check. Now what we do is the same process. With each individual leader that we coach there is a mini 360 that we do--gather the information feedback then put together the plan with that individual leader. We sit down with that individual leader's boss and have a triangle conversation, the same way Val does. Then we say that there will be updates on progress and that is again another three-way conversation. We also do what we call organizational observation, so we can identify common themes coming from multiple leaders being coached. We bring those organizational themes to the sponsor or the organization. But these are not individual development kinds of conversations.

Mary Beth: I basically agree with my esteemed colleagues, except I'm going to steal Val's idea about having the client in the room all the time. I have not done that. I really like that idea. What I've done instead is to set up this norm that every time the boss asks me "Well how's Jim doing?" I joke with the boss, "Every time you ask me that I'm going to say 'Jim's doing fine,' no matter what, no matter how Jim is doing." Because what the boss is really doing is trying to get out of their own responsibility for monitoring Jim's performance. That allows me to do what I call guerilla coaching of the boss. Then I can say, "Are you concerned and wondering how Jim's doing? You know we could have some conversations about how you can monitor how Jim is doing if that would be useful." And we start by what I call coaching moments and may end with a coaching contract with the boss as well.

What Executives are Requesting

Moderator (Linda): What are the current themes that you find executives requiring or requesting coaching about?

Jeannine: My team is not performing well is the most common theme. So, a discussion must be pointed toward the fact that it is their direct responsibility and where are they in the fact that their team is not performing well. I typically move to discussion about performance and team interaction. It also usually requires a focus on the challenge of growing their successors.

Bill: Many of us desperately hope that what we're addressing are things called puzzles. Things that have nice tidy answers and we know when we've solved it. I think that what most coaching I do is not about puzzles but rather complex problems or mysteries that are multidisciplinary, often nested and often filled with dilemmas. I find that most people bring me in to help them solve a puzzle. Normally, during the coaching process, we get involved in things much deeper in terms of problems which are mixtures of things that have both internal controls and things that are out of their control. I help sort those two out.

Klaus: The coaching issue that I see continuously coming up is the need for improvement of communication in general from a broad level into the organization. I am repeatedly dealing with this critical issue.

Executive Coaching Themes

Moderator (Linda): Are there themes that emerge as you all are coaching? I want to give something from my experience, just really quickly. We talk a lot about clear agreements--getting to clear agreements, especially at the end of meetings. So that's one of the themes that executives don't ever start with: "I need an executive coach because I need to talk about clear agreements." But that's one of the themes that emerge.

Val: My personal favorite (which we talked about in our group): even though they never come to coaching for this we always end up talking about authenticity--about how they can be real. So, my basic twenty second coaching is that the client says, "You know my people aren't doing this and this is a problem and that's a problem." I say, "Well, have you told them?" They respond, "Well, no," and I think, "Well that's the problem. You've got to be real with these people." That is where the real coaching begins.

Bill: I find that the higher up people are in an organization, the more difficult it is to take the feedback they get and trust that feedback. Also, it tends to come from more and more sources. I find typically what I'm doing is helping people try to understand and trust the kind of feedback they are getting and how they use that to improve their own performance.

Mary Beth: I'm still talking to leaders about really basic stuff like clear agreements: telling your teams what decision making style you're using - is it majority vote, is it autocratic, is it consultative? It's amazing how much everybody says: "Yeah, yeah, I know that." But they don't use it. And the other one is leaders who are constantly misdiagnosing lack of role clarity when they see their direct reports fighting. They think it's an interpersonal conflict where it's actually that the leader has not been clear about the lines of demarcation between the two roles. You'd

think that was really obvious stuff, but it's still going on so we're going to have job security because of it.

Jeannine: There's a subset of what Mary Beth just said that I find as a theme. It is that the decisions are commonly changed in the hallway after a meeting. Who's been lobbying, who brings more data back into the CEO asking him or her to change their mind. This is a very complex and interesting theme that we see almost constantly.

Bob: I would say the number one theme I see is trust in the organization. We get countless executives that say, "The survey says that the number one issue in our organization is trust. So how do we get them to trust us?"

About Client Expectations

Moderator (Linda): What do you find your clients expect from their executive coaching experience?

Mary Beth: This is a real obvious one to me. I keep hearing over and over again how lonely leaders are and that they need frank feedback from us. Where we are not intimidated by their executive presence and we're willing to give them tough feedback. They are grateful for the truth. Even if they balk at first, even if they get irritated, I find that they are so grateful for it.

Klaus: I think in my experience they definitely expect a certain amount of frankness from us. They want us to be very straight with them and not play any games or be someone else in front of their subordinates. So, to really convey a consistent mirror image that is not a contradiction is vitally important. I treat them with deep respect and build trust. Also, always be clear. I think success in coaching in my experience depends on absolute clarity on our part as coaches.

Val: I would definitely echo Klaus' thought. What my clients seem to appreciate most is the push back. I specialize in strategy development and my clients come to expect the push back. You've got to be able to say, "I don't see how that's going to work. Walk me through how that's going to work or how do you think people are going to react to that." So, that would be one client expectation--the push back. The second one that has surprised me over the years is that they want a place where they can admit their weaknesses, their vulnerabilities and their limitations in a way where it's not evaluative because there is no place else to discuss such a topic. If they can admit it with a coach, they are very good at working on it with you, but it's got to be in that safe place. I actually have had a very high level person say to me, "I'm concerned that I'm stupid." Now who are they going to say that to? With a trusted executive coach, they can say that to get it off their chest. Do I then respond, "Why no I think you're smart?" No. I say, "Tell me, why do you think you're stupid?" You can have a very frank conversation without the client getting upset about it.

Bill: One of the things that strikes me is the role of sanctuaries—which is what I think we're talking about here. In a complex post-modem environment, there are not many safe places for people who have to make difficult decisions--executives. And what is interesting is that coaching is a place where we can in some sense promote forgiveness and understanding. The whole issue of learning from our mistakes is lovely, but one of the first things we have to do is to say, "I

made a mistake and I'm really feeling lousy about it and somewhere along the line I have to forgive myself." This often needs a coach who can say, "Yeah you know that's kind of understandable what you've just been through."

Jeannine: There's an interesting client expectation that is based around learning. It's being able to admit that you don't know or haven't been updated about a major issue in your field. Occasionally, we'll actually get into a learning program. I often point them to information about leadership in their own industry or field. They need to be students of leadership and they haven't done that. They've been so busy leading, they don't know the distinction of being a role-model or being able to be mentor a succession plan. So, it's a valuable education and learning time.

The Executive as a Customer

Moderator (Linda): What do we know about the executive as a customer? What is their need and what makes them consider executive coaching?

Bob: I think many times the executive doesn't want to be the customer to begin with. So they want the organization, their other leaders to be the customer. Mary Beth has talked about a couple of cool little ways to make sure that they actually do become one at some point. And that may be the way that we need to enter the organization: work with their leaders and report to them so that they can be involved in the process. They need to make the commitment that minimally that they will sponsor the process and will take the time to report activities that actually can tum into a coaching relationship. I also see that they need succession planning coaching. They're all of a sudden starting to realize that they don't have their replacements ready. They are looking to coaches to help them identify their successors and to give their successors coaches as well.

Jeannine: Their expectations are high. They got to their roles by being very good at what they do and they're expecting that of us just as a platform of coming in: high professionalism, trust, directness, knowledge, skills. The subject matter we would add to this is often around their own life balance. Having realized the company's stage or they may be in a stage of their career. Where is the time for me? And it won't come out that way, it will actually come out in: here's 13 more things I've got to do and I need to find time for it. Help me sort through how I cram it all in. Then the conversation really becomes: how can you run this marathon, for how many more years, before you make bad mistakes? What are the decisions in the past year you made on which you wish now you'd spent more time? So it gets into the results conversation, the effectiveness of their decision conversation, which unfolds back to more the personal part of how are they taking care of themselves to be sure this executive machine really is able to function as well as it needs to everyday.

Val: I've noticed three things about executives as customers in large corporations. First, they want to know that they're going to deliver some practical results. Your value has got to show up in their daily job, in their performance evaluation, in their P&Ls. The second thing is that our presentation as a vendor, seller, partner, whatever you want to call it, needs to be clear and crisp and short. Because they're busy, they don't have a lot of time and they won't read a bunch of stuff or sit for a long presentation. You've got to laser it and get straight to the point. I find that's true of them as customers. The last thing I would say, and I really like this part: they're expecting a

worthy opponent. They want somebody that they can rock and roll with and they respect you. So as much as I say corporate executives are tough, we are tougher, we are coaches.

Klaus: Whenever I have the initial conversation with a client, I find out who they are. Is it the executive in his or her role as an executive or is it the individual hiding behind the role? I not only work on the executive level, I also work on various other levels in the same organization—either on a coaching level or I'm facilitating leadership programs. That enables me to gain a lot of knowledge about the organization from different perspectives. I then have a better source and I can also bring questions into the coaching situation. It's not only the client who comes up with the topics or with the issues, but I say, "OK, there's this or that rumor in the organization, or I heard this, how do you relate to that and how does that relate to what we have talked about earlier?" So working on different levels in the organization has helped me to not just have the top executive view—because that's a pretty isolated view.

Bill: One final comment about knowing the customer. I quote a German by the name of Kurt Lewin. Lewin wrote about certain experiences that are unfreezing. There's a dissonance, things that don't fit. There's a mistake, there's a failure, there's something that's occurred that essentially unfreezes us. In a post modem world, I think executives are faced with many experiences that unfreeze them, but what Lewin said is that unfreezing isn't learning. The unfreezing is simply setting the conditions for learning. I think often as an executive coach I'm working with someone who's been unfrozen—something has hit them square in the eye and they're trying to figure out what happened. It's a learning process. Yes, they've been very busy, they have no time to do stuff, but something has hit them and they're suddenly saying "What just happened. My world isn't the same anymore." That's why linking it to 360s , training programs, or strategic planning processes, often is effective because there's an unfreezing that's occurred and they need help with the next phrase of learning—and with the subsequent process of refreezing.

Male Versus Female

Moderator (Linda): Are there differences in the needs of male verses female leaders? If so, what are they?

Val: Tricky question. Male verses female. I don't want to sound sexist so I'm going to make an observation from my personal practice. I'm not saying this about all women or all men, but I react to this question by saying that I coach senior executives who are about 60 percent male and 40 percent female. That is just how it is. There is one thing I tend to coach women executives on more than men: I find my women clients (even at really high levels) are often asking for permission to get in the game. They're qualified, they have the skill, but it's not about that. They're still holding back a little bit. One of my favorite lines for my female clients, men too, but female much more is: "Are you going to be a player or are you going to be a pawn?" Which is it? And I have to push really hard like there's not going to be an engraved invitation to play, jump in. I'm surprised at this point with so much progress for women, and it's subtle at the higher levels, but it's still there, they're waiting for permission. So, that is one difference I've seen.

Bill: A majority of the people in this room are women. In executive coaching, the majority of people who do executive coaching are women. The majority of the people being coached are

men. So, one of the interesting things about our profession is the fact that male executives are more often than not being coached by a woman. I've given a number of speeches over the years and the one that has generated the most attention is one I did in Los Angeles several years ago, on the subject of gender-the relationship of male coaches to female clients or colleagues we call them--vice versa. I think it's such a critical point for women as coaches who are coaching men. Often, for the men there is a powerful (and sometimes disturbing) realization: this is a woman who they wish their significant other could be like. I think this is an important issue. I see this again and again. I talk with men who have female coaches and they say: "I wish my wife could listen to me the way my coach does." That's profoundly unfair to the wife because they're involved in the issue. Many of the women I work with as coaches say one of the first things they do is they want to meet with the man's significant other, at least once, so they recognize that this female coach is not a threat.

Mary Beth: Here is one distinction I see when I talk to the bosses of my clients, who are impatient with their direct reports for not displaying more executive potential. I find that the bosses of men can get frustrated that these men don't take more initiative when the opportunity arises. They seem to want more direction. Whereas the women seem to take a lot of initiative but they're not good at setting boundaries they take on way too many things. And then they don't have an executive presence because now they're running around trying to be all things to all people. They can easily become burned out because they're taking on too many things.

Bob: One of the biggest challenges for the male executives is how they have to shift when it's time for women to come into the boy's club. There are very significant coaching needs so they can clearly understand how to make that shift.

Jeannine: Female executives who have grown up with a really rough male model present interesting challenges. Some have gone so far beyond their own original tendencies to play the game as it used to be five or ten years ago, that they have even gotten tougher, meaner, than their male colleagues. It's hard for them to come back into the game on a level playing field. This is where I have run into the most interesting and complex dynamics. I seldom have difficulty with the male client. I grew up in a male world I'm an only child that grew up in my father's business. So, for many years I had no concept of this kind of a distinction. So, I would walk into briar patches without realizing I was in one. It's actually served me well because the expectation is that I'm coming in as a human being working with another human being. That served me well until I was actually working in Europe and Asia some 10-15 years ago where I had to take, really quickly, a completely different stance of honoring that culture. So, I look at this now as, am I bilingual both in the culture and the diversity much beyond the male or the female agenda. And going from that platform, there is very little difficulty or at least you can name it and deal with it when you're simply looking at differences versus tying it back to a gender.

Session Time Variances

Moderator (Linda): How much time do you spend working with an individual executive? Are you with that person for an hour, for a day? What's your model for working with individual executives?

Klaus: I don't believe in rigid 50 or 60-minute time slots. Usually a coaching session with me ranges between an hour and a half and three hours. We meet every two or three weeks in the beginning and then the time in-between stretches out. With a rigid 60-minute session, I might not be able to cover the topic I am concentrating on and then I'm not delivering full value. I'm not saying rigid session times might not work for others, but it has never worked for me. My clients never seem to have a problem booking a three-hour time slot.

Val: I'm happy to hear Klaus say that. I would like to transition to longer sessions myself. I'm still in a traditional model. I coach executives in 40-60 minute sessions because it seems like I attract people that demand brief coaching exposures. I do a lot of laser coaching and they often don't have more than an hour at a time to give me. So I'm still coaching an hour once every two weeks or an hour a few times a month if it's an individual. I'll spend more time with groups of executives.

Bob: Typically for us, we are onsite as well as using the telephone. We tell our executives for the onsite coaching to plan on 90 minutes—we usually like to try to leave some space open after that in case it stretches. Telephone coaching sessions last for 45 minutes and are scheduled for once a week. We find, on average, that one of these sessions every month is canceled for whatever reason. So, we average three sessions a month and their initial commitment for the coaching relationship is six months.

Bill: I represent the other extreme. I would rarely work for less than two hours at a time. Recently I have been doing something quite different and I invite you to try it. In recent years, when people want me to coach I say I'm sorry I need more time at home and am a bit tired of traveling. A few months ago, one of the people said: "Well why don't I come up to your home" I'm fortunate to live in a beautiful area--right on the Atlantic Ocean in the state of Maine. There's a lovely inn near my home. My client traveled to Maine and met with me at this inn for three days. I am now rather frequently offering this type of coaching. I coach my client for two hours and then they go out for three or four hours to ponder, reflect, and even write a bit. We then come back together and I coach them for another two hours. We do that over a period of three days and it's been amazing. Sometimes we're sitting on the rocks down by the ocean or we are walking through the woods. Remarkably, the clients I engage in this manner are usually the busiest. They have absolutely no time for anything like this and they're all saying: "Sure I'll come up for three days." It's really quite remarkable. I'm still trying to figure out what is attracting them to this coaching option. I think it has something to do with finding a bit of sanctuary in their busy lives. We're scheduling about six sessions and my clients do an enormous amount of work between sessions.

Klaus: Listening to what you just said, Bill, reminds me of what I sometimes do. I go with my clients for a walk and when you ask top executives to go with you for a walk, they kind of give you a strange look first--what's that about? This is business—it has to be in an office behind a desk or at a table, but once they went through the experience and probably all of you guys know, we sometimes have the best conversations when we go for walks. Because the body is moving, the thoughts are moving and this is what I'm just using. I just tried it a few times last year and it has worked and since then I have done it more often and got very positive feedback from the clients. First of all, there's resistance, so just try it, go for walks.

When Is It Time to Conclude

Moderator (Linda): How do you know when it's time to conclude your coaching with a client?

Jeannine: There's an internal measure that I use to get to this question of when to end. Am I still excited and eager to go to that conversation? If I'm not, then I've got to be looking at myself first. Has there been something on my side, that either I've used up the skill or the time frame or something here? So, there's a constant check with me that I need to be eager to see each of these clients. I must be anxious to know the progress they've made or what they're dealing with. So, my first calibration is with me. Then I would go back to the contract----our agreements, what are our goals—how close are we to them? But I also look for a sabbatical. Cause some of our clients are one year, two year commitments. And there may be a rhythm—we simply need a time out. We may be working on something very intense and it's time for my client to let it rest for a bit or let the relationship rest for a bit—with a commitment regarding when we're going to pick it up and review where we are and move forward. So, the three dynamics that I'm looking at: first myself, second our stated goal and third the feeling of the rhythm (timing). Now the one caveat I add to this, given everybody's international schedules and how complex things are. If I've not connected with an executive within six weeks, then I will do my best to track them down and become proactive—because so much happens.

Val: I think Jeannine said that perfectly. I think most of us do that. What I'll speak to is the other side of the question: when do you fire a client? Luckily, I've had to fire less than five clients over the eight years but I have done it. It was not easy, and what I use as an indicator for firing is if the client's not taking action. So if we've agreed on things, and remember the client is saying they'll do this, not me telling the client what to do, repeatedly not taking action and we've talked about what's in the way. They still don't take any action. I would call that disengagement. Now I'm not talking about being blocked and we're working on the blocks. I'm talking about not taking action. That's an indicator. Another indicator is scheduling. I carefully watch the scheduling: how often does a client cancel, or reschedule? So, I've sometimes fired clients for that. I've said to my client: "You know, I've got to ask you. Do you think that coaching is the right thing for you right now?" So, I've sometimes had to do it. And then, the hardest client to fire is the one with whom I have felt I'm not being effective. That's the hard one. Because they're there, they're willing to pay the fee. But I just know, myself, that I'm not a match or I don't have the skill set to be effective, I have told them the truth about that and let go. And that's hard on my own personal ego, it's like, hey, I'm not the coach for everybody--99 percent of the people. But not everybody.

Klaus: I fire a client either when there's absolutely no commitment and I definitely feed that back to the client. I just have the feeling we came to the end of the road. It's a dead-end road. The client cannot benefit from me as a coach anymore. I put that on the table and usually I'm right and he or she has the same feeling. I also have a basic rule in the coaching contract with the client: we can both fire one another, but before we do that we meet at least one more time. As coaches, we sometimes have to be the devil's advocate and sometimes our clients hate us for that. They may even be hurt, although it's not our intention to hurt them. They say: "I'm going to fire this guy, I mean who is he?" They come back to the next session and we reflect on our working relationship and then decide whether it's on or not.

Measuring Coaching ROI

Moderator (Linda): How do you measure return-on-investment (ROI) for your work with a corporate client or your work as an executive coach?

Mary Beth: This is one of my favorite topics. I track three things. One is what I call the three factors for leader effectiveness. The three factors are (a) what's the business result and what are the measures, (b) what are very specific leader behaviors that they have to exhibit that they're not exhibiting now and (c) what are team interaction skills that they need from their team to produce those results? I also help my client become aware of other influencing variables. I ask the leader: "What are the variables in your business -- inside and outside -- that are going to impact your results--your success?" These are positives and negatives, so they say everything from, "You know the economy was going down from the year 2000 and we've been really struggling with that" to "We just lost ten percent of our market share" to "You know what, I have the right people on my team." So, we identify the variables and then at the end we cycle back, reconfirm with the three factors how much were they able to bring those home, look at the variables again and then know that the coaching contract is one of the variables. So, I ask my client what percentage of impact--was the coaching variable as opposed to the other variables on getting the ROI? It's a subjective answer from the leader who I have found is always giving an unrealistically high percentage to the coaching variable. It's my job to be more hard-nosed and business-minded about this than they are. I'm always skeptical about it and knocking down the percentage by saying, 'You know there were other variables—so prove to me that the percentage you're giving to coaching is valid." Over time, what I have found is a typical adjusted percentage of impact that clients give after dealing with my skepticism is anything from 20 to 33 percent.

Bob: When I sit down with an executive and they say: "How are you going to measure this?" And what I say to them is: "Tell me what the key issues you have in your organization that you'd like to see shift." Whenever they identify those issues I'll ask, "How do you measure them" and they typically tell me "I can't." So, I say: "Ok we've got a task to look at so how are we going to figure out a way to measure this?" One of the ways we do that quite often is just to identify those key things that they just listed and then we review them using a one to ten scale. I ask the executive "If one is as poor as it could ever be and ten for this indicator walks on water, where do you think you are as an individual or an organization right now-and we pick a number. Then I would say to them: "At the end of six months if we were to measure success what would be a number that you would pick?" And we lay that out as the connector for what we measure. So, set it up in the beginning, take a look at it along the way and measure it in the end. But make sure that they're the ones who are identifying the key indicators and they are also picking the starting point number.

Bill: I think we're allowed some differences, right? So, I want to push a difference here and be critical of ROI. First, when I look at executive coaching I think of executive not as a position in the organization but as a function in making decisions under conditions of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence. As opposed to performance coaching which is about influencing actual behavior. Part of the problem with ROI is that it tends to move us toward performance coaching: it's much easier to measure changes in behavior and the impact in behavior. I think it's much harder to measure the impact of shifts in decision making processes. It is possible, but it

tends to be a much longer term measurement. Second, we are usually not dealing with puzzles when engaged in executive coaching. We are often instead usually addressing a problem that our client has identified. Puzzles are measurable and can be addressed through a specific discipline (such as finance or marketing). Problems, on the other hand, are messy, multidisciplinary, dilemma-filled, nested, and even paradoxical. Problems are very hard to measure. What I fear with ROI, not all, but many of the ROI models is it pushes us into puzzles, when in fact we can be most successful as coaches when we address problems. Finally, something that Mary Beth said is really important: most problems are a mixture of some things we have control over and other things over which we don't have any control. So, any measurement we do, if we ever do a measurement, has to be sensitive to those things that impact the outcomes but are not specifically associated with the coaching process.

Val: The only thing I'll add, I totally agree with everything that's been said. I would add that the ROI conversation is one that I would not separate from coaching itself. So, what I found is very useful is that as a coach, you can educate people to think that way while you're coaching, all the time, so we don't even have to wait for the evaluation day or the update day. For example, I was coaching a group last week, we were doing group coaching, so about 10 managers came together. My homework assignment for them was to do something during the following week that demonstrates the five particular skills on which we were working. They did that, but then my question when we debriefed was: "What did you do? And can you tell me about the impact." I would then ask each person the same question: "What was the business result? How would you relate this to your bottom line?" They're in an operations area: speed of phone- answering. These are things they can easily measure, so I didn't actually have to go as far as the numbers. I just had to ask them: "What' s the business result?" You start educating the client to look at ROI all the time—in addition to the more formal measurement. I'll encourage you to do that too.

Linda: I want to add one more thing regarding the comments on ROI. If you don't set it up in the beginning, it's really challenging. A lot of times, we've been in places where the company will say: "We don 't need to do that." We have to help in the learning process and in the educating process. Our clients should know that when they get down the road two or three or four months, they may have to come back again and it's not easy to measure at that point. So, one of the challenges has been to determine at the very beginning if you're going to measure and be sure you're really clear on what and how you're going to be measuring.

Some Sage Advice

Moderator (Linda): What advice would you give to experienced coaches?

Val: Ok, I'll start. My advice would be whether you're experienced or new to the field, decide to be a player--get a vision of what it is you want for corporate America. Not just what do you want in terms of a client: What do you want? I'm talking about executive coaching for corporations. What do you want to see for corporations? There are some really practical reasons to do it. First, it will organize your marketing effort. If you want to build a practice, you can market around a message. Secondly, it'll move you out of the position of: "Please hire me. I've got something really valuable to offer." This will move you into a situation where you are an equal partner with

an executive and capable of assisting in some real and positive changes in the world. So, that's my advice: be a player, be bold, and have a vision.

Klaus: I suggest everyone identify their core values because they keep you grounded. I feel this is important. You must also speak your mind all the time without exception. Don't be shy. What personally has helped me along on the executive level is having a natural disrespect for hierarchical positions. They simply don't impress me just because someone is a CEO. So what, who cares? I have a deep respect for each human being and I approach them as such and that has always enabled me to enter the true conversation a lot faster.

Bill: There is a new alternative form of human services working with organizations that is being invented right now—its executive coaching! So, my advice to you, especially for those of you who have been in the field. Be servants to this field. Help out. Help us make this into something that is viable. I don't know if you're aware of the fact that my colleagues up here at the table are quite remarkable men and women. And why in the world are they here? Why is Linda here moderating and why are people here like Joan Wright who organized this track? There is this entity called *The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations* that some of you know we are now publishing. Two of our colleagues, who are both involved in marketing, wrote a piece about the history of executive coaching and where it's going from here. They are actively making the effort to be a contributor. They are not simply thinking about their own individual practice, but about how they can contribute to this field in a variety of ways. You must do the same thing.

Bob: I have two practical pieces of advice. First, align, align and align. Stop coaching in isolation. There's a self-fulfilling prophecy when we work in isolation. This is the most giving profession I see that seems to spend all our work in isolation. So, get together with everybody else—providing opportunities for our own growth and therefore growth of those organizations with which we work. Second, stop entering organizations with what I call the "fix it" coaching mentality. The world out there typically says: "Somebody needs to be fixed. Get them a coach." Then we take on the assignment because we want to grow our practice. We go in and we brand coaching as "fix-it". And we brand ourselves as "fix-it" practitioners. The natural result is that when there's more fix-it to be done, they look to coaches for help. However, when there's great growth to be realized they don't look to us or even consider us a viable resource. So, it's time to end fix-it coaching as the way that we enter organizations.

Mary Beth: My advice is to work hard to break polarized thinking both your clients' and your own. I see it over and over again that human beings under stress tend to polarize. It is a symptom of anxiety. I urge you to consciously work at avoiding this trap. Leaders are constantly polarizing, splitting. They say, "If I give parameters to my team, they won't take initiative." But the team is thinking "Unless we get the parameters, we don't know what initiative to take." A typical polarization trap I see is this whole thing about ROI versus focusing on the people dimension. This does not have to generate polarized thinking.

Jeannine: The advice I would give to experienced coaches and those entering and growing their practice is: know your craft. Be grounded in a coaching model and methodology and what underpins it. That will help you set your boundaries. That will help you know what clients you

are best suited for and aid you in knowing when to exit a client system. In addition to knowing your craft, be bold.

Moderator (Linda): In conclusion, I thank and salute the esteemed panel participants who openly and unselfishly shared so much of their executive coaching expertise. It is gratifying to know that I was able to strengthen my relationship with each of these outstanding peers. I firmly believe that I benefited professionally from the information flow and I feel that all in attendance would echo this.
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ABOUT THE EDITOR (2003)
Joan 0. Wright is principal of O'Sullivan Wright Consulting, Inc., a firm specializing in Executive Coaching, Leadership Development and Talent Management Strategies. Her practice helps companies achieve targeted business results by attracting, developing and retaining key leadership talent. Sample clients include: The City of Charlotte, Wachovia, Wells Fargo and Duke Energy. Joan has 21 years of corporate experience in Human Resources Management roles with Philip Morris, Citicorp, GE Capital and most recently First Union National Bank where she was head of executive leadership development. She holds the distinction of advanced certified corporate business coach and her professional affiliations include senior executive coach with Executive Coaching Network, Inc.; International Coach Federation Charlotte Chapter and Rotary Club of Charlotte-South.

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Commentary on ICF Conference Executive Coaching Panel

Bill Bergquist
In 2016, each of the panelists was invited to review their presentation in 2003 and provide comments if they would like.

Five of the panelists (including myself) found time in their very busy schedule to provide a commentary—often responding to one or more of the following questions:
(1) What has stayed the same in the field of organizational coaching over the past 13 years,
(2) What has changed in the field over the past 13 years,
(3) What needs to change in the field, and
(4) What do you anticipate the world of coaching will look like 13 years from now?

I also invited my long-term colleague and friend, John Lazar, to offer his comments on the 2003 panel presentation. John not only played a central role getting this panel established at ICF, but also made the original version of this panel presentation available to a wide audience of coaches (as co-publisher with me of the *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*).

Linda Miller
What has stayed the same in the field of organizational coaching over the past 13 years? Leaders are still wanting/valuing feedback. They're still talking about how to get more from their teams. They're still trying to figure out how best to communicate. Clear agreements still seem to be a theme that many leaders haven't addressed. These are all areas of focus with exec coaching.

What has changed in the field over the past 13 years? I think one area that's different is the need to be proactive around change. Change is happening so much faster and deeper. Leaders need to understand and be coached around being proactive change agents.
Coaching is now recognized as a leadership competency focused on development much more than before—when it was mainly focused on performance.

There are many more internal coaches, yet there still is a need for external exec coaches due to confidentiality concerns.

Bill Bergquist
What has stayed the same in the field of organizational coaching over the past 13 years? I was surprised and impressed with the insights that were offered by my fellow panelists in 2003. Either they were way ahead of their time or there is wisdom to be found in the lessons learned in the field of executive (and organizational) coaching that still holds true today. Here are several of the themes and insights that still seem to hold true. First, my colleagues on the panel emphasized the need for executive coaching (and I suspect all forms of professional coaching in organizations) must be closely tied to business results and to such related factors as strategic planning, succession planning and innovation. While I expressed some reservations about the reliance on ROI as a primary measure of coaching effectiveness, I recognize that executive coaching must be closely tied to performance – at both the individual level (leadership effectiveness) and team/organizational level (productivity, market share, etc.).

Second, I believe that it is still a good idea to tie coaching in organizations to other developmental initiatives – such as training, performance review and organization development. As Klaus noted in his 2003 statement, this tie-in not only provides leverage, it also provides an opportunity for the executive coach (if engaging in some of these other initiatives) to gain greater knowledge of and a more diverse perspective on the dynamics operating in the organization they are serving.

Third, I was impressed with the call for service to the field of executive coaching by my colleagues (and myself). This is still a critical issue. Bob talked about the remarkable tendency of executive coaches (and I would suggest most professional coaches) to work in isolation. Some of the recent research reports I have prepared based on the large-scale Development of Coaches survey provide some verification that coaches tend to work in silos and that we still need servant leaders in the inter-disciplinary field of executive (and organizational) coaching.

What has changed in the field over the past 13 years? I am impressed with the extent to which several inter-disciplinary fields are beginning to inform and influence the way we think about professional coaching. I am particularly intrigued with the rapidly growing disciplines of neurobiology (and particularly social neuro-biology) and behavioral economics. Through the new findings in neurobiology, we are exploring the complex dynamics in professional coaching associated with empathy (as related to mirror neurons) and with major new opportunities for adult learning and change (as related to neuro-plasticity). Behavioral economics has brought forth new appreciation for the processes of reflection (with an emphasis, as Daniel Kahneman notes, on "slow thinking") and the power of assumptions and heuristics that we carry with us and that informs our sometimes accurate but often distorted vision of reality. Clearly professional

coaching can be of great value in addressing the challenges and availing itself of the opportunities associated with empathy, adult learning, reflection and the surfacing of assumptions and governing heuristics.

What needs to change in the field? The changes needed in field relate directly to the observations I have made in the previous two sections. We are in a field that has close ties (at least potentially) to several rapidly expanding fields of research in the biological and behavioral sciences. We need to devote greater attention to the implications inherent in the findings coming out of these fields – and this attention requires collaborative efforts on the part of practitioners in the field of professional coaching. As my colleague, Francine Campone (one of the architects of the Development of Coaches survey) has noted, we need to build a culture of research and evidence that is interwoven with what I have called the culture of collaboration. This cultural transformation is required if the field and profession of coaching is to further evolve and remain relevant to a world of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence.

In the midst of this emphasis on research and collaboration, we also must refine our research tools. The ROI measures have been further refined since 2003, and we now see a more qualitative emphasis on both opportunities and expectations, as related to the perspectives of both coaches and the consumers of coaching services. As is now the case in other human service professions (including medicine and mental health) the push toward evidence-based practices is becoming prevalent in the field of professional coaching. The "evidence", however, must be nuanced and (as Mary Beth noted in 2003), related to the system-based analysis of multiple-causations and interdependencies.

What do you anticipate the world of coaching will look like 13 years from now? In 13 years, I anticipate the use of much more powerful tools of analysis, coming out of such areas as agent-based modeling and system-dynamics. We will not only see more refined ways of exploring the impact of our work as coaches in complex organizational settings, but will also be deploying computer-based tools of analysis with our clients that enable us (with our clients) to do highly-refined contingency based planning and (even more importantly) provide venues for testing out assumptions about how the client's organization actually works and responds to various interventions. If we are to encourage our clients to "think slowly" on occasion and reflect on their own attributions, then we need tools to make this reflective process powerful and productive.

Val Williams

It was great to read the transcript. I was most surprised that if I was asked the same questions, my own answers would be very similar 13 years later. My comments:

What has stayed the same in the field of organizational coaching over the past 13 years? What has stayed the same is that Executive Coaches still have to help executives think beyond today. We can't just support an executive's current work. Our value is in challenging executive leaders on how they are preparing for the future. As coaches, we are that voice reminding executives to look years ahead of an ever-changing business environment. The questions we ask about the future are critical.

What also has not changed, is the need to coach even senior executive leaders on the absolute requirement of being real with people. So many organizational problems have as their root cause: Missing Conversations. These are the tough conversations that leaders need to have with peers, their team and their stakeholders, which they sometimes avoid. Executive Coaching still offers tremendous value in helping organizations identify Missing Conversations and develop the leadership skills to have those conversations.

What also has not changed—and maybe is even more valuable today—is that Executive Coaching still provides that safe confidential place where executive leaders can work out their vulnerabilities, their fears, and their concerns with a thought partner focused on solutions. Executives highly appreciate that in today's even more complex fast=moving world. So, senior executives are still the same types of customers in many ways. They want executive coaching to result in their leadership capabilities improving in practical ways that can be seen in their daily jobs, and tied, however indirectly, to the organization's success.

What has changed in the field over the past 13 years? What I feel has changed is the greater focus on ROI for executive coaching. Today it is essential to have the ROI conversation upfront before the coaching even begins. Now that conversation is used as a criterion for even investing in a leader's development. We still often lack formal measures; but the conversations are robust around outcomes for coaching.

Another change is a build on what I said on the past panel. It is now much more important for Executive Coaches to be bold, to have their own vision for organizations. The practical reason for this is to stand out in a crowded marketplace of people who all want to call themselves coaches. But the bigger reason is because organizations really need help. Organizations are often floundering today with the stiff competition, global pressures, limited resources etc. As Executive Coaches, we can help organizations focus on vision and engaging people to commit to those visions. I believe this so strongly that my own executive coaching business now focuses on what I call: "The Art of Beneficial Impact." I specifically focus on the art and mastery that it takes to make significant impact at the senior executive levels. And it's not just about great impact. It's about a leader's impact being beneficial to the organization, to the people they lead, to themselves and to the world.

What needs to change in the field? What needs to change is greater emphasis on credentialing. I'd like to see the ICF core competencies be the gold standard for coaching. I'd like to see consumers be more educated on what good coaching should look like.

What do you anticipate the world of coaching will look like 13 years from now? As for 13 years from now….I would hope that the emphasis on the quality of coaching is a given. I would hope that organizations can truly partner with coaches to create their futures. I would hope that executive coaches as individuals and as an industry will be able to point to "the beneficial impact" that each of us has had on the world.

Klaus Zepuntke
What has stayed the same in the field of organizational coaching over the past 13 years? The coaching issue that I see continuously coming up is the need for improvement of communication

in general from a broad level into the organization. I am repeatedly dealing with this critical issue. This applies still today.

Clarity is still an absolute necessity and is still needed in coaching and always will be. If we as (executive) coaches approach our clients with a deep respect for their humanness and reflect with them the impact of the Three Marriages Self – Work – Partner on being a leader that people want to follow we achieve better results. What we also need is to work with them on self-knowledge which I perceive underdeveloped in many.

As I mentioned in the 2003 presentation, whenever I have the initial conversation with a client, I find out who they are. Is it the executive in his or her role as an executive or is it the individual hiding behind the role? This still holds true. I not only work on the executive level, but I also work on various other levels in the same organization either on a coaching level or I'm facilitating leadership programs. That enables me to gain a lot of knowledge about the organization from different perspectives.

I still don't believe in rigid 50 or 60 minute time slots. My clients still don't seem to have a problem booking a three-hour time slot. Furthermore, back in 2003, Bill Bergquist and I both noted that at times we take a walk with our coaching clients. This is still the case for me.

What has changed in the field over the past 13 years? What has changed is that many leaders/top executives need to talk about what they call Work-Life Balance. I developed a counter approach which I call Work-Life Integration – or The Secret of The Three Marriages. Inspired by David Whyte's book, *The Three Marriages*, I developed a coaching model that puts various aspects of life into perspective and that actually helps people to implement radical changes in their perception of what life is.

In Germany, face-to-face coaching was the norm in 2003. This has completely changed; face-to-face and telephone coaching are both well accepted by now.

What needs to change in the field? In my experience, executive coaching today also focuses on very personal issues that used to be handled by life coaches. I really think that this differentiation is obsolete, since we need to look not only at the role and function an executive has, but more and more if her/his life is congruent with her/his understanding of the inhabited role and the values.

I really think that we as executive coaches need a deep and thorough understanding of the organization. If we keep talking only to the C-suite we miss the groundwork.

Jeannine Sandstrom
1. Since we did this panel discussion the coaching industry has exploded. Most businesses have certainly heard of coaching even if they haven't actively used the service. The good news is we no longer have to explain we're not athletic "trainers"! Bad news is we are sometimes viewed as a plug and play commodity and one size fits all. What this means for those of us focusing on executive coaching is that we still get to "describe" what we do and it value proposition for the exec and organization.

This is not a bad thing in my viewpoint. As a business owner I expect a consultant to be able to clearly state how their product/service will better my staff and business. I need to know the return on my investment and have clear expectations for delivery success.

And as a provider this keeps me fresh, really current in being able to clearly state the value of an executive coaching engagement both for the leader being coached and for their organization. And it helps distinguish an experienced executive coach from someone newer in the field.

2. Our current challenges/opportunities can stem from the above. So many schools, academic institutions, private certification organizations, etc. now produce coaches that we sometimes find ourselves viewed as an industry with little distinguishing one graduate from another. This provides for a coach to specialize in an industry, level of client, type of client, etc. etc. However, it may also make it more difficult for that coach to identify an effective sustainable marketing platform. An interesting dilemma – too general and you're like everyone else. Too specialized and your opportunities could become more difficult to identify.

When a coach is able to distinguish their niche, provide clear expectations for results and provide excellent references, I believe opportunities abound for truly interesting satisfying work.

3. For the past several years I see/hear a trend that I believe will only get stronger for executive coaches. That is a blending of consulting, mentoring, teacher/trainer, and coaching skills in a single engagement. Senior leaders are requiring a top level executive coach have knowledge of both business and leader development and expect the relation to clearly model how that leader could effectively behave in the organization. The consistent major distinction between X,Y,A and coaching is that coaching still does not have/present "the answer". Coaching is grounded in a discovery process through which the client reaches their own answers vs a consultant, mentor, teacher, trainer, etc. giving/telling the answer. This does not preclude the Exec Coach from utilizing the competences of other disciplines to help broaden the client's awareness/thinking.

Another trend I see continuing is the use of the science of learning and how the mind works to enable coach and client to more quickly, easily and deeply create new lasting pathways of behavior. This includes my area of fascination for decades – how words/language builds realities that can be refreshed so deeply.

John B. Lazar
It was refreshing to reread the 2003 panel discussion on aspects of executive coaching. It is a privilege to reflect on the perspectives that were shared by an extraordinary panel of experienced coaches, deftly facilitated by another experienced colleague, Linda Miller. I offer my own perspectives on this snapshot. There is so much to choose from so I shall be selective, guided by what moves me and where I believe I can contribute. To be transparent, Bill Bergquist and I were co-founders and co-executive editors of *IJCO The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations™*. Several of the panelists wrote articles that appeared in *IJCO* or served on the *IJCO* editorial board.

About excellent executive coaching: Mary Beth had commented on the importance of connecting coaching outcomes to strategic objectives. This continues to be a critical issue for making the

business case for coaching. This is one to broach initially when contracting, to consider during discovery and design phases, and to incorporate when designing evaluation measures. The challenge continues to be to include these issues as relevant design elements for the coaching intervention.

Mary Beth also had an interpretation of the reason a client manager would ask about how the client is doing. I appreciate her interpretation and the opportunities it presents – to discuss how the manager is monitoring client performance and to provide informal dialog with the manager about their perceptions. This is tracks with the more formal approach of Mike Jay, an executive/leadership coach. In his contracting, he gains agreement to coach not only the client but their manager. This acknowledges the manager's influence and importance in the client's performance environment.

Bill had observed that most of the issues to address in organizational coaching were problems and mysteries. I can appreciate this view. It's one on which Bill and I wrote several article. Said differently, often the performance issues for which coaching is requested have multiple root causes. They beg for a blended approach (coaching and other interventions), able to address more of the problem variance. I am seeing an increase in clients' willingness to consider options beyond what they initially requested. It does require accepting the client premise that there's something worth changing without buying into the proposed solution. As for mysteries as Bill and I have written about them, these are legitimate issues worth exploring and engaging through different coaching approaches.

About coaching themes: Both Linda and Mary Beth commented on the criticality of having clear agreements. This is as true for the coaching contract as between managers or managers and their direct reports for the work to be done. Jeannine also mentioned this in a later section. Agreements between parties (and the related trust among partners) are the foundation on which everything else rests. Taking the time to assure that there is shared understanding is a sound investment. Each party gets to be rigorous rather than assumptive about expectations, conditions of satisfaction and standards. This won't guarantee that things will go smoothly (in fact, they seldom do); it will affirm that you've done your due diligence.

About the value received from executive coaching: Bill shared the perspective that the coaching relationship provided a sanctuary space. In a similar vein, Val commented on the coach's role to push back. Sanctuary seems to be a fair interpretation, one of the hallmarks of a coaching relationship. It shows up in at least three ways: confidentiality that what's discussed in coaching stays in coaching; nonjudgmental engagement by the coach; and mutual candor in what's shared, listened and explored. In these ways, the client is encouraged to be curious and courageous to explore the shape and boundaries of their world, recognize self-limiting beliefs and experiment with new ways of thinking, being and acting. The coaching context becomes a practice field for planning new moves, practicing, then executing and debriefing for new perspective and learning. The sanctuary distinctions contribute to expanding the client's world of effective commitment and expression.

About evaluation and ROI: Mary Beth talked about her view of what was important in being able to conduct ROI as the selected coaching evaluation method. This maps well with any client

organization's concerns about whether their investment was successful and worth it. The questions she asks at the beginning of the engagement provide the context for understanding 'success' and 'satisfaction'. They also provide the content for coaching focus and the basis of designing evaluation efforts. This 'expert estimation' approach seems to be her version of the Phillips ROI Methodology™ and Metrics That Matter™ approach now implemented by the Corporate Executive Board. As long as the client is willing to legitimize a conservative estimation of attributed coaching effect and accept the lack of precision, this approach can work well.

Other approaches, such as Brinkerhoff's Success Case Study Method, can be used in multiple client contexts. In fact, there are plenty of evaluation methods to choose from, each with its pros and cons. In my view, and consistent with Phillips and Phillips, part of the contracting conversations should focus on evaluation issues as an integral part of the engagement. This will entail determining what success will look like; when, how and by whom the data will be gathered; who will receive what readouts and when. In other words, there will be an evaluation plan to consider, discuss, align on and implement in tandem with the coaching.

The Participants (Updated Bios and Photos)

I have updated the bios for each of these panelists and provided you with a digital photo of each. No one seems to have grown older – and they all remain vitally involved in their career and the field of coaching.

Joan Wright

Joan Wright is committed to the belief that living by example and self-leadership are critical to impacting real and significant change in the world. As founder and president of O'Sullivan Wright, Inc., a global firm specializing in coaching, leadership development and talent management strategies, she is a nationally recognized Master Certified Coach and frequently sought as a speaker on leadership and change. Her nationally acclaimed book, UP: Pursuing Significance in Leadership and Life, inspired her to lead with significance in support of Senai Global's Climb for a Purpose (summiting Mount Kilimanjaro). Additionally, she is a coach for TED Fellows through the SupportTED program and previously chaired a Vistage CEO Peer Advisory Group. Her most recent book- SOULinks: Pursuing Multi-Generational Significance received a 2016 coveted review from Publishers Weekly.

Linda Miller
Specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, and organizational change, Linda is an advocate for creating healthy change in organizations. In 2000, Linda joined forces with The Ken Blanchard Companies® Coaching Services team, where she currently serves as Global Liaison for Coaching. In this role, Linda has coached or trained leaders from Europe, Asia, Central and South America. Additionally, she serves as the senior facilitator for the Coaching Essentials for Leaders program, which she coauthored. Linda is a founding recipient of the Master Certified Coach designation through the International Coach Federation and is a former board member. She has co-authored two books: Coaching for Christian Leaders: A Practical Guide, and Coaching in Organizations: Best Practices from The Ken Blanchard Companies®.

Bill Bergquist
An international coach and consultant, professor in the fields of psychology, management and public administration, author of more than 50 books, and president of a graduate school of psychology. Dr. Bergquist consults on and writes about personal, group, organizational and societal transitions and transformations. In recent years, Bergquist has focused on the processes of organizational coaching. He is co-founder of the International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, the Library of Professional Coaching and the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations. His graduate school (The Professional School of Psychology) offers Master and Doctoral degrees to mature, accomplished adults in both clinical and organizational psychology.
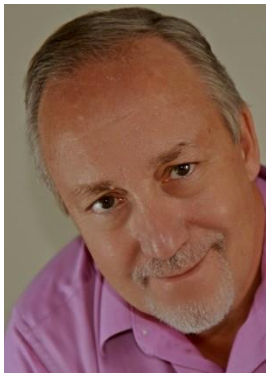
Bob Johnson
Bob Johnson is an experienced leadership development professional with expertise in leadership and executive coaching, team development, client retreats and training/ classroom facilitation. As an executive coach, Bob has over 30 years of experience and has worked in over 150 organizations in many industries including oil and gas, mining, high tech, manufacturing, health care, retail, banking, telecommunications, engineering, construction and the golf industry. Bob travels extensively delivering coaching and facilitation work in countries as far afield as South America, Europe, China, Australia and the Middle East. He has led and participates in the Executive Coach Summit, an annual think tank of very experienced professional executive coaches.

John Lazar
With expertise in clinical psychology, ontological practice, and human performance technology, John Lazar works with individual leaders and their teams to develop emotionally intelligent leadership, create an aligned environment for breakthrough execution, and deliver superior business results. In addition to his business coaching, he consults to companies on issues of leadership and management practices, communications, evaluation, executive team alignment, culture-strategy fit, and performance improvement. John continues to coach TED Fellows. He was a founding member and past President of the Board of Directors of the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations (ICCO). He is co-founder, owner, and Executive Editor of IJCO The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations®. He has been certified as a Master Coach by the International Coach Federation (ICF) since 1999.

Mary Beth O'Neill
Mary Beth O'Neill is a leadership consultant, executive coach, author, leader of the Executive Coach Training Series, and owner of MBO Consulting. For over 25 years Mary Beth has coached a range of leaders, from CEOs, to senior vice presidents, directors, and senior managers, including those in Fortune 100 and 500 companies. She works with executives and their teams as well as 1-1 with leaders. Her passion and specialty is to help clients leverage their interactions with their teams to produce bottom line business results. Mary Beth also trains, coaches, and consults with internal OD/HR departments who are developing coaching cadres for their organizations and want to apply a consistently systemic coaching approach with their internal executive clients.

Jeannine Sandstrom
Dr. Jeannine Sandstrom teaches, trains, coaches and advises executives to "play above the rim," reaching and scoring higher than anyone else, higher than they ever thought. Sandstrom's education, corporate background, coaching and life experiences in numerous industries and across the globe uniquely qualify her as the perfect match-up coach to C-Level leaders. Dr. Sandstrom holds the vision for their success, is uncompromising, has remarkable insights, is strategic in her process and requires clients be fully engaged on the field of play. A leader in the executive coaching industry, Dr. J was instrumental in its development as a profession. Prior to starting her own coaching practice, Sandstrom founded and led three national consulting companies focusing on leadership development, strategic plan implementation, and team development.

Val Williams

Val is an Executive Leadership Consultant and Master Certified Coach (MCC). She has coached and consulted with hundreds of senior corporate executives and their teams since 1994. Val is also a former corporate executive in the managed health care industry (Prudential) and has led teams of over 700 staff members in multiple locations. Val has coached senior executive leaders in the United States, Finland, Japan, England, and South America (often by telephone) to maximize their leadership impact. In her coaching, seminars and management retreats, Val is known for her interactive approach and practical results oriented style.

Klaus Zepuntke

Klaus established the company KLAZEPT Coaching and Consulting in 1989. In more than 20 years as a Corporate and Personal Coach, he has supported clients from many different branches and businesses through change processes and conflict management. Klaus Zepuntke was born in 1955 in Hamburg, Germany. He studied American, English, and German literature as well as education in Germany and the USA. During his studies, he worked between semesters as a travel and hiking guide worldwide. It was here he learned to make quick and clear decisions in guiding travel groups through culture or nature related crisis situations. He continues to travel regularly between Europe and North America. He is fluent in German and English and offers all coaching and consulting services in both languages.