

QUEENS

SUMMER 2011

THE MAGAZINE OF QUEENS UNIVERSITY OF CHARLOTTE



The New Role of Coaches

Top coaches discuss what businesses need

Also

Everyone Eats

Back in the Saddle

Hashtagging History

She Held a Heart



the new Coaching Paradigm

Interview by Vanessa Willis
Photography by Jason Fararoei

Footsteps to follow? Not any more. The marketplace is changing—fast. If you want to get to the top, forget about following the guy ahead of you. You'll need to find the path within

This year the McColl School at Queens launched a Master of Science in Executive Coaching, the first of its kind in the country. Some of the best coaches in America serve as the program's executive coaches-in-residence. Two of them—Marshall Goldsmith and Carol Kauffman—recently sat down with John Bennett, the program director, for a round table discussion of the rising influence of coaches in American business.

Top leaders of mega international corporations are using coaches to gain insight for bringing about positive changes within themselves and their organizations. Here's how.

Q: What is coaching?

BENNETT: Coaching is helping people through a trusting relationship to develop to their full potential. It's conveying a person from where they are to where they want to go, not simply providing all the answers. Coaches help clients find focus, direction, and resources for themselves so they can sustain behavior and mindset changes, and develop a new level of mastery.

KAUFFMAN: It can be something that is sponsored by the organization and filtered through it, or you can be an external advisor to an executive. On whatever scale, coaching is a strengths-based process of change that is really very different

from therapy, from consulting and from mentoring. It's an empowering relationship. Coaching is taking a client on a journey to discover who they are and who they want to be, not just what they want to do.

GOLDSMITH: My coaching practice is about helping successful leaders achieve positive, lasting changes in behavior for themselves, their people and their teams. Different than the broader process of mentoring, which is typically done by a person within a company or a seasoned executive. They [mentors] are focused more on career and the politics of business while I'm focused on leadership behavior.

Left, Professor John Bennett, director of the new master's program in executive coaching, discusses coaching scenarios with volunteer coaching client Jacquelyn Blankinship at Trexler Student Center.



McColl student Rosalyn Jacobs '11 (right) gets help from Professor Mary St. Claire Howerton (left), a management consultant who teaches in the McColl School of Business.

Q: What are the most common things clients need help with?

GOLDSMITH: Most issues I've worked with clients on are behavioral, centered around ego. Like trying to be right all the time, winning too much, and not listening as well as they could.

Q: How do you know you're effective in your coaching? What does success look like?

KAUFFMAN: A good coach believes that the client is resourceful and whole, and holds the client to be bigger than they are. If you have a fierce belief that someone can do something—that they may not even know—it has an effect on them. You're trying to create an ideal balance of challenge and support.

BENNETT: I agree. I don't believe as a coach that it's my job to have the answers. When I move into answer-giving and advice-giving, I'm moving farther away from coaching and more into expert consulting.

What I'm not doing is telling them what to do. The focus is always on the client, and not me. A coach is more about using the power of listening and asking questions and providing new frames of reference and perspective so the client can continue discovering for themselves what to do—and take responsibility for doing it themselves, to be more effective in creating change in their organization.

GOLDSMITH: The key is 360-degree feedback, considering the perceived improvement by key stakeholders. So if my client is saying, "my coworker listens to me more, is more open to my ideas," then the leader I'm working with is becoming more effective.

KAUFFMAN: Imagine you have a client who is pretty sure they need to tell their boss something they don't want to. As an expert, you could give assertiveness lessons or push communication skills. But as a coach you ask, "What do you need in order to feel able to handle this situation in the way you'd like to? What would it take for you to be able to x, y and z?" It's jumpstarting their brains rather than leading them down a set path. Always offering, not telling.

Q: Why has coaching blossomed as a part of our American business model?

BENNETT: Jobs are changing so rapidly. Of the jobs that exist today, many didn't exist 20 years ago. And the ones we have today will change in five, 10, 20 years. ... Another reality is that for the first time we have four generations in the workplace. It can be difficult to relate to value sets and beliefs in ways that create meaningful conversations, but coaching provides a framework for being able to do that.

Organizations are flatter and busier than they ever were, and change is happening more rapidly. Most managers don't have time to play the role of mentor or coach. Developing talent gets pushed to the side because tasks take over. But in fact, somewhere between 30 to 60 percent of most annual operating budgets is people. We spend the least amount of resources developing and maintaining that talent. So, coaching is a way of providing that with external or internal expertise, and being able to embed that into the organization. Coaches are perceived as more valuable than they ever have been.

GOLDSMITH: It's about effectiveness and the amount of money and people impacted by top leaders. An incremental improvement at that level can filter down through the entire organization. Historically, coaching was used to fix bad people. My model is helping successful people get better. These are very distinguished people and yet they publicly acknowledge having a coach. There is more acceptance of coaching than ever before.

Q: If we peeked into a session with a client, what would that conversation look like?

KAUFFMAN: One of the simplest coaching frameworks that's out there comes from Sir John Whitmore, a race car driver turned coach. He created the GROW model: Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward. You can use that model to approach any situation. You ask, "What are your goals? To change opinions? To change their opinion of you?" Then, "reality," which is assessing what is the situation and what is really going on. Then, what is possible? "Options": you brainstorm five things you can do to find the way forward. That's empowering. "Way Forward": helping them think about vision, reality, and options. "What's the path you can take to meet your challenge?" Asking a lot of questions... uncovering answers they may already possess.

Q: What are those "light bulb moments" like?

KAUFFMAN: When you're really trying to work something through, a million things pop into your head. One great thing John says is, "If you already knew the answer, what would it be?" You'd be amazed what suddenly pops into your brain when someone with great empathy and listening skills gives you that question. You discover you knew more than you ever realized.

Q: What are the qualities of a great coach?

BENNETT: In our new master's program we've established that there are core skill competencies that coaches must maintain, and it starts with listening. Then, asking questions. If you don't ask good questions, the right answers won't come forward. There's a quote from Nobel winner Naguid Mahfouz that I love: "You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions."

GOLDSMITH: A key strength for all coaches is the ability to listen.

BENNETT: Also, it's important to have the language of business if you're coaching in business. You have to understand the context of any situation that a client presents; also, a lot of knowledge and skills around understanding people, human development, careers and, to a bit, the psychology of people. But coaching is not therapy. While it can be cathartic, it is not diagnostic, nor prescriptive.

KAUFFMAN: Great coaches also have agility. They can operate in a linear world, but also in an emergent process world within several models of understanding, and really dance in the moment.



John Bennett, PhD teaches in the McColl School of Business and is program director of the new Master of Science in Executive Coaching. He is a former CEO of the Foundation of Coaching, the president of the Graduate Alliance for Executive Coaching, and is active in the International Coach Federation.



Carol Kauffman, PhD has taught for 25 years at Harvard Medical School where she recently launched the Institute of Coaching. She also established the Annual Harvard Coaching Conference. She has logged thousands of hours as an executive coach working with top corporate leaders.



Marshall Goldsmith, PhD has worked with top executives at Boeing, Ford Motor Company and Walmart. He has earned more than 9,000,000 frequent flier miles traveling the globe to meet with clients. He is a regular contributor to *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *The Huffington Post*, and was named one of the 15 most influential business thinkers in the world in a study sponsored by *The Times* (London) and *Forbes*. He is also a prolific author, and his books have sold more than a million copies and been translated into more than 25 languages.



Business coach and Queens alumnus John English (left) enjoys a light moment with graduate students Marcela Liscano and Rick Wells. Both are enrolled in the McColl School's master's program in organization development. English earned a Master of Arts in Organizational and Strategic Communication '07 and a Certificate in Coaching '09.

Q: How can people find this kind of help in their everyday lives?

BENNETT: In classes I like to pair students with someone who can provide them with comfort needs that they have as well as someone who can be their sandpaper, someone who can give them edge and roughness to challenge them. A good coach provides both without creating a dynamic of dependence, so look for someone with those talents.

GOLDSMITH: Some of the best advice I can offer is available for free on my website.

Q: Who coaches you? Where do you go for inspiration?

KAUFFMAN: My first coach was Ruth Ann Harnish, and the main thing I learned from her was how incredibly freeing it is and refreshing when someone has high warmth and high challenge. Those traits are about the capacity to build respectful relationships....People really do become the best version of themselves....But you don't just want to be having a lovefest; [the] whole idea is to get somewhere.

GOLDSMITH: For getting organized—David Allen. Strategy—Vijay Govindarajan. Jim Kouzes for overall leadership. Nonprofit work—Frances Hesselbein. Women in business—Sally Helgesen. All of these people are widely published.

Q: What do you love about coaching?

GOLDSMITH: I have three jobs: coaching, where I learn the most; speaking/teaching, which I enjoy the most; and writing, which is how I reach the most people. In coaching I learn more from clients than they learn from me.

KAUFFMAN: It is so much fun. It's by far the most exciting thing that I do. You get to be like a conduit for this wonderful energy of discovery with someone that can ignite change and is sustainable. When you watch people translate this stray idea that they have in a session and the next time you talk to them they've put it into action five different ways—and they're changing and so is their company—it's just incredible to watch....And you get to develop wonderful relationships with people.

BENNETT: The opportunity to see people gain new insights and take action that they might not have taken on their own is amazing.

Q: Who needs coaches? Is it just CEOs, or can small business owners use coaches, too? What's the scale of this field?

KAUFFMAN: If you're breathing you can benefit from a coach. It's about thinking about yourself and your potential. Anyone can be a better version of themselves.

Q: What would surprise people about the top leaders that you work with?

KAUFFMAN: When you hang around with some of the most successful people in the world, they're walking around saying, "What don't I know? What do I need to learn to move forward?" They're the least complacent people. It's a fallacy that they walk around thinking they're on top of their game. They're constantly thinking, "What more should I do?" Being on the cutting edge is not a comfortable place to be.

GOLDSMITH: They know that they don't have all the answers. ■