Are You Certified?

Calling Out the Cowboys:

The Importance of Professionalism in Mena's Coaching Industry

By Dr. Clare Beckett-McInroy

here are a growing number of Coaches, both in the GCC and globally. Some are trained, some are experienced, some focus on a particular niche, and others are certified and members of international coaching professional bodies. The myriad of coaches may make choosing the best one for you a difficult task. Unfortunately, some people who purport to be Coaches have just basic introductory training and are uncertified and inexperienced. This article supports the need for regulating the coaching profession. If you are looking to hire a Coach, you need to ask some pertinent questions to ensure you are receiving value for their time and effort.



WHAT IS COACHING?

In short, coaching enables you to define what you really want by facilitating, encouraging, challenging, and supporting you to further improve the quality of your life, by getting to the core of what makes you 'tick' by defining and living your values personally, professionally and organizationally. A coaching relationship of trust and accountability is co-created between the Coachee and the Coach. It is a process of discovery and creativity that inspires the Coachee to capitalize on their true potential, deepening learning, and forwarding action. Success and fulfilment come from knowing what you want, thinking deep, planning action through informed choices, being brave then acting accordingly to make things happen. A coach can support you through this process. You will understand the benefits of coaching in sport as having a Coach to be there, push you that bit further, champion your achievements really works!

WHAT COACHING IS NOT

A Coach does not give advice. They are not necessarily 'experts' in your field. They may not have been there and done that already. In short, Coaches do not mentor. This is a really important point as many people who call themselves Coaches do not undertake pure coaching with you and so the psychology, meaning, and impact of coaching is actually lost as mentoring, although a useful development need at times, does not work in the same way as it does not ensure that the Coachee is discovering solutions for themselves. An effective Coach works with you to explore your goals for the session as well as your long-term goals, your current situation, and what options are available. Next, the Coach works with you to enable you to explore what other options may look and feel like. Next, you will identify solutions and accountability measures all from your perspective, without leading. Coaching does not advocate dwelling on the past, although deep dives into processes and experiences is, of course, useful for solutionfocused, action-orientated psychology. Instead, you work towards moving forward and making positive changes, even transformation. You are supported through transition and that includes 'staying' in different elements of the process such as celebrating achievements before moving onto the next agenda. So, if your 'Coach' talks about, or embarks upon mentoring, then they are not coaching. If your 'Coach' is giving you an expert opinion or advice, they are consulting and not coaching. If your 'Coach' only focuses on one aspect of your plans, they are not coaching you as a whole person and so are not using the guidelines advocated by expert Coaching professionals globally. These are distinct disciplines and, while they can be beneficial, mentoring or consulting is not coaching - nor is therapy, although coaching can be therapeutic!



BENEFITS OF COACHING WITH TRAINING (ILM RESEARCH)

Most Fortune 500 companies use Coaches, advocating the benefits for professionals and the organizations. Coaching is used across sectors and is embedded in most high-end MBA, EMBA, and DBA programs internationally. Coaching has also been proven to increase the benefits of training 4-fold when they are combined and when training is not seen as a quick fix but a long-term developmental process with clear formative and summative assessment and actionable tasks that are monitored.

WHAT IS A CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL COACH?

Coaches with professional, internationallyrecognized certification and credentialing are now in high demand by organizations as well as by individuals who wish to embark upon life coaching.



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Ask a potential coach what training they have had, over what period, and if they are certified or accredited. People are often surprised by the number of coach training hours and coaching experience required by international bodies such as the Association for Coaching International (AC), European mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and International Coaching Federation (ICF). Why are they surprised? Because some 'Coaches' see the buzzword 'Coach' and the growing demand and want to be one! They do not necessarily understand the full extent of training and supervision required to be a Certified Professional Coach. You should make sure that your Coach has attended a good quality coaching school which is registered with one of the international bodies such as iPEC, Bahraingrown CoachME, or CTI. Coach training should always be based around the recognized coaching competencies laid down by international bodies, as this will ensure that ethical guidelines and coaching strategies and conventions follow international norms. This, in turn, will ensure the quality of your coaching sessions. Effective coach training should be experiential, contextually-based, and balanced with academic content in order to embed research and deepen understanding to develop tools and techniques. This dedication by the Coach to ongoing professional development demonstrates a commitment to the coaching. As part of continual professional development, coaches are required by ICF, EMCC, and AC to have a coach mentor or supervisor who works with them to reflect and critique their coaching skills in order to work toward their own professional development targets. A coaching mentor or supervisor will be a more experienced coach who has undergone specialized training in supervision in order to help fellow Coaches improve and reflect upon their performance. The CoachME program of '7 Levels to Coaching Mastery', designed by BMC, advocates that a Coach needs to experience being a Coachee during their training so that they can have full empathy with the experience when they are Coaches themselves. An effective Coach working through the CoachME program who wishes to be credentialed by ICF or AC must read around the subject, complete written assignments, log coaching hours, and undertake reflective assessments which demonstrate self-awareness and evaluative skills. A good Coach always asks their Coachee for feedforward at the end of sessions and work hard to implement improvements in their own practice when necessary. The BMC CoachME program is accredited by both the ICF and the AC and follows their competency frameworks and ethical guidelines. For executive coaching, particularly at Level 5 and 6, we also focus on the specific Executive Coaching competencies as laid out by the AC. The CoachME program can run simultaneously with Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Awards, Certificates and Diplomas at Levels 3, 5, and 7. We also deliver Coach training in Arabic, German, French, and Spanish. CoachME also has a Master Coach monitoring the design and delivery of the programs. BIG

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN MASTER COACH CREDENTIALING?

- •1500 (for AC) or 2500 (for ICF) or more Coaching hours from embarking on Coach training
- •60+ coach training hours
- 10+ coaching session for the Coach per year
- •Clear coaching philosophy
- •Ongoing Coach Mentoring/Supervision

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU ASK A PERSPECTIVE COACH?

- Where did you do your coach training?
- How many hours of coach training do you have?
- How many hours of coaching experience do you have?
- What is your coaching philosophy?

WHAT NEXT?

A number of ICF Chapters have been established in the MENA region with BMC being involved in setting up a Bahrain Chapter along with a number of ICF members. This is an exciting step towards continued professionalism in Coaching for the region.



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