

A WABC eZine

Business Coaching Worldwide™

Tens of thousands of readers in more than 80 countries



June 2008 Volume 4, Issue 2

[WABC HOME](#)

[ARCHIVES](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[SUBMIT](#)

[SPONSOR](#)

[SEND](#)

[PRINT](#)

[FEEDBACK](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

SPONSOR

Your Logo

Your name here

Your listing may include a logo, a description up to 100 characters, and up to four optional links.

[link](#) | [link](#) | [link](#) | [link](#)

GET THE EDGE

The Coaching Frontier for Business Coaching

By Robin Linnecar

Imagine two extremes. On the one hand there is fun, creativity, adventure, ambition, scope and hope—on the other there is lawlessness, every person for him/herself, money stolen and some individuals aiming to impose standards. The Wild West? Well yes. The business coaching market and frontier? Well yes. Let's explore this coaching frontier a little more.

Professionalization

Unlike accountancy, law and medicine, coaching and certainly business coaching do not have a recognized professional body. Worldwide there is the WABC, the International Coach Federation (ICF), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and doubtless many more. Within the United Kingdom I can vouch for at least seven different representative bodies all operating in the same coaching market—Association for Coaching, EMCC, ICF, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Association of Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision, British Psychological Society's Special Group in Coaching Psychology, British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. There may be more for all I know, and I am sure the same is true in other countries.

In the UK we have tried recently to pull all these together under a common banner by issuing a *Statement of Shared Values*. Even so, there are fundamental disparities on approaches to supervision of coaches, to name but one area where the range is from "no supervision is demanded at all" to "supervision is a fundamental requirement." *Supervision* means here the supervision of quality and thus more than having merely a mentor for you in your

business of coaching.

Standards and Accreditations

What is the calibration between the demands WABC makes for you to be a member, what the ICF requires or what any other body requires? How does an organization decide who the best coaches are in the market? Who does the accreditation and are there benchmark standards?

It is to be applauded that there is a [Global Convention of Coaching](#) convened for mid-2008, which brings together academics, consultants, coaching providers and coaching trainers who are seeking to address these issues amongst others.

Confused Buyers

At present there is a situation where global companies from Dell to PepsiCo to Unilever to Zurich Insurance to Citigroup are all setting up their own processes to weed out or select coaches to suit their needs. Assessment Centers for coaches comprising presentations, psychologist interviews and "real live" coaching sessions are occupying the best part of a day. We need benchmarking and standards desperately to prevent this duplication of effort and to unravel the confusion in the minds of the buyers of coaching. The buyer's plea at present is "How can I be sure, and quickly, that I am buying a professional coach?"

Can We Push the Frontier and Turn It into a Border?

Some companies are forcing the issue more than others and leading the field in integrating coaching into their businesses. Diageo is a globally integrated organization famous for Johnnie Walker, Smirnoff, Guinness, Tanqueray and other well-known drink brands. It has gone public with a year-long scheme for 900 senior managers, which involves two residential events supported by many hours of one-to-one coaching, 360-degree colleague feedback and other interventions. This scheme is central to Diageo's leadership in its business and fundamental to it.

Business coaching is now a global requirement for many, and this push, which is wider (global) and deeper (with keenly articulated standards being developed), will draw the rest of business along in its wake.

Executives find themselves at what we in Praesta call a "faster-faster" world with unrelenting pressure, global travel and high performance expectations—where coaching is uniquely placed as a development intervention.

In our book, *Business Coaching—Achieving Practical Results through Effective Engagement*, Peter Shaw and I have outlined key developments in coaching good practice for the future:

- Increased focus on real-time coaching of individuals
- Coaching more integrated into business development programs and business school courses
- Greater use of structured internal mentoring relationships for a client alongside an external coach relationship
- Coaching becoming part of an individual's contractual employment relationship
- Professional underpinning through the insistence on coaches to undergo effective, quality supervision
- The oversight of the profession through a professional body covering standards, competence, quality, supervision and continuing professional development.

The Wild West frontier needs to and must become more professional and these developments would certainly help lead us there!



Robin Linnecar is a Master Coach working in Praesta International. A chartered accountant with experience in Arthur Andersen, Shell, KPMG and PWC, his recent co-authored book is *Business Coaching* published by Capstone (2007). For more about Robin and Praesta International, please go to www.praesta.com. Learn more about Robin in the [WABC Member Directory](#).

[We want to hear from you — send us your feedback!](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#) | [Print](#)

Copyright © 2008 WABC Coaches Inc. All rights reserved.