Inherent Excellence™

Ways to Get Ten Times the Value from Calls with Your Coach

1 *Create the "Coaching Experience":* Think carefully about what you want to cover before the call begins. Most coaching calls are brief, 15-45 minutes, and coaching isn't cheap, so make every minute count. Ask yourself the question; "If I could cover just one thing on the call today, and have it be worth the entire month's coaching fee, what would it be?"

2 *Start with a Full Plate*: Working off the question above, make a list, not of one thing, but of 3 - 5 things that would be that valuable. Have more on your plate than you think you can possibly go over, you just might be surprised! Of course, you don't want to rush past something important. Some matters take time; you may only cover 1-2 items, just make sure they are important ones.

3 *First Things First*: One way to see to it that your call is well worth the time and money is to prioritize what you want to go over. Coaching calls are not the place to save the best for last. Put the most important item at the top of your list. That way, even if that's the only item that gets handled, the call will have been worthwhile.

4 *Make Clear Requests*: Once you have your list and the priority, write down what requests for coaching you have in one or two short, clear statements. For example, let s say your number one topic is, "How to make my business more profitable in the next 60 days?" Ask yourself, "How do I want my coach to support me in this?" Do you want to brainstorm some new ideas, develop the ideas you already have by talking them through, get some resource information from your coach, etc.?

5 *Prepare Your State of Mind*: Take a few extra minutes before the call to mentally prepare yourself, rather than jamming the call into an already full day. In the words of one coaching client, "When I book a call with my coach, I write down the time of the call in my calendar, and then I book in an additional 15 to 30 minutes for prep time. This way I know that I will be ready to reap the benefits. I may take a short walk and think; I may look over my prep form, whatever. I make sure that I take the time to `shift gears from my usually busy day. It pays off in big dividends."

6 *Cut the Chat*: Keep the "chit-chat" to a minimum. I enjoy chatting with my own coach, but not if it takes up half the call. That's not really what I'm paying for. Now, if that s what you are paying your coach for, that s fine, just realize it may be a costlier friendship than it needs to be. Chat with friends who aren't charging you to talk to them. Get down to business with your coach.

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7 *Write up the Backstory*: Handle as much of the background information as possible before the call. One of the greatest value-leveraging tools is the Prep Form. If you fill out the prep form prior to your call and fax or e-mail it to your coach, they will have the necessary background information before you ever say a word to each other. In this way you can start the call already running rather than warming up.

8 *Be 100% Responsible*: Take full responsibility for the coaching. Don't hire a coach to do your work for you. Don't expect him or her to "do coaching on you". A healthy approach to coaching is to consider yourself 100% responsible for how the relationship goes and what value you get out of each call. This is not to say that you keep working with a coach if the alliance does not work for you. Taking 100% responsibility might include completing with your coach and finding another, or taking a break from coaching.

9 *Train Your Coach*: Give regular feedback to your coach so he or she knows what works or what is most valuable to you so they can do more of it. Also, let your coach know what s not working or has less value so it can be eliminated. At first you might not know what s of most value but it won t take long before you realize that some calls are very powerful and other calls are so-so. Evaluate what was different about the two calls, and train your coach.

10 *Debrief*: Take a moment after the call to make a note about discoveries, insights or themes that were explored during the call. Write down action items if you did not write them down during the call. I write these notes on the back of my preparation form. I evaluate what I got out of the call, and notice what I didn't cover that I want to address in the next call. One client of mine tapes each call and then listens to the tape and transcribes notes from each call. It sounds extreme to me, but he feels like he gets two calls for every one, because he hears new things and makes new discoveries the second time around.

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