

How do I get credibility as a new coach?

Newly qualified coaches often ask me, “How do I get credibility as a coach when it is obvious to clients that I have not been coaching for very long?”

So, how do you bridge this credibility gap?

What got you here WILL get you there

Embrace all the experiences that led you to train as a coach. Value the knowledge and the qualities you have which make you the coach you are today. Let go of the “beginner” mentality and remember that you brought to your coach training a lifetime’s pre-existing skills and strengths.

Get as much experience as you can, as soon as you can

Don’t wait until you have read another book, got your new website or written a blog — seize every opportunity to coach now. Co-coach or coach pro bono to build experience, confidence and credibility. Always ask for testimonials and referrals and newsletter sign-ups.

Credibility by association

If you just want to get on with coaching rather than building your own “brand,” you could seek to become an associate for a coaching company. The real benefit of being an associate coach is that you can acquire instant credibility through your association with an established coaching company. However, significant coaching experience may be a requirement, which leaves you in the “chicken and egg” credibility trap.

Your comfort zone is not always something to move away from

Tell your professional and personal networks about your new role as a coach and ask them to spread the word to their networks. Draw on your sector knowledge and experience, use the fact that people know you understand the particular challenges they face. Instead of trying to get away from your previous experience, harness it to build your coaching credibility.

Specialize

Some coaches specialize in coaching certain types of clients, some in coaching on certain presenting issues. If your name becomes synonymous with a topic, sector experience becomes less of a requirement. Integrate your whole life experience into designing your personal offering. Consider what elements of your own life story have been most significant, helpful, challenging or developmental? With which coaching clients or presenting issues do you feel most purposeful and at ease?

Be the best coach you can be—all the time!

Commit to being a true instrument of change. Make every coaching session a powerful and memorable experience for your clients. Commit to continued professional development (CPD) and keep working towards your next level of ICF Credentialing. Access regular supervision—even when you don't have clients. Supervision is a wonderful opportunity to learn new skills, ignite enthusiasm and boost confidence.

Be seen and heard

In his 1996 book *Empowering Yourself: The Organizational Game Revealed*, Harvey Coleman revealed some shocking statistics about the value of exposure in achieving success:

- Performance counts for 10 percent of our success.
- Image 30 percent.
- Exposure 60 percent.

Becoming a brilliant coach is not enough. Let people know and learn to blow your own trumpet.

A final thought: “Nothing ever becomes real til it is experienced.” –John Keats