

“How to Add Profitable and Effective Group Coaching Programs to Your Practice”

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<http://www.groupcoachingmanager.com>

1 Designing a group coaching program.

First let me distinguish between two constants, a group coaching program and a coaching group. These two are different. Coaching group is basically an ongoing, usually ongoing group that you started. People come and go. Hopefully they come. If you have not enough room for everybody you start a second group. So this is a coaching group.

A group coaching program is something different. That is where you actually have a program, a curriculum, a set of modules or steps or concepts you want to teach and help them implement. That is the type of coaching group that I have. I have a program.

You can have a combination of both. For example, you could teach a coaching program, and you can roll these people into your ongoing coaching group. But the prerequisite must be the fact that they have gone through the program in the first place. I do that as well.

When you actually design it, it all stems from “*what do you teach?*” *What’s your core message? What are you building blocks in your process?* If you have never designed a program you simply look at what you are doing with your clients right now and document the things you would teach them or the challenges that they are coming to you with and then **make a system out of it**. It is just like product development where you are documenting your process. For example, early on in my business I created a six step process. **First step**, find a niche in each market. **Second step**, define your business models. **Third step**, create market visibility. Then I get little bit more detailed. These are the five strategies that you use to build your market visibility. **Fourth step**, create passive and residual revenue. **Fifth step**, build your systems. Create your automatic systems in your business. **Sixth step**, become a leader and a ‘mover and a shaker’ in your niche market through innovation and leadership skills. These six steps are my program. Of course, it evolved and shaped over time. It took me a couple of years to actually develop the program. Now that it is in place, I can sell it as a home-study course or as a group coaching program.

2 Delivering Your Program

For my coaching program I played around with the concept of delivering the materials with the combination of digital delivery and physical delivery. Eventually I discontinued

delivering content for my program via email. You can't really count on email. I decided to deliver that information to people as a tangible, physical product. In addition, it also increases the perceived value of the program that you are delivering. People are able to listen to their CD in their car. They are able to see and touch it. If you are providing people with transcripts, or checklists or notes, it is great to be able to deliver a box of materials to them well-organized with a document called "*Getting Started: Here are is what to do first, second, etc.*"

Let me just describe to you what my program looks like and how I deliver that in a group. Basically when people join my group program they receive a box of materials called "**Niche Marketing System for Coaches**". The program is split into twelve modules, and each module is packaged in an individual zip lock bag so people can open one each week, step one, step two, step three. Inside each bag there are CDs, DVDs and a workbook. Go to the website, www.NicheMarketingSystemForCoaches.com if you would like to see how I broke this program down into manageable weekly chunks. You can also see a specific schedule with exact weekly targets.

First, they are going to be invited to two orientation calls. The two orientation calls are very important. One of them is to make sure that people have chosen a niche market that they want to work in. For your own program, ask yourself, what do they need to know, have, or understand to get off to a great start? Cover that in your orientation call.

The second orientation call covers all the housekeeping components of the program. They are going to learn how to use the online help desk, what types of access they get to the coach, and how to get support throughout the week. I also emphasize that it is important not to miss any calls because that will put them behind in the program. It is important that they actively complete the assignments and post their files, their documents, in the student area. These are all housekeeping parts of the orientation. Outline for your own program these types of things with an orientation call before the program kicks off officially.

With the physical product, I have added a sheet with **specific instructions**. What to do, step one, listen to this CD. Step two, watch this DVD. Step three, open the workbook to page 11 and complete the exercise. I actually tell them exactly what to do and when. I specifically say in the beginning of the program that I highly suggest that you do not jump ahead, that you put your focus on one step per week. That helps them with the consumption of the program materials and increases the likelihood of implementation. This is much easier than if they received a big, heavy box with all forty CD's and DVD's. When individuals receive information like this, they become incredibly overwhelmed and tend NOT to listen to them. You need to make it easy for them. You need to make sure they get results.

That is how I split my program. I actually tell them that this is step one, and this is step two. It allows us to break the program into twelve weeks and twelve modules. That has worked very well. In addition, I also have an online help desk, where I allow them to automatically upload and post their documents. If they are working on a free give away or a free special report for new leads. They have a special place where they can post that document.

During the program the coach does most of the talking and checks in with the clients to make sure the information is catching on. There is also time for discussion and questions. Unlike traditional coaching, the coach shows up with an agenda on these calls.

3 How to transition clients that graduate from your coaching program into a coaching group.

Once those people complete your program, many will want ongoing implementation support. If you had a good program, their confidence and trust in you will have sky rocketed! You can now offer your next group coaching program, the coaching group.

The coaching group is very much like a mastermind group with a leader at the head of it. Once your clients have gone through the program itself, it is time for them to implement and grow. At that point in their development you are needed as a coach to facilitate their implementation, to ask about their challenges. It is very similar to a mastermind group experience where people come, bring challenges and other participants help them with the coach as the lead facilitator.

Any time that somebody asks me a question in the group, I first say, “*Okay, here’s what I think. Are there any other suggestions for Meg?*” People just chime in with their thoughts, and you won’t believe the collective wisdom that I get through the group. People who have some issues with their own confidence about business building all of a sudden come up with gems of advice. So it is absolutely valuable and the coaching group is almost like an extension of the coaching program.

For example, a group could be twelve weeks or six months to twelve months. You do not want to let go of the connection with your client. And most likely the client does not want to let go of the connection to you and the group. So you roll them into the group for support. You hold a monthly call. Maybe you would invite a guest speaker once a month to give people the opportunity to grow to the next level. So this is less intensive. This type of coaching group is ongoing.

Now, many of the coaches who are professionally trained and licensed reading this are probably thinking “*blah*”-- *‘This is not what coaching is about.’* **There are two schools of thought in terms of coaching.**

The first school teaches that coaching is asking intuitive questions to help people move along in their process. That is what the traditional coaching will tell you. In my world, it almost never happens. The reason for that is because people generally just do not put a lot of value on asking the right questions. Or they put a value on it for a short period of time and then they find they have outgrown the coach and they want more out of their relationship.

The second school of coaching, the non-traditional coaching, is where you bring your expertise and advice to the program. You can also bring external, outside experts into the program. You design interesting experiences like a field trip or a retreat. It is like an inner circle or a mastermind group. Every “big” player, coach and/or trainer in their industry has an inner circle.

Mark Hanson has one. Dan Kennedy has one. Rory Fatts has one. Mike Crow, the inspection guy, has one. At different levels, you have an inner circle. This would be a closer description to what a group coaching, a coaching group looks like.

4 The Structure of an Advisory or Mastermind Group

I have found the best, the most effective mastermind groups have an element where they meet in person a few times per year. People will not mind attending the group or meeting in person when they know that they are going to be surrounded by like-minded, success-oriented people to learn from, to learn about their business and their strategies. They know most of the time these strategies are transferable from one industry to another. There is tremendous wisdom possessed by each member of the group.

In addition, you can conduct monthly or bi-weekly calls with the group in between meetings to keep the group moving forward. Having said that, I can not emphasize enough that I just find the whole experience of masterminding works better in person. I have tried both and I found that when a group gets together in person there is a lot more connection and more importantly, trust built when people physically get together. I recommend at least one personal meeting in a year. Most mastermind groups get together about three times per year.

For example, I was invited by my mentor last year to attend a three-day retreat/mastermind/coaching group where people designed their business plans for the year. When we came back, we already knew each other. We already understood each other's challenges and businesses, when the coach followed up with us, by holding four group calls, it was like, "*Oh, hi, Karen.*" "*Oh, hi Judy! How are the kids?*" Or "*How's your business plan being put into action? How are you doing?*" So we were already connected on a personal level. We were very comfortable with each other.

Furthermore, this is one of the most lucrative streams of coaching income. As we said, most of these people were in one of your programs so they have built a relationship with you and have come to trust you. Those that step into a mastermind group are VERY serious and generally are implementers. It is not uncommon for people to invest \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year to be participants in this type of group!

5 Basic Structure for a Retreat.

A service you can offer to your mastermind groups or any clients of yours could be a stand alone retreat. In my own life I have attended several of these and found them transformational in my business. I was so inspired by the results they brought to me personally that I decided to run my first retreat at the end of this year. The basic structure of mine, and feel free to model this, is to invite users of my coaching, products and services to a beach house setting away from all the distractions a city or resort might provide. Keep in mind I am giving you a basic structure here. We will have an entire issue in the future geared toward this topic.

Here are some of the elements to my upcoming retreat:

- a. **Keep the group small.** My 2009 business planning three day retreat will be limited to twelve people, myself and two other coaches to keep a coach to pupil ratio at three to one. This provides more intimacy and great brain storming. If you plan on doing a retreat, limit the number of participants for maximum effect.
- b. **Have exercises in self discovery to lead off your retreat.** Your clients need to be clear on the “what” and the “why” that they want to implement in their life and business. Many people simply think they want “x” in their life and/or business because someone else is doing it. Come up with exercises to work on this discovery process.
- c. **Challenge their decisions and encourage others to challenge each other.** In a group this size you need to encourage openness to witness true transformation. Don’t just tell people they have good ideas to avoid being a bit confrontive. By challenging them, you not only help them, you improve yourself.
- d. **They should leave with a completed plan or objective.** In my retreat the participants will have an active plan they can implement with the exact steps, dates, etc. When your clients leave a retreat they should be crystal clear what their next steps are.

6 Pricing

Pricing largely depends on the market, the topic, the demand and what type of support you provide. It also depends on the basic market dynamics of supply and demand for YOU and YOUR companies programs and services.

I think there are two types of coaches in the world. The first are coaches who are active in their area of expertise, or niche, and are very successful in that area. Their time is limited because they are successful doing something else, they are coaching others in doing whatever it is that they are successful at. I call these coaches mentors. These are coaches who provide the big picture, the strategy, they create programs and processes. They are creators and entrepreneurs. They do very well in something and they just turn around and pass their knowledge to their clients.

Then there is another type of coach. That is a coach who is more focused on implementation and accountability. Depending on the type of coaching you do and how well you provide your services, your prices will vary. I will not pay more than \$500 a month for accountability and implementation support because I am a pretty self-disciplined person. So if I have to pay more than that, I just won’t.

On the other hand, I will invest much more for exposure to big picture strategic thinking with defined processes, systems and strategies. You must think about what kind of service you are providing and what kind of expertise you are sharing with people. Are you somebody who helps people make their decisions, brainstorm, strategize? Do you share your expertise and your contacts with people, your resources, your million dollar rolodex?

Or are you somebody who says, “Hi, what’s your challenge today? How can I support you today?” See, that is a very different level of expertise that you have here. Both are very valuable, but, most of the time the market values specific expertise at a much higher dollar amount than implementation coaching. **The ideal scenario is to combine both. Use the group program to educate on your specific expertise, strategies and processes and coach the group on implementation, blind spots, etc.**

Having said all of that, I generally have seen group coaching programs start anywhere between \$250.00 a month to as much as \$1,000 a month based on the market and the amount of time and commitment that people are giving you. I have also seen people charge a lot more. This is in a combination of coaching, mastermind groups, and consulting, mentoring and retreats in one big program.

If you look at what Mark Hanson does, he has got a very comprehensive program that includes his inner circle. Inner circles tend to be priced much higher. The reason for that is because an inner circle is revolving around a star, whether it is a star in that industry and/or a celebrity in that particular market. So if you have achieved a certain level of success and you are recognized in your market as a mover and a shaker, people want to hang out with you just because they want exposure to you and to your mentality. Your pricing power is much greater traditionally in this scenario. If you are not as well known and you are offering certain expertise but you have not positioned (or not YET positioned) yourself as the star of the industry then your pricing power will be lower, or people will be willing to pay is going to be less. So part of your pricing power has much to do with the level of recognition in your market that you have been able to achieve.

For example, take world famous author Michael Gerber, the E-Myth guy. He charges \$3,000 for a two-day event, just to be in the hot seat in his program. I guarantee you that the hot seat will probably be less than an hour; two at the most. But just to be in the room with Michael and being able to talk to him and get his feedback people happily pay \$3,000. Also, how much would you be willing to pay to spend time with Dan Kennedy? Dan does NOT spend a lot of time with people one-on-one or in a group environment. But when he does it is worth a lot of money to people. He has waiting lists for his mastermind groups at prices we would all dream about!

To make your group coaching easier, more fun, and to retain more participants, visit <http://www.GroupCoachingManager.com>