

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

WHY DO WE COACH?

And how do we know if it's working?

EVIDENCE-BASED COACHING PRACTICES

Assessment tools based on firm evidence



TARGETING SUCCESS

Measuring the impact of the coaching experience

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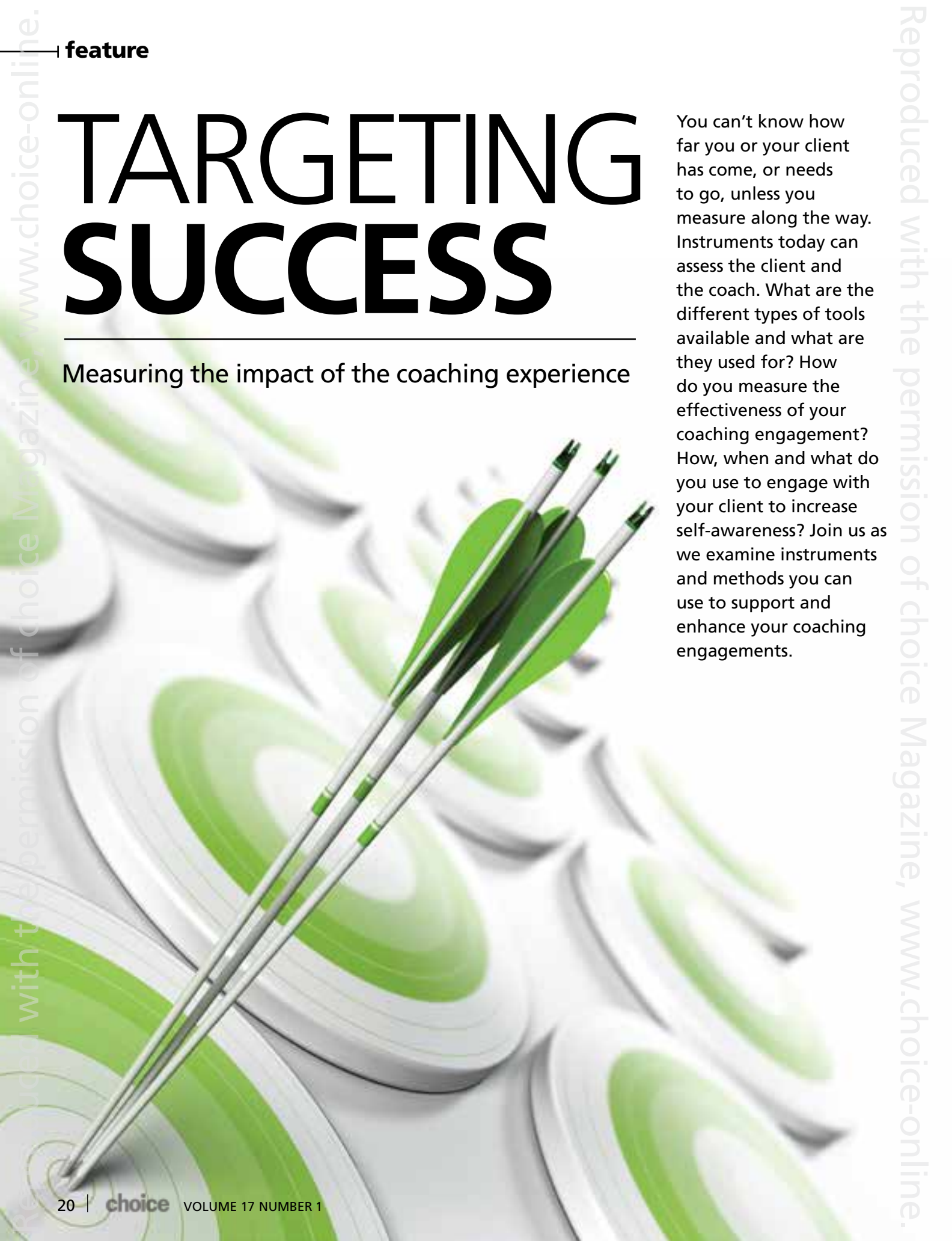
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TARGETING SUCCESS

Measuring the impact of the coaching experience

You can't know how far you or your client has come, or needs to go, unless you measure along the way. Instruments today can assess the client and the coach. What are the different types of tools available and what are they used for? How do you measure the effectiveness of your coaching engagement? How, when and what do you use to engage with your client to increase self-awareness? Join us as we examine instruments and methods you can use to support and enhance your coaching engagements.

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COACH LIKE A SHERPA

Success factors to enhance coaching

By Jenn Chloupek, MEd, CSC

In the Himalayas, the native guides that assist climbers to the top of Everest are called Sherpas. Sherpas have a global reputation because they know the inevitable dangers of the climb, predict the weather, and guide climbers over difficult terrain. Like any good coach, they offer suggestions, ideas and tools of the trade. They have the skills and resources needed for the climb.

An executive coach takes on the role of the Sherpa climbing guide: enabling, advising, and assisting in difficult environments and with limited options. Coaching clients, like climbers on Everest, must endure the hardships and put forth the effort involved in reaching their goals. Although ultimately the client must reach the summit through their own skill and

determination, how does the coach (and the coaching process) measure success and effectiveness along the way? How and when does the coach engage with the client to increase self-awareness?

An effective coaching process puts into place several checkpoints to measure the effectiveness of the coaching engagement throughout the journey to the summit.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE CONTACT

From the very beginning – and throughout the process – the Executive Contact (EC), usually the client's boss, stays involved. The coach should start the coaching engagement by asking the EC to respond to questions regarding the client's strengths, weaknesses, how to measure success, what the EC has done to help the client, and more.

This initial checkpoint creates alignment. It increases awareness for the client and gives the coach information that could be helpful during the coaching process. It ensures that all stakeholders understand the goal and how it will be measured.

As the coaching progresses, all three (coach, client, and EC) should meet at least two more times throughout the 12-session coaching engagement. A second mid-term meeting ideally occurs around the midway point of the coaching session. The client fills out a self-evaluation, describing any changes they have seen in their behavior. The EC provides similar observations, and the coach and client talk about how to maintain those changes. This ongoing conversation creates a feedback loop of positive behavior change and positive reinforcement – driven by an acute self-awareness. The coach must guide this awareness.

The process continues with a final meeting after the last coaching session. They should continue the same conversation. The EC can

share their observations via the same questions from the opening session. By having these ongoing meetings during the coaching process, the coach can listen for ‘success factors’ from both the client and the EC. What success factors should a coach pay attention to?

SUCCESS FACTORS

This brings us to another big-picture tool used to measure the effectiveness of coaching engagements: ‘success factors.’ Climbers in the Himalayas trust the Sherpa with their lives. Executive coaches are trusted with their clients’ *professional* lives.

Of course, establishing trust is easier said than done. However, it *is* a skill that can be learned. It requires certain attitudes and actions on the coach’s part. A good coaching process relies on ‘Success Factors’ to help the coach check their clients’ trust and commitment to the process – and to the coach themselves. These ‘success factors’ are your method, as a coach, to identify a successful coaching engagement.

Intrinsic factors measure how committed the client really is to doing the work. Extrinsic factors help the coach identify continuity and consistency: does the client’s commitment continue and persist? Finally, environmental factors include outside perceptions and support. These environmental factors are crucial in increasing self-awareness because understanding others’ perceptions is key to the process.

INTRINSIC FACTORS

(*Commitment*)

- ▲ Client is committed to the work – and says so.
- ▲ Client completes homework, journaling, and reflection.
- ▲ Client shows up for every meeting on time with journal in hand.
- ▲ Client responds to all your phone calls and emails.

EXTRINSIC FACTORS

(*Continuity and Consistency*)

- ▲ Client responds to your homework requests; including interacting with others.
- ▲ Client does work beyond the journal.
- ▲ Client immediately reports successes.
- ▲ A review of the ramifications page proves they are doing the work.
- ▲ Client works on the exercises and discussion.
- ▲ Client practices the tools.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

(*Outside Perceptions and Support*)

- ▲ Executive Contact participates in all three meetings: Primary, Mid-Term and Final.
- ▲ The Executive Contact has told you they have seen behavior changes.
- ▲ Client reports that peers have commented on behavior changes.
- ▲ Work on Perceptions Exercise is completed thoughtfully.
- ▲ Follow up on perceptions shows the client has acted on ‘what needs to change’ items.

How does a successful coaching engagement play out in the long run, and how can coaches and clients measure success?

IMPACT ON BUSINESS

People who work on their behavior will ultimately make different choices. They will be successful. Their power and influence can make their organization and its people happier and more successful.

The impact they have through these relationships can be remarkable. That’s called a “positive Impact on Business (IOB).” It’s a phrase that has replaced phrases like “Return on Investment (ROI)” in some circles.

Impact on Business is directly related to behavior. When someone displays positive business behavior, they are producing a significant im-

provement in the way things turn out for their organization. Delivering a positive Impact on Business (IOB) should be the ultimate goal for a coaching client. This simple formula tells you how to deliver the biggest impact, right where you are:

POSITIVE SKILLS + POSITIVE BEHAVIOR = POSITIVE IOB

Positive Skills: Leave skills out of the equation and performance will eventually fall short. Take an expert, well versed in her field, who is the vice president of IT in a large hospital. The list of skills the expert must have to be competent in their job is long. Now let’s look at the other half of the equation.

Positive Behavior: Our vice president has five people reporting directly to them, with another 33 people reporting to them. The VP must lead, guide and motivate them. They will need certain positive behaviors: communication, delegation, problem-solving, follow-through, and approachability. The expert knows all the ‘ins and outs’ of their profession and needs certain positive behaviors in order to lead effectively.

What happens to a person with great style and charisma, who lacks essential knowledge and experience? What about someone who has great technical skills and no personality? Either one will be a disaster. Both skills and behavior must be positive in order to create a positive impact on business.

That is where great coaching comes in, driven by process and experience, and equipped with all the tools of the trade – including those to measure success along the climb and after it. In this way, the coach can enhance the client’s self-awareness by building trust as well as through ongoing self-evaluation and feedback from external stakeholders. •