



**AIMHIGH LTD**

### **Coaching is EVERYWHERE! Is it a fad or is coaching here to stay?**

Everywhere you look these days someone is talking about coaching, whether someone is getting a coach, becoming a coach or have had coaching. Government departments, business, sports personalities and other interested individuals appear to be interested in one common goal – leading their best lives! This is a great thing especially if more and more people are benefiting from the coaching. Deep down we are all coaches and we probably use our coaching skills regularly even without realising it! This is a nice thought especially if we know we have made a difference to another person's life irrespective of the scale of change. Think back to a time when you've helped someone work through an issue without giving them the answers. How did it feel for you? As coaches, this is where the satisfaction lies, working with clients by empowering them to make the decisions to suit the client's goals and dreams. Therefore, at Aim High Ltd, we believe coaching is here to stay because more and more people will discover, enjoy and benefit greatly by working with a coach.

Coaching is still a relatively young industry in the UK, but it is set to grow exponentially over the next few years. There are more than 100,000 life/personal/executive coaches in the UK alone, but we're not sure who is counting! Overall the self improvement industry has increased significantly and is worth £50 million and the figure rising fast (Department of Trade and Industry). Life/Personal/Executive Coaching in the UK is still an unregulated industry, but this is likely to change as the industry courts more limelight! However, Jonathan Jay (founder of the Coaching Academy) adds an interesting point to this non-regulation/regulation debate by saying the customers - the fee paying clients - regulate the industry themselves because customers expect a high standard for the service s/he is receiving. Client satisfaction would top

most coaches' lists because coaching is an intangible service and in any case, how do you measure an intangible service?

The USA market on the other hand is self regulated and there are no plans to regulate the market by the federal government in the near future either. Interestingly, it is estimated the self improvement business in the USA, is likely to be worth \$12 billion by 2008 (Media Track Enterprise) a market research organisation which tracks cultural trends. It would not be surprising if the UK followed suit! The USA has been the model for the rest of the world in terms of coaching trends. The UK still lags behind in terms of growth and development, but it's catching up fast!

Despite clients having CHOICE, we believe there is still a need to regulate the industry. Regulation will also take the industry from infancy to the next level of development. Furthermore, such a move would empower potential clients in deciding which coach to work with. For example, how does a potential client differentiate from the plethora of qualified coaches currently available? How do people choose which coaches suit their needs? Is there a central body collating all this information? How satisfied are clients with the services they have received from coaches? At present, there is no one body collating this information in the UK.

### **What has led to this boom in the industry?**

There have been a number of plausible explanations for the explosion of the self development and coaching as highlighted below:

- The changing nature of the family structure. Long gone are the days of extended family where problems were shared and discussed. Even the structure of our immediate families have changed and we may no longer live near close family or we choose not to discuss our inner ideas and thoughts with family and choose to be supported by people whom we may feel to be impartial such as coaches.

- The business world is moving at a much faster pace than at any time and what took our ancestors weeks, months and years to do, now take a fraction of the time. Furthermore, connecting with our business associates across the world take place seamlessly as a result of the technological revolution. Innovation in products has led to greater consumer choice and greater choice is great, but with choice some people are experiencing overload. In a Fortune article (October, 2006) which looked at the change and the challenges in both the business and personal worlds. The article claimed as a result of the continuous changes in business, some business models are now looking at changing every 3-4 years. Human beings on the other hand were hardwired to resist change. However, this does not detract from that fact that human potential is unlimited. Human beings may initially resist change, but we also have the capacity and capability to adapt to change. The human being is versatile and well placed to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> and future centuries. For sure change can bring instability and feelings of vulnerability, but these emotions also serve well in laying the foundation for a stronger future.
- Along with the above changes, we are also reaching exciting times in the world of work too. It might not feel like it right now, but the future of work according to a future trends organisation – the future is looking pretty exciting. A recent report (Management Tomorrow's People – The Future of Work to 2020) by PWC suggests tomorrow's working world will be very different from the one we see today. In a survey carried on nearly 300 graduates across the world, they uncovered some interesting findings in terms of this generation's expectations of the working environment. We already know jobs for life has long since disappeared and we also know people are moving around more to suit their career paths. This group of future employees have even bigger and brighter aspirations of the working world. The new generation of employees are looking for greater responsibility, fulfilment and recognition. Money is no longer the sole reason for working and people are now looking for more meaning in their lives; we already know money does not buy happiness! The Y generation as they are known are likely to have moved around a number of times during their career and loyalty to an employer can be obtained for short bursts of time, but employers are only likely to obtain this loyalty if they earn it!

- Furthermore, Anne Lise Kjaer (the CEO of Kjaer Global and a futurist) depicts an even more ambitious picture for the future of work. Kjaer states work as we know it will be unrecognisable by 2017 and people's attitudes towards work will be heavily influenced by social, spiritual, emotional awareness, technology, globalisation and the gigantic rise of the tiger economies such as India and China. Kjaer, claims we will be entering the "emotional decade" and ethics and spirituality will be prevalent in the workplace. Kjaer also sees the emergence of the Yeppie (young experimenting perfection seeker). They are unlike yuppies whose main aim was to accumulate money; the yeppie on the other hand will accumulate experiences rather accumulate worldly goods. She says "Yeppies will expect to work for a company that offers life-enriching perks such as charity work, sabbaticals in Africa, a Polar bear expedition to test body and soul, life coaching, pampering treatments and nutritious snacks and meals" (HR Focus: Future Perfect? The Guardian, September 17, 2007)

So, what does this mean for the coaching industry? Is coaching a fad or is it here to stay? Coaching is definitely here to stay and we will see great strides in terms of development and progress as well as reaching out to more and more people who would otherwise have been excluded from this industry. Coaches will begin to play a pivotal role in the lives of individuals be it at work or on a personal level. As the business world continues to change, people will also need to adapt to the changing order. Coaches will no longer be seen as a "nice to have" service, but more of a "need to have" service. By working with coaches, more people will be leading their best lives and making the most of their talents.