



Standard 3.1 – Case Study

Multiple Agreements and Relationships

Background

As an ICF Professional, I am aware of and discuss with all involved parties the implications of having multiple agreements and relationships, and the potential for conflicts of interest. This coach will find himself in a situation where he will have to consider what is best for all involved – the company, the CEO, his current clients and himself. Would the adjustment change his relationship with his clients who he is actively coaching? It might be hard not to, but every situation is a little different.

Case Study

As an internal coach, William had clients from within the organization where he was employed. He was the only internal coach at this organization, and he was responsible for coaching the three head executives and the seven supervisors under them. It had been like this year for almost a year now and William had heard all positive feedback.

Budgeting season had begun, and the CEO requested a meeting with him. The CEO had also heard all the positive feedback and decided that he too wanted to be coached by William. And the Human Resources Director was going to be retiring in six months, and he wanted to know if William would take on that role as well. He would compensate William significantly, but he wanted him to take a couple of weeks to consider his proposal.

William felt unsure about this proposal. And he was not sure about the right move to make. It was an honor to be considered, but he wanted to keep the potential for conflicts of interest away as much as possible.

Implications for Coaching

- William will need to revisit the coaching agreement he has with the organization and his clients if he takes on these additional responsibilities. William will need to understand his roles as well as his clients. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 1.1, 2.1, 3.2 and 3.7)
- William will want to remind his clients the need for confidentiality. This is such a key factor in coaching, and it will be a good reminder for his clients. (ICF Code of Ethics, Standards 2.1 and 2.2)

Possible Outcomes or Next Steps

- **What happens if he accepts.** William is already in a position for potential conflict of interest, and to date it hasn't been an issue. Adding the HR role may become confusing for

both William and his clients. When is he wearing his coaching hat and when is he wearing his HR hat? Will his clients still be able to trust him? There is a lot to consider.

- **Managing the power difference.** William could be viewed differently if the HR role is added to his title. He would be wearing two different hats and would need to manage and communicate to others when he's wearing the HR hat and when he's wearing his coaching hat.

Discussion Points

- Is this ask even possible and still be an affective coach?
- If you were William's coach supervisor, how would you support him?

Reference

ICF Code of Ethics (2025)