What Coaching Professionals Can Learn from Change Professionals

Understanding change management and partnering with change professionals provides an opportunity for coaching professionals to enhance their practice and potentially impact organizational change for their clients. By integrating these skills, both practitioners can create deeper organizational and individual client engagement, stronger commitment, and better outcomes.

This document serves to articulate the change and coaching processes and roles and how they may work together to enhance our clients' change initiative success. It contains the following topics:
- Capabilities of coaching & change management
- The change process and how coaching impacts change
- Integrating coaching capabilities into the change process
- Organization culture change: A Coaching Culture
- Opportunities & Recommendations

Change is never just a process. It is a human experience. While change management offers frameworks to guide organizations from one state to another, coaching brings the presence and partnership needed to navigate the emotional terrain of transformation. Both disciplines aim to improve performance, overcome resistance, and build accountability, yet they begin from different orientations. These definitions of coaching and change management assist in the explanation of their respective roles:

Coaching	Change Management
The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires clients to maximize their personal and professional potential. A coaching engagement is a defined relationship with confidentiality agreements. Using the Coach Approach is the use of coaching skills without the specific engagement delineation.	The Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) defines change management as the practice of applying a structured approach to transition an organization from a current state to a future state to achieve expected benefits.

Coaching Professional	Change Professional
The Coaching Professional is trained in the coaching competencies and ethics of coaching. They include individual, group and team coaches, coaching skills trainers and Coach Program Strategists who conduct coaching program design and consultation. These professionals reside inside and outside a client organization and can pair coaching expertise with a myriad of other specialty areas including management and leadership, consulting, organizational management and human resources. They assist with the human challenges of change.	Change Professionals provide expert advice and strategically facilitate organizational alignment and enrollment in a change initiative as well as manage the human collective challenges of change. The work is generally organizationally focused, planned, measured and monitored. Change Professionals assist leaders in managing risk and the on-going stakeholder adoption in change. They inhabit many different roles inside and outside the organization: change manager, change management consultant, change analyst,

The Power of Both

The capabilities of Change and Coaching professionals are combined to optimize the change initiative for the client by providing expertise on change strategy and management as well coaching strategies and approaches to the human challenges in change.

Client Change Initiative

Human Challenge in Change

Change Strategy and Management

Coaching Capabilities

Change Capabilities

Coaching Program Strategist:
- Design optimal coaching program
- Oversee coaching program execution
- Feedback system to change management

Coaching Expertise:
- Individual, Team, Group
- Training coaching skills to employees

Coach Approach:
Use of coaching competencies to evoke client creativity and empowerment and ensure change sustainability

Change Strategist, Leader, Manager:
- Evaluate change impact and organizational readiness
- Formulate the change strategy
- Develop the change management plan
- Execute the change management plan
- Identify next steps and sustainability of the change.

Organizational Expertise:
- Organizational development
- Organizational structure
- Project planning and management
- Organization assessments

Opportunities for the Coach Professional

A stronger connection to the field of change management offers coaches the opportunity to:

- **Deepen their understanding of systems and organizations**
  Gain institutional knowledge that strengthens your context for coaching and broadens your view of how change moves through complex environments.

- **Expand impact**
  Apply coaching skills to influence change at the individual, team, and organizational levels. Large transformational initiatives especially benefit from coaches attached to Executive Sponsors as well as the business areas impacted by the programs.
- **Form new partnerships**
  Collaborate with change professionals to support whole-organization transformation, integrating coaching into training, strategy, and culture work.
- **Elevate coaching credibility**
  Integrate coaching competencies into the change process to increase trust and confidence in the coaching function.
- **Grow skill sets**
  Explore systemic change work and consider certification in change management to broaden your service portfolio.
- **Shape organizational culture**
  Support not just individuals and teams, but also the development of coaching and learning cultures across the organization.
- **Bring more rigor to measurement**
  Learn how change frameworks and metrics can strengthen how you assess and demonstrate the impact of your coaching engagements.

Understanding The Change Process

- The role of the Change Professional is examined through ACMPs standard for Change Management. This process is iterative and on-going including:
- 1) evaluate change impact and organizational readiness,
- 2) formulate the change strategy,
- 3) develop the change management plan,
- 4) execute the change management plan, and
- 5) identify next steps and sustainability of the change.

Change Professionals provide expert advice and strategically facilitate organizational alignment and enrollment in a change initiative. The work is project-based or organizational wide, planned, measured and monitored. Change Professionals assist leaders in managing risk and the on-going adaptation in change. They inhabit many different roles inside and outside the organization: change manager, change management consultant, change analyst, organizational management specialist, training and development manager or communication specialist.
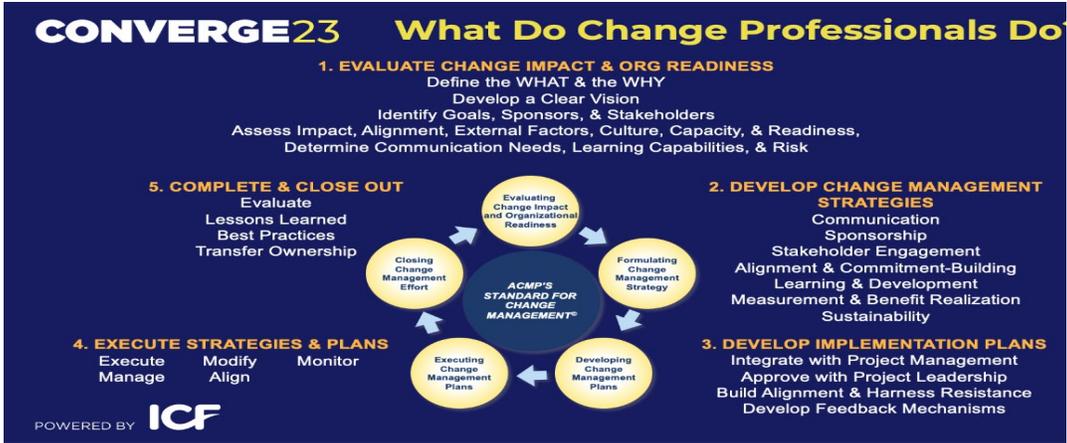
Coaching Roles & Capabilities

The types and roles of Coaching Professionals include: coaching with individuals, groups and teams.; coaching trainers who teach coaching skills; and Coaching Program Strategists that design and manage coaching programs. Coaching Professionals can be internal or external to the organization and can pair coaching expertise with a myriad of other specialty areas including management and leadership, consulting, organizational management and human resources.

Type of Coaching & Roles	Function
Individual	Coaching a client to resolve numerous barriers to their performance, creating an energized, optimistic, andempowered approach to their work. The client's professional and personal growth will be catalyzed. Barriers to change on the emotional, values and mindset level will be explored in a confidential relationship focused on building generative learning. **Change Utility:** Individual coaching with key leaders that are driving the change to help them translate vision to action, embrace their role in the change process, and model the way.
Team	Coaching intact teams to navigatte change together, or coaching team of teams to effect organizational transformation. • Improves group decision-making, trust, and collaboration. • Supports teams in addressing shifting power dynamics, communication breakdowns, and evolving roles. **Change utility:**Enhance alignment, accountability, coordination, and transparency across change-impacted teams. This is particularly

	helpful with Steering Teams or cross-functional sets of Executives highly impacted by the change. Furthermore, it breaks down silos and enables individuals and teams impacted by the change to focus on the organization's best interests. It also helps to develop capability and skills with leaders and teams, both within and across teams.
Group	Coaching a selected group of individuals that are not a team, but that would share common interests of exploration such as how to handle change resistance and how to communicate feedbackmore individuals at once to assist in integrating new behaviors and mindsets and support on-going continuous improvement through sharing of best practice. **Change utility**: Support managers, change agents and frontline managers to share best practice and work through barriers to change. Cross functional engagement enhances communication.
Peer	A collaborative professional development process where colleagues at the same level, or even different levels, work together to improve their skills, knowledge, and performance through regular discussions, feedback, and shared goals. It's a reciprocal relationship where both parties learn from and benefit from the exchange. One or more of the individuals is trained in coaching skills. • Builds coaching skills across a group. • Encourages community-building, support, and shared accountability. • This may also be known as a "community of practice." **Change utility**: Those impacted or instrumental in change share and solve for challenges.

Coaching Program Strategist	Designing and managing enterprise-wide coaching strategies. • Aligns coaching programs with organizational goals and change priorities. • Coordinates internal and external coaching efforts with measurable outcomes. **Change utility:** Ensures coaching efforts are integrated into the broader change strategy and aligned with business objectives. Also, aligns coaching program on tools, terms, assessments, and approach. It can also support a common language and provide a consistent approach for organizational change. Furthermore, this role can provide coaching supervision and note patterns and trends across the system for purposes of organizational learning.
Coaching Skills Trainer	Teaching coaching skills to leaders and managers. • Enables leaders to use coach-like skills in everyday interactions. • Reinforces a growth mindset and relational capacity across the organization. **Change utility:** Builds leadership agility and embeds the Coach Approach into organizational culture. Provides additional leaders within the organization with coaching skills to help with resilience, agility, etc.

Adapted from: Building the Core Competencies of Change: A Guide to Coaching in Organizations, Sandra L. Stewart, 2021

The Individual Coach
The individual coach helps to facilitate change by coaching the leaders and employees who drive, sponsor and advocate for change. The coach assists the organization employees at all levels to catalyze goal attainment with less stress and anxiety and to provide resilience through change.[1] Not surprisingly, leadership style has been shown to be a top influencer in the adoption of change[2]. Coaches model and support the behaviors of transformational leaders such as open inquiry, growth mindset and vision focus.

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[1] Grant, Anthony M., Linley Curtayne & Geraldine Burton 2009. "Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study." *The Journal of Positive Psychology no.4*, 396–407. Doi:10.1080/17439760902992456
[2] Erwin, D.G. and Garman, A.N. (2010), "Resistance to organizational change: linking research and practice", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 39-56. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731011010371

Resistance to change is a key factor in expediency and sustainability to change. The roots of resistance to change are subjective and human-based as highlighted in this quote: "people do not resist change, per se. People may resist loss of status, loss of pay, or loss of comfort, but these are not the same as resisting change[3]." In addition to fears of status, security, and comfort the individuals may confront perceived values conflicts with the demanded change. Often individuals are wedded to past behaviors as their sense of identity and consider them fundamental to who they are. Coaches assist individuals and groups and teams in unearthing and addressing their fears, as well as identifying and aligning their values and motivations in change. The change that is supported by the Coach in this way is often more sustainable because it helps individuals solve for their fundamental issues and then to build their sense of empowerment through the experience of generative learning in the coaching.

The Team Coach
The team coach works with the internal dynamics of a team to optimize its function. Distinct from a facilitator, the focus is not on what the team needs to do as much as how to create the team awareness of its members and systems to become high functioning. The team coach can ensure alignment with the team purpose and its charter. Furthermore, the team coach can enable the team to work more effectively with other teams across the system.

The Group Coach
The group coach works with groups of individuals that are not a team to advance the group individuals' competencies and confidence. For example, a group might consist of individuals who share similar learning challenges in a change process. The coach will work with the group to engage inquiry around the challenges and assist the group in creating new ways of functioning as individuals that will help with the change.

Peer Coaching
Peer coaching is when a group or pair of individuals has been trained in coaching skills and co-coach each other. For example, an individual trained in coaching skills may support each other by working on an ad hoc or scheduled cadence of meetings to identify their challenges, mine the underlying causes of the challenge and build next steps to tackle the challenge.

Coach Program Strategist
The coach program strategist understands the diverse uses of coaching and their ability to assist in a change initiative. This role is defined as "a professional inside or outside the organization who creates the strategic plan for the coaching integration with business objectives".[4] These individuals assist in the design and implementation of the change initiative and can collect data throughout the coaching process to highlight challenges and successes.

The alignment of the coaching program strategy with the change strategy creates a powerful partnership in the change initiative. The Change Professional works with the organization to

[3] Dent, Eric & Goldberg, Susan. (1999). Challenging "Resistance to Change". The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science. 35. 25-41. 10.1177/0021886399351003.

[4] Building the Core Competencies of Change: A Guide to Coaching in Organizations, Advantage Media, Sandra L. Stewart, 2021

clarify the vision and strategy of the change and the Coach Program Strategist aligns the customized coaching program with that vision by identifying key constituencies and targeting coaching types and desired outcomes. Materials and resources developed by the Coaching Program Strategist support effective coaching and may include coaching agreements (confidentiality and sharing of information guidelines), information or educational resources as well as coaching outcome expectations. Coach Program Strategist/Managers are familiar with techniques of aligning organizational objectives to coaching program design. Techniques of alignment include: embedding success metrics in the coaching program design; integrating alignment processes such as leader/client or stake holder alignment meetings; and co-designing coaching with other programs such as leader training, mentor programs, and information resources.

Coaching Skills Trainer

The Coaching Skills Trainer has expertise in teaching coaching skills to managers and leaders or other stakeholders in the change process. Teaching coaching skills and mindsets builds the change stakeholder toolkit in the adaptive learning process required in change. Leaders who are trained in coaching skills and who adopt coaching in their practice are building skills of the Servant Leader that have been found to be more resistant to the chronic effects of stress or "emotional labor".[5] Coaching skills build leader self-awareness. As leaders understand their own emotional and intellectual processes in learning and change they become better at learning and guiding others. This emotional intelligence has been found to correlate with job satisfaction and trust[6] that will help catalyze the change efforts. As leaders create a greater perception of safety in an environment, they enhance communication, sharing of opinions, and creativity[7] needed in change.

Professionals Using the Coach Approach

Not mentioned in the coaching types and roles is the Coach Approach. This is when an individual uses coaching skills in an ad hoc manner, and not in a formal coaching engagement. An increasing number of change professionals are recognizing that the Coach Approach – using coaching skills and mindsets - enhances their ability to gain buy-in and empowerment of the individuals engaged in and leading change. Using a Coach Approach is distinctly different from coaching within a coaching engagement. A coaching engagement requires contracting in alignment with the ICF code of ethics including confidentiality of the process. Meanwhile the use of coaching skills can be deployed in any conversation. The goal of this use of coaching skills is to help the client think through problems to enhance their understanding and learning in the change at hand which leads to greater empowerment and ownership.

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[5] Boyatzis, Richard, Melvin Smith & NancyBlaize. 2006. "Developing Sustainable Leaders Through Coaching and Compassion." *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, no.5. 8-24. 10.5465/AMLE.2006.20388381.

[6] Ashkanasy, Neal M. and Alana D. Morris. 2017. "Emotions in the Workplace." *The Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior. no.4, 67-90.* Doi.10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113231.

[7] Edmondson, Amy and Zhike Lei. 2014. "Psychological Safety: The History, Renaissance, and Future of an Interpersonal Construct." *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior,* 1:1, 23-43. Retrieved from https://www.annualreviews.org/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1146%2Fannurev-orgpsych-031413-091305.

How Coaching Impacts Change

Coaching and the Top 10 Challenges for Organization Change
Coaches benefit from understanding the key challenges in the organizational change process so that they can listen for these challenges as they coach individuals, teams and groups in a change process. The Association of Change Management Professionals has identified a top 10 challenge list in creating organizational change:

From the presentation: What Coaching can Leverage from Change Management, delivered ICF Converge, August 2023.

Coaching can impact all of these challenges through their coaching with individuals, teams and groups.

1) *Resistance and lack of change adoption and commitment*

Coaching is a confidential safe space that explores the foundations of resistance to change. The process is a partnership with the client to identify the change the client wants or needs to make, then to assist with identifying the deeper human reactions to the change that are particular to that individual or team. Often both the identification of the change as well as the underlying reactions are not clear to the client so that this process alone is helpful. Once root causes are identified, the coach assists the client in exploring their emotional and cognitive barriers to the change in a way that honors the client's power in choosing or rejecting that change. It is not the coach's agenda to advocate or force the change, but rather to help the client explore how they will make choices in the change.

2) *Lack of perceived support for change*

Often all of the leaders and stakeholders involved in the change initiative are not providing effective support for the change or are imposing incentives that are in opposition to the change. Coaching assists managers and leaders in empowering them to self-advocate and communicate their needs for resources and support. The coaching also helps clients to identify their own and others' external barriers to change and then to pro-actively build strategies to overcome them rather than remaining in victim mode.

3) *Change Overwhelm*

Leaders and managers may feel that the change required is asking too much from them when they are also trying to manage their on-going responsibilities. Coaches work with the client on the feelings of overwhelm and then assist them in managing what is often a reset of priorities and then communicating a reset of expectations with leadership.

4) *Discord between individuals and teams*

Team and group coaching is a powerful tool resetting the dynamics of conflict.

Change inevitably triggers fears about job security, ownership and control and competence. This fear can manifest in discord between stakeholders in the change process. Coaching provides a forum for clients to express their fear of change and find solutions to the root causes of these triggers.

5) *Communication and Integration of the change plan*

While coaching is not technically a tool for communicating a change plan it often acts as a clarifying tool in the communication of change.

- Leaders of change may face various competency challenges in how they communicate change. They may lack a level of listening and empathy that would assist with change. Coaching skills training also helps to build these skills in leaders.
- Coaches work with clients on their understanding and task building around the client's role in the plan.
- Coaches assist their clients in self-advocacy and empowerment such that they can become more active feedback loops in the change process.
- A coaching cohort may provide general thematic feedback about what they are hearing from clients' understanding and concerns about the change plan.

6) *Employees overburdened with too much change*

Coaching regularly supports clients in finding the energy to meet change. Additionally, coaches assist clients in how to self-advocate to manage their capacity.

7) *Discord between change and project management teams*

Team coaches can assist one team or several teams together to learn how to better communicate and work more collaboratively together through challenging circumstances.

8) *Ambiguity around project milestones*

Coaching on effective communication for one individual, a team or a group of individuals can enhance the clarity of project objectives. Note the points in 5 above.

9) *Uncertainty*

Coaching provides the space for individuals and teams to express concerns that often relate to uncertainty and a lack of clarity. Once the source of the lack of clarity is clarified then building next steps and potentially iterative learning cycles will be supported by coaching.

10) *Lack of strategic communication plan*

Lack of a strategic communication plan as well as ambiguity and shifting objectives are all areas for coaching to assist all the stakeholders in understanding the unknown, parsing the associated concerns and then building next steps towards solutions.

Inquiry: The Role of Coach-like Questions in change

It is worth noting one of the powerful tools of coaching and the Coach Approach is questions and inquiry. The use of questions is a powerful way to engage clients in thinking about and engaging in change. That means the questions are more often open ended, evocative, future-oriented and they deepen the client awareness of the meaning and values underlying the challenge. These questions empower the client to better understand the challenge in order to generate possible solutions. In the appendix there are a comprehensive set of "high impact questions to support change", authored by John, Bennett., Mary, Wayne Bush, Impact Coaching for Organizational Change, 2010.

This visual from the ICF Converge 2023 is a helpful graphic of questions associated with the change process:
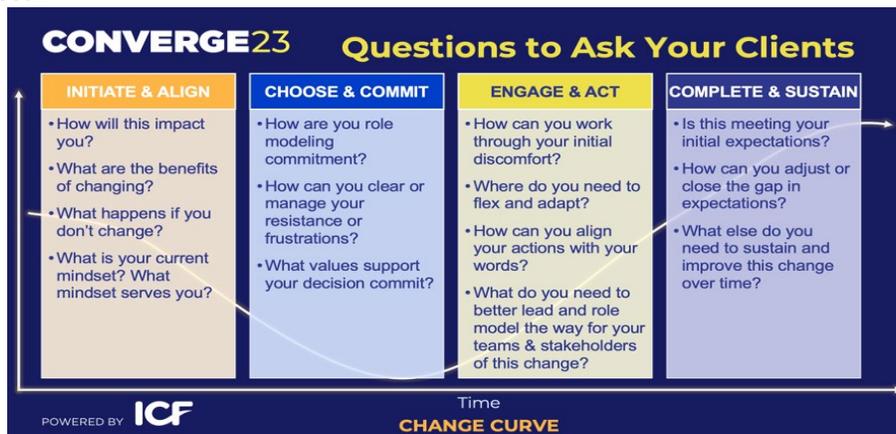
Integrating Coaching Capabilities into the Change Process

The Coaching capabilities may be integrated throughout this change process. Change Professionals use the Coach Approach, the Coach Program Strategist co-designs the deployment of individual, team and group coaching, Coaches conduct coaching and coach skills trainers deploy training. The visual below demonstrates how coaching may be integrated into the stages of the change process.


This table explains the processes in greater detail for the marrying of change and coaching capabilities throughout the process of change:

I. Evaluate change impact and organization readiness	
Evaluate the "why" and the "what" of the organizational change. This establishes a basis for determining the program scope and success metrics. All professionals use the Coach Approach in their conversations as appropriate.	
Change Capabilities	• Conducts research and benchmarking to determine readiness. • Initiates conversations across the organization to develop clear definition of the change. • Evaluates candidates for the change leadership team • Assess human capacity and competency for change • Determine current and future state of human behaviors and shift in culture.
Coaching Capabilities	• Participates in leadership and stakeholder conversations to identify where the coaching knowledge, perspective or skills would assist the change process. • Identifies the human, leadership, and cultural challenges across the organizational system presented in the change as they relate to key coaching-related solutions. • Build mental models to set up how change will impact the system.
II. Formulate Change Management Strategy	
Develop overarching strategy determining program scope and desired outcomes with leaders and stakeholders. Identify any internal collaborative programs such as training and coaching resources	
Change Capabilities	• Stakeholder and leadership engagement and potential areas for resistance. • Set key oversight teams and communication cadence. • Set change strategy with guidelines, actions, new behaviors. • Identify major milestones and impacts.

	• Create a shared need and shape the vision with clear benefits and positive outcomes for the organization. • Design and build change agent network
Coaching Capabilities	• Develop coaching strategy to identify where to bring coaching in and why and what outcomes are we creating. • Engage in coaching based on collaboration with Change Professionals • Engage with change leadership team to assist with strategy and relationship development of key stakeholders and leaders of the change. • Identify internal entities for potential collaboration with coaching programs • Set the cultural dependencies, guideposts, and outcomes. • Readiness, and risk, and resistance
III. Develop Implementation Plans	
Set time-based implementation plan with key markers and stakeholder roles including coaching plan. Develop communication strategy.	
Change Capabilities	• Develops a set of actionable and targeted change management plans aligned and supporting desired outcomes. • Oversees the development of communication plans, sponsor roadmaps, stakeholder assessments, training plans, and resistance management plans • Mobilize short, mid, and long-term commitment • Establish dynamic working cadence to adapt, adjust, and sustain progress towards outcomes throughout the change.
Coaching Capabilities	• Creates the coaching program plan with individual, team and group coaching timing, scope, and outcomes. • Advises on and selects the types and targets for the coaching. • Builds a plan for coach recruitment, communication and deployment and tracking • Plans for support materials needed such as agreements for contracting, alignment processes and communications • Define a transparent, feedback loop to the change team within the boundaries of confidentiality and aligned with outcomes.
IV. Execute Plans	
Initiate and oversee the change and coaching plans. Modify with feedback from the change and coaching processes.	
Change Capabilities	• Leads and monitors the change management activities, and monitors feedback from the system to make adjustments to the plan. • Partners with key roles such as executive sponsors, business owners of impacted areas, project managers, business analysts, and process improvement specialists • Builds and executes change management activities and deliverables
Coaching Capabilities	• Ensures deployment and management of coaching • Coordinates support materials such as contracting, alignment processes and communications • Monitors feedback from coaches to make adjustments to the plan • The Coach and Coaching Skills Trainers conduct their activities as well as provide appropriate feedback to the coach program and change leaders. • Coaching goals include enhancing readiness and managing risk and resistance.
V. Close Out	
Present results to leadership and change management stakeholders. Determine needed future actions.	
Change Capabilities	• Presents the impacts of the change management programs relative to the success metrics to the client. • Determines lessons learned and best-practices. • Determines future support or next stage actions with the client.
Coaching Capabilities	• Presents conclusion on coaching metrics results and impacts • Determines needed future support

Organization Culture Change: A Coaching Culture

Coaching can drive positive systemic change in many ways that benefit a change initiative and can lead to a more adaptive organization as seen in this presentation to ICF Converge 2023:
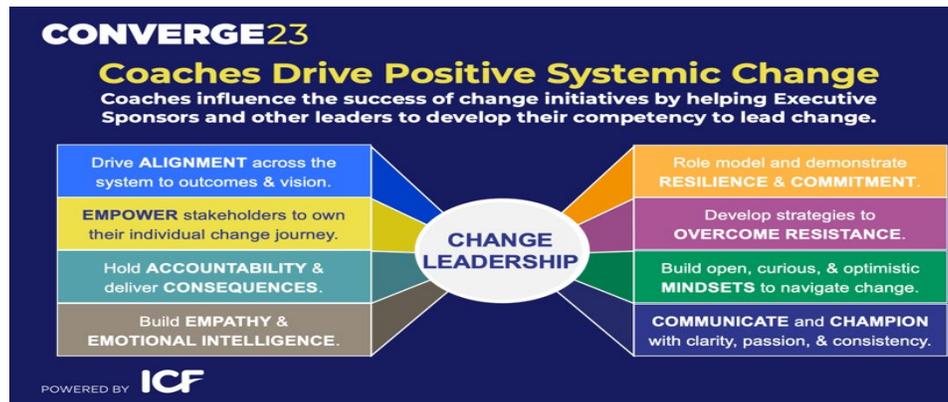
A coaching culture is when an organization adopts coaching principles and competencies into the fabric of its culture and operations over the long term. The coaching culture is relevant to note because these cultures are able to adopt change more readily. As coaching is deployed in an organization, the employees are building the muscles of change such as empowerment, communication, self-awareness and emotional intelligence, for the current project as well as for future projects. As the coaching culture integrates these competencies into its organization it builds the capacity for generative learning support, partnership and empowerment, transformative goal-setting, safe environments and opportunities for reflective and creative thinking.[8] In his book on building coaching programs, Stephen Hawkins states, "A coaching culture exists in an organization when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people and engage their stakeholders, in ways that create increased individual, team and organization performance and shared value for the stakeholders."[9]

Organizations today are recognizing that their cultures must include "change competencies" that provide agility and resilience and support learning and intrapreneurship as the basis for survival in a fast-changing and competitive global marketplace. Organizations are moving to more distributed forms of leadership that emphasize empowerment, collaboration and learning. This presents an ideal opportunity for the partnership of Change and Coaching Professionals to work together. To review examples of organizations creating change with coaching go to: https://coachingfederation.org/awards

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[8] Building an Organizational Coaching Culture, William J. Rothwell (Editor), Behnam Bakhshandeh (Editor), Chapter 11, Sandra L. Stewart 2023, (pp161-176)
[9] Creating a Coaching Culture, Peter Hawkins, Open University Press, 2012.

Opportunities for the Coach & Change Professional

Partnering provides numerous benefits to the Coach and Change Professional.

- Benefits to the Coach include: 1) better institutional understanding that assists with system knowledge around their clients as well as deepening their understanding of organizations as a whole, 2) insight on the capabilities individuals and teams need to become change agents, 3) the opportunity to impact institution-wide change with a professional that can add change process rigor.
- Partner: There are many ways Coaching Professionals may work with Change Professionals. *Partnering*: Coaching and Change Professionals may seek to build a strategic change solution together that leverages both areas of expertise. *Subcontracting*: Change Management Professionals may subcontract individual team and group coaches and coaching professionals may subcontract change management professionals. *Referral*: Professionals in each expertise may refer the other to a client.
- Identify Change Management Opportunities: 2023 ICF Global Coaching Study shows that 57% of coaches are business coaches (70% sponsored by the organization) with a full 90% of these coaches offering additional services including consulting, training and facilitating. This establishes that many coaches may be aware of organizations in need of Change Professionals and, in fact, may already be assisting these leaders in change.
- Diverse Relationships: Change Professionals inhabit numerous roles inside and outside of the organization: change manager, change management consultant, change analyst, organizational management specialist, training and development manager, facilitator or communication specialist. Each of these professionals may benefit from partnering with Coaching Professionals.
- Organization Connections:
  - The Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) is an excellent source for networking with Change Professionals. www.acmpglobal.org.
  - The International Coaching Federation (ICF) has a Coach Referral site and provides networking opportunities both regionally and internationally to find partnership opportunities. https://coachingfederation.org/find-a-coach
- The coaching function may provide an anonymized feedback loop back into the change process to continuously improve and adjust the change process.
- Partnering coaching skills trainers with change professionals provides numerous benefits through alignment of the training and education with organizational outcomes. Additionally, the change professional and coach program strategist can explore the collaboration of the skills training and education with other training or mentorship programs thus amplifying its impact.
- The coach capabilities and services can be used as a value-add marketing for the Change Professional by demonstrating the long-term benefits of building employees who are more effective at change. Additionally, coaching engagements may proceed past the change project timeline providing and on-going client relationship.

Education and Cross-Certification for the Change and Coaching Professionals

- Both the Change Professional and the Coaching Professional may decide to seek certifications or education in the others' field of expertise. This will provide: 1) deeper understanding of how these skills support the client in change, 2) opportunities to network with the other professionals, and 3) enhanced skills in consulting clients on how to approach change initiatives.
- The International Coaching Federation (ICF) conveys an internationally recognized coaching credential based on their gold standard coaching competencies. A list of accredited training institutions can be found on their web site. https://coachingfederation.org/coaching-education
- The Association of Change Management Professionals offers a credentialling course in change management and list accredited training organizations at: https://www.acmpglobal.org/page/ccmp.
- Both the ICF and the ACMP offer opportunities for continued education in their respective communities.

Recommendations

1. Embrace Partnership as a Strategic Advantage
   Coach and change professionals bring distinct but complementary expertise. Partnering early in the change process allows each professional to focus on their strengths while creating a complete and sustainable change strategy.
2. Clarify and Maintain Professional Boundaries
   Formal coaching engagements (confidential, contract-bound) must be distinguished from informal applications of the Coach Approach. Clear boundaries protect ethical standards, avoid role confusion and build credibility.
3. Build Dual Competencies for Broader Impact
   Both fields benefit from cross-training. Coaches who study change management gain organizational context, while change managers who study coaching enhance their ability to influence leaders and stakeholders.
4. Leverage Coaching Roles Across the System
   Use coaching roles strategically: individual coaching for executives, team coaching for steering committees, group coaching for cross-functional managers, and peer coaching to embed sustainable networks.
5. Address the Human Side of Change Proactively
   Resistance, overwhelm, and lack of adoption are the leading causes of failed change. Coaching provides safe spaces for exploring fears, values conflicts, and identity issues that block progress.
6. Use Coaching to Strengthen Culture and Resilience
   Organizations with a coaching culture adopt change more readily. Leaders trained in coaching foster trust, resilience, and collaboration—skills that serve beyond any single initiative.

Appendix

Questions in the Change Process

From The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, 2010, High-Impact Coaching for Organizational Change. John, Bennett., Mary, Wayne Bush., pp114-123.

Table 2. The sponsor and agent roles of change (adapted from Conner, 1992)

Role	Responsibility or Contribution	Critical Phases for Involvement	Potential Coaching Topics
Sponsor	• Sanctions or legitimizes the change • Considers potential changes and assesses the impact, risks and opportunities • Decides which changes will happen • Communicates new priorities to the organization • Provides reinforcement to enable the change to be made	• Creating the vision • Engaging others • Sustaining the change	• Developing an inspiring vision • Influencing through communication skills • Presenting ideas effectively • Networking • Making a compelling business case for the change • Identifying the right agent • Identifying key stakeholders for the change, both formal and informal leaders who will help drive the change • Rewarding and recognition employees
Agent	• Executes the change—an individual or group • Diagnoses potential problems, develops a plan to deal with these issues, and deploys the change effectively	• Engaging others • Strategizing and planning • Sustaining the change	• Understanding and using the change process • Identifying key stakeholders for the change, both formal and informal leaders who will help drive the change • Creating the deployment strategy • Understanding the psychology of change – how people react, how to mitigate resistance • Creating a plan of action • Networking • Managing change projects • Identifying and reporting metrics • Identifying ways to sustain the change after the project is successful • Rewarding and recognizing employees

Table 3. The target and advocate roles of change (adapted from Conner, 1992)

Role	Responsibility or Contribution	Critical Phases for Involvement	Potential Coaching Topics
Target	• Undergoes change—the individual or group that is the focus of the change effort • Understand the change and what is expected • Participates in the implementation process	• Engaging others • Taking action • Achieving measurable results • Sustaining the change	• Clarifying the point of the change and what it mean to them as individuals or groups • Understanding the psychology of the change process • Identifying and reporting metrics • Identifying key areas in their own work and behavior that need to change in order for the project to be successful
Advocate	• Individual or group who wants to achieve a change, but lacks the power to sanction it	• Engaging others • Sustaining the change	• Identifying key stakeholders, both formal and informal leaders who will help drive the change • Understanding and applying the psychology of change – how people react, how to mitigate resistance • Facilitating the new actions and behaviors required • Sustaining the change

Table 4. High-impact questions to support change – Articulating the vision, Engaging others, and Developing strategy/planning examples

Topic	Sponsor	Advocate	Agent	Target
Articulating the Vision	- What do you wish to accomplish? - To what extent does the vision articulate what is in it for customers and employees?	What is needed that is different?	- What is the change you are leading? - Is the appeal of the vision emotional as well as intellectual?	- What are you being asked to change? - Can you clearly see your role or function in this future vision?
Engaging Others	- Who needs to be involved to sustain this change initiative? - How will you help others know you support this change? - How will you let others know what is needed of them?	- How can you help the sponsor see the value in sponsoring it? - What are you asking the sponsor to do?	- Who needs to be involved? - Why will others consider this change important to them? - Who may resist or oppose this change, and why?	- What support system do you have that will enable this change? - How well will our employees and customers say we are currently doing on the issue we want to change?
Developing Strategy/ Planning	- What will you do to ensure competing priorities do not distract the organization from this change? - How will you show the progress that is being made?	- What is your plan for demonstrating to the potential sponsor the importance of the change you seek? - How will you address risk?	- How will you implement the change? - What barriers or resistance are you likely to face? - What is your plan for addressing resistance?	- What are you willing to do? - What are you expected to do differently? - How will you know that you are "on track"?

Table 5. High-impact questions to support change – Taking action, Getting measurable results, and Sustaining the change examples

Topic	Sponsor	Advocate	Agent	Target
Taking Action	▪ What are you willing to "let go of" in order for this change to occur?	▪ What will you do to influence the sponsor? ▪ How will you demonstrate that you are using the feedback you receive?	▪ What will you do to implement this change? ▪ How will you identify early "wins" to show progress?	▪ What is inhibiting you from taking the next step toward this change? ▪ Who among your teammates is managing the change well?
Getting Measurable Results	▪ How will you know this change was successful? ▪ How are you communicating progress, and to whom?	▪ What progress are you making?	▪ What results have your achieved? ▪ Who are you rewarding? And how?	▪ What are the results of the changes you have made?
Sustaining the Change	▪ How has the change become embedded in other business processes?	▪ How will you support the sponsor's efforts to initiate and sustain this change?	▪ What will you do to keep Targets aware of the importance of this change? ▪ How are you documenting the "lessons learned"?	▪ What will you do to avoid returning to the "old way"? ▪ Has this change impacted the way you do business in any other areas?