

The Real
ABC's
of a

SUCCESSFUL Coaching Business

By Marc Mawhinney

NATURAL BORN
COACHES
MARC MAWHINNEY

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WHO IS MARC MAWHINNEY?

Marc Mawhinney has a passion for helping coaches grow successful businesses. As the host of the popular “Natural Born Coaches” podcast, he’s interviewed hundreds of successful coaches to get them to spill their secrets, and he talks with well over 1000 coaches off-air every year to keep his pulse on the industry.

Fed up with the amount of BS around the industry, Marc has become known for his straight talk, no-fluff advice that’s helped coaches from around the world.

Besides helping coaches, his other motivation is his young son, Gray, and a desire to see the Toronto Maple Leafs win another Stanley Cup before he kicks the bucket.

You can learn more at www.NaturalBornCoaches.com

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INTRODUCTION

If you've spent any amount of time around the coaching industry, you know there's a lot of BS out there.

Your computer screen is filled with ads promising an easy path to riches as a coach—with assurances that you won't even have to work very hard to do it either:

“Just follow my super secret system!”

“I usually charge \$200,000 for this, but it's yours for just \$9,997 if you buy NOW!”

“6 months ago I was homeless and dining on gutter rats while drinking from a puddle of rain water . . . now I make \$100k a month!”

“Pay me \$X and I GUARANTEE I'll show you the way!”

“Shoot out rays of positivity and chant affirmations until you're blue in the face, and you WILL be successful!”

I see these same ads too, and they frustrate the heck out of me. They make it seem like it's easy to become a successful coach, and as someone who has done it (and had a successful real estate business previously in my past life), I know that it's NOT easy to make it in this, or any other business.

I'm going to piss off some people in the following pages, but that's good. I'd rather dish out the real deal than jerk you around here. You don't need another woo-woo-filled book, or something from someone claiming to be richer than Bill Gates (but who just started a few weeks ago).

What I'll be sharing in the following pages is no fluff, no BS. In the words of the rock band Sum 41—my fellow Canadians—this is “All killer, no filler.” It's what you need to know to be a successful coach, with no filter on my mouth (or in this case, my keyboard).

This is the book that I wish I had when I was a brand new, enthusiastic but green coach. I eagerly jumped into coaching, and since I had grown businesses before, I thought it would get rolling sooner than it did. I beat my head against the wall a lot, and threw a lot of spaghetti at that same wall to see what would stick.

I became successful in this business, but almost drove myself crazy getting there! Since I can't hop in my Delorean and go back in time to help Younger-and-Not-Quite-As-Wise-Marc, I'll instead share with you what I wish someone had told me when I first started coaching.

While I can't guarantee riches, a house the size of a small country, or a truckload of supermodels clamouring to hop on your yacht (but if you get one, I want an invite), I am confident that if you follow the principles here, you'll be well ahead of the other coaches floundering around or jumping from one get-rich-quick thing to the next.

Here are my (no BS) ABC's of a successful coaching business . . .

A great coach will change people's lives!

Coaches have a tremendous impact on the lives of their clients, and should be proud of what they do. But there are a lot of people out there who haven't hopped onto the “coaching train” yet.

They say it's a waste of money, it's silly, or it's not needed. Some will say, “I thought that only athletes had coaches?”

(When I first told my family that I was becoming a coach, they thought that I

was heading to the NFL, NBA, or NHL to try to land a coaching position with a professional sports team!)

Coaching works.

If you aren't 100% convinced of the power of coaching, you're sunk before you even begin. I was lucky to experience the power of coaching when I was recovering from a rough business closure. Since I saw its benefits first-hand, I didn't need any convincing when I became a coach.

So be prepared for the naysayers who scoff at you. They haven't experienced the power of good coaching before, so what do they know? As Bob Nardelli (former CEO of Home Depot) said: "I absolutely believe that people, unless coached, never reach their maximum capabilities."

There's a reason that Abraham Maslow included "self-actualization" in his *Hierarchy of Needs* ... we have the desire to improve!

Beware of "brain-pickers"

People are going to try to get your valuable knowledge and advice for free. It may seem harmless to give some of your time to these requests, but you're a business and you can't allow people to "pick your brain" for free.

You are a professional and in business to make a profit. It's no different than lawyers, doctors, dentists, plumbers, etc. You deserve to be compensated for your time and expertise just like those people, and when I say "compensated" I don't mean by receiving a half-hearted "thanks" or a cup of coffee.

Try going into your bank to pay your mortgage with pocketful of “thanks” and a cold cup of coffee:

“Hey, I can’t pay the mortgage this month, but I got 14 “thank you’s” from people who picked my brain this month, and here’s some cold coffee. So are we cool?”

When confronted by brain-pickers, explain what you do and how much you charge. And then ask if they would hear how you could help them. Shift the conversation to a sales conversation—go over your packages and your fees. If they get offended, you’ve just saved a lot of time and energy getting away from someone who wasn’t going to hire you anyway.

harge what you’re worth!

One of the biggest mistakes made by coaches is that they don’t value their services properly, and they work at discounted rates (or even worse, for free!).

I’ve heard all of the reasons for this. People who coach this way claim that it’ll give them experience, potential referrals, and possibly a testimonial from the “client.” (I put that term in quotation marks because I don’t consider people who aren’t paying you to be clients.)

Some are being taught to give away these two or three hour free coaching sessions, designed to “knock the socks off” your prospect. The theory is the prospect will be so ecstatic with your amazing coaching skills and grateful for the hours of free help that they’ll gladly hire you and send hundreds of other clients your way.

Baloney. What usually ends up happening in these cases is the prospect gets what he needs in that free marathon coaching session, and doesn’t need any more of your help. Or he gets used to getting free coaching, and it’ll be very hard to convert him to a paying client. Why buy the cow, when you can get the milk for free?

I've had clients who (before we started working together) did tons of free marathon coaching sessions with little results, and were burned out and ready to quit coaching altogether by the end of it. One of my clients did sixty such calls, which took her close to 200 hours (including the time to set them up). Of those hundreds and hundreds of hours, she got just two clients who paid her very little . . .

Once she hired me, the first thing that I commanded her to do (yes, commanded her) was to stop devaluing her time and doing these marathon coaching sessions. She cut her calls down to thirty minutes max, with no free coaching: the calls were designed to see if she was a good fit to help the prospect.

And what was the result? She quickly got four clients (paying her more than before) in her first ten calls, which took her just a few hours instead of the 200 hours of free coaching calls that she previously did.

Ever hear the saying "Happy wife, happy life?" For me, it's "Happy client, happy Marc," and this client was very happy that she was no longer slaving away with her old, inefficient system.

So why do coaches have problems around charging? A lot of coaches have mindset blocks around money, and deep down they feel like they're doing something wrong by charging for it. There are plenty in the industry that I call "Mother Teresa Coaches." They think that unless you're coaching barefoot in some destitute village that you're "greedy" or "in it for the wrong reasons." If you're getting advice like this from those coaches, don't walk . . . run away! Odds are they're struggling in business with an attitude like that and listening to them won't help you become successful.

What they don't understand is that by charging small fees, coaches are hurting their clients. Free or discounted coaching leads to a lukewarm commitment from the "client." They have no (or little) skin in the game. When I talk with coaches who are stuck in the bad habit of not charging, I've discovered that the cancellation rates of "clients" is through the roof. It's not uncommon for their "client" to not show up for the call, or to give a weak excuse like: "Sorry, I have the sniffles today so I can't make our call!"

I charge a lot for my coaching now (if you want me, I'm not cheap) and it's extremely rare that I get a cancellation from a client for one of our sessions. And if

I do, it's a big reason—her dog died, her sister is getting married, she's having an operation, etc. But when I wasn't charging as much, I was getting plenty of those “Sniffle Cancellations,” after I was left twiddling my thumbs waiting for the client to show up on Skype for twenty minutes without a message from her.

But luckily I saw the light. One day, the skies opened up, and the angels sang down. I had an epiphany that I was finished working like that, and I immediately jacked my fees up. I continue to increase them every six months, and I've never regretted that decision.

I'm having a lot more fun and I know that I'm a better coach this way. There's a quote that I heard and I want you to remember: “You can't light up the world if you can't pay your light bill.”

on't focus on the competition

Many coaches get off track by obsessing over what others in the industry are doing. They spend their days watching “the other guy,” concerned with what that coach is up to.

While doing some market research can help you, excessively studying others won't. It's a tremendous waste of time and energy, and it's not helping you.

If you can't break the temptation of comparing yourself to other coaches, at least recognize that many have had a head start on you! So if you've been a coach for two years, don't compare yourself to one who has been in business for ten years. Look instead at others who have been coaching for a similar amount of time, and you might be surprised at how far along you are. Compare apples-to-apples, not apples-to-oranges, here.

There's a reason why horses wear blinders when they're racing!

Eliminate distractions

In today's fast-paced tech world, distractions will come at you from every direction and keep you from finishing those vital tasks that need to be done.

You start working on an important project and then “bang!” you're hit with beeps, blings, notifications and requests for assistance from people who think you should drop everything whenever they need something.

This is dangerous since it will take you time to get back “into the flow” after you're interrupted. Some studies have said it takes twenty-one minutes to get back on track after an interruption, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was even longer.

Limit the time that you spend on non-business social media activities, check emails at specific times of the day, and turn notifications off from your phone.

Four-hour workweeks are a myth

Building a successful coaching business will take lots of blood, sweat, tears, and hard work. Be sceptical of the ads promising that you can make \$1 million a year by working just a few minutes a day sitting in your hot tub.

That's not to say that you can't live a flexible lifestyle with plenty of leisure as a coach. I'm getting better at enforcing time where I'm off the clock. (I'm an admitted workaholic.) But could I suddenly drop down to an hour of work a week, or go off travelling the world for a year without checking my email? No way!

It'll take a lot of hard work, especially in the early days. Once your business grows, you can build a team to help free up your schedule. But I've yet to meet a coach who has “made it” by working very few hours in the beginning.

Be patient and keep working at it. And remember: if you're having fun, why would you only want to do it for four hours a week anyway? I think that people yearning for a four-hour workweek haven't found something they're passionate about yet!

row a thick skin

It's a certainty that when you put yourself out there and you strive for big goals, you're going to get people who criticize you—especially strangers on the Internet. Good ole “keyboard warriors!”

But YOU choose how to react. If you get thrown off your game and fall into a long-lasting funk after hearing a comment from a hater or a troll, you're in the wrong business!

I used to get worked up when haters came at me. In the early days, I spent a lot of time responding to and grumbling about idiots. But as time went on, I changed my approach. I either ignored the haters, which saved me a lot of time, or I'd have fun with them. If a hater sent me something, I would mock them and turn it into a lesson to share it with my community. The other thing that happened with me sharing it with my community was it showed those coaches that it's OK to get negative stuff thrown at you, and that it's not the end of the world (Seeing me being hit around like a Piñata helped them—so that's good.).

Channel your inner Eleanor Roosevelt who said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Keep your mission front-and-center in your mind. If you have a strong passion for your mission, nothing else matters.

And remember: “A lion never loses sleep over the opinions of sheep.”

Hire your own coach

You may be watching your expenses at the moment. You may think that you can save the money by not investing in someone to help you. You can try to “wing it,” but I can guarantee that it’ll take longer (and you’ll have more headaches) doing it this way.

Whenever I want to improve on something, I hire an expert. I’ve hired experts to help me create my online programs, to help me with webinars, to help me write books, etc. And I’ve never regretted these decisions.

I’ve seen coaches who are struggling but refuse to invest in their own coach . . . and then wonder why they’re having so much trouble. If you don’t believe in the power of coaching enough to invest in it yourself, how can you expect others to? Remember how I started this book: a great coach *will change people’s lives!*

Invest in your business

This goes hand-in-hand with my last point. As important as it is to watch expenses while growing a business, you’ll need to invest in tools to help you grow it and avoid burning out!

For example, I strongly believe in the power of email marketing, and I email my list daily. I gladly pay \$20/month for my email service (Aweber) . . . it’s a no-brainer. I also believe that every coach should have an online scheduling system to handle

bookings and to maintain their sanity. The one that I use, ScheduleOnce, is about \$20 a month and I couldn't do my business without it.

But time and time again, I see coaches refusing to spend a few dollars on essential tools that will help them grow their businesses. It's crazy and there's no excuse for it!

(Note: There are even free versions for many of the things that you'll need, like your email system and your online calendar. They may not be perfect, but you can upgrade as you go along.)

oin communities of like-minded people

You can go a lot further when you're in communities and groups of like-minded peers (online or offline). These groups can provide important support, advice, and motivation when growing your coaching business.

The mistake that many coaches make is they look at these groups as solely a place to sell their services. They join a group with the intention of spamming the heck out of it. (As the admin of a popular Facebook group, I've often seen people start spamming about three seconds after they're admitted into the group.)

When you join groups, make sure you're giving back to it; share your knowledge, answer questions, give value. Come at it from that frame of mind, and you'll do much better than by spamming the group.

By the way, if you'd like to join my Facebook group, "The Coaching Jungle," we'd love to have you. Swing on in at www.TheCoachingJungle.com

Keeep negative people away from you

We often don't realize the devastating effects that negative people can have on us. If you're serious about growing a successful coaching business, you need to have your radar up and ensure that only positive people (who want to see you win) are in your inner circle.

Remember what the late, great Jim Rohn said: "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with."

Avoid negative people like they're The Plague. Imagine you're Superman (or Superwoman). Negative people are like kryptonite—they'll weaken you and drain you of your powers allowing Lex Luther to take over the world . . . you don't want that, do you?

Learn and improve constantly

Another coach once said something that stuck with me: "We have a responsibility to outlearn our clients." His point was that clients are paying us a lot of money for our coaching (hopefully) and in return, it's our responsibility to make sure we stay ahead of them.

I once had a call with a coach who wanted my help growing her business. Near the end of the call, I recommended that she read a book that I was confident would help her a lot. She refused to read it. She argued that she didn't have time, and that she didn't like reading—and bragged that she hadn't read a book in ten years!

I refused to work with her—she’s not my ideal client. There’s no excuse for not reading. Got bad eyesight or dyslexia? You can download audiobooks to your smartphone and you don’t even have to turn a page!

I’m a reading junkie and I read or listen to fifty to 100 books every year. I love it, and couldn’t imagine not scarfing down books like a famished man in front of a buffet of delicious food. You don’t have to read that much, but you should be willing to learn and improve any way you can.

Make your mess your message

I’ve seen many coaches hold back from opening up to others. They’re worried if they admit that they’re not perfect, or that they’ve had bumps along their journey, that nobody will hire them.

It’s easy to fall into this trap. We all see the beaming coaches with the perfect websites and the perfect hair, who sound like they wake up smiling at 4 a.m. every day, run ten miles and scale a mountain, and have never had a bad day in their lives.

I smell BS . . . nobody is perfect!

If I held off taking action because of my past stumbles, I wouldn’t have accomplished any of my goals (and you wouldn’t be reading this now). To make you feel better, here’s some of the stuff that I’ve failed at (Don’t feel bad for me, it’s made me who I am today.):

- I’ve experienced business failures and bankruptcy. I’ve gone belly-up in business not once, but twice, by the way.
- My wife and partner of thirteen years divorced (which neither of us would have predicted when we got together).

- I've had to deal with critics running my name through the mud: the local media, my former employees, and friends. I've been attacked in the newspaper and online (some of it true, some of it not).

But you know what? Those experiences have made me a better coach, entrepreneur, and father to my young son. You see, I'm now able to relate much better to my clients. I've been through battles, and I have the scars to prove it. So when they're dealing with sleepless nights over their finances, or they have enemies coming at them and trying to run them into the ground, I get it.

Going through those stumbles caused a lot of people to jump off the "Marc Gravy Train." When I wasn't able to help them, a lot of people turned on me, so I got to see who my real friends were.

My ex-wife and I get along great and we have a happy son. She's been with a new man for a few years and I like him (I know, that seems weird) and it all worked out for the best on that front.

When I first started coaching, I didn't share as much about my past struggles. I wanted to be like the gurus: to look perfect, or I thought I was going to risk potential business.

But once I started opening up and sharing my struggles, my business took off. I had people reaching out to me after listening to an interview of mine, or reading a blog post, or watching a video where I was "letting it all out," and they thanked me for doing that.

I'm not suggesting that you have a "woe is me" or "look at how crappy my life was" tone to everything that you do, but don't be afraid to share your story. This bonds people to you. And you'll get MORE business (not less) by doing it this way.

Now that you know I'm not perfect, let's move on . . .

Niching helps*

I put an asterisk on this because niching isn't essential. I know that if I don't say that, I'll get people yelling at me: "You don't need a niche! Joe Smith doesn't have one and he's doing awesome as a coach!"

But niching can help you get traction and grow your business.

Too many people jump into the coaching world and say things like; "I help people achieve their dreams ..." or "I help people discover their passion."

Yawn.

Don't get me wrong. Those are admirable goals. But there are a ton of coaches out there using that verbiage. Thousands and thousands of them!

Think of yourself as a grain of sand. If you lay on a beach with many other grains of sand, it's going to be hard to get noticed, isn't it?

It's easier if you pick a specific niche and become known as being an expert in it. So for example, instead of saying that you work with "anybody," what if you're:

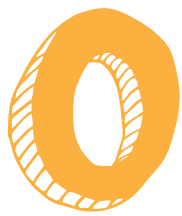
- A coach who helps mothers who have just given birth get their pre-baby bodies back and feel more confident and sexy?
- A coach who helps busy executives take control of their mornings so they'll be more productive throughout the day.
- A coach who works exclusively with divorced men who are re-entering the dating scene after being away from it for many years (ouch, that's a tough one ... good luck!)

Don't get too carried away with niching down though. If you decide that you want to *"work exclusively with left-handed dentists in Idaho named Bob who are in the*

middle of a divorce and want to sell their businesses in the next 6-12 months,” you’re going to have trouble getting clients.

Do you have to niche? Not necessarily. I know successful coaches who have done very well without one. One of my best clients proudly proclaims that she doesn’t have a specific niche—she works with all types of people—and that works for her.

But you’ll find it much easier to get rolling if you narrow down whom you’re helping as a coach. Doing that will separate you from the mob of more general coaches out there today, and you’ll find it easier to rise to the top of a specific target market.



One-to-one coaching is likely your fastest path to revenue

OK, I have to say something. One-to-one coaching gets a bad rap nowadays.

Maybe it has something to do with coaches reading Tim Ferriss’ “The Four-Hour Workweek,” and wanting to spend all but a few hours of every week laying on the beach with a cold drink in their hand, toes in the warm sand, while they refresh their bank account to see all the moola rolling in.

Cha-ching!

A lot of people will tell you not to work with people one-to-one. They’ll say things like “It’s not time-efficient,” “You’ll burn yourself out,” and “you’re limiting your income!”

All are good points. I get where they’re coming from.

But one-to-one shouldn’t be ruled out, especially in the early days of a coaching business. I started with just one-to one as my only offering. And once I filled my slots, I added group programs. And then I created online programs to let me help

more people and gain control over my time (Shameless plug: you can check out my programs at www.NaturalBornCoaches.com/Grow).

My one-to-one coaching was important as I came out of the gate because it gave me valuable revenue, confidence, and experience. Even though I've introduced other ways to help clients over the years, I'll always be working with at least some clients one-to-one. I love it. It gives me energy, new ideas, and it makes me a better coach.

Although some will disagree, I believe it's much easier to get revenue in (starting out) with one-to-one offerings as opposed to other things, like selling e-books for example. It's much easier to get just one individual client paying you \$1,000 to \$3,000 for coaching than it is to sell 100 to 300 e-books at \$10 each.

There will be plenty of time to introduce new offerings to get greater leverage with your coaching business, but don't neglect the benefits that one-to-one can bring.

erfectionism kills!

If you're a perfectionist, you're going to have to get rid of that tendency, or save your time and do something other than coaching!

Of all the mistakes that I see coaches make, this is perhaps the most common one. I've witnessed coaches delay the launch of their websites or programs (or heck, even a simple PDF or checklist) because they've fallen prey to perfectionism. They worry too much about their logo, or their banner, or the wording on something when they should just be pushing ahead.

I launched the "Natural Born Coaches" podcast back in the fall of 2014—about two years ago, as I write this. I know some people that were planning the launch of their show at the same time as I was, but **STILL** haven't launched it (I'll give no names, to protect the innocent.). I spoke with one recently who told me that she wasn't happy with her cover art, then she decided she wanted to change the show's theme, and

then she wasn't happy with the first few interviews that she recorded and wanted to start over. So her show still hasn't seen the light of day.

It shouldn't take you two years to launch a podcast. I've seen people do it in just a few weeks.

This need to be perfect is enough to make me want to pull the hair out of my head!

I've always taken the approach that it's better to launch something that's a 7/10 and then work on improving it, than shoot for a 10/10 but not get it launched.

Nothing will hurt your motivation more than being stuck in limbo. You'll never be perfect, so there's no sense in worrying about that. Just get you and your stuff out into the world. That's an order!

uit listening to people who have never built a successful business

Once you declare your intention to start a coaching business, you'll get people crawling out of the woodwork with their (often unsolicited) advice: your Uncle Joe, your best friend in grade 10 who you haven't seen in seventeen years, your former neighbour, and some guy that sends you Candy Crush requests on Facebook but now thinks that he's Warren Buffett or Bill Gates.

The odds are that these people haven't been in business before (Well, maybe the Candy Crush guy had a newspaper route as a boy, or printed up business cards for that business that he's going to launch "some day."). Why take entrepreneurial advice from Uncle Joe, who's worked at the same office job for the last thirty years?

With today's technology, you can reach some pretty smart people with a few clicks of a keypad. Gone are the days when the penniless Edwin C. Barnes had to hop on a freight

train to New Jersey to try to wrangle a business partnership with Thomas Edison. (It's the opening story told by Napoleon Hill in one of my favourite books, "Think and Grow Rich.") Barnes achieved his goal of becoming Edison's business partner, but what would have happened if he stayed where he was and asked his Uncle Cornelius (that sounds like a name that would have been used in the early 1900's).

(Note: Don't be one of those "brain-pickers" that I warned you about earlier. If you're reaching out to someone for help, offer something for their valuable time and knowledge!)

Ready. Fire. Aim.

No, this isn't a typo. I know we're used to hearing "Ready. Aim. Fire" but I prefer to move the "fire" part up earlier in the equation. This goes back to my gripes about perfectionism—too many coaches use planning as an excuse to not take action.

The most successful coaches that I know take action. I'm sure some of them even had the word "action" tattooed somewhere on their bodies!

My default mode is set to "action." I hate to be stuck in business purgatory. I'd rather be getting something out into the world, and then working on improving it, than be sitting at the drawing board and thinking, "*Why don't I have any money?*"

elf-promotion is necessary!

If you're hesitant to blow your own horn, you're not alone. A lot of coaches don't want to come across as braggarts, or look like they're the coaching version of Donald Trump.

But if you don't promote yourself, no one else will do it for you. Hanging back and trying to be humble and modest may be more comfortable for you, but that doesn't pay the bills.

There are ways to promote yourself without looking like a cheesy Internet marketer who uses photoshopped versions of cheques or screams: "Look at me! I'm the greatest!!!"

Remember that you're providing something of value to your marketplace. If you lay low, people aren't going to know about what awesome stuff you can help them do. And then they could end up hiring the dude that posts pictures of piles of cash on his bed, and that wouldn't be good—would it?

Share your wins. Share your clients' success stories (keeping confidentiality in mind). Don't be afraid to have a high opinion of yourself, some ego is good for coaches and entrepreneurs.

I'll let you in on a secret: many new coaches expect that they'll be coaching 80% of the time, and spending the other 20% on tidying up paperwork or selling. But the reality is flipped; you're going to be spending most of your time as a coach marketing and finding clients, and a small percentage actually coaching.

I've heard coaches say: "But I don't want to sell [or promote]—I just want to coach!" Well you won't be able to coach without any clients, so it's time to put on your big boy (or girl) pants and tell the world what you do!

Talk in your own voice

I'm tired of hearing coaches mimicking the voices of their favourite gurus. Same words. Same language. Even the same branding. If people want to hear from Tony Robbins, Brendon Burchard, or Marie Forleo, they can go directly to them.

You have a unique story, and should have a unique voice to tell that story. Many think that by parroting successful coaches that they can shortcut their success. So someone who usually doesn't swear starts dropping "F-bombs" every second word because it makes them look "edgy," "real," "authentic" and cool like Fonzie (it doesn't).

Or someone who is a little rough-around-the-edges suddenly becomes sweet and syrupy, with pink all over her branding. Even if that's the complete opposite of who she really is.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't swear. My language gets salty at times (ask my brother, who edits my podcast). I've had some people who follow my stuff ask me to tone it down and not say words like "crap," since apparently it puts me on a different energy plane than they're on, or something like that. But if I suddenly start talking like Andrew Dice Clay, and filling my content with as much cursing as I possibly can, it would look silly.

People wouldn't buy it.

Or take Brendon Burchard—no disrespect, the guy has done phenomenally well. But he bounces around like a hyena on Red Bull in his videos, and it looks like his eyes could bug out or his brain explode before he finishes each one. But if I start acting that way, it'll come across phony. That's just not me.

Don't agonize over what voice you'll be putting out there. Just be yourself. It really shouldn't be that hard. Being yourself is a lot easier than acting like someone else.



nderstand the challenges of your market

The most successful coaches understand the pains and problems encountered by their marketplace, and they provide a solution for them.

It's like the old story that the copywriting legend Gary Halbert told. He challenged some of his students by asking them, "If you and I both owned a hamburger stand and we were in a contest to see who could sell the most hamburgers, what advantages would you most like to have on your side to help you win?"

The students gave various answers: the best location, the best buns, the best price, and so on. After hearing them out, Halbert exclaimed that he had them beat. The advantage that he chose was ...

A starving crowd!

What's your market starving for? To find that out, you have to ASK them. (It seems like common sense, but surprisingly few coaches actually do this.) One way to do it is to create an online survey for people to fill out. These are free, and take you just a few minutes to set up. Don't make it too long for people to answer, and you've got your start with understanding what your people need.



Value is the name of the game

When I interviewed the popular speaker and author Bob Burg (“The Go-Giver”) for my podcast, he told me something that I’ll never forget. Bob said:

“Money is an echo of value.”

Take a second to really think about that. What Bob was saying is if you put enough value out into your marketplace, it’ll come back as dollars in your bank account. It’s a given.

I’ve had coaches say to me, “But Marc, I have been putting value out there, but I’m not making any money!” In these cases, I tell them that they probably aren’t giving enough value.

Ouch. I know that sounds rough, but it’s true. There are plenty of coaches who think that posting motivational images and quotes every hour onto social media every hour of the day is “providing value,” but is it really? Sure, I love motivational quotes as much as the next guy, but people can get them from anywhere nowadays. You have to do better than that.

Look at what your market place is starving for, and then give them the fix that’ll stop their bellies from rumbling!

Who is your ideal client?

When I first started my coaching business, I wasn't too picky with who I would work with. As long as someone passed "The Pulse Test" (they had a pulse) or "The Mirror Test" (they could fog a mirror), I took them as a client and jumped into action!

Hindsight is 20/20, and that wasn't the best method for client acquisition. Some clients weren't the right fit. One reminded me of Bill Murray's character in the movie "What About Bob?" If I didn't respond to a message from him within five minutes, he got panicky and anxious. I also took on other clients who apparently haven't heard of the neat website called "Google," since they messaged me anytime a question popped into their head that could have easily been Googled (or YouTubed).

My business really took off when I got clear on who I would work with. One night when I was journaling my frustrations over a client, I wrote on the page: "My ideal client . . ." and then I just started writing. After about an hour, I had a set of five criteria for who I would work with. Anyone else wouldn't make it past the gate at Castle Mawhinney. They would be drowned in the moat, or have arrows rain down from the castle to scare them off into the hills.

It may help for me to give you my criteria for who I'll work with. I'm serious about this, and I even have it displayed prominently on my website to chase away those who aren't a fit for me. Keep in mind that your criteria may be different, but please don't neglect to do this—it's that important!

Here's who I work with, in no particular order (if this fits you, shoot me an email at Marc@NaturalBornCoaches.com and tell me more about what you want to do):

MY IDEAL CLIENT ...

- Is An Action-Taker:

He/she doesn't delay, dither or over-think. He/she hates procrastination as much as I do, and smashes through it without me having to nag. I work with winners, not excuse-makers!

(Note: Excessive procrastinators make terrible clients.)

- Wants To Make a Big Impact:

He/she isn't content to play small or to hide their talent from the world. He/she wants to make a big difference, and isn't ashamed to expect to be fairly compensated for doing it.

(Note: If someone wants to make \$500/month as a coach for some extra spending money, that's cool and I can't fault them for that. However that's not the client that I want ... I want clients with big goals, that's what excites me.)

- Is Coachable and Respects Boundaries:

He/she believes in coaching and has confidence that it works. He/she respects my role as a coach, and doesn't disregard the boundaries that are put in place for our coaching relationship to succeed.

(Note: This one was put in to chase away the "What about Bob?" client.)

- Is Fun To Work With:

He/she is fun to coach, and I enjoy our time together. Life is too short; business should be fun for everyone!

(Note: I have a dry sense of humour that sometimes comes close to crossing the line. I don't want to work with someone who is easily offended. If the client reminds me of Mrs. Lovejoy from "The Simpsons," it isn't going to work!)

- **Pays Me On Time and What I'm Worth:**

He/she gladly pays my fees without haggling or having to chase after them.

(Note: I kind of like to be able to eat, have a roof over my head, a car and all that fun stuff. I don't want to have to hire Vinnie to go to my client's home with a baseball bat. There's nothing more draining than to have to chase clients around for fees that are owed ...)

So I'll ask you: Who is your ideal client?

-pect to be hit with challenges

I'm sorry to burst your bubble, but you're going to get hit with some nasty bumps while driving along the roads in CoachVille. I'm not a pessimist (I think I'm the most optimistic person that I know), but I'm just being realistic.

As I write this, I've interviewed almost 500 coaches for my podcast. And I've yet to encounter one who hasn't experienced a share of setbacks. Usually, the more successful the coach is, the more crap they've had to overcome!

If you're into a lot of woo-woo that's fine, but it annoys me when I see people saying that if you feel all warm and fuzzy, and shoot out positive vibrations to the universe, that everything will go swimmingly well.

Growing a coaching business is tough, and you can be the best damn vibrator in the world (that sounds strange), and you'll still have to wade through the ups and downs.

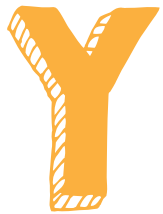
That's life.

That's business.

If it were easy, everyone would be doing it, and then it would be no fun. Personally I like that the successful ones have to pass through challenges to get here. It makes

success that much sweeter.

Be positive, but also remind yourself that you're going to have to deal with some tough stuff on your journey!



our time is your most valuable resource

Time is the great equalizer when it comes to growing a successful coaching business. Other coaches may have more resources than you have, but everybody has the same amount of time in each day (24 hours, or 1,440 minutes, or 86,400 seconds to be exact).

I've already stressed how important it is to value your time, but it's that important that I'm going to do it again!

I wasted a lot of time in my first few years as a coach. I was “working” 80 or more hours consistently every week, but couldn't understand why I wasn't earning more considering the crazy amount of work that I was putting into my business.

So I stepped back and started seriously tracking where my time was going. And I was shocked at how much time I wasted doing non-revenue generated things! I shudder to think of the time spent on things that felt like they were good for my business, but were really harming it:

“Hey Marc, I'd love to connect sometime and pick your brain/shoot the breeze with you/hear more about you/et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.”

I'm going to get some heat on this one, so let me get my bulletproof vest on! Before you think I'm a combination of Attila the Hun, Hitler, and Justin Beiber hear me out: Most people making these requests are good people, and not being malicious. (I even asked to pick some brains when I was a rookie coach.) But they don't realize that these requests for your time—with no intention of every paying for your

help—are very inconsiderate.

Trust me. I did hundreds of these calls on Skype in the early days—I know what I’m talking about. I did so many of them that when I closed my eyes at night, I saw the blue Skype screen and logo. Some days I remained at the desk in my home office and talked with people on Skype all day, running to the bathroom or to scarf down a sandwich if I got a few minutes before calls.

Did some of these calls turn into business? Yes, some. But a very small percentage of them, and certainly not enough to warrant the hundreds of hours spent getting my brain picked like crazy, or chatting about the weather in their neck of the woods and in mine.

Many of the calls were cleverly disguised sales pitches, and after about five minutes I realized that the person was trying to sell me something (Note to coaches: You’re going to get sold to . . . A LOT), or they wanted me to become an affiliate to pitch their products. Or the calls had no defined goal, and they were “getting-to-know-you calls” that didn’t really go anywhere.

I can’t complain, because I didn’t have boundaries. For a time I even threw my scheduling link out on Twitter, and any Tom, Dick, or Harry could book my time easier than they could order a pizza (stupid, stupid Marc!). So I won’t blame those people, I was too loose with my time and didn’t value it—and it cost me.

That changed one day. I had my epiphany that these calls were taking me away from important projects that I had to get done. And once I tightened up on who I would give my time to, my energy level bounced up and I was able to give more time to the stuff that would grow my business and to servicing my clients, not the brain-pickers!

It can be hard to say “no,” but please (please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please times ten) trust me when I tell you that you have to do it more often.

Your time is valuable—treat it like gold.

Zombie coaches don't have a real coaching business

A “Zombie Coach” is a term that I coined for someone that looks like they have a real, live coaching business, but in reality they don't.

This person has all the things that make it look like they're a living, breathing business on the outside. They have a website, maybe a Facebook fan page and a Twitter account, they put out some content and they do the odd discovery call (very rarely). They tell people they're a coach, but deep down they feel like a fraud since they don't have any clients.

One might say, “Wait Marc! I have five clients!” . . . but if those people are paying you peanuts, or aren't paying you anything, they're not clients.

You deserve to be paid what you're worth as a coach.

As you've seen, there's no super-secret, magic formula for success as a coach. But put these 26 lessons into action, and you'll have a much better chance of making it in this business.

I hope you enjoyed this book on how to become a successful coach, and I hope that our paths cross one day.

If you want to breathe life into your coaching business, I have a number of ways that I can help. For more information about what I do for you, head over to www.NaturalBornCoaches.com/Grow

TESTIMONIALS

“I doubled my coaching fees and signed more clients in one month working with Marc than I had in the previous six months!”

—**Lea Ann Mallett, Action and Impact Coach**

“I just sold my premium package for \$6,000. I’m waiting for the clearance to start working next week. Thanks, Marc!”

—**Andrise Bass, Master Coach**

“I enrolled five clients in my 1:1 program and already have two clients enrolled in my group program that I just announced! Thanks to Marc’s coaching I pushed past my old fear-based thinking—the system he taught me has proven to be very successful . . . I’ve quickly enrolled seven new clients!”

—**Jen Macquarrie, Habits Coach**

“My biggest business breakthroughs happened when I worked with Marc. He has a way about him that pushes you without being confrontational. Working with Marc gave me the confidence to increase my fees”

—**Keith Claridge, Simple Self-Growth**

“I doubled my prices and started getting paid what I was worth . . . I landed my first client three weeks after I started working with Marc and implementing his strategies. It was exciting!”

—**Bria Pittman, Health Coach**

Marc continues to be a major influence in the ongoing development of my coaching business. I joined his group program before then becoming a 1:1 client, and he’s delivered results time and time again. Without his guidance, I truly believe that I would be years behind where I am now!

—**Paul Ratcliffe, Career Coach**

“In just a few weeks, I’ve put together a framework for my 12-week coaching program, dialed in my pricing, and have picked up a whole new set of tools and proven strategies I can use in growing my audience and converting leads to clients. Anyone coach who wants more clients should work with Marc!”

—**Tracey Minutolo, Side Hustle Coach**

“Marc’s coaching has been responsible for my success as a coach. He helped me set up my whole business structure and land clients who I love working with. I’ve worked with other coaches, but all come up short in comparison to Marc!”

—**Scott Doucet, Podcast Coach**

“Marc’s group program was exactly what I needed to get my business moving forward. I walked away from the program with confidence that I would be successful in this business and tangible advice that I continue to put into practice on a daily basis”

—**Clare Ng, Codependency Coach**

“Throughout our time together, Marc’s been there to help and support, push, guide, and provide all kinds of insights from his experience. He’s been able to provide resource after resource, contacts and more. It’s been great for my confidence and my coaching practice!”

—**Al Clunnie, Lifestyle Design Coach**