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in the spotlight



This month, the spotlight is on Ann Skidmore, one of The Coaching Academy's Trainers.

I am one of The Coaching Academy's biggest fans. I was on the very first programme in October 1999 and wrote the following about my experience: "This has been a fabulous weekend. I have enjoyed myself immensely and couldn't sleep last night because there was so much I wanted to think about! I know my coaching has improved 100% during the weekend." I am now one of the Coaching Academy's training team and deliver programmes for the Corporate Coaching programme and the NLP Diploma, plus the new

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'Power Pitching' programme which I am very excited about.

My favourite coaching question is: "If you were coaching yourself what coaching question would you ask yourself right now?"

The question that really elicits a breakthrough or 'aha' moment is: "What do you already know that you want to achieve if nothing stood in your way?" Sometimes when clients get 'stuck', they make pictures or create sounds or feelings which inhibit them taking action. For example, one client told me he really wanted to go ice-skating with his children yet he created pictures of getting injured so he didn't even try to learn. He had created pictures of injuries rather than pictures of enjoying skating with his children! By doing some work on creating new pictures, sounds and feelings he was on his skates and having a fabulous time.

My advice for dealing with a challenging coaching situation is: Of course not to give advice. However, when I'm mentoring a coach I share with them my own experience of facing a challenging situation. I say to myself, "Come on Ann you can handle this. It will increase your flexibility and give you even more confidence in your coaching ability." Another way of handling it is to say, "Life only throws challenges to those who can handle them."

My own businesses are: Ann Skidmore Associates Ltd, which designs and delivers inspirational change programmes that help clients find ways to manage themselves and their teams, and my image consultancy which shows clients how to look and feel terrific in how they present themselves.

I spend 10 hours a week coaching. The rest of my time is spent designing and delivering leadership and change programmes and doing image and impact consultations.

I usually see a client for 4-8 sessions.

My top business building tip is: Decide what type of clients you would most love to work with and then go where they go to find them and let

them be excited about working with you and your coaching skills.

If you want to attract more clients, I recommend: Go where they are – my latest clients are on the golf course at my local Health and Golf complex. I don't need to play golf – just to sit in the lovely sunny café and there they are!

My best advice for marketing your coaching business is: Get yourself seen and noticed. Deliver an event where people can experience your skills in action. People like to 'try something before they may purchase it'.

People probably don't know that: I used to belong to Michael Crawford's fan club and he used to send me personally signed Christmas cards each year.

My favourite self-development book is: how can I choose just one!! I love *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey (Free Press,

1990) because it is so practical and makes great sense – we need to be effective with people and efficient with resources. Yet often companies try to be efficient with people and effective with resources. Coaching is all about effectiveness of course!

The best coaching book I have ever read is: *Coaching for Performance* (Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 3rd ed., 2002) by Sir John Whitmore because he was someone who inspired me over a decade ago when I was doing my Masters in NLP.

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My biggest goal is to: Double my business – I am rebranding it right now with this goal in mind.

My definition of success is: To do what you love to do and you never need work again because it isn't work, it is enjoyment and pleasure.

The thing I most love about coaching is: the small and large changes it creates in people's lives and the privilege of being a part of that change that being a coach brings. ☺

further information

You can contact Ann Skidmore via her website, www.annskidmore.com or email her at ann@annskidmore.com or telephone 01543 416242. Meet Ann on the "The Practicalities of Corporate and Executive Coaching" Accelerator Day as part of the Corporate & Executive Coaching Diploma. Visit www.the-coaching-academy.com/corporate.