

### OCMETRO BUSINESS

- COVER STORY
- FEATURE STORY
- POLITICAL COLUMNS
- LETTERS
- PUBLISHER'S NOTE
- TICKER
- WOMEN
- AN EARFUL
- BIZ BITES
- THE EDGE
- EXECUTIVE WING
- ENTREPRENEUR
- WORKSPACE
- MOVERS & SHAKERS
- LIGHTBULB MOMENT
- IN BOX
- HOT READ
- BIZ SOLUTIONS
- GET IT

### OCMETRO LIFE

- ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE
- DINING
- RETAIL
- HEALTH & FITNESS
- BEACH BUZZ

## OCMETRO BUSINESS

### FEATURE STORY AUGUST 17, 2006



**Patricia Hirsch,**  
president of the new business  
development division at the  
company, says, "Working as a  
woman-owned business is a  
great experience. It's a great  
opportunity to work for  
yourself."

The breakdown of the nuclear family, in which older, more experienced members were available to advise younger relatives, is one factor that has created the need for professional life coaches.

By Linda Melone

As the director of Entertainment Marketing and Celebrity Relations for Reebok, then 25-year old Heather Rem made others wide-eyed with envy. After all, it's not often that a job description includes schmoozing with film stars. "I worked with lots of famous people before they became well-known," Rem says. "Matt Damon and Ben Affleck helped me move boxes before anyone even knew their names."

But, like Rocky Road ice cream, too much of a good thing can take its toll. After nine years of dealing with 500 clients a year famous or not Rem felt unfulfilled. "I was all about pleasing everyone else," Rem said. Overworked, overwhelmed and rapidly sinking into depression, she suffered from what she calls, "the classic burnout. I kept asking, 'what is wrong with me?' I had no idea where to go, but I knew I wanted something more meaningful."

Not knowing what to do next, she quit her job. After several unsuccessful attempts to find the answers on her own, she knew she needed help. A

## Life coaching demystified

### Life coaching demystified

The breakdown of the nuclear family, in which older, more experienced members were available to advise younger relatives, is one factor that has created the need for professional life coaches.

By Linda Melone

As the director of Entertainment Marketing and Celebrity Relations for Reebok, then 25-year old Heather Rem made others wide-eyed with envy. After all, it's not often that a job description includes schmoozing with film stars. "I worked with lots of famous people before they became well-known," Rem says. "Matt Damon and Ben Affleck helped me move boxes before anyone even knew their names."

But, like Rocky Road ice cream, too much of a good thing can take its toll. After nine years of dealing with 500 clients a year famous or not Rem felt unfulfilled. "I was all about pleasing everyone else," Rem said. Overworked, overwhelmed and rapidly sinking into depression, she suffered from what she calls, "the classic burnout. I kept asking, 'what is wrong with me?' I had no idea where to go, but I knew I wanted something more meaningful."

Not knowing what to do next, she quit her job. After several unsuccessful attempts to find the answers on her own, she knew she needed help. A

### RESOURCE DIRECTORY

#### B2B

- BANKS & YOUR BU
- COMMERCIAL PRO
- EDUCATION & CAR
- SPECIAL EVENTS/C
- WOMEN IN BUSINE

#### YOUR LIFE

- HEALTH DIRECTOR
- IMAGE & SUCCESS
- NEIGHBORHOODS

ocmenus  
FRESH IDEAS IN DINING & F&T  
NOW ONLINE!

BOC Wo  
BUSIN  
STRATEGIES FOR

ALL NEW  
bodybeau  
mag

PREMIERS JUN

family friend, who was studying to become a life coach, offered to help Rem. As it turned out, this was the answer she had been looking for.

Working with her coach, Rem began to unravel her priorities and learned how to establish boundaries. "I was so used to giving, I didn't know how to receive. I wasn't taking care of myself." In short, she found the coaching process life altering. Inspired by what she learned, Rem decided to become a coach herself and help others in similar situations. In 2001, Rem established Inner Power Coaching, specializing in job transitioning and coaching for those in the entertainment industry. "Everyone trying to break into this business faces the same issues. I help to demystifying the entertainment industry."

People from the entertainment industry, corporate America and all walks of life hire personal coaches to help them negotiate all phases of their lives; and there's literally a coach for every occasion. From life planning and relationship coaches to assertiveness and personal finance coaches, time management coaches and career transition coaches you name it, there's someone who can coach you through it.

### **A profession explodes**

"Life coaching is a catch-all term," says Patricia Hirsch, president of the International Coaching Federation of Orange County, "There are many different types of coaching, but 'life coaching' encompasses them all." Coaching as it is known today began approximately 10 years ago at the executive level in corporate America. A leadership or sales coach from the outside would come in to coach a company's executives, for example.



Hirsch says the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family is one of the main things creating the need for outside coaches. "When [different generations of] families lived together, there were those who would advise the younger family members. That's no longer the case. Coaches fill the void in our society." In addition, rapid changes in the business environment, downsizing, restructuring and mergers contribute to the growing need for outside coaching, as does a widening disparity between what a manager is trained to do versus what he is required to do. At the same time, a growing shortage of talented employees require companies to invest in an individual's development.

Much like personal trainers, coaches inspire, instruct and motivate but the client takes responsibility for following through with agreed-upon objectives. "A coach helps you see what's possible for yourself," Hirsch says. She defines the differences between a therapist and a coach this way: "A therapist has you work in your present by looking back into your past, whereas a coach has you look at your present and your future to figure out where you want to go."

And there are plenty of people willing to help you do just that. The International Coaching Federation (ICF), the largest worldwide resource for business and personal coaches, lists 11,000 members in 80 countries, more than 50% in the United States; compare this to 2,000 members only seven years ago.

## Undercover executive coaching

The popularity of coaching hasn't necessarily brought it out into the open or made it socially acceptable, however. Executives and CEOs don't want to appear less than competent in their employees' eyes and are reluctant to go on the record as having a coach. Hirsch notes, "Executives are hired to take care of the major issues. Employees look to them for answers; they can't take their concerns up or down the organizational ladder. A coach, however, provides a nonjudgmental sounding board."

Phil Teeter, V.P. of Annuities and Mutual Funds for Pacific Life Insurance Co., hired Hirsch when he needed that sounding board. "I didn't have big goals in mind when I hired Patricia. In general, I hired her because I sometimes felt less than effective in certain high-stress business situations like not knowing what to say when I'm in a situation that required me to be persuasive." He originally considered hiring Hirsch to help some of his staff but decided to see if she could help him as well.

Teeter says, "Patricia made me challenge my assumptions, a theme that was carried throughout the four months we worked together." Challenging assumptions, Hirsch explains, means questioning decisions you may have made as a child that no longer work for you as an adult. "If your mother didn't know how to cook a certain food when you were a child, you may have decided, 'well, I won't ever eat that again.' But, as an adult, you need to realize that the decision you made back then may need revisiting."

Teeter says Hirsch also helped him become more effective in interactions with others. "I learned how to convey my ideas and collaborate with other people to be more effective. As busy as I am, I felt that that hour a week was definitely time well spent."

## Coach or consultant?

Maybe it's not a coach you need but a mentor or perhaps a consultant. Although lines between these options blur, in general, a consultant assesses your problem, arrives at a conclusion and recommends a procedure to resolve the issue. A consultant provides professional advice and service and often focuses on a specific issue or issues.

"People come to me because they're already doing well, although that may sound counterintuitive," says Alan Weiss, Ph.D., president of Rhode Island-based Summit Consulting Group, Inc. The author of more than 25 books, including his best-seller, "Million Dollar Consulting," Weiss considers himself a consultant "first and foremost" and then a mentor and coach, which he sees as subsets of consulting.

Someone who is primarily a coach also narrows in on specific topics or issues in the client's life but works with the individual in a collaborative process of client-focused self discovery. "A coach establishes objectives (and provides encouragement)," Weiss says. "There's a deadline."



In mentoring, an activity related to both coaching and consulting, the client typically seeks out the mentor. You come up with specific instances where you need help maybe it's a new task or you're in unfamiliar political waters. "It's like going to the Oracle," Weiss says. "Mentoring is more reactive and less proactive."

Weiss says that often CEOs and major executives contact him because there's no one to push such a successful person to the next level. "They want to explore how much more effective they can be; they want to see if there's room for improvement. They may realize there's a missing component a behavior, skill or experience that prevents them from achieving their goals."

With a Ph.D. in organizational psychology and a client list that includes Hewlett-Packard, GE and Merck, Weiss walks his talk. He vehemently cautions those seeking a coach to do thorough research. "Be sure the coach has a relevant degree. In executive coaching, the person must be familiar with corporate politics and corporate culture, or you may be getting unrealistic directives." He also recommends asking for testimonials and cautions against hiring someone from what he calls the "sugar doughnut school of coaching," when the coach lacks credentials and education but has "manipulated his or her way to the top. There are too many coaching boot camps that certify coaches in a weekend," cautions Weiss. "Ask, 'who's certifying the certifiers?'"  
Good question.

### Who is qualified to coach?

One of the drawbacks to the profession of life coaching is that almost anyone can call themselves a life coach, hang out a shingle and open shop. In California, no certification or license is required to call yourself a life coach or any other type of coach.

However, quality coaching certifications do exist that require a substantial monetary and time commitment. The ICF offers coaching certifications, but the organization itself does not train coaches. Founded by Thomas Leonard, the "father of coaching," in the early 1990s, it began with a program called CoachU, a course that gave out its own certification.

In order to become ICF-certified (considered the "gold standard"), you must first attend an ICF-accredited training program (see sidebar). Plan on an investment of between \$6,000 and \$8,000 and nine months to three years of study, depending on which program you choose. You will also need to log in a minimum of 100 paid coaching hours and 60 hours of coach training before qualifying as an Associate Certified Coach, of three levels. Here are the following requirements for ICF's three levels of coaching certifications:

**MCC (Master Certified Coach)** at least 2,500 hours coaching experience and 200 hours of coach training, as well as successful completion of an oral and written examination

**PCC (Professional Certified Coach)** at least 750 hours coaching experience and 125 hours of coach training, as well as successful completion of an oral and written examination

**ACC (Associate Certified Coach)** at least 100 hours coaching experience and 60 hours of coach training, as well as successful completion of an oral examination

Alternatively, if you've worked as a counselor, therapist or other type of trainer and don't feel you need two years of additional training, coachville.com is a quicker route to certification and a relative bargain at about \$3,000. Unlike other programs, there is no requirement for the number

of training or client hours. You can take the exam within a few months and become an accredited coach with Coachville, although the program is not recognized by the ICF. Confusing? You betcha. Especially since Thomas Leonard founded both ICF and Coachville. Study the websites for a better understanding.

### **The cost of coaching**

The cost of hiring a coach varies widely. Most coaches require a time commitment, typically three months or longer. Some, like Heather Rem, work on a sliding scale. Coaches often offer several options depending on your coaching needs. For example, Alan Weiss charges \$500 for a 30-day “continual access” program option. This includes two phone calls and five e-mails a week.

Or you can choose the “unlimited access” option for twice the price. You have unlimited e-mails, phone calls and faxes, and responses are provided as needed, not just during business hours as in the first option. Weiss notes that the unlimited access option works best for executives who frequently travel out of town. “I once received a phone call from an executive in China. He suddenly found himself faced with an unexpected business situation and needed help in figuring out the right approach. Who knows what time it was there when he called. I was able to help him, which was invaluable given his situation.”

### **Life experience counts**

In the end, only the individual can decide who is the best person to work with. Often, as in the case of Alan Weiss, experience and success in the field speaks louder than any certification ever could. Similarly, business and career coach Ronda La Brane Schemel worked for more than 20 years in corporate marketing and sales environments before becoming a professional coach eight years ago. Schemel believes that people are more comfortable when she tells them, “I want to help solve career problems,” rather try to sell herself as a life coach. Schemel specializes in helping her clients prioritize their various life roles. “We start off discussing career issues, but within two to three sessions, real life issues pop up. Life is complicated; I help my clients break it down into manageable parts.”

Gina Gomez, a regional vice president for the labor and trust division of a large healthcare provider, benefited greatly from working with Ronda. “I knew Ronda understood what I was going through because we had previously worked together,” Gomez says. “People can have all kinds of certifications, but they also have to be able to relate to their clients. Ronda was intuitive and would quickly get to the heart of the matter.”

Schemel uses a dart board model to figure out life priorities. “In the center I have my clients list the ‘must-do’s,’ the next outer circle is comprised of ‘should do’s’ and the outside circle contains items that would be ‘nice-to-get-to.’ Then they can figure out what to deal with first.”

Using tools like the dart board, Schemel helped Gomez realize how she pushed aside her personal enjoyment for the sake of her career. “Ronda made me include time for myself outside of work-related issues. At first I felt horribly guilty here I was cooking (or doing something else for enjoyment) when I thought I ‘should’ be working. Once I got used to it, I felt such a feeling of accomplishment from taking care of myself. And I got the same amount of work done in the end.”

Phil Teeter sums up the coaching experience this way: “A coach is not about Yoda telling me the secrets of the universe. It’s about having someone who is a good listener and asks the right questions to inspire me to recognize what behaviors I employ and whether or not they’re effective. And if not, why is that? It’s a lot better than figuring things out as you go.” **OCM**

*Linda Melone is a freelance writer, speaker and owner of LifeBeat Fitness, a corporate wellness company.*

## Coaching Resources

### International Coach Federation - Orange County

[icforangecounty.org](http://icforangecounty.org)

### International Coach Federation

[coachfederation.org](http://coachfederation.org)

888.423.3131

### Coaches Training Institute

[thecoaches.com](http://thecoaches.com)

800.691.6008

### Coach U

[coachu.com](http://coachu.com)

800.482.6224

### Coachville

[learning.coachville.com](http://learning.coachville.com)

**Patricia Hirsch's website:** [designyourlifecoaching.com](http://designyourlifecoaching.com)

**Heather Rem's website:** [innerpowercoaching.com](http://innerpowercoaching.com)

**Alan Weiss' website:** [summitconsulting.com](http://summitconsulting.com)

## Would You Benefit From A Coach?

Reasons for hiring a coach vary; here are some of the most common:

- A gap in knowledge, experience, skills or confidence
- A desire to accelerate results
- A need for course correction in work or life due to a setback
- A lack of clarity when there are choices to be made
- An individual has a style of relating that is ineffective or is not supporting the achievement of personal goals
- One has not identified his or her core strengths or isn't sure how best to leverage them
- The individual desires work and life to be simpler, less complicated
- Work and life are out of balance, and this is creating undesirable consequences **OCM**

## 7 questions to ask a coach

If you are thinking of hiring a personal coach, the ICF recommends asking the following questions:

- What is your coaching experience? (years and number of clients, types of situations)
- What is your philosophy about coaching?
- What are your areas of specialty?
- What is your coach-specific training? Do you hold an ICF Credential?
- How does your program work? (How are sessions conducted: e-mail? Phone? How often? )
- How do you charge? (most coaches charge a monthly fee that varies, depending on the frequency of contact)
- Tell me about your coaching success stories **OCM**



[Local News](#) [Financial News](#) [World News](#) [Traffic](#) [Weather](#) [Movies](#) [Dining Guide](#) [OC Entertainment](#) [Map Quest](#)

**FEATURED PARTNERS**



[ABOUT CHURM PUBLISHING](#) - [OUR OTHER MAGAZINES](#) - [WHERE TO FIND US](#) - [CONTACT US](#)  
[PRIVACY POLICY](#) - [TERMS OF USE](#)