

Healthy workplaces embrace coaching

Trend gathering strength

Derek Sankey

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Jackie Fairbourn is a shining example of what business coaching can accomplish. "I was at a really low

point," explains Fairbourn of her efforts to build a successful business. "Everything was just a little overwhelming and that's when I decided to start working with a coach."

Fairbourn is a Calgary chiropractor who graduated four years ago and initially struggled to realize her own vision for her practice.

"(Coaching) was a real catalyst to being able to see my vision and to start creating it," says Fairbourn, who is joined by a rapidly growing number of small businesses and large corporations turning to coaches.

The trend toward coaching has gathered a lot of speed in the past year partly because it is becoming a more closely monitored and credentialed profession, says Ric Durrant, president of the Calgary Association of Professional Coaches (CAPC).

"It's totally amazing to me how fast acceptance of coaching is moving in Calgary," says Durrant. "Even in the last 12 months, there's a night and day difference."

For Fairbourn, it helped her solidify her vision for her practice at a time when she was working in a practice that was unfulfilling. Once her coach started working with her, the change began to happen almost immediately.

Fairbourn found an ideal location along 17th Ave S.W. and began to follow through on her vision.



CREDIT: Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald
 Chiropractor Jackie Fairbourn, left, received business coaching from Marlene Cameron, of Cameron Coaching and Consulting. Fairbourn's success was recognized with the PRISM Award for leadership excellence and business achievement through coaching.

"My practice was growing faster than it had ever grown before and I feel like it was because I was still holding that vision," says Fairbourn, adding her clients tripled within eight months.

"I was really motivated to do everything I could," she says. "It was a real turning point for me."

Durrant says that while the profession has been gaining credibility and acceptance over the past few years, only recently have companies begun to set up coaching as a formal business resource in large numbers.

"Many of the bigger companies in the city are embracing coaching now, setting up programs and policies to standardize how coaching is being used by leaders in their companies," says Durrant.

"Companies need some assurance that they're working with coaches that will deal with their employees professionally and ethically and who actually understand the skill set required," he says.

The International Coach Federation is the organization that has emerged as the standard for professional certifications in business coaching. It works with partner organizations to ensure there are strict standards applied to the industry.

"The profession of coaching is moving to become a credentialed profession," says Durrant.

"It's very important for HR folks and anybody in the business community to know how to hire a coach," he says.

Marlene Cameron, a certified business coach who works with Fairbourn, has run her own business before and so she can relate on many levels to her various clients.

"I've got a business background and having run my own operation, I have some insight into the challenges that professionals and entrepreneurs have," she says.

Coaching is about better understanding your own goals, gaining broader perspective and ultimately increasing productivity, says Cameron.

"I really believe there is a lot of inherent potential in not only us as individuals, but in organizations as a whole," she says, adding some studies have shown companies are working at anywhere between 20 to 50 per cent of their potential.

"There's a huge opportunity there for an increase in productivity, especially if everybody clearly knows where they are going," Cameron says.

Coaching has also become more targeted, with specialists in business or executive coaching, life coaches, as well as the broader, more holistic approach that Warren Redman takes.

He's a certified "emotional fitness" coach, psychotherapist and the author of

Recipes for Inner Peace and The 9 Steps to Emotional Fitness. As the owner of the Centre for Inner Balancing, he sees the results first hand.

"There's been huge growth of (coaching) and that's a recognition by organizations that it makes a difference," says Redman.

He agrees more people are turning to coaching because they aren't achieving the balance in life necessary to really focus on their careers and personal lives.

Fairbourn, meanwhile, is busy carrying through on her vision to build her practice at the Mount Royal Health Centre in Mount Royal Village. She was awarded the 2006 PRISM Award for leadership excellence and business achievement through coaching on Feb. 8, hosted by CAPC.

"It's really exciting to be able to do all of this in such a short period of time," she says.

derek.sankey@telus.net

Coaching Resources

n International Coach Federation -- www.coachfederation.org

n Calgary Association of Professional Coaches -- www.calgarycoaches.com

n Coaching Designs International -- www.coachingdesigns.ca

n Coach U -- www.coachu.com

n The Coaches Training Institute -- www.thecoaches.com

n University of Calgary -- www.ucalgary.ca/professionaldesignations/programs/coaching.html

n Centre for Inner Balancing -- www.innerbalancing.com

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