

Case Studies: Coaching as a Second Career

By Karl Corbett, Managing Partner, Sherpa Coaching | October 2009

What does it take to change careers? For some people, the decision isn't all that hard. Even though the economy is faltering, demand for executive coaches is growing. Two groups of people are filling that increasing demand.

What do people do when they retire, but find they really aren't done working? Many of them turn to coaching as a second career. What do managers and executives do when they are out of work, stuck between positions? Many take a chance on doing something new, and follow an independent path.

Sherpa Coaching, based in Cincinnati, has trained executive coaches at major universities since 2005. Their book, *The Sherpa Guide: Process-Driven Executive Coaching* has set clear standards for coaching. It's the text for a two-week executive coaching certification, and guides a new career for those who become Certified Sherpa Coaches.

When Brenda Corbett, 'Sherpa Guide' author, explains the coaching certification, she talks about two audiences. "Larger organizations, including US Bank, the National Cancer Institute and Toyota all have full-time executive coaches on staff. Mastering the Sherpa process helps them work with consistent success across their organization."

"On the other hand, consultants and entrepreneurs come to us when they want to create or enhance their careers as executive coaches. From our very first university program in 2005, retired executives and people caught between jobs have attended Sherpa Certification programs to start a new career."

Case Study # 1: Retired CEO

One of Sherpa's most successful graduates is Bill Smith, who owns Pinnacle Coaching Services in Columbus, Ohio. Once a hospital CEO, he now offers coaching services and leadership programs across industry lines. "I started out in my area of expertise: health care," says Smith. "Like any small business, it took time to grow and develop the income stream I had dreamed of as an independent. Being trained and certified in the Sherpa process at a major university made all the difference. Credibility leads to success."

Case Study # 2: Consultant Turns Coach

Ric Larrabure is another recent retiree. A high-level banking executive who worked across the US, Europe and Asia, he has been consulting with the Royal Bank of Scotland and Bank of America. "I settled in Des Moines, Iowa after my Sherpa certification at Penn State in 2007," says Larrabure. "Consulting is fine, but I need something new. Ultimately, all my business at Summit Consulting will be executive coaching. I love the work. I have mastered the process, and I know how to go head-to-head with top-level executives."

Case study #3: Downsized Executive

Another veteran of the Royal Bank of Scotland is Alex Marquez of Mexico City. When RBS reduced its operations in Mexico, Marquez became a full time executive coach, certified in the spring of 2009. "Everything is going better than expected," says Marquez. "So far, Sherpa Mexico has won contracts with the fourth largest bank in Mexico and the second largest producer of wine and spirits in the country. I'm about to close a deal with Mexico's second largest retailer. I am talking with insurance companies from France and the US. It was a risk to start a new career, but the support I received from the Sherpa team after graduation has been exceptional."

Demand for executive coaching is building as a new generation of leaders prepares to take the reins of power. That demand will largely be filled by the most respected practitioners: coaches who study at a major university, working in person with published authors. The Sherpa Certification is the only program in the US that meets those criteria.

Sherpa's educators bring a unique perspective to their training. Sherpa Guide author Judith Colemon explains: "Most leadership development comes from conventional sources. Our team is a diverse group of men and women hailing from the US, Canada and Vietnam. The Sherpa team is uniquely qualified to help executive coaches work across gender, culture and nationality. Coaching uncovers essential truths about human behavior."

Those fundamental truths lead to positive changes in business behavior. Executive coaches enter this growing profession to create positive change. As they create a new career, their own lives change, too.

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