



Coaching in Closely Held Enterprises

From the Desks of the Co-Editors

There is Theory X, Y and Z – all related to large, corporate organizations. What about the many closely held enterprises? We need a Theory E that embraces enterprise and strategies of coaching that are based on a full appreciation of the unique challenges facing these leaders. This issue of *IJCO* is devoted to this topic.

In setting the context for this issue (and in our own selection of articles for this issue), we have identified four types of organizations that can be called “closely held enterprises.” These four types of enterprise are in many ways different and are usually treated as separate and distinct entities, yet they share many characteristics.

Type One/The Family-Owned Business: one-person ownership, family ownership.

Type Two/Small Businesses: revenues of less than \$5 million per year.

Type Three/Professional Practices: dentistry, accounting, consulting, coaching, etc.

Type Four/Focused and Independent Nonprofit Organizations: governed by carefully chosen group of like-minded people, created for a specific purpose. Providing services in a selective niche.

We have solicited articles for this issue of *IJCO* that address coaching challenges associated with each of these four types. Type One and Two are the focus of Chuck Berke’s “From Second Banana to Leader of a Powerful Bunch” and David Robinson’s “Resolving Dilemmas in Closely Held Businesses.” An organizational coaching practice (itself often representing the third type) is explored in Cherie Kellahan’s interview with Christine McDougall. Coaching to professional practices is also represented in Kathleen O’Donnell article on “Practice Management

and Coaching.” Finally, the fourth type of closely held enterprise (the niche nonprofit) is represented in a case study about a refuge orphanage in Cambodia. This case study is presented in a unique manner. Several senior coaches have prepared brief statements regarding how they would approach a coaching assignment with the remarkable woman who heads this enterprise. You, as a reader, will have an opportunity to compare your own way of coaching this woman with the way in which these other coaches would approach her.

We have also included two articles of a more general nature regarding coaching to closely held enterprises. One of us (Bergquist) has prepared an article with his colleague, Susan Boland, that identifies the more general challenges associated with coaching in this type of organization. In addition, Mike Jay’s quarterly essay (“Mike’s Musings”) is directed in this issue to the issue of coaching in closely held enterprises. This issue comes to a close with a new feature of *IJCO*: *The Coaching Dialogue*. These dialogues will consist of joint interviews among senior organizational coaches regarding the art and science of coaching. The first of these joint interviews (conducted by Mary Beth O’Neill and Bill Bergquist) is included in this issue.

We hope that you find the insights and suggestions offered in this issue to be of value to you as an organizational coach and that you will be further encouraged by what you read to work with the remarkable women and men who lead closely held enterprises.

William Bergquist

Christine McDougall