The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations

COACHING TO COLLABORATIVE VENTURES:
ALLIANCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSORTIA

“...while the basic structure of collaboration has been around for many years, contemporary collaborations are redefining some of its most basic elements. For starters, power relationships are being conceived in a different manner. To be competitive in our 21st Century world, collaborative ventures need to be connected in another way, so that power between the people and the organizations involved is roughly balanced. Collaborations that move beyond form and structure—those, like the government/aboriginal peoples agreements, that demand deeper changes - recognize the interdependence of multiple parties and replace control with influence. This shift in the balance of power both requires and creates a greater demand for equity in our interpersonal and institutional relationships.”

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6 COACHING TO COLLABORATIVE VENTURES: FROM THE DESKS OF THE CO-EDITORS
Weaving the collaborative theme across articles, and something more.
BY WILLIAM BERGQUIST AND JOHN LAZAR
As Co-Executive Editors of this journal, we talk regularly about this publication: where it's going, what's needed, the quality of what we produce, what will be a contribution, how we work together and can work together better, etc. We can't believe it's already been over three years since IJCO first became a resource for our organizational coaching community. We believe this is an especially appropriate time for reflection, given questions of identity, direction and achievement. Now is a time for looking back and looking ahead, acknowledging the past and those who made it, and both speculating about and declaring the future.

IJCO was sparked by an idea for a journal by Bill, re-infused with energy and focus by John, and sourced by the Executive Coaching Summit. It was, in fact, an expression of that community's interest. Some of the attendees at the Summit accepted our invitations to become Editorial Board members; others were recruited elsewhere. The size and international flavor of the Board has expanded and we now have Board members from seven countries and five continents. The number of journal pages and the number of articles that appear in each issue have increased. We have even changed the journal binding to be cleaner and more visually appealing, given the larger size.

The texture of the journal has shifted over time. We still have themed issues
for the first three quarterly issues each year, sometimes for the final issue as well. Mike Jay continues to gift us with his Musings as a regular feature, confronting and provoking our paradigms. We have included white papers from four Executive Coaching Summits, reviews of several coach training schools, and of coaching books. We’ve published an Annual Volume for our 2003 issues; the 2004 volume will be out later this year. We started a website, recast it as an e-commerce site, and began to translate our articles into pdf files that can be purchased and downloaded. This process is going much slower than we prefer. The ICF International Conferences have been the source of extraordinary readership content two different ways: as transcripts of the executive coaching panel discussions, facilitated by one of our Board members, Joan Wright; and as a three part series of interviews among executive coach. And this journal has been a member benefit for ICF for several years, as well as for organizational sponsors of the International Consortium on Coaching in Organizations (ICCO).

So where are we going with this journal? This question, asked by Board members and subscribers, has been a catalyst for reflection, conversation and (some) action. With this first issue of 2006, we are moving to a new cover style and print format. We intend that the white space, font and layout be easy on the eye and engage the reader. We are contemplating having submitted articles be subject to a refereed editorial review. We will be taking action to market the journal not only to organizational coaching practitioners, but to coaching schools, graduate schools of business, organizations that provide external coaching services, organizations that use coaching services internally as standard practice, and libraries that are a source of reference materials, rolled out globally. Schools and service providers will be placing ads in our pages, but not too many. We will be having new features as part of our article mix, including something we’re tentatively calling a “Global Review of Organizational Coaching Practices.” There’s a lot in the works and we intend to take large strides towards achieving the circulation, article accessibility, and community service this publication can provide.

John Lazar
William Bergquist

Co-Executive Editors
This issue of IJCO focuses on the challenges associated with leading and coaching to a unique type of “organization” – namely a collaborative venture (going by many names, such as alliance, partnership and consortium). While in past issues of IJCO more traditional client systems (such as corporations, governments and closely-held enterprises) have been featured, the Editorial Board of IJCO decided that it was time to focus on a newly-emerging organizational phenomenon—the “boundary-less” enterprises of the 21st Century that involve collaboration between two or more organizations.

While our Editorial Board wanted to offer “Coaching in Collaborative Ventures” as the theme of an entire issue of IJCO, it became clear to us as the co-editors of this issue that not much has been written about coaching to collaborative ventures—nor did many of our Editorial Board members have much experience with this type of coaching. Fortunately, one of us (Bergquist) has done quite a bit of work (as a consultant and coach) with collaborative ventures—but it was hard finding other contributors. We turned, for assistance to one of our long-time colleagues, Gary Quehl. Quehl is not only a successful organizational coach, he is also past president of three higher education organizations that have been quite innovative with regard to inter-institutional collaboration and has recently been involved in yet another collaborative venture (in
his Northern California community). We interviewed Gary about his own experiences both as a coach and as leader of these collaborative ventures.

We also decided to turn to another colleague, Brian Pelchat, who is leading a particularly interesting collaboration—namely, an alliance regarding wildlife management between the Government of the Yukon Territory (Canada) and the Aboriginal (First Nation) people of the Yukon. We asked Brian to prepare a case study in which the issues of collaboration and cooperation are critical with regard to the preservation of the fragile and magnificent ecology of Northwestern Canada. Brian’s case study highlights the challenging problems facing any organizations and leaders of any organizations that seek to work together to solve the complex problems of our 21st Century.

As we have in the past, the co-editors of this issue of IJCO asked an experienced organizational coach (Marilyn Taylor) to prepare a brief commentary on Brian Pelchat’s case study. Taylor focuses in her commentary on ways in which a leader like Brian can be effective in working with the multiple agendas and divergent values of the Yukon Government and Aboriginal people. Taylor’s commentary is followed by a more extended analysis (written by one of us—Bergquist) regarding ways in which organizational coaching can be engaged in collaborative ventures. This article contains not only a general description of the unique opportunities and challenges associated with collaborative ventures, and the various types of collaboration that are now prominent in our world, but also a further commentary on the Pelchat case and a unique commentary-on-a-commentary (Taylor’s case analysis).

We hope that this case study (and others offered in previous issues of IJCO) will be the subject of further discussions in future meetings of organizational coaching and in various training programs. We also expect in future issues of IJCO to offer many more extended and interactive analyses of case studies, such as we have provided in this first issue of 2006. Given our interest in providing these more detailed and extended case studies and analyses, we welcome your own comments on the case study and your own appraisal of the value inherent in this type of article and the accompanying analyses.

This first issue of IJCO in 2006 also contains three regularly-appearing features. First, we offer a review of an organizational coaching training program—in this case the Adler Institute in Toronto, Canada. We have followed this review with a brief description of the ways in which Adlerian psychology can be applied to organizational coaching. This description is offered by Marcia Reynolds—a former president of ICF and co-editor of the upcoming second issue of IJCO in 2006. We also offer a book review of Marybeth O’Neill’s Coaching with Backbone and Heart. This review has been prepared by Kathleen O’Donnell—a seasoned practice management coach and previous contributor to this journal. Finally, Mike Jay offers his always informative column, entitled Mike’s Musings.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that you will find its contents to be relevant to your own work—given that you are likely to be faced in the near future (if not today) with the challenge of coaching to or leading a 21st Century collaborative venture.

William Bergquist
John Lazar

Co-Editors