
 ‘TIME WELL SPENT: NOTES FROM THE FIELD’ by Suzi Pomerantz

“For years I’ve been fortunate to meet with an international think tank of executive coaches at the annual Executive Coaching Summit. In 2003 we realized we were just a bunch of executive coaches sitting around talking about how to improve global business leadership. We needed to include key stakeholders in that conversation.

So here’s what we did about it. We made a wish list for the ideal organization - one that would attract multiple stakeholders interested in the success of coaching solutions in organizations. We went beyond executive coaches with a passion for our profession, to include coaching directors of organizations and organizational leaders who utilize coaching services, those who train coaches, and those who research the impact of coaching and the return on investment (ROI) to organizations who deploy coaches.

Voila! We hit upon a real market need - a place to have the conversations that aren’t happening anywhere else. The Professional School of Psychology shared our belief and bravely sponsored the first event. Deloitte, Booz Allen Hamilton, Pricewaterhouse Coopers and Banco Santander sponsored subsequent events and one was hosted by the U.S. Department of Education.

ICCO Symposia. *It’s amazing what happens when you get the right people in a room, the right voices at the table, and professionals representing diverse perspectives in dialogue.* These two- to three-day dialogues are limited to a balance of 30 attendees to ensure optimal conversation. We bring together 10 coaches, 10 organizational representatives, and 10 participants who are coaching researchers, educators, trainers, or associations. Participants are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Once each stakeholder sector is filled, applicants are referred to upcoming Symposia planned in other locations.

Based on recent events in Washington and Mexico and the upcoming Seattle event, I’d suggest booking early to ensure your place at the table.

ICCO Symposia include cases presented by organizational leaders. Breakout sessions let participants take on the roles of either coach or consultant to address that organization’s challenge. There is a pure magic of engaged dialogue that lets people contribute and add value from their intelligence and their heart.

Case Study in point: DC Symposium.

Attendants ranged from leaders of government agencies, corporations, a few associations represented (ASTD), and even a dairy company from Norway. Others came from local and international universities, coach training organizations, researchers, boutique coaching organizations and individual practitioners. The diverse perspectives tackled the exploration of meaty questions about global challenges - sustainability of the planet, leadership in a global economy, politician as coach, and coaches as leaders.

We laughed, we cried, we ate. We explored ideas that were “out there” and practical ideas around books and resources to share, including the role of the coach and whether or not to question the values of a client organization and what impact that might have on global sustainability. Participants reported they were engaged, inspired, challenged, and valued being able to be in this caliber of dialogue utilizing both their heads and their hearts, which was out of the norm for their typical business environments.

Limited participants.

Unlimited ideas.

Each Symposium is limited by design, but can be held virtually anywhere in the world. Our second event in NYC event sold out. Since then, every event is at or near capacity.

Suzi Pomerantz

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