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The Impact of Dialogue - by guest writer: Suzi Pomerantz

April 30, 2007

[Suzi Pomerantz](#), MT, MCC, heads Innovative Leadership International LLC, an executive coaching firm that helps leaders and organizations find clarity in chaos. Her new book *Seal the Deal !: the Essential Mindsets for Growing Your Professional Services Business* continues to receive rave reviews.



It's amazing what happens when you get the right people in a room, the right voices at the table, and like-minded professionals representing diverse perspectives in dialogue. The pure magic of engaged dialogue lets people contribute and add value from both their intelligence and their heart. Lest you think I'm talking about some new-age drumming circle (not that there's anything wrong with that), I wanted to let you know about a recent symposium that was held mid April 2007 in Washington DC on the topic of Global Implications of Organizational Coaching. "Why is she telling me about an event that's over?" you might wonder. Well, because there are more where that came from and you may want to attend one in the future or help organize one yourself in a city near you! The organization is the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations, or [ICCO](#), and I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you a bit about them to set the context for the DC event that was just held.

For years I've been fortunate enough to meet annually with an international think tank of executive coaches at the [Executive Coaching Summit](#) and back in 2003 we had a realization during one of these sessions that we were just a bunch of executive coaches sitting around talking about how to improve global business leadership and yet we might as well have been sitting around contemplating our navels because we were missing key stakeholders in that conversation.

So here's what we did about it. We dreamed up an organization that would bring together the multiple stakeholders who had an interest in the success of coaching solutions in organizations...not just executive coaches with a passion for the advancement and stewardship of our profession, but also coaching directors

of organizations and organizational leaders who utilize coaching services, those who train coaches, and those who are leading the charge to research the impact of coaching and the ROI (return on investment) to organizations who deploy coaches.

Voila! We hit upon a real market need. It took us awhile to organize, incorporate and set up our first board, but now we're moving forward like gangbusters on our mission to create opportunities for dialogue — a place to have the conversations that aren't happening anywhere else.

To that end, we've created free teleforums that happen every 6-8 weeks on various topics relevant to organizations. Our goal is to focus from an organization-centric perspective, not a coach-centric world view. The main activity of ICCO is to hold multiple symposia. These are two- to three-day dialogues limited to a maximum of 40 attendees per event to ensure optimal conversation. As it says on the ICCO site: *For each event, capacity is limited to 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, we will refer you to the symposia being planned in other locations.*

Now, if you're doing the math, you'll see that the above breakdown only accounts for 30 people. The other ten are comprised of design team members, board members and the Dean and administrator who support the event. The symposia follow a template format that includes cases presented by organizational leaders and then breakout sessions where participants take on the roles of either coach or consultant to address that organization's challenge.

So, back to DC. We had several leaders of government agencies (of course...we're in DC) as well as corporations such as Booz Allen Hamilton, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, a few associations represented (ASTD), and even a dairy company from Norway in attendance. We had representatives from universities both local and international, as well as coach training organizations, researchers, boutique coaching organizations and individual practitioners in the room. The diverse perspectives were united around the exploration of meaty questions about global challenges like sustainability of the planet, leadership in a global economy, politician as coach, and coaches as leaders.

We laughed, we cried, it was better than Cats! We explored ideas as “out there” as creating a set of governing laws for a global society that could be co-created in an open source online format where every global citizen can contribute to the content. We explored practical, grounded ideas around books to read and resources to share. And everything in-between, including the role of the coach and whether or not we should question the values of a client organization and what impact that might have on global sustainability. Participants reported that they were engaged, inspired, challenged, and that they 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.

While the number of participants at each symposia is limited by design, the number of symposia that can be held in the world is unlimited. We held the pilot in June 2006 in Sacramento, and it was so well received that we had the second one in NYC in October 2006. We had to turn people away from that one, which was the catalyst for volunteers to initiate multiple upcoming events. Watch the ICCO website for specific details, but in the plans are one in Mexico (May 2007), one in Seattle (June 2007), Toronto in October 2007 and one in Boston also in October 2007 and four more on deck thus far for 2008. These all have different topics, one is on Neurosciences, one is on Research, one is on International Coaching, one is on Cross-Cultural Coaching, etc.

So, if you hunger for meaningful professional dialogue with a stewardship component, this is the community for you to play in. This is the dialogue you've been looking for. Find an upcoming symposium that works for you or organize one yourself (we've got a template, a Dean, and an administrator to help you...you just need a date, a location and a design team) and you, too, can contribute to the dialogue that is making business and the world a better place.

One comment to “The Impact of Dialogue - by guest writer: Suzi Pomerantz”

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This article was my first opportunity to learn about ICCO and discover that their main activity is to hold multiple symposia. The two- to three-day dialogues limited to a maximum of 40 attendees per event to help ensure optimal participation sounds like such an effective method to bring people together and have the chance to hear a variety of viewpoints from people around the world. As small business owners, we tend to focus more on a local or domestic level when we are first growing our business. As a participant in even one of the multiple symposia, you have the ability to meet with people located around the globe and actively share ideas. This exposure to exchanging ideas and examining case studies immediately expands your perspective and provides you with valuable learning experiences. Since May is Creative Beginnings Month, I can't think of a better way to celebrate being creative and exploring your potential!

This format also reinforces a great point that Suzi discusses in her book, *Seal the Deal!: The Essential Mindsets for Growing Your Professional Services Business*. In her book, Suzi shares, “The idea is one of collaboration with competitors, or turning competitors into partners, by building alliances and joint ventures as a business development strategy.” By bringing together professionals who have an interest in the success of various aspects of their industry, we can reach out to more people and create additional resources, services and form joint ventures to allow a more global reach. That sounds like a great investment of time rather than constantly wondering how to “beat” your competitors or “play the game.”

I think I will celebrate Creative Beginnings Month by looking into how I may “contribute to the dialogue that is making business and the world a better place.” Thanks Suzi!

✧ [by Kelly Johnson](#) May 5, 2007 at 11:48 pm

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[Focus on Empowerment Radio Show](#)

June 22 and 23, 2007

Michael and Sheryl will cover “10 Google Skills that Will Make you Smarter than the Average Yahoo” during a radio interview with Carole Copeland Thomas on her weekly radio show. Listen live on Friday or Saturday 11:00 AM EST on WBNW 1120AM in the Boston area, or catch the podcast anytime from the website.

[Get the Handout here](#)

[Ellensburg Downtown Association](#)

August 9, 2007 Help save downtown Ellensburg, Washington. Michael and Sheryl will be doing their part with a presentation. Place and time to be announced. Stay tuned!

Thursday, August 9

Downtown Ellensburg, WA

[Wyospace.com Idea Expo](#)

Sept. 26-28, 2007

Not your ordinary business conference. If you have any interest in business in Wyoming, this is the place to be. Michael and Sheryl do the lunchtime keynote on Thursday, Sept. 27th "But I Already Know How to Google! 9 Surefire Success Secrets the Other Yahoos Don't Even Know"

Wed. Sept. 26 – Friday Sept. 28

Casper Events Center

#1 Events Drive

PO Box 128

Casper, Wyoming 82602

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[2007 Women's Success Forum](#)

Denver, CO – October 3

Join top women executives and business leaders at the 10th annual Women's Vision Foundation event. Michael and Sheryl present "The Beyond Google Advantage: 37 Secrets that Make You Smarter and Richer Than the Average Yahoo" in a breakout session from 1:15 – 2:45

Wednesday, Oct. 3 2007

Colorado Convention Center

Denver, CO

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- [Eric Chester's Generation Why?](#)
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- [Fred Pryor Seminars/CareerTrack](#)
- [James J. Hill Business Reference Library](#)
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