



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 56: Sell a Solution Not Yourself

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[Intro Music]

Brian Miller: Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries Podcast, where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. Our podcast today is sponsored by our certificate in Christian Leadership Coaching. This is a nine month, ICF-approved coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in July, at the end of this month, so it's not too late. If you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, and I'm joined here today by Mr. Bill Copper, the executive director of Coach Approach Ministries.

Bill Copper: The way you say that just sounds so good. I'm impressed. I might have you do my ringtone or something on my phone.

Brian: I try to match the way I say it with how good looking they are, so it takes everything I've got to get yours.

Bill: Well done, my friend, well done.

Brian: That's for sure. Hey, we're going to talk today about our July challenge. We try to put out a challenge every month to our coaches to try to get them to step up, to take their practice a little bit farther, and this month's challenge is to sell a solution, not to sell yourself. Bill, what's that mean to you when you first hear that? What do you hear in that?

Bill: Well, I guess, as you know, when we're doing our training of coaches, one of the things we run into, probably more than anything else, is people trying to make a transition from, often times, a ministry role, but other roles as well, where they didn't have a role in selling, but when they get into coaching, now, all of a sudden, in order to get clients, you've got to sell. There's this sense that people get uncomfortable in "selling themselves." I say that with air quotes around it. We're too modest, or we're too humble, or whatever other idea it is that we think that selling our self violates, but we get

uncomfortable with that. The whole idea in coaching is that we don't have to sell ourselves. It's a necessary thing to sell, but we don't have to sell ourselves. We can find a comfortable way do that, and as Chad points out this month, selling a solution is, for many of us, is much more palatable and probably more accurate than trying to sell ourselves.

Brian: And more effective?

Bill: Certainly more effective, and I think, truer to what's actually going on in a coaching relationship, in a coaching conversation because if you think about selling yourself, then that puts the emphasis on the coach as the person who's making this all happen, and that's different from what we believe about coaching and about our clients. All of those reasons. It's more accurate, it's more helpful, and more palatable for us to sell a solution than to sell ourselves.

Brian: Out of the top two or three things we say at Coach Approach Ministries all the time, in the top three has to be, "People buy results. They don't buy coaching."

Bill: People don't buy coaching. Sometimes that just scares folks to death when they come through coach training thinking, "Hey. I think I want to do this. I want to do this for a living," or, "I want to generate some revenue through my coaching efforts helping folks," and then when we tell them, "Truth is, people don't buy coaching," it can sometimes put people off or scare them a little bit. The truth is, people don't buy coaching. They buy the results of coaching. They buy what coaching will get them, and so, when we can help people begin to think about, not about paying us to coach them, but about paying us to help them achieve something, accomplish something, get somewhere. The more we can help identify and articulate what that is, what that solution is, what that outcome is, the more we can make that value proposition. It can be a tough sell for someone who maybe not familiar with coaching, to say, yeah, you pay me this much per phone call, I'll coach you. Boy, it can be difficult for people to understand the value proposition, but if instead, you say, if you hire me to be your coach, here's what you're going to get from that. The way we're going to do this, we're going to get on the phone, we're going to talk, but the value proposition is there because we're helping them identify, this is what I'm going to get for this cost. It certainly makes coaching seem much more affordable, and effective, and a good value when you help people see what they're getting from it, not what we're going to do.

Brian: So, sell a solution not yourself. We might have better titled it, sell an outcome, sell a result.

Bill: Yeah, and I'm okay with any of those and maybe all of those. Sometimes, Brian, selling an outcome might be appropriate if our particular niche fits that. We're coaching people toward finding a new job. Well, the outcome might be that at the end of our coaching session, you're going to be in a position to find a new job. Selling a solution, that really ties it to the pain that the person is feeling. There's something that they want that they don't have right now. That's their pain, if you will, and what we're helping them come up with is a solution to that pain. So, the coaching is a solution, and what we help them identify is, this coaching is going to help you find a solution to the dilemma, the pain, that you're feeling, so I'm okay with any of those words.

Brian: Absolutely. So, our friend Cyril Johnston, he would say, "Your best ministry season yet," or "Your

best ministry season ever.” In that’s the sense of, “I’m not having my best ministry season ever,” and working with me, a lot of things will fire on that. Certainly, you can’t get it in one statement, but it gives you the sense of, I have a solution for your misery.

Bill: That’s what Cyril helps people do is find, and enjoy, their best ministry season yet. That’s a great way for people to identify, “I don’t have that, so if that’s what you could bring me, then I want to hire you,” and that’s a whole lot different from Cyril, or anybody else saying, “Hey, I’ll coach you. Pay me to coach you, and people being able to make that connection, “If I pay you, and you coach me, then I’m going to get my best ministry season ever.” People just aren’t able to make that connection, so the more that we can help them identify the solution or the outcome, the more it makes the value proposition much more attractive.

Brian: It makes it clear. A couple things that selling a solution does, and we’re going to go ahead and talk about building a coaching package. So, a coaching package would be, we’re not just going to coach to get this result. I’m going to add a bit more to it than that. There’s two purposes for that. One is marketing, Bill, talk about that.

Bill: When you talk about a coaching package, what we’re really helping the client understand is these are the things that are likely to be included in coaching that we do. We help list, here are the things that are going to be part of that, and you might think of it as things beyond coaching. I would say that it’s just part of coaching. It’s just that we articulate them specifically so that the client can see, “Wow. I’m getting all of that as value.” For marketing purposes, we’re helping clients understand, here’s my package. Package A, whatever topic it happens to be, and here are the elements of that package. It really helps people get some tangible, put their hands on, that’s what I’m going to get. Those are the outcomes, those are the deliverables in this coaching engagement, really help people make that value proposition, as you said, more clear.

Brian: The picture I had when you said that is, I’m not going to hire a carpenter who says, “I do carpentry.” I’m really not looking to hire a carpenter. I’m looking to have a new roof. I’m looking to have my house re-sided.

Bill: You’re not looking for carpentry, you’re looking for some siding on the back of the house.

Brian: I need an expert.

Bill: I think that’s a great illustration. You’re not interested in paying for some carpentry. You’re interested in paying for the results, and this person’s going to use carpentry to get it done.

Brian: We’re talked about, we’re going to put new siding on, and the guy shows up, he’s mostly got whittling tools. He’s like, “Well, mostly I’ve done mallards.”

Bill: “I’m good with wood, though.”

Brian: I think in a coaching package, the best thing you’ve got to offer is coaching, but I think it certainly helps give the client a sense of, okay, there’s a bigger plan here than just a phone call. It helps them to

understand the complete value.

Bill: Right. That's a great point, and that's what I mean by it's useful for marketing. Even I might fully know that the most powerful thing we can do is show up as a coach and to use coaching skills, and coaching tools, and to bring out those best ideas and hopes and dreams from someone else, but you and I knowing that isn't the same as our potential clients knowing that, and that's what marketing is about. Just like the carpenter who knows they've got some skills, and some tools, and some techniques, that's going to make your roof really sturdy, and waterproof, and sound, and all those kind of things, what the client needs to know is are you going to deliver a roof or not? Am I going to have a roof at the end of this. Just as we coaches know, good coaching is probably the most powerful thing we're going to bring, but helping clients understand the outcomes by putting together a package of here are all the things you're going to get is a great marketing tool to help people understand, as I said before, that value proposition.

Brian: Certainly the value proposition part of the marketing is huge because if somebody sees just a basic price for my coaching, they may think, "How on earth is it worth that," but if they do see there are more things being offered in it, I think that helps them see the total value, and you may be able to charge a little more for a package than just for your coaching service.

Bill: That's often true because the value just keeps going up the more that you talk about, here's what's included in that, but Brian, beyond the value proposition, as part of marketing, a package helps your client self-identify as someone who can use your coaching. In other words, that's what I'm going to get. Oh yeah, I need that. Whereas, if you just say I'm going to be coaching you, they can't always see the solution. People don't buy coaching, as we've said. Offering a coaching package can help your client understand that they're a candidate for being one of your clients or you're a candidate for helping solve their pain. That package, as I see it, as you've explained it to me, that is going to fix my pain. That's going to bring me the kind of solution that I'm looking for. So, in marketing, it not only helps with the value proposition, but it also helps people identify, that's the coach I want, that's the package I want.

Brian: The second thing that a package can do is create predictable outcomes.

Bill: Exactly. That kind of ties into the clients being able to self-identify that this is for me. This meets my need. This helps to fix my pain, and it can help them understand, if that's the package I'm buying from Brian, I can see how I can get what I'm looking for from that package. Maybe the package includes an assessment. I can predict, I'm going to know, I'm just making this up, what my Meyers-Briggs type is going to be. I'm going to know what my high-performance pattern is, and if they've got some predictable outcomes from the coaching package that they may not be able to see if we're just offering them coaching.

Brian: This is really interesting, this analogy between hiring a carpenter and hiring a coach. So, I say I need a new roof, and the carpenter says, "I can do that," or I'm going to build a house, let's use that, and the carpenter says, "Oh, I can do that." Well, you're thinking, "Can they? I'm not 100% sure." They say, "I'm going to come every day, and I'm going to work." That's part of the package. So, as a coach, that would be one thing we can do is say once a week, once every two weeks, once a month, whatever it

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is, we're going to have a coaching conversation, and I say, "That's a good start, but it doesn't give me the confidence." I'm thinking about five things we could put in a package. The second thing, and you just mentioned it, is an assessment. If I'm building a house, this would be so interesting to me that the first thing the carpenter's going to do is do a little assessment to see what we really need, to see where the areas of work are. That's a great value add.

Bill: And in that analogy, the carpenter's also looking to see what's already there. What do I have to work with? If it's an empty lot, what size is there to work with? If it's an existing place that he's going to remodel, what can I keep? What can I give up? In all of those assessments, what are you going to use it for? What's important to you? You need kids' bedrooms, you need an open space. Part of that assessment that a carpenter might do is very analogous to what a coach might do in assessments. There's a million of them, and depending on what your package, the focus of it is, you might select one or more different assessments as part of a specific coaching package.

Brian: All of a sudden, that makes so much sense to me that we're going to provide an assessment to see what's going on, and that's a great value add. It's not a very difficult value add, depending on what kind of assessment you do. A couple that we were just throwing around in our minds, Bill, were HPP, the high-performance pattern. I find people, in the right situation, especially in leadership or pastoring, they love that assessment.

Bill: The high-performance pattern is a great tool to build a package around, honestly. There's a lot of coaching that comes from that, and something like a high-performance pattern, or an LPI 360, there's just a lot of different assessments, even Strengths Finder, a Meyers-Briggs type. A lot of assessments that are meant to provide some awareness to the client, and depending on the assessment, sometimes it tells us, here's where you are right now, here's where your strengths are, here's where your weaknesses are. There's all kinds of assessments that measure different things, but it's a great way to get started as part of a package. Now people understand, this is where we're starting from, and based on what awarenesses are here, that's going to help form where we go moving forward.

Brian: That's great. So, one thing in the package is obviously coaching, a conversation on a regular basis. Another thing you could put, and this isn't just a specific list. There's more things, and you don't have to put all these things in, and there are things we're not going to mention that you could put in, but an assessment, to help see where they are, some pre-planned topics, Bill. Our friend, Laura Stephens-Reed, has put together a package to help churches hire a new minister, and so, she's thought through several important topics that should be discussed. What a great piece that is that she brings because you might not think through every part of those. She's thought this through, so you don't have to, to some extent, to what topics are important.

Bill: It really ties in with what you've been talking about recently, and that is framework coaching. One of the elements of a coaching package might be a framework. I'm just thinking off the top of my head. I think your example of what Laura does is awesome. Another example might be that the framework is you're going to help someone transition to a new job. There are some things that you might bring to that conversation, that relationship, that you know, some information that you know. You might help

them understand first, we're going to talk about this, then, we're going to help you understand this, then we're going to move to that. You can bring a framework as part of one of the elements of a coaching package, and there are just tons of those that could add value to people because it gives your client some understanding and confidence that this is going in a direction. We're going to be talking about this, we're talking about that. So, with pre-planned topics, I would say that really fits in with the framework idea of coaching.

Brian: That's fantastic. Because there are things you haven't thought of, and we're not the experts. I think what we don't want to be is the expert in the middle of the call. So, oh, let me tell you what I would do in that situation. That we certainly don't want to do, but for instance, I was coaching a denominational executive the other day, and he was going to a church that had just lost their pastor, and he wanted to get coaching around what to do there, and his first thought was, "I'm going to go in there and stretch them. I'm going to see what's next." Just thinking about it, having done that myself, and what Laura had talked about, I'm not sure how well I did without being an expert, but the idea of, what level of grief are they at? He hadn't thought about that that they might need to be spending more time on the beginning side of the transition rather than the other side of the transition. So, that's something you can bring with pre-planned topics is some things they hadn't thought about exploring.

Bill: Even the word that you just mentioned, transition. We learn about transition, some of the different stages, phases of transition. That's something that we bring to a coaching relationship. We bring a framework that says hey, you're going through a transition, and what I understand about transition is first, there's kind of this phase. Then, there's kind of that phase. We can bring that understanding, and that knowledge, and that framework to the coaching relationship, but the framework is put in place because that's part of the package that someone said, "Yeah, that's what I need."

Brian: That's great. Just to stay on track on time, we're doing real well, but we got to get closer to finishing up here. Tools. So, when I was thinking about the carpenter analogy, to know that this carpenter, who's going to put a new roof on, has some equipment that gets everything into the roof easier. He has this and that. That gives me confidence knowing that the carpenter has the appropriate tools, so Bill, what are some appropriate tools that you could put in a coaching package that might build confidence for your client?

Bill: There are a ton of things. We use the coaching wheel to help people understand what areas of life they may want to work in. There are other tools. There's the ladder of inference, if you recall that. I think that's a great tool.

Brian: Oh, it's a great one.

Bill: Some of those assessments could be called tools. I think there's an understanding of how the grief process works, like you just mentioned. Another is understanding conflict styles. That's a great tool to bring to a coaching relationship when that's the issue. Part of the coaching package around leadership, just using that as an example, might be, "I help you understand what your conflict style is." That's a tool. There might also be an assessment there, but I think even more helpful than just the assessment is an understanding of how the different conflict styles come about, when they're appropriate, when they're

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not. Those are tools. Tools like leadership challenge for example, where you help people understand these are the commonly accepted characteristics and behaviors of a great leader. That's information we can provide. SL2, I think, is one that you use.

Brian: It is.

Bill: That's a tool that we can bring to a coaching relationship, conversation, part of the package that we offer that adds value and gives the client, a couple things, confidence, just like you and your carpenter, that hey, they've got the tools to get the job done. It also gives the client some handles, some tangible takeaways to say man, I've got some value because now I've got this knowledge, I got this new understanding of things.

Brian: So, the connection you made, which was great, is an assessment can help create awareness for the client, but then it becomes, typically, a tool. So, the high-performance pattern, when that was done for me, created a ton of awareness, but now I use it as a tool to say, "What needs to happen next?" Not all assessments become tools, and not all tools were assessments, but there is a conversion there that often, often happens. So, the fifth thing you could put in a package, Bill, is resources.

Bill: We do that a lot in coaching. Maybe some books, maybe some favorite authors, some podcasts, some information that we're aware of around a particular topic that we provide to a client. As part of the package, we give you a book list, or maybe we give you a book. One of the packages I did a few years back working with teams, I provided everybody the *5 Dysfunctions of a Team* book. That was part of the resources. That was part of the package. The same thing with podcasts that you've collected, or white papers, or other readings you've collected around a particular topic. Say, I'm going to send you several articles that I've read on this or different resources that will help the client and give them some tangible takeaway that's part of the coaching package.

Brian: Bill, I really appreciate you spending some time with us, helping us to think through how to sell a solution and not ourselves. This has been really helpful. Hey, thanks everybody for joining us. Next week on this podcast, Chad and I will continue to discuss his new e-book, *Nine Things It Really Takes to be a Christian Coach*. One thing you definitely need is clients. You cannot coach without clients, so plan to join us next week for that conversation. This podcast was sponsored by our certificate in Christian Leadership Coaching. We have a new cohort forming at the end of this month, so we hope you'll take advantage of that, Join us. If you're interested, go to www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. We'll see you next week.

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