



## Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

### Episode 85: Identifying and Reaching Your Coaching Niche

Published: February 1, 2018

**Brian Miller:** Are you a certified coach that needs some mentor coaching to improve your skills, grow your business, or renew your credential? Coach Approach Ministries loves to help you grow. To sign up for 10 hours of group mentor coaching that improves your skills and fulfills your credential requirements, go to [coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor](http://coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor), or to hire a mentor coach who will help you grow your coaching practice, go to [coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor](http://coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor). This is the decision that propelled me into full-time coaching.

#### [Intro Music]

**Brian:** This is Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by the president of Coach Approach Ministries, Chad Hall.

**Chad:** Hey Brian. How are you doing today?

**Brian:** Doing good. Hey, we've got a good topic today. This is our focus for February. We like to have a focus each month at Coach Approach Ministries, and the focus this month is identifying and reaching your coaching, what are we going to say Chad? Are we going to say niche or niche?

**Chad:** You know, I just have a hard time saying niche. It reminds me of quiche, so let's go with niche.

**Brian:** It reminds me of itch.

**Chad:** Which I like better than quiche.

**Brian:** It does make sense that you're looking for an itch to scratch as opposed to a quiche to scratch.

**Chad:** That's exactly right.

**Brian:** That's exactly right. I don't think it is exactly right, but it's awfully close. So, let's talk about this. Identifying and reaching your coaching niche. First of all, just give us a quick definition of niche.

**Chad:** This really gets to lean into the identifying part, but a niche is a group of people, but it's a group of people with a specific issue, challenge, problem, opportunity, something that makes them... They're moving along in a story, and they reach some kind of pitch point or something. So, it's not just a group of people. It's not just leaders. It's leaders who have recently been promoted or something like that. So,

[Transcribed by Alyssa Miller](#)

it's a focused group of people with a specific issue that they're facing that you can address through coaching.

**Brian:** And it's important to have a coaching niche because as trained coaches, we like the idea that we can coach anyone who's willing to sit across from us. That's the niche, someone who's willing to be in a conversation with us, and what we find is it does not bring enough clarity to the client to say, "I want to continue this beyond... Or even in the beginning. We talk about after you coach your friend, your mom, your dog, and your neighbor's dog, you really need to start thinking about a niche. Who is it? We're a Christian coaching outfit, so maybe who is it that God wants us to coach?"

**Chad:** When we get into identifying the niche, one of my favorite questions for coaches is to think about what's the good in the world that you would love to see happen? Who creates that good, and that's your target. That's your niche. So, if you want to see healthy and vibrant churches, okay, well, who's responsible for that? Maybe you say, "Oh, it's pastors of churches that are struggling." You begin to narrow into your niche, or if you think, "What the world needs. I'd get up every morning to help create healthy families." Okay, well, who is responsible for creating that good in the world? You might say parents, or newlyweds, or something like that. That's a good way to begin to get at your niche is what's God called you to help make happen in the world.

**Brian:** I think another good way to look for your niche is to look for the arc in your own life, where you've been and where you've gotten to. I know a big part of my heart has been entrepreneurial, starting something new. So, that tends to be a niche for me. I've been a leader. I feel like that's a niche for me, and I'm going to niche even narrower by saying I'm a ministry leader. Although, I think I can help all kinds of leaders. I think I have some, and we don't like to use the word authority when we're talking about coaching, but I think when you're talking about a niche, you have to have a bit of authority.

**Chad:** If authority's too strong a word, maybe credibility is another word we could use. Again, I think you're on to something there, Brian. Coaches tend to shy away from having authority or credibility because they don't want to be confused with mentors or consultants, and we get that, but if you're looking for who are you going to serve best? It probably is going to be somebody who's facing something similar to what you have, or at least something that you're familiar with.

**Brian:** So, part of that credibility, I have an empathy. I've been there. I know what it's like. I know the frustration of it, and the credibility is I know some processes, some models, some best practices. I think I'm aware of those, at least, that can come into the coaching as needed.

**Chad:** That's right because most coaching, if you're coaching for a long-term, you're doing a lot more than just asking questions, and again, maybe coaches a couple years into it are still thinking, "Coaching is about powerful questions, listening, asking those questions." That's a big part of it, but having access to tools, to resources, to exercises, models, those kinds of things. You can't know all of those, so it helps you to have a narrower niche so you can either develop or at least acquire those resources.

**Brian:** I think to know whether you're an authority, I think you used the word credibility, you should probably be able to name 100 topics for your niche. You should be able to predict 100 topics that your folks would bring to the coaching, and probably, you could narrow that down to 10, 20, 25 really common topics.

**Chad:** Yeah, just to be clear to all the listeners, we're not saying you're driving the agenda, but if you can't imagine that many topics, you probably aren't familiar with this person's world, and actually, imagining 100 different topics helps you realize, "Oh, there are a lot of ways this could go. I don't necessarily have to have the answers to all of those. I know the context. I'm familiar enough with this person and what they're facing that I can imagine lots of stuff to talk about."

**Brian:** I had an aha the other day as I was thinking about my coaching niche, and I think this is true, I don't know that people should absolutely do this as they figure it out, but when we talk about a framework for coaching, you laid that out really well. I won't go through that, but there's some idea of what we're coaching about. It's a little more specific than I'm just familiar with it. My aha moment was you take a coaching wheel, which is a circle, and it's divided up into, say, 8 to 10 pieces of pie, and you should be able to put in each piece of pie there a major topic that a person in this niche would likely need to talk about.

**Chad:** That's good. It reminds me, Brian, I was just doing some training last week with a college in the southwest. They're providing coaches for all of their students. It's very framework coaching. It's not, "Hey, what do you want to talk about today?" They've narrowed to five key topics that will tend to get addressed in the coaching.

**Brian:** Wow. Five key topics. That surprises me. Even as I was looking at this wheel for myself and saying 8 to 10, really I think the typical wheel has 8, if you will. If you will, not wheel, but I was having trouble narrowing it down. I wanted to go with 10 because I am not a narrower. I hate to narrow, don't like it.

**Chad:** I think you have a narrow-phobia.

**Brian:** But if you are credible in this area, or you've narrowed enough of your niche, you should be able to come up with... That fascinates me that they came up with five and feel like this is the five.

**Chad:** And again, they have a very narrowed niche. Student body which is coming from a particular background, cultural context with this particular school, and we're not saying five's the magic number. Neither is 8 or 10, but somewhere in that range gives you a good handle for okay, here are the things we could talk about. By the way, your clients might really appreciate that. They're wondering, "What are we going to talk about," and it doesn't mean you are limited in the coaching to talking about only those 5, or 8, or 10 things unless you are doing very framework heavy coaching where you're both covenanting to talk about those areas. You could talk about other things, but having that framework of those 8 or 10 possible topics, or coaching areas, man, it helps the client. It helps them generate topics. It helps think about success. It helps them envision progress in whatever endeavor they're in. It's one of the most helpful things you can do for a client.

**Brian:** The wheel example's one we use a lot. I think it's something you can use for awareness. It's something your client can do before they even get to the coaching call. I would say, even before they sign up for coaching, they get access to this wheel, and from 1 to 10, where am I at in this area? They can kind of rate themselves, self-assess, and see, and this is the point of having a niche to get clients, they can see they could use some help in that area that they might not have been aware of.

**Chad:** You're doing a good job here, Brian, kind of bridging from identifying the niche to reaching the niche. So, when we're going to reach the niche, we're going to communicate in a way they can hear,

understand, lets them know that we get them, and it takes them a little further in their own processing. If you've got a niche, you can develop an assessment, or a questionnaire, or a resource, or something to help reach that niche, whether it's wheel or whatever. If you don't have a niche, what kind of assessment could you create?

**Brian:** I think an assessment's a great piece, or anything like that where it helps the client begin to realize their need for coaching. It creates a self-awareness, and it's because the product we sell as coaches is not a \$19.95 product.

**Chad:** Or year, by the way. It's also not the year 1995.

**Brian:** No, it's certainly not the year 1995, but I'm walking through the store. I see something that's cool.

**Chad:** It's also not a service. It's a commodity. When you say, oh, accounting. Everyone knows what accounting is.

**Brian:** And I need that. I'm not good at that. I need that.

**Chad:** And with coaching, our listeners have heard us say this probably 100 times, nobody needs a coach, nobody buys coaching, nobody's out looking for a coach. They're looking for some kind of help, or solution, or something to help them move forward on some kind of topic. So, that's why you've got to have a niche, and you've got to help create some of these resources, or tools, to help them begin to reach their niche. There are other ways to reach the niche as well.

**Brian:** I think it's helpful. In the issue of identifying, we're narrowing, we're bringing it down, we've given you some good examples. We've started in on the reaching. What are some other ways to do some reaching of the coaching niche, Chad?

**Chad:** Take, for instance, you talk about your own coaching niche, and a lot of people want to coach leaders. So, think, "Okay. How could I reach leaders?" One, that'd be really hard because it's not very narrow. It's narrower than humans. You've got it narrower than that, but if you begin to narrow it to, "I'm going to work with leaders who are ministry leaders who are challenged with feeling overwhelmed and underproductive." By the way, you want to find language that resonates with your niche, so overwhelmed and underproductive ministry leaders. Well, now you've got a pretty narrow niche. Now, you'll be able to reach them, and you can begin to think what sort of resources can I begin to create? What kind of communication can I engage in? What kind of conversations could I have where we could talk about with those people those topics, overwhelmed and underproductive? It helps you know where to go, who to look at, that kind of think. So, I would begin to think... By the way, these examples are not intended to say you should go do these.

You'd have to run these through the filter of, "Is this something I would actually want to do?" So, for instance, you could write an e-book, or you could write a full-length book on the overwhelmed, underproductive ministry leader. It's very targeted. You could create YouTube videos for that audience as a way to reach out to that niche. You could find out where those sorts of leaders hang out, and you could join them there in those conversations. They probably don't go to the Rotary Club meetings, but they probably go to something. So, where could you position yourself to be around them? You're beginning to reach them through that physical presence. What kind of keynotes could you give, and

what kind of audience would you give them to in order to reach that audience? That's what I think. You've got to kind of build a bridge to where they are, and then invite them back across that bridge into coaching.

**Brian:** And I think the best content... I think there's two layers of content I would use as I got started, and I have. One is, I might find a voice that really speaks. In leadership, Patrick Lencioni. I might be familiar with his stuff, and I might walk through his stuff. I don't have a problem walking through it. I'm going to give him credit for it. I'm not going to act like I made this up, but I can talk about this. I think the absolute best place to get your content is from your coaching. You certainly are holding confidentiality, but after you've coached enough people in that niche, you start to hear trends and solutions. You don't want to steal anybody's solutions, but I think there's enough there that you can begin to put it into an e-book or an assessment.

**Chad:** Yeah, you could begin to think of those as best practices. For this group of people, here are some common things they face, here are some best practices for how to address those challenges or opportunities. It's also the more you coach within that niche, the better able you are to use, your example of Lencioni's work, you're better able to translate his stuff into their language. Because any of them could read his book, the value you're adding is you're kind of translating it, you're adapting it to their context for them. That's a big help. People love that, and if you were to do that, the person would say, "Wow. That was really helpful. This is a person who helped me," and the number one rule in business is people do business with those they know, like, and trust. If you've added value to them, they trust you.

**Brian:** And if you're continuing to reach them through the narrowing too. So, if I take Lencioni's stuff, I can apply it to small church pastors, or I can apply it to non-profit execs, and that's a specific place. Because I've done some coaching in that area, because I have some credibility in that area, I do know what the issues are and can give them a little guidance. I would say, if you write the e-book, then you take it out of the coaching conversation. I like this idea that there are pieces that I could give to my clients that I make available to them for free, or I recognize what they're into, and I make it available to them, a specific piece, but I don't bring it up necessarily in the coaching. I don't want the coaching to be a teaching time, I want it to be a reflecting time, a learning time.

**Chad:** That's right, so you could give resources as they're coming on board, or the resources are a way of reaching them and bringing them into the coaching relationship. Some listeners may be thinking, "E-books? YouTube videos? Assessments? What?" The other powerful thing about having a coaching niche is it lets you know what kind of channels to use. If you're coaching, I don't know, this is going to sound like some kind of age discrimination, so it's okay as long as I give you that little preamble, but let's say that you're coaching people that are on the other side of retirement and realizing it ain't all that. That'd be a great niche, wouldn't it? Well, you're probably not going to reach them through an Instagram channel.

Maybe Facebook if you like Facebook, and if they're on Facebook. They probably are on Facebook now that they've realized retirement ain't all that. That's what I mean by going to the conversations. Where are the conversations that these people are in? With some of the media we're talking about with e-books or YouTube videos, you think, "Nobody would find me there." Then don't go there. Go to where your audience is whether that's in physical, real life, or it's online, wherever it is. Go to them and reach

them with the message they want to hear.

**Brian:** I find that to be harder than it used to be, maybe. You'd think the internet would make it easier, but in some ways, it's harder.

**Chad:** It seems like maybe it's easier and harder. I think the internet has allowed us to reach beyond our immediate geography, but so is everybody else. It's a rather noisy lot of conversations that are being had, but the internet can also help us narrow and target in terms of the analytics and stuff. It gives coaches a great outlet for being creative. Even if it's something as simple as a blog. Is a blog going to create enough traffic that you're going to have a full book of business? Probably not, but is it going to be one way of reaching that audience? Yeah, it sure will be. Especially if it's good, and you're answering questions the people in your niche are asking.

**Brian:** You made me think. Some of the most successful coaches we know are doing geographically local coaching. They are not doing internet stuff, and the internet stuff they have, as I look at it, a lot of times it doesn't look very good, and it confuses me, and I think, "This isn't how they're getting their clients."

**Chad:** That's right. They're networking in real life, not through some kind of online mechanism. Hopefully everybody hears us saying, these are not better and worse, good and bad. These are just different ways, and you want to use the way that fits you and your niche.

**Brian:** I think that's got to be a relief to some of our listeners, to say, "I don't have to master the internet to get clients."

**Chad:** This was always my one criticism of Michael Hyatt's book, *Platform*. He goes through all of these different ways to reach your audience, and two-thirds of the way through the book, you just feel like a loser because you don't have a Twitter account. You don't have 5,000... I don't even know how many twitter followers is a lot. It's probably not 5,000. It's probably more than that. You just go away like oh man. I've got to have half the world following me, and LinkedIn connections, and a blog, Google Ad words. Stop the madness. I think what you and I found over the years is give me two, three, maybe four ways, significant ways, that you are reaching your niche.

**Brian:** And you can make a living doing that. What you described with pastors. "I've only got 200 people in my church." Most people in the world would say, "I wish I had 200 people," but there's a sense of that's not much of a church if it's only 200, and you watch a show like Shark Tank, if anybody watches that show, and you go on there, they've got a great idea, and they can make hundreds of thousands of dollars. They might be able to make 2; \$300,000; and the sharks are like, "Yeah, come back when you have an idea."

**Chad:** "That's not worth my time."

**Brian:** And I just want to choke because it'd be great to make a couple hundred thousand. What are we missing? Why isn't that a show of I've got an idea that I can make a couple hundred thousand dollars?

**Chad:** I think you've got a good idea there, Brian. Let's do that alongside Coach Approach Ministries. I'm thinking Dolphin Tank would be the name of it.

**Brian:** Oh, it's not dolphins. It's the Manta Ray Tank.

**Chad:** The Manta Ray Tank.

**Brian:** That's cool.

**Chad:** Yeah, I was struggling to come up with something, and dolphins was the best I could do. It's late in the day here on the east coast in these United States as we're recording, so that's the best you're going to get.

**Brian:** Dolphins are in the same category as unicorns. I see what you're saying, but we're not going to...

**Chad:** What about the manatees?

**Brian:** Well, those were awesome man, but I don't know about that. Chad, I sure appreciate you joining me today and talking about this great focus of identifying and reaching your coaching niche.

**Chad:** By the way, I'm sure you're going to link to this somehow, but we're going to have a webinar this month that will be archived. We're going to have some other things because of this focus. We didn't cover everything in this focus, but hopefully we gave people enough that they're at least interested, maybe one or two good ideas about identifying and reaching their niche.

**Brian:** And thanks so much to everyone who's listening. Don't miss any of our podcasts. Subscribe to our podcast at iTunes, Overcast, Stitcher, Google Play by searching for Coach Approach Ministries Podcast. We'll see you next week.

Are you a certified coach that needs some mentor coaching to improve your skills, grow your business, or renew your credential? Coach Approach Ministries loves to help you grow. To sign up for 10 hours of group mentor coaching that improves your skills and fulfills your credential requirements, go to [coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor](http://coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor), or to hire a mentor coach who will help you grow your coaching practice, go to [coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor](http://coachapproachministries.org/coachmentor). This is the decision that propelled me into full-time coaching.

**[Outro Music]**