

Demystifying Research: *Turning Practice-Related Questions into Research and Marketing Opportunities*

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As coaches, some of us may not consider ourselves to be researchers. But think about it, curiosity creates the space to ask questions about the world and lets the world reveal its truth to us. When we ask our client powerful questions, we are essentially conducting research about our client's world. Curiosity is the foundation of both coaching and research. As coaches or researchers we approach the world with an open mind; free from preconceived ideas or notions. This is where all good coaching and research begins.



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The three of us were asked to participate in a panel discussion that was held at the 2007 International ICF Conference in Long Beach. During this program, our fellow coaches were provided with two key takeaways that were central to demystifying research. The first was how self-limiting beliefs (gremlins) can interfere with being a researcher and following through with your curiosity. The second was how doing research has significant marketing implications.



Do these thoughts about research sound familiar? *I have no background in research or statistics. I have neither the time nor the resources to do research. I should be an expert in this topic prior to doing research. I do not know who to interview. I do not want to impose on people. I do not know if anyone is interested in what I have to say. I do not know how to write research results or to get them published.*

“Ignore your gremlins...do the research anyway!”

Here is what we believe: ignore your gremlins and do the research anyway!

You do not need to be the expert on a topic to do research; you BECOME the expert by doing research. People WILL want to know what your curiosity has revealed. But if you cannot ignore your gremlins, know that there is always help out there for your gremlins and the research process in general.

Coaches might find it easier to overcome their research gremlins if they had a deeper appreciation for the marketing implications of doing research. Professionalism does NOT preclude marketing and occurs naturally as the word of your research gets out. Marketing results in three elements that are relevant for coaches: increased credibility, visibility and contact. Christine's research led her to write an article for an elite business journal. This in turn, led to her increased visibility as a coach and generated several executive coaching referrals. The research that Lynn and Tom conducted led to their being invited to present at an ICF Research Symposium and ultimately being a part of the ICF International Conference panel discussion in Long Beach. Being recognized as researchers has resulted in greater credibility, visibility and contact for all of us. Simply put, research is a way of keeping curiosity about coaching alive.

Research does not only benefit the researcher, but also makes a lasting contribution to the coaching profession. It adds to the body of knowledge about coaching and will lead to the sustainability of coaching as a profession. We invite and encourage you to think about yourselves as researchers and allow your curiosity to create exciting contributions to the coaching profession.

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