

Paul Bellard “Coaching is an investment”

Paul Bellard, Worldwide Motivational Keynote Speaker, Corporate Trainer and Certified High-Performance Executive Coach, Shares his Insights and coaching tips.

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BIOGRAPHY

A former U.K. police officer, he was forced to retire from the career he loved when a spinal surgeon told him he would never walk properly again.

A car crash on duty had left him with a debilitating spinal condition, physically obese and suffering chronic depression. Around that time, his marriage failed too and he found himself living in a converted jail cell adapted to accommodate homeless police officers.

Today, Paul Bellard is a fit, healthy and fully healed International Motivational Keynote Speaker, Corporate Trainer and Certified High-Performance Executive Coach.

Starting from scratch, with no formal qualifications, he created a new identity for himself, and a new life by learning and using the skills he now speaks about, trains and coaches.

To date, he has been blessed to have collaborated on company projects in over eighty cities and forty countries, primarily in large corporate entities such as Emirate Airlines, PWC, Ernst & Young and Ericsson to name a few.



INTERVIEW

You have been coaching for over fifteen years. In your view, how has the Coaching industry changed over that time?

Globally, coaching has been evolving steadily for decades. In the past five years alone, we have seen exponential growth. It is now considered an essential resource, an enabler to exponential growth and ongoing personal and professional development.

A 15 Billion dollar Industry back in 2019 (International Coaching Federation) with a predicted annual growth of approximately 6 to 7%, we are now on track to becoming a 20 billion dollar industry. It is a growing business because it works. Coaching help me to transform my life and now I'm blessed to get to pay it forward for a living.

Coaching is an investment of both time and money, but, Harvard Business Review said, "In considering investing in a coaching program combined with training, results show that it increases profitability by up to 80% while recording ROI 7-9 times the size of the investment". Sceptics may point out that those results came from the USA, where coaching is more widely accepted. However, I can confirm the verity of that R.O.I. from my own experience here in Europe too.

In one case, for example, I worked with a large team of over forty sales executives at a company in London. Once participant started day one by saying, "after working for THIS company for so many years, I hate my job"! He added, "this job is like a cancer to me".

Some believed he was beyond help, others that he should be fired, but, after just one day of training and coaching, and agreeing to give the program a chance, his work performance improved so much that within a month of the program, he was promoted to a new role two levels higher which resulted in a 37% increase in financing profit, 74% increase in warranty registrations and 22% increase in service plan sales for the company. An excellent result for Chris, his mindset, wellbeing and significant return on the company investment from his improved performance alone.

How has the pandemic affected or changed the face of coaching?

There was a time when a clients only option for coaching was a face-to-face meeting. Even when the options for online meetings became a possibility, they still insisted on face to face meetings.

Nowadays, screen time coaching is the norm providing tangible benefits on both sides. It is more efficient, less disruptive and reduces lost opportunity costs due to travel.

INTERVIEW – HR MAGAZINE, GREECE FEBRUARY 2022

However, by far the most important change from my perspective is the scope and objectives of coaching engagements. There is now a broader spectrum of topics, challenges and requirements to help manage and maintain mental health, well-being and to improve resilience to disruptive change.

These have become a priority over the hitherto need for productivity, business models and strategy. 'Soft-Skills' such as Emotional Intelligence, Self-awareness, Communication skills are back on the agenda, which are essential skills, even more so in today's business world.

How Does Greece Compare to the Rest of Europe on the Use of Coaches?

Europe has the second-largest growth in the utilisation of coaches. The USA being number one.

I have observed that relatively speaking, coaching in Greece is presently in its infancy, but companies appear to be slowly waking up to the potential benefits.

My concern about the explosive growth of coaching globally is that the industry remains unregulated. Resultingly, there are a growing number of so-called Coaching Academy's and Diploma Courses appearing with no real certification or accreditation process.

This is producing high numbers of new, often, inadequately trained, inexperienced coaches offering second rate, low price coaching interventions to the less aware. This can be dangerous to potential clients and damaging to the industry as a whole.

For that reason, until such regulation is in place when selecting your coach, discretion and high levels of discernment are required.

What Would you say to HR Professionals to help make sense of our new 2022 Reality?

Firstly, I am well aware of the severe challenges currently being faced by HR professionals these days. Recently, I spoke at the National HR conference in Malta, attended by over almost 400 corporate HR managers and Directors from Malta and across Europe.

The core theme was and remains the same - retaining key talent, and now, finding them in the first place is also proving to be problematic. Add to that, the complexities of the ever-changing COVID control regulations, the landscape is much different now than before.

Obviously, I can't provide answers to the particular problems highlighted above, but I can, and am, helping such professionals to find the clarity, mindset and resilience that will make it possible for them to find their own best solution.

We really must stop looking backwards at what was, or what could have been, to stop waiting for things to go back to how they were. It is not going to happen.

It is time now to regroup and start afresh. In his book called, 'The Heart of Success', CEO, and founder of the GoDaddy Group of businesses, Rob Parsons, said, "The problem with most businesses today is they stopped dreaming"! Ancient scripture tells us that "without a vision, the people will perish", and in the business classic, 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' by Steven Covey, habit number two, reminds us to "Begin with the End in Mind"!

So let's do that! Get clear on 'What' your objectives are for the next twelve months. After that, if you use the skills and techniques promoted by myself or other good coaches, the "how-to" will come to you, step-by-step.

Remember, the only place you have any real control is 'You' and your 'Mindset'! This is the place to start.

Secondly, I feel compelled to reiterate the importance of investing and re-investing in the skill set of your existing staff/teams.

Globally, company resignations are at an all-time high. If there's one thing the pandemic taught us, it's that people now view—and value—their time much differently than in the past. They are considering all available options open to them on the market and will take advantage of the best offers. Add to that mental health and wellbeing concerns, due to workplace uncertainty, a lack of flexibility by employers to permit long term remote or hybrid working and a lack of learning and development opportunities, it all combines to become an emotive incentive to start looking elsewhere for a more comfortable option.

On a personal note, you have travelled the world with your work. Why settle in Greece?

Living in Greece was a desire of mine over twenty years ago. Life took me in another direction but, in 2020, the new acceptance of live-streamed training and screen time coaching made it possible to relocate and still keep my global business alive.

Presently, I'm working with an executive at a wealth management company in Washington DC, USA, a European Managing Director of an Export company in China, and others at a mid-management level across Europe – all from my home office overlooking majestic 'Mount Olympus'. I am very excited to be based and living here now. I love Greece and the Greek language. Being here 'feeds my soul'.

Paul, what impact do you envision for your work in 2022?

Everything we assumed was true 18 months ago, it's now obsolete and relegated to history. Those expecting things to go back as they were, will be very disappointed. Nonetheless, there is a lot of wisdom to be drawn upon from the enforced changes.

We now have new knowledge, insights and practices in place as a foundational base to create a new and better 'normal'. Just this week experts have suggested that we will never have a life without COVID in our midst but its level of disruption to us will decrease over time. We have an opportunity right now to bounce back and win, provided we make a fundamental shift within ourselves first!

We can change the world we live in by changing the way we see it. This is what Gandhi meant when he said "Be the change you want to see in the world". And what Dr Wayne Dyer meant when he wrote "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change".

I feel profoundly called to, and passionate about sharing my learning, experience and knowledge, gleaned over the many challenges of the last twenty years. It wasn't always easy, it was tough, but as we say, 'out of the mess' that was my life 'came a message'. Out of 'desperation came inspiration' to empower others so that they never have to face what I did.

To that end, drawing on my twenty years of experience in Business Management Consulting, Corporate Soft Skills Training, and Executive Coaching, I took the critical success factors from each of those core competencies and blended them into one brand new Facilitated Training and Coaching Program called 'Think, Believe, ACHIEVE', (TBA).

TBA is specifically designed to inspire, motivate and educate executives, managers and employees across all levels of an organisation, this program will help challenge existing paradigms and unlock true potential using both modern-day strategies of transformational change and leverage philosophies of ancient wisdom that have been promulgated and practised by some of the most successful people in history.

The aim is to instil renewed drive, passion and accountability. Define a renewed vision, clear goals, personal discipline, and a winning attitude.

I know change like this is possible to achieve, moreover, it's necessary to achieve it because people can only give their best when they are at their best.

My book, which details the research, experience and work used to create this program is well underway and will be published in late 2022, or early 2023.

How may readers get in touch with you?

I would be very happy to hear from anyone with any questions or comments. My contact details are as follows:

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