



A New Beginning for ICF



Giovanna D'Alessio, MCC
2010 ICF President

The New Year started with an inspiring and visionary Board of Directors' strategic meeting. I truly believe I speak on behalf of the whole Board when I say that it was an experience of expansion, vision, courage and purpose. But let me start from the beginning.

I'd like to start with an acknowledgment. All ICF members, and other stakeholders, who gave us feedback on the proposal around the enhancement of current ICF Credentials, and in particular participants of the ICF Coaches Take a Stand petition, gave the ICF Board a precious gift. They helped the Board to reflect on the need to put the credentialing initiative in a broader, systemic perspective and to re-examine areas such as trust, governance and leadership.

Systemic Constellations

ICF Past President Karen Tweedie, PCC, and I invited a facilitator of Systemic Constellations to join us in a pre-meeting session at our January Board meeting. The goal was to have a better, systemic understanding of our challenges, opportunities and dynamics. The Systemic Constellation process is a phenomenological, systemic intervention with roots in family systems therapy that can be applied to organizations to explore and illuminate the dynamics behind issues in a fresh way. As the Board meeting was in California, USA, ICF members from the

local Orange County ICF Chapter were invited to join this session. Using session participants as "representatives" of the ICF and its components, we set up a physical representation of our organization to look for dynamics and relationships between the various parts. Among other insights, the Systemic Constellation session allowed us to expand our awareness of the need to re-integrate an enlightening higher purpose in our strategic vision and to preserve the wholeness of the organization.

The Constellation work and its systemic view inspired the strategic conversations the Board engaged in the following days. In particular, the Board worked on issues such as trust, strategic approaches to a variety of future scenarios, minimum eligibility criteria for membership, the 2010 strategic priorities and future of credentialing.

Trust

In the trust session, the Board agreed on a commitment to create and maintain trust at all levels. We explored the various elements of trust (Reliability, Acceptance, Openness and Congruence) and relative behaviors, examined the strengths and areas of development of the ICF as an organization, and proposed actions in each of the four elements. Stay tuned as you will learn more about these actions very soon.

Future scenarios

After a revision of the megatrends in society, technology and industry, the Board engaged in a scenario planning

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exercise. We identified "competition" and "regulation" as the variables that can shape the future of the coaching profession and created four possible scenarios. For each of those, a desirable positioning hypothesis that would make ICF unique, distinctive and pioneering was developed. The work on strategic visioning, reinforced by the insights of the Systemic Constellation exercise, allowed the Board to think big, broadly and courageously. Based on the most probable and desirable scenario, we identified some elements that we would like to see reflected in the most recent brand positioning statement that was recently tested with ICF members. One of these elements is an enlightened higher purpose (soul) that is an important foundation of the organization. We directed our branding consultant to incorporate those elements into the brand development and to test them with our members.

Minimum eligibility criteria for ICF membership

The Board discussed as well the opportunity to apply minimum eligibility criteria for ICF membership. This opportunity developed as a need expressed from ICF members during last year's ICF brand work that included a number of focus groups with ICF members. Throughout the course of the focus groups, one particular topic seemed to emerge consistently within each discussion: several participants felt strongly that some of the brand attributes such as: "Knowledgeable," "Professional," "Credible," and "Ethical;" did not embody the current culture of the ICF and, thus, were not authentic.

As this topic continually permeated the focus group discussions, three related questions were added to the ICF Professional Development Survey conducted in August 2009. In the 25 days that followed, a total of 734 ICF members provided additional feedback on the topic of possible ICF minimum eligibility requirements. **Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of all participants indicated that there should be some sort of minimum requirement established in order to become an ICF member.**

During the Board meeting, the Board approved the idea of applying minimum eligibility criteria for ICF membership and directed the global Membership and Community Committee to develop several criteria for member practitioners to be presented to the Board at the March Board meeting. Additional updates will be shared as the work progresses.

2010 priorities

The Board reviewed the 2009 goals and objectives and set priorities for 2010:

- 1. Enable chapters to co-create a brand-based sustainable (financial, leadership and relationship) culture;*
- 2. Enhance credentialing program to best protect and serve consumers of coaching services, measure and certify competence of individuals, and inspire pursuit of continuous development; and*
- 3. Develop, implement and maintain a strong brand strategy for the ICF.*

Enhancement of the ICF Credentialing system

Last but not least, the Board engaged in a thoughtful conversation around the enhancement of the credentialing system, in consideration of what we've learned from input from different stakeholders. You will find a specific message from me in the ICF blog (Coachfederation.org/blog) along with ways you can join me and the rest of the Board in the conversation.

We are still committed to shaping the future of coaching credentialing by enhancing our current system. During the strategic meeting, the Board clarified the strategic purpose of our credentialing system, given the scenario planning we envisioned and the will to prosper and keep leading the coaching profession in the future.



The 2010 ICF Board of Directors at the January Board meeting in Costa Mesa, California, USA.

We charged the Credentialing and Program Accreditation Committee with developing a plan of action to be presented to the Board. This plan of action will be aligned to a three-fold purpose and with the direction to include key stakeholders to ensure co-creation. A 2010 work plan with major milestones and time frames will be developed by the Committee for Board review on March 18.

This process will take some time, so please be assured that, should you be considering, or in the process of getting a credential, the current credentialing system will remain in place at least until January 31, 2012.

If you are interested in knowing more about the decisions the Board made and their implications, join me and members of the Board on one of several credentialing calls that have been scheduled. You can find dates and times on the ICF Blog (Coachfederation.org/blog).

I'm proud of the work we have done and the depth, vision, authenticity and openness we experienced. It was exhilarating and expansive. We all felt that this 15th anniversary promises to mark a new beginning.