



Independent Report on Coach Training and Certification

By [Daniel Midson-Short](#) & [David Wood, PCC](#)

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Further Resources to [Build Your Coaching Practice](#) are contained at the end of this report.

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1) Confusion to Clarity

Welcome!

We are coaches: Daniel Midson-Short and David Wood, PCC. And our research has shown us there is a lot of confusion out there around certification and training.

Really – where can you go these days for truly independent advice? A training school (“Our school has the best training”)? The International Coach Federation (“Our standard is the best standard”)? The International Association of Coaches (“We have the most members”)? Everyone has their own angle and their own slant on what has become a very complex area.

So we’ve put together this unbiased, independent report to give you the real story – as we see it – about accreditation and coach training. We’ll try and save you thousands of dollars by saving you from choosing the wrong certification path for you, or the wrong school.

People ask us questions like:

- Do I need to be certified?
- How much will it cost? Does it have to cost an arm and a leg?
- Will it get me more clients?
- Do I get certified through a school, or an external body?
- Which is more important – ICF or IAC/Coachville?
- Is it true there is a rift between the two organisations?
- What is the Portfolio track to accreditation?
- How do I keep my records so I’m ready when application time comes?
- Which school should I choose?
- What if I already have a lot of related training?
- How does it all fit in with Government regulations in my country?
- Is it true there are some Government grants for coach training?

And in this valuable report, we’ll answer them!

[David Wood](#) is a Professional Certified Coach through the International Coach Federation based in Washington, DC – so he’s been through the process. He was also at one time Chair of the ICF Publicity Committee – helping to promote the ICF and coaching – and knows many of the top players. However, while an ICF member, he is also a Coachville member – allowing him to see both sides of the coin.

He was half way through the CoachU training course, when he resigned to found his own global training school. He’s now sold his shares in that company, leaving him free of any obligation to any company or organisation, except his own! David is perfectly placed to steer you through the coaching and certification minefield.

[Daniel Midson-Short](#) is a personal & business coach who has successfully built his coaching practice to-date without certification. He has developed his business and marketing skills to give him the ability to attract clients and succeed as a coach in the marketplace.

He is also a member of both Coachville and the IAC, and is now beginning his certification process with the ICF. For this reason, he has also seen ‘both sides’ of the certification story and can help you make sense of where to begin. His first-

hand experience as a coach will be valuable in helping you build confidence as you grow your coaching practice.

2) What Is Certification?

Firstly note you do not *need* to be certified to begin coaching – in other words, you can – and many people do – begin coaching without certification. At the time of writing we know of no countries that require certification to practice as a coach. However, it does seem that some states in the US are making moves to regulate the profession.

But more on the need (or not) for certification later. Let's look firstly at how the certification scene has developed in the coaching industry, and your current options.

Schools vs Accrediting Bodies

You can be forgiven for getting confused. Who's the undisputed king of certification? No one – yet.

Thomas Leonard began CoachU in the early 90's – and CoachU of course gave out their own certification. At that time – that was probably the best available.

Other schools began popping up and offering their special brand of certification. So which one to choose? But wait – the story's far from done.

Thomas was instrumental in creating the International Coach Federation, which – and this is important – **does not train coaches**. Nor are they **affiliated with any school**. This independence is important for the body committed to maintaining the gold standard for certification. (After all, if they were affiliated with a school, they might say "errr....the training School X provides is the standard; everyone must meet this to be ICF accredited".)

So – you have the ICF which doesn't train, and bunch of schools which do train. Some schools have the ICF rubber stamp so you can get both the school's certification and the ICF's certification (their course is called an ACTP). Some schools don't have the stamp but are close enough that you can still submit your training to the ICF at the end (called the Portfolio track to accreditation). And some (not many) still ignore the ICF.

Things got a little more complicated when Thomas Leonard (yes – his name pops up quite a bit, doesn't it?) created a second school called Coachville's School of Coaching, which didn't satisfy the ICF criteria. Why? His training doesn't have **live interaction** with trainers via telephone or in person, but rather relies on streaming audio over the internet. The bottom line is: you can't get ICF accreditation through Coachville.

Thomas's answer? Simple. He decided to get many more members than the ICF, which would hopefully make it more important. In other words, he decided to go around the very body he originally created; if his school was the biggest in the world, perhaps people would ignore the fact that it wasn't ICF accredited. Further, he created a new external accrediting body and called it the IAC (initially ICA, but that clashed with the school I was building at the time – isn't this all interesting?).

Just to really fry your brain, the new head of Coachville (Dave Buck) has recently said the rivalry between Coachville and the ICF is over, and Coachville will seek

ICF accreditation! This would seem to really cement the ICF accreditation as the independent, 'gold' standard. (But....more on this later).

It's gotten even more interesting in the last few years with Universities jumping on the bandwagon. So now you can get a diploma or degree. And check this out – some Universities have applied for and received ICF accreditation. From now on when we mention "training schools", we'll include Universities in that category.

And finally, in some countries you may find government regulations do impact the industry. For example, in Australia the Government offers a workplace training certification. Some schools (e.g. The Life Coaching Academy) have managed to meet the criteria to become what's called a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), so they can now offer you what is called Certificate IV Certification. In fact they say their program is the only one in the world to currently have Government recognition. If you're considering corporate work, check for the equivalent in your country, as it might get you some bonus points with your prospective clients.

Recognition of Prior Training

What's that we hear you say? You already have training in a related field? You're a consultant, speaker, therapist, counselor, trainer, fitness trainer, or financial planner?

Or you've been coaching unofficially all your life?

If any of this applies to you, you may not be keen on 2 years of further study – 2 years, which ignores your prior training. In this case, you'll probably love the Coachville/IAC route. They don't even look at any training you do – they simply examine you on your skills. You choose which training you want to do with them, and when YOU decide you're ready, just sit the exam!

The ICF, on the other hand, does not recognise any non-specific coaching training. And even specific coaching training must be demonstrated to be 'aligned' with the ICF competencies. So this may not be the best course if you're already highly skilled and averse to training from scratch.

Timing of Certification

If you go the Coachville/IAC route, and you are already a pretty good coach from prior training and experience, you may be able to cram the material quite quickly and pass the exam. This is because there is no requirement for number of training hours, or training period, or number of client hours. We don't know how long this takes, but we're guessing it could be done in 2-3 months for a natural coach.

If you go the ICF route, by picking an ICF accredited school, you'll need to clock up at least 250 paid coaching hours (approximately), plus 60 training hours (that's coach-specific training), before you can sit the exam. So count on it taking at least 6-12 months to reach your first level of ICF certification (ACC).

Either way, it's expected that you'll be coaching and building your practice while you clock up your certification, unlike other industries where you train first, and enter professional practice second.

Your Certification Options

At this stage, let's summarise your choices:

- a) Forget about accreditation until you have 1,000 hours of paid coaching under your belt (by which time you may not care if you're accredited or not.)
- b) Pick a school whose training inspires you and get their accreditation
 - a. If they are rubber-stamped by the ICF – great! At the end of the day you should end up with both certifications.
 - b. If you chose Coachville, then no ICF accreditation (at least yet), but you'll have a CV accreditation, and an IAC accreditation. (Is this IAC accreditation worth anything? More in the next chapter.)
- c) Go the other way around, and set your heart on the ICF accreditation, and pick a school accredited by the ICF – and whose training inspires you – to end up with a school accreditation AND ICF accreditation.

3) To Certify, or Not to Certify?

Before you look at training, decide whether you will get certified, not get certified, or keep your options open.

A good reason to get certified is because you believe in the philosophy of the training school you choose, and the value of the association you belong to. And, because you want to continually improve your coaching skills.

A bad reason to get certified is because you think that will get you more clients, or in some way it will make you 'worthy' as a coach. Our experience has been that it does neither. A certificate might look good on the wall, and it feels good to be able to say it – but few coaching clients bother to ask about your school of training or level of certification.

Also, if you're waiting to get certified so you can feel confident getting out there and coaching a hundred clients, you could be waiting a long time. The [International Coach Federation](#) requires at least 250 paid coaching hours under before you can get to their first certification level (ACC). So you'll need to become confident coaching without the crutch of certification – which we believe is a good thing. Use it to support your coaching; don't rely on it. Fortunately, there are other ways to build confidence and credibility –which we'll discuss later.

Remember, however, that this represents the current situation. Many people expect that as public awareness of coaching certification and the ICF increases, it will become more important in 2-5 years time to have an ICF certification, particularly for corporate work. We agree this is likely.

To differentiate yourself over the long term, and to create an image of high quality about your work as a coach, it definitely gets you some kind of edge to have some form of certification. Many coaches who have certification are also charging higher fees in the marketplace, which is an important point to consider. However, we believe most coaches greatly overestimate this effect.

While certification is not necessary for a full practice, we do believe it is important for the development of your skill and for the development of the coaching profession. The more certified coaches the stronger the profession, and the better for all of us. If every coach decided to skip certification, we would have lower standards, which might invite public mistrust, and eventually tight Government regulation.

In summary, whether to get certified or not is up to you. There are some very successful coaches from both camps. We recommend you think more in terms of 'What training do I need to be a great coach?'. If you decide to go for training, then why not pick a school that is ICF accredited? That way you're clocking up training hours for your ICF accreditation in a year or two. You'll also be clocking up paid coaching hours. In a year or two if you decide you'd like to be ICF certified, you'll have all the points on the board.

"Consider certification, but don't be obsessed by it. Coaching your clients and helping them to change and improve their lives will give you more confidence and marketability than all the certificates your resume can hold."

4) Which Certification Path to Choose?

OK, let's assume you've chosen to get certified. Perhaps you're going to go full out for it as your major objective. Or, you might just go out and get great training, coach a lot of clients, and then one day sit your ICF exam.

Certification Options

Assuming you *will* get certified, broadly your choices are:

- a) School Certification (excluding Coachville)
- b) School plus ICF Certification
- c) Coachville Certification
- d) IAC Certification Only

a) School Certification

With the exception of Option c) discussed below, we believe few coaches would choose this option. It's possible you will find a school with training you really connect with, which is not either aligned with the ICF competencies, or accredited by the ICF. In this case getting just a School Certification would make sense. Or – if it's a University or linked to some form of Government accreditation, you might be willing to rest with that accreditation.

However, for many coaches the next option is more attractive....

b) School plus ICF Certification

Given the wide range of quality schools that are accredited with the ICF, or at least 'aligned' with their competencies (see 'How to Get ICF Certified'), why not choose one of these schools? This way you always have the option of either sitting your ICF exam with this school, or one day submitting your training record to the ICF and getting ICF certified.

This approach gives you the *option* of going for ICF certification when you're done (and have met the remaining criteria).

c) Coachville Certification

Many coaches are signing up with the Coachville School of Coaching. They seem to provide an enormous amount of training, at a price that is still quite competitive. Further, they claim to provide life long training, and while Thomas was at the helm that promise was looking pretty good. Now it's a little less certain, but even what they offer now seems like good value.

If you get your Coachville certification, it shouldn't be a big jump to get your IAC certification. (Although we can't see at the moment how that adds any credibility – aside from it sounding pretty good). But – the training won't satisfy the ICF due to the lack of 'live' trainer interaction.

In any event, you may be so impressed by Thomas's work, and/or the amount and quality of training that you're willing to waive ICF certification; we believe this is a valid option, because we believe *training is more important than certification*.

d) IAC Only Certification

Because the IAC doesn't actually require you to have completed any specific training, you might be able to jump straight to IAC certification.

If you already believe you are well trained as a coach, and don't want to start from scratch to satisfy the ICF, we see this as a great option to go for some quick credibility in the eyes of the public. Again, the IAC doesn't seem to have nearly the reputation or weight that the ICF has, but International Association of Coaches Certification certainly sounds good!

Choosing between the ICF and IAC/Coachville

(Note: When we say Coachville, which has free membership, we're actually referring to the Coachville School of Coaching, which costs several thousand dollars).

The IAC seems to be making a move to overtake the ICF in terms of members, perhaps hoping that size will make the difference. However the IAC's apparent lack of independence could be a major factor stopping IAC/Coachville from becoming the primary certifying body for coaches worldwide. (This isn't a commentary on their training – but rather a comment on which certification might carry more weight in the eyes of the public in future years.)

Remember the ICF sets certification standards - *independently* of any coaching school. The IAC is not at all independent of Coachville; for example, their 15 competencies are exactly the same as Coachville's 15 competencies, and Coachville gave them \$25,000 to start up. Can you imagine the IAC saying: "You know, we think that all schools should have X, Y, Z so Coachville just won't qualify"? We don't think so. However, their web site states they plan to be independent.

Another way to look at it – the ICF has 24 schools that have applied and received accreditation. IAC has accredited only Coachville schools (yes – there are more than one). By the way this seems a bit redundant because they don't actually require you to accumulate any training hours. If you go for IAC accreditation, you don't actually have to have been to ANY school; remember they just require an exam. If you know your stuff, you pass.

In any event, if you go for Option B – School plus ICF accreditation, we believe you have more weight behind your accreditation because of the independence and reputation of the ICF.

IAC/Coachville's counter to this has historically been that they will get (and we think they now do have) more members than the ICF, and will therefore one day carry more weight. Whether or not this might have come to pass, it is now looking less likely due to the very sad passing of Coachville founder Thomas Leonard. Thomas was the charismatic driving force behind Coachville and the IAC, and there is now a question about the future success of Coachville.

While the future of the ICF seems solid, the future of the IAC and their method of certification seems very uncertain. At the time of writing this report, we have found little information to support to development of IAC conferences or any other forms of coaching development.

Further, the new leader of Coachville, Dave Buck, has recently stated that the rift between Coachville and the ICF is over, and Coachville will be seeking ICF accreditation:

"While we continue to support the work of the IAC, we will also fully endorse, embrace and support the work of the ICF. To that end, we will encourage our members to become members of the ICF, and we will seek ICF accreditation for our school."

– Dave Buck at the Annual ICF International Conference

Firstly, this lends even more credibility to the ICF standard, and suggests that whichever school you choose should be ICF certified (or 'aligned'). The only exception to this would be if you find a school (e.g. Coachville) whose training inspires you so much you're happy to waive the ICF certification, and proudly fly the certification of your chosen school.

Secondly, nobody should start counting any certified chickens. OK that's a little vague. We mean don't sign up for Coachville thinking that they **will** get ICF accreditation. I (David) have had a lot of experience with a school preparing for the ICF certification process – and it's hard! It will take a lot of energy and resources.

In summary, it looks like the International Coach Federation is and will continue to be the primary certifying body. They are expanding rapidly worldwide, and have the advantage of being independent of any coach training organization.

Quick Glance Comparison Table

	ICF	IAC
Year Founded	1992	2003
# Members (approx)	7000	6000
Joining Fee	\$155	Free
Coach Referral Listing	\$0-\$145	Free
Certification Offered	ACC, PCC, MCC	PCCP
Certification Process	Written Exam, Oral Exam (Live coaching test), Submit Tapes of Coaching Sessions, 60+ Coach Specific Training Hours, 250+ Hours of Paid Coaching Experience, Mentoring Hours, Letters of Reference	Written Exam, Submit Tapes of Coaching Sessions, Interview with Mentor Coaches.
Exam Basis	11 Core Competencies	15 Proficiencies
Recognition of Prior Learning	No	Yes (indirectly, as use testing only)
Independent of Training Schools	Yes	Unlikely

In the Appendix you will find more detailed information on the [ICF](#) and the [IAC](#).

5) How to Get ICF Certification

OK – suppose you've decided you want to be an ACC (Associate Certified Coach) or a PCC (Professional Certified Coach). How is it done?



The ICF accreditation for [Associate Certified Coach \(ACC\)](#) requires the following:

- a) 60 coach-specific training hours. Training must be aligned with the [11 ICF competencies](#), and at least 48 hours must be interactive with the trainer – either live, or via telephone.
- b) 250 coaching hours, of which 225 hours must be paid.
- c) Letters of reference from 5 clients.
- d) Two letters of reference from ICF accredited coaches who have heard you coach.
- e) Passing of an oral examination.

[Professional Certified Coach \(PCC\)](#) is similar. However, you need 125 training hours, 750 coaching hours, be mentored by a PCC or higher for at least 10 hours, and to also pass a written examination.

For [Master Certified Coach \(MCC\)](#) you need 200 training hours (100 being interactive), and 2,500 coaching hours!

Two Paths

To meet this criteria for ICF certification, you can choose from one of two paths:

- a) ACTP Track, or
- b) Portfolio Track

a) ACTP Track

This one is pretty simple. ACTPs (Accredited Coach Training Programs) have been 'rubber stamped' by the ICF, after meet very stringent training standards. All the criteria above (e.g. training and exam) are provided by the school. At the end you just send your School Certification, pay your fee, and you get your ACC or PCC automatically from the ICF.

You will likely pay more, but all the hoops to jump through are in the same place making it convenient, and guaranteed that the ICF will accept your training.

b) Portfolio Track

When the ICF began, it recognised there were a lot of quality training schools that would not immediately seek ICF accreditation. To allow for this they created the 'Portfolio Track' – which now allows you to also train with what we call 'aligned' schools. They have (or say) their training is 'aligned' with the 11 ICF competencies. Of course the training still needs to be primarily face to face or via telephone.

It's like an 'unbundled' solution – or 'make your own' certification. You choose your training, go and get your own PCC mentoring, clock up your coaching hours,

and then submit it all to the ICF with a tape of your coaching session and request to do your exam through the ICF.

If you take this route, we recommend you ask your school how many coaches have achieved ACC or PCC using their training. If the answer is zero because they are a new school, just realise you are taking a risk that the ICF may not accept their training as 'aligned'. You should ask the school to provide you with documentation demonstrating how their training is aligned with the ICF competencies. This is the documentation you will need to give to the ICF when you apply.

A word of caution: If your school does not mention the ICF, or specifically that it meets the requirements of the Portfolio Track to ICF accreditation, there's a 99% chance it doesn't. And if they cannot give you specific evidence on how their training is aligned, they may not have thought far enough ahead, and it's likely you are on shaky ground.

* * *

Note how similar the two tracks are. The differences are: you are guaranteed with the ACTP track that the ICF will accept their training, and your school provides you with your mentoring (normally) and your exam.

The ICF has made it clear that neither track is easier – it's just that, again, with the ACTP track all your hoops to jump through are in the one place. To balance this, it will probably cost a little more.

While we believe both tracks are valid, we lean towards choosing an ACTP, unless you find an 'aligned' school where the training, the location, or the price really calls to you.

Note: You don't actually require a certification from your school to get your ICF certification. For example I (David) didn't. I did 50% of a course, and then resigned so I could build my own training school. I then added up the training hours I had done, and combined those with the hours I had done with Landmark Education (not their normal courses, but actually training to be a coach with them), and submitted it to the ICF accompanied with a barrage of documents. In other words, it's possible to piece together your training from different schools, as long as it's coach specific, and you clock up enough hours.

The Right Documentation

You'll want to keep a record of your mentoring hours with a Professional Certified Coach (10 hours needed for PCC), and a record of your coaching hours.

Proving to the ICF you have coached 250 or 750 hours can be an onerous task when the time comes. Here are some tips to make the process smoother for you.

Keeping a tally of your coaching hours

Here are the details you need to record:

Name, contact details, start date, end date, total time coached including emailing, permission (if granted) to disclose their contact details for coaching hours verification only (25 clients), permission (if granted) to disclose their contact details to act as a client reference and discuss their coaching with an independent assessor (5 clients).

These should be recorded in a database such as Outlook, Act, Access, Excel, or at last resort, a simple text file (e.g. a table in Word). At the minimum, record this information each time you finish a client relationship.

- Keep your client files handy, with a summary page on the front
- Add a page for every session, writing the session number at the top.
- For each extra phone call, or email you send, which included XX minutes of coaching (exclude administrative matters), add "+ XX minutes" and the date to your summary page
- When you finish a coaching relationship, write the total coaching hours in the top right of your summary page.
- If you use Outlook, open your client contact.
- Click on 'All Fields', and then choose 'Miscellaneous Fields' from the drop down menu.
- In User Field 1 enter the date you started coaching the clients
- In User Field 2 enter the date you finished coaching the clients
- In User Field 3 enter the number of coaching hours with that client e.g. 4.25

6) How To Get IAC Certification

The IAC certification program is based upon your core understanding of the 15 Proficiencies, and your ability to prove their practical application in your coaching (through submitting recorded coaching sessions with your clients). They do *not* require proof of specific coach training or an accrued amount of coaching hours. However, certification is a long process and can take up to one year to complete.



Basically, the submission program works like this:

- 1) Score 66% or higher on a written examination. The exam is taken online, and consists of 200 multiple-choice questions (from a bank of 1500 questions). Any IAC member may take this test online, and at no charge. However, if you do not pass the test, you'll need to wait 30 days before taking it again. There is no charge to retake the exam, even if multiple times. This exam can also be taken for free if you are a Coachville member.
- 2) Score 80% (60 points or higher) on the 15 Coaching Proficiencies scorecarding. You need to submit 3 recorded coaching sessions with three different clients. Two Certifying Coaches from the IAC will listen to the tape of your sessions and scorecard your coaching, based on the 15 Proficiencies. You will receive a copy of your scorecard and comments made by the Certifying Coaches
- 3) Complete an interview with two Certifying Coaches. The purpose of this interview is to cover any of the 15 Coaching Proficiencies that were not demonstrated during your recorded coaching sessions. During this interview you will coach one of the Certifying Coaches on a scenario designed specifically for each of the proficiencies you did not cover in the recorded calls with your clients. You may also be asked to discuss some of the proficiencies to demonstrate your in-depth understanding of them.

7) How to Choose Your Training School

The good news is that you don't have to be finished with your training course to begin to work with clients, but it is advisable to have begun one. Most courses will encourage some practice coaching as part of your course, so you will soon begin coaching after commencing training anyhow.

Whatever your natural coaching abilities, there is definitely an 'art and science' to coaching which can be greatly improved with proper training. And as we've shown earlier, coach-specific training is necessary if you want certification from a school, the ICF, and/or the IAC (at least in most cases).

I (David) have been through the process of choosing a coach training school - so I know what it's like to try and compare between 30 different schools when you're not too familiar with the industry!

Which accreditation? How much do I need to pay? Which country? Face to face? Does this telephone training really work?

Here we'll raise the major questions you should be asking yourself before choosing a school.

Ten Questions to Ask

a) ICF or IAC accreditation?

We'll be brief on this one, as we've already covered it pretty thoroughly. At the same time, we know it's a confusing topic, and some people like to hear it a couple of different ways.

If you are not going for ICF or IAC accreditation, then any course that provides effective training may suit you.

If you decide on IAC certification, either go to them directly if you feel you have the training already, or sign up with Coachville's School of Coaching.

b) Training Platform

Do I learn best watching, by listening, by reading, or a combination of methods (multidimensional)?

If you must have face-to-face training, you can narrow your schools to those in your area (if you're lucky enough to live near a quality school). If so, factor in travel costs to your training budget. If you like the idea of learning from home, you can take advantage of the many companies now training using printed text, and teleclasses (you dial into a conference call and learn auditorily in a group). This is great for people who can learn auditorily, and is now very common – in fact we estimate most coaches are now trained using this method. Remember to factor phone costs into your training budget, although these are coming down so much now. It's also cheaper for many people to call overseas than it is to call interstate.

More companies are now including streaming audio and/or CD's/tapes into their training.

c) Location

Do I choose a company in my state, my country, or even overseas?

Clearly if you've chosen face to face training, you'll want a company in your state to minimise travel expenses. Having said that, if you love the training enough, you'll fly wherever you have to.

However, if you're going the remote learning path (as the majority of coaches do), it no longer matters whether your company is based in another state, or even another country. As mentioned above, phone costs are now 3-10 cents a minute to call overseas, removing phone charges as a barrier. Most phone 'bridges' you will call into will be in the US – as it's cheaper for the training company to rent a conferencing facility there.

d) Franchise, or Free Agent?

A breed of training company has emerged which provides your initial training at a discount, in exchange for a percentage of your future coaching revenue. This ongoing payment pays for certain support structures such as business cards, client referrals, ongoing training, and a licence to continue using the technology.

By contrast, most non-franchise companies will still provide you with training, and a lifetime licence to use their technology, forms, and client programs, for an up front fee.

Be wary of franchises that require a percentage of your income or a high annual fee. Some of them even charge twice as much as ICF certified training programs. You should not go into one of these companies unless they can put you in touch with several coaches who have gone through their program, and are earning a good income – and who don't have a financial interest in you joining!

e) Your Niche

Are you focusing on Life/Personal Coaching, Business Coaching, or Corporate Coaching?

If you want to work with individuals on personal issues, you'll be looking for a school with a very strong personal development/awareness theme. In short, their instructors should be amazing.

If you're planning on coaching small business owners, consider a school that focuses on business coaching specifically. You'll have the right training, forms and other support to succeed in this area.

If you're going for the corporate market, it makes sense to go with one of the few schools focusing specifically on corporate coach training.

However, if you want to be able to all three....well, it's still possible to choose a good all 'round school that will give you a solid grounding in coaching, and go from there. You can probably take specialist modules with different schools later on (the training market's moving this way) to beef up your skills/business in a particular area.

f) Fees

How do the costs compare?

Aside from checking if there are any ongoing fees, you should find out if a coach is provided with your tuition. If not, you will need to add \$150 to \$400 per month

to your training budget – at least for say 3 months. It's one thing to have a buddy coach; it's another to be provided with a professional, experienced coach. Next, calculate the cost of travel to your face-to-face classes, or estimate the phone bill for the phone training hours required. The costs for non-franchise companies (i.e. companies which charge one upfront fee), which meet the ICF requirement for certification, generally seem to range from around US\$3,000 to \$6,200.

There's nothing wrong with signing up for their 'entry level' or 'lower end' course, and upgrading later. Just make sure the costs of upgrading to the full certification course are not too high.

Check what forms and programs you'll be licenced to use, as well as fringe benefits such as helping you attract clients by listing you on their web site.

g) Guarantees

What is their refund policy?

If you've done thorough research, this might not be too important to you. However, you'll have more peace of mind joining with a company that has a generous refund/cancellation policy if you're not satisfied with the training and/or service. Often this shows they are confident in their service, and that they have a low refund rate.

If they don't provide refunds at all – it's *possible* that it's to support your commitment. But you need to satisfy yourself that they don't have a list of complaints against them by disgruntled students.

In any event, it's a good idea to view testimonials, and even contact current or former students to have a chat before signing up.

h) Trial Run

How does their training/style feel?

Most schools will give you a way to experience their training and/or trainers for free. It might be a face-to-face introduction night, a teleclass (or even a free series), or an online module. You should **definitely** try at least a couple of schools out to see how you feel while experiencing their training and/or teachers. Excited? Inspired? Connected? Bored? Is this something that will get you out of bed in the morning, or be a chore because you know most of it already?

Also - has their training been developed by coaches alone, or coaches in conjunction with an education or training specialist?

i) Customer Service

What is their customer service like?

This one should be obvious these days. You want to know what kind of operation they are running there. Is their staff friendly and knowledgeable on the phone? Do they send you requested material on time? Do they respond to emails within 24 hours? If you're getting the royal run-around even before you've signed on, imagine what your experience will be like once they have your money.

j) Government Assistance

Will your Government subsidise the cost?

Yes – in some countries this actually happens. If you are disadvantaged in some way you may actually get the government to pay for a good portion of your training. In particular, we have heard of this in the UK and Australia.

In the UK, we believe it may be possible for people with disabilities to receive assistance for coaching training – but your training must be with a UK based/approved school.

In Australia, the [Life Coaching Academy](#) says its program qualifies for Austudy and Abstudy.

k) Discounts and Specials

Are they offering any discounts or bonuses on enrolment? Sometimes timing can be quite important.

For details on the specials we have been able to negotiate with some of the top schools, see [Chapter 9](#).

Quick Comparison Chart

Note: We have compiled this table from a range of sources, which may change without notice, and cannot be guaranteed for accuracy. You should verify this information with your independent research before acting on any information.

School	Going Since	ICF Status	Fees* (\$US)	Hours	Training Platform	Region	Refund Policy	Training Special
Coach U	1992	Accred	\$4795	200+	Teleclass	Global	NA	No
Schools of Coachville	2002	None (IAC)	\$3295	200+	Teleclass	Global	90 days	No
Corporate Coach U	1997	Accred	\$3595	125+	Teleclass	Global	NA	No
Internat'l Coach Academy	2001	Aligned	\$3080	125+	Teleclass	Global	30 days (90%)	No
Comprehen-sive Coaching U	1999	None	\$3995	NA	Face to Face OR Teleclass	Global	No	Yes
Results Life Coaching	1996	None	\$4110	125+	Face to Face	Global	Pro-rata until half way	No
Academy for Coach Training	1995	Accred	\$6900	200+	Face to Face plus Teleclass	USA	NA	Yes
The Coaching Academy	1999	Aligned	\$4850	125+	Face to Face plus Teleclass	Europe	No	Yes
Life Coaching Academy	2002	Accred	\$3760	125+	Face to Face plus Teleclass	Austral -asia	No	Yes
Institute for Life Coach Training	1998	Accred	\$5500	125+	Teleclass	Global	14 days	Yes
Coaches Training Institute	1992	Accred	\$3600	125+	Face to Face plus Teleclass	Global	Pro-rata	No

* Convert \$US to your currency [here](#). (Prices are kept in \$US to facilitate easy comparison)

** NA = Not Available

*** Prices are normally the cost of all courses required for a school's highest certification. Entry-level programs are often available at lower cost.

Read Student Reviews

What better way to choose a school, than to read the experiences of people who have gone before you?

It's important to get both the positive *and* the negative experiences. So find out what they like about their school, and what they don't! Access these reviews, free of charge, here:

<http://www.becomeacoach.com/links/index.cgi>

Read Our Reviews

We have compiled the pros and cons of selecting some of the major coaching schools. You can read our reviews here:

<http://www.becomeacoach.com/coach-school-reviews.htm>

8) School Directory

To help you find the right school for you, we've created a listing of the major schools worldwide.

Is that all? No - we've categorized them by country, and further by their ICF relationship - 'ICF Accredited', 'ICF Aligned' and 'Other' – so you can narrow down your list very quickly.

Is that all? No - we've listed the critical features of each school so you can see at a glance if it has the training platform you need, how long it's been in operation, number of students, etc.

And just when you were thinking, "Wow – you guys are brilliant. You're welcome to stay whenever you visit my town" ...we've also invited a hundred coaches to write reviews of **their personal experience with these schools**.

What?! That's right – you can actually click on a school and read what coaches have to say about that school – both the positive and the negative.

And best of all....we've kept it a completely free service. Start browsing schools and reading reviews here:

<http://www.becomeacoach.com/links/index.cgi>

9) Training Specials

At the time of publishing this report, several of the top training schools have agreed to partner with us to offer training specials to new students.

Basically, if you sign up with them and mention SolutionBox or a special code we provide, they will send us a fee, which covers the cost of your training special. This training special varies, but is usually a coaching product retailing somewhere between US\$97 and US\$297. You receive your special 30 days after enrolling.

We won't go into details in this report, as we do want this report to remain independent. However, you can read about these specials on the web here:

<http://www.becomeacoach.com/coach-training.htm>

10) Building Your Credibility & Confidence

Just as important as the issue of Coaching Certification, is the idea of building your coaching confidence and credibility. Because the ICF requires paid coaching hours as part of their certification process, the inclination to put off actually coaching until you're certified definitely won't work. The IAC also requires that you prove your coaching ability (through submitting recorded coaching sessions with your clients). For these reasons, as well as for the success of your coaching practice, you need to start gaining coaching confidence and credibility from the very beginning.

But how can you do it? Becoming a successful coach is sometimes a bit of a Catch-22: you want the confidence so you can go out and coach, yet you can't gain confidence/experience – or even certification - until you coach a lot! So where do you begin?

The answer is actually pretty simple: just keep coaching! The more clients you coach (whether you are paid or not), the more you will build your confidence and experience. Once you see your clients starting to have breakthroughs, the more confident you'll feel. Then with the help of testimonials and success stories, your confidence, credibility and clients just keep building. Remember also that some of the best coaches in the world began coaching with little idea of what they were doing. They started just like you have, and have learned through trial, error and success.

Here are some extra tips for building your coaching confidence and credibility in the early stages:

a) Contribution

Focus on helping people through your coaching: this will take the focus away from you and your fears, and keep you steady.

b) Building Knowledge

Build your knowledge and skills each day by reading, listening and attending training for your coaching. Knowledge is a big key to confidence and you'll gain a lot by learning all you can. Training alone, even without certification attached will help with both your confidence and results.

c) Mentor Coach

Find a mentor coach to help you keep on track with your coaching and personal goals. This is like learning to ride a bike with training wheels – you have all the support and 'fallback' you need because of your coach.

d) Testimonials

Build results and get testimonials from your clients, and even your friends. Not only do testimonials show the world you are a professional coach, *they remind you that you are a professional coach.*

e) Media

Call your local radio stations and newspapers to pitch an interview. You'll need to have a catchy angle e.g. "Celebrating International Coaching Week" or "Coaching Second Fastest Growing Profession Behind IT". Have a 1-2 page pitch in writing ready because the next step is to send that.

With a couple of media mentions on your site you'll look and feel professional.

f) Speaking

Put what you *most* want people on the planet to know into a 30-minute speech. Call your local Rotary, Lions and Apex Clubs – in fact any clubs in your area – and offer to speak at their regular meetings. While it can be very scary at first, get five of these under your belt, and you'll start to worry less about how you look and more about what kind of impact you can make. Plus – it's great for getting clients.

Appendix: Facts About the ICF

International Coach Federation (ICF)

www.coachfederation.org

Year Founded: 1992

Founder: Thomas Leonard

Current Members: More than 7000, 150 Chapters Worldwide



Mission Statement: To be the global forum for the art and science of coaching, where we inspire transformational conversations, advocate excellence, and expand awareness of the contribution coaching is to the future of humankind.

Brief Bio: The ICF is widely regarded as the top governing body for coaches worldwide. The ICF is a non-profit, individual membership organization formed by professionals worldwide who practice and/or teach business and personal coaching.

To become a member requires payment of an annual fee, as well as adherence to the ICF code of conduct. Members are also encouraged to attend conferences and be involved in the development of coaching through participation with the ICF. As the ICF website states, 'The true professional is a member of his or her professional organization. By maintaining membership in ICF, coaches inform others that they are part of an influential voice that is shaping the future of coaching around the globe. ICF membership will help you succeed.'

The ICF offers the Associate Certified Coach (ACC), Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and Master Certified Coach (MCC) credentials.

Appendix: Facts About the IAC

International Association of Coaches

www.certifiedcoach.org

Years Founded: 2003

Founder: Coachville/Thomas Leonard

Current Members: 6057, in 63 countries.

Mission Statement: To further the interests of coaching clients worldwide

Brief Bio: The IAC received startup funding from CoachVille with a \$25,000 launch grant and continues to work closely with the CoachVille team. The original intention of the IAC was to be a separate entity responsible for managing the certification process of the **15 Proficiencies** and a membership organization focused on furthering the interests of coaching clients worldwide. Whether this will happen remains to be seen.



The IAC certification process is based on the 15 Proficiencies developed by CoachVille that, according to the IAC are 'more objective measurements of coaching ability than number of hours coached or number of classes attended'. The IAC certification exam tests knowledge of and demonstrated use of the 15 Proficiencies. There are no prerequisites for taking the exam, because the test is effectively a demonstration of competency.

To be a member of IAC each coach must pledge to abide by the Ethical Principles and Code of Ethics, which are (according to the IAC website) 'the most specific and highest ethical standards in the coaching industry'.

Also, consumers, clients and potential clients may view an IAC coach's official history, which includes their join date, pledge to abide by the Ethical Principles and Code of Ethics, certification dates, records of continuing education to maintain their certification status and any disciplinary action taken by the Certified Coach Review Board against that coach.

There is no fee for membership; probably the reason the IAC membership has grown considerably in the first year of operation (as well as their affiliation with Coachville).

According to the IAC website, "The ICF is the professional association of personal and business coaches that seeks to preserve the integrity of coaching. In contrast, the IAC is completely "Client Centric". As such, we are oriented around coaching client satisfaction."

Another purpose of the IAC is to raise the standards within the coaching profession and the credibility for consumers. Hence, part of their organization is devoted to public advocacy through their site [Coaching Complaints](#) where coaching clients can report an unsatisfactory experience with a coach.

Appendix: Building Your Coaching Practice

If you enjoyed reading this guide to training, certification and building your confidence and credibility, then you may also enjoy and profit from other tools we have produced for new and intermediate coaches.

[First Fifty Clients](#)

How to get your first fifty clients - without being 'pushy'. Lessons from my speech delivered to the ICFA Conference July 2002.



[10 Super Coaches Share Their Secrets](#)

What's the fastest way to build a thriving coaching practice? Get inside the minds of people like you who've built a hugely profitable practice from scratch -- and learn exactly how they did it. In this e-book are interviews with top coaches on how they built successful coaching businesses.



[The CoachStart™ eManual](#)

A step-by-step guide to building your coaching practice. I've compiled everything I know about starting up your coaching practice into one easy, information packed eManual.

[CoachingClips™ .com](#)

Online training library for new and future coaches. Audio clips of live mentoring sessions with topics like building your practice, gaining confidence, and setting up a new client. PLUS audio clips of real live coaching sessions with clients from my practice.

[SolutionBox™ Affiliate Program](#)

Give your network and friends Big Results in their personal & business lives...and earn **40%** on every sale you refer. Here is your chance to share the word about these great products, and build an additional revenue stream for yourself.

[‘My First Year as a Coach’](#) by Daniel Midson-Short

If you are just starting your coaching career, then you will enjoy this easy to read e-book. It talks specifically about the challenges and setbacks that you face as a new coach. Learn about the best ways to build confidence and success early in your coaching career. Daniel shares parts of his personal coaching journey (from 0 to 50 clients), as well as tips, ideas and strategies to help you move ahead as a coach in your first year.

[‘How to Become a Client Magnet’](#) by Daniel Midson-Short

Are you struggling to build your practice and find clients? This new e-book reveals the secrets of selling yourself as a coach in today’s market. There are sections on marketing, branding, attracting attention and delivering powerful sample sessions. If you are serious about accelerating your coaching practice, you’ll enjoy this ebook.



Free Resources

[Coach Training Mini-Course + Downloads](#) – this report you are reading is part of a much bigger package of free tools for coaches trying to choose the right training school for them.

[‘50 Power Questions To Use With Your Clients’](#)

[The SolutionSuccess Teleforums](#)

We offer a monthly teleforum (conference call) for professionals from North America, Europe, and Australasia. Coaches, trainers, speakers, consultants and therapists are all welcome - in fact anyone wanting a thriving practice.

[Mentor Monthly™ Newsletter](#)

Tips for coaches wanting to start, or accelerate their coaching practice.

[Lifestyle Revolution Newsletter](#)

The latest coaching ideas, resources and articles