

## Guidelines for ICF Calgary Charter Chapter Communications

*Approved by the Board of Directors, ICF Calgary Charter Chapter – January 14, 2014*

### **Purpose**

The ICF Calgary Charter Chapter communicates with its members and outside groups through various means including a website, social media, newsletters, email distributions and printed materials. These guidelines have been developed to ensure that all of our Chapter's communications meet three important standards. The purpose of this document is

- a) to help the Communication Director and other Board members make decisions about what will be accepted for communication by the Chapter, and
- b) to provide those submitting material for communication with an understanding of what will, or will not, be accepted.

These standards and guidelines cover all Chapter communications including educational content, and advertising for events and services offered by the Chapter, its members, or outside organizations.

### **Process**

Decisions about what will or will not be published by the Chapter are normally made by the Communication Director, or by the Board as it provides directions to the Communication Director. In the absence of the Communication Director, decisions are made by either the President or Vice-President, or another designated Board member.

Should a decision be made to deny publication, or require changes to material, and that decision is contested by a Chapter member or an outside party, that decision can be reviewed. This review is conducted by either a panel comprised of the Communication Director, the President and the Vice-President, or by the full Board.

## **Standard #1 - Effective use of communication opportunities**

We aim to provide our members, and other target groups, with information that they will feel is aligned with their priority needs and interests. This helps to ensure that they welcome our communication efforts, and do not resist or ignore them, or treat them as unimportant. We also want to align our communications with the priorities of the Chapter, and the goals the Chapter has for impacting our members and important outside groups.

### **Guidelines**

1. All communication materials should be of high relevance to the audience for whom they are intended (e.g., Chapter's members, key stakeholders).
2. Communication judged to be outside the priority interests of our members, or of low relevance to the priorities of the Chapter, will not be accepted.
3. Consideration will be given to the frequency and length of communications so that they do not become onerous.

## **Standard #2 – Reflecting a highly professional organization**

All communications by the Chapter should reflect well on the Chapter and its members. This means having a professional standard for the quality of writing and production, including such things as layout, design, and technical standards for web based or audio-visual materials. As a Charter Chapter of the ICF, we also align with the ICF's branding standards for use of ICF logos, color schemes, etc.

### **Guidelines**

1. All communication materials will meet professional standards in writing and production, and will align with ICF branding standards.
2. Materials judged to not meet professional standards due to poor writing, graphics, layout of other problems will either be revised, or not accepted for publication.

## **Standard #3 - Alignment with the activities and policies of the International Coach Federation**

As a Charter Chapter of the ICF, we support the ICF's core purpose which is to "Lead the global advancement of the coaching profession." We are also committed to supporting the activities and policies of the ICF, and to meeting the terms of our Charter Chapter Agreement, which requires that we:

- a) subscribe to the vision, mission and values and strategic plan of the ICF, and adhere to its policies and standards, and
- b) not conduct, endorse, offer, promote, develop or support any event that conflicts with ICF activity or policy.

Meeting these requirements means aligning with the ICF's strategic plan and its global communication activities. To be in alignment, our Chapter communication should whenever possible:

- a) promote understanding of coaching as it is defined by the ICF and guided by the processes and core competencies the ICF supports,
- b) help people understand what coaching is and is not by separating it from therapy, advising and other practices which are outside of the scope of coaching,
- c) provide education on the value, credibility and efficacy of professional coaching,
- d) encourage coach training and credentialing consistent with ICF policy,
- e) support our coaches/members by including a focus on professional skill competency development, personal development and professional/business development as it relates to the business of coaching,
- f) promote understanding of the ethics and standards that guide the coaching profession.

### Guidelines

1. Consistent with the core purpose of the ICF, Chapter communications **will focus on advancing the practice of professional coaching, and will not promote other practices that are outside of the practice of coaching.** While professional coaches often offer services other than coaching, the coaching component of our member's work is the primary reason the Chapter exists, and the Chapter's identity and reputation are built around coaching. Maintaining this focus also reduces the possibility that potential clients, coaches in training and other groups exposed to Chapter communications will misunderstand the scope of coach training and the nature of coaching services.
2. Chapter communications **will strive to build understanding of coaching as it is viewed by the ICF, and will not publish material that describes coaching in conflicting ways, or that attempt to include non-coaching practices in the definition of coaching.**
3. The Chapter **will reinforce global ICF messages on a local level.** This includes providing education on the value of professional coaching, and promoting coach training and credentialing. As a specific measure in this regard, the Chapter will not promote the services or offerings of any individual who refers to themselves as a professional coach, but who does not have credible coach training.
4. Chapter communications **will recognize the importance of establishing that coaching and therapy are separate and distinct,** and will attempt to educate potential clients, concerned professional groups (e.g., managers, HR professionals, psychologists), and the general public on this point. Practices, training programs or events that have a therapeutic focus will not be promoted in Chapter communications.
5. The Chapter **will monitor global ICF communication and activity, and look for opportunities to align** our communication on a local level.

**For Reference:** This information on the following page supports the interpretation of these guidelines. It is taken from the ICF global website.

### **What is coaching?**

The ICF describes coaching as a process of partnering with clients in thought-provoking and creative discussions that inspire them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaching involves a unique set of skills that distinguishes it from other professions. It takes place in powerful conversations in which the coach uses core coaching competencies to support the exploration of the client's goals, the development of solutions and strategies, and execution of those solutions and strategies.

### **How is therapy different from coaching?**

The ICF distinguishes therapy and coaching as follows. Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways. Coaching, on the other hand, supports personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific actionable outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal or professional success. Coaching is future focused. While positive feelings/emotions may be a natural outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphasis in a coaching relationship is on action, accountability and follow-through.

### **Note on ICF Branding Standards**

The ICF standards for use of logos, colour schemes, etc. are contained in the most recent ICF Brand Manual.