



## Message from the President

Dear Fellow Coaches,

APAC's Vision Statement about "Striving to bring the value of coaching to every workplace and home in the region" is a challenging one for our Asia Pacific based organization. Our Organization is committed to develop and grow the coaching profession in this region and also wishes to expand knowledge of the coaching process to "inspire new heights of human potential, achievement and creativity."

The challenge is not only to increase the numbers of coaches in the region but also to raise awareness of the role coaching can play in developing Asia Pacific citizens. So we need to reach beyond multinational corporations and bring coaching to a broader range of Asian companies, to Government Agencies and charitable organizations in the region.

APAC has initiated a community relations program that offers coaching services free of charge to selected organizations. Past recipients include teachers in two Singaporean secondary schools, and other regional projects are ongoing or being initiated. Our community relations program connects the peoples of Asia Pacific to coaching. Can you step up and volunteer as a coach or create pro-bono coaching projects in your countries?

**Woraphat Arthayukti**  
APAC President  
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## A Giant's Eye View: Coaching Microsoft

by Edith Coron

Microsoft introduced coaching world-wide (including Asia Pacific) about six years ago. Global policy makes the beneficiaries of coaching primarily senior leaders, managers, and high potentials from within the corporation's 88,000 employees.

Lauren Houghton, previously in charge of Microsoft's talent development for the APAC region explains that "over the years, executive coaching has moved from being almost a perk to the individual leader being coached to a Microsoft strategic

Karen Zong, head of talent development in greater China, adds: "[our] worldwide high potential development program... is a multi-year, systematic development program that is based on best practice research. It combines the format of inner classroom, learning on the job and from peers, and also contracting with the managers. [For relevancy, we need] personalization for each high potential and that's clearly when coaching comes into play."

Zong explains that coaching at Microsoft remains a "selective offering" for senior leaders and managers who are going through transitioning and who need "targeted leadership support". She notes with satisfaction that

**[Coaches need an] understanding of the complexity the [Microsoft] leaders... are dealing with in this part of the world.**



an increasing number of senior leaders are getting more open-minded about coaching.

The perception of coaching in Asia Pacific is mixed; though well established in Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Singapore, it is still new to many Asian countries. "As Chinese we are not used to coaching but it is definitely helpful" admits a senior leader who, for more than a year, has received both internal and external coaching.

"Especially as a senior leader, it is difficult to find somebody with whom you can have a relationship based on confidentiality and trust, and know that you are at the same intellectual level. As a senior leader, it is also difficult to go to someone and say: 'I need some help.'"

Zong observes that coaching at Microsoft focuses on both "behaviour" and "competency", addressing a variety of leadership challenges: "How do you earn your credibility? How do you build and view a cohesive team that can work together? How do you exercise strategic thinking and build win and breakthrough strategies? How do you enable change?"

She adds that, like many multinationals, Microsoft remains somewhat “headquarter centric”. “Lots of the things we are driving as leaders, lots of the projects we are implementing, lots of the initiatives we are part of [require] aligning and influencing international and corporate stakeholders. Therefore the leaders leading here [in China] need the capability of impacting and influencing global stakeholders”.

Like other organizations operating at a global level, Microsoft does not limit coaching to expatriate leaders in Asia, nor is coaching offered as a solution to a management issue, comments Lauren Houghton. “In a multinational company, investing in high potentials [builds on] a sense that there are global leadership qualities that are equally applicable to a Korean, a Japanese or a Western leader”, she adds.

As both internal coaches and purchasers of external coaching services, Zong and Houghton have clear expectations and selection criteria for coaches.

Knowledge of the local context is essential insists Zong. “If someone is fresh out of college, or out of Europe or America and new to China, I would hesitate because that person needs to have the maturity, the experience, the knowledge and the understanding of the complexity the leaders and their organization are dealing with in this part of the world. Secondly I like to see someone who is interested in knowing, understanding, in helping out the other person through questioning, probing, cautious analysis without jumping to conclusions and giving advice. I’ve seen too many people who were “executive tellers” rather than “executive coaches”, often re-

tired business executives with flashy résumés but who are unable to listen.”

Among the criteria listed is also “flexibility of coaching style”, in other words a coach’s capacity to work with a young female trainee as well as with a male CFO. “I am also looking for coaches who have a knowledge of both Chinese and Western cultures, but that is rare”, adds Karen Zong. She pays special attention to the coach’s capacity “to tell the coachee that there is an elephant in the room! A coach cannot just be nice and pleasing, a coach must also be confronting when needed”.

Lauren Houghton highlights that Microsoft is increasingly looking at the coach’s certification and professional affiliations, and will ask for feedback from organizations where the coach has worked previously.

“In some countries, like New Zealand, Singapore, Korea and Australia, we have no problem finding the coaches we need for executive coaching but in emerging markets like Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia we found that there were problems with the number and caliber of coaches”, concludes Houghton.

Zong has also admits to mixed feelings about what the coaching market offers in China and would like to see coaching there become more professional.

Once the right coaches have been found, however, Microsoft purchasers and coachees alike have no doubt. “I definitely think the ROI of coaching is worth it. Thinking time is worth more than execution time. I recommend to people to do some thinking before acting — and coaching is thinking time”, says one senior Microsoft coachee.

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# Singapore: High Flying Regional Coaching Model?

by Nancy Verhoeven

## Looking back

It is amazing to see the growth of coaching in Asia and how Singapore is developing as a leader in the regional market.

When I moved to Singapore 12 years ago and started working as a Leadership Consultant and Coach, 360° Feedback was a completely foreign idea for most managers based in Singapore, let alone coaching. It reminded me of the 1980s in the USA, when management consultants were popping up everywhere and people used to ask "What do they really do?"

That was the feeling I then had as a coach in Singapore. People were always asking me, "So what do you really do?", and "Are you a like a sports coach?"

But in 2002, a group of half a dozen coaches, headed by Foo See Luan, decided we should start a local

chapter of the International Coach Federation (ICF). It seems like yesterday that our small group of enthusiastic coaches sat together in See Luan's home planning how to get the chapter off the ground. In fact, it

didn't take long before the chapter was established and other coaches and coach wannabe's got a whiff of the great meetings we were having! See Luan's home was soon not big enough!

Coaching was still in its infancy in Singapore. Though still relatively new in the USA, Europe and Australia, Asia was still comparatively behind in terms of the number of coaches, their experience level, organizational support and range of client projects.

## Looking forward

Moving forward to 2010, and looking at the coaching community in Singapore, we see our ICF chapter reaching 200 members and, of course, See Luan has founded the Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches (APAC), to

**...as a regional hub for large corporations it is natural that coaching is becoming a major part of the management and leadership development market here**

*High flying Singapore: the coaching market in Singapore is reaching a high level of maturity*

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meet the needs of coaches across the greater Asia Pacific Region.

The two organizations are co-hosting the first Asia Pacific Coaching Conference this September. I believe that is an amazing achievement. Now, some may look around and say, well, the USA has been having conferences for a decade, Europe is right up there and Australia has also been having conferences for years. So what?

Well, I think the first Asia-Pacific Coaching Conference ([www.apcc2010.com](http://www.apcc2010.com)) shows the level of maturity in the Singapore coaching industry and how that is spreading across other parts of Asia Pacific. I see it as a landmark event that places our region firmly on the global coaching map.

## Market maturity

To what degree has the coaching market grown? I would not say that I no longer have to answer the "what do you really do as a coach?" question,

but happens far less. It is very common for organizations to conduct 360° feedback for their managers and leaders, and I would even dare to say that it is becoming common for organizations to hire coaches as part of their development plans for senior leaders.

Singapore has long been a regional hub for large corporations so it is natural that coaching is becoming a major part of the management and leadership development market here.

Local, regional and global research on coaching projects is growing and all the results so far indicate that coaching adds significant value. In a 2009 ICF global coaching client survey, 86% of those able to provide figures to calculate company ROI indicated that their company had at least recouped their investment in coaching, while 96% of clients indicated that they would repeat the coaching experience given the same circum-

stances.

## Regional prospects

So what is the future of coaching here in Singapore and the rest of Asia?

Singapore's small physical space has made it an ideal place for coaches to congregate and form a community. In addition, it is home to a host of multinational headquarters and led by a government that believes in investing in people.

The coaching community is vibrant and growing, as is the client base. Singapore now offers several world-renowned accredited coach training programs.

Traditionally, Singapore-based coaches have been very much focused on business and executive coaching, however more and more we are seeing growth in other coaching niches such as personal coaching, financial coaching, spiritual and energy coaching, etc. For me, this shows an expansion of acceptance of coaching in general, opening up exciting possibilities for diverse individual specializations. All these point to the increase in the market maturity in Singapore and may provide a model or map for the other regional markets.

Looking around Asia, there are large and fast-growing coaching communities in China, Hong Kong (where an ICF chapter is launched formally in October), India, Japan and Korea. Other parts of Southeast Asia have smaller coaching communities set to develop alongside their growing economies.

All in all, I'm excited to imagine what coaching in Singapore will be like in 2020!

*Nancy Verhoeven, PCC — [nancyv@vincerecoaching.com](mailto:nancyv@vincerecoaching.com)*

*An APAC R&D Team  
Study Project*

## Working with HR: Introducing Coaching to Organisations

Executive coaches building their practice in Asia's developing economies often struggle to introduce organizations to the concept of coaching for leadership development. HR teams in organizations are often unaware of coaching.

The objective of this exploratory, qualitative study is to understand how successful coaches have handled the challenge of introducing coaching to organizations and managing the relationship with the HR team.

To share your experience as part of the study, email:

[ajaynangalia@globalcoachtrust.com](mailto:ajaynangalia@globalcoachtrust.com)

**Thinking of joining APAC?**

**Find out more or sign up today!**

See [www.apacoaches.org](http://www.apacoaches.org)  
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**APAC IS AN ORGANISATION CREATED BY MEMBERS, FOR MEMBERS  
YOU ARE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE CREATIVE WORK OF THE APAC COMMITTEES...**

## CONTACT DETAILS BELOW

### New Members

A warm APAC welcome to:

Thipyaniya Samalapa – Thailand

Ong Su Chzeng – Singapore

Marje Tiphonnet – Singapore

Ros Wilson – Singapore

Lauren Houghton – Singapore

Issa Kumalasari – Indonesia

Shanmugam D Moorthi – Malaysia

Tjira Irawan – Indonesia

Dr Tang Yong Ming – China

Frances Leung – Hong Kong

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