

Dear Master Coach

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Dear Master Coach: I keep hearing that I should specialize and find my "niche." Do you agree? Do you have any thoughts about how I should go about specializing as a coach?

Ambitious

Dear A.

Well, first things first: If you're a Northwest native like me, it's niche (rhymes with itch). Sophisticated imports to the Northwest tend to say niche (rhymes with quiche). In my experience you just have to decide and stay with it.

And I know: We all get mail from marketing experts who tell us they can help us "break into" a niche. But the truth is that building a coaching practice isn't burglary, it's a long, steady blend of visibility + good work + profitability (repeat).

Most financially successful coaches start as generalists--by just coaching. A lot. All comers. Do that and get skilled at this craft. Excellent training combined with a hundred or so hours with clients gets you a solid foundation: You begin to grasp the craft, methodologies, core competencies and presence of a great coach.

Along the way, pay attention to which clients you are most drawn to serve ("niche") and what you are most drawn to teach them ("speciality").

I know, I know. In coach training, your mentor coaches nagged you about not teaching, telling, advising, consulting and rescuing. At SeattleCoach, I do that too. But rather than telling coaches to just "STOP THAT!" I ask them to mentally bookmark what they find themselves wanting want to tell or teach their clients.

Most financially successful coaches also have a thing. An engine. A deep and specific body of knowledge, and an audience which they understand and for which they are known (think blogs, books, workshops, keynotes). Your thing, your engine is the place where you believe you can be a thought leader and a major influence—as a great coach.

Keep getting great at the craft and personal presence of a formidable coach. But along the way, keep paying attention to what and whom you're longing to teach and influence. Keep noticing, *Who are your favorite clients? What do they want to work on? What makes this fun for you?*

I define great coaching as highly customized, just-in-time adult learning. And if you can apply your craft as a coach to a specific niche and specialty, it's almost magic. And people will gladly pay you to do it.

Go get 'em!

PEB, MC

Listen to Patty's "Dear Master Coach" monthly 3-minute answers at: <http://www.seattlecoach.com/dearmastercoach.html>