

DIG COACHING PRACTICE



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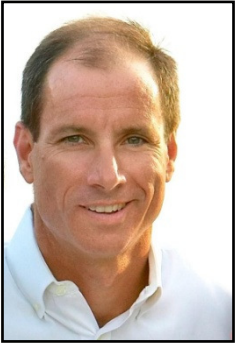
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MISCASTING: Just a Bad Cast or the Wrong Hobby?

DIG Coaching is the leading coaching practice for adults and children looking to manage attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms and attention deficit disorder (ADD) symptoms. We focus on managing symptoms of attention deficit disorder, adults with ADD, or adults who have children with ADHD. DIG Coaching, led by attention coach Jeff Copper, helps adults and children (particularly those diagnosed with or impacted by attention deficit disorder or its symptoms) in life or business who are stuck, overwhelmed, or frustrated. DIG Coaching helps adults and children get unstuck and moving forward by helping to open their minds and pay attention to what works.

MISCASTING: Just a Bad Cast or the Wrong Hobby?

By Jeff Copper, Manager & Head Coach, DIG Coaching Practice LLC



Untangling a knotted fishing line because it was miscast might be frustrating, but it will pass. Being miscast as a fisherman, now that is a problem! At DIG Coaching, we define "miscasting" as placing someone in a role and asking him/her to do something with an expectation of performance that is not supported by his/her underlying abilities. To better understand miscasting, let's use horse racing as a metaphor.

We all know that thoroughbred horses naturally run fast; in general, they run faster than other types of horses (e.g., Clydesdales). Miscasting in this case would be taking a zebra and labeling it a racehorse as they did in the movie **Racing Stripes**. While a zebra is a type of horse and runs in the same manner as a thoroughbred, labeling it a racehorse, entering it in the Kentucky Derby, and expecting it to compete with thoroughbreds is unrealistic. This illustration might seem absurd, but look around you. Miscasting is pervasive in our society and is getting worse as we evolve into a 100% self-service society, meaning, the more you have to be the jack-of-all-trades, the less time you get to spend on what you were born to do.

Miscasting occurs in two basic ways. The first resonates from individual choice, such as when a person chooses a role or attempts to do something with performance expectations in the absence of sufficient abilities. The second manifests when people (and society) ignore important details or address issues with solutions grounded in how they want something to be instead of paying attention to how things actually are. Our metaphor illustrates both, because (1) no one paid attention to the difference in the types of horses (a detail), and (2) the person doing the miscasting wanted to believe that all horses are equal when, in reality, they have different talents that drive performance (absence of sufficient abilities).

Labeling (or mislabeling) and miscasting go hand in hand. With that in mind, let's look at miscasting in the real world and compare it to our metaphor. Take for example the roles of salesperson and sales manager. Both roles are focused on sales in the same way that a zebra and a thoroughbred are both horses. The key difference is in the details of what each one does. A salesperson sells and a

sales manager manages. The talents needed to be successful in either position can be very different. Similarly, a zebra and a thoroughbred have different talents. A zebra is sensitive to and avoids danger while a thoroughbred runs fast.

During my 15 years in sales, I saw countless successful salespeople being promoted to sales management positions, only later to find them being managed out of the company because of performance. From what I witnessed, those managed out were not failures, but talented salespeople who were just miscast as a manager, like a zebra racing in the Kentucky Derby.

In a larger context, "climbing the corporate ladder" promulgates miscasting. Consider the logic of climbing the ladder. The idea is to keep getting promoted to the next higher level, which requires different talents (e.g., becoming a sales manager). This process continues until your talents no longer suit your position. For many, it means they were just promoted one too many times, going from being cast to being miscast.

Miscasting is not limited to corporate America. Think about relationships. Each person in a relationship fulfills many roles and is tasked with doing certain things. All too often I've witnessed couples miscasting the woman in the role of "housemaid" and the man as the "family money manager." Frequently, the miscast partner performs poorly and his or her partner expresses dissatisfaction with the results. Many times, I find the partner is dissatisfied because he or she has higher performance expectations simply because he or she would have been a better casting choice for the role. It is important to understand that many who are properly cast don't realize it. The role comes so naturally to them that they don't understand why others can't replicate their results.

As a coach, I've found frustration, stress, procrastination, a sense of helplessness, boredom, slower learning, feelings of emptiness, inconsistent results, and low confidence can all be symptoms of miscasting. Do you experience any of these symptoms on a regular basis? If so, the next time you feel this way, pause, witness what is real, and consider the fisherman metaphor: Is this just a miscast line that can be untangled quickly, or are you miscast as a fisherman?

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