



The Leader-Coach: The Future Of Professionalism

by *Esther Muller and Michael Williams, Ph.D.*



The Leader-Coach: Leader as Learner

Coaching enables empowerment. Empowerment fuels achievement. Achievement drives professionalism. Professionalism can be expressed through a leader's compelling vision of the future, an unwavering commitment to ethical business practices, or demonstrating the courage to champion innovation when the status quo prevails. Learning is fundamental to leadership.

Leaders who are life-long learners enable their leadership and coaching capabilities. Many leader-coaches have acquired formal coaching training or been coached by leader-mentors in master and apprentice relationships. Leader-coaches are mentors; mentors who understand and apply the coaching processes; they enable others to act.

As President John F. Kennedy stated "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." The result of this *indispensable* interaction is a rich integration of leadership and coaching; leaders modeling the way for others.

Leader as Model: Professionalism in Practice

Modeling is a key coaching tool for leader-coaches. Leaders who are models of professionalism are often exemplary leaders. Let's explore leadership modeling as a mechanism for creating leader-coaches. Here are two exemplars of leadership excellence.

David Schlamm—Founder and CEO of City Connections

Mr. David Schlamm, Founder and CEO of City Connections, Inc. in New York City is an exemplary leader. A 23 year veteran of the Manhattan real estate industry, David continues to create the future of professionalism at City Connections. David's vision of professionalism articulates a client-centric business culture, inhabited by highly educated agent-advisors, delivering a comprehensive and customized housing acquisition experience. Schlamm's vision is fueled by his unflagging commitment to ethical conduct enabled by an innovative high "split-to-agent" commission structure the cornerstone of his business model championing entrepreneurialism.

Central to David's vision of professionalism is his commitment to life-long learning. In order to realize his vision of providing "highly educated agent-advisors" to his clientele, he endorsed and participated in creating the Certified Real Estate Advisor (CRA) designation. The CRA designation is the only professional designation of its kind worldwide coupling industry training and high performance coaching. David immersed himself in the coaching processes; being coached and becoming a leader-coach. As a result of his commitment and pioneering action, the CRA designation is rapidly becoming the recognized benchmark of professional excellence for residential real estate advisors industry-wide.

David's vision of the future of professionalism is rapidly revolutionizing the residential real estate industry nationally.

City Connections, Inc. Website: <http://www.ccrny.com/>

Richard Dickson—President and Chief Executive Officer Branded Businesses of Jones Apparel Group, Inc.

Mr. Dickson, President and Chief Executive Officer Branded Businesses of Jones Apparel Group, Inc. is an exemplary leader. An industry thought and practice leader in the fashion, fragrance, and toy industries, Richard continues his legacy of creating the future of professionalism through his leadership at Jones New York. Richard's vision of professionalism crafts a worldwide culture of empowered women, framed by strong female models of leadership, and coached by recognized female leaders such as a former Clinton Administration Press Secretary Ms. Dee Dee Myers.

Dickson's vision of a world culture empowered and enabled by women leaders, is a transformative idea. However, without his innovative acumen and creative design mastery, this idea could remain transformative, yet unrealized. Richard's unyielding commitment to professional excellence, driven by his relentless pursuit of artistry and creativity, resulted in the launch of the *Empower Your Confidence* initiative in 2010 through the Jones New York brand.

Richard's vision of the future of professionalism integrates his legacy of creative perspectives resulting from coaching and being coached. The Empower Your Confidence initiative is a nexus of his leadership, creative genius, and branding skill. It is the essence of originality crystallized in a distinctive and new strategic direction for Jones New York. This seminal work product articulating Dickson's vision is evidenced in a stunning sepia print presenting empowered women framed in New York's Grand Central Station. This photo captured the imagination of the international fashion industry and launched Jones New York's new strategic vision heralded by the power and potential inherent in these women. It concretized Dickson's vision and evidences his exemplary leadership.

Richard's vision of the future of professionalism provides witness to and models world-class leadership creating new worlds of enablement through empowerment.

Website: <http://www.jny.com/Empowerment/JNY,default,pg.html>

The future of professionalism is the work of leadership. Leaders who are coached and coach others are the leader-coaches of the future.

Lead, coach, and achieve. ■

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