Professional coaching tools and exercises are a vastly underused resource in the coaching world.

Firstly, what Are Coaching Tools And Why Use Them?

When our clients come to us it's because they're dissatisfied with their current situation. And whatever is bothering them -- one thing that's common across all coaching clients is that they want change!

So, the purpose of coaching tools and exercises is to facilitate change, get the client looking inside, learning, reflecting and taking action. And a coaching tool can literally be anything you use to help move your client forwards.

Examples could be familiar like The Wheel of Life, Personal SWOT and The Urgent/Important Matrix or they could be innovated coaching exercises like "Eat Your Elephant" (where clients brainstorm on a large picture of an Elephant to counteract overwhelm and take one 'bite' at a time) or "Troll Travels" (where clients review their qualities and use the 'device' of a troll to decide which qualities they value the most.)

In short, coaching tools add a lighthearted element to the often challenging coaching process. And we all know that when things are fun people are more engaged, they achieve more, learn faster and the learning is stickier! And, of course, engaged clients refer more and stay with us longer...

Coaching Tools Can Be Used Over And Over Again:

Quality coaching tools can be used in session, as client homework, in a welcome pack or to supercharge your seminars as exercises and handouts. They can even help you shine in prospective client or corporate meetings -- demonstrating what coaching is in a clearly tangible way. And when the tools have your company and contact details on there -- you'll want to use them as much as possible to get your name out there!

Who Uses Coaching Tools In Their Practice?

Coaching tools can be used by any type of therapist or coach -- whatever the specialty or niche. You just pick, or create, a coaching exercise that works for the client or situation in hand. They are ideal for:
• Coaches just starting out -- to give them focus and confidence in their dealings with clients.
• Established coaches -- who will enjoy adding some pizzazz and fresh activities to their practice.
• Therapists of all kinds -- can enjoy adding some more light-hearted and coaching-style exercises to their practice.

What Type Of Clients Can I Use Coaching Tools With?

Well, the easiest way to answer this is to let you know some of the types of clients I've successfully used coaching tools with. They are managers, lawyers, accountants, engineers, computer programmers, teachers, HR specialists, marketing and sales professionals, writers, entrepreneurs and small business owners, dance teachers, construction workers, film industry professionals and stay-at-home moms.

A large portion, but not all, of my clients are women. And unexpectedly, I found that men enjoyed the tools just as much, if not more than, the women. Coaching tools take potentially ’airy-fairy’ conversations and make them more real and tangible -- more practical.

Common Themes For Coaching Tools:

While each client is unique, once you’ve been coaching for a while you’ll undoubtedly have noticed common themes. The ideas below are all excellent areas to add value to your clients with tools:

• 1.Time management and prioritization issues
• 2.Not enough self-care, doing too much, tired and/or lacking motivation
• 3.Inner critics -- limiting beliefs and fears that block them from moving forwards
• 4.Focusing on their weaknesses or problems and oblivious to their real strengths and opportunities
• 5.Feeling dissatisfied with or stuck in their lives -- and not knowing what to do next
• 6.Setting meaningful goals or achieving goals faster -- especially in the business and executive coaching areas.
• 7.Planning and reflection of themselves, their lives, relationships, careers and goals

How Coaching Tools Enhance Your Coaching:

In session we ask questions and explore, we look for insight, action and commitment, we consider new ways of looking at and doing things. We help evaluate, challenge and push our clients to be the best they can be.

Using tools and exercises as homework helps the client achieve more as they continue learning and growing in between sessions. They help your clients identify blocks and come up with new ideas -- faster -- which they then bring to you to delve deeper and work your coaching magic.
Coaching tools also provide continuity and a bridge between sessions -- your clients stay longer in a coaching frame of mind. They also keep your coaching fresh -- with a stream of new ideas and exercises for your clients. Finally, pre-prepared tools help the client feel that they're not alone -- they see that other people have the same issues as they do.

**Why Coaching Tools Are Great For Business:**

When your tools look good, they help you appear professional, well-structured and organized. They provide a polished framework that adds tangibility and instant value to your meetings, coaching sessions and workshops. And over time, your client builds a folder of 'coaching work' demonstrating solid progression.

Also, because coaching tools and exercises are reusable, they save you time and energy repeating yourself -- allowing you to focus on growing your business.

All this makes it easier for you to attract more clients, increase prospect conversion rates and keep your existing clients engaged so they give you quality referrals. If you keep it fun and consistently demonstrate tangible value -- your clients just keep coming back for more.

**What To Look For In A Great Coaching Tool? It Should:**

- 1. Be professional, well-laid out and clearly explained.
- 2. Be fun and easy to complete -- quick, colourful and with immediate impact (graphics and colour will appeal more to your clients).
- 3. Be short! So they don't overwhelm your already busy clients.
- 4. Deal with issues your clients regularly face -- so that you get great value and reuse out of your tools.
- 5. Solidify learning with at least one action or learning 'take away'

**Create Your Own Coaching Tools:**

Try creating your own tools -- and take-off! It just takes time and a bit of thought. If you want a simple step-by-step guide to creating your own tools, see the complimentary article "Coaching Tools 101: 10 Simple Steps To Create Your Own Fabulous Coaching Tools and Exercises!"

I want your clients to love coaching and rave about you! And, if you start using coaching tools more regularly and consistently it WILL save you time, impress your clients and boost your practice, as well as help get your name out there. It's common knowledge in sales that it's cheaper and easier to keep an existing client than it is to get a new one -- why not use Coaching Tools to help you?