



Marketing and Communications Guide

TOOLS, FRAMEWORKS, AND DIRECTION FOR COACHING MATERIALS



LEARN MORE: [MILLIONCOACHES.ORG](https://millioncoaches.org)



This guide provides practical tools, messaging frameworks, and creative direction to ensure marketing materials reflect the kind of coaches every child deserves: supportive, inclusive, relatable, and joy-focused. It offers concrete direction for language, visuals and storytelling so campaigns:

- **Reflect a holistic, youth-centered approach to coaching.**
- **Inspire people from all walks of life to see themselves as coaches.**
- **Avoid outdated, harmful portrayals.**

Whether you're designing a social media campaign, creating flyers for a community event, or refreshing your coach recruitment page, this guide is your roadmap.

Portraying Great Coaches

Tone and Framing for Showcasing Quality Coaching

When writing or designing materials: speak to the heart of someone who wants to make a difference, emphasize approachability over authority, use relational and human-centered language and show that coaching is rewarding, doable, and meaningful — not intimidating or overly competitive. Marketing materials should highlight in language and imagery the following traits and behaviors when portraying or attracting coaches:

Welcoming

- ✓ Welcomes children of all races, genders, abilities, and backgrounds.
- ✓ Adapts coaching styles to meet the needs of individuals.
- ✓ Actively works to dismantle barriers to participation.

Emotionally Supportive

- ✓ Leads with kindness, patience, and empathy.
- ✓ Notices and responds to children's emotional states.
- ✓ Uses positive reinforcement and avoids shame-based discipline.

Growth-Oriented

- ✓ Focuses on effort and learning over winning.
- ✓ Encourages reflection, goal-setting, and resilience.
- ✓ Sees mistakes as part of the learning process.



Tone and Framing for Showcasing Quality Coaching

Child-Centered

- ✓ Prioritizes children's voices, choices, and emotional safety.
- ✓ Recognizes the full humanity of every participant — not just athletic ability.
- ✓ Builds relationships rooted in trust and mutual respect.

Representative and Relatable

- ✓ Comes from a range of backgrounds — including nontraditional or first-time coaches.
- ✓ Showcases a wide variety of coaches across dimensions such as race, age, gender, and more.
- ✓ Demonstrates that coaching is accessible and welcoming to everyone, not just former athletes.

Fun and Joyful

- ✓ Highlights the joy in sports ensuring kids are actually having fun.
- ✓ Engages with children with age-appropriate behavior and language.

What Not to Promote

It's equally important to identify coaching styles and messaging to avoid. Legacy portrayals of coaching often rely on outdated stereotypes that don't align with positive youth development or your organizational values. Avoid highlighting or recruiting individuals who exhibit or align with:

“Tough Love” Coaching

- ✗ Uses yelling, intimidation, or punishment as motivators.
- ✗ Believes that adversity must be “taught” through hardship.
- ✗ Emphasizes discipline over compassion.

Authoritarian or Military-Style Leadership

- ✗ Values obedience over exploration.
- ✗ Discourages emotion or vulnerability.
- ✗ Frames authority as control rather than guidance.



What Not to Promote

Performance-First Mentality

- ✗ Centers winning, ranking, or “being the best” over participation and growth.
- ✗ Views coaching as transactional — focused on outcomes, not relationships.

Overused or Harmful Stereotypes

- ✗ Reinforces narrow images of who can be a coach (e.g., only male, only white, only athletic).
- ✗ Highlights aggressive or stoic body language (crossed arms, yelling, etc.).
- ✗ Focuses only on sports drills or physical exertion, excluding relational context.

Core Messaging Pillars

Overview

To attract coaches, messaging must reflect who you’re trying to reach and how you want them to feel. These pillars are designed to help shape language, visuals, and overall tone in a way that highlights coaches as relatable, supportive, empathetic and joyful — and distances from outdated models of authoritarian coaching.

Pillar 1: Lead with Heart, Not Hierarchy

Messaging Focus: Coaching is a relationship. Show coaches as mentors and partners, not disciplinarians.

Sample Phrases:

- “Be the adult who listens.”
- “Coaching is connection.”
- “Lead with kindness. Coach with heart.”

Do Use:

- ✓ Warm, conversational tone.
- ✓ Words like *guide*, *mentor*, *trusted adult*.
- ✓ Stories about emotional impact.

Avoid:

- ✗ “In charge of the team.”
- ✗ “Discipline and structure” as lead benefits.
- ✗ Phrases like “laying down the law” or “keeping kids in line.”



Pillar 2: Celebrate Joy and Belonging

Messaging Focus: All children (and adults) should feel seen, safe, and celebrated. Focus on connection, encouragement, and fun.

Sample Phrases:

- “Coaches create belonging.”
- “No experience needed — just a big heart.”
- “Help kids find joy in movement and connection.”

Do Use:

- ✓ Language around welcoming spaces.
- ✓ References to *community, fun, acceptance*.
- ✓ Phrases that celebrate different kinds of leadership.

Avoid:

- ✗ Hyper-competitive framing
- ✗ Exclusivity or “elite” terminology
- ✗ Assumptions about traditional gender roles in coaching.

Pillar 3: Representation Matters

Messaging Focus: Coaching should reflect our communities.

Sample Phrases:

- “Representation matters — and so do you.”
- “Coaching is for everyone — every identity, every background.”
- “Real people. Real Impact.”

Do Use:

- ✓ Photos showing nontraditional coaches and coaches representing a spectrum of identities.
- ✓ Language that invites people who haven’t seen themselves represented in sports
- ✓ Stories that challenge traditional expectations of what a coach is.

Avoid:

- ✗ Traditional imagery of coaches
- ✗ Overly polished, uniformed visuals that signal exclusivity
- ✗ Stock phrases like “no one left behind” without demonstrating *how*.



Pillar 4: Whole-Child Focus

Messaging Focus: Coaching is about building up a child's *character, confidence, and sense of self*.

Sample Phrases:

- "You'll shape more than skills — you'll shape lives."
- "Our coaches focus on who kids are, not just what they can do."
- "Help kids grow into kind, confident, and compassionate humans."

Do Use:

- ✓ Language about growth, resilience, character-building.
- ✓ Emphasis on emotional well-being and self-esteem.
- ✓ Phrases that show impact beyond sports.

Avoid:

- ✗ Performance-centric recruitment (e.g., "Train the next champions").
- ✗ Narrow references to physical ability or strength.
- ✗ Pressure-based or result-oriented framing.

Pillar 5: Keep It Doable

Messaging Focus: Coaching is accessible, rewarding and supported — no experience required.

Sample Phrases:

- "No experience required — training provided"
- "Coaching is about connection, not perfection."
- "We will help you grow in the role."
- "If you care about kids, you already have what it takes."

Do Use:

- ✓ Reminders that training and resources are available at no cost.
- ✓ Language about *growth, resilience, character-building*.
- ✓ Simple, encouraging language that reduces barriers ("doable", "supported" and "step-by-step").
- ✓ Words that emphasize community and teamwork ("together", "connected").

Avoid:

- ✗ Jargon or technical terms ("pedagogy", "defensive scheme").
- ✗ Emphasis on winning, competition or sport-specific expertise.
- ✗ Phrases that sound like a burden ("sacrifice", "full commitment").
- ✗ Messaging that implies you must have prior experience, certifications or athletic background.



Visual Identity & Representation

What this Means

Your visuals are often the first — and most lasting — impression. They signal who belongs and who is welcome.

Include:

- ✓ Coaches kneeling, smiling or high-fiving at the player's level.
- ✓ A range of racial, gender, body type, age, and ability representation.
- ✓ Non-traditional settings (e.g. parks, school gyms, community centers — not just sports fields).
- ✓ Moments of encouragement, laughter, and genuine connection.
- ✓ Variety in attire — showing that coaches don't need uniforms or athletic gear to belong.

Avoid:

- ✓ Sole focus on drills or physical exertion with no visible relationship dynamic
- ✓ All-white or all-male groups, especially in leadership positions
- ✓ Photos with harsh or aggressive body language (crossed arms, blowing whistles, yelling)
- ✓ Overly staged or hyper-posed images that feel unnatural or exclusive
- ✓ Stock images that do not reflect your community or values.

Video & Audio Best Practices

What this Means

Video is a powerful tool to humanize coaching. Use it to show voice, warmth, and real connection.

Video Tips

- Prioritize natural interactions: candid footage of practice, huddles, affirmations, games.
- Capture voiceover or testimonial from coaches and kids.
- Show emotionally compelling scenes: a child sharing a win, a coach kneeling down to listen.
- Use light, joyful music — avoid militaristic or dramatic tones.

Audio Tips:

- ✓ Record authentic voices — let community members speak in their own tone and language.
- ✓ Include sound cues that highlight fun and laughter, not command or control.



Messaging & Imagery

Do/Don't Framework

Do	Don't
Use words like “mentor,” “guide,” “encouraging,” “inclusive”	Use words like “boss,” “strict,” “tough”
Show candid, warm coach-player interactions	Show only drills or physical exertion with no relational context
Represent diverse races, genders, ages, and abilities	Use all-male, all-white, or uniform-only imagery
Emphasize effort, learning, and joy	Center winning, ranking, or elite performance
Use approachable, conversational language	Use jargon, acronyms, or performance-only terms
Show coaches in varied clothing/settings	Show only sports uniforms in traditional venues
Depict coaches listening, laughing, and engaging	Use images of crossed arms, yelling, or aggressive postures

Storytelling & Testimonials

Overview

Real stories — when told with authenticity and care — are one of the most powerful tools in marketing. They show that coaching is doable, rewarding, and for people like me. This section outlines how to source, shape, and share coach stories in a way that invites diverse audiences and avoids harmful clichés.



How to Source Exemplar Coach Stories

Identify coaches who:

- Reflect a range of ages, identities, backgrounds and experiences.
- Demonstrate emotional intelligence, respect for differences, and growth-mindset behaviors.
- Are willing to share personal reflections about their role and impact.

Use informal prompts to spark storytelling, such as:

- “Tell me about a moment you felt proud as a coach.”
- “What surprised you most about coaching?”
- “How has coaching changed you?”
- “What does belonging look like on your team?”
- “What would you say to someone who’s nervous about becoming a coach?”

Best Practices for Shaping and Sharing Stories

Do:

- ✓ Feature coaches with varied backgrounds and experiences.
- ✓ Highlight emotional connection and impact.
- ✓ Use first-person quotes that feel natural and unscripted.
- ✓ Pair stories with authentic photos from real moments.

Avoid:

- ✗ Creating “hero” stories that suggest only exceptional people can coach.
- ✗ Over-polishing or scripting — let their natural voice come through.
- ✗ Tokenizing underrepresented identities — ensure stories are full and dignified.
- ✗ Stories that unintentionally reinforce barriers (e.g., “It’s hard, but worth it...” can deter new applicants).



Story Formats to Use Across Channels

Format	Where to Use It
Short coach quotes	Social media graphics, flyers, emails
Written testimonials	Website bios, brochures, applications
Video clips	Instagram Reels, recruitment emails, events
Q&A-style blog posts	Organizational blog, newsletters
Audio snippets	Podcasts, voiceover for social videos

How to Avoid Harmful Stereotypes in Testimonials

When reviewing coach stories, ask:

- Are we showing only people of color in hardship stories, or are we also celebrating their joy and leadership?
- Are we implying that coaching is reserved for “exceptional” people, rather than inviting everyday community members?
- Are we centering the coach *with* the team — not *above* the team?

Every story should affirm the idea that ***coaching is for everyone***, and that being a great coach means caring, listening, and showing up — not commanding or fixing.



Checklist & Toolkit

Overview

This section provides easy-to-use tools and quick-reference guides to help your team execute coach recruitment materials that reflect your values of connection, belonging, joy, and whole-child development. Use this toolkit throughout your campaign planning, creation, and review processes to ensure alignment.

Coach Recruitment Messaging Checklist

Before publishing any piece of marketing content (social post, flyer, email, etc.), ask:

Content & Tone

- Is it encouraging, relatable, and non-intimidating?
- Does it center connection and support, not competition or discipline?
- Would a first-time coach feel invited and capable?
- Does it reflect joy, connection, and growth?

Representation

- Are diverse races, genders, body types, and ages represented?
- Does it challenge stereotypes about who can coach?
- Is language accessible (e.g., includes alt text, readable fonts, clear language, translations when possible)?

Messages & Call to Action

- Is the call to action clear, actionable, and low-barrier ("No experience needed. We'll train you.")?
- Is the coaching opportunity framed as rewarding and achievable, not overwhelming?
- Does it focus on impact and joy, not just skills or wins?

Imagery Check

- Are coaches shown engaging warmly with players?
- Does the setting feel approachable and authentic?
- Would this image make someone think I could do that?



Suggested Recruitment Materials for Youth Sport Programs

Social Media Templates

- Coach Quote Graphics (Canva-ready)
- “Meet Our Coaches” Post Format
- FAQ Reel Script (e.g., “Do I need experience?”)

Flyer Templates

- “You Can Be a Coach” single-sheet flyer
- Multilingual version template with space for local translation
- Tear-off or QR code flyer for public spaces

Email Templates

- Coach Interest Outreach Email
- Community Partner Ask Email
- Former Coach Re-engagement Message

Coach Recruitment Messaging Checklist

Use this during design and review meetings to help teammates critique from a values-first lens.

Question	Yes/No
Does this asset affirm that anyone can be a coach?	
Does it reflect the diversity of the community?	
Does the tone feel emotionally warm and inclusive?	
Would a first-time coach feel <i>invited</i> , not intimidated?	



**MILLION
COACHES**
CHALLENGE