

*An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context*

**MA IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF IRELAND**

**RACHEL MCGAHERN  
13112899**

**SUPERVISOR: ARLENE EGAN**

**Submission Date: 02/09/2015**

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, September 2015

# Declaration Form

## National College of Ireland *(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)*

**Name:** Rachel McGahern

**Student Number:** 13112899

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** MA Human Resource Management

### **Material submitted for award**

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.
- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)
- (d) I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

*(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)*

**Signature of research student:**



**Date:** 10/08/2015

# Similarity Report

Final Dissertation  
BY RACHEL MCGAHERN

turnitin 6% SIMILAR OUT OF 100

Match Overview

Rank	Source	Similarity
1	www.sajip.co.za Internet source	2%
2	Submitted to National ... Student paper	1%
3	Submitted to Oxford Br... Student paper	<1%
4	www.ohiolink.edu Internet source	<1%
5	www.coachfederation... Internet source	<1%
6	trap.ncirt.ie Internet source	<1%
7	www.instituteofcoachin... Internet source	<1%
8	www.isis.or.ug Internet source	<1%
9	ses.library.usyd.edu.au Internet source	<1%
10	wiredspace.wits.ac.za Internet source	<1%
11	innovatelearning.com	<1%

Waiting for moodle.ncirt.ie... PAGE: 1 OF 78 Text-Only Report

## Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library

Student name: Rachel McGahern

Student number: 13112899

School: National College of Ireland

Course: MA HRM

Degree to be awarded: MA in HRM

Title of Thesis:

*An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context*

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (<http://trap.ncirl.ie/>), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate:



For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school

## **Abstract**

The growth of executive coaching has continued to increase despite difficult economic circumstances post-2008 and belief in the process appears to be at an all-time high with annual revenue reaching \$2 billion globally (ICF, 2012). The realisation that professional life can be both mentally and psychologically challenging, particularly at executive level, has placed coaching practice under the spotlight.

Organisations are becoming increasingly intrigued by what executive coaching can offer yet they require tangible evidence of what influences the process and what contributes to success. Much of the literature has focused on outcome from the perspective of the executive and on coaching theory which is noted as being somewhat limited up to the year 2000 (Grant, et al., 2010). From 2000 to 2009 there was a 4.5 fold increase in research (CIPD, 2012) but focus has generally remained within the confines of coaching theory and the self-evaluation of the executive. While self-evaluation studies are relevant, they can be considered somewhat unreliable and in addition, little attention has been paid to the underlying influences that lead to these outcomes. There has also been a 'burgeoning of new ideas in the coaching orbit' (Ives, 2008) when it comes to coaching models which has created a need for these approaches to be analysed and challenged. Even more importantly, little attention has been paid to the third side of the 'coaching triangle' Freas & Sherman (2004), the coach, who could be considered the driving force of the process. The views of the coach could provide insights that may be supplemented to existing findings in order to create a more holistic view of executive coaching and what impacts success.

This study will first attempt to establish where exactly current research lies on the subject of what influences success in executive coaching. In addition to this, a qualitative study on the views of six executive coaches on the impact of coach-oriented factors such as knowledge of psychotherapy, business knowledge, coaching methods and coach attributes will be conducted. Comparisons will then be drawn between themes identified in existing literature and the findings of this

study in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations on where research should focus its attention in the future.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to say a sincere thank you to the six coaches whose input was so vital in the completion of this piece of work. Their honesty, openness and willingness to speak about their experiences is hugely appreciated.

Thank you to Arlene Egan and other members of the NCI staff for their guidance in planning, writing and completing this dissertation.

I would also like to thank Patrick Berthier and the team at Airbus Helicopters International Services for their support in allowing me to conduct the odd interview in the office boardroom!

Last but not least, I would like to thank David for being my pilot interviewee, Paul for such thorough proof-reading, and of course family and loved ones whose patience may have been tested from time to time during the completion of this dissertation...

# Table of Contents

<b>Declaration Form .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Similarity Report.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1. Literature Review.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Knowledge .....	2
1.2.1 – Psychology and Psychotherapy.....	3
1.2.2 – Business and the Organisation .....	4
1.3 Coaching Model.....	5
1.3.1 - Goal-Oriented Coaching.....	5
1.3.2 - Behaviour-Oriented Coaching.....	6
1.3.3 - Cognitive Therapy Coaching.....	7
1.3.4 - Integrative Coaching.....	8
1.4 Coaching Relationship.....	8
1.5 Coach Attributes .....	10
1.6 External Influence .....	13
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Foundation of the Methodology.....	16
2.2 Pillars of the Methodology.....	16
2.3 Chosen Methodology .....	18
2.4 Sample Group .....	20
2.5 Data Analysis.....	21
2.5.1 - Qualitative Data Analysis .....	22
2.5.2 - Quantitative Data Analysis .....	24
2.6 Data Validation .....	25



2.7 Limitations .....	25
2.8 Findings.....	25
2.8.1 - Knowledge of the Business .....	26
2.8.2 - Knowledge of Psychology .....	27
2.8.3 - Coaching Model.....	28
2.8.4 - Coach Attributes .....	33
2.8.5 - Three Key Factors.....	34
<b>3. Discussion.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 Knowledge .....	36
3.2 Coaching Model.....	37
3.3 Coach Attributes .....	38
3.4 Conclusions and Recommendations .....	39
<b>References .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>48</b>
Appendix 1: Interview Request .....	48
Appendix 2: Interviewee Acceptance Form.....	50
Appendix 3: Interview Questions .....	51
Appendix 4: Competence Coaching Model (Koortzen & Oosthuizen, 2010) .....	55
Appendix 5: Coach Attributes (Executive Coaching Forum, 2008) .....	59
Appendix 6: Data Validation Request .....	60
Appendix 7: Sample Data Validation Sheet .....	61
Appendix 8: Data Charts.....	65

## **Tables**

Table 1: Sample of how themes were coded.....	23
Table 2: Sample of how statements were coded to themes.....	23
Table 3: Sample calculation of the number of times a theme occurred.....	24
Table 4: Mean rating of coach attributes.....	25

# 1. Literature Review

## 1.1 Introduction

It is clear from a brief overview of the existing research that there is an opportunity to pursue further study around the practice of the coach and what constitutes a successful executive coaching partnership from a coaching point of view. In this section we will analyse in detail current research and findings related to the role of the coach and the relevance of the coach's impact on the coaching process as a whole. It is important that the key terms of our research question are continuously reflected upon in studying the literature:

*'An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to one coaching partnership within a business context?'*

In identifying the key terms within the title of the study, we can now propose a focus for our research. As indicated by the term 'perceptions', a study of this nature is relatively subjective which will have a direct impact on the sources of information that will be accessed. Primary focus will be on the views of executive coaches but it would be amiss not to hone in on the numerous studies and pieces that have been written by experienced theorists on the influence of the coach. The primary goal of this study is to test our own methodological findings against findings in the literature. It is vital to reflect on the core subject matter at hand which can be encompassed as follows; 'external executive coaches' who have conducted 'one-to-one' coaching within a 'business context'. These three phrases are important as they further refine the focus of our research and ensure that we are continuously envisioning executive coaches entering into a business domain to conduct one-to one interventions from an independent point of view. The pivotal phrase in the title could be considered to be 'key coaching attributes and skills' as it ensures clarification that we are analysing the key tools and methods employed by the coach.

The literature review itself will be categorised thematically in order to synthesise the research in a way that highlights the most relevant aspects of the coaching

process from the point of view of the coach. These themes will be organised as follows:

- 1) Knowledge – this will focus primarily on the knowledge of the coach both in business acumen and psychology acumen and how this affects coaching outcome. We will pose the question of whether both are necessary, and if so, if any problems arise in the use of such knowledge.
- 2) Coaching Model – this will focus primarily on the coaching model employed by the coach with assessment of a selection of different coaching models in the literature. The structure of the coaching process will be examined with a view to analysing the balance between the practical and the cognitive.
- 3) Coaching Relationship – this will focus on what is considered by many authors to be the key or pivotal element of a successful coaching partnership. The coaching relationship is vital yet it is important for the coach to maintain a degree of distance and objectivity whilst conveying openness and sensitivity.
- 4) Coach Attributes – following on from the coaching relationship, the personal attributes of the coach will be studied. Can the characteristics of the coach determine the outcome of the process and if so what are these characteristics? We will also look at some possible negative attributes that may impair the coaching process.
- 5) External Influence – it is important to be aware of the key stakeholders in the coaching process and how they impact outcome. The influence of the business, peers, line managers and HR will be studied with a view to examining how outside support can be instrumental. We will also focus on the degree to which the coach is responsible for managing these dynamics.

## **1.2 Knowledge**

The relevance of knowledge in the field of executive coaching has been a frequent topic of research for many years with a large amount of focus on coaches possessing the correct balance between business knowledge and knowledge of

psychology or psychotherapy. There are a variety of opinions on the subject with some experts believing that there is limited scope for the use of psychological theory in a business setting while others maintain that it is impossible to separate business life from personal and psychological issues.

### **1.2.1 – Psychology and Psychotherapy**

76% of coaches have assisted with personal issues at some point in their executive coaching career (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009). However, in the same study, only 13.2% of respondents (coaches) said that psychology training was ‘very necessary’ as compared to 45.9% who said it was ‘not at all necessary’. Similarly, Maccoby (2009) and Grant (2009) highlight the importance of creating a degree of distance from the coachee so as not to end up playing ‘therapist’, a distinction that is regularly outlined as crucial in the coaching world. However, Grant does raise the question that serious underlying issues may not be identified by coaches untrained in this area which can raise ethical concerns. He notes that the University of Sydney conducted a study identifying that between 25% and 50% of coachees have been clinically diagnosed with anxiety or depression. (Berglas, 2002) shares this view and warns against the dangers that coaches could in some cases be treating ‘symptoms rather than the disorder’. It appears that these authors do not expect executive coaches to be able to treat these problems but they should be able to identify them and refer the coachee to a qualified psychologist. We can acknowledge an alternative view from De Haan, et al., (2010) who highlight the similarities between the coaching relationship and the psychotherapy relationship - both are based on shared reflection and critical moments of realisation which are linked to strong emotions. This view is mirrored in a report on coaching (CIPD, 2012) which identifies the overall helping nature and basis of trust as common to both relationships.

Of course we cannot entirely distinguish a person’s workplace well-being from their personal issues but a balance must be struck. There may be occasions during the coaching process where the coachee seeks to explore issues of a more personal nature. This overlap should not be discouraged but it is advisable that the coach would link these issues back to the workplace in order to maintain focus on business goals (Van Genderen, 2014). This leads us to the topic of the importance

of the coach's business knowledge in facilitating a successful coaching partnership.

### **1.2.2 – Business and the Organisation**

As mentioned above, a contrast is frequently drawn between the importance of the psychological background of the coach and their business knowledge. The 'psychologist' coaches tend to position themselves on one side of this argument while leadership coaches or coaches with a 'business background' tend to place more emphasis on the requirement for a coach to understand business language, business values and business strategy. This has been particularly advocated in early literatures Thach & Heinselman (1999) and Peterson (1996), who highlighted the need for the coach to understand the business and even to have worked in the same industry increasing credibility and cultural understanding. This is also emphasised in more contemporary literature particularly in Koonce (2010) where the coach's need to actively engage with company culture is crucial. A 'systems' perspective is advocated by Francis & Gentry (2011) who state that 'coaches cannot coach in a vacuum' and that the coach is strongly encouraged to conduct site visits, review organisation charts and study the hierarchy of an organisation. The politics, dynamics and stakeholders involved in the process can have an active affect on the path taken by the coach. This is echoed in Guttman (2004) where the coach is warned that their role is not to 'rescue' or to 'play Freud' but to set the bar high for the coachee in line with business objectives. In the six coaching principles cited by Bluckert (2006), business focus as well as systems-orientation is indicated as relevant. (Schnell, 2005) conducted a study in which he observed the benefits of internal coaches primarily due to their knowledge of the culture and politics of the organisation. This would suggest that there is significant merit and relevance in understanding the dynamics and values of an organisation. However, Segers, et al., (2011) note that 'company blindness' from the point of view of an external coach can be invaluable as it introduces a fresh pair of eyes and can shed light on issues that internal coaches could be amune to.

Despite some variations in opinion, the research would appear to attest that both business knowledge and knowledge of psychology or psychotherapy are very

relevant from a coaching perspective. It is risky to suggest that one is more important than the other as it more than likely depends on the type of intervention that is taking place. For example, performance-based or goal-orientated coaching will require strong business understanding but work issues related to low self-esteem may require more in-depth psychological analysis. Knowledge may be used in different ways and at different times depending on the issue or task at hand. Some coaches may naturally have more experience in one area than another and it is important for the coach to be self-aware and coach to his or her highest potential based on the knowledge that they have at their disposal. Self-development is also vital and coaches should continuously strive to fill gaps in knowledge that may improve their executive coaching skills.

### **1.3 Coaching Model**

An effective coaching model can be considered to be the vehicle employed by the coach to facilitate change. While the knowledge and background of the coach is highly important and can form a foundation for his/her coaching abilities, it is vital that a coach has the right tools to be able to apply that knowledge effectively. The applicability of coaching models can be strongly linked to our prior discussion on the importance of business knowledge and psychology knowledge as debate around approach and method almost mirrors this in the sense that researchers tend to position themselves in the pragmatic, practical realm or in the more cognitive, relational realm (Ives, 2008). Some models have attempted to merge both styles by creating an integrative approach which would appear to be a sensible compromise due to the fact that a number of approaches can be merged within one coaching process. A selection of models has been selected for critical analysis in order to assess schools of thought as well as the question around which coaching models could have more of a chance at success.

#### **1.3.1 - Goal-Oriented Coaching**

In 1992, John Whitmore introduced the GROW model as a method of structuring management education. Businesses began to realise that common generic 5-day management programmes could not cater to the needs of the individual (Bax, et al., 2011). The GROW model (Whitmore, 2012), is considered one of the earliest goal-orientated coaching models available. The four steps are; Goal, Reality,

Options, Way Forward. The coachee establishes a goal, evaluates their current situation, identifies the obstacles preventing them from achieving the goal and finally then sets out a plan to overcome these obstacles in order to succeed in attaining the goal. This approach is primarily non-directive as the coach simply leads the coachee through the steps as they reach their own conclusions. The GROW model has been actively advocated even in recent years, particularly by Grant, et al., (2009) who attest that coaching is first and foremost a process of goal-attainment, despite any underlying cognitive or behavioural links. In Grant's study, the GROW model was used to provide focus for coachees during sessions. Self-regulation also formed a significant part of this study where guidance from the coach was much less and coachee accountability in goal attainment was analysed. Spence & Grant (2007) also emphasise that while clinical psychology has helped to structure executive coaching models, coaching is more concerned with building solutions into the future with limited analysis of past emotions. This departure from therapeutic approach is emphasised by Cavanagh (2005) in stating that the coachee must be prepared for 'practical examinations of professional functioning'.

### **1.3.2 - Behaviour-Oriented Coaching**

In its earlier years, Behaviour-based coaching followed an approach that was significantly action-orientated and focused on setting action points to encourage behavioural change within one's environment. Essentially, this model ensured that learning and development was applied to real scenarios so as to create a reality for the coachee. Peterson (1996) supports this approach by insisting that environment is directly linked to the type of change that will occur. A number of researchers have advocated such views in their research notably Saporito (1996), who incorporates evaluation of behavioural change by the coach into his four step model. Some of these earlier behavioural approaches have since been developed into more cognitive-based approaches. An example of this is the model based on pre-existing therapeutic theory known as REBT or rational-emotive-behavior therapy (Ellis, 1994). (Sherin & Caiger, 2004) introduced this as a possible model for executive coaching through the idea that 'the individual's explicit and implicit belief system becomes the locus of change'. (Anderson, 2002) believes this



approach can be extremely useful in dealing with clients who have underlying performance-based issues or absolutist thinking as it allows them to independently identify obstacles to change. While earlier behavioural constructs focused on setting actions to change behaviour, cognitive behavioural therapy sought to identify existing beliefs that could be preventing change. It is through this realisation and acceptance that the client can actively attempt to change their behaviours in the workplace.

### **1.3.3 - Cognitive Therapy Coaching**

While more goal-orientated models are valid and practical, much debate surrounds their simplicity and possible limitations in the complex executive coaching process. Having looked at the REBT model, we can now examine in detail how psychological constructs have impacted executive coaching approaches in recent years. Linked to the debate on business-orientation versus psychology-orientation, many feel that a more cognitive-based construct is more likely to have valuable effect on the coaching process. (Auerbach, 2006) discusses the importance of underlying thoughts and emotions that may obstruct the development or advancement of an individual. Goal-orientated models do not necessarily address these issues due to their pragmatic nature. Cognitive models are generally derived from therapy models and focus largely on encouraging the coachee to look within themselves to identify insecurities or issues that may hamper their development. (Stober & Grant, 2006) also promote a cognitive style of coaching but place more emphasis on the Positive Psychology approach whereby the coach encourages the coachee to recognise their individual strengths and the ways in which these can be applied to career development. It is believed that encouraging a positive outlook can result in positive performance. (Kilburg, 2004) emphasises how executives may not be aware of how feelings or thoughts might influence how they act and behave in the workplace which has 'obvious implications for their success or failure'. As a result, Kilburg introduced the possibility of using a Psychodynamic Model in executive coaching. In his 2004 article, he examines the pros and cons of such an approach. It is believed that such approaches may be more relevant in dealing with dysfunctional behaviour or inability to integrate normally within a team. (Czander, 1993) echoes this theory in his work as does Gray (1994) in his

analysis of in-depth psychodynamic interventions. Limitations are identified around the requirement of the coach to be extremely well-equipped in the field of psychotherapy in order to employ such an approach.

#### **1.3.4 - Integrative Coaching**

Integrative coaching combines a number of different forms of coaching as a means of combining all of the most relevant coaching approaches within one framework. (Passmore, 2007) developed an Integrated Model based on the behavioural, cognitive and unconscious: 'it combines these elements into streams which the coach works across seamlessly'. Passmore speaks about how coaching models are too much focused on therapeutic constructs and are not 'designed for the executive boardroom'. Six streams focus upon the maintenance of the coaching partnership, the behaviour of the coachee, conscious cognitive patterns behind behaviours, unconscious cognition behind behaviours and finally the systemic impact. It is clear that there is a large degree of cross-model integration here which allows the coach to employ a number of different approaches at different moments in the coaching process. Similar to Passmore, Cocivera & Crenshaw (2004) created a coaching model which incorporated a mixed-approach. Action Frame Theory was introduced as a way of integrating the coachee more with their organisation with a view to moving away from the highly individualised nature of one-to one psychodynamic coaching. It looks more to social interactions within the workplace and how actions and behaviours can be incorporated within this dynamic. It would certainly appear that coaching models where a number of tools or approaches can be accessed at different moments during the coaching process would be preferable. However, it is important to note that coaches will need significant training in both psychodynamics and in organisational behaviour in order to be able to implement such models correctly.

#### **1.4 Coaching Relationship**

Within the existing research on executive coaching, quite significant focus has been placed on the influence of the coaching relationship on the outcome of the intervention. In (McGovern, et al., 2001) 84% of coachees identified the relationship as being crucial to success. This same outcome is noted in Gan & Chong (2015), in which coachees identified 'rapport' and 'commitment' as the

most important factors in a successful coaching partnership. This is also emphasised in Tyler (2014) in the statement that choosing the correct coach is vital and that a chemistry meeting must take place in order to establish whether a coaching relationship is viable or not. (Wasylyshyn, 2003) also discusses at length the importance of chemistry in attaining vital ingredients such as trust, rapport, openness and vulnerability within the coaching forum. In (Thach & Heinselman, 1999) there is somewhat of a warning that matching an executive to the wrong coach can actually be damaging to the executive. In (Bax, et al., 2011) a number of core competencies are highlighted as being most important from a coaching perspective. The list includes managing the coaching relationship and setting boundaries which then explores further the specific coach competencies which will be discussed later in this review. The essence of the coaching relationship is one of 'helping' which results in the need for the relationship to be strong which in turn creates the need for trust to exist (Grant, et al., 2010). There is also some commentary on the impossibility of fully controlling a coaching process due to the fact that it is a 'personal and relational activity' (CIPD, 2007), which questions how much a coach can structure and plan a process so focused on dynamic.

It is important to discuss what actually defines a strong relationship from an executive coaching point of view. The largest global study on leadership was conducted in 1999 by GLOBE (House, 1999) in which integrity was identified as the most important attribute in an effective leader. While this study is not specifically related to the coaching relationship, it shows how integrity is valued within working relationships on a near-universal level. (Yukl, 2002) describes the importance of integrity in coaching and sums it up in the following concepts; 'honesty', 'keeping agreements', 'service and loyalty' and finally 'confidentiality'. Emerging from this, (Van Genderen, 2014) describes 'trust' as being central to the relationship which can be connected to integrity. (Newsom & Dent, 2011) further examined these concepts through a work behaviour analysis of coaches and it was found that within relationships, the most frequent coaching behaviour(s) were establishing trust, honesty and respect. (Jowett, et al., 2012) created a 3+1 C framework by which to analyse the intricacies of the coaching relationship. The concepts of 'trust' 'respect' and 'liking' recurred as key factors in a successful coaching relationship and a conclusion was drawn that the quality of the

relationship is non-negotiable and crucial to the process. It can be assumed through this examination of the literature that integrity, trust and honesty appear to be the most common attributes of a strong coaching relationship.

There is a question of balance in the relationship and this raises issues around who might hold more influence within the coaching dynamic. Generally, it appears that there is more focus on the responsibility of the coach to lead and create rapport. (Baron & Morin, 2009) noted in their study that the quality of the coaching relationship is based on coach self-efficacy in promoting learning and coachee motivation and (Atkinson, 2012) goes as far as to say that coaches should take responsibility in 'moving out of their comfort zone'. While the need for the coach to establish and manage a strong coaching relationship is relevant, it is important to note that they cannot do this in isolation and the coachee also plays a significant role in this. Questions around the accountability of the coachee are very relevant and (Hernez-Broome, 2002) makes reference to the fact that the coach needs to hold the coachee accountable in the process and that if this does not occur, the relationship will inevitably break down. Even if the coach has the best of intentions, if an executive is unable to connect with the coach or lacks commitment to the process, it is more than likely that the intervention will fail. (Starr, 2011) speaks about the coach providing a 'service' to the coachee and while from a commercial point of view this might be the case, it may not be quite this simple within the complex dynamic of the coaching relationship. Francis & Gentry (2011) note the coach's role in 'establishing' the relationship but make a distinction by saying that there must be 'equal level of influence' as the process moves forward.

### **1.5 Coach Attributes**

As a natural progression from the coaching relationship, the specific attributes or competencies of the coach will now be discussed with a view to attempting to ascertain whether there are certain attributes that a coach must possess in his/her armoury in order to succeed in executive coaching. As a starting point, the question of employing an internal or external coach is relevant as it immediately sets a certain tone or dynamic within the situation. (Grant, et al., 2009) discusses this at length by focusing on the possible bias of an internal coach, the cochee

having too close a working relationship with the coach or an internal coach working towards a bigger project or goal. The downsides of an external coach are also highlighted by way of explaining that they have no prior knowledge of the organisation, they may have bias towards the stakeholder if that stakeholder is financing the sessions or they may not be invested in the organisation as a whole. Interestingly, these downsides could also be considered upsides and this is noted by Turner (2006) in the comment that a lack of insider knowledge can bring ‘curiosity and questions, not assumptions and recommendations’.

In terms of the specific characteristics or attributes of the coach, opinions are wide and varying on the topic but some reoccurring themes can be identified in the literature. (Freas & Sherman, 2004) speak about the ability of the coach to encourage the independence of the coachee whilst simultaneously supporting them. This follows on from the discussion on coachee accountability in the previous section. Maccoby (2009) advocates this view by stating that the coach must have the ability to create some distance in the relationship which can be difficult to balance correctly. (Turner, 2006) speaks about the need for executives to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and identifies business language as being very important in conveying this. The coach must be able to converse with the coachee in the language that they identify with. The necessity of clarity is also discussed by Guttman (2004) and he promotes the honesty of the coach in order to avoid ‘feeling goodism’. Being able to ask ‘probing questions’ is highlighted by Tyler (2014) as being a key coaching skill which allows the coach to gain the insights necessary for progression. The importance of the coach having the ability to ask ‘reflective questions’ is also noted by Armstrong, et al., (2007). While language and questioning is important, Hicks & McCracken (2014) also emphasise the importance of listening skills and the ability for the coach to be able to take a back seat and analyse body language.

There is much commentary on the ability of the coach to establish trust in the relationship from early on which Tyler (2006) also emphasises in saying that the executive should be confident that the information he shares is confidential unless he/she states otherwise. This is really believed to be the foundation of the relationship by many theorists and it would appear that the coach should take a

proactive role in establishing this trust. In the study conducted by De Haan, et al., (2010), clients' 'critical moments' were analysed both in the negative and positive sense and interestingly many of the negative experiences resulted from coach-coachee trust being 'damaged' and the coach being 'insensitive'. Personal attention is also established as being something that executives like to feel they are getting from their coach and Hall, et al., (1999) emphasise that this needs to be provided by the coach. (Tyler, 2014) also states that the coach should ensure that the coachee feels 'prioritized'. (Armstrong, et al., 2007) also speak about the need for the coach to establish a 'safe' environment for the coachee in order to encourage honesty and openness.

We must look to the literature to identify how some of the concepts discussed can be summarised by outlining key terms and descriptions for future reference. Researchers have attempted to do this through studies and have sought to outline the core competencies or attributes of the coach. Bax, et al., (2011) have identified the following coaching attributes as crucial; listening, communication, questioning, influence, empathy, confidence, integrity with emphasis on challenging the coachee and providing constructive feedback. Both (Thach, 2002) and (Bennis, 2003) identify very similar attributes but with slightly more emphasis on identifying gaps and strengths in the coachee. (Dean & Meyer, 2002) speak at length about coach competencies and set out a comprehensive list of attributes as follows; building rapport, assessing coachee, providing constructive feedback, dealing with resistance, encouraging motivation, dealing with coachees who insist they are 'all better' (flight into health), business/organisational expertise, stress management and integrity. While this list provides a more detailed view of coach attributes, it essentially ties in with other research and once again we see integrity as the underlying foundation of the essence of the coach's approach. Some literature has examined coach attributes that can be damaging in the coaching process. For example, Van Genderen (2014) specifies that a judgemental coach who allows their own prejudices to impact the process will create obstacles towards success. The inability to listen and over-direction of sessions is also highlighted as being detrimental to progression.

Noting that integrity is so instrumental in coaching, it is important to reiterate the ethical implications of one-to-one executive coaching and while a coach must strive to employ integrity as well as the other key attributes discussed, we must be aware that coaching generally happens behind closed doors so control over the process can be minimal. (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006) discuss the necessity of supervised coaching where coaches are held accountable for the manner in which they conduct coaching sessions. (Hall, 2006) also advocates regular supervised sessions as a means of supporting the coach and notes that even good coaches require on-going development.

## **1.6 External Influence**

As indicated earlier, executive coaching differs significantly from other types of coaching in the sense that there is the constant additional presence of the organisation within the dynamic. The question of how this affects the coaching partnership is a fascinating one and in a profession where confidentiality and trust appears so vital, the presence of a third party can create challenges for a coach. The ‘triangular relationship’ as referred to by Freas & Sherman (2004) is a unique one and a coach must be able to manage it correctly. Organisations generally both engage and fund the coach so they hold a degree of power and influence that must be respected. An organisation will engage a coach with a specific objective in mind with Coutu & Kauffman (2009) observing in their study that 48% of businesses engage a coach in order to develop a high performer. They also note that the median hourly cost of a coaching session is \$500 which further emphasises that organisations are investing and should play an active role in decision making. Aligning coachee goals to the goals of the organisation is vital and the coach must strive for alignment early in the process. Probably one of the most crucial aspects of the influence of the business in the coaching dynamic is the need for coaches to provide evidence of progression and development towards the objective set out. (Peterson, 2009) insists that coaches must be able to provide quantitative measures of outcome and that the organisation should insist on it. This is argued by (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006) who attest that the question of ROI is the ‘wrong question’ and that development is an intangible and unquantifiable concept. Atkinson (2012) suggests that ROI does not actually have to be statistical or quantifiable and notes that the calculation can also be achieved

by evaluating behaviour changes through feedback and analysing how these changes impact goal attainment.

While 76% of assessment and evaluation is still based on the self-assessment of the coachee (Habig & Plessier, 2014), it is recommended that coaches look to those with whom the coachee interacts on a daily basis in order to attain more robust, unbiased information which can lead to performing a more accurate evaluation (Guttman, 2004). (CIPD, 2012) reports on the relevance of diagnostic tools such as 360 degree feedback in order to engage key stakeholders. It is not enough for a coach to rely on intuition and prior experience in conducting an accurate assessment (HR Focus, 2006). This is explored in detail in Koonce (2010) where a process of narrative 360 degree feedback is examined. Gaining nuanced views via interviews from those who interact with the coachee can provide a detailed view of company culture among other vital details. The issue of confidentiality is addressed here and it is insisted upon that the coachee compiles the questions and selects the people involved. Interestingly, the role of the coach in conducting a 360 evaluation is relevant as examined by Waldman (2003) in his findings on the impact of multisource feedback without the influence of an executive coach. The findings highlight the need for the coach to manage the process and ensure that the tool is used correctly. While there are numerous studies on the benefits of 360 feedback, (Smither, et al., 2003) express some reservations on the subject by observing mixed results with regard to outcome which could indicate that the process can be successful but only with appropriate application of the tool. This is noted by (Hooijberg & Lane, 2009) in their qualitative study where they found that interpretation of the feedback by the coach was cited as being of key importance to stakeholders.

The relevance of Human Resources and the Line Manager is also noteworthy and the need for the coachee to be provided with encouragement and support from these two entities is noted in the literature. (Habig & Plessier, 2014) describe the support of key influential stakeholders as a 'lever for development'. (Thach, 2002) echoes this by outlining that lack of support from stakeholders is the leading obstacle to change. It is important for the coach to be able to connect with key stakeholders in the organisation and this is generally achieved by identifying with



the overall business strategy being implemented. This is noted by Thach & Heinselman (1999) and in (CIPD, 2007) in reference to the need for the coachee assignment to be directly related to the overall development programme and performance management strategy of the organisation. (Smither, et al., 2005) go as far to say that there is little point in pursuing a coaching relationship if the coach does not understand how the process is linked to the overall HR strategy. It is clear that the coach must understand these processes in order to guide the coachee effectively. However, (CIPD, 2007) does recommend that the Line Manager and Human Resources should know when to step back from the situation and trust the coaching relationship. There appears to be a fine balance between a supportive approach and a domineering approach when it comes to stakeholders and it would seem that the coach must take active responsibility in ensuring that this influence is effectively managed in the overall context of the coaching process.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Foundation of the Methodology**

In order to construct a coherent methodology, it is important to look to the literature while also retaining a critical distance. As examined in detail above, a number of contributory factors on coaching efficacy are identified in the literature. It is possible to synthesise these themes by looking to the Executive Coaching Forum (ECF), a US based entity, widely regarded as one of the leading executive coaching groups providing support to coaches, executives and organisations globally. The ECF is the creator of the Executive Coaching Handbook (Ennis et al., 2008), amongst many other coaching aids, which outlines the most crucial and important aspects of the executive coaching process, aiming to educate and promote effective coaching skills and methods. This handbook is used by coaches of all levels and the foundations of coaching identified within it form the basis of the methodology employed in this piece of research.

As a starting point, it is appropriate to reflect on the definition constructed by the ECF on what is understood by the term ‘executive coaching’;

Executive coaching is an experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader’s capability to achieve short and long-term organisational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum learning and impact (Ennis et al., 2008).

It is possible to break the ECF definition down into some key terms in order to identify the primary pillars of this investigation; experiential, individualized, one-on-one, development, organizational goals, multiple perspectives, trust, respect, partnership, learning, impact. These terms allow us to already gain some insight into what might determine a successful coaching partnership.

### **2.2 Pillars of the Methodology**

What makes the ECF definition interesting is the reference to ‘individualised/one-on-one’ yet in the same sentence, emphasis is placed on ‘organizational

goals/multiple perspectives'. There is an insight on the one hand, into the needs of the individual, yet on the other to the objectives of the organisation and it appears that a marriage between the two is vital. This allows us to identify the importance of the *organisation and the business* and how this influence is key to the functioning of the process. The handbook includes a dedicated section of the coach's knowledge of the business and the objectives of the organisation, which will form one of the pillars of this study.

Another aspect of this definition that is note-worthy is the use of terms such as 'experiential', 'development', 'trust', 'respect', 'partnership'. These terms focus much more on the individual and the experience or developmental process that they will go through personally. This brings us to the next pillar of our study which focuses on the background of the coach in terms of psychology and knowledge of *psychological constructs or theories*. It would appear that a background or training in this area could be very relevant and while executive coaching should be distinguished from counselling or therapy, there may be elements from that field that can be applied advantageously in an executive coaching context. This is highlighted as a key area of influence in the handbook and will be explored in this study.

When we analyse the terms 'development', 'goals', 'learning', 'impact' we reflect more on the actual process of coaching and how it functions. This leads us to the question of structuring the process and how the method employed to do so is key to the active functioning of the partnership. The handbook analyses this in detail through a 'competency model'. As we have observed in the literature, there are numerous different coaching methods and processes used depending on the individual coach or situation. As a method of evaluating the coaching process, it was decided that a more recent competence-based coaching model (Koortzen & Oosthuizen, 2010) would be employed. It allows us to distinctly evaluate the steps of the coaching process whilst analysing the influence of the coach simultaneously. This model is interesting in that it has only recently been developed and incorporates an aspect of coaching called 'public dialogue' which is not included in many coaching models. Opinion around the importance of

public dialogue can differ so an opportunity was taken to analyse this concept further as there is little ‘testing’ of its validity in the literature.

The term ‘partnership’ in the ECF definition also suggests that rapport between coach and coachee is highly relevant. The handbook dedicates a section to the characteristics or *attributes* of an effective coach. Note the use of the terms ‘trust’ and ‘respect’ in the definition; these can be considered overarching terms defining the underlying characteristics of both coach and coachee. Hence, it is paramount that the coach can convey these characteristics to the executive in order to build rapport and trust. This will also be analysed further in the study.

The pillars of the methodology; ‘Knowledge of Organisation/Business’, ‘Background in Psychology’, ‘Coaching Model’ and ‘Attributes of the Coach’ will act as the foundation for this study and will allow us to frame our findings in a concise and thematic way which is important when dealing with a subject than incorporates such nuance and subjectivity. From these umbrella themes, many sub-themes will emerge which will also be analysed in detail during data analysis.

### **2.3 Chosen Methodology**

In order to successfully examine the themes identified above, careful consideration must be taken in selecting an appropriate methodology. The goal or aim of the study is central to the methodological steps taken and it is important to reflect on the kind of results or outcome that is expected from a study of this nature. It is helpful to focus again on the title of the study:

‘An analysis of the *perceptions* of a group of external executive coaches on the *key coaching attributes and skills* required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context’

The most important term here is ‘perceptions’ which immediately signifies that the study will not be based on definitive or factual information. The Oxford English Dictionary (2015) defines perception as ‘the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted’. This definition signifies that the subject is highly subjective and based on the varying opinions and views of individuals. The pivotal phrase in the research title is ‘key coaching attributes and skills’ which again lends itself to a methodology that is more amenable to opinion, thought and

perspective as it is likely that key attributes and skills might mean something to one person but something quite different to another.

It would appear that a qualitative study would be the most appropriate in this case and that a quantitative, figures based analysis might not necessarily provide us with the rich information that we require in order to establish robust conclusions. A quantitative study would infer a more generalised approach to the question and might give us some tangible statistics and percentages but may miss the nuance and detail that is forthcoming when dealing with a topic that is based on perception. In taking a qualitative approach, we will target a much smaller group of people as the density and detail of the data will require much careful analysis and validation.

The next step in choosing an appropriate method is to establish which specific type of qualitative study will be conducted. As the sample is small, it is crucial to attain rich data, so emphasis was placed on the importance of creating an atmosphere where the participant feels comfortable. It is for this reason that face-to-face interviews were selected, primarily to build rapport with the interviewee but also to be able to record the data for review and validation. Telephone interviews were considered but the lack of interpersonal interaction was considered a risk due to the possibility of the interviewee getting distracted without a presence in the room.

The next consideration is the format of the interview questions themselves. As already indicated the pillars of the investigation were used to frame the interview into sections or parts. While it is important to gain a wealth of rich data, some parameters need to be established in order to perform effective data analysis. This is known as a deductive study based on existing theory and it allows the researcher to further analyse themes in the literature.

Open-ended questioning was employed which allows interviewees to elaborate on existing themes as they see fit (Rapley, 2001). This means that there is a lack of control over the direction of the interview but this is counteracted by asking questions within the pillars or themes established. It is tempting to ask a number of detailed questions but this can result in unintentionally influencing or directing

interviewees. An initial pilot interview was conducted and it was evident that the questions were initially too many and too specific. As a result, very general questions based on the pillars of research were posed to the participants around ‘how important’ or ‘how relevant’ they feel certain elements are in the ‘context of the coaching partnership’. There was a degree of fear that the answers would be somewhat tangential but crucially, due to the framing of the questions, a correlation of themes emerged.

In addition, two sections in the interview were included where a less open-ended approach was taken. The section on coach attributes in Part 3 of the interview employed a quantitative, Likert-style scale to rate existing attributes identified in the ECF Coaching Handbook. The last section on general perceptions asked participants to use just three key words or phrases to sum up both a ‘good’ coaching experience and a ‘bad’ coaching experience. It was felt these sections were important in order to alleviate from the anecdotal aspect of the study and also to provide a change of pace and focus for interviewees. These sections were strategically placed at a point in the interview where naturally, interviewees’ level of engagement was likely to be waning. The most important aspect of these sections is the ability to measure the resulting data more easily and draw more reliable comparisons. This balance was considered to be advantageous to the study as a whole.

## **2.4 Sample Group**

The demographic was another vital consideration and needed to match the type of study being conducted. A small group of six coaches were selected – three males and three females, with a view to avoiding gender bias. It was important to set criteria that the interviewees needed to fulfil for the purposes of the study. As the sample size was small, it was particularly important to ensure that the group had some common ground in order to gain reliable data. The following coach criteria were set out;

1. Coach is accredited/certified in executive coaching by a recognised institution;
2. Coach has conducted one-to-one executive coaching in business organisations;
3. Coach has conducted external executive coaching in business organisations.

It was considered that levels of coaching experience could vary within these three parameters but the ability to accurately distinguish between levels of experience was deemed too difficult to measure. As a result, no specific level of coaching experience was set out but background research was conducted on the coaches. At a minimum, coaches needed 4-5 years of active executive coaching experience but some interviewees had as much as 27 years' experience in the field. Graduates or very recently qualified coaches were not considered for this study.

The anonymity of the coaches was considered very important considering their line of work. Confidentiality is a crucial aspect of coaching that must be respected and this was well noted. It is also believed that the coaches' knowledge that they would remain anonymous resulted in much richer data due to the freedom with which they could discuss their experiences.

## **2.5 Data Analysis**

It is possible to classify qualitative data analysis within two general concepts – behavioural analysis and content analysis. Methods such as ethnography and ethogenics focus less on physical data and more on underlying influences such as culture and behaviour (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As this study is based on the key elements that facilitate a successful coaching partnership, a more constructivist approach was taken in order to focus on content analysis and thematic coding. A Framework Analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) was selected as the method to assess the qualitative interview data as it allowed for 'a priori' themes to be incorporated. The Grounded Theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was also considered but it was felt that the primarily inductive nature of this process was not suited to analysis of pre-existing theory. The aim of the study is not necessarily to develop new hypotheses but to test existing ones. As discussed, a short quantitative scale was incorporated into the final section of the study. In order to analyse this data accurately, SPSS software was employed to calculate the frequency and mean value of each answer. This allowed us to establish a scale of responses that was ordered by levels of importance. For the purposes of this discussion we will firstly review the bulk of the data which was qualitative.

### **2.5.1 - Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative sections of the interview data were Part 1, Part 2 and the second section of Part 3 which constituted a total of 83.3% of the data. The recordings of the interviews were transcribed along with notes taken during the interviews. A first impression of possible themes was established which was tested by listening to the interviews for a second time. This proved valuable as some details had been omitted or misheard and these errors were corrected. Following the second listening, relevant statements were picked out of the text which were felt to be significant within the context of the questions asked.

An Excel sheet with three tabs for each part of the interview was set up as this made the data more manageable. Any cross-comparisons between sections would be conducted later in the analysis. In accordance with the Framework Analysis approach (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) a column for themes was set up on the left of the table and interviewee phrases and statements were inserted into the right hand side of the table. Themes were classified into tiers as a number of sub-themes emerged that related to broader themes. Tier 1 is the umbrella theme that mirrors the subject matter of that part of the interview, Tier 2 is an emergent theme from Tier 1 subject matter and Tier 3 is the most specific theme, emerging from the Tier 2 theme. Russian dolls of decreasing size, one placed inside the other, can be a visual aid in understanding this concept. Each relevant comment or phrase was written into the table and themes allocated accordingly. This took a significant amount of time as it was not always clear how themes should be established in the broader context of the data. There was a large degree of trial and error as well as the need to take breaks and revisit the data regularly. The second section of Part 3 was much more straight forward as participants were asked to give just three key words or phrases that constituted both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ coaching experiences. Coding using letters only was sufficient here as no sub-themes emerged from limited responses.

Once a point was reached where it was felt that the themes established accurately reflected the data, a coding system was incorporated so each statement could be conveniently linked to a theme or themes. Statements that provided a very general view of the subject matter were allocated to a Tier 1 theme only, coded by a letter.



Statements of a more detailed nature that looked at specific areas within a subject were allocated to Tier 2 or 3 themes and given a number as well as a letter. The coding format was logical; the letter represented the first letter of the Tier 1 theme and the number represented the Tier 2 or 3 theme within it. For example, Knowledge of Business (Tier 1) = ‘B’, Expectation (Tier 2) = B2, Credibility (Tier 3) = B5. The numbers followed the order of the themes by Tier so Tier 3 themes tended to be labelled with a higher number than Tier 2 themes. No value or importance level should be derived from these numbers; they were simply used to distinguish between themes in the same section. Table 1 below is an extract of the three tier system used in the framework and Table 2 shows how the coaches’ responses were coded within that framework.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Business/Organisation (B)	Culture/Values (B1)	
	Expectation (B2)	Credibility (B5)
	Industry Knowledge (B3)	
	Business Strategy (B4)	
	Relationship (B7)	Mentoring Distinction (B6)

**Table 1: Sample of how themes were coded**

Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6
Must understand business language (B1) (B3) (B5)	Hygiene Factor (B2) (B5)	General understanding is good (B)	Expected from the organisation (B2) (B5)	Not crucial for success of coaching relationship (B7)	But there is a paradox - can be good not to be an expert (B3)

**Table 2: Sample of how statements were coded to themes**

As an aid in organising the data, the frequency of each theme was then calculated by adding up the number of occurrences of each code. It is important to note that

some themes occurred in more than one section or part but they were distinguished by the code specific to that section e.g. ‘Goals’ came up in a number of areas and as a result had a number of different codes (C4, A1, D1, I3, E5). A results tab was added to the Excel worksheet which would provide a summary of the number of occurrences of each theme as well as the correlation of themes across sections of the study. Please see Table 3 below which shows an example of the frequency of codes in the business knowledge section:

<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Business/Organisation	(B)	12
<b>Tier 2</b>		
Culture/Values	(B1)	9
Expectation	(B2)	7
Industry Knowledge	(B3)	7
Business Strategy	(B4)	2
Relationship	(B7)	5
<b>Tier 3</b>		
Credibility	(B5)	7
Mentoring Distinction	(B6)	2

**Table 3: Sample calculation of the number of times a theme occurred**

### **2.5.2 - Quantitative Data Analysis**

Only one section of the interview, 16.7% of the total data, warranted a purely quantitative method of data analysis. Section 1 of Part 3 of the interview incorporated a scale where participants were asked to rate pre-existing attributes from 1 to 9 on a scale of importance, 1 being most important and 9 being least important. No detailed answers or perceptions were required here which resulted in the data being purely quantitative. Statistical data analysis software called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was administered which allowed the nine attributes to be organised in order of importance as indicated by participants. A mean calculation was conducted by the software to show the average rating for each attribute:

Statistics									
	Mature Self-Confidence	Positive Energy	Assertiveness	Interpersonal Sensitivity	Openness and Flexibility	Goal Orientation	Partnering & Influence	Self-Improvement	Integrity
Mean Rating	3.6667	5.5000	7.3333	4.0000	3.5000	7.5000	5.5000	5.8333	2.1667
Std. Deviation	1.50555	3.33167	1.21106	2.19089	2.07364	1.76068	2.34521	2.04124	2.04124

**Table 4: Mean rating of coach attributes**

## 2.6 Data Validation

As the method of extracting key phrases and statements from the audio recordings was a particularly subjective process, it was felt that a method of proofing should be employed. A summary sheet of about three pages in length detailing the key phrases and statements was sent to each interviewee for review. Interviewees were given one week to respond with changes. Each of the six interviewees responded to the email to confirm that they were satisfied with the data.

## 2.7 Limitations

Every methodology has its own limitations and in this case, the small sample group could be considered limiting. However, it was felt that the range of themes analysed increased the likelihood of producing rich data and possibly provided more detailed insights. As the researcher interpreted the data alone and was the only one to code and assess data, there was an element of subjectivity to the study. It was for this reason that the data validation exercise was carried out which, it was hoped, would somewhat alleviate this issue.

## 2.8 Findings

For the purposes of organising the findings in a meaningful way, the data was addressed in accordance with the pillars of the methodology. The pillars of the interview were used to provide a classification and framework for the data which allowed for analysis by theme. As identified earlier, these themes or pillars were the following; ‘Knowledge of Organisation/Business’, ‘Knowledge of Psychology’, ‘Coaching Model’ and ‘Attributes of the Coach’. We will now examine in detail the findings of the study within these areas and will also look to identify correlation of themes across this framework.

### **2.8.1 - Knowledge of the Business**

A number of general statements were made regarding the importance of business knowledge which can be summarised by commenting that all coaches agreed that a level of business knowledge is important in conducting successful executive coaching. However, differences were apparent regarding the degree to which this might be the case. The top two themes identified concerning the relevance of such knowledge were focused on understanding of *culture/values* and the *credibility* of the coach in the eyes of the organisation. The ability to understand the culture and values of the organization was cited as being very relevant in employing the correct coaching strategy in order to meet the strategic needs of the organisation and coachee. Comments around understanding business language and being familiar with the sector highlighted this. Grounding and context were also referred to and were directly linked to the ability to connect with the coachee. The second most commonly cited theme was the credibility of the coach, which was derived from a number of comments around the organisation's need for the coach to have a business qualification or that for certain niche industries, knowledge of the business is a pre-requisite. These comments centred around expectation and referred less to actual knowledge and more to the reputation or image of the coach in the eyes of the organisation. One coach even referred to it as a 'hygiene factor' in the context of the overall process.

Interestingly, some coaches agreed that knowledge of the business was relevant but then proceeded to detract from this by playing down its importance in the overall scheme of the coaching process. Statements such as 'not actively important', 'an in-depth knowledge is not critical' and 'important to a certain extent' led to focus around how being an expert in this area can possibly be of negative influence. Three out of six coaches took this approach with two in particular citing possible negative impact. A number of issues came up around this, particularly the need to be a coach and not a 'mentor' which was linked to knowledge of the sector resulting in a telling approach. Reference was also made to the difficulty in being unbiased when the coach enters the situation with preconceived ideas of the business or sector. In conjunction with this, a comment was made on how from a strategic point of view, less knowledge allows the coach to question and challenge assumptions within an organisation which can be

enlightening. Business knowledge was cited as not being incremental in the coaching relationship but that it could assist in the process. The overall impression given was that knowledge of the business is useful and relevant but is not an essential piece of the jigsaw.

### **2.8.2 - Knowledge of Psychology**

Statements regarding knowledge of psychology were generally very positive with regard to importance. It appeared that there was more of a consensus on this than there had been on the degree to which business knowledge was relevant. The theme most frequently referenced was the ability to get *beneath the surface* and access a truth that would possibly not be obvious without the ability to recognise it. It was believed that these underlying issues could be instrumental in breaking down obstacles or resistance related to goal attainment. Commentary around underlying motives leading to certain behaviours was common to most interviews and this resulted in the second most frequently cited theme which was analysing *behaviour*, its origins and the reasons for certain behaviours. Some coaches spoke at length about cognitive behavioural therapy and how this can be used in the coaching space to understand the reasons why people behave in certain ways. This was also directly linked to the process of change and understanding how to change as an individual. Some coaches made the observation that coaching theory and training incorporates therapeutic models and psychology models which must mean there is a place for it in the profession.

One coach in particular highlighted some negative impacts by stating that while knowledge of psychology is useful, it is not what businesses are looking for and it can leave the need for business knowledge unfulfilled. This was somewhat echoed by another coach who stated that while it plays a more incremental role in the coaching relationship than business does, it can be a deterrent to the stakeholder or even the coach who might fear the unfamiliarity of the 'white coat'. There was a large amount of commentary around this topic and in particular the importance of distinguishing between coaching and therapy. The concept of 'forward thinking' was insisted upon as the distinguishing factor in that therapy or counselling looks to past experiences as far back as childhood. Another important distinction mentioned was the importance of the coach being able to identify a

more serious clinical issue and also having the wisdom to refer the coachee to a clinical psychologist. The subject of formal qualification was interesting also as two coaches did not feel a formal psychology qualification was necessary while one coach specifically cited the importance of ethics and the need for ethical coaches to have formal training in the human psyche. At this point it is important to reflect that some coaches had extensive backgrounds in psychology and some did not which was naturally reflected in their answers. Overall, the perception of the coaches on the knowledge of psychology appeared positive with only one coach taking a slightly more conservative stance. It is also worthy of note that two coaches stated that it was equally as important as business knowledge but three coaches explicitly stated that it was more important.

### **2.8.3 - Coaching Model**

This part of the data was analysed on the basis of the six elements of the coaching cycle as described by Koortzen & Oosthuizen (2010) in their competency coaching model. These six elements are as follows; Contracting, Assessment, Development Plan, Public Dialogue, Intervention and Evaluation. These elements will provide structure to the key contributory factors impacting the coaching cycle.

The contracting phase was highlighted by all coaches as being particularly significant in the overall cycle. Phrases such as ‘fundamentally vital’ ‘key’ and ‘critical’ were used to convey this. It could be stated that this was seen as the most important phase as a lot of comments were made around ‘getting off to a good start’ and ‘building rapport’ early on. Key themes that arose from this question were the importance of the *relationship* and building rapport as well as the importance in establishing *confidentiality*. While the subject of objectives and establishing goals underpinned the commentary from a practical sense, every coach focused on the concept of establishing confidentiality as part of the coaching contract. This primarily referred to the confidentiality of the coachee being paramount and sacred which in itself suggested that the coachee could possibly speak about personal issues during sessions. A number of coaches referred to the need to have a chemistry meeting to establish rapport early on. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of having a three way agreement or

‘triad meeting’ for the purposes of clarity and support. There was elaboration on the balance between the needs of the organisation and the needs of the client and while ‘alignment’ was mentioned a number of times, coaches seemed to place slightly more importance on the needs of the coachee in the process. This was deduced from statements such as ‘permission must be given by the coachee on what to report’ or ‘the organisation should support enough but also trust the process’. Coaches acknowledged that in many situations, the organisation is financing the intervention but that when it comes down to it, the coachee is the ‘real client’. The theme of flexibility and the ability to adapt to change was also evident within the scope of establishing goals. The general feeling was that while high level goals drive the contract, coaches must employ flexibility if circumstances change. Little attention was paid to the possibility of re-contracting and only one coach suggested it in the case that the process had become completely detached from the high level goal.

Overall, coaches believed that the assessment phase was necessary in some cases but certainly did not feel it was a crucial element of the process. One coach made the comment that they had ‘done coaching without assessment and it had worked’. In speaking about conducting assessment, quite a large amount of focus was placed on the specific tools used to do so. Four out of six coaches made reference to a 360 process with two coaches elaborating further by mentioning MBTI, EI testing, psychometric testing and competency based assessments. Coaches seemed to hone in specifically on 360 degree evaluation as a method of ‘expanding from self-perception’ and gaining insights from the Line Manager in particular. In many cases it appeared that the choice of tool in assessing the coachee was directly linked to the need for unbiased feedback from external parties. Coaches also spoke about the importance of identifying ‘gaps’ i.e. where the coachee is now and where they wish to be. While there was significant emphasis on the 360 process and the importance of external feedback, all coaches spoke about the need to continually reflect within the coaching relationship as a form of ongoing informal assessment. Two coaches highlighted the somewhat unreliable nature of self-assessments and spoke about how coachees may under or over-evaluate themselves which can lead to inaccuracy. The coaches paid little attention to the subject of reassessments and referred again to the process of continuous reflection

with one coach even mentioning that if formal reassessments do not show evidence of improvement, the coachee's motivation level or enthusiasm may be affected negatively. A statement was also made regarding the unreliability of reassessments in that it is not 'comparing apples with apples' if a change occurs within the organisation subsequent to the original assessment. Interestingly, another coach mentioned that if a reassessment was to occur, it would happen 'no earlier than 12-18 months later'. While views differed slightly on this topic, the overall impression was that neither assessments nor reassessments are critical to the process and if incorrectly employed, could even have a negative impact.

The next step of the model focused on the development plan or strategy of the coaching partnership. All coaches felt this was very important in the overall process with one coach stating that it is the 'kernel of the coaching'. This phase appeared to be closely linked to the contracting phase which was evident in phrases such as 'it is a reminder of why you are here' or 'it goes back to what was said at the triad meeting'. This provides evidence that there is a *goal-orientated* aspect to the development phase which arises from agreements made during contracting. Pragmatic comments such as 'mustn't lose sight of the ultimate goal' and 'incorporate milestones and goals' provided strong evidence of this. Emerging from this was the need for clarity in the process and the requirement for the coach and coachee to be in agreement about why a certain plan or strategy can contribute to goal attainment. Two coaches specifically spoke about the need to have the plan in writing in order to avoid confusion while others made statements such as 'what are the key areas to address' or 'what needs to be achieved'. Interestingly, while clarity was a strong theme, the need for the development plan to be *flexible* was also particularly evident. One coach spoke about how a coach must be 'fluid' in the way they work which is of particular importance when change occurs. The idea that 'plans can derail' conveyed that the plan should be clear but certainly not rigid and should be reviewed throughout the process. The subject of stakeholder involvement came up again here and while a degree of favour was placed on the coachee in that they 'must develop the plan themselves' in order for 'buy-in' to be achieved, comments were also made around the value of involving key stakeholders in the development plan. The subject of the need to distinguish between coaching and mentoring arose again which was well noted



and showed evidence of the need to define executive coaching on the part of the coach.

The next part of the interview dealt with the concept of public dialogue and how external parties can impact a coaching process. Within the coaching model, public dialogue is specified as a process where external parties actually enter into the coaching forum to engage with coach and coachee. The aim here was to explore whether the coaches interviewed agreed with this strategy and on a more general level, how they felt about the influence of external parties generally. In addressing the suggestion of bringing externals into the coaching sessions, there was a large degree of hesitation which was made clear through comments such as ‘client sessions are sacrosanct’ and one coach specifically commented ‘I’m not sure about quarterly public dialogue sessions’. Other coaches glossed over the topic which in itself could be perceived as a negative reaction or at a minimum, a lack of interest. This is relevant as it reflects the outcome that Koortzen and Oosthuizen observed when they first tested the concept amongst a group of coaches. It appears that there is incompatibility between public dialogue and the importance of the confidentiality of the coachee. Coaches were uncomfortable with the suggestion that this would be compromised in any way.

From the point of view of involving *external parties* in assessment, evaluation and planning, coaches generally reacted more positively to this and much of the commentary on 360 degree feedback observed in the assessment section of the interview was echoed here. However, one coach was rather hesitant about involving external parties and said that it should be done ‘only when necessary’ and ‘if the issue involves these parties’ as it was felt that this could ‘dilute the client/coach relationship’. Another coach was more positive about it but also said that coaches should ‘proceed with caution’. There was then further elaboration on ‘politically immature’ organisations where external parties may not always understand the aim of the process and may not have the best of intentions. Other coaches insisted on the relevance of external influence with strong emphasis on the Line Manager’s input and the fact that the ‘right people’ must participate. This also developed further into conversation about the *intentions* of the external parties and how this can certainly impact positively or negatively. One coach

pinpointed that the feedback ‘must be used positively’. Benchmarking was also spoken about and it was felt that in order to do this correctly, the objectivity of external parties is ‘vital’. Overall, this part of the interview was spoken about with the concept of confidentiality and intention very much at the forefront which raised some hesitation on the part of the coaches. It appeared that external influence was valued but only within certain parameters.

In analysing the intervention phase of the process, there was significant correlation with themes identified in the development phase particularly around the areas of *goal orientation* and *clarity*. This would make sense as the development plan is essentially a prequel to what takes place during the intervention phase. Practical and logistical elements were spoken about such as the frequency of the coaching sessions and the use of particular coaching tools to provide focus. Again, one coach spoke about the importance of writing goals down for clarity. The importance of goals was very evident but there was also a lot of emphasis on the relationship between coach and coachee. While previously, confidentiality had been focused on, here more language around the attributes of the one-to-one relationship was noted. Three coaches looked specifically at building the confidence of the coachee and the importance of the ‘empowerment’ of the coachee as a direct link to *engagement* level. Two coaches looked at the relevance of ‘openness’ and ‘trust’ in the relationship as key factors in advancing the sessions and this led to conversation around building the self-awareness of the coachee and allowing them to ‘decide what to do next’. Three coaches spoke about the need to ‘ask the right questions’ of the coachee. There was a feeling that the role of the coach should be non-directive and that the coach shouldn’t over-prepare for sessions but should be ‘present’. This tied in with another comment on the importance of avoiding a mentoring or ‘telling’ relationship. Flexibility was mentioned here again as an important aspect of the process with one coach specifically speaking about ‘uncontrollable external factors’ that may impact the strategy and force the coach to adapt quickly. The ability to continuously reflect on progress was also frequently commented upon as an ongoing way of checking ‘what is working’.

The final part of the coaching process focused on the importance of evaluation and how it is administered by the coach. This proved to be fascinating as there were a number of varying views amongst the coaches on the ability to attain a *tangible* evaluation of coaching. While the importance of performing an evaluation was acknowledged by all coaches there was significant variation on how to accurately achieve this. Two different types of evaluation were spoken about; self-evaluation of the coachee and coach and then evaluation of coachee and coach by others. Five coaches specifically spoke about the need for the coachee to evaluate their own progress which can be linked back to comments on reflection throughout the sessions. Again confidentiality was referred to in the context of only feeding back a very ‘general evaluation’ to the organisation. Three coaches referred to the need for the coach and the process itself to be evaluated with two comments specifically referring to the importance of ‘supervised coaching’ from an accountability point of view. A three way evaluation involving a stakeholder at the half-way point and at the end was advocated by three of the six coaches. Where the real difference of opinion arose was on the subject of measuring results via return on investment (ROI) with a view to the *organisation* calculating the value of the coaching process. Two coaches in particular dismissed this idea by saying that ‘a lot is unquantifiable in coaching’ and he/she ‘doubts the credibility of definitive figures’. Another coach stated that ‘quantitative data is not realistic’ and followed up by saying that ‘an organisation cannot be guaranteed a specific outcome’. In contrast with this, another coach felt strongly that ROI is ‘very possible’ and has seen CIPD studies where it has been ‘linked to the bottom line’ This coach also commented that organisations ‘must know that it is worthwhile’ so a convincing evaluation is ‘vital’ and promotes ‘transparency’.

#### **2.8.4 - Coach Attributes**

Being the only quantitative piece of the data analysis, analysis of results regarding coach attributes was relatively straight forward as a mean ranking of attributes was calculated through SPSS software.

The mean figure represents the average rating given by the coaches. Integrity emerged as the most important factor which ties in with coaches’ responses on relationship and confidentiality throughout the interview. Openness and

Flexibility followed in second place, again emphasising the importance of rapport with the coachee. Interestingly, the Mature Self-Confidence of the coach was highly rated in third place which suggested that coaches felt they require the ability to be influential and strong-willed at certain points in the process. This may tie in with the need to stand up to the organisation or coachee in the case that intentions are misplaced. Assertiveness was placed quite low in the ranking but two coaches commented that this could be encompassed by Mature Self-Confidence. Goal-orientation ranked in last place which is fascinating considering it was one of the most frequently observed themes across the rest of the interview. A number of coaches ranked it in last place and followed up by saying that ‘I know it may seem unusual but...’ or ‘I know this may seem strange but....’ This showed that coaches believed that Goal-orientation was important but maybe not always relevant throughout the entire coaching cycle.

### **2.8.5 - Three Key Factors**

To conclude the interview, coaches were asked to pick out three key words or phrases that they felt summed up why a particular coaching experience had been successful. They were asked to do the same with regard to a coaching partnership that they felt had been unsuccessful. The theme and coding process was again used here but proved to be a much less complex process as answers were much less detailed.

On successful partnerships, the three key themes that emerged from the coach responses were as follows; Coachee Engagement, Rapport and Honesty/Openness. Interestingly, each of these themes can be strongly connected to the importance of the coaching relationship. Similar to the findings on coach attributes, there was very little or no commentary on goal-orientation being a key factor which is interesting as the theme of goals came up frequently throughout the rest of the interview. As stated above, it could be concluded that relationship is considered paramount and acts as a pre-requisite to any other factor in the process. The term ‘*engagement*’ of the coachee was stated by four of the six coaches while three coaches used the term ‘*rapport*’ in identifying key factors to success. Trust and openness were also spoken about and one coach spoke about how this must be established early on in the process. Some coaches spoke about using appropriate

tools, establishing clarity and being flexible but the overwhelming focus was on the coachee's attitude to the coaching and the quality of the coaching relationship.

The results seen in the question on key factors to success were somewhat mirrored in the negative sense when coaches addressed the issue of factors that contributed to lack of success. However, it was interesting to observe that the coaches focused more on the dis-engagement or *ill-intention of the organisation* or stakeholder. Three coaches recalled experiences where the coachee had been 'pushed' into the coaching and another coach spoke about the organisation 'box-ticking'. Coaches then went on to talk about the *dis-engagement of the coachee* being a key detracting factor in the process but it appeared to be linked to the lack of support or bad intention of the organisation in each case. Further specification on lack of integrity, understanding and openness emerged from this which placed emphasis on the coaching relationship once again. There were no explicit comments about goals or actions as coaches seemed to echo their feelings on the importance of the relationship by highlighting the intricacies of the coaching dynamic as being crucial to the process.

### **3. Discussion**

Having gained a firm grasp on the key areas where focus has been directed within executive coaching research until now, it is appropriate to discuss how the findings of our own study relate to the themes and findings identified in the literature. To perform an effective comparison, it is necessary to extract the themes identified during data analysis with a view to observing similar ones in the research. It seems sensible to apply our discussion to the pillars of the methodology as it gives us a tangible foundation upon which to draw comparisons.

#### **3.1 Knowledge**

What is clear from an examination of the research around the subject of knowledge is that there are two competing schools of thought on the subject. The question around the influence of psychotherapy in the world of business coaching infiltrates almost every aspect of the process and is a continued source of debate within the field. While some theorists are more extreme in their views, the general feeling is that a very delicate balance needs to be struck by the coach in employing different types of knowledge on a situational basis. Having said that, there is a wealth of writing on how psychology constructs and theories can quite easily be applied to executive coaching situations. It could be stated that in recent years, there has been more acceptance by business minded theorists that psychological theory can provide a coach with a more comprehensive skill-set.

From the findings of our own study, it is clear that the coaches feel that both forms of knowledge are important. There was certainly more in-depth discussion about the impact of psychology in the executive coaching world and with the exception of one coach, it was felt to be either equally or more important than business knowledge. At this point, it is important to note that three coaches are formally qualified in psychology and it is possible that as a result of this, they are more likely to place emphasis on this subject. However, this could also be evidence that executive coaches are beginning to see the value of employing psychological theory and as a result are actively studying and attaining

psychology qualifications. Furthermore, one of the formally qualified coaches felt that business knowledge and business orientation was extremely important and spoke at length about engaging with the business. This would suggest that psychological background may not necessarily result in bias in that area. Overall, our own findings seem to reflect the findings in the literature in the sense that generally, there was acknowledgement that coaches must employ business orientation in a business-oriented profession but that knowledge of psychology could give coaches the ability to address the more complicated and personal issues that inevitably arise in a one-to-one coaching dynamic. The slightly more accented emphasis on the role of psychology does reflect the literature in the sense that in recent years, there has been an increase in awareness around the positive role psychological theory can play in the industry.

### **3.2 Coaching Model**

This aspect of the study was possibly the most difficult one to evaluate due to the fact that there are near-endless coaching models and constructs in the literature. For the purposes of the methodology, coaches were asked to speak about each aspect of one particular coaching cycle so that some insights on approach to coaching could be established. As noted in the literature, goal-oriented coaching models are still very much in use but there has been extensive development in the application in cognitive-behaviour therapy and psychoanalytic theory in the coaching world. The increase of the influence of psychology noted in the knowledge section of this chapter is almost paralleled in the development of coaching models which makes sense in that one originates from another. It would appear that in recent literature, there is more of an emphasis on building a coaching model that facilitates the interpersonal nature of the coaching dynamic and recognises the importance of the coach-coachee relationship in achieving results.

The coaches were provided with a relatively standard coaching model upon which to base their answers and they were asked to outline key contributory factors within each phase of the cycle. A very interesting contrast became apparent in the data which showed goal-orientation, action-orientation and practical learning highlighted in some areas yet significant emphasis on relationship, interaction,

trust and confidentiality in other areas. The contracting phase focused on objectives and clarity yet simultaneously there was huge focus on the three-way coaching relationship and the importance of confidentiality. Assessment also focused on relationships and the systemic nature of the coachee's working environment with emphasis on tools such as 360 degree feedback and psychometric testing. Public dialogue also highlighted issues around confidentiality and trust and the importance of using feedback in a sensitive and fair way. The development plan and the intervention phases focused more than any other phases on goals and objectives yet there was also some commentary on engagement, buy-in and the underlying personal factors contributing to this. This again highlights the balancing act between practical goal attainment and management of the fragility of the coaching relationship. The integrative approach discussed in the literature could possibly provide coaches with a structured method of achieving this as it gives guidance in both the practical and psychological applications within the coaching cycle.

### **3.3 Coach Attributes**

Within the literature, there is much discussion on the profile of a strong executive coach and what elements might be most important in being a successful coach. Having treated knowledge separately, focus on this area was purely on characteristics and personal attributes and as identified earlier, research highlights the following areas: maturity, assertiveness, self-awareness, integrity, self-development, sensitivity, openness and then further explores the intricacies of such attributes for example, confidence, empathy, trust, communication, listening skills reading body language etc. There are some variations of these lists but essentially they tend to focus on the same key areas. Interestingly, there seems to be more emphasis on the soft skills of the coach as opposed to ability to structure coaching sessions, focus on goals and set clear actions. As analysed above, goal orientation is still prevalent in the literature when it comes to a coaching model but it appears that goal-setting and attainment are not elaborated upon hugely in analysis of coach attributes. This would suggest that goal-orientation is considered somewhat of a given in the general context of the coaching process and there could be a view that the soft skills of the coach are more difficult to attain and as a result deserve further study.



This was somewhat reflected in our own study as when coaches were asked to rate the ECF attributes on a scale of one to nine, goal-orientation came in last place with four coaches placing it in ninth place. This is a significant finding as it is slightly at odds with the frequency of comments on goals in the coaching model section of the study. It would appear that the coaches place more emphasis on attributes that could be considered less practical which was evidenced by the fact that integrity came out as the top attribute with openness and flexibility in second place. Discussion around a coaching model and application of the process could lend itself more to conversation about goals. However, the coaches actively placed the attribute of goal-orientation in last place by some margin which cannot be ignored. It would suggest that focus on goals is seen as inevitable and that other attributes are more likely to vary from coach to coach. This does reflect the literature in the sense that interest has generally focused on relationship-oriented attributes, particularly in recent times.

### **3.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

We must now give some final consideration as to how this study could benefit the field of executive coaching in the future while also outlining key outcomes.

Executive coaching is a unique profession in the sense that it brings together two worlds that traditionally have had little in common with one another. There is significant challenge for future executive coaches as the gap between the business world and the world of psychology continues to narrow. The drone-like workers of the industrial era are almost obsolete in the Western world and with continued evidence of the importance of work-life balance in driving success, executive coaching is now playing an active role in developing businesses. At this time, there is almost a feeling of discomfort on the part of both businesses and executive coaches in that the growing impact of psychology and psychotherapy in the industry remains somewhat of an unknown entity. Many active coaches continue to have little psychological training and it is certainly uncharted territory for business-minded people working in organisations. There is also a significant amount of uncertainty around what constitutes ‘too much’ psychological impact in coaching and there is endless discussion about distinguishing from therapy but little explanation as to how this is really achieved.

Acknowledging this, it is crucial that there is continued research on how psychology can be appropriately and effectively employed in executive coaching with a need to explore ethical considerations further. There is considerable danger that the influence of psychology in executive coaching is growing at too fast a rate for coaches to keep up with which could have a damaging impact on coaches, coachees and the industry as a whole.

The debate around return on investment and measurement of outcome rages on within the executive coaching world and this was seen clearly in the findings of our own study. As businesses begin to rely on executive coaching more in providing tangible results related to strategic objectives, there is more pressure than ever on the executive coaching industry to pursue ROI and other quantifiable methods of evaluation in order to prove its worth. Many coaches insist upon the fact that the relationship-based nature of coaching does not lend itself to tangible statistics due to the fact that it involves emotions, opinions, feelings and perceptions which cannot be easily measured in the manner in which businesses are expecting. Only one coach interviewed as part of this study felt strongly about the need to attain tangible ROI and it appears that the general feeling is that it is unrealistic. The future of executive coaching does depend on funding from organisations so while emotions and thoughts are difficult to define or quantify, executive coaches must strive to find a compromise by giving businesses some form of tangibility. It is recommended that further studies are conducted around ROI calculations and how businesses can be provided with outcome reports that directly relate to business objectives as there has been only limited research in this area to date.

Finally, having gained insightful views and perceptions from executive coaches, it is advised that further focus is placed on coaches and how they view their own profession. Any view into the world of the coach has been largely represented by coaching manuals and handbooks but this does not provide us with the honesty that emerges from a face to face interview. The executive coach possibly plays the most proactive role within the coaching triangle and essentially leads the process from start to finish. Examining the views of coaches in the field can also provide us with an overview of the state of coaching and will hold the industry

accountable. Studies on key coaching practices and skills will serve as examples to upcoming coaches and with the industry continuing to grow, it is vital that executive coaching skills and techniques continue to develop and improve.

## References

- Anderson, J. (2002). 'Executive Coaching and REBT: Some Comments from the Field'. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive Behavior Therapy*, 20(3/4), pp. 223-233.
- Armstrong, H., Melser, P. & Tooth, J.A. (2007). *Executive Coaching Effectiveness: A Pathway to Self-efficacy*, Sydney: Institute of Executive Coaching.
- Atkinson, P. (2012). 'Return on Investment in Executive Coaching: Effective Organisational Change'. *Management Services*, Spring, pp. 20-23.
- Auerbach, E. (2006). 'Cognitive Coaching'. In: D. Stober & A. Grant, eds. *Evidence-Based Coaching Handbook*. New York: Wiley.
- Baron, L. & Morin, L. (2009). 'The Coach-Client Relationship in Executive Coaching: A Field Study'. *Human Resource Development Review*, Volume 20, pp. 85-106.
- Bax, J., Negrutiu, M. & Colota, T.-O. (2011). 'Coaching: A Philosophy, Concept, Tool and Skill'. *Journal of Knowledge Management, Economics and Information Technology*, 7, December, pp. 320-328.
- Bennis, W. (2003). 'Growing on the Job: How can you Develop Leaders?' *Executive Excellence*, 20(11), pp. 9-10.
- Berglas, S. (2002). 'The Very Real Dangers of Executive Coaching'. *Harvard Business Review*, June, pp. 87-92.
- Bluckert, P. (2006). *Psychological Dimensions of Executive Coaching*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Cavanagh, M. (2005). 'Mental Health Issues and Challenging Clients in Executive Coaching'. In: M. Cavanagh, A. Grant & T. Kemp, eds. *Evidence Based Coaching: Vol. 1. Theory Research and Practice from the Behavioural Sciences*. Brisbane: Australian Academic Press, pp. 21-36.
- CIPD (2007). *Coaching in Organisations*, London: CIPD.
- CIPD (2012). *Coaching: The Evidence Base*, London : CIPD.
- Cocivera, T. & Crenshaw, S. (2004). 'Action Frame Theory as a Practical Framework for the Executive Coaching Process'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 56(4), pp. 234-245.

- Coutu, D. & Kauffman, C. (2009). 'What Can Coaches Do for You?' HBR Research Report. *Harvard Business Review*, January, pp. 91-92.
- Czander, W. (1993). *The Psychodynamics of Work and Organizations: Theory and Application*. New York: Guilford Press.
- De Haan, E., Bertie, C., Day, A. & Sills, C. (2010). 'Clients' Critical Moments of Coaching: Toward a 'Client Model' of Executive Coaching'. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(4), pp. 607-621.
- Dean, M. & Meyer, A. (2002). 'Executive Coaching: In Search of a Model'. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 1(2), pp. 3-17.
- Ellis, A. (1994). *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*. Rev. ed. New York: Kensington.
- Ennis, S. et al. (2008). Institute of Coaching. [Online] Available at: <http://www.instituteofcoaching.org/images/pdfs/executivecoachinghandbook.pdf> [Accessed 16 April 2015].
- Fillery-Travis, A. & Lane, D. (2006). 'Does Coaching Work or are we Asking the Wrong Question?' *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 1(1), pp. 24-36.
- HR Focus (2006). 'For Success with Corporate Coaching, Begin With Assessment'. *HR Focus*, July, p. 8.
- Francis, T. & Gentry, W. (2011). *The Coach's View: Best Practices for Successful Coaching Engagements (White Paper)*. November ed. North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Freas, A. & Sherman, S. (2004). 'The Wild West of Executive Coaching'. *Harvard Business Review*, November, pp. 82-90.
- Gan, G. & Chong, C. (2015). 'Coaching Relationship in Executive Coaching: A Malaysian Study'. *Journal of Management Development*, 34(4), pp. 476-493.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. 7th ed. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Grant, A., Curtayne, L. & Burton, G. (2009). 'Executive Coaching Enhances Goal Attainment, Resilience and Workplace Well-being: A Randomised Controlled Study'. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(5), pp. 396-407.
- Grant, A. M. (2009). 'Coach or Couch?' HBR Research Report. *Harvard Business Review*, January, p. 97.

- Grant, A., Passmore, J., Cavanagh, M. & Parker, H. (2010). 'The State of Play in Coaching Today: A Comprehensive Review of the Field'. *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Volume 25, pp. 125-167.
- Gray, P. (1994). *The Ego and Analysis of Defense*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Guttman, H. M. (2004). 'Executive Coaching - Become a More Effective Coach'. *Executive Excellence*, 21(5), p. 19.
- Habig, J. & Plessier, F. (2014). 'Measuring the Impact'. *Training Journal*, March, pp. 64-69.
- Hall, D., Otazo, K. & Hollenbeck, G. (1999). 'Behind Closed Doors: What Really Happens in Executive Coaching'. *Organizational Dynamics*, Issue 27, pp. 39-53.
- Hall, L. (2006). 'Coaches Need More Support'. *People Management*, 28<sup>th</sup> September, p. 12.
- Hernez-Broome, G. (2002). 'In it for the Long Haul'. *Leadership in Action*, 22(1), pp. 14-16.
- Hicks, R. & McCracken, J. (2014). 'How to Get the Most out of Your Coaching'. *Physician Executive Journal*, January/February, pp. 78-80.
- Hooijberg, R. & Lane, N. (2009). 'Using Multisource Feedback Coaching Effectively in Executive Education'. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 8(4), pp. 483-493.
- House, R. et al. (1999). 'Cultural Influences on Leadership and Organizations: Project GLOBE'. In: W. Mobley, ed. *Advances in Global Leadership*. Stamford: JAI Press, pp. 171-233.
- ICF (2012). *ICF Research*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.coachfederation.org/files/FileDownloads/2012GlobalCoachingStudy.pdf> [Accessed 15 July 2015].
- Ives, Y. (2008). 'What is Coaching? An Exploration of Conflicting Paradigms'. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 6(2), pp. 100-113.
- Jowett, S., Kanakoglou, K. & Passmore, J. (2012). 'The Application of the 3+1 C's Relationship Model in Executive Coaching'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 64(3), pp. 183-197.
- Kauffman, C. (2006). 'Positive Psychology: The Science at the Heart of Coaching'. In: D. Stober & A. Grant, eds. *Evidence-Based Coaching Handbook*. New York: Wiley.

- Kilburg, R. (2004). 'When Shadows Fall: Using Psychodynamic Approaches in Executive Coaching'. *Consulting Psychology Journal Practice and Research*, Fall, pp. 246-268.
- Koonce, R. (2010). 'Narrative 360 Assessment and Stakeholder Analysis: How a Powerful Tool Drives Executive Coaching Engagements'. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, September/October, pp. 25-37.
- Koortzen, P. & Oosthuizen, R. (2010). 'A Competence Executive Coaching Model'. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), pp. 1-11.
- Maccoby, M. (2009). 'The Dangers of Dependence on Coaches'. HBR Research Report. *Harvard Business Review*, January, p. 95.
- McGovern, J. et al. (2001). 'Maximising the Impact of Executive Coaching: Behavioral Change, Organizational Outcomes, and Return on Investment'. *The Manchester Review*, 6(1), pp. 1-10.
- Newsom, G. & Dent, E. (2011). 'A Work Behaviour Analysis of Executive Coaches'. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(2), pp. 1-22.
- Oxford English Dictionary (2015). *Oxford English Dictionary*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford Publications.
- Passmore, J. (2007). 'An Integrative Model for Executive Coaching'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59(1), pp. 68-78.
- Peterson, D. (2009). 'Does Your Coach Give You Value For Your Money?'. *Harvard Business Review*, January, p. 94.
- Peterson, H. (1996). 'Peer Coaching for Executives'. *Training & Development*, 50(3), pp. 39-41.
- Rapley, T. (2001). 'The Art(fulness) of Open-ended Interviewing: Some Considerations on Analysing Interviews'. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), pp. 303-323.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. 1st ed. London: Sage.
- Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L. (1994). 'Qualitative Data Analysis for Applied Policy Research'. In: A. Bryman & R. Burgess, eds. *Analysing Qualitative Data*. London: Taylor and Francis, pp. 173-194.
- Saporito, T. (1996). 'Business-linked Executive Development: Coaching Senior Executives'. *Coaching Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 48(2), pp. 96-103.

- Schnell, E. (2005). 'A Case Study of Executive Coaching as a Support Mechanism During Organizational Growth and Evolution'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 57(1), pp. 41-56.
- Segers, J., Vloeberghs, D., Henderickx, E. (2011). 'Structuring and Understanding the Coaching Industry: The Coaching Cube'. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10(2), pp. 204-221.
- Sherin, J. & Caiger, L. (2004). 'Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy: A Behavioral Change Model for Executive Coaching?'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 56(4), pp. 225-233.
- Smither, J. et al. (2003). 'Can Working with an Executive Coach Improve Multisource Feedback Ratings Over Time? A Quasi-experimental Field Study'. *Personnel Psychology*, 56(1), pp. 23-44.
- Smither, J., London, M. & Reilly, R. (2005). 'Does Performance Improve Following Multi-source Feedback? A Theoretical Model, Meta-analysis and Review of Empirical Findings'. *Personnel Psychology*, Volume 56, pp. 23-44.
- Spence, G. & Grant, A. (2007). 'Professional and Peer Life Coaching and the Enhancement of Goal Striving and Well-being: An Exploratory Study'. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 2(3), pp. 185-194.
- Starr, J. (2011). *The Coaching Manual*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Pearson.
- Stober, D. & Grant, A. (2006). 'Toward a Conceptual Approach to Coaching Models'. In: D. Stober & A. Grant, eds. *Evidence Based Coaching Handbook*. New York: Wiley.
- Thach, E. (2002). 'The Impact of Executive Coaching and 360 Feedback on Leadership Effectiveness'. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 23(3/4), pp. 205-214.
- Thach, L. & Heinselman, T. (1999). 'Executive Coaching Defined'. *Training and Development*, March, pp. 35-39.
- Turner, C. (2006). 'Ungagged: Executives on Executive Coaching'. *Leadership*, May/June.
- Tyler, K. (2014). 'Calling in a Coach'. *HR Magazine*, September, pp. 55-58.
- Van Genderen, E. (2014). 'The Inner Game of Executive Coaching: Integrity, Leadership and Change'. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 9(2), pp. 5-8.
- Van Genderen, E. (2014). 'The Outer Game of Strategic Coaching: Principles and Professional Development'. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 9(3), pp. 3-8.



Waldman, D. (2003). 'Does Working with an Executive Coach Enhance the Value of Multisource Performance Feedback?' *Academy of Management Executive*, August, pp. 146-148.

Wasylyshyn, K. (2003). 'Executive Coaching: An Outcome Study'. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 55(2), pp. 94-106.

Whitmore, J. (2012). *Coaching for Performance*. 3rd ed. Boston: Nicholas Brealey

Yukl, G. (2002). *Leadership in Organizations*. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

## **Appendices**

### ***Appendix 1:*** Interview Request

Dear X,

As discussed, below you will find a summary of the required profile of the interviewee as well as other information about the interview process and how it will work:

#### **Subject of research:**

- *'An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context'*

#### **Profile of Interviewee:**

- Holds a recognised executive coaching accreditation
- Has conducted one to one executive coaching within a business context
- Is an external coach (does not work in the organisation where the coaching is conducted)

#### **Structure of the Interview:**

- Semi-structured, open-ended questioning
- Approximately 30 minutes long
- 8 general questions, 1 rating question, 2 short summary questions
- Interviews will be recorded and conducted face to face
- Interviewees will remain anonymous

#### **Pre-Interview:**

- It would be much appreciated if you could review the questions in advance of the interview (attached)

- Note that Part 2 of the interview will be based on the content of **Appendix 1 (attached)**
- Note that Part 3 of the interview will be based on the content of **Appendix 2 (attached)**

**Post-Interview:**

- A data validation exercise will be conducted (by email) once the data has been analysed
- The recording will be retained until the date of dissertation submission (2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015) and then destroyed
- Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process
- You will receive a copy of the final dissertation (if you wish)

If you are still interested in partaking in this study, can you please confirm that you match the interviewee profile as indicated above? Do not hesitate to let me know if you have any queries or questions related to the process.

Kind regards,

Rachel.

## **Appendix 2:** Interviewee Acceptance Form

1. I have agreed to take part in a study related to the following research question:

*‘An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context’*

2. I acknowledge and accept the instructions and guidelines I have been given. I acknowledge that these details were provided in advance of the interview.
3. I agree that an interview will be conducted and recorded face to face and that any information provided by me during the recording may be referenced unless I specify otherwise.
4. I agree that shorthand notes will be taken by the interviewer and if I request it, I will receive a copy of said notes.
5. I agree that all data gathered will be securely stored and will not be accessible to anyone other than the interviewer and interviewee.
6. I agree that I will not be named nor will my company be named in any part of the research but that the categories detailed in the ‘coach profile’ section of the interview may be referenced.
7. I agree that the audio recording of the interview will be destroyed upon submission of dissertation (2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015) but that short hand notes or transcriptions may be retained until such time as the final mark has been awarded (date TBC).
8. I agree that my involvement is voluntary and if I so choose, I can withdraw from the process at any stage and accordingly request that my data is destroyed immediately.

Name of Interviewee:

---

Signature of Interviewee:

---

## ***Appendix 3:*** Interview Questions

### **The Study**

*'An analysis of the perceptions of a group of external executive coaches on the key coaching attributes and skills required to facilitate a successful one-to-one coaching partnership within a business context'*

### **Introduction: Coach Profile**

Gender:

Years of Experience:

Executive Coaching Accreditation:

Psychology Accreditation:

Number of Organisations:

Number of Executives Coached:

### **Part 1: Importance of Knowledge**

#### **1.1 Business/Organisational Knowledge:**

Do you feel that knowledge of the organisation/business plays an active part in a successful one to one executive coaching partnership? Please explain:

#### **1.2 Background in Psychology:**

Do you feel that knowledge of psychological theory plays an active part in a successful one to one executive coaching partnership? Please explain:

## **Part 2: Importance of the Coaching Model/Process**

For the purposes of evaluating this section, a specific coaching model has been selected. Please refer to ‘**Appendix 1**’

### **2.1 Contracting:**

How important is the contracting phase in the overall scheme of the executive coaching cycle? What are the key contributory factors in establishing an accurate coaching contract?

### **2.2 Assessment/Re-Assessment:**

How important is it to perform assessments and re-assessments on the executive? What are the key contributory factors in conducting an accurate assessment?

### **2.3 Development Plan:**

How important is it to establish a development plan in the overall scheme of the executive coaching cycle? What are the key contributory factors in establishing an effective development plan?

### **2.4 Public Dialogue:**

How important is it to involve external parties in the executive coaching process? How does this feedback/information impact the overall outcome of the process?

### **2.5 Intervention/Implementation:**

How important is the intervention phase in the overall scheme of the executive coaching cycle? What are the key contributory factors in ensuring that the intervention is a success?

## 2.6 Evaluation (throughout process):

How important is it to conduct regular evaluations on the progress of the executive? What are the key contributory factors in ensuring that an accurate evaluation is conducted?

## Part 3: Attributes of the coach

For the purposes of evaluating this section, an existing list of attributes will be examined. Please refer to ‘**Appendix 2**’

### 3.1 Nine Most important Attributes:

- a) Mature Self-Confidence
- b) Positive Energy
- c) Assertiveness
- d) Interpersonal Sensitivity
- e) Openness and Flexibility
- f) Goal Orientation
- g) Partnering & Influence
- h) Self-Improvement
- i) Integrity

*Referring to the description of each attribute, please rate their importance by labelling them 1-9*

## Conclusion: General Perceptions

Recall an example of one of the most successful executive coaching partnerships you were involved in:

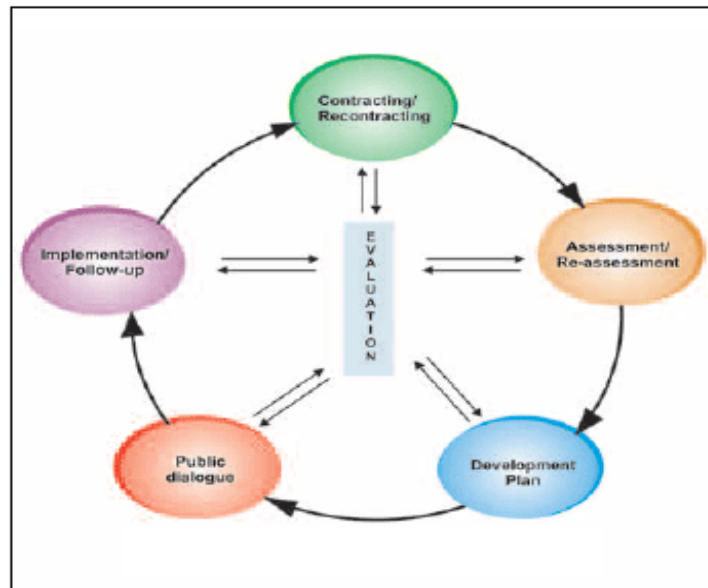
*What 3 key factors do you think were instrumental in its success?*

Recall an example of one of the least successful executive coaching partnerships you were involved in:

*What 3 key factors do you think were instrumental in its lack of success?*



**Appendix 4:** Competence Coaching Model (Koortzen & Oosthuizen, 2010)



**FIGURE 1**  
Competence Executive Coaching Model

**Contracting:**

- Coaches orient themselves to understand the business context.
- Coaches familiarise themselves with the leadership profile in the organisation.
- Consultation takes place with relevant parties on the expected outcomes of the intervention.
- Rapport is established with the coachee (executive) and the expected outcomes are determined.
- The possibility of an effective working relationship is determined.
- The coachee is oriented to the nature of the intervention.
- The appropriateness of a coaching intervention is determined.
- Agreement is reached on the participation of relevant parties.
- An acceptable coaching contract, including cost, is negotiated.
- The contracting process is evaluated in terms of role clarity, expected outcomes, milestones and time boundaries (time, space and task).
- A second contract can be negotiated and developed if required

## Business Knowledge/Interpersonal Skills/Clarity

### **Assessment/Re-Assessment:**

- An executive leadership competency model is created for the specific organisation.
- Suitable assessment tools for assessing individual development needs, based on the competency model, are identified or developed (could be psychometric/360).
- The coachee's current level of performance is assessed.
- The gaps between current and expected levels of performance are identified.
- The results and assessment process are evaluated in terms of the organisational context, leader profile, expected outcomes (organisation and individual) and contract.
- Corrective steps are taken if necessary.
- A reassessment is conducted after a six-month period.

### **Development Plan:**

- Rapport with the executive is re-established and the outcomes to be achieved are reaffirmed.
- An open and honest feedback session on the assessment results is conducted.
- An opportunity to reflect and internalise the assessment results, to ask questions and ventilate feelings is facilitated.
- An integrated summary highlighting strengths and development needs (three each) is presented.
- Agreement is reached on the development areas.
- A structured development plan using appropriate action learning strategies and coaching sessions is developed.
- Agreement on the development plan and process (time, space and task) is reached with the relevant parties.

- The appropriateness of the development plan is evaluated in terms of the organizational context, leader profile, expected outcomes (organisation and individual) and contract.
- Corrective steps are taken if necessary.

### **Public Dialogue:**

- The relevant parties are oriented on the nature of executive coaching intervention and the development plan.
- The relevant parties are educated on the importance and value of feedback.
- The relevant parties are educated on their roles and responsibilities and appropriate feedback techniques.
- An initial public dialogue session between the executive and the relevant parties is facilitated.
- Agreement is reached between the executive and relevant parties on roles, responsibilities and feedback sessions (time, space and task).
- The feedback from the relevant parties is analysed, noted and incorporated in future interventions.
- Corrective steps are taken if necessary.

### Management of relationships/Facilitation/Listening/Mediation

### **Intervention:**

- Monthly coaching sessions are conducted with the executive.
- Learning and development processes are facilitated during the coaching sessions.
- It is necessary to facilitate opportunities to reflect on experiences and consider the application of knowledge, skills and competencies in the work context.
- Quarterly public dialogue sessions are facilitated between the executive and relevant parties.
- The action learning activities complementing the coaching sessions are monitored and supervised.

- The effectiveness of the development plan and process is evaluated in terms of the executive's progress, monthly meetings, interactions with relevant parties and feedback received.

- The development plan and process are adapted as necessary

### **Evaluation**

- Occurs throughout the cycle

***Appendix 5:*** Coach Attributes (Executive Coaching Forum, 2008)

Please refer to pp. 85-93 of the Executive Coaching Handbook (2008) on the Executive Coaching Forum website:

<http://www.instituteofcoaching.org/images/pdfs/executivecoachinghandbook.pdf>

## *Appendix 6: Data Validation Request*

Dear X,

I hope you are well. I have compiled a summary of the interview on executive coaching you kindly did for me (attached).

I have extracted the statements and phrases that I felt most accurately summed up what you said on the day. Can you please review the document and ensure that in your opinion, it is an appropriate reflection of what you said? While you may have some thoughts to add now, please note that the data should be based only on what you conveyed at the time of the interview.

I have also attached the interview questions to jog your memory.

If you have changes to make, can you please communicate them to me by the **31<sup>st</sup> July 2015**?

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you once again for the valuable insights you have provided, your time and effort is very much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Rachel.

## ***Appendix 7: Sample Data Validation Sheet***

### **Profile**

- 10 Years' Experience
- Post Grad Diploma in Executive Coaching, Post Grad Diploma in Coaching Psychology, Post Grad Diploma in Systemic Coaching
- Transactional Analysis – Foundation Programme
- Has coached in 30 Organisations
- Has coached 300 Executives

### **1.1 Org/Business**

- Ultimately a hygiene factor
- Not actively important in a successful one-to-one
- Someone with good business might not necessarily be a good coach
- The hardest coaching can be with someone in your sector – can be a hindrance
- Too much business orientation can result in telling or mentoring
- It is useful but not essential
- Certain industries will expect it more – the 'we are different' approach
- It is an important first step but figural – becomes less important
- It is good to make sense of businesses and how they operate
- Don't need to have in depth knowledge of the profession
- Might be key in the buyers mind initially but disappears
- It is not incremental to the coaching relationship

### **1.2 Psychology**

- Does play an active part more than business
- Coaching is about helping people change – this is crucial here
- Psychological models get below the surface of what might block change
- It looks at behaviours that may cause resistance
- What is making change difficult?
- Thinking may originate from prior experiences

- Business knowledge can placate an organisation but can be important not to overstate psychological knowledge
- They don't want a person in a white coat – they might judge it and may perceive it as counselling
- Both org and coachee may feel psychologically unsafe
- Coaching incorporates a lot of counselling skills but differs in that it is forward looking

## **2.1 Contracting**

- Incredibly Important
- It's the key one
- Clarity and explicitness are crucial – problems that arise later in the process can often be linked back to lack of clear contracting
- Expectations, role of each party, confidentiality to be clear
- Facilitation of a three-way meeting
- Unclear contracting can get the relationship off to a bad start
- A chemistry meeting should happen in advance of contracting
- What does success look like for all parties?
- Important to get the manager involved but won't speak to manager without permission
- Organisation must understand that the coachee is the client

## **2.2 Assessment**

- Not as important as contracting but important
- Has done coaching without assessment and it has been successful
- But there is value in assessment particularly when looking at leadership
- It brings in other data and expands from self-perception
- Uses 360 as a survey or series of interviews – this is discussed upfront during contracting
- Coachee and manager work together to decide who is involved
- Manager involvement gives a more realistic view
- Reassessment can give a before and after but can be challenging
- There is a lack of energy for it – 'surveyitis'



- If the result is not good and the coachee has worked hard it can be deflating, disappointing
- Reassessment may not be comparing apples with apples – key people may have moved roles or left, mood may have changed

### **2.3 Development**

- Important
- Important to have in writing – more likely to happen
- A way of managing the three way dynamic
- Some flexibility required
- Org should be allowed in enough – they should have a sense of confidence that things are moving to their agenda also
- The coachee must write the plan themselves
- It is bigger than a set of behaviours – what does the coachee want to be known for?
- Ideally should be planned with 3 or 4 key stakeholders – more real
- Accountability of coachee

### **2.4 Public Dialogue**

- Very Important
- Systemic Coaching – we are all part of teams and systems
- Coachee engagement with the system – will it be supported?
- Person may not be able to change if the environment doesn't suit them
- Externals hold the coachee accountable
- Can be challenging if the manager is a blocker but up to the coachee to address this
- More detrimental not to involve others
- If contracting is clear and right people are involved at contracting phase, it works

### **2.5 Intervention**

- Important
- Awareness is raised here
- Ultimately this is about a developing relationship
- Trust, Integrity, Openness

- Commitment to the process
- How both parties 'show up'
- Environmental factors can affect this
- Presence of the coach important – being grounded
- Not a believer of over-preparing
- Must be able to adapt to change

## **2.6 Evaluation**

- Important for momentum
- Is this working for the client?
- Not sure about ROI – doubts the credibility of definitive figures
- How can you quantify confidence, self-awareness?
- The org will evaluate by asking the coachee for feedback
- 3 way check in mid-way through and at the end

## **Part 3 - Attributes**

1. Integrity
2. Openness and Flexibility
3. Mature Self-Confidence
4. Interpersonal Sensitivity
5. Partnering & Influence
6. Goal Orientation
7. Assertiveness
8. Self-Improvement
9. Positive Energy

## **Part 3 - 3 Factors**

Good – Rapport/Trust, Commitment, Early Results/Momentum

Bad – Lack of commitment, Lack of manager support, Lack of openness

## Appendix 8: Data Charts

Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3		Case								
Theme		Coach 1		Coach 2		Coach 3		Coach 4		Coach 5		Coach 6		
BUSINESS/ORGANISATION (B)	Culture/Values (B1)	Very important (B)	Not Actively Important (B)	In Depth Knowledge not Critical (B)	Yes - Important (B)	Important to a certain extent (B)	Myth that knowledge of org is not required (B)							
	Expectation (B2)	Must understand business language (B1) (B2) (B3) (B6)	Hygiene Factor (B2)	General understanding is good (B)	Expected from the organisation (B2) (B6)	Not crucial for success of coaching relationship (B5)	But there is a paradox can be good not to be an expert (B3)							
	Industry Knowledge (B3)	Will seek a business qualification (B2) (B3) (B6)	Someone with business knowledge may not be a good coach (B)	Good to understand business language (B1) (B3) (B5)	Gives context and culture (B1)	An interest in the company is good (B)	Need to understand challenges within an org (B1)							
	Business Strategy (B4)	Useful to have worked in the industry (B1) (B2) (B3)	Important not to 'tell' mentoring (B7)	The org will look to see if you have knowledge of the sector (B2) (B3) (B6)	The sector is also relevant (B3)	You are never going to know everything about a company (B)	Not being an expert allows you to ask 'stupid' questions and challenge assumptions (B3)							
	Relationship (B5)	Must understand politics (B1)	Certain industries may expect it (B2) (B6)	gives an idea of where they are coming from (B5)	Gives Strategic Direction (B4)	Good to research brand, values, (B1)	Coaches need an understanding but dont need to be experts (B)							
				An important first step but figurat. (B2) (B6)	is it - what are the behavioural impacts on coaches? (B1)	Helps build rapport (B5)								
				good to make sense of a business but it is not incremental to the coaching relationship (B5)		Gives grounding, context (B1)								
				The hardest coaching can be with someone in your sector - can be a hindrance (B3)		Can be negative if you have worked in sector - becomes mentoring (B3) (B7)								
				Plays an active part more than business knowledge (P)										
	PSYCHOLOGY (P)	Relationship (P1)	Can be useful in analysing behaviour (P8)	Plays an active part more than business knowledge (P)	In a certain way is beneficial (P)	Absolutely - is important (P)	Definitely Contributes (P)	Very unusual not to have an understanding (P)						
Expectation (P2)		Can impair - this is not counselling (P1) (P9)	Crucial in helping people change (P4)	Not critical (P)	Coaching theory incorporates it (P2)	Insight into motives (P3)	Working with humans (P)							
Beneath the surface (P3)		The relevance depends on the particular case (P) (P1) (P2)	Gets below the surface (P3)	Skills are quite transferable (P)	Therapeutic tools are required (P9)	Behavioural and Cognitive Insight (P3)	Expected to be trained to quite a vigorous level (P2)							
Change (P4)		Having only this knowledge can leave need for business knowledge unfulfilled (P)	Looks at behaviours that may cause resistance (P8)	Slightly more important than business knowledge (P)	Gives insights (P3)	Well-being, mental health important in workplace (P5) (P9)	Cognitive behavioural coaching - emotions, beliefs, actions (P3) (P8)							
Mental Health (P5)		A good coach can read people well without having a formal qualification (P) (P3)	Prior experiences of employee are relevant (P3)	Don't need a qualification, some theory is useful (P)	Relative to how person sees themselves in org (P3)	Can identify a deeper issue (P3) (P5)	coaching has evolved from study of psychology (P)							
		Organisation will tend to be more interested in a business background (P)	Can be a deterrent to an org - too unfamiliar (P2)		Instrumental in coaching (P)	More important than business knowledge (P)	not a vital component (P)							
		It is very helpful as you can miss some tricks without it (P)	Coaching is forward looking unlike counselling (P9)		Equally important to business knowledge (P)	Must distinguish from counselling (P1) (P9)	ethical coaches should have training in human psyche (P6)							

Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3		Case						
Theme		Tier 2	Tier 3	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6			
CONTRACTING(C)	External Parties (C1)	Confidentiality (C6)	This is vital or it becomes a 'chat' (C)	Incredibly important (C)	Really important (C)	Critical to the process (C)	This is key (C)	Fundamentally vital in successful relationships (C5)				
	Flexibility (C2)		It is important to involve the relevant people (C1)	Key phase (C)	Provides clarity and understanding (C8)	Rapport and chemistry important here (C5)	Sets expectations (C4)	3 key questions: high level goal, 3 key objectives, how will we succeed (C4) (C8)				
	Alignment (C3)	Support (C7)	Contracts should be flexible (C2)	Clarity and explicitness is crucial (C8)	Confidentiality is established (C6)	Needs and requirements are outlined (C4) (C8)	Alignment of goals is important (C3) (C4)	Important to create rapport - trust, safety (C5) (C9)				
	Goals (C4)	Clarity (C8)	Organisation and coach should align (C3)	Problems can often be linked to bad contracting (C)	Goals are agreed (C4)	What is the desired outcome? (C4) (C8)	Balance of org needs and ability of client (C1) (C6)	Everything is confidential unless it is shared by yourself or others (C6)				
	Relationship (C5)	Trust (C9)	Some aspects for coach should be confidential (C6)	Coach and organisation must align (C3) (C7)	3 way meeting - everyone is on the same page (C1) (C3)	What interventions will be used? (C8)	Flexibility of contract is important (C2)	Definition of coaching - a powerful alliance that is forward moving (C8)				
ASSESSMENT (A)	Goals (A1)		Needs of coach are important (C5)	3-way trust (C1) (C3) (C9)	3-way trust (C1) (C3) (C9)	Logistics - where will we meet, what time, no of sessions (C8)						
	The Now (A2)		Two contracts can be confidential to coaches (C1) (C5)	Some scope for the personal (coach) (C5) (C6)	What is possible? (C8)							
	Accuracy (A3)		Must establish why coach is there in the first place (C4) (C8)	What is success for the coach (C8)	3 way meeting then organisation should step back (C1) (C5) (C6)							
	External Parties (A4)	Relationship (A6)	When you are in the process the coach is more important (C1) (C3)	The coach is the client - must distinguish (C5)	Org should support enough but trust the process (C1) (C7) (C9)							
	Tools (A5)		Integrity is vital (C5)	only involve people with permission of coach (C6)	Coach can deviate if it leads back to the goal (C2) (C4)							

DEVELOPMENT (D)	Goals (D1)	Clarity (D7)	This is crucial (D)	Important (D)	Yes - Important (D)	The kernel of the coaching (D)	Timeframe is relevant - duration (D2)	What do we really want to achieve? (D1)
	Plan (D2)	Flexibility (D8)	Reminder of what is 'good' for the coachee (D1) (D6)	Important to have in writing for clarity (D7)	Action items (D3)	What are the key areas to address (D1)	Clarity is important (D6)	Goes back to what was said at the triad meeting (D4)
	Action Points (D3)	Learning (D9)	Reminder of why you are here (D7)	Some flexibility is required (D8)	Tracking of progress (D5)	Create a clear process for the first 100 days (D2) (D7)	What is the ultimate goal/objective? (D1)	Development plan is linked to the goal setting sheet (D1)
	External Parties (D4)		What is the plan? (D2)	Organisation must be allowed in 'enough' (D4)	Plan should be flexible - iterative (D8)	Incorporate milestones and goals (D1)	What needs to be achieved? (D1)	A client may bring in something else (in the confidential space) this is ok (D6)
	Tools (D5)		What are the consequences to the plan? (D7)	The coachee must develop the plan themselves (D2) (D6)	But mustn't lose site of the ultimate goal (D1)	Learning and doing phase (D3) (D9)	Flexibility here again (D8)	Break down the goal - what does it mean, get vision, get strategy (D1)
	Relationship (D6)	Mentoring Distinction (D10)	Who will be involved and why? (D4)	what is the big aspiration of the coachee? (D1)	Client buy in is crucial (D6)			This can change - a good coach can be fluid in the way they work (D8)
			How will this happen? (D3) (D5)	Who is relevant? (D4)				Coaching is all about clarity, being reflective becoming more self aware (D7) (D9)
			Not mentoring (D10)	A way of managing 3 way dynamic (D4)				
			Review the plan - plans can derail (D8)	Accountability of the coachee (D9)				
			Reviewing the plan ties in with recontracting (D8)	3 or 4 key stakeholders (D4)				
PUBLIC DIALOGUE (PD)	Parties Involved (PD1)	Opinion/intention (PD8)	Only when necessary (PD5)	Very important (PD)	360 can be good but not in all situations (PD4) (PD5)	Dont agree with quarterly public dialogue sessions (PD)	360 can be beneficial (PD4)	Client sessions are sacrosanct - sacred space (PD10)
	Accountability (PD2)		If the issue involves these parties (PD1) (PD5)	Systemic coaching - teams and culture relevant (PD3)	360 is only one element of a broader dialogue (PD4)	Input of HR and Line Manager crucial (PD1)	But it is disingenuous to say no one else is involved (PD1)	Stakeholders, HR, management will be a part of the process (PD1)
	Culture (PD3)		Can dilute client/coach relationship (PD7)	Holds the coachee accountable (PD2)	Can be used incorrectly - in a org (PD3) (PD5)	Better to include external parties at the latter end of the process (PD1)	does not agree with public dialogue forum is sacred (PD10)	Stakeholders, HR, management will be a part of the process (PD1)
	Tools (PD4)		can be positive but depends on situation (PD5)	Can challenge the coachee (PD4)	Proceed with caution (PD8)	Initial focus should be on engaging the individual (PD9)	select right people and number for a 360 dialogue (PD1)	The triad meeting is a form of public dialogue (PD1)
	Situational (PD5)		More detrimental not to involve others (PD1)	Can open up blind spots (PD2) (PD6)	Can open up blind spots (PD2) (PD6)	Boundaries and confidentiality must be established (PD7) (PD10)	external opinion is important (PD8)	At the beginning and then at the end of the sessions (PD11)
	Clarity (PD6)		If contracting is clear, external influence works (PD6)	The environment of the coachee - may not be repairable (PD3)			make sure the feedback is used positively (PD11)	Great advocate of this as long as confidentiality is maintained (PD10)
	Relationship (PD7)	Engagement (PD9)					the language and approach of the coach is important (PD11)	Vital we do this - important for benchmarking and evaluating (PD2)
		Confidentiality (PD10)					Must be agreed by coachee (PD7)	Coaching shouldnt be a covert interaction (PD2)
		Approach (PD11)						external parties with negative intentions are detrimental (PD1) (PD8)

INTERVENTION (I)	Mentoring Distinction (I1)		Coaching is not mentoring (I1)	Important (I)	this is the key to the whole process (I)	Monthly sessions generally good (I2)	Self-awareness of the client is important (I7)	Initial meeting is very important (I7)
Plan (I2)			Should be reflective, not telling (I1)	Awareness is raised here (I17)	the coachee is working really, must get into the process. (I14)	A time for learning (I13)	coach questions are key (I18)	A good coach will bring in appropriate tools and techniques - dependent on client - coaching tools (I8)
Goals (I3)	Flexibility (I9)		Monthly is probably too frequent - this would be more like mentoring (I1) (I2)	Relationship, trust, integrity, openness (I7) (I16)	action points tried out (I6)	Supervised coaching is essential (I11)	Coach brings challenge asks difficult questions (I18)	Coach brings challenge asks difficult questions (I18)
Development (I4)	Coach (I11)		Coaching is about the 'now' (I3)	Commitment to the process (I14)	what worked? (I10)	Must adapt and be flexible (I9)	Using a model or tool is good for focus (I8)	Understands clients values and beliefs (I7) (I11)
Situational (I5)	External Factors (I12)		Continual development (I4)	Presence of the coach rather than preparation (I11)	build the confidence of the coachee (I15)	Combination of class work and homework (I8) (I13)	In-session learning mostly (I8) (I13)	Empowerment of the client - client is in charge (I15)
Action Points (I6)	Learning (I13)		Progressively moving to the 'good' (I3)	Over preparation can be negative due to change (I9)	clarity and solid action points (I6) (I10)	Learning tools and models are used to focus the sessions (I8) (I13)	Important to recap/reflect this is what I have heard so far' - focus, clarity (I10)	Client will write an action sheet - reinforces objectives (I3) (I10)
Relationship (I7)	Engagement (I14)		Each process is different - situational (I5)	Uncontrollable external factors can affect it (I12)	5 or 6 sessions (I2)	Goals and milestones are established (I3)	Reflection on what's working (I10)	Normally 6 coaching sessions (I2)
	Confidence (I15)		The relationship is important (I7)					
	Trust (I16)		Pattern of 3-4 sessions (I2)					
	Self-Awareness (I17)		Questioning - what would you do? (I18)					
	Approach (I18)		Develop confidence (I15)					
Tools (I8)			Must be three-way (E3)	Important for momentum (E)	Ongoing evaluation of the coaching 'process' (E4)	Very important (E)	Self-reflection of coach and coachee (E1) (E2)	Evaluation is vital - orgs are investing, must know its worthwhile (E3) (E7)
Coachee Evaluation (E1)	Confidentiality (E6)		Very Important (E)	Is this working? (E4)	What is working? (E4)	Important for the coach to be evaluated also (E2)	After sessions - what could arise in the next session? (E2)	Transparency (E3)
Coach Evaluation (E2)			Evaluate progress after 3 sessions (E1)	Not sure about ROI - doubts credibility of definitive figures (E7)	What is the coachee looking to achieve? (E5)	What is working? (E4)	Go back to the goals set out (E3)	Client will complete evaluation forms at the end (E1)
Organisation (E3)	Tangibility (E7)		Constant self-evaluation and of the process in general (E1) (E2)	A lot is unquantifiable (E7)	Self-Evaluation of the coachee (E1)	Coachee accountability (E1)	Quantitative data is not realistic (E7)	Organisations may overdo it 'internal' evaluations (E3)
Overall Impact (E4)			Coach must have a supervisor - can hit brick walls (E2)	3 way check in half way through and at the end (E3)	Measurement is important for the organisation (E3)	Not all evaluations should go back to the organisation (E6)	Only a very general report back to the organisation (E3) (E2)	Sometimes coach will complete an evaluation sheet too (E2)
Goals (E5)			Coachee evaluation most important (E1)	Coachee evaluation objective view of progress (E7)	Gives a subjective and objective view of progress (E7)	Confidentiality is essential (E6)	Evaluation is everything, as is ROI (E7)	Evaluating and measuring coaching has been an issue for orgs in the past (E3) (E7)
					3 way evaluation (E3)		Organisation cannot be guaranteed a specific outcome (E3) (E7)	CIPD studies on ROI - very possible - linked to the bottom line (E7)
								Evaluating and measuring coaching has been an issue for orgs in the past (E3) (E7)
								Boundaries are most important (E6)

Theme		Case						
Tier 1	Tier 2	Coach 1	Coach 2	Coach 3	Coach 4	Coach 5	Coach 6	
Good Key Factors (GK)	Business Knowledge (B)	Business Knowledge (B)	Rapport (R)	Rapport/Openness (R) (HO)	Support of the organisation (S)	Rapport/Chemistry (R)	Trust (T)	
	Rapport (R)	Clarity (C)	Early Results (ER)	Trust (T)	Trust/Openness (T)(HO)	Planning yet Flexibility (PF)	Coach challenged coachee (D)	
	Clarity (C)	Coachee Engagement (E)	Coachee Engagement (E)	Coachee Engagement (E)	Engagement (E)	Being Direct/Openness (HO) (D)	Appropriate tools (TO)	
	Early Results (ER)							
	Engagement (E)							
	Honesty/Openness (HO)							
	Trust (T)							
	Support of the Org (S)							
	Planning yet Flexibility (PF)							
	Coach Challenged (D)							
Appropriate Tools (TO)								
Bad Key Factors (BK)	Bad Intentions (BI)	Bad Intentions of Org (BI)	Lack of manager's support (LS)	Bad intentions of Org (BI)	Bad intentions of org (BI)	Bad intentions of org (BI)	Lack of openness (LO)	
	Integrity Lost (IL)	Integrity Lost (IL)	Lack of Openness (LO)	Coachee focused too much on personal goals (BI)	Lack of clarity/understanding of process (LC)	Lack of understanding of process (LC)	Lack of understanding of process (LC)	
	Dis-Engagement (DE)	Coachee Dis-engagement (DE)	Coachee Dis-engagement (DE)	No conclusion was reached (NC)	Dis-engagement (DE)	External uncontrollable factors (UF)	Coachee dis-engagement (DE)	
	Lack of Support (LS)							
	Lack of Openness (LO)							
	Lack of Clarity (LC)							
	No Conclusion (NC)							
	Uncontrollable Factors (UF)							