EXECUTIVE COACHING: TRENDS, THREATS AND PREDICTIONS

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Abstract

Coaches encourage managers to stay alert to track the trends in their business and to take timely action to avoid problems or pursue opportunities. The purpose of this paper is to help coaches take their own advice. Coaches and clients were interviewed, and articles on coaching were reviewed, to help us identify possible trends and threats in the coaching business. This resulting collection of insights and predictions can help coaches build their business for the future as well as increase the effectiveness of executive coaching. Coaches are enthusiastic about performance improvement. We believe that they can apply the contents of this paper to do a great job for themselves, their clients and for the profession of coaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Executive coaching services have taken less than a decade to become a common component in executive development programs of Fortune 500 firms. It has been the executives, rather than corporate educators and trainers, who have driven this growth. Executives perceive coaching as being useful and cost-effective, even though the research to support this perception is very sparse. Coaching is still somewhat of an art, as human resource managers learn when they are asked by an executive to “find a coach for me”.

No one selects a coach by studying a pile of resumes. Even references can be confusing—coaches who have been enormously successful with some executives are flops with others. Coaching is an idiosyncratic art form that requires “good chemistry” between the coach and executive. Even planning can be difficult because coaching sometimes pushes executive behaviors and perspectives in a direction that neither party can predict at the start of a coaching engagement.

Suddenly, everyone wants a coach, and the tolerance for idiosyncrasy has diminished. Human resource managers have been challenged to integrate this popular demand for coaching into their cost-sensitive, objectives-driven and systematic corporate executive development programs. Yet, it is happening, and it is to the benefit of coaching as an emerging profession. Here are the growth areas in coaching:

- More firms: even senior executives in smaller firms are now coached
- More mid-level managers: high-potentials at all levels are now coached
- More uses: newer applications include coaching for development, for succession, for new employer transition, for directorships, for internal coaches.
- More global contracts: as coaching is integrated with large corporate leadership development programs, issues of standardization, adaptability and scalability must be resolved.
- More large, long-term contracts: larger coaching firms prosper, though opportunities for coaching boutiques and individuals are diminished.
- More publicity: Dave Pottruck of Schwab, Mike Dell of Dell Computers, Jack Welch of GE publicly praise value of coaching for themselves, no surprise that in 2002,; 16.8% of a sample of 750 CEOs want to hire a coach and 9.5% have done so.[1]

This paper discusses the positive trends in coaching and the manageable risks that these trends imply. There are also trends that could be significant threats to coaches who see no need to change their practices. If coaching is to continue to be a key element in development programs, there are several changes that we predict will occur. These have nothing to do with better marketing, licensing or research. They are actions that we believe the best coaches will be taking to become more productive, effective and competitive.

2. DEFINING EXECUTIVE COACHING

There are many published definitions of coaching. The terms “executive coaching” and “management coaching” are used interchangeably here to refer to coaching that is a business purchase made for the purpose of improving the leadership effectiveness of employees in key

[1] Haapaniemi, P., Leading indicators: the development of executive leadership, Center for Creative Leadership CEO survey, web publication, Sept. 4, 2002.

leadership roles.[2] Some common definitions of coaching are:

- Coaching is a form of personalized, supported learning undertaken for the accomplishment of goals in a chosen area of focus, either professional or personal.[3]

- Coaching is a structured program designed to have a positive impact at the organizational level through focused work with the individual client...with benefits to the organization accruing through increased effectiveness in any areas of the client’s life.[4]

The most important components of a coaching arrangement in business are:

- *One-on-one meetings of manager and coach*: there may be some occasional joint meetings with human resources or the boss, but most meetings are private.

- *Confidential discussions*: it is generally agreed that what the manager shares with the coach will not be discussed with anyone else without the manager’s permission.[5]

- *Flexible methods and goals*: the coach adapts methods that are best suited to each manager’s personality, work style, interests and goals.

- *Goals to improve business effectiveness*: whether immediate and direct or longer term and more diffuse, business coaching is always intended to improve business effectiveness.[6]

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[2] “Life coaching” is typically purchased by individuals, rather than businesses, because it is primarily intended to improve individual self-understanding, happiness or competence. However, reflections on career/life transition questions that arise for older executives certainly impacts job performance so the present distinction between personal and business coaching may become blurred.

[3] Goldberg, M., Expert Question Asking, The Manchester Review, Jan 30, 2000

[4] Kiel, F., Rimmer, E., Williams, K., and Doyle, M., Coaching at the Top, Consulting Psychology Journal, 1996, Vol. 48, 67-77

[5] Personal communication, 2003, Lauren Walsh, Regional director of coaching, Right Management Consultants notes the fatal barrier to the effectiveness of internal coaches is that managers never forget that the coach is a fellow employee and not someone with whom they will easily discuss their fears, frustrations and feelings about fellow managers.

[6] Personal communication, 2003, Bob Lee, founder Lee Hecht Harrison, past CEO of the Center for Creative Leadership, notes that some coaches (Dotlich and Cairo) accept the goals of their superiors because these are “business goals”, while others (Hargrove) believe that improving business effectiveness is most likely to be achieved when the manager determines what goal they will work on, even if it seems more personal than business related.

- *Purchased by the firm*: managers do not pay personally for coaching; the employer pays because the results of coaching are intended to benefit the business.

- *A 3 to 12 month time span*: the essence of coaching is the ongoing relationship and commitment to change a manager's resistant long standing habit or point of view.

3. DEPTH AND FOCUS OF CHANGE IN COACHING

Coaches often have different perspectives on how they define their role or their objectives. These differences reflect an "outside-in" vs. and "inside-out" approach to change and development. Two of the most common differences in how a coach works are (1) the level of intimacy that a coach establishes with managers and (2) the depth of the impact that the coach expects to achieve with the manager.

- Differences in degree of intimacy depend on whether the coach favors a "trainer" or a "therapist" role. Only a few coaches can play either role equally well.

- Differences in the level of impact being targeted depends on whether the coach focuses on changing a manager's specific behavior, or focuses on changing a manager's values or a frame of reference that may then impact an entire range of behaviors.

Coaches usually have personal preferences and skills to perform one or another of these roles. However, coaching relationships often call for the kind of flexibility that may push a coach to move from one role to another as the opportunity arises. Some coaches can make these shifts easier, and with greater skill, than others. The distinctions in these roles are described in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Coaching Intimacy

Coaches sometimes believe that business performance is so deeply embedded in a manager's personal life, goals and values, that they have to get "beneath the surface" to do their job effectively. Other times, they will just tackle the behavior "as is" on the surface. Some coaches can use both approaches, although they generally either prefer, or are most skilled at, one or the other approach.

- The trainer/coach may simply want to make certain that a manager understands the feedback about their performance and then takes action that will help them reach their business goals more effectively. Discussions about topics such as the manager's anxiety, resistance to change, a forthcoming divorce, or personal happiness are seen as being largely tangential to coaching work. The orientation is that of a trainer or educator who just happens to be working with a single student rather than a group.

- The counselor/coach believes that the manager’s personal issues and needs are important levers that a coach will use to understand how best to help the manager achieve the desired business goals. The real value of the one-on-one work is to create a setting that will allow this kind of information to emerge. The risk in the latter approach is that much of the coach’s efforts can sometimes be directed to resolving the manager’s personal issues, without giving sufficient attention to improving business performance.

Coaching Impact

Coaches sometimes discuss how much impact they try to achieve during coaching. Some coaches focus on readily observable management skills or behaviors. For example, “learn how to delegate and you’ll get a promotion”. This is called “transactional” coaching. It requires convincing a manager that investing time and effort in making a particular change will be “worthwhile” in terms of immediate productivity or promotability. It is usually easy to define both the nature of the behavior change required and the goals of a transactional coaching relationship.

Transformational coaching, on the other hand, tries to change some aspect of the manager’s perspective or values. The goals are often harder to define in measurable terms, as the following comments indicate.

- “Transformational coaching has to do with transforming who people are, or altering the self-defining choices that result in people’s way of being, winning formula, or defensive strategies…(transforming) involves fundamentally reshaping underlying patterns of thinking and behavior.” [7]

- “When I coach I always concentrate on changing some very specific behaviors. However in most cases, I also work on trying to create some deeper changes in the manager’s perspective. These latter changes may not result in observable behavior changes in the specific areas on which I am concentrating, but they still could make the manager more effective in his or her role”.[8]

[7] Hargrove, R., Masterful Coaching, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1995, pg. 60, 61.
[8] Personal communication, 2003, Paul Larson, Global Vice President of Coaching, Right Management Consultants

At more senior executive levels, and when coaching is intended to tackle issues related to life/career challenges, coaching is typically more transformational. In part, the depth and level of accomplishment is a function of the interaction between the skills and intentions of both the coach and the executive, as well a practical matter of what service the coach sells. For example, Marshall Goldsmith states "…an executive coach help(s) people understand their true potential and work on their undeveloped strength. …defining potential as a process, not a state, …shows how we need to go on a life long journey, not look for a 'quick-fix' solution."[9] It may sound as if this approach is very unspecific, yet in practice, Goldsmith arranges clear "fix it" contracts with clients. In fact, he often contracts with clients not to bill them unless there is evidence that a manager has changed an agreed upon behavior.

4. TYPES OF COACHING ROLES

A common problem in agreeing on the selection of a coach is that the coach, the manager, their superior, and the Human Resources manager may all have different ideas about what coaches do. This is because the role of coaches has evolved, but the profession is still sufficiently new that expectations about the role are still evolving.

Coaches who entered the profession early have sometimes broadened their approach to incorporate elements of the more recent styles, but it is still a matter of personal inclination since there still seems to be a market for every type of coach. The most recent evolution of coaches—the Development Expert—will be in highest demand if they also can demonstrate possessing the skills and experience of other coaching styles.

- Experts and Ex-CEOs (1945-1960)
- Facilitators and Problem Solvers (1960-80)
- Assessors and Planners (1980-2000)
- Development experts (2000-2005)

These coaching roles do tend to attract different kinds of practitioners. For example, a client that is expecting a coach to be a "development expert" is requiring new skills of those coaches who have spent most of their career in the "assessor and planner" role. Coaches often convince prospective clients, and themselves, that they can play any of these roles. Few can actually do it.

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[9] Savage, A., A Spark from Heaven: The Place of Potential in Organizational and Individual Development, PNA press, 2002, Forward. By M. Goldsmith.

As in any profession, some coaches do their best work by staying with "what has worked" for them. Newcomers try to work on developing skills that will meet what they hope are the future expectations of clients. The way each type of coach functions, and the skills and experience required of each, are described in the following paragraphs. [10]

Experts and ex-CEOs: 1945-1960

The first coaches were hired for their wisdom and expertise. They wouldn't have used the term "coach" but they did work that was similar to the coaches of today. The primary difference was that they typically spent more time assessing operations and other people, so they were generally more capable than the coaches of today in providing advice that took adequate account of the context for the manager. They would assess the business or technical issues of managers and make recommendations based on their own personal experience or exposure to similar situations. These coaches were typically older and had senior management experience. They solved specific business problems and passed on skills and wisdom to the executives with whom they worked. For example, in a recent book it is noted that Alfred Sloan was brought into General Motors as a consultant.11 Just as a sports coach is measured on wins vs. losses, the business coach is measured on the extent to which the client began to make more winning decisions after being coached. There are very few coaches who personally have achieved the level of business success to credibly aid their clients in making key business decisions.

In the last decade, successful entrepreneurs who have sold one or two businesses, but are still too young to retire, often join a venture capital firm or holding company. Their status and experience allows them to coach CEOs of firms in which their company has invested. The coaching relationship is seldom welcomed by CEOs, but accepted as part of the financial arrangement.

Facilitators and Problem Solvers: 1960-1980

As coaching expanded in popularity, it became clear that an executive could often become more effective if a coach asked thought-provoking questions and encouraged a fresh approach to decision-making. A coach didn't have to be a more skilled manager than the client. It was often enough for a coach to have enough knowledge of business and management roles to ask questions that could re-energize a manager's thinking and get him or her off "autopilot". Roher, Hibler & Replogle, a firm of psychologists, were a powerful force in establishing the value of this style of

[10] Of course individual coaches, and particularly large coaching firms, often blend two or three types of coaching skills together for marketing purposes. Clients generally know to look for the difference between sales and substance when it comes to real skills and experience.

[11] Farber, D.R., Sloan Rules: Alfred P. Sloan and the Triumph of General Motors. University of Chicago Press, Trd, 2002.

coaching among senior executives of major corporations.

The advantages of the facilitative coach as opposed to the expert coach were many. Facilitative coaches didn't intimidate the client with their business expertise; they didn't have the successful manager's attitude of "this solution worked for me, so you should do it also". This new facilitator style encouraged trainers, psychologists, mid-level business managers and teachers to enter the field of coaching. They had to have some familiarity with business issues but their expertise was primarily in facilitating changes in a manager's behaviors and attitudes.

Assessors and Planners: 1980-2000

Up to this point, the actual steps involved in coaching were still relatively undefined. The next phase evolved from the recognition that managers had "blind spots". That is, they often didn't understand why they were not more effective. A coach's task was to help the manager discover the problem. Once the client understood and accepted the cause of the problem as being their behavior, the route to change was sometimes quite rapid.

The challenge was in being able to convince the manager that the coach had the expertise to specifically identify the problem. Coaches functioning in the facilitator role might easily learn about the destructive aspects of a manager's behavior by simply interviewing employees. Nonetheless, managers still often responded to such information as misguided, biased or unimportant unless the coach could present "hard data".

Coaches responded to this discovery by becoming objective and systematic data collectors and analysts. Initial meetings focused only on assessment and relationship building. Coaching didn't begin until survey data was collected, and facilitative questioning and counseling has taken place. Executives are assumed to be rational, motivated, disciplined and capable of learning to modify their behaviors. Coaching involved translating assessment data into a thorough and practical action plan and then seeking commitment by the executive to pursue the plan. The use of systematic surveys rather than interviews meant that the action plans emphasized changing specific observable behaviors that were most closely linked to key competencies of the manager's job.

The facilitative coach had to be skilled in conducting a problem analysis without the benefit of systematic surveys and in leading the client to accept the coach's judgment about the nature of the problem. The assessment and planning coach who relies upon the use of survey data, doesn't require the same level of perceptiveness and interpersonal skill. They only have to convince the client that the results of their survey are accurate. As the popularity of coaching grew, the reliance on survey data meant that there were even more people who had the necessary skills to act as coaches. For example, the firm Personnel Decisions International became a leading firm in coaching in part because they cost-effectively leveraged the use of new Ph.D. psychology graduates. These graduates had limited business experience, but their credibility as researchers was not an issue for managers. This allowed seasoned coaches to use their business experience to work with managers on implementing action plans.

Managers are often confident that once they have the data, they can make any necessary changes themselves or get help from their boss or human resources. Thus, while a coach still needed to have some credibility and knowledge of business, it was not required that they have deep management experience. The outcomes of a coaching project were still largely in the realm of an action plan, but now the time required to collect and analyze the survey data often took up a large part of the coach/client interaction time.

Coaches generally believe that they need managers to commit to a minimum of 6 months of coaching time in order to ensure ample opportunity for relationship building, analysis and behavior change. However, corporate managers of large coaching projects often negotiate 3-month "coaching" programs that are limited to data collection, analysis, and action planning. They then train internal coaches or mentors who are assigned to "take over" the facilitation and monitoring of the action plans. This can be a cost effective model for some firms but often the selection, training, and management of internal coaches is under-resourced or poorly coordinated with the result that the impact of such programs is negligible.[12]

Development Experts: 2000-2005

Good assessment and good planning aren't enough to get most managers to change their behavior in a sustained manner. Most internal human resources staff don't have the time, the skill or the organizational power to maintain a manager's commitment to a plan. Normal backsliding and abandonment or getting swamped in other business--and forgetting the plan altogether—are not uncommon outcomes of any coaching engagement.

In recent years, it has become obvious that managers do not necessarily take corrective action, even when they become fully and accurately informed of certain aspects of their behavior that they should change. Good intentions by the manager are usually not enough, so coaching is evolving into a service that places more emphasis on the training and support for actual behavior change.

Many "assessor-planner" coaches need to learn new skills in order to move into the "development expert" role. There is plenty of pressure for this development. Advances in software and a few

[12] Personal communication ,2003, Richard Hagberg, Chairperson, Hagberg Consulting Group.

knowledgeable human resources staff now make it very easy for a firm to conduct multi-rater surveys, and provide feedback, using only internal staff. In fact, the surveys that coaches have used have now become an inexpensive and easy-to-implement commodity product. Coaches used to be able to choose the multi-rater assessment that they were familiar with, and considered to be well-designed. Now, coaches are often told by the human resources department that the assessment has already been selected and administered. The coach is needed only to facilitate the behavior change process.[13]

As the interest in finding coaches continues to grow, there is once again an emphasis on engaging coaches who are skilled in the techniques of training and behavior change. The outcome of coaching is no longer a good action plan; there is now an expectation that will be growing ever that the coach's task is to facilitate observable and reasonable permanent changes in a manager's behavior.

How does a coach demonstrate that they have the wisdom and expertise required to change behavior? What does it mean to be a development expert? Are they experts in knowing how to get people to change habits, perspectives and attitudes? What tactics do they use when their first efforts to encourage behavior change are failing? Does the coach have the beliefs and values that permit them to use their knowledge of behavior change in a responsible and motivational manner?

In the past, managers who wanted to change, but couldn't, often just blamed themselves. That seems to be changing. Now, managers, as well as their organizations, are holding coaches more accountable. In most coaching engagements now, it is usual for managers and human resource experts to ask coaches tougher questions about exactly what skills and practices they use when they encounter managers who are motivated to change behavior, but have found it hard to do so.

5. POSITIVE TRENDS AND INCIDENTAL RISKS IN COACHING

As the style of coaching has grown from expert, to facilitator, to assessor, and then development expert, the demand for coaches has continued to grow. Assignment of a coach used to be a signal that a manager "needed help", but now it is as likely to indicate that a manager is consider to be on a firm's "high potential" list.

There are both good and bad aspects of phenomena that undergoes such rapid growth in popularity. In this section, the positive aspects of the rapid growth in coaching are discussed, along with some incidental risks that they imply. The threats to coaching that have arisen from this increase in

[13] Personal Communication, 2003, John Epperheimer, President, The Workpath Group.

demand are discussed in the following section.

What are positive trends? They are trends that should benefit the managers receiving coaching, benefit the coaches, and benefit that firms that pay for coaching. These trends are:

- Managers are more likely to be repeat users of coaching; they are finding more uses for coaching.
- Managers, rather than organizations, may maintain long-term relationships with coaching firms that they carry from one employer to the next.
- Coaching is more likely to be seen as a reward and support--it is no longer evidence of weakness or incompetence.
- Coaches are more likely to work with managers who will be successful rather than those likely to fail.
- Coaching is more likely to be integrated with the development policies and practices of the firm.
- High potential managers receive coaching when they are younger.
- Managers who are successful, but who overuse a single strength or are too self-centered, are now recommended for coaching well before they are ready to derail**.**
- Coaching is often combined with team building in order to increase impact.
- Large firms are more likely to contract with just one coaching supplier rather than negotiate separate contracts with different firms, different standards and prices.

There is always some risk associated with any change, even if it seems to be a positive trend. These are briefly noted after the description of each trend in the following paragraphs.

Managers are more likely to be repeat users of coaches; they are finding more uses for coaching.

Managers now recognize that coaching is not a one-time educational experience similar to that of taking a specific university course. Managers now engage a coach when they are preparing for a promotion, or adapting to a company, or for recognizing that their new job requirements demand new skills or allocations of their resources.[14] It is not unusual now for managers being brought into a new company to negotiate for access to their own coach once they are in place.[15]

Potential Risks of Repeated Coaching Interventions

- Managers tend to want to rely on the same coach for all of their needs. Although few coaches actually have the skills to be effective in every circumstance, they try their best rather than give their client to a competitor.

- Repeated use of a coach on a periodic basis is acceptable in most firms, but back-to-back contracts, or too frequent use, may be seen as a lack of management competence.

Managers, rather than organizations, may maintain long-term relationships with coaching firms that they carry from one employer to the next.

At the Hagberg Consulting Group, coaches in 1997 once discussed (only partly in jest) trying to sell a ten-year coaching program to fast-moving Silicon Valley executives. This program could save a CEO or VP the inconvenience of having to initiate a new contract each time they changed employers. A few other firms are positioning themselves to create such a cross-employer relationship.

The Gallup Corporation launched a five-year program in January 2003. This long-term coaching service is an integral part of Gallup's new part-time MBA program for employed executives.[16] It is expected that the employer would normally pay all or part of the Gallup program fees. Any executive leaving an employer mid-way through this degree program would probably negotiate with a new employer to permit a continuation of this course of study along with the long-term coaching relationship.

Another example of manager-driven relationships could be the executive recruitment firm of Heidrick & Struggles International which offers "on boarding" management coaching services through the Colorado-based Lore International Group. Executive recruiters often assist executives in repositioning themselves every few years. It seems obvious that a coaching relationship through a

[14] Personal communication, 2003, Michele Bolton, Partner, The Executive Edge.
[15] Personal communications, 2003, Shirley Ross, Vice President Strategic Leadership Development, Williams Sonoma.
[16] Personal communication, 2003, Connie Rath, Vice Chairperson and Dean of Leadership, Gallup Corporation. The MBA degree will be granted by the University of Nebraska in partnership with Toyota University and the University of Peking.

recruiting firm would be ideally suited for extending a coach/executive relationship across employers.

Other recruiting firms offering such coaching include Korn/Ferry International, which has aligned its services with the Canadian firm KFYCoach under the direction of Marti Smye. Smaller recruiters, such as Curtis Consulting of Massachusetts and Taylor-Rodgers and Associates of Connecticut also incorporate the on boarding coaching as part of their services. CEO Richard Taylor believes that coaching is responsible for the fact that 90% of the executives they place stay with the same employer for longer than two years.[17]

Potential pitfalls of using the same coach across different employers:

- Managers prefer to stay with the same coach, but this is not always the best basis for a continuing development experience. Change is good.

- Few coaching firms have the precise range of expertise in the right geographical locations to serve an executive adequately, no matter where they might relocate.

Managers who have received coaching are likely to recommend it for peers, reports and bosses.

Coaching is expanding in popularity partly because managers believe that their experience in having a coach was worthwhile. A review of 72 articles on executive coaching published between 1991 and 1998 concluded that in 88% of the cases, the reaction to executive coaching was positive. Even if a manager does not change their behavior, they often blame only themselves. They will typically say in such circumstances that they just didn't "stick with the plan they had developed with the coach".

This positive response to coaching should be no surprise. The more senior a manager becomes, the more likely they are to say that they have great difficulty in finding someone to talk with who is apolitical, can keep a confidence, and can ask questions, provide advice, and give counsel.[18] A coach can meet all of these requirements, and managers report valuing coaches the most when they are results-oriented, honest and give challenging feedback and helpful suggestions.[19]

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[17] Editorial, "Onboarding" coaches help acclimate new executives. *Wall street Journal*, 2002, Oct. 22, B10

[18] Lukaszewski, J. E., Behind the throne: How to coach and counsel executives. *Training and Development Journal*, 1988, v.*42*, 33-35.

[19] Hall, D. T., Otazo, K. L. & Hollenbeck, G. P., Behind closed doors: What really happens in executive coaching. *Organizational Dynamics*, 1999, *27*, 39-52.

Potential Risks of Enthusiastic Support

- Managers who are enthusiastic about the value they received from coaching may recommend coaching for other managers who would be more likely to profit from more targeted and less costly interventions, such as seminars.

- A high demand for coaching will create a shortage of good coaches; the poor quality of service that managers may receive from less skilled coaches many then devalue the reputation of coaching.

- Coaching is expensive and corporations faced with high demand for these services will introduce cost-control policies and policing that will make access to coaching more difficult in the future.

Coaching is more likely to be seen as a reward and support--it is no longer evidence of weakness or incompetence.

It is common for managers to request a coach because it will be good for their career. In a survey of 488 firms, 40% of the respondents indicated that one[20] reason they provide coaching is "to retain top talent." It is also recognized that managers with great potential might also have to polish off some rough edges. It is not a career stopper to have earned a reputation for pushing staff too hard, or for being too ambitious. Managers gain respect from colleagues for dealing openly with aspects of their behavior that they want to change in order to be more effective.

Potential Risks of Assuming Acceptance of Coaching

- Managers, or coaches, sometimes move from one company to another and discover an entirely opposite understanding of the coach's role. Coaching is still a relatively new service and is still viewed in many companies as a prelude to dismissal or as evidence of weakness by the manager.

- Organizational cultures differ in their view of coaching. Managers sometimes refuse offers of coaching unless their superior is very proactive in meeting with them and the coach, and in emphasizing that the availability of coaching was a clear indicator of their value to the company.[21]

[20] This was a "check all that apply" question; other popular choices were leadership development 70% and skill or style development 64%. The study was done by Lee Hecht Harrison and reported on their website in 2000.

[21] Personal communication ,2003, John Epperheimer, President, The Workpath Group

Coaches are more likely to work with managers who will be successful rather than those likely to fail.

Coaching was once primarily used as a last resort for a manager who has been performing poorly. Clients are more likely to recognize that earlier intervention by a coach is more likely to be successful, and that for some managers, it is just too late to try to help them with coaching. Ten years ago, about 80% of the managers who coaches worked with were drawn from the bottom two boxes of the chart below—managers that were in the “stagnating” or “failing” categories. Three years ago, it was not unusual for coaching firms to draw between 50% and 80% of their managers from the following top two categories of successful managers.[22]

Type of Employee	***Characteristics***	***Coaching Risk***
Self-Actualizing	Strong, mature, motivated, self-confident, self-directed	Good risk, if the coach is functioning at the same level
Mover, Striver	Moving up, getting it together, strong potential, good attitude	Good investment for coaching. Cooperative, motivated, will make it work if boss supports
Middle of Road, Status Quo	OK, average, mediocre, fair	Good investment for coaching but needs motivation and quick wins
Stagnating	Confused, burned out, discouraged, subdued, headed for trouble	Hard to change, may try coaching but has little support from others
Sinking, flailing about	Turned off, emotional, angry, desperate, negative	Hard to change, maybe a candidate for counseling, but not coaching

*Adapted from Robert Oberlander’s presentation at the 2002 conference for the Society for Psychology in Management

Of course, the chances of coaching having no observable impact was quite high in working with managers who were already identified as being “in trouble”. In fact, coaching was often used as just one of the steps taken to ease a manager out of a firm. At that point, virtually nothing the coach or the manager could do would reverse the decision to release the manager.

[22] Shirley Ross (op. cit.) budgets 85% of her coaching budget for high potential managers, and only 15% on managers in trouble. These managers must show enthusiasm and commitment within three or four sessions, or they aren’t funded to continue receiving coaching.

At the other end of the scale, coaches particularly like working with successful managers. These managers will often try to use what they learn from the coach, and regardless of the impact that the coach may have on their behavior, these managers are likely to get promoted anyway. Everyone wins, even when the coach is not particularly skilled.

Potential Risks of focusing on successful managers

- Not all coaches can meet the needs of high-level managers who are successful but want to continue developing as both individuals and leaders. Most coaches are problem-oriented rather than development-oriented and they don't know where to start with someone who is already functioning at a higher level than themselves.

- Clients who have experienced repeated failure in "saving" managers by coaching may be tempted to move even marginal managers into the "can't be helped" category and reserve coaching only for high potential managers.

Coaching is more likely to be integrated with the development policies and practices of the firm.

Coaching is more likely to be an integral part of an executive development plan. An executive may still seek coaching at any time in reaction to personal or business circumstances, but most development plans that are part of the popular "corporate university" movement include a coaching component. This approach ensures that more managers will be likely to receive coaching than ever before.

Potential Risks of Becoming a Program

- The need to find enough coaches to meet the needs of any large program can stretch resources of suppliers, and result in the use of coaches who are not as skilled as needed.

- Large companies are global, and global development programs introduce new project management challenges such as coordinating, centralizing and standardizing coaching services and finding or training coaches around the world.[23]

[23] Bob Lee (op.cit.) notes the high risk of implementing standardization at the expense of quality of service.

- Coaches have a free hand in program design and delivery when they report to a CEO, but becoming part of a corporate leadership development program means reporting into human resources and adapting to internal policies and practices about coaching.

- Coaches coming from a variety of different backgrounds to meet the high demand of a large corporate program will often have very different views on how to work with managers and will also have different view on appropriate coaching policies and philosophical orientations.

- Program-linked coaching means that a manager may not be able to access coaching when it is most useful. A manager may have just been promoted, or taken on a large new project. However, program-linked coaching administrators may say "Sorry, the plan says that you aren't due for coaching services until December."

Corporations are clearly moving toward the integration of coaching into their leadership development programs.[24] However, human resources must have the time and budget to invest in the coordination and training of the coaching team. Many coaches are likely to be contractors brought together for the first time for a large project, and even though many of them may come from the same coaching firm, their individual backgrounds and training are likely to be very different. For example, Amanda Matthews of Capital One reports that the team of coaches she has assembled for her executives consists of 35 people who include lawyers, actors, psychologists, former executives, and OD specialists.[25] Jim Lomac at MRG, who trains and licenses coaches, reports that about 1/3 have a psychological/counseling or ministry background, 1/3 are former executives who have often spent time working as outplacement consultants, and 1/3 are from the training field.[26] The challenges of standardization are daunting considering the wide variety in the beliefs, values and training among coaches.

High potential managers receive coaching when they are younger.

In the past only senior executives were able to purchase coaching. Now, as corporations are trimmed of all extra staff, it means that younger managers have fewer opportunities to find mentors inside the company. Companies now are willing to consider younger managers for coaching if they are considered to have considerable potential and if the coaching might serve as a means to encourage retention.

[24] Sun, Agilent, Hewlett-Packard, and Capital One are some good examples of corporations that have integrated coaching with their leadership development programs.

[25] Amanda Matthews presentation at the national ASTD meeting 2002.

[26] Personal communication, 2003, Jim Lomac, President, MRG Consulting.

Potential Risks of Coaching More Mid-Managers

- Costs escalate quickly when a program of coaching used for senior managers is moved down through the ranks to middle level high potential managers.

- It is necessary to identify and publicly acknowledge the high potential managers, and some companies don't like to do this for fear of demoralizing other managers.

- The turnover rate of executives is so high that some companies are reluctant to invest in executive development when it is as expensive as coaching.

- Companies sometimes use coaching to replace basic management skills training. In fact, coaching is not the best solution to many performance and development needs, but it is sometimes used because it is convenient.

There are many variations on coaching which don't require the same level of one-to-one contact that is usual with more senior levels of management. Human resources managers can work with coaches to create a cost-effective combination of e-learning courses, integrated team building sessions, internal human resources staff support, and selective one-on-one meetings with an external coach.[27]

Managers who are successful, but who overuse a single strength or are too self-centered, are now recommended for coaching well before they are ready to derail.

The fatal flaws that predict management derailment[28] (e.g., arrogance, speedboating, abrasive, critical, unadaptable) are now widely recognized and addressed by human resources professionals early in a manager's career. Early intervention is now more possible than ever. It is important to catch these problems while the manager is still viewed by colleagues as having promise and the capacity to be more productive.

Potential Risks of Coaching Immature Managers

- High potential managers are experiencing promotions and praise. They can become egotistical and reject the need for coaching.[29]

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[27] Personal communication, 2003, Tim Jones, Vice President Human Resources, Spectrian Inc.

[28] Lombardo, M.M., & Eichinger, R.W., Preventing Derailment: what to do before it is too late. Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC. 1989, pg. 12-13

[29] As a respondent noted about the challenges of working with a successful dotcom management team of 28 year olds, "they didn't know what they didn't know."

- Managers may see little need to "polish" their rough edges, and may in fact fear losing what they considering their winning strength.

- Many high potential managers who resist coaching are sufficiently ambitious and politically aware to "go through the motions" with a coach just to satisfy their boss, but will show little change in satisfaction or performance.[30]

It is important that the manager's boss and the human resources manager are closely aligned with the coach on selecting goals and monitoring progress. The boss has to be particularly clear in emphasizing two points. First, the proposed changes in behavior are not optional and second, the boss has to continue an express as much interest and attention about this "personal change" project as about the manager's other regular projects.

Coaching is often combined with team building in order to increase impact.

Executive teams are finding value in receiving individual coaching while simultaneously using "group averages" data to identify and work with the strengths and weaknesses of the team. Sharing of goals and action plans also provides mutual support and attention to facilitate the achievement of personal change goals. This is seen by coaches and managers alike as a good opportunity to link coaching activity to immediate business needs and objectives.

Potential Risks of Linking Coaching and Team Building

- When everyone on a team receives coaching at the same time, there are often a few members of the team who aren't ready for, and don't want, coaching. Although they will superficially cooperate, their lack of enthusiasm will be obvious and can weaken the coaching effort with other team members.[31]

- Without strong executive leadership, some members of the team who received high ratings will offer to show their own scores to everyone and will push for the disclosure of everyone else's scores. This places those with very negative scores in a difficult position.

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[30] Lubin, Joann, An executive coach should be viewed as an aide, not an enemy, *Wall Street Journal*, 2003, Feb. 17, B1

[31] Personal communications, 2003, Helen Peters, Director Corporate Coaching, Drake, Beam & Morin.

- It is especially important to have an extremely skilled coach available if the team shares anonymous open-ended peer comments because "rosy notions of team solidarity can be transformed into a devastating loss of trust".[32]

It is important to have a discussion, before launching the project, about each manager's attitudes about coaching and the issue of their readiness for coaching. This discussion would include alerting the team to the actions of individual managers that could undermine the developmental process. Finally, a proposed "appropriate behavior" contract can be circulated that would provide the policies and practices guiding individual responses and responsibilities during the coaching/team building project.[33]

Large firms are more likely to contract with just one coaching supplier rather than negotiate separate contracts with different firms, different standards and prices.

As coaching has moved downward from the executive suite to become a part of the overall development program, firms want to ease the complexities of managing many small contracts with multiple suppliers.

Potential Risks of One-Source Contracting

- As in other human resources external services that were once primarily local, such as training and outplacement, this move toward one-source global contracts will put small local suppliers at a disadvantage.

- Contracting for large-scale services creates constant downward pressure on prices and reduces program content and flexibility to minimal levels.

- Downward pressure on pricing will reduce the quality of programs and the quality of coaches delivering the services.

5. .THREATS TO COACHING AND COPING STRATEGIES

The preceding section described the many positive trends in coaching as this line of business has rapidly expanded in recent years. There are also some significant threats to coaching that arise from

[32] Personal communication, 2003, Lauren Walsh, Right Management Consultants.

[33] Personal communications, 2003, Jerry Cooper, VP Human Resources (rtd.) The Beck Group

this rush to deliver service. How do coaches meet the needs of clients, and cope with competitors who flood into this attractive market even though they may lack the necessary skills to be coaches.

So, while the coaching business is expanding and profitable there are some aspects of this success could potentially be troublesome for coaching. These are the threats:

- The integration with corporate leadership development programs may transform coaching from an exclusive, expensive personal service for executives into a cost-sensitive commodity business for all managers.

- The combined increased demand for coaching, and pressures for cost containment, may decrease the quality of coaches.

- More pressure on may be put on coaches by clients to address the question of the impact of coaching on performance or behavior**.**

- The effectiveness of coaching in person may be diminished by cost and geographic pressures to make more use of videoconferencing, telephone and email.

- An overuse of multi-rater feedback, and the proliferation of surveys designed by amateurs, may diminish the quality and impact of this data for coaching purposes.

- The influx of untrained coaches may discredit coaching through their misuse of personality and values assessments and lack of understanding of business.

The following paragraphs expand on each of these impending threats and identify ways to adapt to, or avoid, the possible undesirable consequences.

Coaching may become a commodity and less of an individualized personal service.

To manage costs more closely, is now possible to purchase software that can help human resources craft an assessment and coaching program that is generally applicable for many managers. There are "pre-written" development plans for a wide range of usual coaching goals.[34] The client can edit these general plans to incorporate details that fit his or her specific circumstances. Then, after several months of coaching, follow-up surveys to assess behavioral changes can be automatically assembled,

[34] Personnel Decisions International, Right Management Consultants, and the Hagberg Consulting Group are just a few of the organizations that offer online versions of development plans to follow up discussions and interpretation of a manager's 360 feedback.

sent, analyzed and delivered, to the client, the coach or the supervisor.

Adapting to commoditization

- Coaching is becoming a commodity only because it is being purchased for use in the middle management ranks. This does not mean that either the pricing for coaching at the executive level, or the methods used, will change significantly.

- Technology and software give managers excellent feedback more quickly, accurately and inexpensively than ever before. The role of the coach as feedback expert is disappearing, but it is still difficult for managers to change their behavior without help. Coaches will position themselves as experts in facilitating and maintaining behavior change, not as simple feedback and planning experts.

- To demonstrate their value, coaches need to be able to articulate more clearly how they will help the manager identify how to interpret the data to select the targets for change. The coach must then be able to demonstrate that they have the skills and techniques needed to help the manager make and then maintain the proposed changes.

An increased demand for coaching, and cost containment, may decrease the quality of coaches.

Coaching has become so popular, and has moved far enough down the management levels, that coaches with minimal experience are being hired. The cost of providing coaching decreases as levels of a coach's experience decreases, and this can make coaching affordable for lower levels in an organization.

Many of the new coaches entering the market know little about business, little about senior management roles and issues, and little about behavior change techniques. They are often willing to accept lower than average coaching fees in exchange for the chance to build a client base.[35] For financial and self-promotion reasons, most of them could not be expected to turn down the offer of working with senior managers.

Adapting to Low-Cost Competition

[35] Personal Communication, 2003, Ellen Stein notes that a licensed Ph.D. in clinical psychology earns only about $14 an hour if they accept clients from health insurance companies. Career counselors typically earn between $15 to $45 an hour. An executive coach earns (don't confuse this with fees) about $75 an hour for a typical 2000 hour year.

To a certain extent, market forces are still in effect. As competitors become more experienced in servicing senior level managers, their fees rise to the level of other competitors. The people who hire coaches—senior executives and human resources managers—have usually been exposed to sales pitches from various levels of coaches. In most companies, clients know what kinds of questions to ask to determine if a coach's background and training are appropriate for the manager to be coached. If they don't, it is the task of the trained coach to provide guidance on such matters to their clients and potential clients.

- Is this person trained as a life coach? Life coaches are known to specialize in dealing with their clients' personal issues of purpose, meaning and life goals. These topics may be of interest to some clients, but these types of coaches are seldom hired by corporations to provide management coaching.

- Is this person a psychological clinician trying to escape from managed health care fees? They can discuss assessment procedures in detail. That is good, because assessments can make the nature, dynamics and extent of the need for certain types of behavior change very clear. However, when clients ask these coaches to discuss how they will make and sustain behavior changes in managers, the responses can inform the client about the coach's familiarity with the business environment and with behavior change techniques appropriate for psychologically healthy people.

- Is this an ex-manager who is entering the coaching field? These coaches will discuss how they can use merely their interview expertise and their review of a resume and personnel records to accurately assess the development needs of a manager. They can be good mentors or business advisors, but they seldom use a structured coaching and behavior change program. They also can create uncomfortable tension in attempting to impose their own management perspectives and experiences on their clients.

More pressure to address the question of the impact of coaching on performance or behavior.

Business people have developed a passion for easily measured and quickly implemented actions. One coaching manager who specializes in large multinational projects notes that every call or a proposal now has as its centerpiece a request to address the ROI question.[36] The reality is that it is certainly possible to design an evaluation project, but extremely expensive to conduct the research.

Every coach and every manager knows that behavior change can be selective. A coach might

[36] Personal communication, 2003, John Epperheimer, President, The Workpath Group.

successfully work on improving a CEO's ability and awareness in the value of "turning on" his listening skills and open-mindedness. The results may appear in the form of approving new R&D expenditures to upgrade a maturing product line, or perhaps giving serious consideration to a young manager's ideas to shift the focus of an advertising campaign. The impact on profitability can be enormous, but at what point, and how, is this selective improvement in listening measured? Does the manager have to be a better listener in all situations to make the coaching worth the investment, or just in some important circumstances? If we show a 100% improvement in listening skills, how will we measure the specific impact the bottom line? Will there be less turnover of key staff? Do we expect better investment decisions? It is hard to measure the impact of coaching, or any intervention, unless specific financial outcomes and causal mechanisms are defined in advance.

Return on Investment vs. Satisfaction

The "return on investment" question is usually only rhetorical. A purchaser may ask a coach about an ROI study just to test their professionalism and knowledge. However, clients recognize that conducting an ROI study on this topic is a prohibitively expensive proposition. They typically discard the idea of doing their own study by relying on their judgment and on the research that other firms have already done.

The few ROI studies that have been done have certainly not spawned any rush of further research in this field. For example, a research study conducted by MetrixGlobal LLC for a Fortune 500 firm and Pyramid Resource Group, a coaching services company, asked managers to identify how and where coaching had led to an improvement in their business performance.[37] Each manager made an estimate of how much of a quantifiable business accomplishment (i.e., making a major sale) they could attribute to their coaching experience. After adjusting for a variety of other factors, including just simple exaggeration, the authors of the report calculated that the return on investment of coaching was 529%.

One coaching firm conducted its own study. Manchester Consulting reported that the VP and CEO level executives that they coached for periods of six months identified average returns due to their coaching experience of more than $100,000, or about six times the cost of the coaching services. Twenty-eight percent of these managers stated that they had boosted their quantifiable job performance by $500,000 to $1,000,000.[38]

In spite of the potential bias inherent in research that is conducted by or for the company delivering

[37] Anderson, M., ROI for executive business coaching, ASTD International conference, New Orleans LA, June 2, 2002.
[38] Fisher, A., Executive Coaching—with returns a CFO could love. Fortune, Feb. 19, 2001

the service, the reports by Manchester and MetrixGlobal are widely used by consultants to mollify their clients' requests for proof that coaching works. In fact, on the related question of "does coaching improve productivity at all, regardless of the cost?" a review of research in 2001 found only seven empirical studies that tackled this question.[39]

The published research indicates that coaching is generally effective. For example, a large and well-designed study in a government organization reported that coached managers increased in both satisfaction and productivity.[40] There has still not been enough research of sufficient quality to permit definitive statements about the relative effectiveness of the coaching variations described in the preceding paragraphs.[41] As one coach writes, "…about the best anyone can say is that executive coaching can work…"[42]

The following quote, reported in Training magazine, from an executive in American Science is probably representative of the class of data that convinces executives that they should invest in coaching.

- "Overall we've seen noted progress, the staff gets along, we're maturing, building strong routines, growing into our roles and level of leadership. For someone who wasn't a believer in executive coaching, I'm converted—I firmly believe in it."[43]

The fact is that many requests for ROI data are really requests for data that shows that managers are satisfied that coaching is a worthwhile investment. There are many studies that show that managers value the coaching experience, and that seems to be sufficient evidence for firms to decide to purchase coaching services.[44]

At a recent conference, a presentation by three coaches submitted a "20/60/20 rule" and the "4 of 5 rule" for consideration by the coaches in their audience. That is, they estimated that 20% of coached

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[39] Kampa-Kokesch, S. & Anderson, M., Executive coaching: a comprehensive review of the literature. Consulting Psychology Journal, 2001, 53, 205-228.

[40] Olivero, G., Bane, K. D. & Kopelman, R. E., Executive coaching as a transfer of training tool: Effects on productivity in a public agency. Public Personnel Management, 1997, 26, 461-469.

[41] Kampa-Kokesch, S. & Anderson, M., Executive coaching: a comprehensive review of the literature. Consulting Psychology Journal, 2001, 53, 205-228.

[42] Hollenbeck, G., The 21st Century Executive, 2001, pg. 150.

[43] Bolch, M, Proactive coaching. Training, May 2001, v. 38, pg 58-66

[44] Lukaszewski, J. E., Behind the throne: How to coach and counsel executives. *Training and Development Journal*, 1988, *42*, 33-35.

[44] Olivero, G., Bane, K. D. & Kopelman, R. E., Executive coaching as a transfer of training tool: Effects on productivity in a public agency. *Public Personnel Management*, 1997, *26*, 461-469.

[44] Hall, D. T., Otazo, K. L. & Hollenbeck, G. P., Behind closed doors: What really happens in executive coaching. *Organizational Dynamics*, 1999, *27*, 39-52.

managers improve performance a lot, 60% improve a bit, and 20% show no change. Also, on a five-point scale, managers rate their coaching experience a positive 4 out of 5.[45] The coaches attending the presentation agreed that the rules sounded about right. In fact these data are similar to the study of 488 human resource managers. For this group, 57% say that coaching "worked more often than not", 17% "produced results", 21% were "hard to measure, or don't know" and 5% were "disappointed".[46]

Coaching may increasingly make use of videoconferencing, telephone and email to replace face-to-face meetings.

Coaches generally believe that they can be more effective using face-to-face coaching rather than trying to coach "long distance". It is difficult to use video or audio connections to observe the subtle cues in client behavior that indicate degrees of compliance or enthusiasm with developmental exercises or assignments. If clients just "go through the motions", coaching will gain a reputation for being time-consuming and expensive, but not very effective.

The pressure to rely more on telecommunications comes from several sources.

- Managers in remote locations want coaching, and telecommunications is more practical than frequent travel

- Telecommunications means that fewer coaches need to be hired, oriented and managed

- The cost of coaching, either through saving employee or coach commuting time, can be reduced if meeting are done by phone or videoconference

- Managers often work nationally or globally in virtual teams and are comfortable with the process of building relationships and doing business by telephone and video

Adapting to Tele-coaching Trends

The trend toward long-distance coaching will probably continue. Coaching is becoming more popular, and is moving down the management chain. It will not be possible to find skilled business coaches in every location in which a corporation has managers. So, what can be done? Some suggestions are:

[45] Silzer, R., Fulkerson, J, & Hollenbeck, G. Innovative practices for building 21st century executives, SIOP conference workshop, April, 2002.
[46] Lee Hecht Harrison, 2000 (see footnote 15)

- Coaches who rely primarily on the use of telecommunications try to meet personally with the client for one or two meetings to build a relationship and personal connection.

- Coaches who rely exclusively on telecommunications can use sets of exercises and forms to ensure that the homework prepared for each telephone meeting will provide a basis for substantive discussion.[47]

- Engage on-site observers (with the participation of the manager) to become an active part of the coaching process. This could be a human resources person, an executive assistant, or even a local trainer. The observers would report to the coach on the manager's behavior, to determine if assignments are being done in the right spirit and frequency, and with appropriate outcomes. Telephone and email contact by the coach would supplement similar contacts with the client.

- Conduct anonymous short surveys among those who would be able to observe specific exercises or experimental trials being assigned to the manager. For example, an assignment to build relationships across department boundaries can easily be tested by surveying attitudes, beliefs and recent communications with those targeted departments.

- Be more specific than usual in defining precisely the actions to be undertaken and the outputs expected. In face-to-face situations, more effort placed on the process of launching what is often a complex learning activity and then discussing the results of the effort. With less intimate contact permitted, it is necessary to simplify broad learning activities into smaller and more precise components that can be more easily observed and tracked.

- There are training programs (e.g., www.coachfederation.org) for coaches that emphasize the use of the telephone in coaching. Take a course!

For senior level coaching that deals with concepts and perspectives more than specific behaviors, the use of telecom or email will be workable, but second best. On the other hand, when coaching focuses on basic management skills—such as delegation, or organization—the forced level of specificity due to the lack of face-to-face contact could actually improve both cost efficiency and effectiveness of

[47] In face to face meetings, discussions about problems or discussions to review the manager's progress toward goals can be most effective when the coach has a chance to sense the attitude and attentiveness of the manager and then varies the approach and content of questions and responses accordingly.

the coaching.

The overuse of multi-rater feedback may result in low quality surveys.

Managers were once almost always reluctant to submit themselves to an anonymous survey by peers and subordinates. However, after they have once done it, they usually value the process and are much more relaxed about the process. This is important because it is now widely agreed that the most accurate way to identify coaching needs involves the use of such surveys.

Adapting to the overuse of multi-rater surveys

- Firms planning to use multi-rater surveys for regular performance appraisals and coaching discover that employees will eventually not cooperate. A coach can warn the firm of the consequences—such as low rates of return—and make estimates of total staff time in order to discourage the frequent use of this approach.

- The coach can warn the firm that when multi-rater surveys are used for performance appraisals, rather than treated as confidential information for development purposes, employees give ratings that are more positive and also almost useless for coaching purposes.

- Managers can now use available and inexpensive software to create and conduct their own 360 surveys. However, the absence of normative data, and the complexity of testing and validating questionnaires often brings a firm back to the use of a commercial multi-rater instrument.

Misuse of personality and values assessments by untrained coaches may discredit the process of coaching.

The results of personality and values assessments are useful but not absolutely essential in coaching. Unfortunately, the Internet and some publishing firms have unleashed a wave of assessment materials that are not supported by adequate validation or reliability studies.

Many coaches have no training in either delivering assessment feedback or in selecting appropriate assessment methods. It doesn't matter, they use such assessments anyway. First, many coaches like to delve deeply into the personal life of a stranger; it is a form of voyeurism, and the assessments often provide an entryway to such analyses. Second, transformational coaching—working on underlying perspectives and views of the world—is particularly appealing to very senior level executives. This type of coaching always involves a deeper look at underlying motives and dynamics.

Since the interest in working with senior managers is high (and so are the fees), untrained coaches will make use of assessments so that they can attract senior executives.

Ideally, assessments give the manager more insight to his/her actions, and the results are also useful to the coach in selecting the techniques used to change specific behaviors or attitudes. With appropriate interpretation, the manager and coach use test results to determine if the behaviors rated in the multi-rater surveys are a function primarily of learning or inattentiveness, or if they are driven and maintained by certain personality characteristics. For example, a manager may be criticized as being a micro-manager. Is this a style learned from a previous boss, a reflection of the corporate culture, or an indicator of a personality that may be excessively detail-oriented and lacking in trust of others? Without the test results to show otherwise, many managers would prefer to blame a problematic management style on bad training or on the culture of their company. Many coaches believe that you can’t really get movement on behavior unless you work on self-awareness—and an excellent way to get there is to use tests.[48]

Coaches without training often use the wrong, or poorly designed and validated assessments. They often interpret the test results either too literally, or too flippantly. In so doing they create unnecessary and misleading problems for the client, and sometimes initiate very unproductive concerns and comparisons by the client. As more managers receive coaching, and find themselves unimpressed with amateurish interpretations of assessment results, the perceived value and professionalism of coaching will be diminished.

Adapting to Irresponsible Use of Assessments

A well trained coach will make certain that corporate buyers understand how to assess competitors who are using assessments in an irresponsible manner. Buyers often hire a coach, like a physician, on the basis of good “chemistry” and good references. Here are some points that a trained coach can pass on to a buyer:

- Professionals like physicians have a licensing body that ensures they have learned the technical skills of their profession. Coaches have no required professional qualifications, so a wise buyer should pose questions that probe deeply into a coach’s experience and competence.

[48] Personal communications, 20003, Robert Oberlander, Vice President, Lee Hecht Harrison.

- As in purchasing any new and complex service or product, buyers should meet with several suppliers and develop an understanding from their presentations just what questions seem to be useful.

- Coaches should be able to name the assessments they might use. An answer of "it all depends" is a red flag. Every coach knows certain tests very well. A test must be used regularly for a professional to understand its potential and its quirks.

- Coaches should be able to go into considerable detail about why they prefer certain assessments and state what they believe are the strong and weak points of competitive assessment methods. If they only have considered using one assessment, how do they know it is the best one?

- The American Psychological Association (APA) has well-known and accepted standards concerning proper validation and reliability studies. The coach should know if the test meets APA standards.

- The coach should be able to say if the test has been standardized and normed on business populations (i.e., many tests use the responses of college students as the "norm" rather than managers).

- The coach should be able to give specific examples of how the results of the assessments will be used in conjunction with the multi-rater results to provide more insight to the manager and guide the coaching process.

7. PREDICTIONS FOR COACHING

None of the threats to coaching described in the preceding section are likely to be fatal to the field. Managers understand the value of coaching and still recognize that—like any business—there will be coaching teams that deliver higher quality service than others.

In many traditional fields of consulting (e.g., compensation, TQM, change management), the quality of staff and services may differ very little across the best firms. Investments by consulting firms in marketing, sales and the employment of well-published experts are usually seen as bringing greater returns than trying to improve the quality of products and services.

Coaching is different. Coaching is still in its developmental stages; there are substantial opportunities for firms to improve the quality of coaching services they deliver. The predictions in this section are based on improvements that we believe clients will want to see, and that coaches can deliver. The improvements are of a conceptual, organization and operational nature; they will improve quality without significant changes in the cost structure of services.

Coaching, as a service, could continue to stumble forward even if no improvements were made in how it is delivered. However, coaches celebrate and promote positive change. If they were asked, coaches would say “our goal is to make coaching a successful, desirable and effective business service in the decade to come.”[49] In this section we present our predictions of what the professionals in this field will be doing to achieve that goal.

The Challenge of Change

Helping a manager become more effective usually requires that they change some aspect of their behavior. However, it is often difficult for people to change their behavior and perceptions, ever when they are highly motivated to do it. There are many avoidance techniques, and we have all used them ourselves. Sometimes we are uncertain about exactly what to change, so we do nothing. Sometimes we reject the opinions of others about the importance or the nature of the change. Sometimes we change, but then revert to our old behaviors after a short time.

In coaching, the search for good coaching and the search for ways to improve coaching both seem point in the direction of facilitating and sustaining changes. Although some coaches are already implementing or developing some of the following activities, most are not.
Adherence: action plans are easy to make and easy to ignore. There is a vast body of research on program adherence that coaches will incorporate into their programs.

Integrated services: coaches will be more effective when they stop trying to accomplish everything by working alone with clients in confidential meetings and begin to leverage other educational processes such as readings, mentoring, networking, linked training programs and corporate task force assignments.

Context: coaches will initiate behavior change planning with a study of the organization culture and climate and will make greater use of changes in structure, systems, policies and practices to help aid the impact of training and insight to change a manager’s behavior.

[49] We cannot explore in this paper the use of other experts such as the marketer/salesperson who can provide innovative solutions to improved positioning, packaging, promotion and sales; the bureaucrat who can establish a professional organization, institution or licensing facility to establish and enforce standard policies and practices, or the academic who can provide more research on coaching techniques and outcomes,.

Matching: Coaching style and techniques will be assessed and adapted to fit the specific characteristics of the manager; more than one coach will be assigned to a manager at different stages of a project.

Supportive: there will be a justifiable business role for coaching that is less behavior change oriented than supportive and less directly business objective oriented and more personal

Accountability: when quality assurance policies and practices are a central, integral and public part of a coaching service, coaches will be motivated to search for more effective ways to change behaviors.

Methods: coaches will be familiar with various techniques and principles of behavior change that can be used with different managers in different situations, and will know the limitations of their skills.

Discontinuous development: coaches will discard the inaccurate linear model of leadership development in favor of a cyclical model that reflects the chaotic and discontinuous development process of leadership.

In a few cases, we will mention examples of tools or approaches used by other coaches. These comments should not to be interpreted as recommendations for specific services or products, but simply as pointers or examples that a coach might consider exploring.

Adherence: action plans are easy to make and easy to ignore. There is a vast body of research on program adherence that coaches will incorporate into their programs.

It has often been said that it is easier for all of us to be nicer than we really are, for a short time.[50] The challenge is not only to achieve a behavior change, but also to keep it. This is referred to as the compliance, adherence or maintenance challenge. Every other professional field that focuses on human behavior change--such as medicine, sports coaching and social work—is challenged and concerned about the problem of adherence. That is probably why over 12,000 articles have been published on this topic in the past 25 years.[51]

[50] Personal communication, 2003, aphorism of Richard Hagberg's mother.
[51] Blackwell, B., Treatment compliance and therapeutic alliance. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic. 1997.

Do More than Hope for the Best

Coaches haven't published many articles about adherence. In fact, Kilburg did write an excellent article in 2001, and it may still be the only such article on this topic written by a professional coach![52] The book by Meichenbaum and Turk was written for a clinical audience, but includes extensive research and lists of practical suggestions; their writings seem very applicable to the management coaching context.[53]

At present most coaches tell managers not to get discouraged if they can't stick with a plan of action. They usually just say "backsliding should be expected" and the manager should just re-start whatever they were doing and move on. Judging by the fact that a bit of backsliding usually just leads to more—this advice is seldom very effective. Other behavior change professionals know that they need to start preparing for backsliding at the beginning of the program. Here is the start of a few steps to discuss early in a coaching program to help facilitate compliance:

[52] Kilburg. R.R., Facilitating intervention adherence in executive coaching. Consulting Psychology Journal, 2001, 53, 251-267.

[53] Meichenbaum, D. & Turk, D., Facilitating treatment adherence: a practitioner's guidebook. New York: Plenum Press, 1987.

Action	Examples
Personal adherence history interview: *Do this interview early in the relationship-building phase.*	Previous examples of deliberate change Failures to achieve goals Ways that work for you in the past Strengths that support your efforts
Goal clarity: *what seems clear at the beginning gets lost later on. Make sure that you continually refine the definition of goals.*	How would we define it When, how often, and where do we see it Who else would notice Can you explain it clearly to a child
Documentation: *seek all the triggers associated with backsliding. Keep the manager aware or symptoms.*	Beliefs: unimportant, forgetful, busy, Feelings: anxious, angry, uncertain People: what say, do or appear
System support: *to maintain and report, create multiple sources and systems.*	Create data sources if needed Data documentation flows to human resources or boss Regular meetings, notes before and after Multiple reminders as needed
People: *participation and observation by people whose opinions matter to the manager*	Co-opt peers, a direct report, an assistant Use family or friends as needed

Seek Reinforcements

A key element that many coaches seem to ignore is that behavior is very likely to change when as many people as possible know what the manager is trying to do, and why. This is the power behind action learning techniques. The manager, either alone or in a team effort with other managers, is assigned a special interdepartmental task that requires a report to top management. Everyone involved knows not only what the outcome of the task should be, but also what skill the manager is committed to developing. Under these conditions, the motivation is very strong for the manager to commit to, or continually revise as needed, the behavior change plan developed with the coach.

If the coach can’t launch an action learning task with senior management, then at least they can seek commitment by asking the manager to involve not only the boss, but also a peer and a direct report, in the drafting of the development plan. This would not be the case with highly personal development needs—but in most cases the topics for development are already known, or suspected, by colleagues before the plan is even completed. The advantage of involving others is that they will also be engaged to help monitor and motivate the manager in adhering to the change program. Whatever the creative mode or re-assessing development over time, or using email and telephone reminders, the manager will know from the beginning of the project that this will not be just another performance plan to be drafted and shelved. Setting the stage at the beginning of the program is a good way to gain adherence at a later stage.

Integrated services: coaches will be more effective when they stop trying to accomplish everything by working alone with clients in confidential meetings and begin to leverage other educational processes such as readings, mentoring, networking, linked training programs and corporate task force assignments.

Coaching is not always the most effective way to reinforce a manager's insights and to take action on development needs. For example, a basic skill-building need such as delegation should be handled with an e-learning course, readings, a seminar, or meeting with an internal mentor who is viewed as an expert in this skill. External coaches often try to accomplish too much through coaching.

Working with HR

Coaching has traditionally been on the fringe of other human resources activity because it concentrated on senior level managers. As it moves down into the system to serve high potential managers, coaches will seek ways to integrate coaching services with the systems and standards of existing leadership development investments. Issues such as quality control, coordination with the company vision and mission, and routine management reporting will be a part of the coach's professional activities.

Upgrading and Tailoring Readings

Coaches have always handed their favorite books or articles to clients, recommended websites and even introduced them to a network of like-minded executives. The challenge now is to make these supports automatic, but at the same time more targeted. A coach will lose credibility quickly if these additional suggestions are not viewed as relevant. Some of the larger coaching firms and test publishing firms currently generate emailed reading materials to clients based on their specific 360 ratings and on personality assessment scores. However, for senior executives, much of this material is still pitched at a lower level of management. A coach who can discuss the screening, evaluation and selection process used to assemble and maintain senior level supplemental materials will be making a significant contribution to a firm's development program.

Context: coaches will initiate behavior change planning with a study of the organization culture and climate and will make greater use of changes in structure, systems, policies and practices to help aid the impact of training and insight to change a manager's behavior.

There is sufficient research to demonstrate that the culture of an organization can impact the style of management that is best tolerated and encouraged. A few coaching firms now administer culture assessments as part of the coaching process.[54]

Deeper Knowledge of the Organization

Because consultants can identify certain management styles that do well in specific cultures, this emerging field will certainly have an impact on the nature of the coaching program, the selection of goals, and the determination if coaching is appropriate at the time. Whether by formal survey or other means, the successful coach will surely want to incorporate this step into the initial preparation phase of coaching.

Some of the instruments currently in use by coaches to assess culture are published and used by The Hay Group, The Hagberg Consulting Group, and Denison consulting. These consultants are in various stages of linking their culture assessment data to their multi-rating assessments and organizational productivity.

Use Organizational Resources Effectively

The closer scrutiny of coaching effectiveness means that coaches will be more strategic about management behaviors that they try to change. Keeping the manager engaged is critical and it is clear that managers are readily motivated to develop and change behaviors that can help them make more effective use of their strengths and talents. [55] It is much harder to strengthen a weakness than sharpen a strength.[56]

Coaching can help the manager make more strategic use of organizational policies, systems, culture and resources—rather than try to keep their motivation and attention focused on achieving personal behavior change.[57] This would require that the coach either invest time and develop expertise to gain a deep understanding of the politics, dynamics and operations of the manager's organization, or that they find and work closely with an internal mentor-to-the-coach.

Moving to this level of service will require that coaches become familiar with moving between

[54] Denison consulting, Hagberg Consulting Group, Hay Consulting Group
[55] Fredrickson, B, The role of positive emotions in positive psychology, *American Psychologist*, 2001, *56*, 218-226. This is a reflection of the growing importance and recognition of applications of the use of positive emotions and positive psychology in behavior change.
[56] Buckingham, M. & Clifton, D., Now, discover your strengths. The Free Press, 2001
[57] Personal communication, 2003, Connie Rath, Vice Chair, Dean of Leadership, The Gallup Organization.

social and individual dynamics and strategies in designing and implementing a development program for the managers they are coaching.

Matching: Coaching style and techniques will be assessed and adapted to fit the specific characteristics of the manager; more than one coach will be assigned to a manager at different stages of a project.

Considering the fact that coaching is primarily a one-on-one activity, it should be expected that coaches would be able to discuss how their program is customized to fit the characteristics of the manager. There are several approaches to this issue, all of which are reasonable and worthy of consideration. Building the relationship with a manager, and getting them to reflect on their current situation can be helped by consciously and openly discussing how the following issues may influence both strategy and understanding of the coaching role.[58]

Adapt Coaching Styles to Process

Coaching style: The following chart displays eight coaching styles consisting of the two factors of coaching method (directive or non-directive), coaching scope (transactional vs. transformational), and coaching focus (specific vs. holistic).

	Directive		***Nondirective***	
	Specific	***Holistic***	***Specific***	***Holistic***
Transactional	Instructor	Parent	Facilitator	Counselor
Transformational	Manager	Philosopher	Colleague	Mentor

Bacon, T., adapted from Nondirective coaching

The coaching style labels indicate the differences in the approach taken by the coach. It is not unusual that a coach is concentrating on transactional coaching (i.e., a specific program to strengthen a manager's delegation and monitoring performance), but is simultaneously hoping to broaden the impact into a transformational change. The shift implies a change in coaching style, and coaches can be more effective if they are conscious of these shifts.

The fact is that most coaches continually improvise to find the most effective approaches for each of their clients. As one study noted, in examining 25 executives who were receiving coaching to prevent derailment, it was clear that different coaching methods worked best for different derailment

[58] Personal communication, 2003, Ellen Johnston, Senior Manager, Executive Development, Sun Microsystems personally manages such matches now, but plan to allow this to be done via their intranet resources. At Agilent, Kirk Froggatt notes that managers can already select internal mentors based on stated strengths and interests.

styles.[59]

Recognize the Value of Multiple Coaches

Few coaches are sufficiently skilled to perform all styles equally well. Also, the most effective coaching styles may change during the course of a coaching project. Informally both parties in a coaching relationship always ask “can I work with you”. This table of coaching styles gives that question some structure. What is the gap between the coaching style a manager wants and the coaching style received? How flexible can both the coach and the manager be about their ideal style? What can be done—given the perceived differences— to make the relationship work? These are reasonable questions to discuss and to use in relationship building.[60] In other professions that specialize in education and behavior change, it is not uncommon for professionals to transfer a client to a colleague when they recognize that their style is no longer effective.

Although managers often prefer to work with just one coach, the beginning of a relationship is the appropriate time to introduce the value of accessing different coaches. Changes in the manager’s needs and development stage over time can be met by changing coaches rather than trying to make dramatic changes in one’s coaching style.

Recognize Developmental Stages as Style Drivers

<u>Developmental stage</u>: How a manager accepts feedback and decides to act on it depends not only on personality characteristics, but also on their developmental stage. At present, coaches focus primarily on personality characteristics. However, we know that a manager’s developmental stage, as well as the coach’s developmental stage, can affect reactions to coaching.[61] Stages of personal development can influence the selection of goals and motivation and appropriate techniques of behavior change.

This is an underlying rationale in developing a strategy for coach selection and coach/manager matching. For example, mature managers in very senior positions often reflect on career/life transition issues. Whether the matter is really work and personal is difficult to determine. The issues are intertwined and can profoundly affect a leader’s effectiveness; yet, there is no specific behavior to change. Coaching is useful for these situations, but it is an “inside–out” kind of task. This is not the type of coach or coaching needed for a younger high potential manager who has a style or behavioral problem.

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[59] Stern, L., Five types of executives in search of coaching. The Manchester Review, 1998, v 3, no. 2
[60] Bacon, T.R., Effective coaching. Durango CO, Lore International Institute, 2000
[61] Laske, O.E., An integrated model of development coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 1999a, v.51, 139-159.

An example of a firm that has evolved a model to fit these differences is Agilent. They produce scientific measurement devices while evolving various possible revenue generation opportunities in the fields of nanotechnology and proteomics. Management opportunities may arise in well established fields, or may require capacity to move into unknown leading edge areas of applied science. They use a six-box model of coaching types. At one extreme—where the issue is polishing a basic management skill--a specialized behavior change expert may make a fine coach. However, for an older, experienced executive, the coach needs considerable life experience and credible business expertise. At this level, managers may be wrestling with strategic planning challenges as well as issues such as dual career couple decisions or planning on how to use a golden parachute.[62] In the middle ground, a coach is needed who works in a completely integrated manner with all components of the development program for high potential managers. While these middle-ground coaches need not specialize in life/career issue counseling, they must have substantial business expertise plus a capacity to help managers explore and understand their own internal dynamics that drive their style, define their values, and reinforce their long term goals. [63]

[62] Jim Lomac (op.cit.) notes that these kinds of issues at senior levels may force a much deeper analysis into personality and motives than either the coach or the manager had anticipated; a less experienced coach may be doing fine, but then suddenly be out of his or her depth when these issues arise.

[63] Personal communication, 2003, Kirk Froggatt, Director of Staffing and Development, Agilent.

	Current performance	Preparation for a future position	Career/life transition focus
Reactive	Change a behavior that interferes with job performance. Behavioral coaching, only modest attention to possible internal motives or issues.	Prepare for an immediately forthcoming job. Task is to acquire an understanding of context and not just content and behavior. Coaches are industry experts and /or have strong business experience.	Performance is fine but express concern of reflection on work/personal interface and future plans. Inside-out approach with specific issue to resolve.
Proactive	Identify and fill gaps in skills and experience needed to achieve the outstanding performance expected from high potential managers.	High potentials with great track record. Coaching is integral part of a comprehensive development program. Systematic task assignments that meet the needs of the corporation and participation in mentor teams to develop both skills and understanding of context.	Ensure that successful managers continue to meet personal and work demands of high pressure positions. Inside-out approach, often with no specific business or behavioral objective.

*Adapted from a discussion with Kirk Froggatt, Agilent Technology.

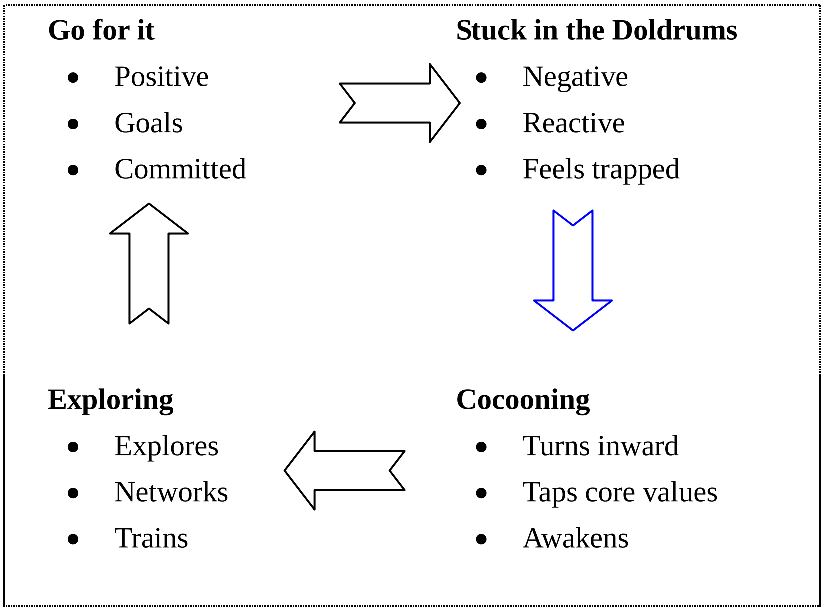
Adapt Style to Fit the Life Cycle Phase

<u>Life cycle phase</u>: Our careers, relationships, leisure time and family activities do not evolve in a convenient straight line--ever upward and forward--but in cycles. For example, a manager will master a skill, or make a department successful, or start a new business. At some point, the enjoyment of success begins a shift toward questioning, boredom and malaise. This is called the “doldrums” after that occurrence in a voyage of sailing ship in which the wind just “goes out of the sails” and the only option is aimless drifting.

At this point, there are two directions we move in life. We can find a new direction, a new challenge, and hit the ”building up to a peak” stage once again. Thus the promotion to GM, then the international move, then the VP suite, then the lure of a headhunter to another company. Then what?

At some point, most managers undergo a period of reflection and review of their life. This is called "cocooning" and is characterized by a fairly definite realization that the past has no appeal, but the future is unclear. While this process is underway, the manager is usually still working. Sometimes this process is a minor distraction, other times the manager forces enthusiasm and it becomes more and more difficult to maintain interest in the job. For most people this is not a serious mental issue, but it is a serious distraction and time for questioning values and goals. At some point, something clicks, and specific ideas or options begin to look worthwhile again.

The exploration phase is signaled by an interest in training, reading and networking. Finally the manager is able to make an internal commitment to a new goal, and the cycle to the top begins again. With few exceptions, the manager keeps working throughout this cycle, but the impact on work, productivity and ability to lead will suffer the longer it takes to pass from one stage to the other.



*adapted from F. Hudson, 1995, life launch

Put Reactions into Perspective

When a manager and coach agree on the current positioning of the manager in the cycle, it helps both parties understand where the time, attention and energy of the manager is focused. The personality of the manager, where they are rated on the 360 (and why), and what goals are productive to work on—will all show considerable influence by the phase they are passing through, or find themselves stuck in. For example, someone receiving a lot of negative 360 feedback will be "crushed" if they are in the doldrums phase, they will be uncaring if they are cocooning, and will be curious and responsive if they are in the exploration phase. A coach can't be helpful if they have no way to position the phase that a person is in when they are trying to get them to achieve insights or behavior change.

Supportive: there will be a justifiable business role for coaching that is less behavior change oriented than supportive and less directly business objective oriented and more personal.

At present, the business community and the coaching community often respond with a shudder to the notion that an executive's personal issues appear on a coaching agenda. Comments are "isn't that the role of the Employee Assistance Program therapists or shouldn't they be seeing their own doctor and using their own health insurance for this?" In fact, especially at the high-pressure executive level and when executives are older, career and life issues are intricately intertwined. It will be increasingly difficult to separate life coaching and business coaching at the most senior levels of management.

Sports coaches routinely discuss issues with athlete's that are more about life than about skills in competition. Neither party mistakes these discussions for therapy, and everyone recognizes that personal motivation and commitment to a job arises from one's perspective on life—and not just from the inspirational words on the corporate mission statement. While the focus of the business coach is behavior change, it is important not to overlook the reality that the discussion will often slide into a discussion of personal issues. Just because a manager wants to talk so someone safe about his job insecurity and loss of energy as he gets older doesn't mean that he needs or wants therapy. However, just the opportunity for such a discussion in the course of coaching is often a relief that can help move his attention back to the task at hand.

Accountability: when quality assurance policies and practices are a central, integral and public part of a coaching service, coaches will be motivated to search for more effective ways to change behaviors.

Coaching has been a business in which confidentiality and self-management rule. Reports to the manager's firm—if required--tend to be thin, irregular and uninformative. The very issue of confidentiality provides an opportunity for the coach to be less than careful and complete when it comes to documenting progress and process notes.

While many firms ask clients to evaluate coaches, this is seldom done in the midst of a coaching program. It is usually done immediately afterwards, and the issue of coach/manager relationship is not addressed during the program unless there is a complaint or question from the manager. Also evaluations of the value of coaching are often done after the project ends, but seldom are they done 6 months after the project has ended.

As the numbers of coaches proliferate, it is ever more important to initiate a quality control process. Not all coaches will be equally effective in all settings. If you are a client, it seems reasonable that a coaching firm should be able to describe how they track this issue and how the data they collect impacts the way they select, assign and train coaches.

It is not until accountability is taken seriously, that coaches will more actively seek ongoing training and education courses, and support meaningful professional associations and professional standards.

Methods: coaches will be familiar with various techniques and principles of behavior change that can be used with different managers in different situations, and will know the limitations of their skills.

Some coaches see themselves as problem solvers, not as behavior change experts. They work with a manager to identify a solution, eliminate barriers, gain commitment to the action—and then step back. The point at which they step back is actually the part where the hard part of coaching begins. Every coach should know some basic approaches and issues around behavior change. It is, after all, the toughest part of the coach’s job, and the most telling when it comes to judging impact.

For most managers, coaching is a mystery. What is it that coaches actually do? The closest that most clients come to seeing what coaches “do” is a simplistic five-step coaching model.

1) Build a relationship of trust with the client
2) Assess and identify proposed changes
3) Identify the barriers to change
4) Develop an action plan that is acceptable and workable
5) Implement the plan, and persist when you backslide.

The unspoken assumption of this model is that if the manager is rational and ambitious, the desired change will occur during coaching. The manager only has to stay focused and motivated. This is the “they will change if they really want to” school of thought. It is not regarded as a change model by any other profession specializing in behavior change.

Coaches should acquire the skills and capacity to discuss and choose the specific techniques they use as a coach to change behaviors and facilitate insights. It is not that difficult. For example, action coaching is a very business oriented coaching process that uses clearly defined tools and steps to facilitate behavior change.[64] Even coaches who are more psychologically oriented can also be specific about what they do and how they do it.[65] However, most coaches rely primarily on a “black box” description of their services. They are likely to emphasize their capacity to be flexible and

[64] Dotlich, D. & Cairo, P. Action Coaching, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1999
[65] Hargrove, R., Masterful Coaching.Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1995

adaptive and creative when they are faced with resistance from a manager. The truth is that they are often just doing what comes naturally, and hoping that it works.

What do Professionals Do?

In contrast, descriptions of techniques are the hallmark and central preoccupation of other professionals who specialize in behavior change. This would include educators, therapists, advertisers, nutritionists and sport coaches. All these professions started at one time with casual methodologies that sounded like "I don't know what I do; I just listen and then say or do what comes naturally". Clients of these other types of coaches are not hesitant to ask how they work, who their methods work best with and what they do when their approach fails. Management coaches who do not come from any of the professions noted above typically have little to say about the techniques or models of behavior change that are most effective.

Every coach knows that a multi-rater surveys will clearly identify some managerial faults in most managers. This information may create a strong desire and commitment to change—but these feelings often dissipate quickly. Coaches are not paid to find solutions and get agreement—they are paid to get a change in behavior. All coaches should be behavior change experts. That is, they should be able to talk about techniques of behavior change and why the obvious solutions don't always work. It is not necessary to become a psychologist—there are plenty of change strategies that trainers, sports coaches or advertisers use.

Techniques of Behavior Change

Techniques of behavior change can be in the tool kit of any coach. A coach may want to discuss how and when they might use the techniques of assessment and feedback, observations/modeling, simulations, role playing, brainstorming, conferences, reframing/reconstructions, analyzing and setting boundaries, reading assignments, training courses, journaling, confronting, conflict management, observation/feedback, ladders of inference analysis, structure/process/control analyses, reflection and inquiry, and depreciating and devaluing maladaptive resistance, perspectives and values.

When clients indicate a particular problem with ineffective habitual/emotional responses, coaches may use the principles of cognitive-behavior modification.[66] This involves self-monitoring, imagery and goal-setting to restructure, augment or replace faulty thoughts (e.g., Joe and I will just never get along, I get irritated so easily by him) with more constructive thoughts. Some coaches won't feel comfortable venturing into techniques that are new to them, but there are always places to acquire

[66] McKay, M., Davis, M. & Fanning, P., Thoughts and feelings. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland,1997

the necessary skills and information. It is interesting to note that sports coaches[67], salespeople, and social workers are always seeking new behavior change techniques, but management coaches with business backgrounds can sometimes be too conservative and uncomfortable with the soft-side of development.[68]

There are always newer techniques and concepts emerging, and organizations should expect coaches to keep current with developments in their field. For example, the field of "appreciative inquiry" emerged in the mid 90's as an organization development tool. In 2001 it was already incorporated in U.S. Naval officer training.[69] At BP in the United Kingdom, it is being used internally to deliver 360 feedback in a manner that is positively motivating rather than problem focused.[70]

Teaching, Dissonance and Contemplation Models

Coaches can expect to have clients begin to ask them about how they believe behavior change occurs. In the coaching literature, the most common model presented is a teaching model. It is logical, easy to describe, familiar to everyone, and often ineffective when emotional barriers are present.

The teaching model is a good place for a coach to discuss their perceptions of how change happens. In the follow table, the central column lists assumptions that the coach makes about the manager. It is easy to see where the breakdowns may occur between perceptions or relations of coach and manager. The problems that commonly arise are that (1) the coach doesn't check the validity of his or her assumptions with the manager and (2) this is the only model that some coaches know. As Michele Bolton of The Executive Edge has noted, whether a manager really sticks with plan that seems utterly logical depends not so much on the reality of the need for change, but the extent to which the manager has "co-created" the plan and the goal.[71] Or, as John Epperheimer of the Workpath Group would say, it is the "level of enthusiasm" for the goal that determines if a manager sticks with a perfectly logical plan.[72] As we all know from our school years, both children and adults can be very skilled at going through the motions of this model (because they know what the teacher wants) without actually changing their behavior.

Teaching Model	***Assumptions***	***Problems***

[67] Williams, J.M., Applied Sport Psychology, Mayfield Publishing Company, London, 2001
[68] Personal communication, 2003, Joyce Shields, Vice President, Hay Group, notes that when managers see the gap between what they are and where they want to be, a coach can't help them achieve deep change without being willing, and skilled enough, to discuss motives and self-image.
[69] The Leadership Summit, US Navy report. http://www.cee.nps.navy.mil/NewSite/leadership_summit.htm
[70] Samuels, N.M., A Guide to Appreciative Upward/360 Feedback Conversations, BP, Jan. 10, 2002,published http://connection.cwru.edu/ai/uploads/a guide to appreciative upward
[71] Michele Bolton, personal communication (op.cit.)
[72] John Epperheimer, personal communication, (op.cit.)

Define the problem Assess skills Assess information Assess applications Define outcomes Define gap Create learning program Teach content Present problem Assess learning	I consider it a serious problem You can assess skills You can assess what I know We agree on applications We agree on outcomes The gap matters to me Its good enough as is I am listening & learning Is it still the same problem For now, it is working	If it is logical, and if I want to do it, I will. If I agree it is a problem, and if this is the way to fix it, then I might use what I have learned, unless it creates other problems. People often do not do what seems to be logical, and it doesn't bother them at all.

Because the teaching model doesn't always work, the coach has the choice continuing to work on achieving behavior change by trying another model, or reviewing where in the assumptions or implementation did the teaching model break down.

The dissonance model turns the teaching model on its head.[73] It might be called a "ready, fire, aim" approach, or "try it, you'll like it, trust me". The coach's task is to get the manager to act, then to seek tentative acceptance, and finally to motivate the manager to justify their action by creating a rationale. Salespersons know this approach well. First they sell you the car, and then you find yourself looking for justification and a solid rationale for why you bought it.

Dissonance Model	***Assumptions***	***Problems***
Awareness Urgency Decision Action, shock Reflection Action Interpretation Commitment	It's only a small issue Conditions require some action We agree on outcomes Did I do that? It wasn't like me! Decision has to appear logical Repetition, encouraged Maybe this is important after all A redefinition of beliefs	Maybe no "small steps" are possible "Not like me" behavior may lead to embarrassment and self-recrimination. Interpretation of an event may be different one than planned

The task of the coach is to get the action that is inconsistent with the manager's current beliefs. Many introverts get dragged to parties by a friend, and then are surprised that they enjoy themselves. One experience is seldom enough. The coach starts small, and then encourages repetition and

[73] O' Keefe, D. J., ''Cognitive Dissonance," in *Persuasion: Theory and Research*, Sage, Newbury Park, Calif., 1990, pp. 61–78.

reflection. In other words, "you didn't have to do what I suggested, but let's discuss what you actually thought about during and after the action." Repeating actions that conflict with beliefs, if done with the least possible amount of external pressure, often results in change as a means of justifying one's actions. The crucial balance for the coach is never to put so much pressure on the manager that he/she feels that they "had" to act just to keep the coach happy.

The contemplation model recognizes that some people have to "buy in" emotionally and not to the change—logic is not sufficient.[74] Repetition and exposure are important along with creative re-positioning. People can spend a lot of time in the pre-contemplation and contemplation state without appearing as if any movement is being made. However, if an issue is dropped at this stage, when the coach gives up, the internal analysis stops. Thus repetition, questions, information and persistence from different directions are all useful. Salespeople are familiar with customers who have all the necessary information they need, but they still won't buy the product. They seek out a kernel of discomfort or curiosity and gradually work with the customer to spin that into a decision making stimulus. It is worth noting, in contrast, that coaches may not exhibit the same strategic persistence in working with resistant managers.

Contemplation Model	***Assumptions***	***Problems***
Complacency	I never considered changing	Urgency comes and goes
Pre-contemplation	What would it imply	
Confidence	I can do it, I have skills	Commitment may changes
Intriguing idea	The outcomes seem OK	if actions lead to
Contemplation	Decision has to be logical	unexpected results
Preparation	Commitment won't change	
Inciting behavior	Action is competent	You don't know all the
Reflection	Rewards will motivate me	rewards in the situation
Maintenance	Reward or habit, which one?	

Methods as Evaluation Criteria

Coaches will be questioned more closely in the future about their skill and competence. A prospective salesperson is typically asked to recount the strategies they have used to gain entry to and sell a resistant client. Similarly, a coach should have a repertoire of methods that they can articulate if asked, and apply as needed. In the future, coaches will not survive the analyses of human

[74] Prochaska JO, DiClemente CC. *The Transtheoretical Approach: Crossing Traditional Boundaries of Therapy*. Homewood, Illinois: Dow-Jones/Irwin, 1984

resources experts if they describe the simple black box coaching model, or imply that managers are at fault if they fail to follow through on action plans or on the coach's good advice.

Discontinuous development: coaches will discard the inaccurate linear model of leadership development in favor of a cyclical model that reflects the chaotic and discontinuous development process of leadership.

The perspectives of a leader can often lead to derailment, and one task of the coach is to help guide the manager's assumptions about the path of development. This is because certain aspects of a leader's character and skills will be tested in many different ways through various job transfers and promotions. The manager who is excellent at establishing a strategic direction and vision at the functional level can utterly fail this test at the CEO level. This notion of a building block development plan helps accounts for the fact that the chances of hiring an executive today who will later be considered a failure are about 50%.[75]

Development is Opportunistic not Systematic

Leaders and coaches often view development as a linear process. Simple forward movement--from character through competence to insight and finally to integration--looks very much like school. The leader, like a child with potential and drive, succeeds through tougher and tougher grades. The most competent and motivated students should make it further through the educational system. The same progress is expected of managers—but it doesn't always work this way.

[75] Hogan, R., Curphy, G. & Hogan, J., What we know about leadership: Effectiveness and personality. *American Psychologist*, 1994, *49*, 493-504.

Character:	Competence:	Insight:	Integration:
Selected first for character, drive and evidence of natural leadership ability.	training and mentoring to build basic management skills such as structuring, controlling, planning and rewarding	seeks clarity and perspective, by being open to other thinkers, concepts and leaders. An agile learner who practices self-reflection and encourages and uses feedback from others to strengthen leadership values and direction.	uses special assignments to consolidate and test concepts and people; communicates an inspiring vision. Creatively leverages assets and opportunities to leave a legacy in the company and community

The business world is like an educational system without grades or prerequisites. It is as if a bright child who is interested and talented in mathematics could wander directly into a college course and skip all the other boring work. In business, people generally choose to move ahead as far and fast as they can. The result is that regardless of the individual's current position in the management hierarchy, they could be at any developmental level.

Managers often move into senior positions without developing many of the basic management skills. They often fail because they don't understand, or give credit for, efforts to put the basic management systems and practices in place that they have never learned. Since leaders often leap past some of the basic managerial grooming and skill building stages, they often believe that they have "made it" and can look forward only to the strategy and visioning world of the executive suite. Alternatively, the plodding and gradually promoted manager who has seemingly learned every aspect of the management role can easily fail because of a lack of flexibility and innovation.

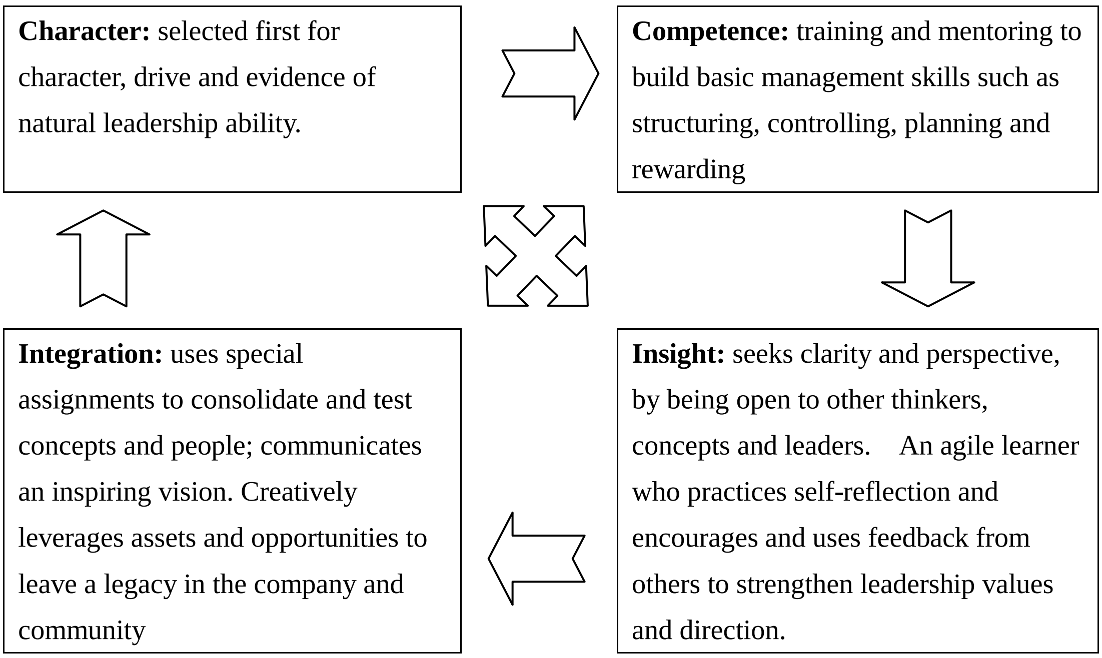
Unconscious Incompetence is Common

In the dot.com era, it was not unusual for a brilliant engineer with a great idea to start a company. Within a year or two they would sometimes come to imagine that they are a brilliant visionary. They believed that they had a deep understanding of the market, the world and the appropriate composition and functioning of a senior level team and a board of directors. From a state of still underdeveloped competence as a manager, they would leap straight into the role of a strategic integrator. When problems erupted and the new company began imploding, the leader would be drawn quickly back into the fundamental questions of character (do I really have what it takes to lead people?) and competence (why don't people just do what I tell them?). The cycling through the stages happens quickly in some industries.

Even in a stable industry, this not linear development process is common. For example, honesty is a character trait important in leaders. An entry level manager might be scrupulously honest with expense account claims. Yet, this aspect of character is tested at a different level over time. Twenty years later, as a senior vice president, will the same manager resist the opportunity to accept a six million dollar bribe to bump up a bid in order let a competitor win a lucrative government contract?

For coaching purposes, it helps managers to discuss development in terms of this multidirectional development model. Managers pass through the four phases of development, and then return to earlier phases again and again. The joke about a very tough job, a difficult boss or a critical board member as being "character building" is a realistic statement on the development process.

As managers gain deeper insights and more accurate self-judgment, they often consciously return to a focus on polishing or developing their most basic skills such as listening to subordinates, or communicating goals with clarity, or practicing empowerment. In fact, there is reason to think that managers stop developing when they stop recycling through these development phases.



A belief in a linear model of development has led many coaching clients to be inattentive to warning signals and even to coaching. Managers who are promoted, soon hear less and less specific criticism about their skills. If they do receive negative feedback on a 360 survey of management skills, they sometimes decide that the skill in question isn't important for their job level anyway; or, people doing the rating don't really understand the role of senior executives. The result is that when executives with this belief system try to improve their core skills, they lack the discipline to stick with an action plan. The role of the coach is expected to be more that that of just a behavior change expert, but also an expert in leadership development and life/career phases.

8. CONCLUSION

In the course of this writing project, we found many people who saw coaching as just another service business. They predicted that coaching was a bit of a fad, and that it would soon be shaped and beaten by the purchasing managers into a cheap and ultimately ineffective commodity service for supervisors and mid-managers.

We also talked with plenty of coaches and clients who sparkled with ideas and enthusiasm about the future of coaching. They believe that the trends are positive, that professionalism is growing, and that successful coaches find their jobs to be uniquely satisfying.

Who is right? It might depend on whether or not the people who love coaching really commit themselves to developing it as a profession. If they just spend their time selling and delivering their service, without writing, researching and developing their professional networks and upholding standards, then the pessimists may win.

Our thanks to the many participants who enthusiastically participated in our interviews and then help to qualify and shape the valuable ideas and concepts that appear in this paper. All these individuals are acknowledged in the footnotes of this paper as "personal communication" sources.