

Executive and Professional Coaching Provided by Internal Coaches: Analysis of Strengths and Impact on Clients

A dissertation submitted

by

Dawn M. Newman

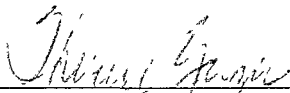
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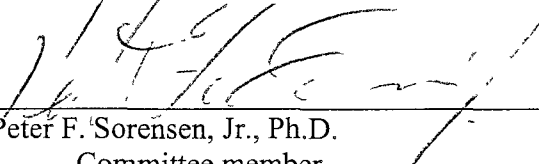
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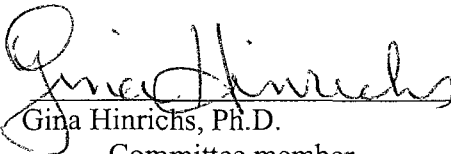
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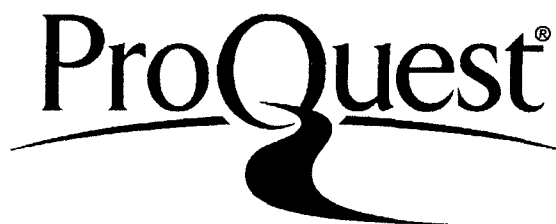
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Abstract

Research on the impact of executive coaching has emerged in the past decade, yet formal studies of internal coaching practices are few, with little attention given to coaching provided for nonexecutive clients. This case study explored the impact of executive and professional coaching as an organization development (OD) intervention provided by coaches inside a large global organization. The research targeted a nonexecutive audience of managers and nonmanagers seeking development. The researcher served as coach and participant-observer and used a mixed-methods approach that included client and coach interviews, surveys, and a quasi-experimental design. This study compared the general self-efficacy of coached and not-coached participants and captured what worked in the internal coaching process. General self-efficacy (GSE) scores were higher in the coached group, and yet the difference was not statistically significant. Study results characterized internal coaching as a value-added service that led to tangible and intangible outcomes for the individual and business. The return on investment (ROI) of coaching showed positive results and validated the business impact of coaching provided by credentialed internal executive coaches. Implications for internal coaching practices are shared, and future areas of research are identified.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Focus of the Research

Executive and professional coaching has shown continued growth in the past two decades (Berglas, 2002; Bono, Purvanova, Towler, & Peterson, 2009; Grant, 2010; Joo, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 1996; Stern, 2004).

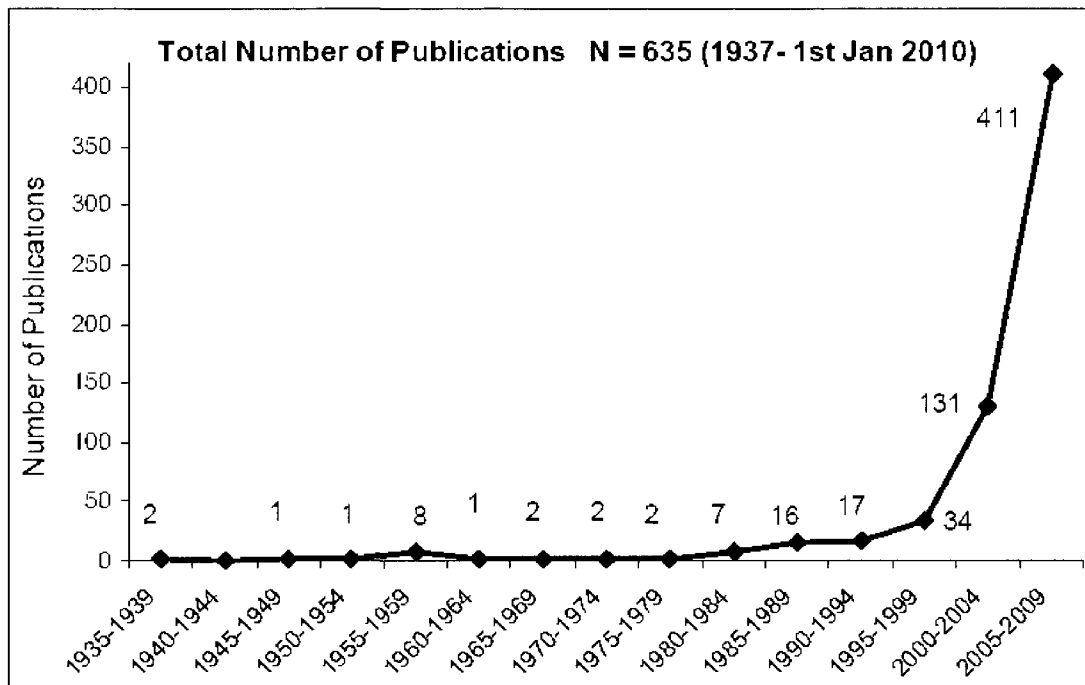
Historically, companies have enlisted external coaching professionals to provide coaching services to executive-level employees (Judge & Cowell, 1997). In highly technical organizations, global competition and the accelerated pace of change demand a sophisticated set of leadership and technical skills in employees at all levels. Although it may not be economically feasible to employ external coaches to support nonexecutives, companies may choose to build coaching expertise internally to support a broader set of employees (Frisch, 2001) and to “spread benefits of coaching more widely” (Frisch, 2005, p. 23).

Some large organizations provide coaching services through internal coaches. Examples include Pfizer, American Express, JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Honeywell, Wachovia, IBM, Whirlpool, GE Capital, and NASA (Goldsmith, 2004; Hunt & Weintraub, 2007; Yedreshteyn, 2008). Although coaching is part of these organizations and has been in some cases for decades, published research on effectiveness of coaching from an internal coaching perspective is rare (Frisch, 2005; Yedreshteyn, 2008). This study explores internal coaching as an

organization development (OD) intervention resulting in positive outcomes for the individual and for the overall business.

Relevance for Theory, Research, and Practice

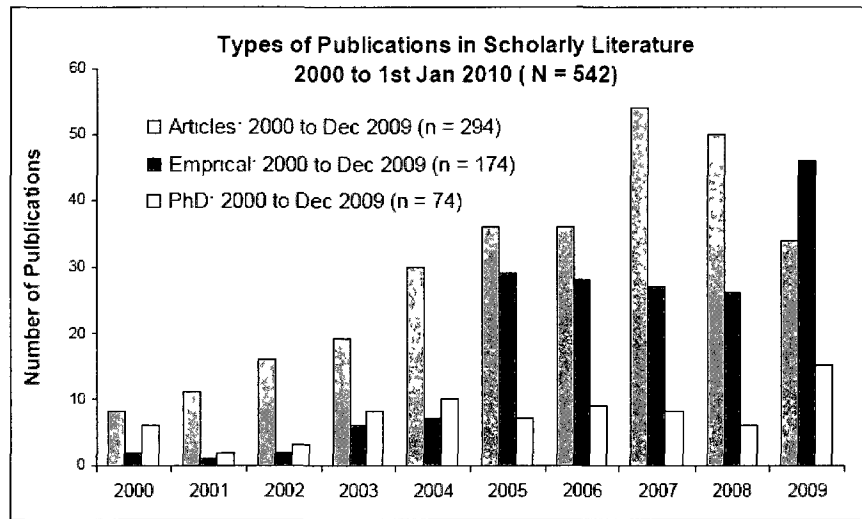
As shown in Figure 1, the number of research studies on executive coaching increased dramatically from 1999 to 2010 (Grant, 2010, p. 2).



Source: Grant, (2010), p. 2.

Figure 1. Number of Research Studies by Date Range

Furthermore, Figure 2 emphasizes the trend in increased numbers of empirical, outcome-based studies in the past decade (Grant, 2010, p. 3). This research focuses on coaching provided by external coaches. Little is documented about the design, implementation, or evaluation of internal coaching processes in organizations (Frisch, 2005; Yedreshteyn, 2008).



Citations are categorised as follows:	
A	= Primarily a discussion article
E	= Primarily an empirical study
PhD	= PhD

Source: Grant, (2010), p. 3.

Figure 2. Trends in Types of Empirical, Outcome-based Studies

The field of coaching, as well as the field of organization development, has few barriers to entry because formal education or accreditation is not required (Cohen, 2011; Laff, 2007); consequently, it may be described as “underbounded” (Alderfer, 1980). OD professionals and professional coaches describe themselves as thought partners, sounding boards, and agents of intentional change, yet often the evidence of the impact of their change efforts is not readily shown.

This research attempts to add to the body of organization development knowledge what works in the internal executive coaching process and what outcomes lead to leadership development and business improvement from the perspectives of both

clients—also known as “coachees”—and coaches. The questions addressed in this study gain insight about what makes a difference in internal coaching experiences with an emphasis on value-added outcomes.

Outcomes Targeted

An outcome of interest in change management and coaching is self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Self-efficacy in this context is described as the general or specific belief in one’s capacity to succeed at tasks (Bandura, 1997). This belief or perception plays a key role in whether or not the individual takes action. Studies show the relationship between self-efficacy and positive change (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Wood & Bandura, 1989) and that as individuals move through change, self-efficacy increases (Marcus, Eaton, Rossi, & Harlow, 1994).

Theory and research support the idea that coaching can strengthen self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2010; Leonard-Cross, 2010; Malone, 2001; Moen & Allgood, 2009; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Given the relationship between coaching and self-efficacy, this study seeks to compare self-efficacy in a coached and a not coached group of clients using a quasi-experimental design.

Additionally, the research seeks to discover the following:

1. What works in the coaching process?
2. What would enhance the coaching experience?
3. What is different compared to before coaching?
4. What is the value attributed to coaching outcomes?

The answers to these questions may provide a better view of what adds value to the individual and to the business in internal coaching relationships.

Researcher's Role as Participant-Observer

Serving as coach and participant-observer inside the organization's systems had several benefits: detailed knowledge of the strategy, structures, environment, business context, and relationships in place. Schwandt (2007) found that immersion in the setting, as a participant-observer, "is the best way to develop knowledge of others' ways of thinking and acting" (p. 219). As an employee of the organization, the researcher had access to proprietary information, company processes and procedures, people in the system, and the culture in place. Relationships built in multiple departments over the years could be leveraged to include several disciplines in the research. The detailed knowledge of the organization provided exposure to the levels of culture within the organization at and beneath the surface, including underlying assumptions (Schein, 2004, p. 26). As a fellow employee, the internal researcher needed less time to gain a systemic view of the coaching client's world and to help the client take a big-picture view of situations.

The role of participant-observer also had disadvantages, such as personal bias, myopic internal viewpoints, and over immersion in the group under study. To mitigate these risks, the researcher incorporated a mixed-methods research design and built in safeguards to accurately capture observations. Details of the precautions and research design are included in subsequent chapters.

Business Context

The research took place in a United States location of a Fortune 500, global corporation referred to as “F-500” to maintain its anonymity. The organization had been experiencing a high degree of change due to global competition, strategic shifts, and dramatic changes to the business. As a result of an environmental needs assessment, an internal coaching group initiated executive and professional coaching services as an individual and organization development process supporting a broad base of employees.

Summary

This chapter introduced the dissertation topic and provided a brief background depicting the need for internal executive coaching research. It gave a brief description of executive coaching research trends and stated the need for more research on internal coaching practices and outcomes. The contribution of this research to the field, an overview of the business context for the study, and the role of researcher within that system were explained. The next chapter provides a review of executive coaching literature and details the research framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review—Executive Coaching

Introduction

The field of coaching is “young and evolving” (Lyons, 2000, p. 18) and continues to grow and develop (Berglas, 2002; Bono et al., 2009; Dugan & Fredell, 2000). This chapter discovers key points of existing research and identifies areas in need of further exploration about using executive and professional coaching to develop individuals and organizations. It introduces the concept of self-efficacy and ties it to coaching and organization development literature. Use of self is identified as a critical element of the coaching process. Several models of coaching are highlighted, with special emphasis given to appreciative, solution-focused, and cognitive behavioral coaching theories and practices applied with intent to enhance the business performance of individuals and organizations. Research exploring how coaching impacts the bottom line in organizations is summarized.

Two hypotheses guided the research process:

- H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.
- H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

History and Evolution of Coaching

The concept of coaching has evolved over the centuries. Linkages to ancient Greece and ties to Socratic dialogue are referenced within coaching literature (Garvey, Stokes, & Megginson, 2009, p. 17; Neenan, 2009). Others conclude the word *coach* comes from a region in Hungary, Kocs, where horse-drawn carriages were made (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2010). The carriage symbolizes that a coach may be described as someone who helps take a person from where they are to where they would like to be (Underhill, McAnally, & Koriath, 2007).

Although the true starting point for coaching is not distinct, early accounts indicate that the recognized professional coaching process started in the 1940s under the title of “developmental counseling” (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Joo cites Tobias’ 1996 article attributing the late 1980s with the first mainstream use of the term *executive coaching* (Joo, 2005). For all practical purposes, coaching professionals agree that coaching developed from a combination of disciplines such as counseling, psychology, communication, business, and education. The term *executive* was added before coach to identify the clients involved and their level in the organization; however, the term executive coaching is also used more generically to describe the coaching process regardless of position. An extensive review of coaching can be found in Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) and Joo (2005).

Coaching has been estimated to be a billion dollar industry that continues to grow (Bono et al., 2009). A dramatic expansion of executive and professional coaching services occurred in the last two decades, with professional organizations emerging to support the growth. The International Coach Federation (ICF), founded in 1995, “is the leading global organization, with over 19,000 members, dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high professional standards, providing independent certification, and building a network of credentialed coaches” (ICF, 2011). Although the growth of coaching is not fully understood, some attribute it to a “desire for self-construction” (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy, 2007, p. 11).

Coaching is defined by some as a profession and by others as an industry.

Witherspoon and White (1996) identify four areas of coaching: learning, development, performance, and leadership agenda. Specialty areas of coaching also include life, nutrition, fitness, financial, cross-cultural, and spiritual coaching.

Coaching does not currently require educational or professional qualifications; however, certification may become more important in the future (Laff, 2007). A variety of organizations offer coaching certifications, some at the university level.

The rapid and continued growth of executive coaching, inconsistency in coaching programs and certifications, and varying levels of coach qualifications combined with a scarcity of validated measures of effectiveness continue to present challenges to the reputation of coaching.

Grant compiled all published scholarly papers on business coaching from 1937–2010 and noted that of the 393 papers, 318 were published after 1996. Further, 67 of the 78 empirical studies were published after 2001 (Grant, 2010). These statistics show a rise in business coaching research interest and movement toward evidence-based approaches. Even so, researchers commented that “rigorous empirical investigations of the outcomes...of executive coaching are far outnumbered by practitioner articles” (Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 834).

Defining and Describing Coaching

Existing coaching literature contains different ways to describe coaching in business context. A sampling of descriptions over the years illustrates the variation in terminology. Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck (2010) describe coaching as “a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders” (p. 1). The International Coach Federation described it as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (ICF, 2010). Earlier literature emphasized the results of the close coaching relationship in the “one-to-one development of an organizational leader” (Underhill et al., 2007, p. 8) and the “collaborative alliance focusing on change and transformation” (Natale & Diamante, 2005, p. 372). Downey (1999) called coaching “the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another” (p. 15).

Although no standard definition of coaching exists, the descriptions share common elements characterizing coaching as a process involving a relationship between coach and client that yields results or transformation. Argyris and Schon (1974) identified three core variables aligned with this type of coaching: “valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment to decisions made” (p. 87). The term “developmental coaching” is used to describe voluntary, participative engagement focused on goal achievement and learning (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007, p. 38). For consistency, the ICF definition describes the developmental type of coaching in this dissertation. The researcher may also synonymously use the terminology executive and professional coaching.

Coaching and Organization Development

Coaching is a highly personal organization development intervention (Cummings & Worley, 2005) that can also be thought of as a motivational strategy (Cassidy & Medsker, 2009), a leadership development strategy, and a way to provide on-the-job learning (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007). In a 2004 survey of *Trends in Executive Development*, executive coaching ranked fifth as a top learning method (Underhill et al., 2007). Coaching emphasizes “deep renewal and ongoing learning” (Dugan & Fredell, 2000, p. 288) that can be both a development process and a strategic initiative (Anderson & Anderson, 2005).

Coaching may be considered a subset of consultation that involves establishing a helping relationship with clients (Schein, 2000). Schein goes on to explain the

multiple roles a coach may have as “process consultant, content expert, and diagnostician/prescriber. The ultimate skill of the coach, then is to assess the moment-to-moment reality that will enable him or her to be in the appropriate role” (Schein, 2000, p. 72).

Organization development may be defined as “a process of planned interventions using behavioral science principles to change a system and improve its effectiveness, conducted in accordance with values of choice, participation, human dignity, and learning so that the organization and its members develop” (Jamieson & Worley, 2008, p. 104). Organization development has also been described as a mindset, a way of being, a philosophy, and a multidisciplinary field that integrates theories, concepts, and methods for understanding and changing human systems (Jamieson, 2010).

OD and coaching share common values and common desired outcomes. Both disciplines use client-consultant relationships to build future capacity and to incorporate positive change at the individual, group, and organization level. Both approaches are customized based on client needs and focus areas. Finally, both OD and coaching struggle to build a distinct identity as a discipline, field, or profession and may be called fields of practice and communities of practice. (Jamieson, 2010; Jamieson & Worley, 2008).

For the purposes of this research, executive and professional coaching is considered a subset of OD, will incorporate OD values and principles, and will focus on individual coaching as a process leading to positive change, including results at individual, group, and organization levels.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a construct identified as important in coaching and human change.

Bandura (1997) offers the following definition: “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). The belief can then lead to taking the actions necessary for accomplishing the relevant tasks. If people believe that they can do something, there is a higher likelihood they will do it. Conversely, thoughts of failure can undermine performance. According to Bandura (1992), self-efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection (p. 10). Self-efficacy is tied to a variety of topics including health (Bandura, 1997; Schwarzer, 1992), improved performance (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), and career decision-making, and career development (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987) and coaching (Moen & Allgood, 2009). Published studies on self-efficacy are relatively few in business research (Leonard-Cross, 2010; Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

Because self-efficacy can be built through persistence, focus, and hard work, it is a logical coaching outcome. Completing mastery exercises, successfully managing

stress, having role models, and having someone who believes in you are four specific ways to build self-efficacy (Miller & Frisch, 2009).

Use of Self

Numerous studies have identified the use of self as a critical ingredient in a variety of interventions used in coaching, consulting, and organization development work (Block, 2000; Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010; Orenstein, 2007). Use of self may be described as “the conscious use of one’s whole being in the intentional execution of one’s role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is presenting” (Jamieson et al., 2010, p. 5). Jamieson and Worley (2008) saw the client-consultant relationship as a tool of change and learning. Block (2000) described being authentic as “the most powerful thing you can do to have the leverage you are looking for and to build client commitment” (p. 37). Being authentic and building trust are essential elements of the executive coaching process.

Use of self is a critical element in the multidimensional world of executive coaching, requiring “the consultant to be both involved enough in the dynamics so as to experience their impact and detached enough so as to analyze what is transpiring” (Orenstein, 2007, p. 31). Patwell and Seashore (2006) identified six concepts related to use of self in coaching: choices, reframing, power, feedback, supports, and connections. Coaches must be aware of their own choices, reactions, and dynamics, as well as those of clients.

To serve effectively in service of human beings, coaches must know who they are and how they interact with others. Use of self also implies awareness of strengths and values as unique individuals. Additionally, going beneath the surface to bring unconscious thoughts and actions to consciousness encourages new behavior and growth. Self-efficacy as a coach or client can provide a source of strength for positive momentum in a coaching relationship and can encourage belief and confidence to act.

“Self” may be explained as a “collective portfolio of who we are, what we know, and what we can do as developed over a lifetime in both known and unknown realms” (Jamieson et al., 2010, p. 6). The “use” entails three core competencies—seeing, knowing, and doing—as well as three levels of development called functionality, efficacy, and mastery (Jamieson et al., 2010).

Three Core Competencies

Seeing entails taking in data from our surroundings and understanding the system as a whole. *Knowing* involves making sense of multiple data sources through learned theories and internal mental models (Senge, 1990). *Doing* is the act of exercising the skills of seeing and knowing to help the client. The competencies are a “dynamic representation of a practitioner’s capacity to help” (Jamieson et al., 2010, p. 7).

Three Levels of Development

The levels of effectiveness start with functionality, knowing how to do something. The middle stage, called efficacy, is characterized by higher levels of confidence and trusting of self to take action. Mastery is at the highest level of development. At the

mastery level, an integration of professional skills, competencies, knowledge, and insight produces a state known as “flow” or complete immersion in the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Jamieson et al. (2010) use a musical metaphor: “Like any instrument we need development, calibration, tuning, and maintenance” (p. 10). Developing self is a lifelong journey of continual improvement.

Use of Self in Coaching

Executive coaching has the twofold purpose of developing the executive as a leader and helping the leader achieve business results (Stern, 2004). In addition, Shechtman (2009) emphasized leveraging personal and professional skills that are automatic and intuitive and identifying blockers that get in the way of maximizing success at the personal or business level. Through use of self, coaches can model self-awareness and mastery and inspire clients to reflect, learn, grow, and ultimately reach full potential.

Coaching is not a sideline sport and requires being present “in the moment” (Anderson & Anderson, 2005) and being fully engaged with the client. Coaches must guide and support each client’s discovery, learning, development, and growth throughout the coaching agreement. Development can require helping people see beyond the conscious into their unconscious models of the world to understand self-imposed barriers to success. How coaches help clients accomplish the purpose can take many forms. Techniques such as appreciative coaching, solution-focused coaching, and cognitive behavioral coaching can help clients go beyond their conscious actions to examine what drives behavior.

In their role, coaches need to stand apart from the issue and help the person being coached to see different perspectives (Hicks & McCracken, 2009, 2010a). Perhaps this is why coaches enter the profession, as internal or external coaches, from many backgrounds and areas of expertise. Bono et al. (2009) found that psychologists and other professionals addressed common areas of coaching, including leadership, interpersonal skills, communication, and management style (Bono et al., 2009).

Coaching Competencies

A question that shows up on a recurring basis is, What do coaches need to know? Scholars and practitioners debate the importance of educational background, competencies, and professional credentials for internal and external coaches. A wide variety of coaching specialties exist with no universal set of knowledge, skills, and abilities designated.

The International Coach Federation (ICF) is well-recognized in the coaching community of practice. ICF core competencies include setting the foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, and facilitating learning and results. Subelements of the competencies stress the importance of establishing trust and intimacy with the client, active listening, powerful questioning, planning, and goal setting (ICF, 1999).

Other knowledge, skills, and abilities go beyond the coaching competencies and point out both business and coaching process know-how. Coaches need to know about

organizations, management, leadership, and economics (Diedrich & Kilburg, 2001).

Because of the broad range of executive focus areas, the coach needs to have knowledge to understand organizational systems, the individual client, and the behavioral factors that mediate the interactions between the two (Kilburg, 1996).

Specific areas of technical competence for coaches include individual and group dynamics, organization development, leadership and team assessment, certification to administer appropriate psychometric instruments, and promotion of adult learning (Berglas, 2002; Peltier, 2001). It is important for the coach not only to have knowledge in multiple areas but also to be able to make appropriate interventions at the appropriate time to guide the client. For this reason, coaches have to not only integrate multiple theories, processes, and tools but also be willing to adapt to accommodate client needs (Lyons, 2000).

A comprehensive model of expert coach competencies, including areas of knowledge, skills, and attributes (Ennis, Goodman, Hodgetts, Hunt, Mansfield, Otto, & Stern, 2007), incorporates organization development skill areas, methodologies, and attributes. Table 1 provides an overview of the categories.

Table 1. Coaching Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes

Knowledge	Skills	Attributes
Psychological knowledge	Building & maintaining coaching relationships	Mature self-confidence
Business acumen	Contracting	Positive energy
Organizational behavior & development knowledge	Assessment	Assertiveness
Knowledge of coaching theory	Development planning	Interpersonal sensitivity
	Facilitating development & change	Openness & flexibility
	Ending formal coaching & transitioning to long-term development	Demonstrating a goal orientation
		Partnering & influence
		Continuous learning & development
		Integrity

Source Ennis, S , Goodman, R , Hodgetts, W , Hunt, J , Mansfield, R , Otto, J , & Stern L , (2007) Appendix A The competencies of the expert executive coach In J M Hunt & J R Weintraub, *The coaching organization A strategy for developing leaders* (pp 223–231) Thousand Oaks, CA SAGE Publications, Inc

Coach Credentials

Studies have identified a variety of credentials for executive coaches Wasylyshyn (2003) listed graduate training in psychology, business experience, established reputation as a coach, listening skills, and professionalism Diedrich and Kilburg (2001) emphasized knowledge of organizations, management, leadership, and economics According to Baron and Morin (2009), coaches should have relational skills (empathy, respect, trust, presence, availability), communication skills (questioning, reformulating, reinforcing, confronting), and the ability to facilitate learning and results For Underhill et al. (2007), objectivity, confidentiality,

intelligence, and insightfulness were essential qualities. In addition, coaches should give direct and honest feedback, use assessments properly, and hold appropriate certifications (Underhill et al., 2007).

Educational programs such as the University of Texas at Dallas offer an Executive and Professional Coaching Master Certificate aligned with the ICF core competencies (<http://som.utdallas.edu/executiveEducation/programs/executive-and-professional-coaching-certificate/graduate-certificate/index.html/>). Certificate recipients complete over a year of formal coursework, participate in practice coaching sessions, take written and oral exams, and receive formal recommendations from a mentor master certified coach.

Schools and consulting groups offering certification promote the importance of formal coaching certification. In practice, those selecting coaches may trust a proven track record rather than other coaching credentials. Credentials may differ in importance for internal and external coaches (Bono et al., 2009).

Coaching Mindset and Models

The executive coaching process is a journey of client self-discovery involving reflection on personal values and beliefs and determining future actions. A coach's mindset includes realizing it is not the coach's role to diagnose and solve client problems (Hicks & McCracken, 2009). Coaches should, however, support and guide clients through the discovery process, challenging them to think and act in strengths-

focused ways that promote leadership, growth, and goal accomplishment (Hicks & McCracken, 2010b). Positive coach-client relationships are critical to success.

Key elements of the relationship between coach and client include trust, connection, collaboration, and mutual commitment to the process (Baron & Morin, 2009; Ting & Hart, 2004). These elements are also found in the ICF Professional Coaching Core Competencies under four broad categories: setting the foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, and facilitating learning and results (ICF, 1999).

Because coaching approaches are customized to fit client and organization scenarios, a wide range of coaching techniques, models, and frameworks exist within coaching literature. Dingman (2004) provides examples (p. 21). An extensive listing identifies 13 theoretical traditions of coaching and 11 genres and contexts of coaching (Cox et al., 2010, p. 10, Table 0.2). Common threads in the models include initial contracting to define the coaching relationship, some form of baseline measure or assessment, comparison of current state, and desired future state to develop relevant goals, action planning and experimentation to achieve results, and reflection to celebrate success and evaluate future areas of focus.

Table 2 highlights a selection of coaching approaches and demonstrate that coaching processes may be adapted to fit individual and business situations.

General Coaching Model (Liljenstand & Nebeker, 2008)	VISTA Model (Walsylyshyn, Gronsky & Haas, 2006)	Phases of Coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005)	Five Stages of Executive Coaching (Natale & Diamante, 2005)	Behavioral Coaching Process (Goldsmith, 2000)	Appreciative Coaching (Orem, Binkert & Clancy, 2007)	Solution-focused Coaching (Hicks & McCracken, 2010a)	Cognitive Behavioral Executive Coaching Process (Good, Yeganeh & Yeganeh, 2010)
1. Setting foundation (context, contracting, alliance)	1. Data gathering 2. Feedback 3. Coaching 4. Follow up	1. Data gathering 2. Feedback 3. Periodic coaching sessions 4. Evaluation & assessing impact	1. The Alliance Check 2. The Credibility Assessment 3. The Likeability Link 4. Dialogue & Skill Acquisition 5. Cue-Based Action Plans	1. Identify desired attributes 2. Determine who can provide feedback-stakeholder 3. Collect feedback 4. Analyze results 5. Develop action plan 6. Manager responds to stakeholder 7. Develop ongoing follow-up 8. Review results & start again	1. Discovery - history, strengths, successes 2. Dream - possibility thinking, future vision 3. Design - identify & plan actions to achieve dream 4. Destiny – implement actions, reflect, celebrate, reassess	1. Formulate Goals & Outcomes 2. Build on strengths & capabilities to reach goal 3. Identify & commit to taking small steps to reach goal	1. Orienting and Vision 2. Current Thoughts & Behaviors 3. Vision Oriented Thoughts & Behaviors 4. Experiment 5. Transition

Table 2. Sample of Coaching Models

Sample of Coaching Models

Based on a study of coaches, clients, and practices, Liljenstrand and Nebeker constructed a general model consisting of five stages, including foundation, assessment, engagement, implementation, and evaluation steps (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008). The VISTA model consists of four steps focused on developing emotional competence (Wasylyshyn, Gronsky, & Haas, 2006). Feldman and Lankau identified phases of coaching and identified what coaches and clients do in partnership during the phases (2005). The five-step model (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008) and two four-step models (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Wasylyshyn, Gronsky & Haas, 2006) use a framework aligned with Shewhart's Plan-Do-Check-Act model (1939) to essentially gather data, assess and provide feedback, coach, and evaluate. A five-stage model of executive coaching, outlined by Natale and Diamante, starts with an alliance check that often resurfaces throughout the coaching engagement and progresses to a final stage of action planning (Natale & Diamante, 2005). The model incorporates checkpoints to assure commitment and coach-coachee match (2005). Marshall Goldsmith, a world-renowned executive coach and author, advocates an eight-step behavioral coaching process with high client engagement, stakeholder feedback, and on-going follow up (Goldsmith, 2000).

Although no single best model exists, each model described above encompasses relationship-building aspects, assessments, feedback, goals, actions, and communication. The coaching approaches most relevant for this proposed research

study are appreciative, solution-focused, and cognitive behavioral coaching, which are described in more detail.

Appreciative Coaching

Because each coaching agreement is unique, numerous coaching processes can be found in academic and practitioner articles. Some coaching processes advocate a strengths-based approach and solution focus. Appreciative coaching (AC) follows philosophies of appreciative inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, 1986; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Both AC and AI share the same five principles: constructionist, positive, simultaneity, poetic, and anticipatory (Orem et al., 2007). Through an appreciative coaching process, the coach guides the client through the discovery, dream, design, and destiny phases. During the discovery phase, rapport between coaches and clients is built. The clients reflect on and celebrate past success. During the dream phase, the clients share wishes for the future that form pictures of what they would like to achieve. In the design stage, the clients determine what to focus on and which actions to take to realize the dream. The destiny stage entails the clients' living the dream and remaining committed to it even in tough times. During the destiny phase, the coaches also prepare the clients to self-coach to sustain the new direction on their own, after the existing coaching agreements are over (Orem et al., 2007). The appreciative coaching process is a high-engagement process to build on what is working and to incorporate stretch goals to help the clients expand capabilities and grow.

SOAR Framework Used for Coaching

Building on appreciative coaching, the SOAR framework (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009) can be used in coaching to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results of individuals and teams. In individual coaching, SOAR can help clients build on what is working and focus coaching goals to achieve identified results leading to aspirations. Additionally, the SOAR framework can be used in team and organization coaching to create a path forward using a high-engagement, team-focused approach that is aligned with higher-level strategies.

Positive Psychology Approach

“Positive psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive” (University of Pennsylvania, 2007). The positive psychology approach to coaching is built on humanistic values and aligns with appreciative coaching. The approach is appreciative by building on strengths, developing talents, increasing self-efficacy, and moving clients toward accomplishing goals (Kauffman, Boniwell, & Silberman, 2010). A variety of assessments, models, and interventions can be used to support client-positive change. A data-oriented approach is used to create a sound body of evidence. The positive psychology approach “combines the very essence of coaching with a robust theoretical and empirical base” (Kauffman et al., 2010, p. 169).

Solution-Focused Coaching

Solution-focused coaching was first used in therapy and developed as a brief intervention. Like appreciative coaching, it is based on constructionist epistemology

and uses dialogue between client and coach to build a desired future state (Cavanagh & Grant, 2010). Solution-focused coaching assumes that the client has the necessary resources to achieve the goal and helps the client do more of what is working. The coach can help the client uncover resources, develop actions, experiment, and achieve goals.

The focus is on “solution talk” and the future rather than on “problem talk” and the past. Taking small, immediate steps to move forward is emphasized (Hicks & McCracken, 2010a, b). Solution-focused coaching helps the client to view problems differently and to develop behaviors to reach the solution. Positive, goal-focused language is essential. Coaches ask questions and employ techniques, such as reframing and visualization of success, to help clients reflect, think differently, and move forward (Grant, 2006). In solution-focused coaching, coaches challenge their clients to think and act differently and support the clients as they make positive changes. Table 3 summarizes nine key tenets of solution-focused approaches identified by O’Connell (1998) and reiterated by Cavanagh and Grant (2010).

Table 3. Key Tenets of Solution-focused Approaches

Key Tenets
Use of a non-pathological interpretive framework
Client-based expertise
Coaching is about facilitating solution construction
Focus on client resources
Clear, specific, and personal goal setting
Action-orientation
Do what works, stop doing what does not work
Change can happen in a short period of time
Enchantment

Source: O'Connell, (1998); Cavanagh & Grant, (2010).

Cognitive Behavioral Coaching

Cognitive behavioral coaching (CBC) combines cognitive therapy work developed by Aaron Beck (1976) and Albert Ellis' rational emotive therapy (1962, 1994). Ellis developed an ABC model, illustrating that individuals have *activating* events that create a thought or *belief* that then leads to a *consequence* or feeling. Automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions (Beck, 1976) inhibit client's positive performance. Techniques in cognitive behavioral coaching are designed to increase the client's

awareness of the distortions, thus producing opportunities to change thinking, language, and actions.

Cognitive behavioral coaching can enhance leader flexibility (Good, Yeganeh & Yeganeh, 2010) by using real-life experiments and bringing unconscious thought into the conscious. Coaches help clients identify automatic thoughts and develop new thinking and behaviors. Neenan (2008) noted, “Cognitive Behavioral Coaching (CBC) offers to coaches an in-depth understanding of how self-defeating beliefs are developed and then maintained in the face of contradictory evidence” (p. 13). Through client learning and behavior change, movement to an “ideal self” (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006) may be achieved.

Elements of Coaching Effectiveness

An extensive array of coaching models and processes presents inconsistency in assessing the effectiveness of coaching. Elements of effectiveness can be attributed to the coach, the client, and the organization. Hunt and Weintraub (2007) identified four critical factors that shape coaching initiatives at a high level within an organization: organization culture, business context/strategy, existing human resource practices, and coaching experiences of organizational members, particularly leaders.

Kilburg (2001) pointed out the absence of literature on “intervention adherence” in coaching and subsequently identified eight key elements in a model of coaching effectiveness focused on his own client- and coach-based research:

- Client's commitment to the path of progressive development
- Coach's commitment to the path of progressive development
- Characteristics of the client's problems and issues
- Structure of the coaching containment
- Client-coach relationship
- Quality of coaching interventions
- Adherence protocol
- Client's and coach's organizational effectiveness (p. 256)

The coaching literature supports the theme of standardization in competencies (Brotman, Liberi, & Wasylyshyn, 1998) as well as clear purpose and alignment with goals (Frisch, 2005). To assure the client and coach commitment and to define the boundaries of the coaching relationship, professional coaches suggest having formal, written contracts between coach and client and specifying the length of the coaching agreement, typically 6–18 months. Scholar-practitioners also recognize the need for improvisation and coaching on a real-time basis.

Research by Smither et al. found that senior managers working with a coach set more specific goals than those who did not work with a coach. Additionally, senior managers who worked with a coach were more likely to solicit and share feedback with their managers and their peers but not with their direct reports (Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003). The 2003 study proposed several opportunities for

future research to look at long-term measures of goals and at specific improvement results. Wasylyshyn's work indicated that 63% of coaching clients experienced a sustained behavior change (2003). Another study found that external coaches inspired performance changes in teamwork behaviors among MBA students more effectively than peer coaches did (Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004).

Regarding the process of coaching, a recurrent theme in the literature was that "very little is known about the variables that influence its effectiveness" (Baron & Morin, 2009). Coaching effectiveness is difficult to measure because of the variety of factors that work together to result in success or failure (Levenson, 2009). Levenson's approach looks at three types of measurement outcomes: changes in executive's leadership behavior, changes in perceived effectiveness (of the leader), and changes in "hard" performance measures (2009).

The impact of coaching often is measured by self-assessment, feedback from stakeholders (direct reports, supervisors, customers, etc.), and business measures. One variable that has been studied and found to have a relationship to coaching effectiveness is the coach-coachee relationship. Not only was the positive relationship important but also the coach's ability to facilitate learning and results (Baron & Morin, 2009). According to Levenson (2009), the context within which the executives operate is also important for measurement of coaching impact. In other words, in

highly complex roles where integration is a key component of the executive's job, coaching may not directly impact business results.

Team coaching has also been studied and is featured prominently in the popular press. One study found that teams are more receptive to coaching in the beginning, at the middle, or at the end of a project (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Although team coaching is not the focus of this research, individual coaching may have significant effects on teams.

Coaching Results and Impact on the Business

Frameworks and models proposing conceptual, proximal, and distal results (Joo, 2005) appear in the literature, as well as ways to measure using a balance-sheet approach (Passmore, 2007). According to a number of researchers, one area that needs to continue to improve is the measurement of business results attributed to executive and professional coaching (Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Frisch, 2005; Hunt & Weintraub, 2007; Rock & Donde, 2008b). Of the research studies capturing results from coaching interventions, estimates of return on investments (ROI) range from 200% to 1700%. Five studies below show the percentages:

570% (McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker, & Warrenfeltz, 2001)

788% (Anderson, 2003)

200% (Kearns, 2006)

689% (Parker-Wilkins, 2006)

1700%, 17X (Rock & Donde, 2008b)

ROI averages of \$100,000, which were 5.7 times the initial estimated investment, were reported in *The Manchester Review* (McGovern et al., 2001). This report categorized business impact into tangible and intangible benefits using Phillips' ROI calculation method (Phillips, 1997). Table 4 shows the top five results in each category with corresponding frequencies of impact (McGovern et al., 2001).

Table 4. Business Results

Tangible Business Results	Intangible Business Results
Productivity, 53%	Improved Relationships: Reports, 77%
Quality, 48%	Improved Relationships: Stakeholder, 71%
Organizational Strength, 48%	Improved Teamwork, 67%
Customer Service, 39%	Improved Relationships: Peers, 63%
Reduced Complaints, 34%	Improved Job Satisfaction, 61%

Source: McGovern et al., (2001), T1.

McGovern and colleagues (2001) also identified ways to maximize the results from executive coaching:

- Select coaches with care.
- Provide strong organizational support.
- Measure and communicate the impact.
- Make coaches more widely available.

Levenson reviewed coaching research studies and looked at results based on changes in three areas: executive leadership behaviors, perceived effectiveness of executives, and hard business measures (2009). He concluded that participants have difficulty directly connecting the impact of coaching with business outcomes because coaching agreements may focus on leadership behaviors with less direct links to hard measures. Levenson argued that using traditional ROI measures may not be the best way to measure the impact of coaching. He also suggested that “coaching may best impact the business when combined with other interventions” (2009, p. 119). It can be difficult to attribute the business impact solely to coaching, especially in complex organizational settings where many factors impact tangible financial results. Levenson’s study found “no cases in which coaching had a clear, direct impact on the executive’s business results absent other interventions” (2009, p. 115). Suggestions for future studies included partnering comprehensive performance evaluation processes with coaching processes to measure the results in the organization.

Prior to 1990, the predominant number of published studies on coaching did not measure business impact or ROI (Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Cummings & Worley, 2005; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Grant, 2010; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Evidence-based coaching studies became available in work published from 1990-2010 and grew to include quasi-experimental designs and randomized trials (Grant, 2010; Leonard-Cross, 2010). In the past decade, published research on the

efficacy of coaching research has grown, and yet much remains unknown about the business impact of internal coaching.

Internal and External Coaching

Published research studies specifically evaluating internal coaching programs are scarce (Frisch, 2005; Yedreshteyn, 2008). Pros and cons of having external coaches or those inside the organization appear frequently. External coaches can offer confidentiality, experiences in industry, and a broader range of ideas, whereas internal coaches can offer knowledge of environment, internal politics, and personal trust (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999). Goldsmith et al. (2004) deemed internal coaches as effective as external coaches. Rock and Donde found that internal coaches impact a greater number of people than external coaches and those internal coaches can have a significant positive business impact (2008a, 2008b). The study also found that using internal coaches—often from HR or from other internal leadership positions—provided better availability of coaches to nonexecutive employees and cost only 10% as much as external coaches (Rock & Donde, 2008a). A study by Walsylyshyn found that *internal coaches received more positive ratings than external coaches in* knowledge of the company (culture, industry, and executives), accessibility, and cost; however, they scored poorly in objectivity, conflict of interest, and trust (2003).

Organizations with internal coaches must also recognize the time, resources, and organizational alignment required to develop and position coaches to gain the greatest impact (Anderson & Anderson, 2005). Internal coach credibility can be built by

maintaining client confidentiality, by asking for feedback from clients, and ultimately by delivering results (Strumpf, 2002). The continual development of internal coaches through certification, courses, communities of practice, and partnerships with external executive coaches is also an important consideration in sustaining internal coaching capability (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007).

In tough economic times, with increased pressures to cut cost, organizations often do not have the luxury of hiring external consultants. Building internal coaching resources can broaden the reach of coaching to clients at levels in the organization beyond executive (Frisch, 2005). By working with leaders and teams, internal coaches can reach senior and middle managers as well as individuals committed to positive change. Rather than reaching only the top 1%, internal coaching programs designed to transfer skills and utilize mid managers as coaches can impact a much larger percentage of the organization (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007; Rock & Donde, 2008a, 2008b).

Direction of Future Research

A 2008 article states that “there is still little consensus on the nature of executive coaching, particularly its definition or functions” (Sperry, 2008). Sperry asks questions about whether coaching is indeed a profession, an intervention, or a role function. He presents his belief that coaching is more a role function than a profession. The reputation of coaching as an essential value-added process may be enhanced through an established track record of measurable business results.

A number of researchers emphasized the theme that little scientifically-based research has been conducted on coaching and that articles including empirical data have not been as prevalent as practitioner articles (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 1996).

Bono et al. performed a comprehensive review of executive coaching practices. The research focused on people involved in coaching, processes used, and outcomes achieved. Three goals of the research were to identify background and training of executive coaches, to link background and training to coaching practices (approaches, assessments, philosophies), and to identify key competencies of executive coaches (Bono et al., 2009). Responses confirmed that organizations offer executive coaching for an exclusive audience of top-level employees and select managers, and they rarely provide the service for other employees. The research found that individuals who participate in executive coaching find it useful. Coaches differed in processes and tools, assessments, and goal-setting or action-planning used. Bono and others reached the conclusion that “everyone is doing it (executive coaching) and everyone is doing it differently” (Bono et al., 2009, p. 364). The findings of this study build curiosity about why executive coaching is not widely offered to employees at all levels as a way for them to develop and grow.

In conclusion, as companies continue to look for ways to reduce cost and increase effectiveness, executive and professional coaching provided by internal coaches may

be a viable solution. Little research has been conducted about internal coaching programs and what makes them effective. There are few empirical studies exploring the internal executive and professional coaching process and outcomes. This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge by looking at internal coaching as an OD intervention that produces tangible and intangible personal and business results.

The questions of what works in an internal coaching process and what outcomes or behavior changes occur will be investigated from client and coach perspectives. The link to enhanced self-efficacy and leadership in coached clients as outcomes of coaching will be explored. Additionally, specific measures of return on investment for the internal coaching process will be calculated.

Two hypotheses guided the research process:

- H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.
- H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of literature of executive coaching including the history, purpose, models and frameworks used, and coach competencies. The relationship between coaching and organization development was explored, as was the link to self-efficacy, use of self, and leadership development. Studies on measured effects and return on investment were provided. The need to broaden the audience of

coaching clients through internal coaching was presented. The chapter concluded by discussing future research areas identified in previous studies. Chapter 3 will discuss the methods of research employed in this dissertation.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methods of research, including questions addressed, instruments used, data collection, and data analysis techniques. The chapter begins by framing the organization context and explaining why the research adds value to the organization. A description of the process for identifying, informing, and inviting participants follows. The processes used to gather and analyze data are explained. The chapter concludes with a summary of considerations taken into account to build a robust research design.

Context—Tie to Organization Background

F-500 is a large, multi-billion dollar, global organization with headquarters in the United States and presence in over 50 countries. The corporate history highlights innovative products, breakthrough designs, best-in-class engineering, and superior manufacturing processes. The company prides itself on creating solutions to complex problems. Since the mid-1990s, the company has continued to encourage high performance through employee engagement and team development. Challenging economic times, decreased funding, and changes in the customer base followed by layoffs have accelerated the pace of change in the company. As in other industries, F-500 employees are asked to do more with less, to continually improve through Lean Six Sigma and high-performing teams, yet at the same time to demonstrate leadership with a commitment to people.

Five internal organization development practitioners within one department served as employee involvement (EI) facilitators at one of the US locations with thousands of employees. The researcher is a member of this department. Three years earlier, the department used the SOAR framework (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009) in strategy-development sessions to capture strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results to guide its future direction. Executive and professional coaching surfaced as one of the key opportunities aligned with strengths and values of the team. An internal customer needs assessment conducted after the SOAR strategy sessions verified the demand for individual coaching services. In response to this need, the five internal OD practitioners in the EI organization set up a development plan to enhance their executive and professional coaching skills. Since that time, the five have completed an intense coach certification process, launched a pilot coaching program, and continued to refine coaching techniques to best serve internal clients. The coaching in this study is provided by the five certified coaches in the EI department.

Executive leaders in F-500 have access to external and internal executive coaches from corporate office staff. Although the OD practitioners interact with executive-level managers, the EI department primarily serves middle- to first-line managers and technical experts in a broad range of functional disciplines. This research study focuses on coaching services offered as an optional developmental offering to a primarily nonexecutive audience. The terms “executive and professional coaching,”

“executive coaching,” “developmental coaching,” and “coaching” are used synonymously in this research to indicate the type of coaching provided.

Although the coaching services have received positive feedback from clients, the organization has little information about the particular aspects of coaching that clients value most and no formal measure of results. Research on the impact of executive coaching has emerged in the past decade (Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Grant, 2010; Leonard-Cross, 2010), yet formal studies from an internal executive coach perspective are few (Frisch, 2005; Grant, 2010; Leonard-Cross, 2010; McKee, Tilin, & Mason, 2009; Rock & Donde, 2008a, 2008b; Yedreshteyn, 2008), with little attention given to nonexecutive clients.

Given this need, the researcher embarked on a journey to explore the internal coaching processes through the eyes of clients and coaches and to “expand the reach” (Frisch, 2005) of internal coaching beyond executive clients. The results of the study will help shape the direction of the internal coaching services offered at F-500.

Researcher Role as Participant-Observer

It is important to note that the researcher is an employee of F-500. She has experienced the coaching process both as a coach as a client. In her role as researcher, she may be considered a participant-observer or an “observing participant” (Alvesson, 2003). In this study, the researcher collects data from participants through interviews and surveys and shares her own reflections and observations of clients,

coaches, and the organization. To strengthen the research approach and defend the use of insider academic research, Table 5 notes four considerations—access, preunderstanding, duality, and organizational politics (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007)—their challenges, and the ways addressed.

Table 5. Coaching Considerations, Challenges, and Ways Addressed

Considerations	Challenges	Ways Addressed
Access	Ability to do the research and be in the organizational system	Approved study via organization's internal policy Support from team and manager to conduct study Voluntary informed consent from all participants
Preunderstanding	Knowledge, insight, experience prior to research	Lived experiences in organization for over 10 years Use of questioning techniques and probing questions to get at information below the surface Reflection built into research plan
Duality	Organizational and researcher role	Action research negotiated with organization and participants Research methods provide structure Use of stories and personal interviews allow deeper look at experiences
Organizational Politics	Manage politics Constructive use of results	Knowledge of organization & networks Anonymity assured Focus on positive change

Action Research/Study Questions

The intent of this two-phase, sequential, mixed-methods study is to discover what works in the coaching process and to identify the individual- and group-level business outcomes attributed to coaching. This research also examines how self-efficacy is impacted by coaching. The first phase involves qualitative interviews with coaching clients and coaches within F-500. Findings from the qualitative phase will be used to characterize the coaching experience and to refine quantitative survey items, evaluating the value-added contributions of coaching.

The quantitative phase includes a quasi-experimental design using a validated instrument to test the hypothesis that general self-efficacy is higher in a coached group than in a control group of employees not receiving coaching. The reason for collecting qualitative data initially is that little is known about what works in the internal coaching process and about how the coaching process impacts clients at the individual and group levels.

The qualitative interviews provide a venue for discussing tangible and intangible outcomes attributed to coaching and key moments in the coaching experience. The subsequent quantitative data collection serves as input about the coaching experience from a large sample of internal coaching clients and provides a measure of self-efficacy for the control and the experimental groups.

The rationale for combining both qualitative and quantitative data is to better understand the internal coaching experience and relevant outcomes at the individual and group levels by triangulating both types of data. The following excerpt describes how triangulation enhances validity and reduces bias.

Triangulation is an approach derived from navigation, military strategy, and surveying; it is based on the logic that researchers can move closer to obtaining a “true” picture if they take multiple measurements, use multiple methods, or examine a phenomenon at multiple levels of analysis. In social research, the term is associated with the use of multiple methods and measures of an empirical phenomenon in order to reduce bias and improve convergent validity, which is the substantiation of an empirical phenomenon through the use of multiple sources of evidence. (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2009, Conceptual Overview and Discussion section, para. 1)

The presence of multiple sources of data is critical in this study to begin to establish a business case for expansion of internal coaching and to understand elements of the coaching process to replicate in future studies. The research focuses on the value and impact of executive and professional coaching services provided to nonexecutive participants by internal coaches at F-500. Because the coaching services are a relatively new offering, the department providing coaching has limited data about what the client values most from the coaching experience and the overall impact of coaching from the viewpoint of client.

The overall approach applies action research through an ongoing process of discovering what is working, taking action, and reflecting to continually improve the coaching process. This research is a case study (Yin, 2009) that uses a mix of

qualitative and quantitative data to discover which aspects of coaching are value added to clients and to capture measures of business impact. The unit of analysis is a set of individuals within F-500; however, the data will also assess impact at the larger group level. The case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” because all participants are within a particular location of F-500.

To test the hypothesis that general self-efficacy differs between coached and not coached employees, the researcher used a control group and an experimental group. The real-life scenario in this action research did not allow for a randomized experiment. A quasi-experiment may be defined as “an experiment in which units are not assigned to conditions randomly” (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002, p. 12). A quasi-experimental design, using the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale as a post-test, compares a coached (treatment) group and a not coached (control) group. Figure 3 illustrates the research design using classic notation (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 6), where X represents coaching treatment, O indicates the outcome of GSE measurement, and the horizontal line separating groups indicates a nonrandom assignment.

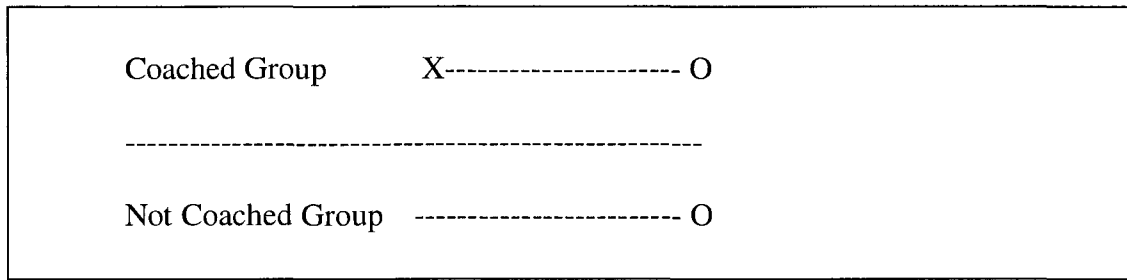
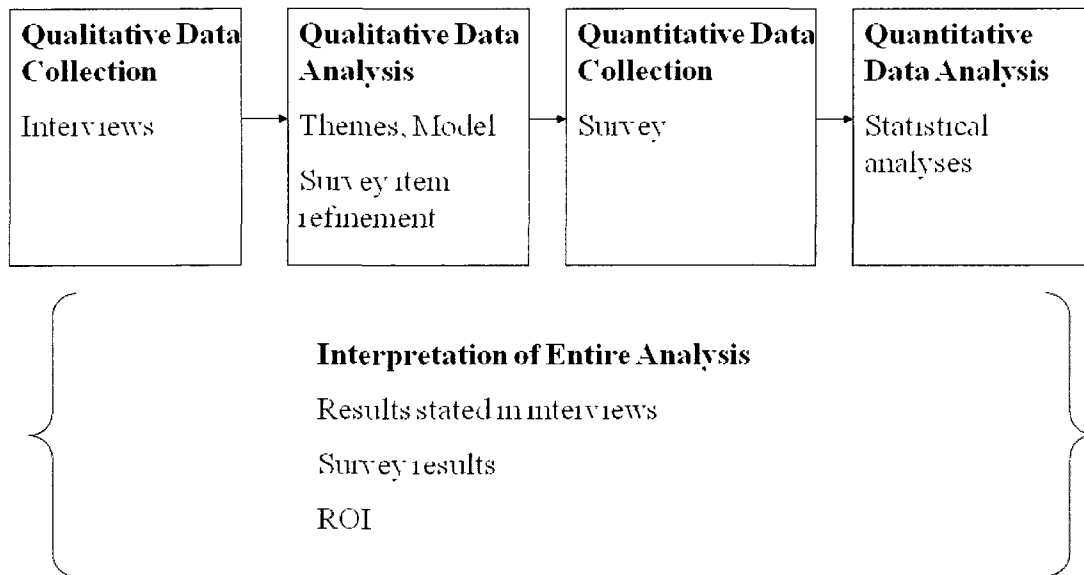


Figure 3. Classic Notation Research Design

The researcher used a phased-sequential approach, collecting qualitative data first, to discover and understand aspects and outcomes of the coaching process and then examined general self-efficacy and other impacts of coaching more fully using quantitative methods and then integrating all results (Figure 4). The choice of mixed-methods approach aligns with the researcher’s pragmatic worldview that “collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of the research problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 18).

Sequential Exploratory Design



SOURCE: Adapted from Creswell, 2009, p. 209

Figure 4. Sequential Exploratory Design

For the qualitative data, an appreciative approach—the Success Case Method—is used to capture what works in the coaching process (Brinkerhoff, 2003). This approach targets four main areas:

- What works in the coaching process?
- What would enhance the coaching experience?
- What is different compared to before coaching?
- What value do you attribute to coaching outcomes?

To supplement the client view, a semi-structured interview process is used to capture observations of client success and value-added coaching processes from the internal coach perspective. This process provides additional information for the internal coaching department.

Two hypotheses guided the research process:

- H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.
- H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

Instruments/Assessments for H1

Perceived self-efficacy is linked to motivation, goal accomplishment, and behavior change (Bandura, 1997; Schwarzer, 1992); to the perception of reaching improved performance (Gist & Mitchell, 1992); and to persistence to goal accomplishment (Wood & Bandura, 1989). The General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale is a validated instrument (Scholz, Gutiérrez-Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002), with reported Chronbach alphas of .86 in US samples, designed to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). GSE has been used as a result measure in developmental coaching research, with significant differences reported in coached groups compared to a waitlist control group (Leonard-Cross, 2010).

To test the hypothesis, H1, that general self-efficacy (as measured by GSE assessment) differs between coached and not coached participants, the researcher identified a group referred to as “clients/coachees” also known as the

“experimental/treatment group” and a second group of participants not receiving coaching, referred to as a “control” group. Both groups received an online survey using a 4-point rating scale for 10 items assessing GSE (Appendix C: Not Coached Group Online Survey and Appendix D: Coached Group Online Survey).

A quasi-experimental design is used to compare GSE scores that are based on self-assessment of coachees to those of the control group not receiving coaching. To maintain anonymity of both groups, demographic data was limited to role (manager vs. nonmanager) and gender. An item asking for hours of leadership development training since January 2009 was added to explain possible variation in GSE from factors other than coaching. In an attempt to foolproof the process, an item asking respondents to identify if they have been engaged in a voluntary coaching agreement in the past 24 months was added for both the experimental and the control groups.

Instruments/Assessments for H2

For the hypothesis referring to the impact on coaching, H2, the researcher chose a mixed-methods approach to collect data from coachees/clients. To get qualitative input from the client perspective, one-on-one interviews were conducted with a selection of coachees. To supplement this data and to reach a broader client set, the researcher administered an online survey featuring scaled and open-ended items.

To capture the coach perspective, the researcher interviewed four coaches and used her own answers to the 10 interview questions. The coaches also shared observations of what they have noticed in clients to capture what makes a difference in the

coaching process. Each portion of data collection to test H2 is described in greater detail in the next sections.

Coachee/Client Interviews

The 10 questions used in the individual interviews (Appendix B) let respondents share stories about effective aspects of the coaching process, recommendations for enhancements, discoveries, mindset changes they experienced throughout the process, personal accomplishments, and business results. Interviews can be called semi-structured because the questions guided the discussion and clients could deviate from the order answered or tie in other thoughts about the coaching experience. Each interview used the same framework; however, the client's responses and probing questions could focus the conversation on areas the client found most meaningful and relevant to research. The interview was designed for a 30-minute private meeting between client and researcher, either face-to-face or by phone.

Coachee/Client Survey

Out of courtesy to the experimental treatment (coached) group, rather than introduce a separate online survey to test H2, the researcher added survey items about the coaching experience after the 10 GSE items used to test H1. The resulting survey used nine scaled items from a previous study that focused on internal coaching effectiveness (Leonard-Cross, 2010) and incorporated themes from the one-on-one interviews (see Appendix D). The 26-item survey consisted of scaled, multiple choice, open-ended, short-answer, and demographic items. For client convenience, surveys were designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Participants

All participants are employees of F-500 and consented to participate in the research.

To capture multiple perspectives, the primary data was collected from three employee groups: clients/coachees, internal executive coaches, and employees not receiving coaching.

Clients/Coachees Experimental Group

For the purposes of this research, the terms “client” and “coachee” are synonymous.

The coachees were either currently in a voluntary coaching agreement with an internal coach or had been during the previous 24 months. Coachees came from multiple disciplines and had varied backgrounds within the company. Both managers and nonmanagers were eligible to participate. Some participants learned about the internal coaching process from a pilot program offered in 2009, whereas others entered into agreements through personal contact with a coach, by a referral from another coachee, from information provided in a training workshop, or as a result of OD consulting work with a team.

Approximately 64 employees had been coached since the coaching was formally implemented. This number is not easy to track because coaches maintain their own records to ensure confidentiality. Clients may initiate an agreement and then opt out. To determine the population total, the five coaches used guidelines to count those employees who committed to an internal coaching agreement, met more than a few times, and were currently employed inside the company. Based on the approximated

population of clients, 34 (53%) are female and 30 (47%) male. In addition, 17 (27%) are managers, and the remaining 47 (73%) are not in management positions. Table 6 summarizes the client population.

Table 6. Client Population Snapshot

Coach	Female Exec	Female Manager	Female Nonmanager	Male Exec	Male Manager	Male Nonmanager
A		5	5	2		4
B			3		1	2
C		2	5		4	4
D			12			10
E		1	1		2	1
Total: 5	0	8	26	2	7	21

Data was collected in two phases for the coached group. For the first phase, a representative sample of coachees from each coach was invited to participate in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. To ensure coaching relationship confidentiality, the researcher only received names of clients expressing an interest in the research during private conversations with his/her coach. After each coach explained the opportunity to participate and gained client consent to provide contact information to the researcher, the researcher provided the research protocol and consent forms for participation. (See Appendix A: Research Subject Information and Consent Form.) Of the coached group, a total of 35 people volunteered for the study, 19 (54%) female, 16 (46%) male. A total of 13 were contacted for one-on-one

interviews, with 12 (92%) respondents interviewed. One client rescheduled several times and then had to cancel. The completed interview sample consists of 7 (58%) female and 5 (42%) male. Of this group, one third is currently managers. Care was taken to invite a portion of clients from each of the five coaches.

For the second phase of data collection, an online survey was sent to each of the 35 volunteers in the coached group (see Appendix D). A total of 28 coached employees completed the online survey, 16 (57%) female and 12 (43%) male, for a response rate of 28 (80%). The number of managers and nonmanagers responding to the survey was almost evenly split, with 13 (46%) managers and 15 (54%) nonmanagers.

Internal Coaches

Executive coaching was provided by internal coaches with varying levels of experience and credentials in multiple locations within F-500. To minimize variation in coaching practices and client base, the researcher chose a specific group of internal coaches working in one department at one location in the company. The internal coach team was a highly collaborative, self-directed team of five. One coach (male) served as manager with the four remaining coaches reporting to him as specialists. Of the four specialists, one (female) served as the researcher. Of the remaining coaches, one is male and two are female.

All internal coaches completed the same International Coach Federation Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP) through the University of Texas at Dallas (2009–

2010). Subsequently, each earned ICF credentials at the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) level, therefore adding consistency in coach experience and coaching approaches applied. Throughout the accredited training program, the coaches practiced using a variety of coaching models and determined that solution-focused, cognitive behavioral, and appreciative coaching techniques were a good fit for clients in F-500.

In addition to the coaching-specific training, all coaches hold master's degrees in business, psychology, or closely related fields and at least 10 years of experience in a professional consultant type of role. Several coaches have professional certifications related to organization development bodies of knowledge. The internal coaches' department primarily serves employees in a wide variety of programs and functions. *The team has provided individual and team support and coaching in a less formal process for approximately five years and formally introduced executive and professional coaching services in 2009. The coaching process is ongoing, with clients entering or exiting coaching agreements continually.*

Control Group (Not Coached)

The control group participants for H1 research purposes were employees of F-500 not in coaching agreements who volunteered to participate in research by taking an online survey (see Appendix C). To best match the client group, instead of generating a random sample, the researcher elected to use a convenience sample to simulate a typical set of employees likely to want to enter into a coaching agreement. The five

coaches were asked to provide a 50% male, 50% female selection of employees with roles and backgrounds similar to those of existing coaching clients. The matched group had an interest in coaching or, based on interaction with the coaches, was observed to be similar to the coached employees and to have the desire to receive coaching. To qualify for this group, the employees were not currently in a voluntary coaching agreement and did not have a coaching agreement during the past two years. Each candidate was invited to participate with an email request from the researcher using the informed consent process described in the next section.

Data Collection Process/Procedure

Approval/Consent

The company involved in this research has a human subject research board and approval process that must be followed before any research takes place. The researcher gained approval from both the F-500 Human Subject Research Board and Benedictine University Internal Review Board prior to any research data collection. The researcher asked the four internal coaches to discuss the research opportunity privately with each client and with a selection of employees not being coached. If the employee expressed interest in the research, the coach provided participant email contact information to the researcher. After receiving names, the researcher sent an email request including a consent form and explanation of the research process to all prospective participants. The researcher, also a coach-practitioner, invited her own clients and employees not being coached using the same email consent and research

explanation process. She also gained consent from each of the four coaches in her department (Figure 5).

Informed Consent Process

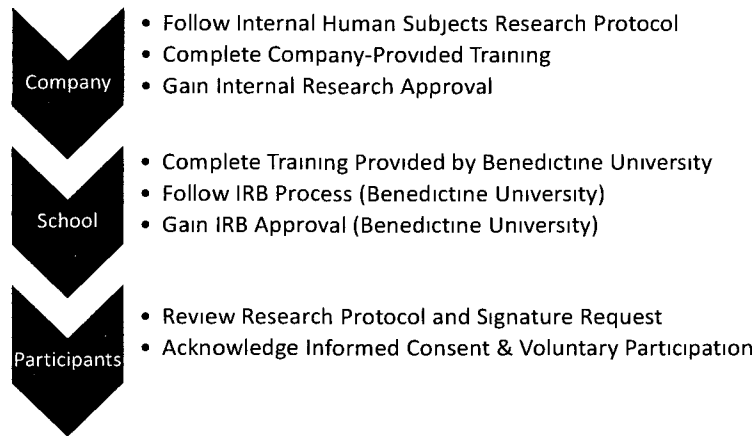


Figure 5. Informed Consent Process

Confidentiality and Selection—Client Interview Sample

Confidentiality of coaching is a key part of coaching agreements and is recognized in the International Coach Federation Code of Ethics (ICF, 2008) and executive coaching texts (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007; Orenstein, 2007; Strumpf, 2002). Coaching agreements with the internal coaching group maintain client privacy because names are known by individual coaches but not by the team. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher relied on coaches to share information about the study with clients and to forward discreetly names of interested voluntary participants to the researcher.

The researcher attempted to contact all coaching clients engaged in a coaching relationship since the department's coaching pilot, including clients completing agreements as well as newer clients. To clarify the research population, the coaches agreed to define a client as an individual with an established relationship with the coach; therefore, individuals inquiring about coaching and opting out of the process early on and very recent clients with little or no time yet invested in coaching were not targeted in the client pool. Employees previously coached and no longer with the company were excluded from the study.

Because initiation and completion of coaching services happen at any time, the overall number of participants in agreements fluctuated. The researcher asked each coach to provide a total number of clients broken out by gender and management role. Based on those figures, the population of interest or total number of coaching clients currently employed by the company since the initial coaching pilot totaled 64. As mentioned previously, a total of five coaches were part of the research. Coaches were key in characterizing the population served, selecting participants, engaging in coaching, and participating in coach interviews. Figure 6 depicts the critical role of coaches supporting the research process.

Coach Role in Research Process

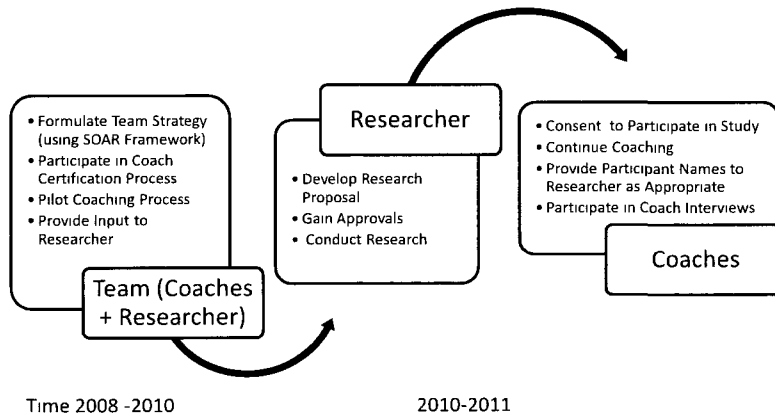


Figure 6. Coach Role in Research Process

To maintain confidentiality and follow informed-consent protocol, the researcher asked each internal coach to provide a brief explanation of the research to each client and ask for permission to forward names to the researcher. After receiving the name, the researcher sent individual emails to each client to gain consent. Each coach listed 4–7 coaching clients willing to participate in the interview portion of the study. Of the 35 client names submitted as interested volunteers, the researcher selected a sample of clients from each coach to invite to participate in the one-on-one interview phase of research. Upon confirmation of formal consent to participate, the researcher scheduled one-on-one 30-minute interviews with a representative sample of clients from each coach. During the second phase of research, each of the 35 clients was invited to participate in the online survey assessing coaching (Figure 7).

Client Research Participation Process

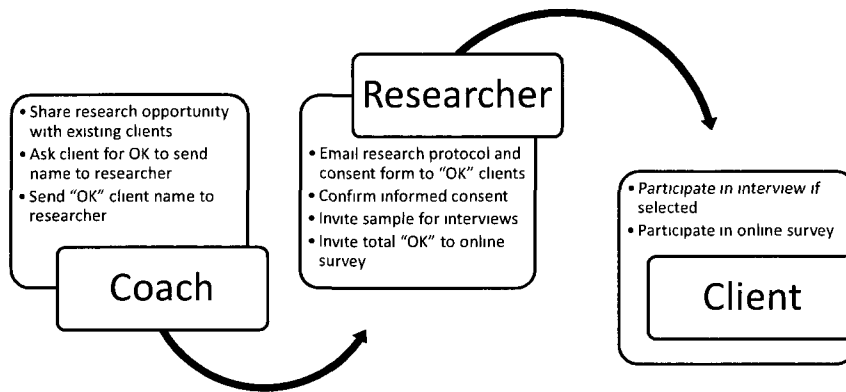


Figure 7. Client Research Participation Process

Coaches provided names of potential control group participants by supplying names of individuals not currently in a coaching agreement to the researcher. Employees not in coaching agreements that opted to participate were requested to take an online survey. Figure 8 provides a depiction of the research process for employees not in coaching relationships.

Non-Coached Group Research Participation Process

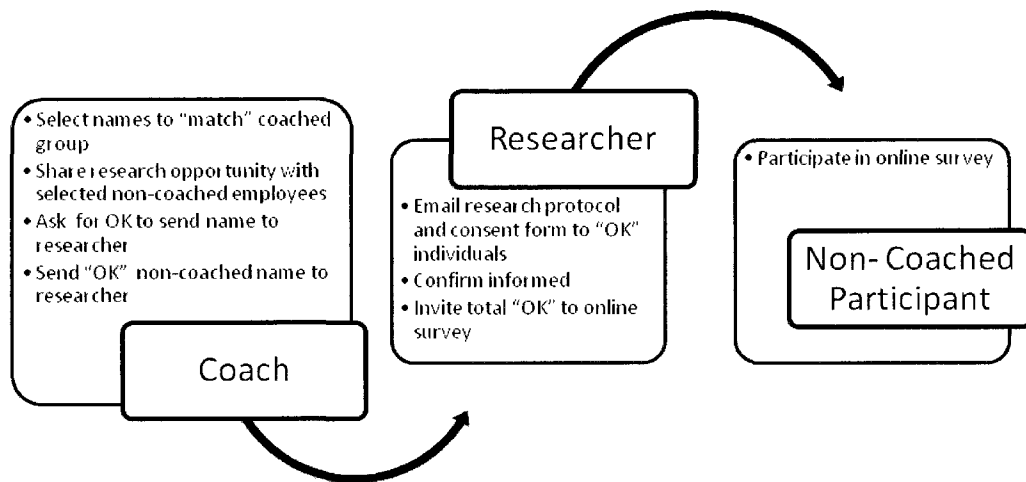


Figure 8. Non-Coached Group Research Participation Process

To maintain anonymity, participant demographics survey items were limited to gender and role (managers or nonmanagers) in the online survey, and field completions were optional. The control group consisted of 37 people, 17 females and 20 males. A total of 32 (86%) of the invited, not coached participants completed the survey. As indicated by the gender responses, 14 (44%) were female, 17 (53%) were male, and 1 (2%) chose not to indicate gender. The responses for management roles included 5 (16%) managers, 26 (81%) nonmanagers, and 1 (3%) choosing not to indicate role.

Data Integrity—Control Group

To ensure data integrity, the researcher included a question asking respondents if they have been engaged in a coaching agreement in the past 24 months. Four people in the control (not coached) group selected the following answer: “I am currently in an agreement with an internal coach.” Because there were no other comments to determine if the four had legitimately taken the appropriate survey or had inadvertently chosen or misinterpreted the response, the researcher determined it was best to delete the four responses (2 male, 2 female; 2 nonmanager, 1 manager, 1 not indicating role) from final analyses. The sample sizes indicated in the results section reflect the 28 remaining responses in the group not being coached. To verify any significant changes from the omissions, the researcher compared the analysis of the full data set to results with the four deleted responses to assess overall changes in output.

Qualitative Data Collection**Qualitative Interview Instrument**

The interview consisted of 10 primary questions (see Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions) designed using appreciative, success-case principles and incorporating elements to capture business impact. The intent of the interviews was to listen to client success stories and learn more about the aspects of the coaching experience they found most value added.

The resulting sample of coached employees consenting to participate in interviews consisted of 13 employees: 6 female and 7 male, 5 managers and 8 nonmanagers. As stated previously, schedule conflicts and time constraints did not allow one employee originally invited to participate in an interview. The overall coachee interview response rate was 12 out of 13 (92%).

Client Interviews

Although no preparation was required prior to the individual interviews, as a courtesy to participants, the interview questions (see Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions) were emailed to clients in advance.

Clients were encouraged to participate in the interview face-to-face, with the researcher in a private conference room whenever possible. The researcher also accommodated telephone interview requests from participants. All interviews were recorded using a Sony ICD-PX820 digital recorder for transcription purposes.

A total of 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The researcher attempted to ask each question in numerical order; however, conversations emerged within the interviews that at times led to a natural re-ordering. Of the 12 interviews, 10 were conducted face-to-face, and 2 were conducted by telephone. Respondents were asked for permission to record the conversation and had the option to pause recording if needed. To maintain anonymity, the researcher transcribed each interview and removed name, department, company, or other information that would identify the

coach or respondent. The researcher provided the transcription via email for each client to review and revise if desired. Additionally, the researcher offered to provide the MP3 recording for the client. Clients were assured the researcher would not share individual interview content with coaches. After receiving the client confirmation of the final transcriptions, the researcher analyzed responses to each of the 10 interview questions by reading field notes, identifying key points, and capturing themes from the 12 interviews.

Coach Interviews

The same 10 interview questions used for the coachees were used in interviews with the coaches. The researcher asked each of the four coaches to elaborate on what they observed from clients related to the questions. Second, the researcher asked for the coach to answer the interview questions from the perspective of what they found value added as a coach and equal partner in the coaching process. Finally, the researcher answered the questions based on her own observations as coach-practitioner and coachee. All five coaches participated in coach interviews resulting in a 100% response rate.

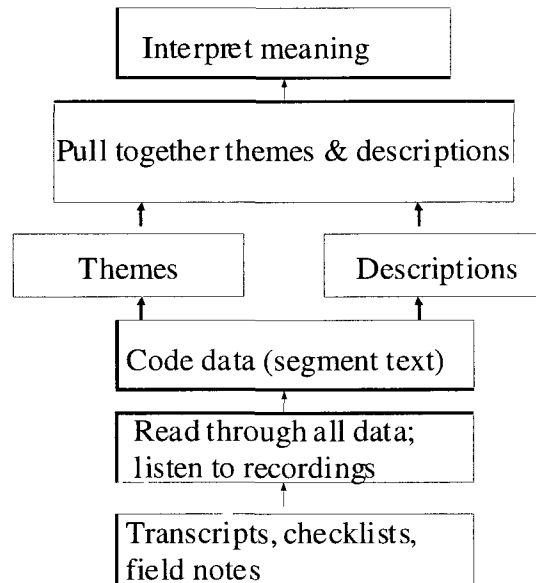
Gaining insight from both client and coach viewpoints served multiple purposes. First, it allowed the researcher to compare overall responses from the clients to the observations of the coaches. This comparison pointed out consistencies and identified different elements of coaching found valuable to each party. Second, the coach data could be used to share best practices and identify lessons learned within the coaching

department. Third, the value-added elements could be used to determine how the coaching group will refine and further develop internal coach capabilities and tools to address customer and client needs for future coaching services.

Qualitative Analysis

Because this research aimed to understand the coaching process from the client and coach perspectives, interview data revealed key moments in coaching and identified what was most valuable in the process. Creswell (2009) described a grounded theory approach as “a qualitative strategy in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants of the study” (p. 229).

The researcher used a combination of worksheets, checklists, and open coding themes to segment input from interviews. The overall qualitative analysis approach and coding themes are shown in Figure 9 (adapted from Creswell, 2009, p. 185) and Table 7, respectively. Results are shared in the next chapter.



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009), p. 185.

Figure 9. Overall Qualitative Approach

Table 7. Coding Themes

Coaching Processes and Tools
Questions
Methods or Approaches
Consulting + Coaching
Assessments
Organization Infrastructure/Support
Outcomes/Results
Behavior Change
New Perspectives
Awareness/Appreciation of Self (Strengths-focused)
Leadership (skills, styles, behaviors)
Affect (feeling valued, emotions, positivity, bond with and trust coach)
Business Results (Tangible and Intangible)

Quantitative Data

Not Coached (Control) Group Survey to Test H1

The matched group of 37 employees served as a control group to test H1 and to assess general self-efficacy as compared to the coached (treatment) group. The control group completed 10 GSE items using the following 4-point scale: 1=Not at all true, 2=Hardly true, 3=Moderately true, and 4=Exactly true. One additional question, which asked them to indicate how many days of interpersonal skills and leadership development training they have taken since 2009, was included to account for possible differences in scores attributed to factors other than coaching. The control group consisted of 37 people: 17 females and 20 males.

A total of 32 (86%) of the invited participants not in a coaching agreement completed the survey. As indicated by the gender responses, 14 (44%) were female, 17 (53%) were male, and 1 (2%) chose not to indicate gender. The responses for management roles included 5 (16%) managers, 26 (81%) nonmanagers, and 1 (3%) choosing not to indicate role.

Client (Experimental) Group Survey to Test H1 and H2

For the survey phase of research, the 35 selected coachees were sent an online survey link. To collect data related to H1, the survey included the same 10 GSE items as the experimental group, plus items to assess elements perceived as value added, ways to improve the coaching experience, and results. (See Appendix C: Not Coached Group Online Survey.)

A total of 28 coachees completed the survey for a response rate of 28 out of 35 (80%). Of those that responded, 46% currently served in management roles and 54% were nonmanagers, and 57% were female and 43% were male. When answering the process fool proofing question about the coaching agreement, 2 of the respondents answered, "I have not been in an internal coaching agreement during the past 24 months." One respondent explained in the comments field that it was too early in the coaching to know and indicated that he or she had been involved in coaching 3 months. The other stated that the coaching was valuable and indicated that he or she had been involved for 1 month. Because the coaches provided potential client research participant names directly to the researcher and because both responses did include specific reference to benefits received from coaching, the researcher decided to include the two responses in the analyses. The term "agreement" may have caused some ambiguity in interpretation.

Quantitative Analysis

Survey data collections from the online system were downloaded from the survey tool and input into Minitab software for detailed analysis. Descriptive statistics, graphs, and comparative analyses were used to provide visual representation of the data and summary charts. Specifically, two sample *t*-tests were used to compare composite and average GSE scores as well as individual item scores for the 10 items assessing general self-efficacy of coached and not coached participants to evaluate H1. To address H2, scores of survey items 11–18 used a 4-point scale to provide a baseline evaluation for the impact of coaching. Supplemental open-ended and multiple-answer

items asked for significant outcomes of coaching. In addition to the online survey, multiple interview questions were used to quantify the tangible and intangible business results experienced through coaching to generate an overall return on investment. A more detailed description of relevant statistical analyses and results follow in subsequent chapters.

Synthesis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The research design consisted of multiple phases of data collection and interpretation. The process of pulling together and connecting the qualitative and quantitative data through triangulation served to mitigate risk of bias and to validate results. Schwandt (2007) argued the benefits of triangulation: “Triangulation is a means of checking the integrity of the inferences one draws...by examination ... from more than one vantage point” (p. 298). The input from multiple stakeholders in the organization, including clients, coaches, and prospective future clients, presents insight about what works in the coaching process, tangible and intangible outcomes, business return on investment, and opportunities to improve the process in the future.

Iterative Use of Fieldwork

An important part of the analysis consisted of periodic review of fieldwork including voice-recorded interviews, transcriptions, researcher field notes, and comments from coaches. The recorded interviews conveyed excitement, energy, and emotion in the responses and brought meaning to the transcribed text. The researcher grew to appreciate the iterative nature of processing the information collected during research and of synthesizing it to arrive at key findings. Revisiting all feedback and

assimilating the combined data sources proved valuable for adding meaning and emphasis to key themes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) arrived at a similar conclusion: “The analytic process, like any thinking process, should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being overly structured and based only on procedures” (p. 12). Throughout the data collection and analysis, the researcher attempted to understand and make sense of the simultaneous multidimensional forces (Orenstein, 2007, p. 159) involved in the coaching process to provide a holistic view.

Research Risk Mitigation

Adequate research designs protect against recognized risks. The researcher considered steps illustrated in research texts to solidify the design (Creswell, 2009; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2008; Shadish et al., 2002; Yin, 2009). Table 8 illustrates the research risk mitigation approach. Recognition of implications of the research design will be covered in subsequent chapters.

Table 8. Research Risk Mitigation Approach

Risk Area	Mitigation of Risk
Response Rate	<p>Research approach and survey designs included upfront feedback and buy-in from internal coaching team</p> <p>Positive reputation of the internal coach team established credibility of research intent</p>
Sampling/Selection Bias	<p>A conscious effort was made by design to solicit input from a diverse set of participants (e.g. gender, age, race, background, function in organization, role)</p> <p>Research targeted a representative sampling of clients from all coaches</p> <p>Control group participants were selected from all coaches using standardized criteria</p>
Instrumentation Validity	Validated instrument used to assess general self-efficacy (GSE). In samples from 23 nations, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .76 to .90, (US=.85) with the majority in the high .80s. The scale is unidimensional.
Reliability/Data Integrity	<p>Interviews recorded and transcribed, then sent to respondents to verify.</p> <p>Fool-proofing item included in survey to verify coached vs. not coached category</p> <p>Separate survey links were provided to control and experimental groups</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Each coach provided participant names to researcher with agreement from client</p> <p>Surveys were administered online with no traceability to respondent</p> <p>Demographics collected were carefully chosen at a high level to support anonymity</p> <p>Interviews were held in private conference rooms</p> <p>Transcripts contained no names or identifiers tied to participants</p>

Table 8 continues

Risk Area	Mitigation of Risk
Objectivity/Researcher Bias	Interview questions were designed to be open ended without the researcher influencing answers
	Survey items built from validated existing surveys and/or with input from design experts
	Use of field notes and researcher reflections
Analysis	Use coding scheme and iterative process to analyze qualitative data
	Incorporate appropriate statistical analyses
	Integrate qualitative and quantitative data
Validity	Mixed methods approach using qualitative and quantitative data and triangulation (convergence of themes)
	Incorporate member checking (Creswell, 2009) to incorporate comments from participants
External Validity (Generalizability)	Cautious approach taken with applicability of findings outside boundary of research study
Ethics	Informed consent
	Transparency in research protocol

Summary

This chapter provided organizational background, setting the stage for research. It presented hypotheses to be tested, research questions, and the overall approach. It explained the methods for gaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality and outlined the qualitative and quantitative research data collection and analysis techniques to be used. The chapter included a description of how the researcher used field notes and revisited recordings of interview data throughout the research process to complement textual qualitative and quantitative data with tone, energy, and excitement level of participants. The chapter concluded by identifying

elements incorporated in the research to mitigate risk. The next chapter details the results of the study and observations/reflections from the researcher as participant and observer.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

Introduction

Much published research on executive coaching deals with coaching provided by external coaches who, by definition, are not part of the organization. Articles and studies on coaching provided by internal coaches are scarce. Based on a compilation by Grant (2010), formal research on internal executive coaching makes up less than 2% of the total 635 studies, and studies capturing business results in terms of ROI account for less than 1%.

The purpose of this research is to add to the body of knowledge about internal executive and professional coaching by identifying what works in voluntary executive and professional coaching relationships when coaching is provided by ICF-credentialed internal coaches. The research hypothesis is designed to elicit information about how general self-efficacy in a coached group, as measured by GSE (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), compares with that of a group of participants not in coaching agreements. A mixed-methods approach explores the coaching experience from views of both coach and client. The study targets tangible and intangible business results to assess the return on investment of voluntary developmental coaching inside a large organization.

As stated in previous chapters, two hypotheses guided the research process:

- H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.
- H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

Individual semi-structured interviews and online surveys served as the primary mechanisms for data collection by the researcher-coach. Clients, coaches, and a control group of employees not in coaching agreements were involved in the study. To assess H1, an online survey using previously validated GSE items (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) was provided for both a coached and not coached group. To assess H2, individual interviews and an online survey about the coaching experience provided data to capture results and to define value-added elements of the coaching process.

Comparative statistics of ROI are rarely found in published research on executive and professional coaching. Published relative measures of ROI show results ranging from 200% to 1700% (Anderson, 2003; Kearns, 2006; McGovern et al., 2001; Parker-Wilkins, 2006; Rock & Donde, 2008b). Because the executive and professional coaching services were a relatively new offering for the internal coaching group in this study, the only existing data to assess the internal coaching process was informal feedback provided by clients or personal observations from coaches. This research study provides qualitative and quantitative data to serve as a baseline. Interviews and

survey questions asked respondents about the coaching relationship, tools, and processes that led to key moments in the coaching experience and produced subsequent outcomes.

Qualitative Interview Results

Response Rates

Of the coached group, a total of 35 people volunteered for the study: 19 (54%) were female and 16 (46%) were male. The research design proposed conducting up to 20 interviews based on resources, participant availability, and saturation of data. A total of 13 coachees were contacted for one-on-one interviews, with 12 (92%) respondents interviewed. One rescheduled several times then had to cancel. The completed interview sample consists of 7 (58%) female and 5 (42%) male clients. In this group, 4 (33%) coachees currently hold manager positions.

The research design also incorporated input from coaches. The response rate for interviews with the five coaches was 100%, with 4 coaches and 1 researcher-coach providing input.

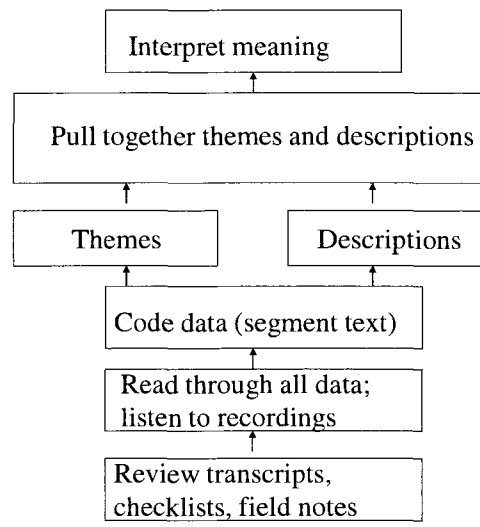
Analysis Process

The researcher used field notes, transcripts of individual interviews, spreadsheets with key points, and the voice recordings to experience what participants viewed as value-added elements and outcomes of the coaching relationship. Interview questions were analyzed in more than one way to find meaning. Respondents commented, “Coaching takes on a different conclusion for different people” and that the process used by

coaches “wasn’t just a regular, set, straightforward A, B, C approach” but one with flexibility. The data analysis process was designed to respect the fluidity of the coaching process and to provide a multifaceted approach to answering the research questions.

Initially, a checklist with categories was used to bring out question-by-question responses for each respondent. Because internal coaches provide a customized coaching process based on client needs, overall interview content was also reviewed one respondent at a time to fully grasp the interviewee’s situation, organizational context, desired coaching outcomes, discoveries throughout the coaching process, and overall results.

Coding was used to categorize feedback and develop similar themes and unique responses from coachee to coachee. Themes were reviewed as the researcher listened to voice recordings of interviews, reviewed field notes, and identified quotes to add meaning and generate key results. This process was iterative and nonlinear to offer a robust analysis suited to the complexity of the interview data. A grounded theory approach was used to “simultaneously employ techniques of induction, deduction, and verification to develop theory” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 131). Figure 10, adapted from Creswell, (2009, p. 185), provides a visual representation of the data analysis process.



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009), p. 185.

Figure 10. Analysis Process for Qualitative Data

Table 9 illustrates a set of codes used in the analysis to help “identify or name the segments” of data (Schwandt, 2007, p. 32). The researcher split the analysis into two parts to characterize inputs and outputs involved in the coaching process:

- Coaching Processes and Tools
- Outcomes and Results

Table 9. Coding Themes

Coaching Processes and Tools
Entering into and Developing the Coaching Relationship
Coaching Combined with Consulting Services
Techniques, Processes, and Tools
Assessments
Organization Infrastructure and Support
Outcomes/Results
New Perspectives
Sub-Themes: Coaching and Mentoring, Career Direction, Asking for Help
Self-Awareness, Confidence, and Appreciation of Strengths
Behavior Change
Strategic Thinking
Leadership
Sub-Themes: Balancing Tasks and Relationships, Recognizing Success, Performance Management
Communication
Change Management
High Engagement Coaching Climate
Positive Affect
Sub-Themes: Hope, Courage, and Bravery; Energy, Excitement, Sense of Belonging
Business Results (Tangible and Intangible)

The Coaching Processes and Tools category includes coaching-related techniques and approaches, models or frameworks employed, services provided, and organizational systems in place. The Outcomes and Results category shows specific individual, group, or organizational outcomes attributed to the coaching process. Key findings in each area and supporting quotes are presented in the next section.

Overview of Category: Coaching Processes and Tools

The coaching approaches most frequently labeled by clients as beneficial were strengths-focused approaches including appreciative inquiry, use of the SOAR framework (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009), and cognitive behavioral coaching. Coach feedback added that solution-focused coaching complemented strengths-based, appreciative approaches and helped clients focus on taking immediate steps to reach the desired future state. Tools and processes such as individual and team assessments, questioning techniques, assignments outside the coaching session, and follow-up reminders were seen as value added by coachees and coaches. Scenario planning, role playing, and reflective exercises inside the coaching sessions were also deemed valuable learning experiences.

Although specific tools and processes played a role in successful outcomes, coaching was viewed as a much deeper experience (for coach and coachee) beyond the mechanics of tools and processes. While sometimes difficult to put into words, both coachees and coaches shared how coaching transformed their mindset, created energy, and brought new possibilities to light. A client responded: “Coaching speaks

to me. It really creates an accelerated movement for me, which I appreciate a lot.”

Another commented that coaching “was able to open up new thought to explore new avenues of pursuit and situations to resolve.” The experience was viewed as mutually beneficial for coachee and coach. A coach commented about the “immense satisfaction in seeing power and influence develop. You get to watch people develop and look at their lives through a different camera lens. That’s been wonderful to be part of.” The coaching experience was viewed quite positively as a coachee shared: “I didn’t have anything to compare it to. I’ve had people giving me advice, but this was a true peer helping me to deal with situations. To me, it was a real benefit.”

The next sections provide more detail about subcategories, characterizing how clients and coaches initiated the coaching relationship, and depict experiences on the coaching journey leading to the resulting outcomes.

Theme: Entering Into and Developing the Coaching Relationship

Coachees entered into the coaching relationship as a result of one of more of the following:

- Direct offer for coaching from the coach to the coachee
- Complement to (or expansion of) OD consulting work with coach
- Referrals from another coachee, manager, or human resources
- Exposure to coaching through workshops and learning events

The vast majority of coachees entered into coaching voluntarily. In a couple of cases (2/64), the coaching was strongly suggested by a manager or human resources generalist and viewed initially as coaching for performance improvement. In both cases, the relationship evolved to a developmental coaching focus.

During initial contracting steps, coachees were introduced to coaching and given the option to select any of the five coaches based on background and coach fit. Part of the coaching agreement acknowledged the importance of coach-coachee fit and the opportunity to choose a new coach at any time. In each of the 12 interviews, coachees expressed satisfaction with their current coach. Several coachees mentioned that they valued their current coach and would also like the opportunity to work with other coaches in the future.

When asked about coaching one coachee stated, "I have always been the kind of guy that has tried to help out or look for opportunities to improve things...but hey, with the right coach, you can probably make that happen a little better and a little faster."

Coachees shared that early in the coaching experience they were not sure what coaching was all about and that they may have thought of it as mentoring or consulting. Going through a formal coaching contract with a coach helped to define coaching and clarify boundaries. Coaches also commented that contracting was a critical phase in coaching and that although written contracts were used, with some

clients and teams, a less-formal, verbal contracting approach may have worked as well. The contracting approach may depend on the way the client was referred. A coach shared the need to be flexible about agreements.

We can help people pick up some of these skills. I don't want to devalue the coaching agreement but in some cases there isn't time and energy for formal agreements. You can ask a few questions and in 5–10 seconds have an agreement.

Coaches reiterated that the essence of coaching “is all about the relationship. It just is.” They frequently used analogies of “dancing with the client” and “being in the moment.”

Getting to know the client as a whole being and incorporating their outside-of-work likes, hobbies, and interests helped develop the relationship and leverage the client's strengths. Clients and coaches found a variety of formats and locations effective for coaching sessions. The importance of privacy was emphasized. Conference rooms provided a more intimate setting, whereas phone calls in cubicle-based office settings did not afford privacy. Both clients and coaches agreed that face-to-face coaching sessions played a critical role at the start of the coaching process to develop trust and rapport. A coach commented, “As time went on and the relationship grew, virtual coaching using phone calls or Instant Messaging [was] helpful to substitute for or complement face-to-face meetings.” Meeting face-to-face presented challenges in some cases. Coachees and coaches shared that traveling between buildings made it difficult and more time consuming to meet face-to-face.

Coaches commented that while initial coaching sessions may be 1 hour in length, 30-minute sessions often proved highly effective as the relationship progressed. Shorter sessions and options to coach over the phone allowed extra flexibility to fit busy schedules. A coach noted that rescheduling when the client is not ready can make a big difference. He suggested asking the client, “If together we come to the conclusion that it won’t work today, will it work tomorrow? [You must be] able to voice that and ask the client to make the choice.”

Responses indicated that confidentiality of the coaching agreement was valuable and contributed to a high trust in the coaching relationship. Respondents spoke highly of the coach as a trusted resource “in their back pocket,” knowing they “could count on 24/7,” and as a “sounding board.” In some cases, coachees referred to the coach as a “trusted friend” and “confidante.”

Private coaching sessions provided a time to reflect and think strategically. Clients could call a coach and ask, “I’m stuck on this. What do you think?” The sentiment that coaches really cared about the client’s success was evident. Coaches were referred to as a trusted thought partners, sources of validation, and accountability partners. Comments reflected on the deep connection between coach and client, demonstrating empathy and mutual respect.

My coach shared a lot with me and it helped me but I think I shared a lot with him. It was something where we both got a lot out of it....We

leveraged the experiences, brought outside experiences in and shared. Each of us gained something from the sessions.

Theme: Coaching Combined with Consulting Services

Several clients in management roles pointed out that individual coaching combined with team coaching or consulting work proved to be particularly beneficial. Coaching provided the opportunity for the leader to think through and design an approach to implement with the team. The client commented,

For every hour of time spent with my coach it saves me 10 hours in productivity time. Then when my coach works with our team, every hour we spend in coaching [and planning team interventions] equates to 30 hours in team productivity.

In some cases, the OD consulting work preceded the coaching agreement and served as the entry point for the coach to work with the client.

Coaches have overlapping OD skills in group dynamics, assessments, facilitation, and change management. Some coaches specialize in quantitative topics, incorporate artistic or musical talents, or offer other unique skills. A number of clients specifically valued the subject-matter expertise of the coach, often shared outside the coaching session. “My coach was a good resource for information outside the one-on-one meetings.”

One coach made the following observation about the process:

[It is] often walking the line between coaching and consulting. There are simply times when it is a “tell” and I’m not going to waste their time or mine, because in the context of the conversation you can incorporate consulting because of the relationship.

Another coach learned to “think of coaching more flexibly. Much of your life is ‘coaching’ rather than drawing a hard line between coaching and consulting.”

Theme: Techniques, Processes, and Tools

Outlining future goals and developing plans to get there were tasks frequently mentioned by clients as value added. Examples of tools and methods facilitating goal setting and planning implementation steps varied. Coaches and coachees commented that the use of questions to help clients think through plans was advantageous. A coachee stated:

You have a thought-through plan someone else has helped you validate, maybe only asking you enough questions to have you validate it. I’m not saying my coach says “yes” or “no” but he will say “have you thought about this?” To make sure you have weighed the options.

All coaches shared the continual experimentation with different types of questions.

One coach commented,

I thought I was pretty decent at asking powerful questions...but realize it is a continual journey. Knowing sometimes I’ve been “on” by noticing the client’s reaction and sometimes I haven’t been. So, I’m constantly in search of more powerful questions.

Scaling questions asking for a measure from 1–10 or a likelihood of an outcome happening also proved to challenge the client’s thinking. A coach found a solution-focused approach helpful, using challenging questions like “What are you going to do about that this week?” He continued that this helped the client to see that they did not have to have a master plan at that moment and that they could share other ways of moving forward in the next meeting.

Coaches shared what worked to help clients build skills to influence. A coach reflected on the impact of cognitive behavior coaching:

When people are caught up in the dramas at their own desk, they’re really not thinking strategically, they’re just thinking, “This hurts. I don’t like this. It doesn’t feel good. Make it go away.” But when they actually reframe it using the ABC model, they regain power. All you can control is your reaction to the event and influence the rest. That’s very comforting to some people.

The use of role playing was mentioned as a way for coaches to try out language and approaches, especially in difficult situations. Several clients in management emphasized that role playing helped them deal with performance issues more effectively by trying out new language and questioning techniques to help employees own up to behaviors. Role playing also helped clients prepare for interviews or new assignments. Coaches also explained that role playing helped them prepare for coaching sessions and helped them share fictitious coaching scenarios to get input from other coaches about useful next steps.

Reflecting on past success and imagining future scenarios were also useful techniques. Strengths-based approaches received many positive comments. Appreciative inquiry and the SOAR framework (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009) proved beneficial for people, building on their success and opening their eyes to identify strengths, recognize accomplishments, and see new possibilities. Several coachees in management mentioned the coach-facilitated SOAR as a team intervention that complemented individual coaching.

Theme: Assessments

Coaches commented that a variety of assessments were available and that “understanding needs, having conversations with clients about strengths, hearing it from them personally...then recommending [appropriate] assessments was useful.”

Clients specifically mentioned the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as being “instrumental in understanding self and others.” Individual MBTI assessment was provided to all coachees as appropriate. Using MBTI was not a new offering for the coaches; however, coaching provided a different context for the assessment use.

Coaches mentioned a “new appreciation for MBTI” and offered that “giving people neutral language to use—they are more of an ‘E’ or ‘I’—de-escalates their emotion and lets them think of how to approach and solve a problem. It’s a helpful framework.” *Type and Coaching* (Hirsch & Kise, 2000) booklets and other resources to help leaders and teams develop an appreciation for different MBTI types were viewed positively by both coachees and coaches. One coachee commented: “It was

important to understand how I view things and take a guess at how other people are viewing things.”

Going through the MBTI in a team setting was beneficial for some clients. A coachee in a management position noted: “We did MBTI [and discovered] 80% of the organization is introverted and we have an extraverted job. How big of a step is it going to be for us to be an extraverted-acting organization with a group of introverts?”

Overall feedback about assessments used at the individual and team level was positive. In addition to MBTI, the DISC, VIA Signature (Character) Strengths, and GRIT assessments were noted as beneficial from both coachees and coaches.

Theme: Organization Infrastructure and Support

Having the coaches be from the company and be familiar with the organization was viewed positively. Clients appreciated the ability of internal coaches to provide a broader organization perspective to help answer a key question: “Is this a problem unique to me or one that you’re seeing in other areas?” Most clients, particularly those interested in career coaching or dealing with performance issues, viewed having a coach inside the organization, with an understanding of the company’s human resource processes, as being extremely advantageous. Another plus, viewed as a valuable resource, was the ability of the coaches to use their social network to connect clients with multiple contacts inside the organization. In specific matters

related to development and career growth, having an internal coach was viewed as especially helpful. Coaches were viewed as neutral parties by clients. In no cases did clients mention down sides or concerns about the coaches' being from inside the company.

Organizationally, the coaches' home department reports to an operations function. Coaches saw the benefits of being internal to the organization and not being in the HR function. Both coaches and clients felt the organization structure had the advantage of "being able to push back on HR" and positioned coaches as neutral colleagues. Coaches expressed that being internal to the organization had two potential areas of vulnerability:

- Because coaches operate in an overhead department, services are provided without visible cost charges to the client. The client may not equate internal coaching with the fair market value of an external coach.
- If for some reason the client has performance issues, no formal system would provide that information to the coach. The coaches do not have access to HR documentation of corrective action or performance. Coaches thought that could leave them at risk if someone was laid off or fired and the coachee attributed the result to the coach's actions.

Although some clients mentioned that their organizations were aware of the coaching they were receiving and were supportive, other clients felt the company as a whole

did not embrace the spirit of developmental coaching. Both coaches and coachees would like the company culture and language to be more aligned with voluntary, developmental coaching. Currently coaching carries with it a connotation that people “need to be coached” because of a deficiency, issue, or problem with performance. Clients and coaches noted, “You get coached when you are in trouble.” Because coaching is a service provided as part of the coach department’s employee involvement and development services, no separate budgets support client assessments, coach professional development, or other resources specifically targeting coaching. Coaches noted the lack of budget as a major barrier to providing coaching materials, resources, and tools to clients. Professional development for coaches and the lack of aesthetically pleasing private conference rooms for coaching sessions were also voiced as organizational limitations with no current funding or sponsorship by upper management.

Overview of Category: Outcomes and Results

Each client interviewed expressed multiple beneficial outcomes from coaching. Nearly all clients expressed skills improvement, increased confidence, heightened self-awareness, and fresh thinking as individual outcomes they experienced. When asked what was different compared to before coaching, clients responded, “I have more direction. I have a better process.” Others noted, “We made great strides in accomplishing goals this year.” Additionally, participants gave examples of specific behavioral changes and leadership development that transpired as a result of

coaching. Many clients shared positive feelings and emotions, or “affects,” such as hope, optimism, and excitement.

Ultimately, the questions most clients and coaches found more difficult to articulate were the tangible business results attributed to the coaching experience. Several clients commented that coaching was “priceless” and “intuitively valuable” and that they had noticed improvements in employee engagement and satisfaction survey scores even though they were not able to tie clearly a dollar amount or equivalent measurable result.

Clients commented that it was difficult to know what part of the results were tied specifically to coaching versus consulting work and subject-matter expertise provided by the coach as part of the coaching sessions. Several respondents gave specific tangible, measurable results they attributed to coaching. These figures were subsequently used to generate an ROI estimate. Others shared results that are not as easily translated to financial terms, such as positive changes to the work group climate.

Most conversations concluded with gratitude for the opportunity to be involved in the coaching process. The majority of respondents wanted to spread the word and suggested advertising the internal coaching services more prominently to more people within the organization.

The next sections provide detailed depictions of the subcategories within Outcomes and Results.

Theme: New Perspectives

Each of the 12 coachees interviewed pointed out outcomes related to new ways of thinking or looking at situations. One client said, “The coaching experience has opened my eyes a lot to the fact that there is more than one way to look at something or to review something.” Another client noted, “With this coaching experience there could be many opportunities, things you did not even know about when you first walked in. Your future can be whatever you determine it to be.” Coaching provides encouragement to “have a positive look at yourself; not everything is all gloom and doom.” One client mentioned how this fresh way of thinking “gave me a better perspective of being in control and ... finding a way to do something on my own.”

New ways of thinking related to topics including career and leadership. A client noted:

I guess it shifted my view of the importance of relationships in my career and in being an effective leader in the organization, [of] the need to work through relationships and influence as opposed to just [serving as] a positional power base.

Discovering different ways to look at situations and to develop potential solutions was a frequently stated outcome. Clients mentioned moving from “Yes, no, right, wrong, good, bad [binary thinking]” to seeing the “space between the answers.”

One client shared:

I had no idea how many times I had come to a solution and forced it into a binary answer, when in reality a better solution might have been somewhere in the middle. And that was a very big, very big aha moment.

A coach observed clients “being able to move ideas or processes to places they couldn’t before.” Another explained:

Coaching helps people discover themselves. They realize they may be looking at the wrong thing as the source of their discontent, their unhappiness. They may be blaming...you know, “my manager is such a jerk, I can’t stand it. He ruins my life every day and I’m so miserable.” Well let’s take a look at the whole situation, reframe it, consider other points of view. I think when people go through exercises like that and realize they are part of the problem themselves, just by listening to it, they become more productive.

Participant Perspectives: Coaching and Mentoring

Most clients had previously not had the opportunity to work with a coach.

Throughout the interviews, a few clients used the terms “mentoring” and “coaching” synonymously to indicate a blending of coaching and consulting roles provided by internal OD professionals. Several distinctions were also noted in client responses.

One client said, “Mentoring gives you hand holding whereas coaching gives you strengths improvement.” According to another, “Coaching is drawing upon what I have to help me think it through.” Still another client emphasized the practical approach: “A coach can say ‘snap out of it...quit whining...here is the situation, now look at it for what it is. How do you get past this?’”

Perhaps as one coachee expressed, both coaching and mentoring show value: “I think a lot of people promote the mentoring, but this (coaching) is a complementary and very valuable tool as well.”

Career Direction

An area specifically mentioned by over half of those interviewed was developing new ways of looking at a career. In interviews, clients talked about ways coaching has helped them view options for career development through expanded opportunities in current positions, at higher levels, and in other areas of the company. Two respondents were actively searching for jobs outside the company and stated that they are no longer looking outside as a result of the coaching experience. One coaching client explained,

I felt like I could only do what I really wanted to do outside of the company; that I would have to leave the company in order to meet some of my personal professional goals. Coaching taught me about binary thinking. I wasn't allowing myself that middle ground, that space in between.

Others related the following: “Through the use of questions, [my coach] gave encouragement to explore options,” and “I saw more opportunities for a path inside the company.” Another described the impact coaching had on the coachee’s career aspirations:

[Coaching] made me want to go into management. I feel better armed to deal with problems and build on successes. Knowing I have someone I know is in my corner that I can call on if I have issues or problems goes a long way for me. My experience with my coach, my

relationship with him, led me to believe that...having him behind me gives me the confidence that I'd like to continue as a manager.

Coaches observed how coaching got clients out of the victim mode and into the belief that "sure, I can start doing this." Several coaches shared stories of clients having courage to take more responsibility, enhanced leadership roles, and, in some cases, new roles in different departments they had not imagined. Expanded thinking provided ways for clients to envision and obtain positions more in line with their strengths and career aspirations.

Asking for Help

A number of coached individuals emphasized that they were grateful for the coaching services and that they are more comfortable asking for help now than before coaching. One commented, "As a result of coaching I realized that everyone needs help at certain times and I needed to ask." Another client reflected, "What's different is I think I have learned that don't be afraid to ask and somehow out there you will find an answer if you can just keep digging hard enough."

Theme: Self-Awareness, Confidence, and Appreciation of Strengths

In virtually all cases, clients mentioned greater self-awareness, appreciation of personal strengths, and increased confidence. A client stated, "My coach has helped me see my good points, my strong points and put that in motion to express that to my management and even the management above to help elevate me to that next level." Another explained, "My coach helped me see the good in what I do and how I bring it to the table here." A mid-career client commented, "I think the highlight is [coaching]

has given me a lot of confidence, inspiration, a more positive approach— rather than: ‘Hey, I am stuck in this rut—how do I get out?’ I have some techniques and resources.”

Comparisons of what was different since coaching showed shifts from “I don’t think I can do that. I don’t have that experience” to “Wow! I really do have some qualifications.” Comments from coachees showed evidence of being more self-assured: “I feel my confidence has come back.” A client in a leadership role commented, “I think I am more confident in different situations and in tough situations. My coach helped me get through some really, really crazy times, so that was very helpful. The timing couldn’t have been better.”

Some clients reflected that they are “realizing that there’s a lot more...always more area, more space to grow in...there is more to do if I choose and I do choose to do it.” Another client described the transformation: “Self-awareness—that was another teaching moment or a way that I grew.” Changes made as a result of coaching included a client’s assertion of “getting confident in my own strengths.” Another responded as follows: “My confidence has definitely grown. I’m a better leader.” A client comment captured a persistent theme: “I think the coaching gave me a lot of confidence and allowed me to do things I would not have done without a coach. It provided me with reinforcement and the prodding that I needed.”

Theme: Behavior Change

Clients provided examples of changes they have made in a variety of areas. Some of the more prevalent areas included risk taking, assertiveness, and time management.

People were at different stages of change and shared improvement as well as work in progress. One client noted the need to work on time management skills:

Sometimes I feel guilty I haven't done things. Like I know I should have made that list...or maybe goals. I don't always focus as well as I should. I think deep down I know I should do certain things but I don't really do it. I'm trying to work on that.

For another client, change brought about from the coaching agreement was ongoing:

“Interest [from coaching] is still accruing.” Another client provided this self-assessment about being

more positive, proactive, and a lot more aggressive about professionally approaching my manager about help to better understand what I need to do. I think it is hard for somebody to come out and say to a manager: “I am not being recognized but yet this is why.”

Often the new behavior highlighted new abilities: “I can present myself in a much better light in terms of my skills, my capabilities, my involvement outside of work and what I do as a person. I think managers need to know.” A mid-career client noted, “I am able to articulate my superior accomplishments in more detail now than 6 months ago.” Clients mentioned being “more brave now” and “having courage” to take risks.

At times the new behaviors brought new rewards: “It was really exciting to see that I took this risk, got out there, tried something different and got rewarded because it worked.” Some behavior changes included the client’s use of a coaching style that “helped me deal with my boss better; how I make statements, asking questions. Having a coach has helped me to recognize I can challenge but it is all in how you challenge.” Other examples pointed out techniques the coach used to help the client refocus, reframe, and redirect conversations that were helpful in client situations dealing with conflict, difficult people, and bullies.

A general comment of being more open minded came out in most interviews: “I am more patient now. I don’t judge people very quickly now like I used to.” An overall theme of awareness leading to behavior change was evident, as one client pointed out:

I think that what changed was a heightened awareness of how I have been operating and kind of a perspective that my natural inclination might be to go down a certain path but that I need to be more cautious about commitments so that I can make sure that I can always deliver.

Theme: Strategic Thinking

Comments from clients regardless of position reflected a growth in systems thinking and long term strategic approaches resulting from coaching. One client not in a management position commented, “My coach helped me think beyond 15 minutes.” Another provided a metaphor: “It’s like you are looking through a straw then you realize there is a lot more to the picture than what you see here.”

Examples of how coaching helped change task-oriented and tactical behaviors to strategic, relationship-oriented ways of leading were voiced. A manager described the changes:

Before coaching, I probably would've been working my day-to-day issues. You know, I gather all this work to do and I'm driving toward getting all that done. So when other changes are happening in the organization I would be busy on this lower level activity. And instead, since I've been participating in the coaching, I'm thinking at a higher level about what should the organization be doing, what does my leadership need and then I go engage with them and interact with them and contribute. So I'm contributing to some of the things that they need to have information on. Whereas before coaching I would've been really focused on executing my program.

Another manager explained a key learning gained from coaching: "Thinking about the end state and making sure my decision making is intentional enough to get me there." Several commented that "coaching helps your world view perspective, helps you work on two planes, our organization and the bigger company."

Themes tying strategic thinking and high engagement included a coaching style of "asking questions so you understand the bigger picture before you make a decision. Our tunnel vision/perception doesn't drive thoughts to get us to a better decision...bottom line." Reflections of how the coaching experience has an effect of bringing his thoughts and behaviors to a more strategic leadership level are characterized in this manager's reflection:

So, we [my coach and I] get together, think through some things and set some objectives. Maybe near-term I realize some things I could be doing. And we get back together, and I realize that I have increased

my performance in terms of leadership within the week or so in which we got together. And then I start getting focused more on operations and more details again.

Theme: Leadership

The category of leadership came up frequently in responses from clients and coaches.

Examples of thinking patterns, skills, and leadership behaviors developed through coaching were prominent in the interviews. Managers and those not in management positions described new ways of engaging others and being more effective in formal and emergent leadership roles. Developing emotional intelligence, engaging others, and setting high expectations were a few of the areas tied with leadership development. A client shared, “My coach helped me deal with perfectionism...to be grounded.” Coaches also reported that they developed better ways to lead, influence, and engage others as a result of the coaching experience.

Leadership Sub-Theme: Balancing Tasks and Relationships

To put this subcategory in context, the F-500 results-focused climate, technical problem solving nature, and bias for action encouraged task behaviors. Comments provided evidence of the need to balance priorities given to tasks and relationships.

I’m busy driving results, but the benefits of those results aren’t really well communicated. In terms of my relationship with a larger organization, sometimes I lose sight of some of those objectives in trying to provide results for the organization. So, one of the things that the coaching experience does for me is it causes me to—on a regularly scheduled basis—come back and say, “all right, where am I with respect to my overall objectives? Am I really bringing the organization best value in terms of my coordination and my leadership?” Because it’s not just enough to get the job done. The other “softer side” of leadership is something that I need to work to grow. And coaching brings me back to that, in terms of my objectives, so that I can keep it in front of me.

Several task and relationship elements of leadership's role in creating an engaging climate are captured in one manager's response:

One of the things the coaching experience has helped maybe elevate in my just general awareness is that I need to be a leader in the organization not just a performer in the organization. So, there's a lot that I contribute and a lot that my people contribute but those intangible things—how I conduct meetings, how I deal with people, suppliers and whatnot— in terms of how. Just the tone that I set really does affect the long-term performance of the organization.

Leadership Sub-Theme: Recognizing Success

Statements emphasized that coaching results included the importance of looking at accomplishments. A client reflected on the how the high degree of organization change and the focus on ever-more-challenging goals often created constant activity and prevented employees from stopping to recognize what was working:

You keep looking forward at what you still have to do and that list never stops growing...you don't see what you did...and you don't see it as an accomplishment because it didn't feel good. It was hard. There was no 'feel-good' to it. So you don't think it was an accomplishment because accomplishments usually feel good.

Through the strengths-based approaches used in coaching, clients frequently mentioned striving to recognize individual and team accomplishments. Comments expressed changes in the perspective to “value each team member and you have to let that be known” as well as to communicate success of individuals and the team.

Successful results were obtained using the SOAR framework when individuals and teams “highlighted in their words what they have accomplished as individuals and a team.” A leadership client's comments modeled an appreciative approach:

Everyone on the team brings something to that organization, to that group. It was up to me to let them know how appreciative I was of their efforts. So, I think the coaching experience has made me realize that I have all these people in my organization and I have to make the most of who I have, the people I have been given. Value each one of them, the work they do. Let them know, thank them, don't take any of them for granted.

Leadership Sub-Theme: Performance Management

For coachees in management roles, a frequent area targeted in coaching was performance management. Managers consistently provided positive results in this category. One manager commented:

I learned that giving positive reinforcement came easy and naturally to me but giving feedback on deficiencies was not. Rewarding was easy but providing feedback to low performers was not easy and I still haven't mastered that yet. The coaching provided did help.

Another manager noted, "I've been able to more effectively address individuals on individual performance issues in a manner that still maintains their self-esteem yet is very to the point about communicating expectations. I didn't go in with the same confidence level [before coaching]."

Again, coaching approaches worked well in performance management, as noted by a manager: "Learning how to ask questions...making them accountable by letting them hear what they are saying...what's been coming out of their own mouth."

Many positive comments explained how coaches provide neutrality and help clients deal with stressful situations and with people-related concerns. One client explained the benefit of having a neutral coach familiar with the company environment:

Being able to even just reference a coach during the difficult time or if you did have one employee you were having trouble dealing with... just being able to re-center and bounce these ideas off of somebody totally objective I think has been really advantageous. I think it would be advantageous for a larger group of people because right now I think people go to their manager and say “I have to deliver this bad news” and honestly they may not be the best person to tell you how to deal with a specific personality or issue. I think sometimes somebody that is more objective can look at it from the outside. Sometimes a manager might already have some preconceived notions that might jade how he/she responds.

On the theme of performance management, feedback emphasized the advantages of an internal coach familiar with company policies, procedures, and organization culture. Clients highlighted internal coaching as extremely beneficial. Coaches also revealed that being inside the company provided more time to spend on experimenting with possible ways to handle the performance concerns, providing opportunities for clients to test language through role-play scenarios, and, if needed, providing connections to trusted HR colleagues for additional support.

Theme: Communication

Coaching provided benefits to leaders and was particularly insightful for those transitioning to management roles. Coaches helped clients “share who I am as leader and how I can help.” Strategic direction and higher levels of engagement through improved communication realized through coaching approaches were often

mentioned. A client highlighted success achieved using strengths-focused approaches:

Appreciative inquiry has really helped me communicate better with my employees because when you are asking questions they are not so deflating. You're asking them in a different way. You're not deflating people from their efforts they have already put in.

Changed language and approaches to communicating expectations were frequently noted improvements from both client and coach responses. One manager explained:

I think the coaching helps because it keeps me from just saying "you've got to do it" to saying "how can we do it? How can we do it together? You are doing it. This is where we are doing it." So that you create the expectation but it is not dumping. And I think sometimes without realizing it, and we don't hear ourselves, we dump more than we expect. We think we are setting expectations but it feels more like we are dumping.

Improved individual and team relationships were frequently noted outcomes. Clients mentioned having healthier conversations than they did before coaching. Examples indicated the conversation may be up, down, or across the organization, from leader to employee, employee to leader, or peer to peer. A manager related upward communication improvements:

Well, probably one of the more frequent topics that comes up, not really by the coach's direction but by the coaching experience and my own introspection is maintaining communication and relationship with my leadership. Things that they need to know. I mean, when I think about it I know that they need to know that given thing, partly because if I were in their position, I would need that as well. But it causes me to connect more with their needs as leaders in the organization. So I can support them.

Another manager discussed communication with his employees:

In dealing with people reporting to me, I was better prepared to answer their questions. When I asked them to do something and I'd get a question why or what's the point in that I had a good answer for them instead of flying off the handle and saying "because I am the boss" or "because I told you to." There was dialogue, there was communication, and we maintained—built—a good relationship because I communicated and did things for them.

A manager discussed how improved communication led to improved employee survey results: "I had 100% positive feedback that I was getting good communication about specifically what was expected of people and how that related to the organizational goals and objectives (goal flowdown). So, I think that was a good outcome." A nonmanager reflected on improved upward communication:

I'm more positive, proactive, and a lot more aggressive about professionally approaching my manager about help to better understand what I need to do. I think it is hard for somebody to come out and say to a manager: "I am not being recognized but yet this is why."

Both clients and coaches shared the importance of improved listening and shared,

"I'm a better listener now." A client responded how his coach "helped me understand that people are different. Everybody wants to be heard...listen to the message."

Coaches reiterated their own improved listening skills and those of clients. A consistent theme of improvements and new appreciations for listening before reacting came up in interviews.

Theme: Change Management

Clients' roles in the organization spanned multiple disciplines and departments. As stated previously, F-500 has been undergoing major transformation in product and services mix, customer base, and ways of operating. Economic shifts have led to an increased emphasis on cost reduction and productivity improvement. At the same time, the need for innovation, growth, and speed to market is also present. Coachees were grateful to have coach availability and support to "help in challenging times." Clearly, new ways of operating with a focus on leadership and change management were topics clients targeted in coaching relationships. One manager shared the improved ways of leading change that she gained from the coaching experience:

I got better at listening, better at asking those questions, better at realizing they [my group] were really going through change. Everyone does it in their own time in their own way. When I started looking at my team and realized they were in transition and change mode I could be more patient with them. That was broader thinking for me because I was thinking "they pay you this much money, so just move on, get over it!"

Work-life balance and managing the tensions in a high change environment were evident: "I was given this responsibility with high expectations for change and yet still have this group of people I very much want to represent and care for and lead."

Both coaches and client agreed that the coaching experience helped bring focus to the multitude of changes going on in the organization. Additionally, the coaching agreement provided an outlet to discuss tension, stress, and general work environment.

Theme: High Engagement Coaching Climate

Results from coaching approaches used with individuals and teams emphasized an improved and more engaged climate leading to culture change in the organization.

Individual coaching led to using a coaching approach with teams. A client offered the following explanation:

We asked open-ended questions and the team compiled answers. You realize when you are together and you have that open-ended conversation the potential of the people you have. It was a much more structured, focused look at who we are and who we can become.

A coachee talked about how he enhanced engagement from his employees through questions and dialogue:

My coach encouraged me to always get their [my team's] involvement by asking them how we should go forward...asking them what do you think we should do. Asking questions, making sure they are part of the process and encouraging dialogue asking each one what they think as problems come up. Make sure they are part of that whole thing.

One response demonstrated the willingness to share the positive experiences of coaching with others to create a coaching climate: "I find myself wanting to coach others [and ask] 'what if you thought about things in a different way?'...to help people along their own path with what I've learned. And before I'd just keep my mouth shut."

Theme: Positive Affect**Hope, Courage, and Bravery**

Clients displayed positive emotions when speaking of the coaching process. For example, the word “hopeful” frequently showed up as well as synonyms emphasizing an optimistic view of the future or the “inspirational” role of the coach. Coachees commented, “Sometimes when you are just down and want to hear some good things. My coach gives me good things.” Another emphasized, “I feel like there is always somebody I can ask for help. It shifts my view. It is kind of hopeful.” Some coachees expressed that coaching “makes you feel happy inside.”

Some coachees come into the coaching agreement feeling that they are unappreciated or stuck in a current role or position. Coaching provides a constructive way to deal with those feelings, as evidenced by a client with over 20 years of experience: “The last couple of years have been really discouraging. Hopefulness is a good adjective. I’m a lot more hopeful now. I do have a lot of potential. The company needs skilled people with a knowledge base like [mine].”

Energy, Excitement, and Sense of Belonging

Energy and enthusiasm were also noted as outcomes of coaching: “It [coaching] continually keeps me pumped up to contribute at a higher level.” The effects of coaching went beyond individuals to impact the group and organization level, as shown in this coachee’s statement: “[Coaching] created energy for new direction, strategic change, transition—we have a lot more excited group.”

The personal impact of coaching was reflected in a client’s observation: “To meet a coach and to know there’s a group who focuses on how we interact with one another bolstered me into wanting to stay and feeling like I belonged and could have an impact. Powerful.”

Theme: Business Results

Table 10 summarizes tangible and intangible results participants identified in interviews and surveys.

Table 10. Tangible and Intangible Business Results

Tangible Business Results	Intangible Business Results
Productivity Improvement	Understanding of Self
Cost Reductions (Savings)	Understanding of Others
Process Improvement	Improved Relationships
Decreased Attrition	Improved Teamwork
Goal Accomplishment	Improved Career Direction
Increased Throughput	Leadership Development
Performance Improvement	Increased Employee Engagement
Increased Employee Satisfaction	Work/Life Balance; Less Stress
	Able to Help Others (“pass it on”)

Return on Investment

Return on investment goes beyond satisfaction surveys and behavior changes into tangible business measure (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005). Generally accepted return on investment calculations assess the costs incurred as well as the benefit received (Anderson, 2003; Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Phillips & Phillips, 2007). The formula accepted in organization development and training business literature is

$$ROI = \left(\frac{Benefits - Costs}{Costs} \right) \times 100$$

All respondents did not submit measures of impact. The ROI calculation is conservative in that it assumes no response equates to no benefit. Only hard measures that could be carefully quantified and directly tied to business results were used to calculate benefits for the coaching research study. If results were tangible yet not easy to translate to financial benefit, they were excluded from the reported figures. The calculation accounts for three business results:

- Productivity improvement
- Cost reductions
- Retention

For each stated business benefit, respondents were asked for two additional pieces of information that were then used to ensure that the values were realistic:

- Degree of confidence in the figure (0–100%)
- Percentage of the result attributed to coaching (0–100%).

In other words,

Benefit = Business Result x degree of confidence in figure x percent of result attributed to coaching

All reported benefits were then totaled for use in the ROI formula. To assess the return, the total costs of the coaching experience were captured and then subtracted from the total benefits.

Costs included the following:

- Total coach time spent in coaching multiplied by a standard labor rate
- Total coachee time spent in coaching multiplied by a standard labor rate
- Total material costs for books and resources
- Total tuition and fees associated with the coach training

The researcher erred on the side of overestimating costs and underestimating benefits to produce a conservative ROI figure. To keep competitive rates private, detailed figures are not presented.

Using the data provided in individual interviews and accepted methods to calculate ROI (Anderson, 2003; Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Phillips & Phillips, 2007), the ROI for executive and professional coaching in this study equals 1037% or, more simply, for every dollar invested in coaching, \$10.37 was returned in benefit.

Additional Business Results

Areas identified earlier in this chapter capture personal and team development, new perspectives, and behavior changes. Results that were not easy to translate into benefits and substantiating quotes were identified in the study and not included in ROI figures:

- Achieving individual-, team-, and department-level goals
- Maintaining workload (throughput) with reduced staff
- Learning how to coach others
- Leadership development
- Improved employee survey scores

One leader commented: “I did have very good survey scores last time around in a couple areas, and some of those were a result of coaching. One was specifically revolved around employee engagement. I improved my score there.” In some areas, respondents mentioned increased numbers and types of lean projects sparked by employee engagement, fresh thinking, and risk taking. Overall coaching was viewed as positive, good for relationships, and helpful to drive business results.

Quantitative Survey Results

To test the hypothesis that self-efficacy as measured by the General Self-Efficacy scale is higher in a coached group than in group not being coached, the researcher used two sample *t*-tests for the GSE totals as well as for the GSE averages (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). A mean GSE (average score) and composite GSE (sum score),

using the 10 GSE items, were used to evaluate the hypothesis H1, that the overall GSE of the coached group is higher than that of the group not coached. H1 was not supported because the calculated p-values were not statistically significant.

GSE Coached vs. Not Coached Group

Table 11 shows a General Self-Efficacy Survey (GSE) for all research participants. It includes the sample size (N), mean, and standard deviation (StDev) values of the GSE scores for the coached and the not coached groups and resulting p-values.

Table 11. Coached and Not Coached GSE Scores

	Coached	Not coached	Coached	Not coached	Coached	Not coached	Two sample t-test
GSE Item	N	N	Mean	Mean	StDev	StDev	p-value
1 I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	28	28	3.36	3.26	0.56	0.86	0.235
2 If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	28	28	3.04	2.84	0.43	0.58	0.045*
3 It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	28	28	3.21	3.10	0.63	0.65	0.345
4 I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	28	28	3.39	3.35	0.57	0.55	0.500

Table 11 continues

	Coached	Not coached	Coached	Not coached	Coached	Not coached	Two sample t-test
GSE Item	N	N	Mean	Mean	StDev	StDev	p- value
5 Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	27	28	3.30	3.35	0.61	0.49	0.658
6 I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	28	28	3.61	3.55	0.50	0.51	0.299
7 I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	28	27	3.25	3.37	0.59	0.61	0.767
8 When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	27	27	3.33	3.33	0.62	0.71	0.417
9 If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	28	28	3.50	3.45	0.51	0.51	0.300
10 I can usually handle whatever comes my way	26	28	3.62	3.48	0.50	0.51	0.300
Composite GSE (ten items)	24	26	33.71	32.81	3.48	4.14	0.200
Mean GSE (ten items)	28	28	3.36	3.30	0.36	0.41	0.289

GSE Item Source (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)

The researcher evaluated the GSE scores item-by-item and found a statistically significant difference ($p=.045$) for item 2: “If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.” This difference may be explained by the “Not at

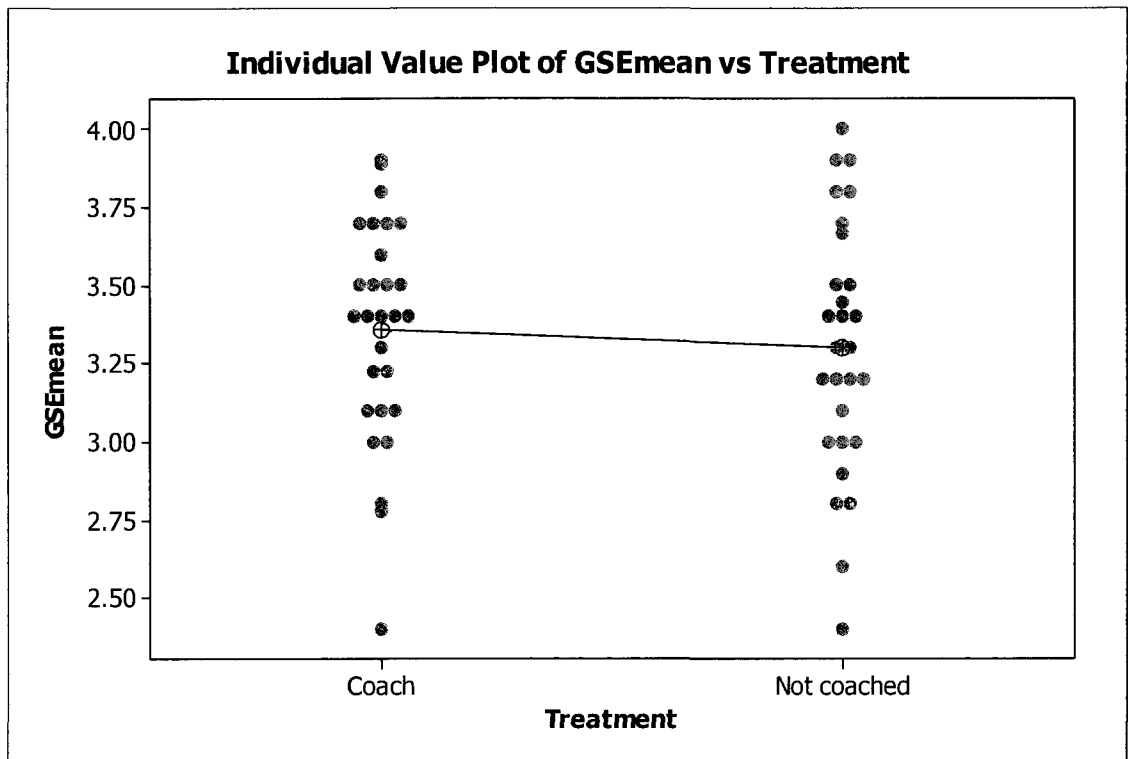


Figure 12. Individual Value Plots of GSE Means

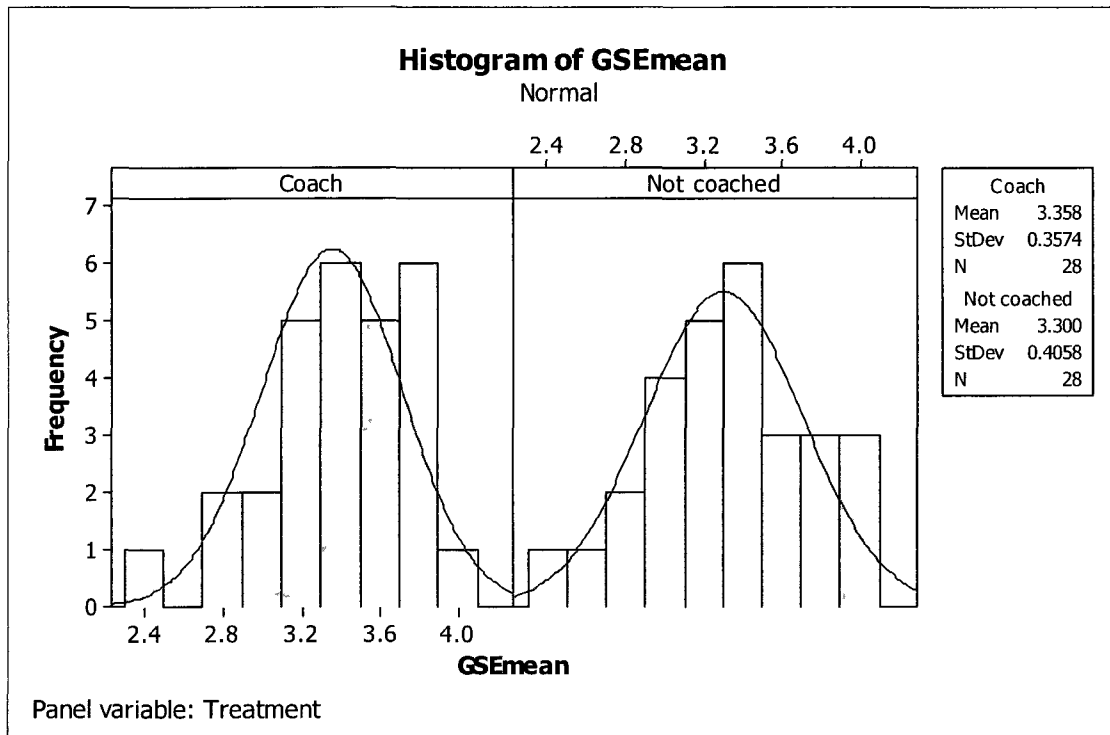


Figure 13. Histograms of GSE Means

Survey item 25 captured the number of months the client had been in the coaching relationship. The histogram displaying the coached group duration of months in the coaching agreement appears normally distributed, ranging from clients in the first month of coaching to those engaged nearly 2 years. On average, the clients in this study had been in a coaching relationship 10 months (Figure 14).

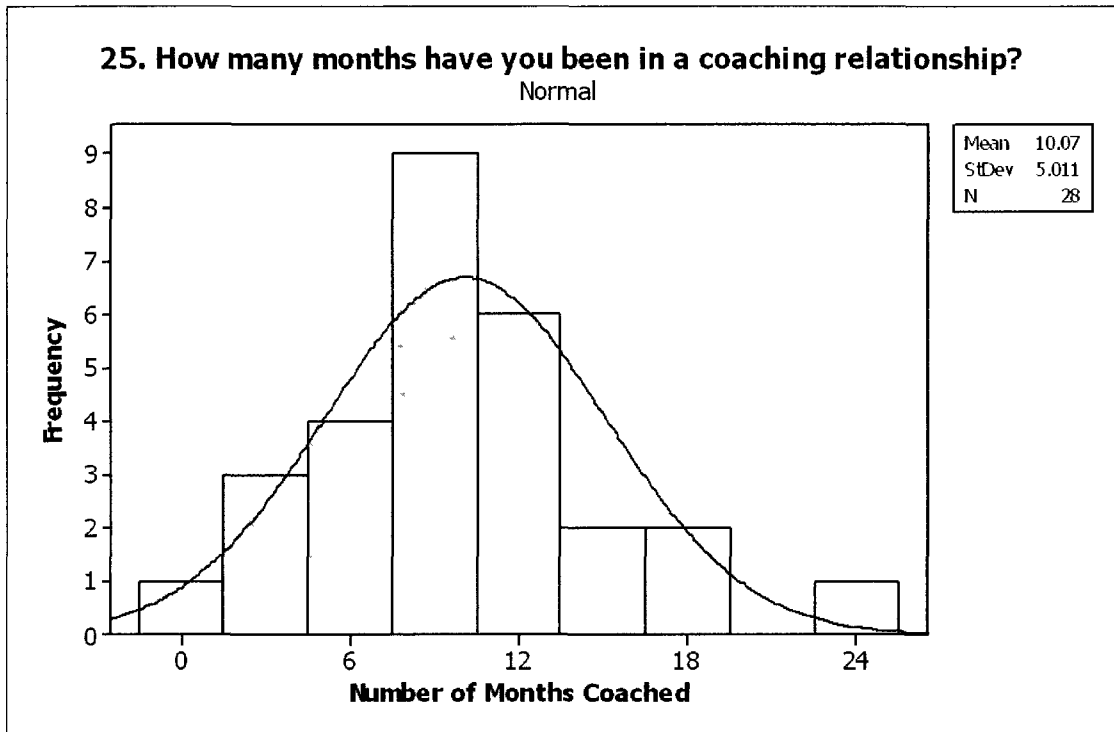


Figure 14. Number of Months in a Coaching Relationship

Looking solely at the coached group, a scatter plot of average GSE scores (Mean GSE) plotted by number of months in the coaching relationship reveals a positive—and possibly nonlinear—correlation (Figure 15).

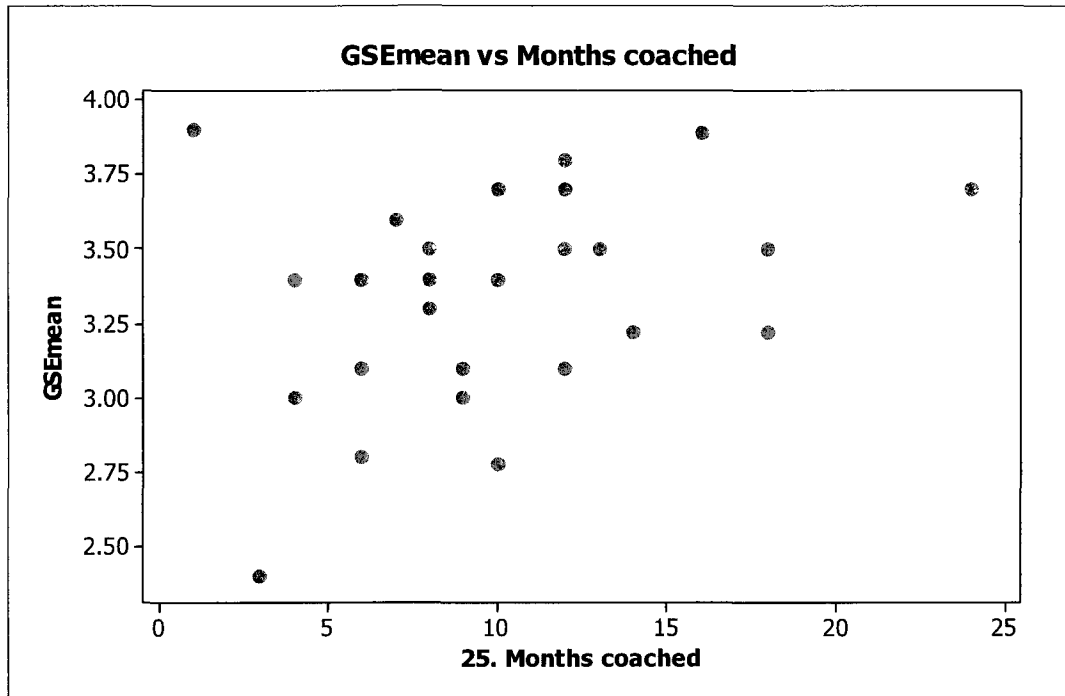


Figure 15. GSE Mean Scores vs. Months in a Coaching Relationship

Coached Group - Additional Survey Items

All averages from the eight coaching-specific items (Leonard-Cross, 2010) rated from 1, “Not at all true,” to 4, “Exactly true,” were above 3, with averages ranging from 3.46–3.93 displayed in Table 12. For these scaled items, half had ratings of “Moderately true” and “Exactly true” only. In all instances, no more than 11% (3/28) answered in the lower half of the scale (“Not at all true” or “Hardly true”).

Table 12. Summary of Coaching Survey Item Results

Survey Item	N	Mean	StDev
16. I would recommend coaching to others.	28	3.93	0.26
11. I feel coaching has had a positive impact on me personally.	28	3.82	0.39
12. Coaching has given me skills I will continue to use.	28	3.79	0.42
18. I felt that coaching positively challenged me.	28	3.75	0.44
17. Coaching has given me a greater understanding of myself.	27	3.67	0.62
13. I feel more confident in my abilities due to being coached.	28	3.54	0.64
15. I have made positive changes to my life due to being coached.	28	3.50	0.75
14. Coaching has helped give me a clearer career direction.	28	3.46	0.69

Higher Rated Items

The positive responses support the hypothesis that coaching is value added for clients.

All responses rated 3 or 4 for item 11, “I feel coaching has had a positive impact on me personally,” item 12, “Coaching has given me skills I will continue to use,” item 16, “I would recommend coaching to others,” and item 18, “I feel that coaching positively challenged me.” The fact that 98% of respondents would recommend coaching to others is particularly powerful.

Items Rated Less Favorably

Item 13, “I feel more confident in my abilities due to being coached,” and item 17, “Coaching has given me a greater understanding of myself,” both generated two

“Hardly true” responses. One of those responses can be explained by a respondent indicating that it was early in the coaching agreement. This participant also rated GSE items consistently low.

Because many clients mentioned career planning as an area of focus in coaching sessions, the result that 3 out of 28 respondents answered “Hardly true” to item 14, “Coaching has helped give me a clearer career direction,” warrants exploration. After further analysis, the respondent rating item 15, “I have made positive changes to my life due to being coached,” as “Not at all true” was a client who had been coached for 3 months and was not in an agreement.

Qualitative Client Survey Items

Using the interview data allowed the researcher to add customized items to the online survey for the client group. One such item asked clients to check skills and capabilities they developed as a result of coaching. Figure 16 shows frequencies and cumulative percentages for responses in each category based on the sample of 28 respondents (n=28).

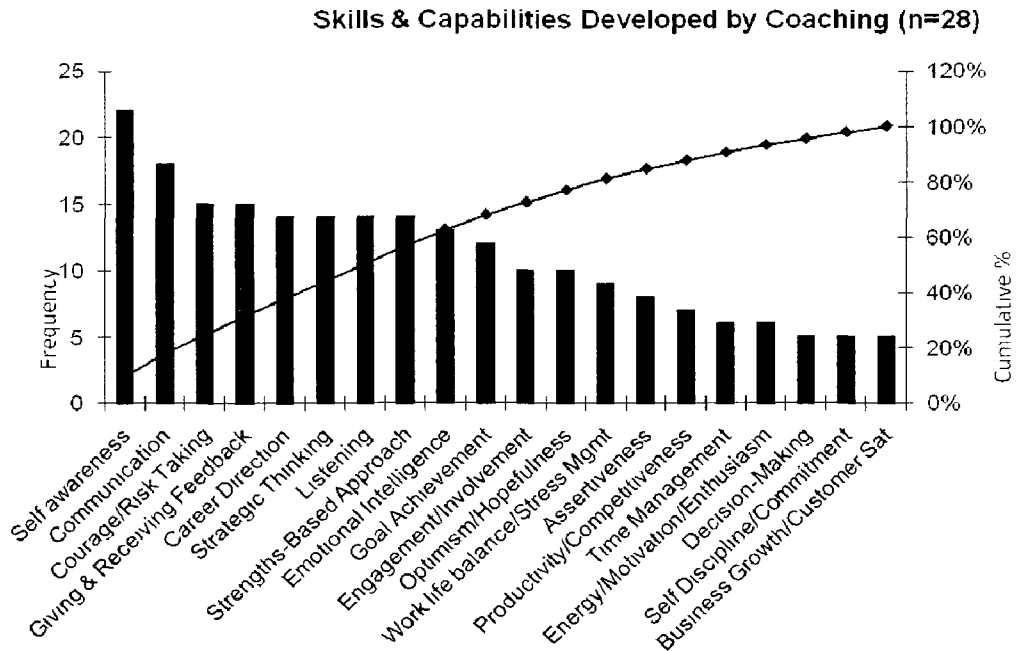


Figure 16. Pareto Chart of Skills Developed or Improved Through Coaching

Qualitative feedback from the interviews frequently indicated increased self-confidence and feelings from participants that they can accomplish tasks with more confidence than before coaching. Additionally, qualitative data emphasized that coaching was an eye-opening experience that prompted new ways of looking at situations and dealing with difficulties. Furthermore, for the multiple selection item 20, “Please select skills and capabilities you developed/improved as a result of coaching,” coached clients chose at least two choices (developed or improved) in all cases and four or more 89% (25/28) of the time. The top four selections were Self-Awareness (22/28), Communication (18/28), Courage/Risk Taking (14/28), and Giving and Receiving Feedback (14/28). The next four items, Career Direction,

Strategic Thinking, Listening, and Strengths-focused Approach, each received 13/28 responses. Additional categories were consistent with feedback received in the one-on-one interviews.

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

Both the qualitative and quantitative results indicated that clients found coaching a beneficial experience and would recommend the coaching process to others. Many of the quantitative items were supported by comments. The combination of interview and survey data showed that coaching performed by internal, credentialed coaches had value for clients and the organization.

Although ratings of the coached group were higher than the those of the group not being coached for 7 of the 10 GSE items (greater in 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10; less in 5, 7; and equal for item 8), the composite and average GSE did not differ significantly from a statistical perspective.

Summary

This chapter provided the results of the research study, including key themes from client and coach interviews and their supporting comments. It examined descriptive statistics and hypothesis tests relating to research questions. It provided an overall comparison of quantitative and qualitative results and presented the tangible and intangible business benefits and resulting ROI of 1037%. The next chapter includes a discussion of the results and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

The intent of this study is to add to the field of executive and professional coaching by using scientific methods to explore the tangible and intangible results derived from internal coaching relationships. Although the body of coaching research studies is growing, robust action research showing the business benefit of internal executive and professional coaching is rare. This research study uses a mixed-methods approach with clients and coaches to provide a holistic view of what works in the coaching process and what benefits are realized within a large company referred to as F-500.

The research compares the general self-efficacy of coached and not coached individuals using a valid GSE instrument, as well as interviews and surveys, to assess value received from coaching. The results of this research contribute evidence to the OD and coaching fields by demonstrating that the ROI of coaching provided by internal OD professionals is substantial not only in terms of financial benefit but also in terms of human capital investment. The blended approach of coaching combined with consulting sheds light on how internal coaching experiences may differ from those derived from external coaching. Coaching approaches aligned with organization strategies, supported by organization climate and culture, and true to humanistic values are suggested. This study also reflects on the complexities and challenges of scholar-practitioner research performed inside a company. The research serves as a

preliminary attempt to gather baseline data about the perceived value and affiliated business results of voluntary executive and professional coaching provided by internal coaches.

Research Hypotheses

Two hypotheses guided the research process:

- H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.
- H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

Summary of Findings

H1: General self-efficacy of employees in voluntary coaching agreements is higher than that of employees not in coaching agreements.

To evaluate this hypothesis, GSE scores were compared for a group of individuals engaged in a coaching agreement (experimental) and a group of individuals not in a coaching agreement (control). Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) recommend analyzing GSE using either a sum or a mean score. Scores may be used as long as no more than 3 of the 10 GSE responses are missing. In this study, the researcher used the composite GSE (sum scores) as well as the mean GSE (average scores). Using two sample *t*-test comparisons, the calculated *p*-values were .20 and .29 respectively, showing results that are not statistically significant. The first hypothesis was not supported by this study. It may be noted, however, that both the coached and the

control groups in this study had composite GSE scores that were significantly higher than the comparable norms for the American adult population, where the mean equals 29.48, the standard deviation equals 5.13, and the sample size (N) equals 1594. (Schwarzer, 2009).

H2: The internal coaching process is value added to participants.

Interviews with coaches and coaching clients, a calculated ROI of 1037%, and survey data from coaching clients show positive results. Evidence supports this hypothesis.

Discussion H1: Self-efficacy

The lack of statistical significance in general self-efficacy scores of the coached and not coached groups did not provide quantitative evidence that GSE is significantly higher in the coached group. This result was surprising because increased self-efficacy is frequently tied to positive psychology and executive and professional coaching published work. Self-efficacy is tied to health (Bandura, 1997; Schwarzer, 1992), improved performance (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), career decision-making, and career development (Betz & Hackett, 1986; Lent & Hackett, 1987). Research on executive and middle managers in Norway showed coaching had significant positive effects on self-efficacy (Moen & Allgood, 2009). A quasi-experimental design by Leonard-Cross provided evidence of increased self-efficacy in clients as a result of coaching using GSE (2010).

In this study, qualitative feedback received in individual interviews with coaching clients and coaches frequently stated that confidence, the feeling that tasks can be accomplished, and leadership development were positively impacted by coaching. The online survey responses showed that self-awareness, increased courage, and risk taking were frequently listed as skills and capabilities developed by coaching. Open-ended responses supported coachees' developing a broader scope of alternatives and increased confidence in handling difficult situations. The lack of statistical significance seemingly conflicts with the largely positive qualitative responses—evaluated using keywords and concepts tied to self-efficacy—received from coachees and coaches.

For H1, three areas of additional exploration are needed:

- Revisit the applicability of general self-efficacy.
- Evaluate the choice of instrument used to measure general self-efficacy.
- Revisit the quasi-experimental design and participant selection.

Revisit the Applicability of General Self-efficacy

The first area of exploration relates to the hypothesis that general self-efficacy for coached clients would be significantly higher than for individuals not being coached.

Is this a valid hypothesis? Self-efficacy is a widely published concept in psychology and OD literature (Bandura, 1997; Luthans, et al., 2007; Schwarzer, 1992; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Self-efficacy is a belief or perception about oneself. Bandura contends that “people guide their lives by their beliefs of self efficacy”. He defines

perceived self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (1997, p. 3). The keyword “perceived” is interesting to note because self-efficacy is a belief or judgment of one’s ability to organize or execute performance. To measure perceived self-efficacy, statements with formats starting with “I can...” before a choice are typically used.

Bandura contrasts outcome expectancies as “judgments of the likely consequence such performances will produce” (1997, p. 21). Anticipated outcomes depend on how well people believe they will perform. Figure 17 (Bandura, 1997, p. 22) depicts the relationship:

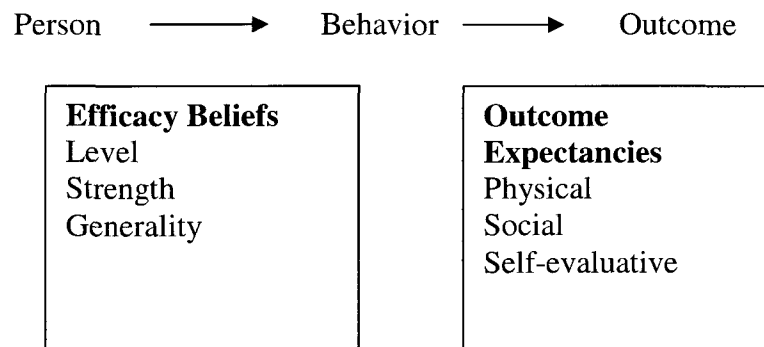


Figure 17. Efficacy Beliefs and Outcome Expectancies

General self-efficacy is “designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life” (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Given the wide range of objectives for developmental coaching, general self-efficacy seemed appropriate for this study. It may be interesting to examine a better way to evaluate

self-efficacy changes in coached and not coached groups that may be attributed to coaching interventions.

An area worthy of further examination is how GSE changes over time and if there is a critical time increment (e.g., number of months) for GSE to significantly change throughout the coaching agreement. Visual plots of composite and mean GSE scores and months coached (see Figure 15) show a positive relationship.

It may also be valuable to explore how a baseline GSE score of a client compares to the client's GSE at critical points throughout the coaching agreement. Pre- and post-measures could show the changes on a client-by-client basis in addition to comparing composite or average scores to those of a control group.

Evaluate the Choice of Instrument Used to Measure General Self-efficacy

The GSE (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) is a known instrument used to assess general self-efficacy. GSE is widely available, with permission granted to use and freely reproduce the scale for research. In this study, the instrument provided logical statements and realistic measures of potential coaching outcomes. The GSE seemed like the best fit because it was free, easy to implement, and had previously shown reliable and valid results. Does the 4-point scale provide enough discrimination to detect small amounts of variation in scores? Even though the 4-point scale of the instrument has been noted as a possible limitation (Leonard-Cross, 2010) at the time

of the research design formulation, the instrument appeared to be a good fit for the intent of this study.

For future studies, expanding the scale of the instrument using a 5- or 7-point scale to provide greater discrimination may be helpful. Alternative instruments may be considered, such as the NGSE (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001) used in Dingman's research on executive coaching and job-related attitudes (2004). Table 13 compares the GSE (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) with the NGSE (Chen et al., 2001).

Table 13. Comparison of General Self-efficacy and New General Self-efficacy Instruments

GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE (GSE)				NEW GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE (NGSE)				
Likert-type scale where 1=Not at all true and 4=Exactly true.				Likert-type scale where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.				
Not at all true	Hardly true	Moderately true	Exactly true	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.			1.	I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.			
2.	If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.			2.	When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.			
3.	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.			3.	In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.			
4.	I am confident that I could deal effectively with unexpected events.			4.	I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.			
5.	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.			5.	I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.			
6.	I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.			6.	I am confident that I can perform effectively on many difficult tasks.			
7.	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.			7.	Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.			
8.	When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.			8.	Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.			
9.	If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.							
10.	I can usually handle whatever comes my way.							

Source: Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp. 35–37). Windsor, England: NFER-NELSON.

Source: Chen, G., Gully, S. M., & Eden, D. (2001). Validation of a new general self-efficacy scale. *Organizational Research Methods*, 4(1), 62–83.

Alternate measures such as Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007), which captures self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, could be used to compare the control and experimental groups in future studies and to assess sustainable impact.

Revisit the Quasi-experimental Design and Participant Selection

H1 was not confirmed with the quantitative data. Research participation in the experimental and control groups was voluntary. The control group participants were referred by the coaches as potential candidates for coaching agreements. The overall average GSE in the control group was 3.30 on a 4-point scale. Perhaps the control group started off with higher self-efficacy scores than random F-500 employees. To fully understand how self-efficacy of coached clients compares to those not in coaching agreements, a random selection of employees, including those unknown to the coaching organization, could be used in future research. It is possible that F-500 employees in general have greater self-efficacy scores than the general population does because of the high focus on continuing education and personal development within F-500. The means obtained in this study could be compared to norm GSE scores to see if scores at F-500 are significantly higher in both groups.

A research design that distinguishes between survey response GSE ratings of those interviewed and not interviewed could point out differences. The overall mean for the coached group was 3.358. Incorporating respondent tracking, perhaps using a code or identifier that maintains anonymity yet shares connection to link GSE with interview responses, may provide more depth beyond the GSE scores for subsets within the

coached group. Additional provisions to collect pre- and post-study measures of GSE would add insight to changes in self-efficacy over time.

Discussion H2: Value of Internal Coaching

The responses received from clients and coaches during individual interviews provided numerous examples and descriptions of value-added elements of the coaching experience. Both tangible and intangible results were provided. Synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative data served as the basis for the proposed model of the internal coaching experience shown in Figure 18.

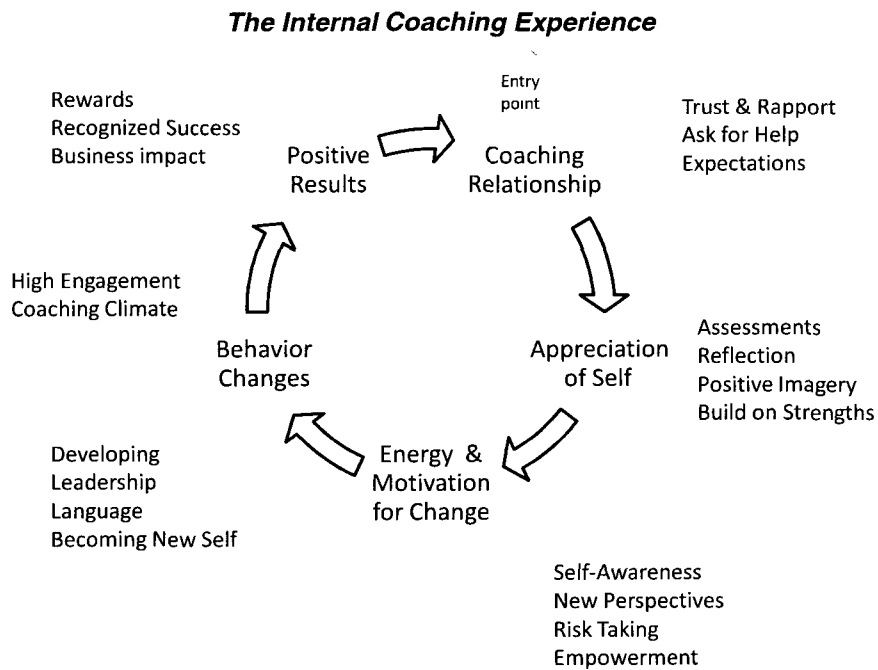


Figure 18. First Draft—Model of the Internal Coaching Experience

The entry point in the model follows a top-of-a-clock orientation. Clients may enter into the coaching relationship, engage with the coach, reflect, gain new perspectives, build up energy to change, make changes, experience learning points, realize positive results, and then choose to exit the coaching process. At a later point in time, the client may reengage and enter a new phase of coaching. Entry, exit, and reentry points are relative to client needs; they may occur at different times based on coaching purposes and goals. A model depicting the morphing, flexible, dynamic, and developmental nature of coaching is presented as a developmental spiral in Figure 19.



Figure 19. Developmental Spiral Depiction of the Internal Coaching Experience

Use of Self

In addition to the model, a key finding related to the coach's use of self as a value-added element of the coaching experience emerged. Use of self may be described as "the conscious use of one's whole being in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is presenting" (Jamieson et al., 2010, p. 5). The very nature of coaching requires listening skills and the ability to connect with the coaching client. As an internal coach, knowing about the company culture, strategies, and nature of the business provides a common basis to form the coach-client relationship and to relate fully to the client's world. The ICF core competencies align with and provide ways for coaches to consciously use full self. By co-creating the relationship with the client, the coach demonstrates coaching presence and develops a bond with the client. Interview responses from coaches emphasized adapting to the clients' needs and being flexible to be "in the moment" with clients as elements leading to successful coaching outcomes. Assessments, tools, and processes support the coach as well, but the essence of "meeting the client where they are" entails conscious use of self. When coaches demonstrate seeing, knowing, and doing, they are actually "being" coaches. As coaches move from functionality to efficacy and ultimately mastery, what works in the coaching process will be easier to assess and possibly predict.

Coaches View Inside the System

Both clients and coaches valued having coaches from inside the organization who were part of the system the client experiences within the organization. The clients

could explain how company-related systems and processes, organization structure, or measures in place were affecting them, and the coaches understood the acronyms, objectives, and industry terms. Because the coaches were in a department inside the system yet not part of HR, clients felt safe sharing issues and concerns.

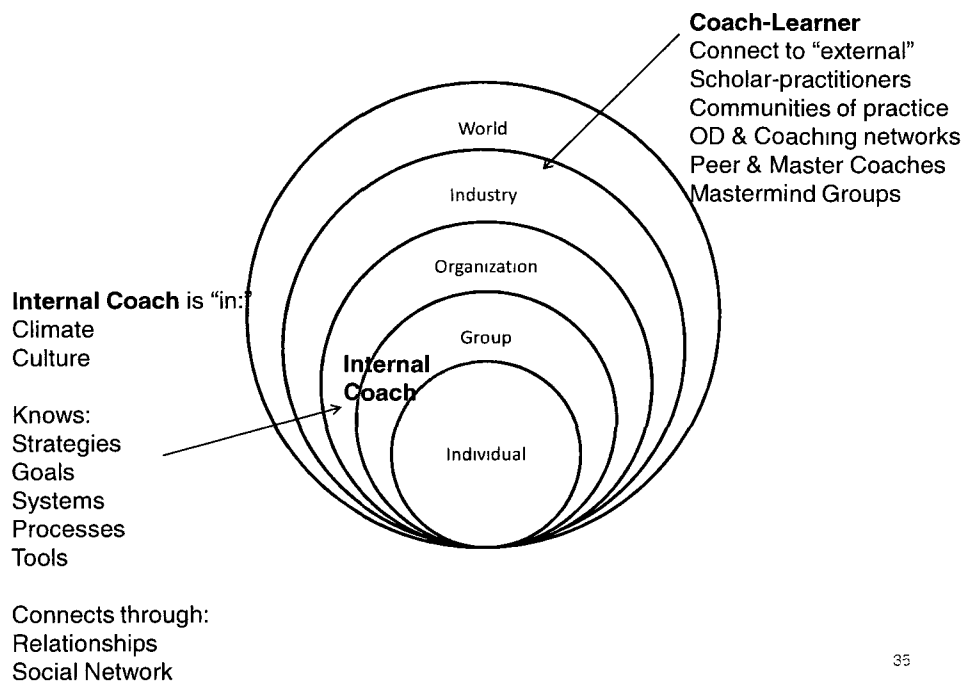
Coaches felt that being inside the company helped them to understand the strategies, people involved, organization design, organization culture, and climate that make up the clients' world. Additionally, coaches could leverage the key learning points with other coaches located throughout the company without compromising competitive or proprietary information.

Connections made through social networks were valued by clients and coaches.

Clients, particularly those exploring career options, appreciated virtual introductions to colleagues within the company that could help them learn and grow. Both clients and coaches believed that personal networking was a powerful intangible benefit associated with coaching. A theme that the solutions exist within F-500 and with an expanded social network, making the solution easier to find emerged from the research.

To complement the internal company systems view, the coaches in this study actively participate in professional organizations outside F-500 and regularly read academic and practitioner articles on coaching. The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD)

Executive and Professional Coaching program, relationships with peer coaches and master coaches, and participation in a UTD Cohort Mastermind group provide opportunities to learn about coaching from outside sources. Figure 20 illustrates the connection of the internal coach to the coaching stakeholders from the individual client to the world at multiple levels in the system.



35

Figure 20. Internal Coach Systems View

Continual Development

All coaches in this study completed an accredited coach training program and earned recognized coaching Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credentials through the ICF.

The standardized approach and level of professional skills of all coaches strengthened

this study and minimized variations in coach experience levels. Clients commented on the professionalism and high competence of the coaches.

A topic of concern identified in coach interviews was how to develop and advance coaching skills and practices to reach mastery levels such as the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) or Master Certified Coach (MCC) ICF credentials. Mastery skills in both consulting and coaching were labeled important because the two go hand in hand with multipurpose internal executive and professional coaching. Bandura believed that developing mastery skills was one of the ways to increase self-efficacy (1997). Developing communities of practice with internal coaches or developing relationships with external coaches may serve to share knowledge and get fresh ideas. Keeping current with scholar-practitioner research and articles on coaching practices was also deemed necessary. For internal coaches, building a business case and aligning with the company strategic direction may be the best way to ensure funds are budgeted for continued coach development and sustainability in the coaching process.

Creating a coaching climate within the organization will build the infrastructure to support and advance internal coaching. Anthony Buono stated, “The leader’s job is to set the climate” (Buono, 2010). Research reinforces the importance of the leader’s role in forming a coaching climate and culture and in developing the environment for an organization that continually learns (Hipkiss, 2006; Hunt & Weintraub, 2007).

Developing coaching managers inside the organization is a viable way to expand coaching practices and to help the organization learn and grow (Hunt & Weintraub, 2011).

Combinations of Coaching, Consulting, and Other Development

Consistent with Levenson's research (2009), respondents found it hard to differentiate whether business results were obtained through coaching or other combinations of efforts, such as consulting, team development, leadership development, and lean events. Clients mentioned that coaching definitely played a role in producing business results, particularly group- and organization-level results that were more directly related to the client's scope of responsibility. Several other factors, such as lean events, organization structure, cost-reduction initiatives, and process and procedure refinement at the F-500 company, were also thought to contribute. The environment of rapid change confounded effects of several simultaneous initiatives and made it difficult to assess the impact of coaching. Although no easy solution to this dilemma emerged, future efforts to ask clients and coaches to provide input on ways to capture and communicate results may produce new measures of success.

Internal coaches and clients shared that the roles of coach, consultant, and subject-matter expert sometimes blur. Role clarity and strict distinction of coaching versus consulting may be more important to academic and professional coaching community articles than to actual practice within the organization. Clients appreciated the combination of offerings and roles coaches took on to help them develop. The

coaches involved in the research were interested in the consulting, coaching, and even teaching roles that were valued by clients. Research supports the blending of skills and adaptation of roles commonly discussed in OD and process consultation literature. Joo (2005) used the words “coaching” and “consulting” interchangeably (p. 468).

Block’s consulting skills (2000) include contracting, diagnosis, feedback, and ethics, principles frequently discussed in coaching literature. Schein (2009, 2000) described the “helping roles” of consultant and coach. Clients in this study used the terms “mentor,” “coach,” and “OD consultant” synonymously and found value in the relationship, regardless of the naming convention.

The fact that 98% of respondents would recommend coaching to others is a particularly powerful indication that the internal coaching process is indeed healthy. The client survey results align with and exceed scores from a previous coaching study that showed positive results (Leonard-Cross, 2010).

Communication to Market Coaching Success

The ROI for executive and professional coaching in this study is 1037%. In other words, for every dollar invested in coaching, \$10.37 was returned in benefit. The research study had no particular target for ROI of coaching inside F-500 to use as a benchmark. The calculated ROI compared favorably with the ROI statistics

mentioned previously from the following published coaching-related research studies outside F-500:

570% (McGovern et al., 2001)

788% (Anderson, 2003)

200% (Kearns, 2006)

689% (Parker-Wilkins, 2006)

1700%, 17X (Rock & Donde, 2008b)

Additionally, the figure was favorable when compared to current interest rates, opportunity cost, and industry financial returns on investment. To help develop coaching, the internal coaching community can use the 1037% ROI figure to publicize results and build organization-level support.

Limitations

Generalizability of Study

Because this research was a case study at one company, the results may not be generalizable to other companies or industries. The quasi-experimental design provided empirical data comparing general self-efficacy in coached and not coached groups within F-500. It is unclear whether the study replicated in another company or industry would produce comparable results.

Choice of Assessment H1

While the GSE provides a general self-efficacy measure, using it to compare a control and an experimental group may not be the best way to measure coaching

effectiveness. Individuals in both the control and the experimental groups may have increased self-efficacy through developmental programs, training, leadership opportunities, or through learned experiences. In retrospect, a better way to use GSE to measure improvement from coaching may be to take a baseline measurement before a client enters into a coaching agreement and then a post-coaching measurement. Former studies comparing pre-coaching and post-coaching results have captured self-efficacy changes over time (Franklin & Doran, 2009).

Participant Selection

An attempt was made to form an inclusive control group with similar characteristics, roles, and openness to coaching as the experimental group. Even so, several limitations existed with the research design.

Control Group Selection Bias

The control group sample was selected using names provided by each of the five coaches. Although the five coaches knew a substantial number of individuals within the population of interest, they did not know all employees. Therefore, a selection bias was present because the sample may have unintentionally excluded people the group had not met. The researcher originally considered a random sample generated from internal HR systems for the control group. Such randomly selected sets typically result in low response rates. More importantly, a random population may not reflect the types of employees choosing to enter into a coaching agreement. After careful evaluation, the choice was made to develop a convenience sample with input from the five existing coaches to determine possible not coached individuals that would better

match the experimental group. The coaches' perception of whether or not the employees would be receptive to coaching was also biased because a formal assessment was not part of the approach. The survey did not ask the control group for a rating of readiness or interest in pursuing a coaching relationship, so it was not clear whether any control group members considered coaching as an option. In future studies, a survey item may be added to assess readiness of interest in coaching.

As it turned out, the percentage of respondents in the control group included a larger percentage of nonmanagers (75%) than the experimental group (54%). The difference can partially be explained in two ways: some members of the control group were not formally coded as managers and yet they served as team leads, and former managers in a developmental assignment were coded as nonmanagers. Finally, because research was voluntary, only those agreeing to the consent protocol participated.

Experimental Group Selection Bias

The original intent was to include all employees coached by the five accredited coaches in the online survey and a smaller portion for selection in the one-on-one interview process. Coaching relationships are built on trust, and confidentiality is essential. Clients who do not want anyone to know about their participation in coaching are unlikely to agree to participate in research, even with anonymity.

Having to first ask the coaches to ask the clients if they were willing to participate and then having to approach the client for informed consent added complexity and multiple steps to the process. Some people did not respond to the request even after

indicating they would be interested in participating. This research study did not target inactive coaching clients or those who opted to exit the coaching relationship early.

Of the 35 clients who initially offered to participate, 13 were selected for individual interviews. Although ideally it may have been better to invite the entire group for one-on-one interviews, resources and schedules did not allow it. Because the interview portion of research was designed to use grounded theory, there was no pre-determined, statistically valid sample size. The researcher used a large enough sample to capture the qualitative data from an adequate portion of clients. The selection for interviews was not completely random; however, the researcher did ensure that she spoke with at least two clients of each coach and attempted to provide equal numbers of males and females the chance to contribute in the interview portion of the research. From the final group of 12, the researcher gathered input from managers (33%) and nonmanagers (67%) from a mix of functional areas, with varying backgrounds and years of experience to represent a sample reflective of the diversity in the population.

Recommendations

In this study, only one measure of self-efficacy, GSE, was used to evaluate the control and experimental groups, at only one point in time, and only after coaching occurred. To more effectively gauge changes in self-efficacy beliefs, a design incorporating pre- and post-coaching assessments for each coached person may be a better way to track changes along the coaching experience and eventually to gain insight to predict when changes will occur.

Evaluating more than one measure of self-efficacy might also be prudent. In future studies, alternative instruments, such as the NGSE (Chen et al., 2001), PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007) or other measures, may uncover new effects. Future research could also consider alternative measures of self-efficacy, stronger alignment with coaching goals, changes in coachee performance, linkage to engagement, and involvement survey scores.

Value could be gained by conducting longitudinal studies to show if coaching results are sustainable over time. If data could be collected by the client, it would be easier to show improvement over time and to connect with specific client goals of coaching.

Clients and coaches expressed difficulty in measuring the results attributed to coaching. New ways to evaluate the impact in terms of both tangible and intangible results will provide evidence of what works in the coaching process and how to positively impact business results. These changes may entail considering measures in addition to ROI that tie to business impact both in hard and soft business measures. One example measure of impact that has been proposed to capture the return on leadership development investment is RODI (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010). Average returns of 200% were found, and although not directly comparable to ROI, may show promise as potential future coaching impact measures. Cultural or climate assessments (coaching climate/culture) could be incorporated to assess coaching

leadership behaviors leading to ideal work environments. Chapter 6 will explore implications and suggest topics of future research.

Chapter 6: Implications and Future Research

This study explored the world of internal coaching within an organization experiencing high change. Perspectives of client and coach were incorporated to find out what works in the coaching process and the impact of coaching at a personal and business level. Tangible measures were used to calculate return on investment. Numerous intangible outcomes were also gathered. Measures of general self-efficacy were compared for a coached group and for a control group of employees not in a coaching agreement.

This study added to OD and coaching research and demonstrated the business value in expanding executive and professional coaching offerings to all levels of the organization. Internal coaches integrated coaching approaches from multiple models to build a strengths-based approach that adds value inside a large organization. Coaching showed a greater than 10 times benefit and is helping to build a coaching climate, leading to culture change in the organization.

The coaching provided in this study focused on individual coaching and emerged to include some OD consulting work at the team and organization levels. The role of an internal coach may entail a broader description than an external coach and may include process consultation or other subject-matter expertise to best suit the business

needs. All coaches in this study hold professional coaching credentials complemented by a strong process consultation background; therefore, the coaches were capable of offering a multitude of relevant services based on client needs.

Future research exploring the impact of individual and team coaching could continue to expand the availability of coaching to more employees in the organization. Robust longitudinal studies to explore the impact of coaching over time could help identify results that are sustainable in the long run. Studies focused on how to design a work group and organization climate conducive to coaching could help organizations learn and grow. Finding new ways to translate coaching outcomes to business results and to predict the impact with accuracy could build the case for expanding coaching within the organization. Future studies aimed at learning more about the process and science of coaching, adapting coaching to suit an increasingly diverse, geographically-dispersed workforce, and continuing to develop coaching skillsets could enhance the credibility of the coaching profession and capture the overall value to the business.

Expand the Practice of Coaching

This research focused on individual coaching, which in some cases led to team coaching in the organization. Greater use of team coaching could provide teams a valued resource to tie more closely to business results. Proven leverage points for team coaching include beginnings, middles, and ends of projects (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). These leverage points could provide key times during team project formation, implementation, and closure to introduce coaching. The use of coaching

philosophies and questioning techniques could promote fresh thinking about possible solutions or opportunities. Teams could capture lessons learned during the phases of implementation to create an overall climate of learning and growth. Teams could share what worked in the coaching process and the ultimate business impact with other teams across the company to expose a larger group to coaching benefits and to create a learning organization (Senge, 1990).

Important for the expansion of coaching is determining better ways to evaluate results in the short and long run. Future research capturing how coaching can provide benefits in high-impact business cost areas such as wellness (Linley, Nielson, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010), innovation, and knowledge transfer may create a demand for coaching inside organizations.

Understand the Process and Science of Coaching

Research to understand change by exploring the neuroscience of coaching (Boyatzis, Jack, Cesaro, Passarelli, & Khawaja, 2010; Rock, 2006) could advance the insight about how the brain works in coaching, why coaching works and how to make it a more effective experience for individuals and teams. Expanding the use of Cognitive Behavioral Coaching approaches to spark greater insight into unconscious thinking and behaviors can also increase Emotional Intelligence in the organization.

Expanding on research identifying critical moments in coaching (De Haan, Bertie, Day, & Sills, 2010), understanding proximal and distal outcomes of coaching (Joo, 2005), and gaining clarity about the stages and processes involved in human change

processes (Prochaska & Norcross, 2001) are ways coaching may help form new mental models.

Coaching in a Diverse Workforce: Focus on Strengths

Future research to determine the multidimensional nature of internal executive coaching and ways individual-, group-, and organization-level positive change takes place will help researchers understand how to position coaching within the organization. As organizations continue to become more diverse globally and generationally, research to understand how multiple generations and multiple cultures interact effectively to create a coaching culture in organizations could expand the use of coaching as a catalyst for organizational learning. Perhaps when coaching becomes a value, an expectation, and ultimately a recognized developmental experience for learning and growth, an openness and transparency about the coaching process will inspire more participation and support for coaching as a strategy for organization development and growth.

Research using coaching as a catalyst for knowledge transfer across generations may solve the dilemma many organizations face as employees retire. Strengths-focused coaching may also help when knowledge is transferred from one organization site or country to another. Solution-focused coaching approaches could be used in a variety of settings across the value stream and supply chain to promote better communication, high engagement, and concentration on building on what works to

create solutions rather than on focusing on problem-oriented language (Hicks & McCracken, 2010a).

Continual Development as Coaching Professionals

The coaching profession continues to evolve. Professional organizations and academic programs incorporate competencies for coaching, yet there is no standardized list or set of credentials for professionals deemed coaches. Previous researchers identified the importance of coach competencies (Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Bono et al., 2009; Brotman et al., 1998; Laff, 2007; McGovern et al., 2001). Building coaching mastery skills in key areas will ultimately lead to better results. Future research to identify the skills and create robust processes to develop them will continue to advance coaching as a profession.

Reflection and Challenges for the Future

Coaching of the future may be viewed more as an investment in human capital rather than as a cost. Analytics could be used to support this belief and give credibility to the investment philosophy, (Fitz-enz, 2010). As a scholar-practitioner, the researcher experienced some of the real-life barriers and challenges of conducting research inside an organization. A wish list for future researchers would contain budget set aside to design and conduct research, a pull from the organization to learn from and use the results, support and interest from a broad set of stakeholders, commitment to build an infrastructure supporting experimentation, and continual development of the coaching community. The reality in current, high-change environments is that companies advocate action and results and have little patience for conducting

research or reflecting and observing what is happening in the system. Perhaps by communicating the results of this research, the organization will move one step closer to obtaining the wish list.

As the role of the internal coach continues to demonstrate value to the organization, the versatility of coaching used will continue to expand. Research designed to bring to light the impact of coaching at the individual, group, and organization level will continue to add credibility to coaching as a profession and the vital role of coaches inside the organization. Capturing and communicating the value added through coaching relationships create both a challenge and an inspiration for continual improvement of external and internal executive and professional coaches.

Appendix A: Research Subject Information and Consent Form

TITLE: Executive and Professional Coaching Provided by Internal Coaches: Analysis of Strengths and Impact on Clients

INVESTIGATOR: Dawn M. Newman
CONTACT INFORMATION

SITE(S): Company site (or virtual participation via phone or Internet)

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the researcher or the study staff to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand.

SUMMARY

- You are being asked to be in a research study because you are a professional employee.
- Your decision to be in this study is voluntary.
- If you decide to be in this study and then change your mind, you can leave the study at any time.
- You may anticipate an individual interview of approximately one hour and brief online surveys to complete during the six-month study period.
- If you agree to be in this study, your research records will become part of this study. They may be looked at by Benedictine University and/or coaching researchers.

More detailed information about this study is in this consent form. Please read it carefully.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purposes of this study are:

- *Determine success factors and value of internal coaching process from multiple perspectives*
- *Compare General Self-Efficacy assessment of clients in a coaching agreement vs. those not in a coaching agreement*

- *Capture strengths and opportunities to improve internal coaching process*

You will be in this study for six months. Approximately forty subjects will participate in this study. The study is scheduled to take place between August 2010 and January 2011 and will take place in SITE or virtually via phone or company Internet.

PROCEDURES

If you decide to participate, you will have an opportunity to complete:

- *Individual Interviews*
- *Online Surveys and General Self-Efficacy Assessment*

If you participate in an individual interview, you may be audiotaped to record your feedback so that it may be accurately transcribed. The researcher will provide a copy of the transcribed file for your approval within seven days after the interview.

You may ask that audio recording be turned off and/or that recording media be destroyed at any time during your participation.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks in this study that are greater than you will encounter in performing your normal duties. If you experience any discomfort, you should inform the researcher immediately and stop your participation.

BENEFITS

Although you are not expected to benefit directly from participation in the study, participants may experience enhanced personal insight and reflection. The results from the study will be provided as a courtesy to participants.

COSTS

There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive any additional payment for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the need to give information to these parties. The results of this research study may be presented at meetings or in publications. Your identity will not be disclosed in those presentations. Your identity will not be released to the general public without your consent, unless specifically required by law.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or you may leave the study at any time. Your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, nor will it have any effect on your employment at Name of Company.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about this study or your participation in this study, contact:
Dawn M. Newman at xxx-xxx-xxxx

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Company contact for internal research

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

If you agree to be in this study, you will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for your records.

CONSENT

I have read the information in this consent form. All my questions about the study and my participation in it have been answered. I freely consent to be in this research study.

I authorize the use and disclosure of my information to the parties listed in the confidentiality section of this consent for the purposes described above.

By signing this consent form, I have not given up any of my legal rights.

Subject Name

CONSENT SIGNATURE:

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Person Conducting Informed
Consent Discussion

Date

Appendix B: Individual Interview Questions

What worked in your coaching experience?
1. Tell me about how you initiated the coaching process (include contracting, coach selection, how you learned about coaching, etc.).
2. Please describe your top three key learning experiences or “aha moments” from Coaching.
Probe: What have you noticed about yourself during the coaching experience?
3. What processes or techniques do you most value about coaching?
Probe: How, specifically, has your coach done to add value to the process (assessments, tools, etc.)
4. How has the coaching experience changed your perspective (Of yourself? Others? The company?)
Share opportunities (or suggestions)
5. What would enhance the coaching experience?
<i>Consider the time, phone vs. face-to-face coaching, development, resources, work environment, organization support, management involvement, etc. Identify any support mechanisms or barriers you experienced.</i>
How do you see yourself?
6. How has the coaching process shifted your view of the future?
<i>Please share what you did, what your coach did, and any new views of the world.</i>
What results were achieved?
7. What worthwhile actions and results is coaching helping you to produce? (Consider tangible and intangible results.)
8. What is different compared to before coaching?
9. Please tell me more about specific outcomes (individual, group, organization).
10. What value (impact, ROI, dollar amount) do you attribute to the coaching services?

Appendix C: Not Coached Group Online Survey

Please complete the following anonymous survey. Thank you for your participation in this company-approved research study.

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

11. Have you been engaged in an executive and professional coaching agreement in the past 24 months?

I am currently in an agreement with an internal coach.

I worked with an internal coach in the past 24 months and we concluded our agreement.

I have not been in a internal coaching agreement in the past 24 months.

12. Since January 2009, approximately how many days of interpersonal skills and leadership development training have you had? Please include Company-provided and other. List 0 if you have not had any. _____

13. Please indicate your gender.

Female

Male

14. Please indicate your current role.

Manager

Non Manager

15. Comments



Appendix D: Coached Group Online Survey

Please complete the following anonymous survey. Thank you for your participation in this company-approved research study.

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

11. I feel coaching has had a positive impact on me personally.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

12. Coaching has given me skills I will continue to use.

Not at all true

Hardly true

Moderately true

Exactly true

13. I feel more confident in my abilities due to being coached.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

14. Coaching has helped give me a clearer career direction.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

15. I have made positive changes to my life due to being coached.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

16. I would recommend coaching to others.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

17. Coaching has given me a greater understanding of myself.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

18. I feel that coaching positively challenged me.

- Not at all true
- Hardly true
- Moderately true
- Exactly true

19. What is different compared to before coaching? (What are 2–3 of the most significant outcomes from the coaching you received?)

20. Please select skills and capabilities you developed/improved as a result of coaching (select all that apply).

- Communication
- Courage / risk taking
- Strategic thinking
- Emotional intelligence
- Energy / motivation / enthusiasm

- Self-awareness / knowledge of behaviors
- Assertiveness
- Listening
- Goal achievement
- Engagement / involvement
- Optimism / hopefulness
- Career direction
- Productivity / competitiveness
- Business growth / customer satisfaction
- Work life balance / stress management
- Giving / receiving feedback
- Self-discipline / follow through / commitment
- Time management
- Decision-making
- Strengths-based / appreciative approach
- Other (please describe with comments below)

20a. Comments

21. Have you been engaged in an executive and professional coaching agreement in the past 24 months?

- I am currently in an agreement with an internal coach.
- I worked with an internal coach in the past 24 months, and we concluded our agreement.

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