

## **A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF COACHING**

The authors studied the impact of executive coaching on 31 managers in a US city health agency.

In phase one of this project all managers participated in a three-day, classroom style training workshop that included a variety of interactive activities and focused on their work roles. The participants rated the training workshop very highly on all quantitative and qualitative measures.

In phase two, the managers participated in an eight-week one-on-one coaching that detailed coaching processes tailored to the agency context. The post-training coaching included goal setting, collaborative problem solving, practice, feedback, supervisory involvement, evaluation of end-results, and a public presentation. The managers met with their coaches for one-hour each week over a two-month period. ***The authors found that while their training intervention with managers increased manager productivity by 22 percent, adding a one-to-one (8-week) coaching intervention after the training pushed productivity to 88 percent.***

Olivero, G., Bane, K.D., and Kopelman, R.E. (Winter, 1997).

Executive coaching as a transfer of training tool: Effects on productivity in a public agency.

Public Personnel Management, 26, 4, 461-469.

## Coaching Increases as Focus Shifts to Leadership (Lee Hecht Harrison – HR Survey 2002)

The focus of executive coaching is increasingly on leadership and management development, according to Lee Hecht Harrison's survey of 488 HR professionals. And indeed, nine out of ten survey participants reported that their organizations offer coaching to executives.

In the '70s and '80s, "coaching" was usually a euphemism for helping problem employees. But as workforce management practices have become more sophisticated, coaching has been geared more toward developing employees that the company wants to retain. Today, most HR professionals understand coaching as a focused, one-to-one process intended to maximize management and leadership potential or change behavior in the workplace.

Nevertheless, some companies continue to regard coaching in a more traditional way, according to our survey. While the majority of participants report their organizations use coaching for employee development, a significant minority still consider coaching to include personal counseling (33%), fashion assistance (12%) or speech preparation (10%). While some employees no doubt need this kind of help, executive coaching has come to mean so much more in today's workplace.

### **Which of the following describe your organization's use of coaching?\***

Training in new skills or techniques 53%  
Program to maximize leadership and management potential 50%  
Process aimed at behavioral change 48%  
Mentoring by a senior person 33%  
Counseling to address personal issues 33%  
Advice on appearance or attire 12%  
Preparation for a major speech or presentation 10%

*\*participants were asked to select all that applied*

Among our survey's other findings:

- One quarter of organizations provide coaching primarily to high-potential, fast-track employees; 54% provide it equally to high-potential as well as other employees.
- The top reasons coaching is provided are for leadership development (70%), skill or style development (64%), and to retain top talent (40%).
- 79% of respondents think organizations will increasingly use coaching as part of their succession planning.

This survey was conducted at the Global HR Forum conference in Orlando, the American Management Association conference in Anaheim and the Coaching & Mentoring conference in Boston. 37% of respondents come from organizations with fewer than 500 employees, 11% with 501-1,000 employees, 22% with 1,001-5,000 employees and 30% with more than 5,000 employees.

<http://www.lhh.com/knowledge/html.cfm?kcid=13>

**Chartered Management Institute research results on the benefits of coaching skills within organisations.**

Richard Branson, Charles Handy and Tony Blair top the list of public figures that Britain's leaders would most like as a personal development coach.

As coaching grows in popularity and credibility, both inside and outside the workplace, eighty per cent of executives say they think they would benefit from coaching at work and dismiss the suggestion that it is just another fad.

Virtually all managers (96 per cent) think coaching should be available to every employee, regardless of seniority, according to new research, *Coaching at Work*, launched today by the Chartered Management Institute and Campaign for Learning, to coincide with National Learning at Work Day.

The value of learning and development, as a source of competitive advantage in business, has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years. This study builds on previous research by the Institute showing that informal ways of learning are becoming increasingly popular. In its study, *Achieving Management Excellence* (2000), the Institute found that the number of managers receiving coaching had increased from 58 per cent in 1996 to 77 per cent by 2000.

So what are the benefits of coaching? The current research shows that 85 per cent of managers identify the main value as enhancing team morale and 80 per cent say it is good at generating responsibility on the part of the learner. Managers say coaching can be used to support an individual through restructuring and change in the organisation, or as part of a programme to motivate and retain staff.

But for coaching to work, adequate planning is essential. Executives also say training for coaches is essential, acknowledging that not everyone is cut out to be a good coach. While most executives are happy with the quality of coaching in their company, a quarter, however, are concerned that insufficient time is set aside for it.

The majority (59 per cent) of managers cite personal coaching, involving face-to-face meetings, as the main type of mentoring used in their organisation, while newer methods such as e-coaching over the Internet, are still in their infancy with only eight per cent of managers saying this takes place in their organisation. But only 18 per cent of executives say their organisation has a formal coaching programme. Coaching is far more likely to take place on an ad-hoc basis, they admit, with nearly half (44 per cent) saying this is the case in their organisation.

Thinking about the expertise executives would most like to develop further, those that come out tops are IT skills, personal effectiveness and emotional intelligence. This reflects the growing dependence on technology and an awareness of the continued importance of strong interpersonal skills.

But coaching is not confined to the workplace. Executives clearly use their skills to develop and support others outside the workplace, with 28 per cent saying they have acted as a coach in a sports club, nearly a quarter (24 per cent) saying as part of voluntary or charity work and 17 per cent within the context of a youth group such as Girl Guides or Scouts.

Christine Hayhurst, Director of Public Affairs, Chartered Management Institute, commented: "The increasing number of managers who have experienced coaching are clear about its value as an important element of workplace training and development. The challenge, now, is for managers to work with their people in developing a 'coaching culture' in organisations that extends this type of beneficial learning to employees at all levels."

### 10 Most Popular Public Figures as Coach

	<b>% would most like as Coach</b>
Richard Branson	39
Charles Handy	19
Tony Blair	9
Sven Goran Eriksson	6
Alex Ferguson	6
Sharron Davies	3
Lenny Henry	3
Trevor McDonald	3
Anita Roddick	3
Miriam Stoppard	2

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Research was undertaken among 3,000 managers, of which 280 replied, a nine per cent response rate. Eighteen per cent were directors, 33 per cent senior managers, 30 per cent middle managers and 16 per cent junior manager.

<http://www.managers.org.uk/institute/news>

### **Executive Coaching: Inspiring Performance at Work**

Carter A  
IES Report 379

**Executive coaching is largely an import from the US, and has been sweeping the boardrooms of Europe over the last few years. It is arguably now the 'hot topic' in many organisations for meeting senior**

**management development needs, spanning business, functional and personal skills. Yet the issues arising from this expensive process have until now been little explored. Here is an informative overview for organisations.**

Executive coaching is an import from the US that has grown enormously in popularity across Europe in the last few years. Fees for executive coaches of around £2,000 per day are not uncommon. This compares with an average daily fee of £975 per day among UK management consultants. The research was undertaken because of the increasing interest, cost, and use of executive coaching, and because relatively little appeared to be known about what the issues were for organisations.

### **What is executive coaching?**

Executive coaching is an interactive process that is designed to help individuals to develop rapidly. It is usually work related and focused on improving performance or behaviour. It is a goal-orientated form of personally tailored learning for a busy executive.

The essential features of executive coaching are that it is a short-term, time limited, paid for, goal specific, action orientated, personally tailored approach to learning. It utilises feedback and offers some objectivity.

The study found considerable confusion in organisations about the differences in theory and in practice between the 'labels' of executive coaching, mentoring and a range of other one to one support processes. Our report differentiates executive coaching from mentoring, organisation development, counselling, and psychotherapy.

### **Why do employers use it?**

What motivates employers to commission executive coaching? What is it they hope to gain? Our study found five main motives for organisations in introducing executive coaching. These were categorised as:

- to support the induction or appointment of a senior person into a more senior, or different role
- to accelerate the personal development of individuals defined as 'high potential', or individuals from a minority group identified for affirmative action
- to underpin the effective implementation of organisation change, through supporting teams and individuals
- as a critical friend or independent sounding board to a senior individual
- to support senior individuals engaged in wider personal effectiveness programmes, such as 360-degree appraisal or development centres.

These categories are illustrated in the report by the use of real case examples or 'vignettes' from organisations. One further category, or motive, was suggested as possible, although it was not encountered in this study:

- as a means of rewarding and retaining key staff critical to the business.

The reasons for the phenomenal growth in the use of executive coaching by employing organisations may include:

- the knock-on effects of the downsizing of the 1990s, resulting in 'lonely' and isolated senior managers who welcome support and challenge from someone external to their immediate work environment
- the increasing demand by organisations for senior managers with key 'soft skills'. Many business schools and in-company standard development programmes have failed to embed the kinds of feedback-based approaches necessary for self-insight and the acquisition of soft skills, for managers when they were more junior.
- Some senior managers consider they have 'made it' and worry that being seen to undergo development may be perceived by others as admitting they have a weakness. The nature of the executive coaching relationship is private and avoids that public gaze.
- Attendance on whole-day courses or regular learning sets can seem an imposition into an already busy schedule. Sessions with executive coaches can be fitted around other diary commitments.

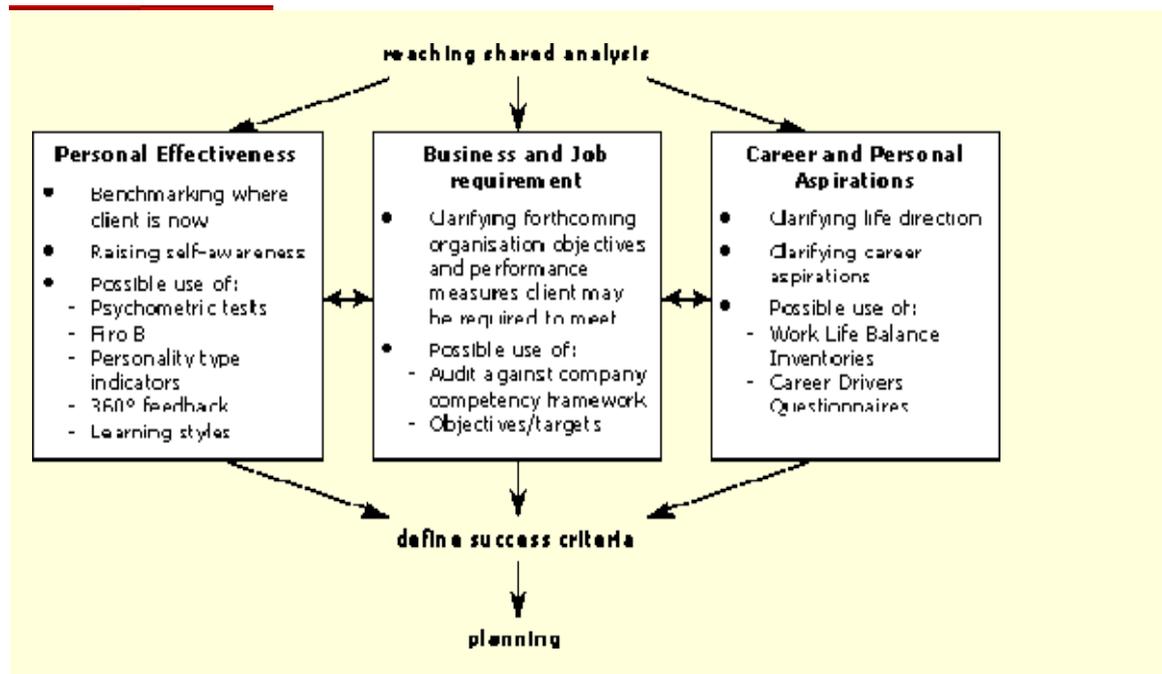
### **The executive coaching process**

The study enabled the process from the executive coaches' perspective to be identified. Six main phases within the overall process were evident. These were:

- entry and contracting with the individual
- identifying the issues to be addressed
- reaching a shared analysis
- planning to address development needs arising
- action taking, practice and reflection
- withdrawal from the relationship.

Figure 1 outlines the key phase of reaching an analysis, shared by the coach and coached, whereby coaches were found to focus on one or more of three key paths. IES has termed the three paths as those of personal effectiveness, business and job requirements, and career and personal aspirations. All of the coaches interviewed in the study, however, gave at least some consideration to all three aspects.

**Figure 1: Behind reaching a shared analysis**



Source: IES

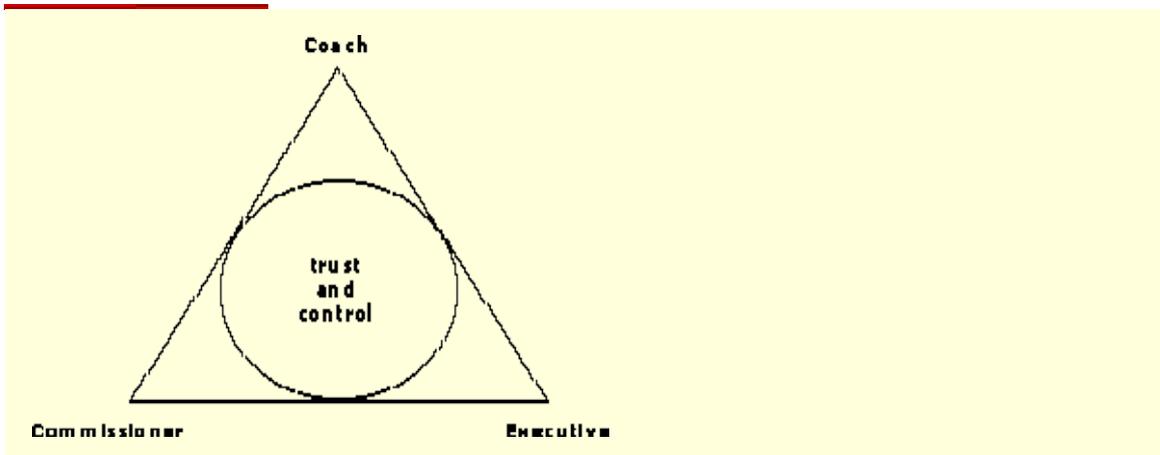
### Issues to consider

The study identified a range of implementation issues from the perspective of employing organisations using, or planning to use, executive coaching. This includes practical considerations that need to be taken into account, whether the intention is to source the executive coaches externally or internally. In particular, the report of the study has:

- identified a range of backgrounds and professional training of coaches, and the implications that this has for the underpinning conceptual framework or approach they bring to providing their services
- recommended having a process in place to maximise the chances of a successful 'match' between the individual manager and the coach
- highlighted the existence of 'coaching envy' (whereby having an executive coach is seen as such a positive activity that everyone else wants one) and the potential need to manage the demand for executive coaching
- shared some of the experiences of the organisations participating in the study, regarding the cost of commissioning external executive coaches
- highlighted the problems inherent in evaluating the impact of this type of development process involving close one-to-one collaboration
- explained the 'relationship triangle' (see Figure 2 below) between the commissioner, executive and the coach. It has offered some insight into the underlying issues of trust and control which need to be present in order to maximise the success of the executive coaching from each of the

three perspectives.

**Figure 2: The executive coaching relationship 'triangle'**



*Source: IES*

### **IES Research Club**

With the aggressive marketing of executive coaching by consultants, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain an objective view about what it is, and about the issues to consider when using it. This initial exploratory study was sponsored by the IES Research Club, a group of 30 of the UK's leading employers who help to shape an ongoing programme of topical research. Several member organisations collaborated and participated in the study.

This work builds on previous IES research into management development and the role of senior managers.

*Executive Coaching: Inspiring Performance at Work*, Carter A. IES Report 379, 2001. ISBN 1 85184 308 6. £19.95. [PDF price: £8.00]

## Useful sources of information

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