
**Coaching and the impact on
work related skills**

**A thesis submitted to the National College of Ireland in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of MSc in Human
Resource Management**

by

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of MSc in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Thesis

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. ABSTRACT – SUMMARY | 5 |
| 2. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION | 9 |
| 3. LITERATURE REVIEW | 14 |
| 3.1. Main Question | 19 |
| 3.2. What is coaching? | 20 |
| 3.3. What are the benefits of coaching? | 27 |
| 3.4. Is there supporting literature on the impact of coaching effectiveness? | 29 |
| 3.5. Self awareness in the process of coaching | 35 |
| 3.6. Literature Review Summary | 39 |
| 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 42 |
| 4.1. Research Goal | 44 |
| 4.2. Kirkpatrick Model | 46 |
| 4.3. Selection of participants | 49 |
| 4.4. Data Collection & Analysis | 52 |
| 4.4.1. Closed questions | 54 |
| 4.4.2. Open ended questions | 55 |
| 5. RESEARCH STUDY RESULTS | 56 |
| 6. DISCUSSION | 59 |
| 6.1. Comments and Limitations on Findings | 63 |

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 6.2. | Practical Implications | 67 |
| 6.3. | Suggestions for future studies | 68 |
| 7. | CONCLUSIONS | 70 |

1. Abstract – Summary

This explanatory research expands the knowledge of coaching and demystifies the process of this self-discovery journey. This type of study examines and explains relationships between variables in a particular cause and effect association. We attempt from a coaching perspective to describe the benefits linked with this people centred approach and what impact it can induce in the working environment. The main objective of this research paper centred on the testing of the hypothesis that coaching engenders awareness, awareness brings choice, choice freedom or change in behaviour, and change in behaviour brings an improvement in a work/life context.

Nevertheless, the research philosophy absorbs that of the interpretivist, as the relationships between variables can be complex. The process of coaching with the variables engrained in the context and the evaluation of the outcome of behavioural change can be subjective.

Interpretivists contend that only through the subjective interpretation of and intervention in reality can reality be fully understood. They admit that there may be many interpretations of reality, but maintain that these interpretations are in themselves a part of the scientific knowledge they are pursuing.

The primary research comprised of the installed based of coachees from the author's company using a qualitative research methodology. This cross-sectional study focused on a purposive sampling of middle managers and employed the survey strategy in order to gather data. The judgmental sampling from the installed base endorsed the research question and adhered to the objectives of the research paper.

Multi methods of data collection included questionnaire and structured telephone interviews. It entailed some form of triangulation to take place in order to investigate and validate the meaning of data in the open questions.

The results clearly indicate a personal effectiveness due to the process of coaching based on their self-perception and to a certain extent feedback from peers. The

interviewees obviously indicate that the process of coaching coincides with a shift of internal boundaries and they are more effective because new behaviours, due to awareness, have become a smart habit. However, this personal impact can only be justified through personal accountability and responsibility from the coachee – if they are ready to act on it and this is what they want to do. No two human minds are the same, only they can discover how to act effectively with awareness. No miracle recipe exists for coaching nevertheless, one need to include at least some ingredients of self-belief, self-motivation, choice, awareness, responsibility, and action in order to have an effective outcome:

The findings on the other hand showed some vagueness in terms of work performance, as the evaluation of any type of behavioural change measurement could be cumbersome. Although some coachees audibly reported the impact of coaching on work performance such as improved inter-relationships or communication skills, others had a harder time translating the impact due to the early stages of their coaching journey.

Coaching evaluation, in its fullest, most complete form, may not take place for a variety of reasons. These could include lack of concern, negligence, or difficulty of conducting an evaluation. It could also be though, that gaining a true evaluation of any form of training/coaching, particularly in the area of soft skills, may just not be possible. Hard financial figures stimulate the ROI debate, despite the need to take into account other intangible factors such as personal growth and fulfilment. Coaching is highly individualised and specific to corporate culture and objectives, if included in a development programme.

A solid foundation on evaluating coaching programmes is that of Kirkpatrick's model, who suggested four levels of evaluation criteria – namely reactions to the training, learning that took place, behaviour changes, and results. The literature review indicates hard data harvested from coaching programmes tagging along the Kirkpatrick's model and adding Philips 5th level of ROI measurement. The case studies still used subjective components such as isolation factors in their calculations;

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

despite this, the results elucidate incredible benefits due to coaching with ROI of up to 545%.

Goals of coaching may change over time during sessions and qualitative research remains the most effective way to assess the success of a coaching initiative. The outcomes confirm the original hypothesis of the theory testing with this methodology.

The results used in this paper derive mostly from self-reported satisfaction and for some cases on self and other reported improvements.

A more rigorous approach in surveys in order to conduct behavioural, attitudinal and skill improvement both from the perspective of the coachees and others will be necessary in order to have a more realistic approach in the definition of what exactly is the effectiveness of the coaching program. This level of measurement, with the latest available multi-rater 360 software, can be extremely valuable in a pre and post coaching programme because it describes actual intrapersonal and interpersonal changes. The next level, measuring business impact, will require companies to move from measuring soft, intangible data to more specific and well-defined hard financial data, impacts on the firm's bottom or top line.

In this last case the phenomena can be isolated and perhaps observations repeatable, hence moving towards a more scientific approach of best business practice. This other approach is just another scientific way to prove the original hypothesis and perhaps can suit a different type of audience.

List of Appendices

1. Literature Review References
2. Questionnaire and example of email
3. Xenergie Consulting Ltd business brochure

2. Introduction and Research Question

'The vision was never about coaching. It was always about people living lives of radical fulfilment, balance, and aliveness' (Whitworth et al. 1998). In this fast-paced world, too many managers live to work instead of work to live; too many individuals sleep walk through their lives rather than live life to its full potential. Broken marriages, stress, anger, anxiety, fear of the unknown, are far more widespread than business people would want to acknowledge -- as we need to rivet our artificial theatrical mask, when entering the corporate world. Coaching is a gentle way of raising our awareness to this imbalance that tears us apart and help the coachee unearth a more fulfilling balanced life and work. Achieving a work/life balance was the first rate major personal challenge identified in the IMI Top Challenges for Managers report, 2003. Many executives are finding today that coaching can have a dramatic impact on the quality of their performance at work and life.

The holistic objective of this explanatory study is about promoting a culture of coaching, 'only when coaching principles govern or underlie all management behaviour and interactions, as they certainly will do in time, will the full force of people's performance potential be released' (Whitmore 2003). Studies that establish causal relationships between variables may be termed explanatory (Saunders et al. 2003). The design of the study emanates from studying a situation, the process of coaching, in order to explain the relationship between variables.

The core research topic tries to establish a causal relationship between coaching and work performance, although we validate this as our outcome, the influence of emotional competency is the linking element between the two. The conduit of this linking element, the process of coaching through its self-discovery journey plays a crucial part in the 'awakening' of the coachee.

The aim or what this research attempts to pint point is the link between coaching and the impact on work related skills within the context of middle management. The avenue of coaching, due to the process, translates into doing, this contributes into

influencing the business in some form, or another and this impact can be measured and replicated across the organisation. We associate the missing element between the first chain of impact as emotional competency. 'An emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work' (Goleman 1998). This basic emotional intelligence capacity is decisive in order for the managers to master the required competencies to be successful in the workplace and life. We associate the first personal competence, self-awareness (emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence) as a key element of emotional intelligence.

In this paper, we will use the term coaching from a business context, although the lines between the two worlds (life/work) overlap and blurred into one life journey of empowerment and fulfilment of one's need. We need both sides to live a full life as one goes with the other and both intertwined.

This suggests the following question to guide both the literature review and the research paper:

In the context of middle line management, how can the process of coaching enhance emotional competencies and strengthen the performance of organisational business targets?

The research philosophy is likely to be nearer to that of the interpretivist as the coachees may place different interpretations on the situations they find themselves and as such, this can affect their actions from the outcome of a coaching session. Interpretive researchers start out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions, such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Research in coaching can be quite complex because of the human nature, as is the field of psychotherapy and its sister therapy, counselling which has shaped the human relations field for decades. These client-

centred approaches are complex, relationship-based interventions in which the coach, coachee, relationship between the two, issue raised, intervention process, and context all play a decisive role.

In order to examine this umbilical cord, self-awareness, channelling the process of coaching with an imprint on work related performance, the author decided on a qualitative research methodology. If the researcher is trying to understand something in more detail or to describe a situation so that people can understand it better, this transcribes better through qualitative research.

The preferred data collection method adopted, self-administered questionnaires followed by telephone interview, was based on the author's company existing clientele. As an actor, practitioner and researcher I had to be part of the process, although I did not coach all the interviewees. The qualitative research will seek meaning and understanding of the consequences of self-awareness discovered through the process of coaching and its impact in the context of the workplace.

The purpose of the research methodology searches the understanding of the divergence between the pre-coaching and post coaching sessions and explain those differences, motives, what triggered them and potential impact in the work related environment. The variables measured, behavioural change and performance in the workplace formalized the outcome. We draw a deductive approach between the processes of coaching, behavioural change due to self-awareness and the impact on work related skills. The hypothesis expressed comes from this linkage: coaching brings awareness, awareness brings choice, choice change in behaviour, and change in behaviour brings an improvement in a work/life context.

As one of the owner and director of XenerGie Consulting Ltd, the author wanted to apply this paper to his work and learn by doing. The applicability of this paper within his own workplace was a key critical element in evaluating a research subject.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

Coaching is now among the most widely used executive development tool around the world and this trendy subject appealed to the researcher as a part-time student and coach.

XenerGie specialises in *executive coaching, management development and team building training/consultancy*, improving motivation, interpersonal communication and cooperation and, through this, productivity (i.e.: quality improvement, revenue growth, leadership development), in the workplace. We embrace a holistic approach to team performance management and are concerned with what people do (their work), how they do it (their behaviour), and what they achieve (their results). We support all formal and informal measures adopted by an organisation to increase team and individual effectiveness and continuously to develop skills, knowledge, and competence. The key competencies of XenerGie rest with:

- Creating High Performance Teams, working from managerial teams to fully empowered work teams
- Providing full behavioural/assessment team working services with **Belbin** e-Interplace software.
- Providing key skill training programmes, which enhance personnel's ability to motivate and manage people and use effective 'soft skills'.
- Empowering and coaching individuals.

It seemed natural, as an executive coach and member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF - the largest professional association worldwide of business and personal coaches) to analyse and segment our installed base of existing coachees. We undertake executive and personal life coaching mainly in Dublin and Galway regions but facilitate training all across Ireland. The ability to collect data and gaining access to it became much simpler and we see this as a continuous process on how our clients value the company – a 360 feedback on our performance and how can we improve our services. As executive/business coaching is planned and executed with a focus on

specific, desired results, we know from our clients during the process that we have achieved a milestone. Nevertheless we have never attempted to confront this to the work place in analysing tangible results.

Another point to consider involves the time and resources needed in primary research. The author felt that in terms of the research's feasibility, the subject of the thesis coincided with the blueprint of the company and this became an important guiding principle. Therefore, the author operated as a participant researcher and as such did not have any problems accessing the data. There was clearly a high level of convenience in terms of gaining access through contacts, which are familiar. The only issue was establishing enough credibility with actual and former clients in order for them to complete the questionnaire.

3. Literature Review

The literature indicates that coaching occurs in two primary fields: business and personal life. We will concentrate our literature review on business coaching.

The purpose of the literature review is twofold: to briefly examine the link between HR and organisational performance as coaching is predominantly an outgrowth of executive development programs or linked with performance management and to examine business coaching with regards to its history, goals, process and more importantly outcomes – what impact does coaching has on the firm? This depicts a deductive approach and we will be using this conceptual framework in our research methodology. We examine books and articles between 1986 and 2004 on the subject of coaching. They focus on the impact of HRM and the bottom line, organisational change, and effectiveness, the change structure of the workplace and high performing organisations, the benefits and impact of business coaching.

In order to understand the context in which business coaching is embedded, one needs to consider both macro (company level) and micro (individual level) forces. This matrix, similar to (Pugh 1986) OD change initiatives, reflects the rationales expressed for selecting coaching as reported in ‘The case for Executive Coaching’ from the Lore Research Institute 2002. These reasons bridge the desire to change at three levels: the individual executive level (intrapersonal), the interpersonal level, and the organisational level. It goes as saying ‘the premise is that changing executive behaviour at any of these levels can drive changes, which will impact the business results of the organisation.’

Dr Sherman Severin, Senior Executive Coach, Executive Coaching Network, in his paper on ROI in executive coaching defines this as *total factor productivity (TFP)* calculating the cascading effect that a surge in productivity of an individual or team may have on the rest of the organization.

Companies have always examined ways of improving their profitability in order to become more competitive and survive the harsh reality of modern day business. As (David Ulrich 1997) asserts in HR Champions 'business theories have proposed a number of foci for conducting the ongoing search for competitiveness'. Each functional body or a part of an organisation has its theory named after an academic researcher: business strategy, financial management, marketing, technology, manufacturing...etc. As the discussion drawn from (Sirota and Wolfson 1973), managers have been criticized for "jumping on and off a succession of behavioural-science bandwagon" in their search for organisational effectiveness and efficiency. (John Purcell 2004) states in his latest research on HRM-performance link 'the search for the way human resource management impacts on organisational performance is sometimes equated with the hunt for the HR Holy Grail'.

All these approaches to business management from the classical school to the neo-classical traditions are necessary and valid, as the search for competitiveness will continue.

One accepted approach for high performing organisations in this turbulent environment associates the deployment of HR practices as pivotal in order to enhance competitive advantage. Globalisation, irregular economic growth mixed with uncertainty, mergers and acquisitions, speed of change, dicey international climate, as described in (Emery and Trist's 1965) four environment model of uncertainty, are now forcing organisations to recognise the importance of people management as another blend to the debate on competitiveness. Organizational change is constant and interactive with the external and internal environment, encapsulated throughout the ages (Jones et al. 1996). The most important HR issue identified in PricewaterHouseCoopers HR Benchmarking Ireland 2003 was 'organisational and cultural change', this correlates with the two prime global HR issues ranked as 'leadership development' and 'organisational change' in their worldwide surveys. Problems occur when executives struggle with change or its related organisational impact such as the need for enhance inter-personal skills, performance – competency

based management, require assistance. The Hay Group/Fortune in designating The World's Most Admired Companies, acknowledges in its latest annual survey, this approach for high performance organisations:

“To be successful in today's ever shifting, always competitive market, people count for more – they can make or break the best business strategy; be the driver or brake in adopting new technologies. People are not an implementation issue, nor just an operational or strategic asset. People are the raw resource around which business success revolves.

No strategy, however well designed, will work unless you have the right people, with the right skills and behaviours, in the right roles, motivated in the right way and supported by the right leaders.”

The HR department has one primary responsibility in helping a firm to maximise the value of its employees and research studies across the world (e.g. Pfeiffer, "The Human Equation", 1998; Ulrich, Smallwood – "Why the bottom line isn't", 2003; Collins & Porras "Build to last"; 1997; Hope & Frase, Management Accounting; 1997) clearly establish the importance of HR practices to the bottom line. The ability to attract and hold on to talented employees is the single most reliable predictor of overall excellence (Fortune and Hay 2004).

'Dealing with what has traditionally been the softer side of management and organisation has now become the harder and more demanding part of most executives' jobs' (Ulrich 1997). Ulrich elaborates on four broad tasks for HR that would allow it to help deliver organizational excellence. Two of these broad tasks denote how HR should become an expert in the way work is organized and executed and an agent of continual change. Fulfilling this agenda would mean that every one of HR's activities would help a company better serve its customers or otherwise increase shareholder value. He illustrates how investors now look beyond the traditional financial numbers to determine the value of a firm - they look at the "intangibles" -

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

such as leadership, culture, ability to innovate, capability to integrate mergers. Competitiveness requires both business strategy and organisational capability.

Data from The Brookings Institution helps to put into perspective the importance of the measurement and management of intangible assets. In 1982, tangible assets represented 62% of a company's market value on average. By 1992, this figure had dropped to 38%. More recent studies place the average market value of tangible assets in many companies as low as 15%. In other words, up to 85% of a company's expenses correspond to intangible capital.

Organisational competitiveness incorporates the skills and abilities of the people, and the willingness of, and example of, managers and leaders to engage in lifelong learning - focused on continuous improvement in performance. The balance scorecard approach in the Sear's employee – customer – profit model (Rucci et al. 1998), shows how HR practices align with business results exemplifies the link between intangibles and market value: a 5% increase in employee commitment leads to a 1.8% increase in customer commitment and a 0,5% increase in financial results. By taking full advantage of their powerful feedback mechanisms from employees and customers and learning capabilities, the process enable them to discover the causal linkages in measurable relationships between indicators, which lead to the model.

In other words, the missing elements between the market value of intangibles and the HR scorecard leads to leadership choices and actions or as (Ulrich 2003) states 'how leaders create market value through people and organisational capabilities is key to an increase in their company's valuation'.

The effect of the stock market depression over the last three years has accelerated the concern in most firms for cost-cutting measures, greater efficiency, and sweeping management changes in order to improve their organisational competitiveness. All these impact on working practices and only those with a clear link to the company's survival are coveted. Thus, more emphasis has been placed on review and change of

working practices as stated in the different major management challenges surveys from (PWC, IMI 2003) in Ireland. The latest (CIPD 2004) poll on 'What has affected your organisation's skills needs most in the last year?' rates new working practices as the second highest at 50%. The constant need for training and upgrade skills in today's environment compels companies to look for efficient ways to deliver innovative training and development programmes.

The War for Talents, (Michaels et al. 2001), is based on a series of McKinsey sponsored studies conducted in 1997-2000 with more than one hundred large and mid-size US companies. In this book, the authors reveal that 95% of corporate officers believe that their pool of managerial talent will need to be stronger three years from now and 57% of managers believe that their company does not develop their people quickly and effectively. The real war accounts for the imagination and determination from firms to look upon and implement new and better ways to develop and retain existing talent. Winning the war for talent, involves continuously developing people for their next and future assignment in a more skilful, effective and challenging way.

In the CIPD Training and Development Survey April 2004, commenting in the latest trends in training practice in the UK, coaching experienced the largest increase in usage in the last few years, compared with other forms of training provision; E-learning follows a close second. The survey provides annual data on current and emerging practice in training and development, with a sample sweeping 530 firms, 70% of them approaching 250 employees. Over three quarters reported that coaching takes place in their organisation and improved individual performances. An overwhelming proportion, over 90%, believes that coaching is an effective mechanism for promoting learning in organisation. The results indicate that coaching contributes as a very effective business tool and the survey exposed 'hard' evidence about the tangible benefits and positive impact on the bottom-line.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

To help organisations survive and thrive in the current environment, coaching can be employed as a key strategy. Coaching helps eliminate barriers that hinder firms from improving performance and creating change. Coaching programmes often serve as one of many interventions organisational consultants offer their clientele in order to improve the company's overall effectiveness and productivity.

According to (Appleton 2002; Crane 2001), the potential implications for an organisation that successfully employs an effective coaching strategy include increased employee retention, satisfaction, commitment, and respect, and improved communication and team effectiveness. An effective coaching strategy can also enhance motivation and morale; improve organisational performance, and leverage learning and creativity while lowering cost.

The purpose of this study is to explore, analyse, and assess manager's perception of the coaching process in relation to emotional competence, specifically self-awareness competencies, and consequently to improve work related skills in regards to matching these emotional competencies to the situation specific behaviour defined by a business unit.

3.1. Main Question

The main question we are asking is:

In the context of middle line management, how can the process of coaching enhance emotional competencies and strengthen the performance of organisational business targets?

- 1. What is coaching and how do we define the process of coaching?**
- 2. How does the coaching process help executive performance or help influence the manager's behaviour?**

3. What kind of learning takes place because of coaching?
4. How do the principles of Emotional Intelligence, specifically self-awareness, fit into executive coaching?
5. What business impact, if any, has this coaching intervention produced?
Does executive coaching help the executive's performance on the job?
6. When the coaching gets business impact what contributes to that outcome?

3.2. What is coaching?

The research basis for executive coaching up to date is minimal (Kilburg 2000), and describes frequently the process coaching model (Kiel et al. 1996), (Peterson 1996), (Tobias 1996), the minimum competencies and skills to undertake coaching (interactive listening skills, experience in debriefing, analysing and delivering assessments tools for example). However, the taxonomy of executive coaching is quite brief, dating back little more than a decade but the history (Maher and Pomerantz 2003) 'is rooted in a range of philosophies and practices that can be traced back to Aristotle, Buddhist thought, Gestalt theory and various gurus of ontology and business. It predates Anthony Robbins, Stephen Covey, Tom Peters, and Ken Blanchard.' The lack of accepted definitions, agreed standards, practice guidelines, and representative bodies calls this relative new human relations tendency into question at least until now. Under these conditions some of the most benefits of executive coaching, producing real and lasting change for example, may still be viewed as a gut feeling instinct. As the field grows and matures there is a need for more rigorous research on executive coaching. An up-to-date literature search on the impact of coaching reveals mostly case study or formative evaluation of coaching services and as the profession enters the market maturity stage the need to document the specific and quantifiable benefits of coaching ensue. This research paper indirectly contributes to the evaluation of business coaching and the impact within a work environment. We must fully appreciate our limitations of not operating in a scientific

environment as we're dealing with soft measure variables (human beings) that can exist in multiple states as (Storey 2003) describes coaching as "a transformational instrument, enabling permanent, desired, behavioural, managerial, and organizational change" that takes into account both cognitive (head) and values (heart).

So what is coaching and where does it come from?

The burgeoning field of coaching, as mentioned previously, points to a lack of definition as the subject gives rise to much discussion. The concept generates a lot of debate due to the immense growing rate of coaches worldwide, but one can acknowledge coaching prevailed as part of leadership development in the field of human relations. The Oxford dictionary decipheres coaching as '*the process of training somebody to play a sport, to do a job better or to improve a skill*'. When we think coaching, we assume coaching in related sporting events, as a tennis coach or a football coach for example.

In his book *The Inner Game of Tennis*, (Gallwey 1986) identifies the essence of coaching as 'unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them'. Gallwey's books describe a new model where 'we are more like an acorn, which contains within it all the potential to be a magnificent oak tree. We need nourishment, encouragement and the light to reach toward, but the oakness is already within'. (Downey 1999) characterizes coaching as 'the art of facilitating the performance, learning, and development of another'. Cheryl Smith, Director of the coaching programmes for Corporate Coach U, one of the biggest training coaching body, defines coaching as 'the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities they need to achieve effectiveness in their commitment to themselves, the organisation and their work'.

Coaching is best known as a one-to-one approach to workforce development, although a number of different approaches, styles, types to coaching exist (e.g. Whitmore,

2003; Fournies, 2000). Some of these categories define coaching type by its goals or ends and the practice of executive coaching may involve many models of coaching (career, group, performance, personal-life, targeted behavioural ... etc). In general, it involves a team leader or manager helping people to develop greater self-awareness, to improve their skills and take on new responsibilities. A lot of coaching is about self-socialisation: getting the individual to conform to patterns of behaviour acceptable to the firm. A number of authors (Goldsmith, Lyons and Freas 2000) have suggested that coaching is an expanding area of executive development. The coaching culture, especially one to one appears to undergo rapid growth according to (Peterson 1996; Redshaw 2000; Stratford 2001). Previously executive coaching had taken place quietly, often in the context of organisational development (OD) and business consultancy. It only focused on the problem executive, defined today as derailment coaching (Judge and Cowell August 1997), which generated the revenue top-line so sought after, but needed to gain a better understanding of emotional management before climbing the corporate ladder. The corporate world lingered up to the mid to late 90's until more executives began seeking out coaches on their own and firms initiated leadership programs that incorporated executive coaching advice and feedback to managers. When the managerial authority accepted that the old Tayloristic, top down, command and control strategy only fitted with specific economic sectors and sought a more developmental approach to management did coaching gained momentum in the early 90's. Coaching is a management behaviour that lies at the opposite end of the spectrum to command and control (Whitmore 2003) and great leaders such as Jack Welsh delivered a coaching culture pervasive throughout their organisation and reap the rewards.

Jonathan Brown, speaker of 'coaching managers to coach' at HRD April 2004 states that coaching is the most effective way to learn as organisational success now relies on the ability of each and every employee to learn faster than competition. In his article Cheap and Cheerful (March 2004) he references Arie De Geus, author of The living Company, that 'learning may be the only competitive advantages that matters in

the 21st century, because all other advantages rely up on it. Coaching helps people to learn at work to build their capacity for learning. It's the cheapest way to learn – little and often'.

The Executive Coaching Forum (TECF) provides interesting guidelines, definitions, and standards for executive coaching. It identifies executive coaching 'as an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals and conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect'. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact' (TECF 2004).

How is that different from existing professions? Like counselling, it is client-centred and individual. Like consulting, it is outcome oriented; dealing in visions and actions. The major difference between training, counselling, therapy, consulting, mentoring, and coaching conveys contrasting approaches in their techniques quite simply. The coach does not have answers. The coach does not provide expertise. A coach operates from the presupposition that the client (coachee) has all the resources, including the ability to discover and exploit resources. Against these descriptions of mentoring, counselling, coaching, consider for a moment the following objectives (Wright 1998): 'to help the individual gain confidence, gain a clearer focus and become more committed to their work; to help the individual feel valued and maximise their potential.'

In the interest of this study, we will focus on feedback coaching, as opposed to any other styles of business coaching. Each major category of coaching (e.g. content, in-depth development /psychoanalytical in approach) is implemented differently (Thach and Heinselman 1999) nevertheless the objective coincides with skill enhancement or improvement in a specific area. Feedback coaching involves responding to the coachee in order to help him/her create a development plan to address specific needs

and most of the time incorporates some form of 360 feedback assessment instruments. The coach will then help the coachee analyse the data and identify strengths and areas in need of development. The use of open-ended questions requires the coachee to begin to explore his or her situation which alternatively leads to different ways of thinking about it and ultimately to the self-generation of solutions. The author's company draws on this directive approach for performance coaching, however most coaches operate by adapting their style according to the preferences of the coachee. Adaptive coaching (Bacon and Spear 2003), with its unique client-centred approach looks into how people prefer to be coached and reflects on how coaches prefer to give help (directive/non-directive), when coaches prefer to give help (programmatic/circumstantial), what coaches focus on during coaching (specific/holistic).

We can distinguish three major stakeholders involved in the coaching process: the client, the coach, and the firm. Obviously the partnership involves secondary groups including senior management, Human resources...etc. The process results with a multiparty set of relationships based activities involving these 3 stakeholders, for the purpose of this study we will only concentrate on the relationship between the **person being coached (PBC)** and the organisation, in other words the coaching outcomes.

In this research, we can summarise the stakeholders as:

- 1) the direct reports of the PBC
- 2) the executive's manager
- 3) other key people in the PBC's life

The first golden rule of coaching does not seek to give people the answers to their problems or difficulties, because the coach helps them to reach their own conclusions and solutions through a collaborative process which we can define as guided or self-discovery (in other words, whenever possible, we let people's brains take the exertion

of problem-solving). Guided discovery builds upon Socratic questioning, mostly acknowledged in selling techniques, whereby the coach asks the person a series of questions in order to bring information into the awareness of the PBC: therefore, Socratic questions are designed to promote insight and better rational decision-making. Questions should be phrased in such a way that they stimulate thought and increase awareness, rather than requiring a correct answer. A recent study (2002) conducted by the Work Foundation and the School of Coaching revealed that 34% of respondents stated that they used the GROW model (**G**oal **R**eality, **O**ppportunity, **W**hat **n**ext) one third cited they used a variety of models and the remaining third did not know what model or process was used in their coaching activities. One of the best-known coaching model in the UK remains the GROW model, developed by Sir John Whitmore. Many coaching programmes embrace this model as the framework during the guiding process and designing of the alliance.

Various articles and books explain the process of coaching, where each author describes a specific three to six steps procedure. (Flaherty 1999; Goldsmith *et al.* 2000; Kiel *et al.* 1996; Whitmore, Kilburg 1996, 2000). Furthermore, there are lists of coaching methods and techniques, which range from 360 assessment and feedback to training, simulations, role playing, and confrontations just to name a few. In general, however, the mechanism of coaching includes the following three phrases: contracting, data collection with the use of different tools (e.g. 360 assessment, Myers Briggs, leadership styles, motivational questionnaires) and coaching.

In order to measure the outcomes we will have to take into account the coaching process because emotional learning is different from technical or cognitive type of learning usually found in training and development programmes. Another dimension implicated in the individual coaching process entails the analysis of the learning outcomes. Based on the primary assumption of coaching that every person has the answer as discussed above, we will concentrate on these two main learning outcomes:

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

- 1) Emotional capabilities of new ways of thinking and acting that generalise to other situations and roles.
- 2) “Learning how to learn”: developing skills and habits of self-reflection that ensure that learning will continue after coaching.

The observant and insightful coach will help the PBC examine gaps or openings between what they believe they do and what they actually do. These emotional capabilities of new ways of thinking and acting are fertile ground for personal growth and development. The objective in this process is to cleanse the blind spots as described in the Johari Window. Awareness is the first step to change and creates “the learning how to learn” necessary attitude and culture. This opens the door to continuous self-improvement and self-discovery. As (Peter Senge 1990) says ‘through learning we re-create ourselves, we become something we were never able to do’.

This ‘learning how to learn’ has become a key element on how to keep talented employees through development. ‘As the war for talent continues, companies are increasingly turning to coaching as a principal means of developing their existing managers in an effort to produce extraordinary results from almost everybody’, (Bacon, Spear 2003). Consider the top 10 reasons why executives hire a coach from Leading Insight eZine (October 2003). They carried out a survey and the explanations draw from the blind spot to organisational effectiveness as revealed in the literature review:

- To improve the existing culture of the company
- To increase the executive’s ability to leverage his/her time
- To have fostering discussions of ideas that are still in the inkling stage
- To test out ideas and strategy with someone who has no vested interest
- To expand upon and clarify the executive’s vision for the company
- To have a secure, safe and confidential outlet to vent when necessary
- To point what out what the executive can’t, won’t or doesn’t see

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

- To find a better way to reduce stress, increase, effectiveness and still have a great life
- To achieve personal and professional goals

Businesses are adopting coaching as the limitations of traditional classroom training become more and more obvious. Lack of transfer in learning and lack of sustained behavioural change points toward the need for more individualised, more engaged, more context specific learning. The literature overflows with coaching as a tool; however, how successful is the outcome?

3.3. What are the benefits of coaching?

So what are the benefits for utilising coaching? How do you know coaching is the right intervention for your leadership needs?

Obviously assessing the need for a coaching programme decides the first step. The purpose of contracting in coaching, as outlined in *The Executive Coaching Handbook* is to ensure productive outcomes, clarify goals, prevent misunderstanding, establish goals and define interpersonal practices. The assessment phase provides both the coach and the PBC with important information upon which to establish a developmental plan, followed by goal setting. Goals spring from reliable data that denote how the PBC should learn new skills, change behaviour, work on organisational priorities, achieve specific results whether in his/her personal life or from a work context. The validity of the data often depends on the perception of others and the clarification of what the PBC will need to achieve so others perceive him/her as achieving the goals plant this stage.

Therefore research (ICF, coaching.com, Hay Group, CIPD, Coachville) tells us coaching occurs primarily for the development of core competencies in emotional intelligence and individual leadership skills (e.g.: higher productivity, improved

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

communication, relationships, learning, quality of life, greater recognition, flexibility and adaptability to change, more customer care, creative ideas).

The coaching study 2004 led by Professor John Sparrow of UCE indicates that the provision of external coaching services across the UK has rocketed over the last years and as a result organisations increasingly perceive coaching as a key component in their development strategy:

- There is ample evidence to show that coaching works and yet at the same time, there is growing confusion in the market around the quality and value of provision.
- The majority of coaching occurs at executive/management levels in support of personal development and performance improvement.
- There is a strong expectation that coaching demand and usage will increase in the future and with this a need for greater rigour, standardisation, and consistency.

The study displayed clear indicators of multiplied demands for coaching and heightened expectations from firms embracing a coaching based approach to people development.

The Chartered Management Institute and Campaign for Learning in the UK (2002) conducted a survey to a sample of 3000 individual institute members into learning at work, focusing on the informal learning method of coaching. 93% of managers believed that coaching should be available to all employees regardless of seniority, building on successful workplace initiatives already in existence and giving and receiving feedback should be seen as a key responsibility of all managers as part of a 'coaching culture'. 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 organization, or as part of a programme to motivate and retain staff.

A survey with The Quo Group, published in February 2001, demonstrated that executive coaching plays a major role in improving the capability of UK businesses and in maximising competitiveness. In his article 'Executive Coaching - the route to business stardom', Steve O'Shaughnessy gives an example of one senior respondent who estimated she was able to bring more than £15 million of added value to her organisation through new initiatives that coaching inspired her to undertake.

The survey, which includes interviews with senior executives of 25 blue-chip organisations, was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching as a management development tool. 'It revealed an across-the-board consensus that coaching was one of the most powerful strategic and tactical weapons open to businesses today because of its ability to enhance areas of executive expertise that were already at a high level and to establish skills that were previously absent or weak.'

In another snapshot overview of coaching, The Hay Group 2002 worldwide coaching survey revealed that 86% of coachees observed positive behaviour changes through coaching and 40% linked coaching to improved performance with only 19% of organisations formally evaluating the impact of coaching. If coaching is to prosper on the promise it holds we need to appreciate more explicitly what constitutes effective coaching in the eyes of the client. Do we have empirical proof studies?

3.4. Is there supporting literature on the impact of coaching effectiveness?

The most comprehensive study on the ROI (return on investment) on coaching, using (Phillips and Pulliam 2000) fifth level was contracted by the (Manchester review

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

2001); no prior research had attempted to quantify the business outcomes of executive coaching. It included data on executive behaviour change, organisational improvements achieved and the ROI from comprehensive executive programmes. The respondents were executives from large mostly (FORTUNE 1,000) companies who had participated in either "change oriented" coaching, aimed at improving certain behaviours or skills, or "growth oriented" coaching, designed to sharpen overall job performance. The programs lasted from six months to a year and the participants (50% of executives held positions of VP or higher, aged 40-49 and 33% earned > 200K\$ a year) were 100 executives who had completed their coaching experience.

The research followed Kirkpatrick four levels in evaluating the adequacy of the program, selecting a qualitative approach with interviews and questionnaires. Specifically: reaction to programme and planned action (reaction to programme and what participants planned to do with material), learning (competencies participants were expected to acquire because of the programme), behavioural change (what are they doing differently as a result), business results (relating participation to either tangible or intangible business results). They added another criterion, a fifth level, (Phillips 1997) in order to demonstrate a chain of impact, which leads to financial measurement. The return on investment from coaching, measured in hard financial data, included for example, reduced turnover or inter-personal relationships. In the later case, let us consider the extracts of one executive on how he reached his conclusions in the study: "we're more productive and people are more responsive. Last year we save the company about \$4 million. Say 10% of that was because of my dealing with people in a more productive manner and their performing better in return, which would be \$400,000. I am 75% confident in this estimate." Participants used their own calculation methods for ROI and evaluated their confidence level in this estimate in order to make a series of adjustment to render the projection conservative and to isolate the ROI component attributable to coaching.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

The results showed the company obtained a return of 5.45 times or an ROI of 545% on its investment. Forty-three executives in the sample provided an estimate of ROI (the others applied the total value scale), and with a conservatively calculation averaged at 5.7 times the initial investment.

Results:

- 86% of participants and 74% of stakeholders indicated that they were very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the coaching process:

Among the benefits to executives who received coaching, as intangible business impacts:

- 77% executives observed improvements with their direct reporting line.
- 71% working relationships with immediate supervisors
- 67% teamwork
- 63% working relationships with peers
- 61% job satisfaction and 52% reported reduced conflict.

Learning:

- enhancing interpersonal skills (35%)
- enhancing management skills (18%)
- enhancing leadership skills (14%)

Behavioural change: Participants considered 73% of goals achieved very effectively or extremely effectively.

This far-reaching research displayed strong evidence of the efficacy of executive coaching as effectiveness transpired across all five levels of the evaluation.

About the same time (November 2001), another interesting useful study involving a Fortune 500 firm came to the limelight. The company launched a leadership development programme, targeting middle management and the program included

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

group mentoring, individual assessment, development planning...etc. During this training and development scheme, it was decided to evaluate the impact of coaching on work related skills. Coaching produced a 529% ROI and significant intangible benefits to the business.

The data collection applied derived from a questionnaire in two parts: part one covered Kirkpatrick level 1-3 of assessing the effectiveness of the program, meaning gathering feedback on the client's reaction to coaching, what they learned and how they applied what they learned and captured their initial assessment of business impact.

Part 2 was done over the telephone with each respondent and probed more deeply into business impact and the financial ROI. The target population for the survey covered 43 leadership-development participants with a 70% response rate.

Decision-making, team performance and the motivation of others were enhanced, 77% of the 30 respondents indicated that coaching had significantly affected at least one of nine business measures. 'Coaching was a very effective development tool for the leadership development participants, producing intangible benefits for the business (Anderson 2001)'.

In conclusion, from these two prime case studies, although the literature has little full time scale analysis of the impact on coaching performance within the organisational context, one can see a common thread in both of these cases: the use of the Kirkpatrick model of evaluating the effectiveness of a program. Maximising the performance of managers, especially the performance of leadership teams via executive coaching can yield significant return for an organisation as we have demonstrated, yet organisations often opt for qualitative approach when evaluating the process. The main reason for this approach lies in the mechanism of the coaching process itself.

In analysing the change impact in both of these case studies, the essential factors that contributed to or prevented the continuation of newly acquired behaviours, comprised the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism through the process of coaching.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

As we have seen, one of the central objectives of coaching is to help leaders enhance their capabilities and maximise their potential. Though the primary aim of coaching is to help individuals develop action plans for change, it also encourages them 'to increase self-awareness of thinking, moods and emotions' (Becket 2000). Moreover, translating awareness into behaviour change may have to do a lot with how self-aware one begins with and readiness to change (Prochaska, et al. 1992).

Individual behaviour change is complicated and (Nowack 1999) in order to maximize coaching success invoke other tools to ensure that the essential conditions required for behaviour change are all there. These can be described as 'awareness, motivation and EQ' and 'coaches who attempt to maximize all three conditions will have a much higher probability of seeing a payoff in their clients than if any one condition exists alone'. These three elementary conditions initiate and sustain successful individual change efforts. This supports (Goleman 1998) which states 'there are some elements of emotional intelligence that are so basic as to constitute "meta-abilities" which are essential for most other competencies. These basics include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

In the habit 1 – be proactive, of the seven habits of highly effective people (Covey 1990) , the author states that self awareness 'affects not only our attitudes and behaviours, but also how we see other people. It becomes our map of the basic nature of humankind.' He outlines the primary human endowment of self-awareness in order to portray the link between stimulus and response, as the freedom to choose, the fundamental principle of the nature of man. Our greatest power as human being, which set us apart from the animal world, is this ability to decide upon our lives. In addition to self-awareness, he adds conscience, a deep awareness of right and wrong; independent will, the ability to act based upon our self-awareness; and imagination, our ability to create in our minds beyond present reality.

This proactive model, grounded by self-awareness, is the cornerstone for all the other habits as 'our basic nature is to act and not be acted upon'.

The theme of self-awareness begins with the proactive model, 'one to one coaching is excellent for developing self-awareness, particularly the awareness of one's impact on people, process, and strategy' (Sloan and Utts 2003).

The latest survey from the Euro Coach List, one of the biggest coaching email discussion group in Europe, the Irish coaching survey (Morley 2003), respondents to the ICF survey, all report self awareness among the top three benefits of a coaching session with clarity-direction of goals and enhanced self discovery. Self-understanding or insights were the most common achievement of the PBC in corpexcoach.com snapshot from the 480 business and executive coaches interviewed.

The ICF survey included 67.6 percent of participants who reported increased self-awareness as the number one benefit of a coaching session.

In the search for leader development, it would appear that leader "know thyself" is primordial. Coaching is one-step in the leadership self-awareness journey. Leaders need coaching to encourage them to look within to understand their own skills, strengths, and competencies and they need to look outside themselves to see who needs their coaching. The process of coaching, in other words the coaching conversation will lead to awareness.

In order to understand this process we must first apprehend the notion of awareness. How do we know we have gained awareness and how do we define it? How self-awareness does relate to emotional intelligence (*EI or EQ*)?

3.5. Self awareness in the process of coaching

In the post-modern management and organisational theories, coaching with 360 feedbacks has become one of the fastest growing executive development options inside global companies (Goldsmith et al. 2000; cited by Thach 2002).

Emotional intelligence "is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Mayer and Salovey 1993). It involves resourcefulness that may be categorized into five domains:

Self-awareness:

Observing yourself and recognizing a feeling as it happens

Managing emotions:

Handling feelings so that they are appropriate; realizing what is behind a feeling; finding ways to handle fears and anxieties, anger, and sadness.

Motivating oneself:

Channelling emotions in the service of a goal; emotional self control;

Empathy:

Sensitivity to others' feelings and concerns and taking their perspective; appreciating the differences in how people feel about things

Handling relationships:

Managing emotions in others; social competence and social skills

Studies of close to 500 organizations worldwide, reviewed by (Goleman 1998) in his book Working with Emotional Intelligence, indicate that people who score highest on EQ measures rise to the top of corporations. 'Star' employees possess more interpersonal skills and confidence, for example, than 'regular' employees who receive less glowing performance reviews.

'Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytic skill combined for star performances,' he says. 'And the higher people move up in the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes.'

Research by the centre for Creative Leadership has found that the primary causes of derailment in executives involve deficits in emotional competence such as difficulty in handling change, not being able to work well in a team, and poor interpersonal relations. How well someone handles their own emotions more often determines how much people around that person prefer to deal with them.

(Goleman 1998, p. 7) states that 'unlike IQ, which changes little after our teen years, emotional intelligence seems to be largely learned and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experience'. Obviously the role of the coach will be determinant in facilitating that learning. Though academic IQ is important, EQ is what differentiates star performers from good performers. In fact, EQ is the best predictor of management performance. The author defines 25 sets of emotional competencies under the five domains or cluster of behaviours and self-awareness is the cornerstone in the hierarchical structure.

Emotional Intelligence assesses the measure of your self and social awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately identify your emotions and their impact, as well as understand your motivations. It also facilitates the proficiency to manage your emotions in an appropriate manner, which includes restraining disruptive impulses such as anger and stubbornness, thinking before acting, resisting from being judgemental and nurturing standards of integrity. Social awareness relates to recognising emotions and the ability to listen to others and put their needs ahead of your own. These skills are not innate and must often be instilled or sharpened. Most managers are too engaged or enable or unwilling to step back from their day-to-day tornado in order to explore and improve upon their emotional functioning. Executive coaching creates a forum in which to engage in sustained self-examination.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

For the simplicity of this project and reasons outlined above, we have decided to evaluate self-awareness as the main emotional competence. Self-awareness is also easy to measure with specific diagnosis tools such as observer assessment or 360 feedbacks. At the time of this writing, the author's company is evaluating different 360 software tools, although we implement this tool in our coaching programmes when the budget concedes it, we do not systematically refer to such feedback instrument.

Research indicates that 360° feedback, if done systematically, with the right instrumentation, and with appropriate coaching, can improve performance, and lead to sustained behavioural change over time.

Awareness becomes the agent of choice when someone adjusts their own perspectives, expand their awareness and it reveals new choices. The first step in this adjustment builds upon a present-based perception of reality from the PBC and the outcome usually leads to a platform for effective actions. This last word characterizes coaching, as after all it directs action. (WCI Ltd 2003) in their guide for coachees – 'things to reflect on when entering a coaching relationship' describes this as:

- Feedback brings awareness,
- Awareness brings choice,
- Choice brings freedom,
- Freedom brings effectiveness.

Without awareness you cannot change, in order to change you need to become aware of your strengths and weaknesses and this leads to action. When people make the shift from self-interest to self-responsibility, it enhances the quality of interaction with colleagues and clients.

The more you obtain choices about how to behave, the more effective you can be. To bring forth choices, as (WCI Ltd 2003) illustrates you need to:

- be aware of what is happening,
- be aware of how others see you and your behaviour,
- be capable of doing what it takes to be effective in the situation at hand,
- Choose the effective behaviour and carry it out.

The more of our real selves we have shared with others (and been accepted), the more likely we are to accept ourselves. The better we understand others, the better we can understand the opposite and ourselves, the better we understand ourselves, the better we understand others.

(Turnow 1993) describes the importance of self-awareness in 360 – degree feedback activities as based on two key assumptions:

- That awareness of any discrepancy between how we see ourselves and how others see us increases self awareness
- That enhanced self awareness is a key to maximum performance as a leader, and thus becomes a foundation block for management and leadership development programmes.’

(London and Beatty 1993) have suggested that the rationale for 360-degree feedback ‘can become a powerful organisational intervention to increase awareness of the importance of aligning leader behaviour and increasing employee participation in leadership development and work unit effectiveness’.

“The importance of self-awareness in the workplace has been cited by both popular authors such as Covey, Senge, and Juran, as well as in empirical research studies, as being a critical factor for managerial and leadership effectiveness.”

For example, a manager may impulsively react to criticism by withdrawing and not interacting. Without being mindful of this pattern, the manager will not alter his behaviour. In effect, by concentrating his attention and intention on this pattern, the manager can instigate how it gets triggered and what its consequences are. If they are undesirable, the manager will be motivated to change the pattern. However to be mindful presupposes to remember to be mindful. Change requires an act of memory, this activates the learning curve, and personal effectiveness increases by moving from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence. If the manager who withdraws in the face of criticism is aware at the moment of being criticised of his potential to repeat a pattern of withdrawal then he has the opportunity to challenge that pattern. I call this being aware in real time.

3.6 Literature Review Summary

As we have reinforced, a growing number of Fortune 1000 companies offer coaching as a HR tool to their managers. Whether hiring external coaches or training their own leaders in coaching skills, companies perceive that coaching initiates change and stretches people towards their highest productivity potential. Coaching can suggest nothing more than individual therapy focusing on enhancing interpersonal and social skills, however effective coaching focuses on work related skills and behaviours to enhance professional effectiveness and job performance.

With a constant need to remain competitive, firms are seeing coaching as a way to help valued employees develop swiftly in a rapidly changing business environment.

These views can best be summarised in terms of (Beer and Nohria's 2000) 'E' and 'O' strategies. An 'E' approach to change is based on economic value and an 'O' approach to change is based on organisational capability. The 'O' soft approach, to change, attempts to develop human capability through individual and organisational learning in a process of collaboration with others at all level of the organisation. Best

practice, with the likes of GE proceeded with the two approaches in sequence, with an E approach preceding an O approach. Do companies embrace and implement the 'O' approach in this new millennium? Can we justify the E approach in today's environment?

Organizations are discovering that traditional management approaches do not always achieve the results that the manager and the organization want. Therefore, many are turning to the development of coaching skills to support leaders in retaining quality employees and increasing performance in the firm. In today's rapidly changing business scenery, winning organisations require a new kind of management culture, one that builds on creating new knowledge. This compels constant learning and a crucial catalyst in this new management culture is the coach.

The latest T&D 2004 CIPD survey proves that coaching is now widely accepted well-planned and integrated aspect of corporate performance and development activity. Nevertheless, one need to be careful that the hunt for another Holy Grail involved in evaluating the ROI of coaching may overshadow real issues. The myth that all training and development needs to be justified by hard financial data can be put to question.

As we enter an era of individual-centred approaches to learning and development delving into the quest of this particular Holy Grail can become a fruitless exercise.

We are witnessing a period of increased individualism in terms of both self-interest and self-responsibility for learning and development and the criteria that organisation adopt in the evaluation of success should also evolve with time. Learner-centred learning, as opposed to teacher-centred training, has become the norm rather than an example of excellence. The author can validate this through the different experiences of facilitation the company undertakes across Ireland.

There is other value, however, in providing coaching and development which is over and above the objectives of any coaching programme itself, namely that it encourages people to continue to learn and to develop. This is an intangible quality and yet it is

one of the most wonderful effects of training and development. Traditional forms of training evaluation would not fully acknowledge the value of this and the contribution it makes to firms.

Providing time, advice and support become key corporate responsibilities.

The perceived value to the organisation will amount to belief and trust as the key source of endorsing data can only come from individual recipients. It is therefore interesting to note that in the CIPD survey the most popular method used for assessing the effectiveness of coaching activities is feedback from participants.

There has constantly been increased pressure on Human Resource and Training professionals to demonstrate the worth of their programs, however coaching has led to a greater understanding of and emphasis on the best features of training.

4. Research Methodology

Coaching is not rational science and one cannot take the view of a natural scientist because the variables, methods and procedures of coaching and the outcomes fluctuate. If it were science, the coachee would know the answer and not undertake the coaching process of self-discovery. The exact process would be replicated, however each human being is different and unique and there is no such thing as a super coach who thinks he is invincible and be assured of success. The versed principles, contexts, and skills of coaching are valuable for understanding what to do however; there is no magic recipe for coaching. Therefore, the research philosophy cannot reflect the principles of positivism. Positivists generally assume that reality is objectively given and recorded by measurable properties, which are independent of the observer (researcher) and his or her instruments. Positivist studies generally attempt to test theory, in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena.

Just as there are various philosophical perspectives, which can inform qualitative research, so there are various qualitative research methods. A research method is a strategy of inquiry, which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to research design and data collection. The choice of research method influences the way in which the researcher collects data. Specific research methods also imply different skills, assumptions, and research practices.

The author decided to adopt a qualitative research methodology using structured interviews and questionnaires as a cross-sectional case study. A quantitative research was not applied in this study because the data collection instruments, the research method and the method applied to analyse the data according to the quantitative research were not suitable for the target population of this study.

A cross sectional study usually implements the survey strategy (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002; Robson 2002) and the collection of data derived from the coaching process within a specific timeframe.

A prelude in trying to appreciate the collection of information for research purposes is that there are broadly two approaches; quantitative research and qualitative research.

The main objective of qualitative research concerns the development of explanations of social phenomena. In other words; it aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It relates to the social aspects of our world and aspires to answer questions about:

- Why people behave the way they do
- How opinions and attitudes are formed
- How people are affected by the events that go on around them
- How and why cultures have developed in the way they have

Qualitative research is concerned with finding the answers to questions that begin with: why? How? In what way? Quantitative research, on the other hand, is more concerned with questions about: how much? How many? How often? To what extent?

The foremost, or dialogical, approach conversely promotes the use of qualitative, or perceivably subjective, methods in which dialogue, description, and interpretation take precedence over measurement. Evaluation, interpreted as dynamic rather than static, forms an integral part of the development process in which subjectivity integrates the process. The design of the research needs to highlight the PBC opinions about the coaching experience, therefore accounts, and feelings of individuals producing subjective data is concerned with qualitative research. This correlates with the April 2004 CIPD T&D UK survey where (75%) of the respondents reported using feedback from participants as the measure accepted to assess effectiveness of

coaching. Other common measures used are appraisal systems (61%) and feedback from coaches (44%).

Other important issues for consideration when making methodological choices include the ease of comprehension with which the data emanating from the evaluation and its credibility in the eyes of the audience who will receive, and utilise, the results.

After deciding on the type of data required, qualitative, or quantitative, the next methodological decision to gather is on the type of research that will best address the research problem. There are many different types of research design. The choice of design depends on the research problem. Research can be carried out using experiments, correlation studies, surveys, case studies, action research, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.

The author identified the type of research that best addressed the research problem of the impact of coaching on work related skills as a survey.

The survey involves asking individuals questions about their opinions, beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours with regard to a given topic. Selected individuals take part in a survey because they share certain characteristics and form some kind of population. Data gathering comprise questionnaires, face-to-face or telephone interview. The use of surveys permits a researcher to study more variables at one time than is typically possible in laboratory or field experiments, whilst data can be collected about real world environments.

4.1. Research Goal

Evaluating coaching interventions with regard to learning, transfer, and organizational impact involves a number of complexity factors. Evaluation goals affect multiple purposes at different levels.

The purpose of the evaluation undertaken is to make a judgment about the worth and effectiveness of the coaching process, more commonly defined as 'summative' in the academic literature. The evaluation had two main routes:

- Type of evaluation objectives (cognitive, affective, behavioural, impact)
- Level of evaluation (reaction, learning, behaviour, organizational impact)

The essential objective of the research examined the testing of the hypothesis.

Coaching engenders awareness, awareness brings choice, choice freedom, or change in behaviour, and change in behaviour brings an improvement in a work/life context. The outcomes that the author is trying to establish are variables of improvement in a work life/context. The coachees elucidated these variables through their own perception of how the coaching process improved their working environment.

We used a research questionnaire sent by email and followed by semi structured telephone interviews. Each person completed a set of predetermined questions.

We asked the coachees their initial reaction to coaching, what they had learned; how they applied what they learned to the workplace in order to capture their initial assessment of the business impact.

In other words, we followed the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation. Evaluation measures the extent to which programs, processes, or tools achieve the purpose for which they were intended. The author considered one major model of evaluation. This model, developed by Kirkpatrick in 1952, remains widely used today (ASTD 1997).

Developing evaluation strategies based on the Kirkpatrick Model holds the greatest promise for systematic assessment of training within organizations.

(Phillips 1991) stated the Kirkpatrick Model was probably the most well known framework for classifying areas of evaluation. This was confirmed in 1997 when the

American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) assessed the nationwide prevalence of the importance of measurement and evaluation to human resources department (HRD) executives by surveying a panel of 300 HRD executives from a variety of types of U.S. organizations. Survey results indicated the majority (81%) of HRD executives attached some level of importance to evaluation and over half (67%) used the Kirkpatrick Model.

4.2. Kirkpatrick Model

In order to design the questionnaire we aimed to adjust our questions so they would match as closely as possible to the 4-step model of Kirkpatrick. From the literature review, we exemplified two major case studies in the ROI of coaching which as a starting point reported the effectiveness of this model. The author implements this model, at least the first two levels, in the majority of its training programmes with the company.

Kirkpatrick's model follows the goal-based evaluation approach and constructs its methodology on four simple questions that translate into four levels of evaluation. These four levels are widely known as reaction, learning, behaviour, and results.

We can separate the outcomes of development programmes such as coaching or training into two types of benefits; soft benefits such as self-awareness, improved communication, conflict resolution, employee morale and increased employee loyalty, are more difficult to convert to monetary value. Profitability can increase due to coaching in various ways. For example, coaching can expand the capacity of leaders to handle more complex responsibilities, sharpen teams' energy and motivation, and enhance creativity devoted to profit-generating activities. The difficulties lie in the practicalities of evaluation and because the impact of training or coaching is often not directly measurable.

The initial assessment of levels I, II and III of the (Kirkpatrick 1994) model, enables the measurement of this soft data:

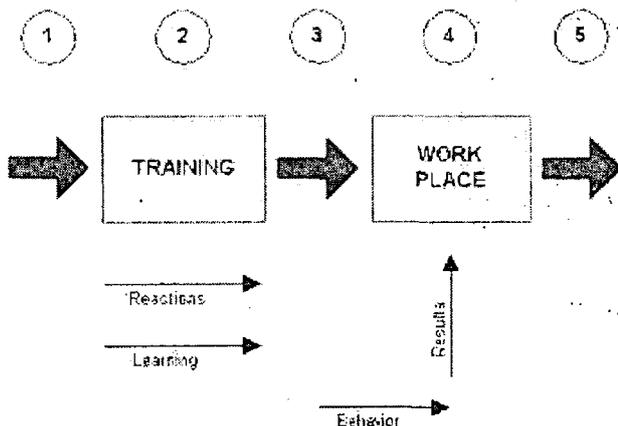
Coaching and the impact on work related skills

Level 1: Reaction & Planned Measures Action: Measures participant satisfaction with the program and captures planned actions. This level is frequently embraced with surveys or questionnaires that measure whether the training was meaningful or enjoyable.

Level 2: Learning: Measures changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This level checks if the employee learned the information or skill presented and to what degree.

Level 3: Job Applications: Measure changes in on-the-job behaviour usually by observer ratings and observations. In this case, behaviour outlines a relationship of learning (the previous measurement level) to the actualization of doing.

Level 4: Business Results: measurement of specific measurable business results attributed to the training. These results may include increases in productivity, increases in efficiency, decreases in absenteeism and occupational accidents, decreases in customer complaints, etc. Measurement of this result should isolate the effects of training from other extraneous events. Statistics or control groups regulate the measurements of level four in general.



(Source Kirkpatrick 1959)

Each level of measurement is dependent on the previous level and each level is linked to the others. Without this link it is difficult to isolate the effect of coaching or to conclude with any degree of confidence that coaching is responsible for any improvements in performance.

Each level of evaluation commands a different type of question, the answers to which are likely of interest to various audiences. In response, distinct assessment instruments are best suited to each category. For example, it is not feasible to get Level 3 - behaviour data from the type of Likert scale questionnaire best used to collect Level 1 - reaction data. Level 2 - learning data often requires traditional question-response tests or observational check lists. Detailed interviews or direct observation accord with Level 3 - behaviour data, and while Level 4 - results data is frequently produced as a by-product of the program, it is then analyzed using cost/effectiveness, cost/benefit, or cost/utility formulas. Also different grouping of data need to be collected at varied times. Level 1 - reaction data is best measured immediately at the end of a coaching session. Level 2 - learning data needs to be measured before and after the sessions, usually after 60 days. Level 3 - behaviour data can be measured any time between one week and many years after the program and it is often very beneficial to conduct behaviour assessments several times over a certain time period. Finally, depending on the program, Level 4 - results data may take anywhere from a few months to several years to unfold.

The author concentrated largely on Level 1 to level 3 for the purpose of this research due to lack of time and resources in evaluating level 4. In order to measure level 4, we needed to visit a certain number of different companies on site from our sampling and this would of lead to difficulties of obtaining access within the constrained timeframe.

4.3. Selection of participants

The sampling techniques available for this research derived from a judgmental sampling or using a non-probability technique. The probability of each case of coaching session being selected from the population of middle managers in Ireland is not known and we needed to make in-depth study that focused on a small case sample only from our installed base.

The population from which the sample will be analysed represents the business coaching installed base of XenerGie Consulting Ltd, in other words coaching within a working context or with a business performance outcome or work/life related. One common criticism imposed at qualitative research is that the results of a study may not be geared to a larger group of managers because the sample group was small and the subjects were not chosen randomly.

The original aim of this explanatory study sought insight into a specific subgroup of managers "middle management" within the business coaching installed base of XenerGie Consulting Ltd. Nevertheless, we considered that the selected sample reflected our target segment and this could be easily rolled out in a different business context. Middle/junior manager, team leader, supervisor accounted for 64% of the employee group being coached in the CIPD 2004 survey. This data indicates that coaching does not take place only with the most senior people in the organisation and that the majority of coaching is provided and delivered (95%) internally by middle management. The author considered that due to lack of time and budget constraints, it would be impracticable to survey the whole population of the installed base of middle management. Sampling saves time, as we have fewer data to collect from the entire population and therefore the results will be available more quickly. Also the smaller the number for cases for which you have to collect the data implies more time spent on designing and piloting the means of collecting these data.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

We used the approach of purposive sampling as we felt the selected subjects had special knowledge of the topic under investigation, mainly the coaching process suited business coaching outcomes as opposed to personal life coaching.

In order to select our purposive sampling, we targeted and constructed our criteria on the following guidelines from our installed base:

- Business coaching as opposed to life coaching
- Coachability of the subject
- Relationship with coachee due to confidentiality factors
- Frequency and regularity of sessions with PBC
- Specific as opposed to holistic issue, defined from the needs
- Email address and telephone coordinates (updated coordinates)

The original assessment phase through interviews with the PBC, enable us to evaluate the participants through our own observation and dialogue with them.

Some employees are more open or disposed to coaching than others and we had to take into account the Coachability factor of our sampling for ease of use. The company applied the model developed by the Lore research Institute (Bacon and Spear 2003) to help appreciate how coachable a person is, what behaviours reflect the manager's degree of Coachability and what entails effective change. The coaching scale has seven levels of Coachability and reflects the degree of difficulty in coaching a PBC. The lower the number on the scale, the more difficult it will be for the coach to help the PBC to change, on the opposite end, the higher the number on the scale, the more coachable the executive will be.

Some of the key factors identified in Coachability can be summarised as follows:

- Ego strength (sense of self, pride, humility, and arrogance)
- Feelings of vulnerability

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

- Openness to feedback
- The PBC self-assessment of need, sense of urgency in change, extrinsic motivators
- Perception of the value of the coaching process and trust in coach
- Awareness of the need for change
- Presence of serious psychological problems
- Responsiveness to extrinsic pressures ...etc

We selected coachees from good Coachability to very good Coachability for the purpose of this research because we required time to compile the data in a very short timeframe. These entire factors expose how motivated someone is geared towards change as helping client change is the purpose of coaching and one of our measured variable. Under no circumstances does this implicate that one cannot select participants of fair Coachability, but the author confined under a strict timescale had to complete the research. Therefore the behavioural descriptors of the PBC, prior to coaching can be summarised as 'desire to change, intrinsic need to grow, wake up call after original development assessment?.'

Another dimension we implemented involved the frequency and regularity of our coaching sessions with our clients and we tended to focus in circumstantial coaching as opposed to programmatic coaching relationships. The main difference discussed in the initial contract, denotes a timeframe, programmatic coaching relationships can last for years and commit to long-term development of the coachee. Circumstantial coaching tends to be much more short term and task focus. In this instance, we obviously selected circumstantial coaching partnerships, meaning three months on average relationships and deep inside them the coachee knew what they wanted.

To the best of knowledge we also concentrated on specific issues, tasks or skills as opposed to holistic coaching concentrating on the whole person. Specific coaching tends to focus on explicit behaviour at a time and as such inclines to be more behavioural as holistic coaching prefers to work on broader issues of professional

development. At the end, the split is never clear-cut, as the underlying issue has to be rooted out, treating causes rather than effects. As mentioned in the literature review we targeted one type of coaching, the simplest type, giving someone feedback, for the purpose of this research paper.

The respondent ranged from business director, product group manager, quality inspector, marketing manager, accountant, and two self employed entrepreneurs. The organisational setting, where the coachees worked, corresponded to multinationals in the high-tech sector, medical device sector and the food industry. The accessibility of the sample group did not pose any particular threat and the majority of the respondents had at least 10 years working lifespan.

4.4. Data Collection & Analysis

The design of each question determines the data you need to collect and (Dillman 2000) distinguishes between three types of data variable that can be collected through questionnaire as opinion, behaviour and attribute. Questionnaires comprise a written set of questions answered by all respondents in the study. Several different types of questions exist.

Closed questions seek a limited response and commonly assess opinions, behaviours and respondents designate a point on a scale, either semantic or numeric, to indicate how they perceive or feel about a situation.

At the other end of the scale, open questions allow the respondent to answer freely in their own words. These indicate a more extensive response where in depth information is required and the respondent influence by a set of pre-defined answers is minimal.

We produced a questionnaire in which each respondent completed two parts and followed (deVaus' 2002) advice on the length and ease of use of the document in order not to affect the response rate.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

The first part consisted of seven self-administered questions from a scale of SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), A (agree), to SA (strongly agree). The rating or scale questions are often used to collect opinion data. The intention in this first phase followed indirectly the Kirkpatrick model in measuring the reaction and learning of the coaching process. The author's ambition addressed the main issue – what was the experience and what did you get out of it? One has to note here that the majority of the coachees were encountering for the first time a coaching experience in their life. The information required needed to reflect this from the beginning and the open, sensitive questions designed at the end.

The second part reflected their true inner feelings through open-ended questions where the questionnaire concentrated on the process of coaching in order to discover any behavioural changes, which led to improvements in their work related environment. In this section, the author's aim was to elucidate the level three of Kirkpatrick model – what effect did this have in the work environment?

The methodology expressed during the data gathering comprised various phases:

First, we emailed a sample of 20 coachees as defined by the above criteria in order to ask for their permission to be interviewed and evaluated on the coaching process. In this email (see appendix) we stated the objective of our research, introduced the context of the thesis so interviewees were aware of the objectives.

Second, from this first batch (40% response rate) of respondent, we emailed the questionnaire (see appendix) to all consenting coachees. Some of the non-response rate was due to PBC's inability to respond to the questionnaire due to holidays or simply refusal to take part in a research project.

Following this phase, the returns amounted to seven questionnaires by email (90% response rate) to XenerGie Consulting and then the author interviewed all respondents before analysing the data, especially in the second section of open-ended questions.

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

The second development behind this logistics of administrating the interviewee by telephone was the importance of not distorting or contaminating their answers in the interpretation of the data. Structured interviews may be used to explore and explain themes that have emerged from the use of a questionnaire (Wass and Wells 1994).

The telephone interviews conformed to a structured interview based on predetermined and standardised set of questions as per the original questionnaire. The author read out each question as per the questionnaire in order to appreciate their response especially the relationships between the variables.

4.4.1. Closed questions

The basic level of analysis is a descriptive account of the data: this is what was actually said with nothing read into it and nothing assumed about it. The self-administered questionnaire (appendix) completed by the respondents can be summarised as follow:

| Scale | SD | D | A | SA | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| Question 1 | 14% | 14% | 57% | 14% | |
| Question 2 | | 43% | 71% | | |
| Question 3 | | | 57% | 43% | |
| Question 4 | | 14% | 71% | 14% | |
| Question 5 | | | 86% | 14% | |
| Scale | VL | LS | H | VH | |
| Question 6 | | 14% | 57% | 29% | |
| Scale | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Question 7 | | | 43% | 57% | |

4.4.2. Open ended questions

Meanings expressed through words that cannot be statistically analysed characterize qualitative data so these are the quoted and summarised words of the open-ended questions:

1) Purpose of coaching: *Set goals, find happiness in work, increase self-esteem, learn more about self, career change, support structure to accomplish significant milestone in life, find fulfilment in life – missing something.*

2) Reactions and learning material to coaching: *very much integrated into my life, very interesting try to implement in daily life, working process – learning from it, change life with it, aware of pattern of behaviours, very tough at the beginning, ongoing process part of everyday life, more aware of yourself = new ideas = new beliefs = need to be coached again.*

3) What are you differently: *using intuition, being more structured to my approach to change, being happy and content with a person on my own, confidence in life, looking at career change, expanding boundaries, confidence in dealing with people, see things more objectively, prioritise before getting upset, positive thinking, interpersonal relationships improvement.*

4) Process of coaching causality with goals: *relationship improved, still working on that one, everything is within, we all have the resources, slow down listen to intuition, establish my true beliefs.*

5) Trigger the change: *spring-cleaning, pull out the pieces one by one, pain and self-mirror, looking at self self-awareness, open mind.*

6) Work: *goal achievement, people skills, communication, more aware of people moods, less stress, 80% of work performance is enough not 100% - over achiever, more approachable, more human, sense of freedom.*

5. Research study results

How valuable is the research? In order to answer this question, we need to evaluate the first causality effect of coaching and the impact on each of the coachee's.

The overarching purpose of the participants' coaching tended to centre on the broad headings of goal setting, confidence, and life/work fulfilment. The most common area of concentration for the participants focused on goal setting.

The first phase of the data collection had successfully gathered basic data, identified what the major benefits of coaching provided in terms of learning and reaction and delivered an understanding of the importance accorded to such issues by participants.

Level One - Participants' reactions to executive coaching (what are participants' reactions to the training?)

All participants expressed the view that their coaching sessions were eloquent. More than 80% of the respondents rated their coaching sessions as having at least a high impact in their lives and motivation. This level measured participant satisfaction with the program and captured planned actions.

Different interpretations in the definition of high to very high were noted in the open questions comments. In general, most coachees commented on how much they benefited from coaching, one participant stated "*incredibly helpful.*" Other reactions to the learning were the fact that one participant expressed it as a "*working process that changes life with it*" that the individual tailoring of coaching encouraged successful learning, the awareness how they felt on an emotional perspective. One interesting comment from a participant has featured the understanding of the process of coaching as a reaction: "*huge benefits but you must understand what it's about – people think coaching will tell them what to do.*"

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

Level Two - The participants' learning (what skills, knowledge, or attitudes have been changed or acquired and to what extent?)

From the research, we can safely say that coaching has influenced the majority of participants as most of them rate the effectiveness in achieving their goals at 4 from a 1-5 scale and rate the overall impact of coaching on their life as high to very high. From a percentage point of view, this represents more than 90%.

Most of the respondents on rating the effectiveness of coaching state the following:

- It opens the door to other factors, willing to let go, huge steps in life, life can be different.

- It's like a starter pack and you go off, good experience, benefit a lot, am now looking at feelings, I now look at both eyes open, it gets me thinking of how I use my time and manage things at work.

Question 4 in relation to the skills and confidence needed to do things that were important to achieving personal and work goals scored 71% 'agreed' and 14% 'strongly agreed'. This definitely measured changes in skills, knowledge, and attitudes in order to achieve their coaching purpose.

Level Three – Participants' changing behaviours (did participants apply what they learned on coaching in their jobs?)

This level measured changes in on-the-job behaviour and was a critical factor of the coaching evaluation. Most of the participants agreed that coaching had considerable impact on them.

This level firstly related to question three on how the coaching sessions encouraged participants to do things differently within their working environment and life. All of the participants agree or strongly agree on this subject.

Did participants apply what they learned in coaching on their jobs?

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

One participant observed “*no change in job but improvement of relationships,*” which leads to the question how do you measure improvement in inter-relationships? One can deduct quite easily that this leverages our social competence. Other behavioural changes included awareness, self-belief, and confidence, the ability to reflect on the learning, intuitive skills enhancement.

The participants commented about various aspects of coaching that had an impact on them both professionally and personally. The findings that emerged from the data themselves and the application of the Kirkpatrick model of three phases provided a close examination of the personal and professional impact of coaching on the participants. Nevertheless, the findings originated from self-perception, although some participants reported level III benefits from the feedback observations they received from their peers at work.

The PBC recognized a range of positive experience through coaching, the last question also allow them to criticize the process. The only negative feedback summarises the practice of coaching. One of the interviewee defined herself clearly at this stage “*if I had known what coaching was all about I wouldn't have started it,*” she relinquished her comfort zone although she was in pain in the pre-coaching sessions.

The second phase of causality chain effect between changes in behaviour and improvement in a work/life context answers the measurability of intangible benefits. This deduction solicited responses like “*improvement of relationships, sense of freedom, communication with people, people skills, work/life balance issue, thinking differently, self-discovery process.*” Intangible benefits are also the features that may have an effect on specific outcomes, for example, thinking differently will lead to creativity. Human behaviour cannot easily be broken down into a set of variables. This is the essence of qualitative research; information can only be loosely measured: the main issues can be identified but not specifically measured.

6. Discussion

The results gathered from the survey emphasise one critical aspect of the process of coaching, the feedback mechanism. This feature overwhelmingly accentuated the 57% response rate in question 5. It was mentioned systematically in the trigger for change during the coaching process with the way the process helped achieved those goals. Feedback is the lubricant that makes coaching work, and if you cannot measure how well you are doing, then coaching is very hard for both the giver and receiver. The measurement aspect will be discussed later on in the limitation section. For the moment, let us turn our attention to this feedback mechanism as holding up the mirror to the clients means helping them see themselves as others see them.

Many managers might dispute the fact that they climbed the corporate ladder without needing to work with a coach to assess and improve their performance.

Their 'soft and hard' competencies directed and helped them jump over the barriers. (Woodruffe 1991) defines 'competency' as the ability to perform a job or part of a job competently and to the sets of behaviour that a person must display in order to perform the tasks and functions of a job with competence. The areas of competence are quite specific because they are based on functional analysis which arise from their job description, 'the what you need to know' to do your job properly and the skills required. Nevertheless, the soft capabilities needed to accomplish the job properly are often disregarded because they are hard to measure and the definition of what exactly constitutes a competency is not easy. The behaviours necessary to accomplish a job, in other words to convert the inputs of knowledge and skills into outputs of outcomes and which are aligned with organisational values and beliefs is probably the most critical as you move up the ladder. GE's talent machine (Welsh J 2002) depicted the importance of leader's behaviours from the type four assessment (Hi-results, Low values) as being the most difficult to deal with. 'This is the individual who typically forces performance out of people rather than inspire it'.

However, making headway through the hierarchy and working around shortcomings puts a cap on the development of the 'stars'. Many reach a threshold, which they can

only cross by exposing blind spots, and overcome their shortfall. Individual coaching brings these blind spots into focus and allows managers to develop new skills that create greater flexibility in their leadership style. So what is exactly a blind spot?

People only change for a good reason—awareness is a key and conclusive condition required to leverage any behaviour change effort. Without awareness, behaviour change is arbitrary — maybe it will satisfy the needs of others and maybe it will not. Executives have to notice what it is about their behaviour that creates irritation, annoyance, or frustration before they will consider doing something about it. Good coaches appreciate that one of their roles is to mirror and reflect as accurately and clearly as possible how others experience, perceive, and react to their PBC. This entails the process of learning and bouncing back and making us aware of our blind spots becomes critical in the coaching process.

Helping executives “see the world” more accurately is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to ensure behaviour change.

The concept of visualizing this world more accurately can best be described with the Johari Window, (Luft and Ingham 1955):

The **open** pane represents things about us that are apparent to others and ourselves.

The **hidden** pane represents things we know about ourselves but don't reveal to others.

The **unknown** pane represents things about ourselves about which neither others nor we are aware (such as, perhaps, subconscious motivations).

The **blind** pane represents things that others see about us but about which we're not aware.

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | | Others | |
| | | See | Don't see |
| we | See | Open Public Arena | Hidden |
| | Don't see | Blind Spots | Unknown |

Like the Johari Window model designed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham several decades ago, feedback and disclosure can be seen as a communication window through which you give and receive information about yourself and others.

The process of giving and receiving feedback is one of the most important mechanisms for behavioural change and relates to the heart of coaching. It provides the opportunity "to see ourselves as others see us." In the model above, the information contained in the four quadrants is not static but moves from one pane to another as a level of mutual trust and the exchange of feedback varies. The Public Arena, characterized by open feedback and free exchange of information, expands as the level of trust increases. One the purpose of the feedback coaching process is to initiate an exchange of information about what lies in each of the other three quadrants so that more information shifts to the Public Arena. The Blind Spot contains information that we do not know about ourselves but about which our feedback providers may know. As we begin to interact with others, we communicate all kinds of information of which we are unaware. In the Hidden Area, there are things that we know about ourselves but of which others may be unaware. For whatever reasons, perhaps due to mistrust, fear of rejection or attack, we withhold this

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

information and, consequently, not knowing our feelings, thoughts, and reactions to certain situations, others have little option but to interpret our behaviours.

The area called the *Unknown* contains information below the surface of consciousness that neither others nor we know about us. This material, however, may have major impact on relevant issues such as our work performance, which can surface to the level of awareness through an open exchange of feedback.

The goal of disclosure and feedback coincides with the shift of these internal boundaries horizontally and vertically, expanding the *Public Arena* because of feedback dialogue. Hence, it is possible to create a communication window in which information flows openly in the *Public Arena* and very little remains that is *Unknown*; we gain access to our true potential within us. This is a key element of the coaching process in bringing self awareness 'building awareness and responsibility is the essence of good coaching' (Whitmore 2003). Whitmore in the nature of coaching declares that awareness is 'the ability to determine what's relevant' and in the workplace 'it includes an understanding of systems, of dynamics, of relationships between things and people and inevitably some understanding of psychology'. Awareness also encompasses self-awareness, in particular recognising when and how emotions distort one's own perception'. This will lead inevitably to continuous self-improvement and self-discovery.

The practical activity of coaching derives on principles of adult learning: awareness, action, and reflection. The coach engages the PBC in discussion and activities; using data gathered from the assessment phase of the process designed to:

- Enhance self awareness of the implications of typical behaviours
- Learn skills, build competencies, change behaviours, and achieve results
- Reflect on ways to improve and refine skills and behaviours.

This engagement is achieved through a learning and behavioural integration model.

Traditional learning or personal effectiveness increases by moving from each of those four stages:

- Unconscious incompetence
- To conscious incompetence
- To conscious competence
- To unconscious competence

Coaches help the PBC from moving to stage 1 to stage 2 of the learning process by giving the PBC feedback about their performance, with a sense of urgency the PBC will move to stage 3 where problem solving, action and commitment are crucial. Being consciously incompetent is usually unsettling for people and the degree of urgency, linked with motivational factors is critical in this phase.

Through the process of reinforcing and practice, the PBC attains the highest level of learning. This learning and behavioural integration process with the Johari Window is the basis of the human change process.

6.1. Comments and Limitations on Findings

The ability to explore data or to seek explanations through qualitatively based methods means that there will be greater scope for ethical and other issues to arise in relation to this approach to research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

The advantage of a questionnaire lies in the fact that the method of collecting data is relatively simple, rapid, and efficient. Nevertheless, the selection of force choice items mixed with open questions may be insufficient to reflect respondent's choice. We have also all the other disadvantages of using this tool (e.g., respondent can omit items without explanation therefore data incomplete, amount of information limited by respondent's interest and attention....). The different scales throughout the closed

questions (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree) were not clearly defined for example.

On the other hand, in regards to structured interviews, theorists, who question the influence, exerted by the interviewer in conducting the interview, view the data produced as disputable and dubious, with the danger of interviewees yielding information, which is distorted through recall error, selective perceptions, or desire to please the interviewer.

Qualitative data is analysed by reading respondents' comments (questionnaires and interview transcripts), or by listening to their comments (tape-recorded interviews) or by reviewing their behaviour (observation). The range of responses depicted and examples of behaviour or narrative are used to illustrate both the typicality and diversity of responses and this is bound to be subjective.

Coaching as we have explained, is about helping people change, however the degree of willingness in this change factor is crucial in order to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching. If people don't want to change, because they're afraid of their own shadows or their own homo status when the boat starts rocking than trying to enforce them endure coaching will not lead to the desired results. Life can be a great journey of self-discovery and we have to accept the uniqueness of each individual in terms of the process and learning continuum. We can compare this change factor and exploit the meteorological metaphor to change management and the type of changes depending on the force of the winds, from small summer breeze to howling gales and the impact on the society (Goodman 1995). We can conclude, from some of the responses, that the change factors of the interviewees were not at the same level and this can biased some of the outcomes.

Perhaps the biggest limitation came from the fact that the needs and goals of this purposive sampling did not focus on organisational factor as none had sponsoring organisations. One of the accomplishment in measuring the impact of coaching

concerns organisational effectiveness and as stated in the literature review we were missing a stakeholder in our purposive sampling. Does this mean that the most profound way to measure the effectiveness of coaching lies in the sponsorship of a coaching programme? The commoditisation of executive coaching inside global multinationals, in order to implement a coaching culture surely leads us in this direction. The practice of executive coaching may involved many types of coaching described in this paper, *however the ones with the most impact* from a research point of view always involve a partnership among executives, coach, and organisation. Often the components of the coaching process are single, as in this research paper, on the own initiative of the manager outside the office or in discrete activities in a larger organisational development settings. These components will not have the impact of full executive coaching unless they are conducted from a systems perspective. The systems theory on the interactions between the structural (mechanistic) and behavioural (organic) dimensions of firms play an important role in the specific definitions of outcomes. In order for coaching to become really effective in the workplace there needs to be an alignment to business outcomes and organisational success. Regardless of the relationship during the 'designed alliance' where the relationship is customized to meet the exclusive need of the coachee, the coaching process runs the risk of engaging no outcome for the organisation, apart from offering a personal perk for the coachee. Our research objective concentrated on the relationship between the person being coached (*PBC*) and the organisation, we tested the causality relationship, however we cannot firmly state that the organisational effectiveness has increased due to this intervention because we are missing level IV and V in our evaluation model.

(Argyris, 2000) states that 'the failure to adequately describe the outcomes, individual and organisational, of executive coaching and, in particular, the processes that lead to those outcomes, creates the potential that executive coaching will be guilty of providing "flawed advice".'

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

The data collected during the survey did not explicitly measure a business impact because XenerGie Consulting did not have the necessary tools to undertake this. Tools such as *CoachingIndex360* cover external/internal coaching sessions:

- Attitude – for example, whether the manager has a commitment to learning and development, and is using coaching to achieve those goals;
- Planning – whether the coaching sessions are being planned and then followed up by the manager;
- Process – whether the manager is skilled in running the actual coaching sessions; and
- Relationships – whether the manager is open to using coaching to build stronger working relationships

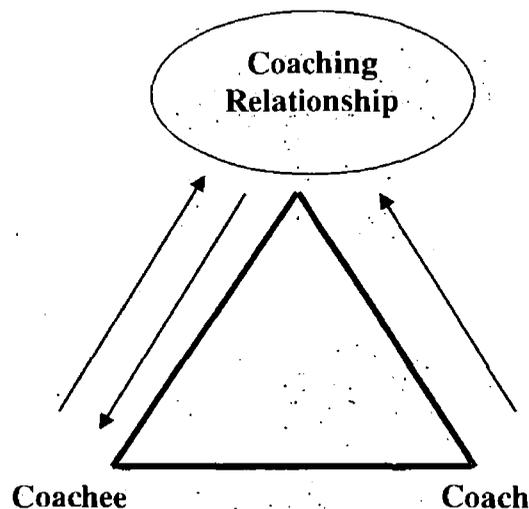
Executive coaching needs to be planned and executed with a focus on specific, desired results and the PBC, coach, and the organisation require the definition of the ultimate goals of coaching. In other words, successful coaching links a business focus with human processes by closely aligning the PBC's development with business needs and all stakeholders must see themselves as partners in the coaching process.

The discussion thus far has focused on the evaluation of the coaching process and benefits to the organization, somewhat overlapping with the managerial application of Skinnerian theory on organisational behaviour modification. Research indicates other theories to more fully explain the process of motivation in terms of the factors that channel or direct behaviour. Perhaps the leading indicator of the effectiveness of coaching should provide a framework for understanding how motivation operates within the organisational setting. A lot of coaching approach derives from the path-goal theory of motivation, often referred as leadership effectiveness, nevertheless other authors suggest that the role of coaching is to create an environment in which

clients focus entirely on their fulfilment, balance and process. The client is the star in this model and the coach is invisible – the co-active coaching model.

6.2. Practical Implications

Coaching models and approaches differ as per the contracting stage or ‘designed alliance’ (Whitworth et al. 2003). The authors encourage co-active coaching where the power in the alliance is granted to the coaching relationship – not the coach. The relationship is like a triangle, the coach at one end, the client at one point and the relationship at the third point (see figure). The coach grants power to the relationship as well so that in this model all the power in the relationships serves the client. The coaching relationship is separate from the two actors and the process and co-active coaching depends on how the client shapes its design and outcome. The two characters entrust the relationship that is best for them. As the authors state, ‘this level of relationship is unique to this process and it is one of the reasons co-active coaching is effective for clients in making and sustaining significant change. Instead of trying to fit themselves into a predetermined process of change, they create the conditions that will give them the best results.’



Depending on the best conditions, the coaching process and the outcomes will differ; clients will need the courage to make the change. They mostly come for setting goals and getting into action to achieve those goals in other words clients mostly come to coaching to do things differently or to do different things.

6.3. Suggestions for future studies

This research paper can spring from more specific measurement tools as described above. The author at the time of the thesis did not have the opportunity and resources to go along this route. Nevertheless, the company plans to certify in at least two assessment tools (360, EI, leadership evaluation...) and will undergo extensive training in the aftermath of this research paper.

A longitudinal case study with the right planning process, over a period of 6 months can easily bring forward the benefits of coaching. The research philosophy can be more scientific with a clear concise definition of measurable variables such as specific competencies (e.g., leadership, team working) within a performance management systems. Another research topic to consider can emanate from a wide scale-coaching programme as part of a case study.

An organisational climate that recognises and rewards the behaviour required for organisational success creates higher levels of business performance. This is associated with better job satisfaction, commitment, quality and flexibility.... etc

As such, specific unique corporate culture and objectives compels the individualisation of each executive coaching program. With that in mind, every coaching campaign will be circumscribed with a different set of measurement criteria:

- 1) Individual Assessment and Goal Setting (360, self-assessment, qualitative interviews, individual goal tracking)
- 2) Measurement of Specific Leadership Competencies: (Emotional Competencies, key organisational leadership competencies)

Coaching and the impact on work related skills

3) Measurement of satisfaction (Individual satisfaction, team satisfaction, customer satisfaction)

4) Measurement of behaviours (Behaviours defined by corporate values)

All these measurement strategies will assist in quality assurance, as qualitative research is the most effective way of assessing a coaching initiative.

7. Conclusions

The interaction between an individual and the organisation is a two-way, bidirectional process. This is well documented in the literature with the psychological contract (Thomas 1974) and motivational theoretical elements. In a broad sense, both parties participate in this relationship because of what each other expects to receive in return for their involvement.

'Tayloristic task management gives way to knowledge management; the latter seeking to be cost-efficient by developing an organisation's people assets; unlike the former which views labour as a cost to be minimised'(CIPD, 2001). In the new millennium, people management takes centre stage. The information-era paradigm requires that leaders communicate, encourage, motivate, collaborate, and lead by example and many of the requisite behaviours are located in the interpersonal domain or the affective.

Executive coaching can develop into a powerful tool within a company's performance management system and leading to high performance culture.

One of the lessons of the work so far is that the 'how' of people management (doing it right) is as important as the 'what' (doing the right thing).

Whether or not it does what it proposes, however, remains largely unknown because of the lack of empirical studies. Some also question whether executive coaching is just another fad in the long list of fads that have occurred in consultation and business.

Appendix -

3) Literature Review References

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Coaching Impact: Survey May 2004

Directions: Select your response to each question by highlighting on the answer. When finished, email back your answers. Your responses will be treated confidentially. Thank you for your help!

Occupation:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Employment Status:

Part time/Full time/Student/self - employed

1. When I began participating in the coaching sessions, I had very clear goals for my participation.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. During the coaching process a structured programme was put in place in order to facilitate and measure progress.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. My coaching sessions encouraged me to appreciate, what I needed to change/do differently within my working environment and life (e.g. relationships with peers, family, friends, teamwork, move into a new role, change management style)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. My coaching sessions gave me the skill and confidence I needed to do things that were important to achieving my own personal and work related goals:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. I have learned some things about effective coaching from this process that I am already using with my close relationships or within a work context.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. Overall, the impact that the coaching sessions have had on my life and motivation:

Very Low Low Somewhat High Very High

7. Please rate your own effectiveness in achieving these goals from a five point scale Rate the importance of each item from 1 (low) to 5 (Extremely effectively):

1 2 3 4 5

B) Open-ended Questions:



What was the purpose of your coaching session?

What are your reactions to the coaching sessions and what do you plan to do with the material?

What are you doing differently that you may otherwise not have done with the coaching?

In what way did the process of coaching help you achieve your goals?

What has triggered the 'change' during the coaching process?

How has the learning benefited you in your job or study? In your personal transformation?

Any additional comments about the positives or negatives of coaching, you may want to add?

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, please email me back by next Thursday 27/05:
Bernard.chanliau@xenergie.com.**

Bchanliau

From: Lorna McDowell [lorna.mcdowell@xenergie.com]
Sent: 16 May 2004 17:57
To: Undisclosed-Recipient;
Cc: Bernard Chanliau
Subject: Feedback / Research on Life & Business Coaching

Dear clients

My business partner, Bernard Chanliau, is undertaking a research study into life and business coaching as part of his thesis for his Masters in Strategic Human Resources management at the NCI in Dublin. He is looking to talk to people who have been - or are going - through the process either as one on ones or in a workshop situation. The questionnaire would take around 20 mins by email or by phone and would happen this coming week.

If you would be willing to participate, please would you let me know asap with your permission for me to pass on your contact details to Bernard. All information that you have shared with me remains confidential - I will give him no more than your name and number. Please feel free to be honest and open as all feedback is useful!

many thanks for your help,

Lorna

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Executive coaching for leadership and team performance

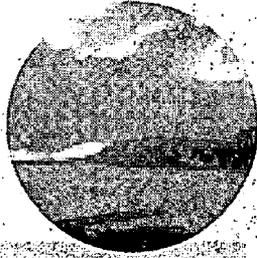
www.xenergie.com

Energising People. When we are more connected, motivated and in harmony with ourselves and our environment there is no limit to what individual human beings can achieve.

Attitude is everything.

What does XenerGie offer?

Inspiring People. XenerGie engenders positive attitudes, communication and action with imaginative coaching and consultancy to help businesses and individuals achieve their potential. We help define and achieve goals, manage change, create winning teams, develop leadership skills, find creative solutions to solve problems and enhance personal interactions.



Our mission is to "make companies fit for humans and humans fit for companies" by energising and motivating the people of the company to perform with excellence and find fulfillment not only at work but also in their personal lives.

What are our credentials?

Our trainers combine experience in business and human resources management, both for major corporates and small businesses in Ireland and in Europe, with expertise in interpersonal skills coaching, counselling and psychotherapy, life coaching, hypnotherapy and NLP.

XenerGie trainers are also fully trained and accredited in the Belbin Team Role methodology and other psychometric testing models.

Belbin behavioural analysis helps to improve business performance through greater self-awareness, fostering greater mutual teams and matching people to jobs more effectively.

The Belbin Interplace Team Role system is used by over 40% of the top 100 companies in the UK, the United Nations, World Bank and thousands of organisations big and small throughout the world.

What's different about us?

We mix solid business experience with a spiritual approach which focuses on empowering and motivating individuals to better understand themselves and the environment in which they exist. Techniques such as NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), hypnotherapy and visualisation are

such part of our tool kit as management practice, time management, negotiation skills and presentation skills.

Work provides a marvellous opportunity for us to practice our spiritual principles and to benefit from our contemplative practices in daily life. It also provides us an opportunity to grow and develop to our full potential.

Where are courses held?

Courses are held in a professional classroom environment at your chosen venue or at outdoor country locations with our partners in Donegal, Galway, Clare and Meath where outdoor experiential learning can be incorporated.

Personal coaching is held in our consulting rooms or your offices.



How do we operate?

We offer a range of pre-packaged programmes and we tailor training courses and personal sessions to suit your needs.

- Motivation through empowerment
- Building supportive communities and teams
- Experiential learning activities
- Facilitating self-awareness
- Supporting company change initiatives

Who would benefit from our services?

In short, anyone who wants to achieve their potential. We work alongside both experienced and inexperienced people, from senior management to the factory floor, providing first-time skills-learning and help experienced people look at things from a different perspective.

Our personal coaching, too, is open to individuals who, supported or unsupported by their employer, wish to enhance their own personal effectiveness. Increasingly, this kind of coaching is becoming part of employee benefit and career development planning.

What return will you receive from us?

Both company and individual benefit. Employee productivity is a key determinant of a company's efficiency and cost structure. The more efficient a company, the fewer inputs it needs to produce outputs. The more motivated, fulfilled and comfortable an individual in his or her work, the more passion and energy he or she brings to producing output.

Why choose XenerGie?

Soft skills training, grounded in psycho-therapeutic training AND 30 years solid business experience
International experience in major corporates AND small businesses
Spanning Ireland with cost effective training
Bringing best practice from around the world
A personal approach that is inspiring and energising!
High skills pool in the West of Ireland

What our clients say about us

"Some very innovative ideas for training. An excellent opportunity to see our trainees operate as the people they are"

Irish Aviation Authority

"A whole new perspective on team performance"

Dairygold

Training At a Glance

Group Courses

Team Performance with Belbin – Introductory
Team Performance with Belbin – Management/Train the Trainer
VisionQuest Leadership Executive Development Programme
Communicating 100%
Feel the Fear and Do It – Enhancing Confidence
Achieving Goals
The Art of Managing Stress
Building the Transnational Team
Leadership of change
Problem Solving, Lateral Thinking and Creativity
Presentation Skills
Spirit & Motivation in the Workplace (Management training)
Sales & Marketing skills
Stop Smoking Group Course

Personal and Executive Coaching

- We analyse and coach the behaviours and beliefs that are needed to achieve desired outcomes
- Line Manager – Leadership Programme with 360° team assessment
- Personal effectiveness – confidence, communication, presentation skills, goal achievement
- Life Directions and Personal goal achievement
- Marketing and Business Development

Experiential Learning & Team Motivation Days

These are just a taster of what we offer. All are designed to reinforce team theory learning, using Belbin as a framework:

A Night at the Oscars - teams recreate and film themselves re-enacting some of the great movies, including hiring and negotiating with film stars, editing scripts and researching locations.

Rap n Rhythm - teams compete for a recording contract, learning to create, play and perform their own rap music from a range of percussion instruments.

Tribal Revival - back to basics as teams become tribes for a day to learn about team community and creativity from the wisdom of our global ancestors.

The Great Outdoors – High Ropes – Ireland's most daunting ropes course, kayaking, raftbuilding, walking, survival adventures, mind-teasers.

Cabin Fever - teams learn to sail a boat - a wonderful way for a team to learn about cooperation

On the Farm - communication and group skills based on running a farm!

Your Greatest Adventure – A life coaching reconnaissance course in 'mapping' and practising techniques for the most important trip you'll ever take!

Consultancy & Bureau Services

- Applying Belbin and Team Roles in the Workplace
- Belbin Team Role Profiling Bureau service – 24 hr turnaround comprehensive personal behaviour profiles
- Team performance

Belbin profiles can be ordered via VISA or MasterCard credit card over the phone, please 086 1043805 or email bernard.chanllau@xenergie.com

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