

The Value and Benefits of Coaching to an Organisation and Its Individuals

Contents

What is coaching?	3
Where can coaching be used in an organisation?	4
Why use coaches rather than mentors or consultants?	5
What is the value of coaching?	6
The GROW model	7
Example coaching call.....	10
Benefits to the Organisation and Individuals.....	13
Benefits to the Organisation	13
Benefits to the Individual	14
How coaching can be measured	16
How to get best value out of coaching	18
Summary.....	21
Bibliography	22

What is coaching?

Coaching can be defined as a process that allows a client to fully release the potential that is already inside them, through focused and skilful questioning from the coach. Fundamentally coaching is focused on the future and does not pretend or attempt to give advice or delve into the complex and emotive realms of therapy. These important definitions help to separate coaching from other personal or corporate development practices and offers distinct benefits and values to the organisation and its individuals.

As a profession, coaching is often confused with similar practices such as mentoring, consulting and counselling, and not without good reason. Coaching is a relatively new discipline and some of its history outside of sports does indeed have links to the other disciplines. To make things more complicated, many coaches also hold qualifications in disciplines such as counselling so it is really no wonder that coaching lacks the clarity it deserves.

At its core, coaching focuses around the clients inherent abilities and helping them release this potential themselves. This is very different to mentoring or consulting which is about paying for the advice of someone who has done it before. A mentor or consultant is an expert in their field and has been there and done it and offers you the benefit of their experience. In sharp contrast a coach does not have to be an expert in the field in which they are coaching, and often doesn't even need to know the details. Mentoring and consulting do have their similarities however and nowhere is this more obvious than in the fact they are also about the future, about moving the client towards a desired goal.

Counselling is another discipline that rubs shoulders with coaching, mainly because they are both seen as methods of change. As already discussed coaching is generally about the future, whilst counselling is more focused on discussing the clients past and helping them come to terms with it to allow them to think about the future. During a coaching session, it is not uncommon for a client to expose an issue that may benefit from counselling but it is imperative that the coach recognises this and where necessary refers to someone who is qualified to deal with these often highly complex and emotive issues. Again there are similarities and both coaching and counselling revolve around the client making the choice to change which is often a direct result of a technique recommended or learnt from the counsellor or coach.

Additionally, all of these disciplines require some core skills which are evidently transferable in each sector. These include empathy, active listening, intuition, discipline, positive attitude and of course the ability to ask the best question at the best time.

Where can coaching be used in an organisation?

As coaching is such a flexible discipline, organisations have found that wherever there is a change required, coaching can add value and help them achieve their desired outcome. Common objectives include dealing with under-performing employees and equipping middle managers but in general coaching is also appropriate to:

- Developing an individual's potential
- Developing an individual's skills in managing, communicating, and dealing with conflict
- Developing strategic skills
- Dealing with a change of role.

In addition to this a CMI survey revealed that managers requiring development were particularly interested in personal effectiveness, emotional intelligence, assertiveness, time-management and communication.

A report by the Centre for Executive Coaches recommends that an executive coach can be used in the following six types of situation:

1. **Stretch assignments:** For an executive facing a sudden critical assignment with intense time and budget constraints, or promoted into a new position or back-filling a current opening, a coach can provide a valuable safety net and sounding board.
2. **High-potential executives:** A manager on the fast-track, who's being groomed for leadership positions, might need extra guidance to help him or her advance quickly.
3. **Uneven leadership skills:** When an executive's weakness in interpersonal relationships, decision making or managerial proficiency is causing low morale and internal conflict, a coach may be the best way to help that person recognise his or her problems and figure out how to turn them around.
4. **Specific performance problems:** For the leaders of units and divisions that are behind plan or unlikely to meet business targets, a coach can provide strategic business insights and support.
5. **Beat the competition:** A coach can help executives enhance their leadership and business skills so that their organisations can stay ahead of the competition.
6. **Building teams:** Often used in mergers and acquisitions or turn-around situations, coaching helps an executive team quickly acquire new skills, particularly when time is of the essence.

Why use coaches rather than mentors or consultants?

As discussed, coaching differs with consultancy and mentors in a number of ways, but as an indication of how coaching is mushrooming in popularity a recent Hay Group study in the US reported that:

- 25-40% of Fortune 500 companies use corporate or executive coaching.
- A leading telecommunication company expected to spend “in the low millions” on corporate & executive coaching in 12 months for its best middle managers.
- In organisations like IBM, Hewlett Packard, Dell and Glaxo Wellcome coaching has moved from being used to deal with troubled staff to becoming part of the standard leadership development programs.

These facts alone go a long way to show that coaching has been accepted by the corporate environment and as the Hays report goes on to explain, coaching returned an average of 5.7 times the investment or an average of \$100,000 per executive coached.

That said, mentors and consultants do have their place and are used to great effect across the organisation. Coaching however comes at the same problem from a slightly different angle. In a coaching session, it is the client not the coach that creates the options. This process is often slower than a mentor telling them the answer, but the longer term effects are the profound difference.

In most cases, our human nature has greater resistance to accept a suggestion of change when it is given to us externally. So if a consultant makes a suggestion, whilst it may be taken on board initially it is likely to get watered down as the client did not think of it themselves. Coaching however ensures that it is the clients ideas and creates greater buy-in and as a side effect develops the clients self esteem to achieve more.

This self perpetual circle of self awareness and self delivery ultimately ends up in the client becoming a more resourceful and useful member of an organisation who has learnt the importance of being self reliant and responsible for the actions in their lives. This is in stark contrast to consulting and mentoring which can generate a dependency on the external agency and leaves people reliant on others.

Outstanding coaching creates high performing, self aware, confident and responsible individuals that are focused on their personal and organisational goals and outcomes.

The current trend in organisations is the awareness that leadership is going to be key to organisational success in the next decade. Executive development programs that include coaching, are well equipped to uncover the natural leaders in a business and to allow any hidden potential to be revealed through the processes of self discovery that are the cornerstone of coaching. Whilst there are a number of

leadership development programs available, no other development discipline can offer the same level of leadership generation as an outcome and sets coaching apart.

What is the value of coaching?

As the concept of coaching has gained popularity throughout organisations, the question of its value is often discussed. Like any discipline that works with people and so-called 'soft skills', the measurement and value of the work can be difficult. However, many organisations have recently started to look at the value of coaching and there are now a number of well recognised professional pieces of work that clearly show these values.

A fine example of this can be seen in the work carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of the NHS. The report was a thorough review of how the recent introduction of coaches into the NHS has had proven and measurable benefits. The outcome of the report showed that whilst some clients found it difficult to determine the direct benefits of coaching, the majority were able to clearly identify with the process and the results were clear and distinct.

Personal benefits identified included:

- increased sense of motivation and enthusiasm
- increased ability to deal with frustrations encountered
- developing a more objective and strategic approach
- improved work prioritisation
- increased confidence
- improved ability to influence key people
- better team management
- and enhanced self-presentation

Direct business benefits identified included:

- reduced staff costs
- increased investment in staff
- ability to clearly identify and hit targets
- increased clarity in how to commercialise services
- the ability to retain good people during difficult times.

These very obvious and exciting benefits echo the findings of other reports outside of the public sector and clearly give the organisation that can successfully deliver a coaching program, huge competitive advantages.

The challenge facing the coaching community is not in what coaching can do, it is proving that coaching is directly responsible for it. The IES study is particularly interesting as it was completed by an independently recognised professional body and was not mixed with any of the social improvement programs which often confuse the results.

Whilst unregulated, coaching has a well defined method that is employed by all good coaches, and it is this method that delivers another key value. The value of reliability and predictability of results.

The GROW model

One of these methods or models is GROW. Grow stands for Goal, Reality, Options and Will and is sometime referred to as T-GROW where the coach also explores the Topic. This additional step is useful in a corporate context as it allows the organisation to add an umbrella Topic that is the focus of the coaching interventions. A good example of this would be where an organisation wishes to set an organisational goal of improving sales. The topic then becomes increasing sales and subsequent coaching sessions would be held with that context in mind.

The GROW model has a number of benefits as it is this structured methodology that ensures a level of consistency in how an individual is coached. Whilst models aren't unique to coaching, models used in mentoring and consultancy tend to be used in individual sessions rather than bringing a structure to the entire process.

An example of a GROW process can be seen on the next page.



It is important to note that the model is not linear and during the process, a coach and client may explore each of these steps at individual times, in any order and may move about coming back to other parts of the process as required during the session.

The Goal element of the process allows the client to explore what the goal of the session is whilst the coach has the responsibility of ensuring that the goal is focused and that key items are identified. It is this clear goal setting that gives the sessions their focus and also teaches clients the importance of setting clear, specific goals. Additionally, it is a great method to measure the value of each session, particularly when a goal is linked with a corporate target such as customer service metrics or the number of sales calls the client makes.

Reality explores the clients current situations and is a place where the coach can challenge topics like values and limiting beliefs. In challenging these areas, the coach and the client can explore the importance and effects of performance limiting attitudes. It is not uncommon for a coach to hear statements like “I can’t do that” or “They will never agree to that” and a great coach will then be able to pick these up and, through using open questions, explore why the client believes these to be true. In spending time with the client in reality, their awareness increases which lays the foundation for change and creates the window for the next step.

For the coach and the client, the most exciting element of the GROW model is in the Options stage, as it is here where the client begins to generate options about what they ‘could’ do. It is worth noting that the coach is not interested in what they can’t do, but rather in what they can do and that all the options generated are generated from the client with little or no input from the coach. As explored later in this document, it is this important distinction between coaching, mentoring and consulting that produces radically different results.

The final step is Will. Here the coach explores the clients desire to make the changes that have been revealed through the session, happen. This step is often missing in other forms of change methodology but is vital as it ensures that the client is going to take the action they committed to, removes any excuses and also highlights any unconscious positive intentions.

Unconscious positive intentions are one of the most important principles of modern behavioural science. Simply put, the principle states that at some level all behaviour is, or at one time was, positively intended. Another way to say it is that all behaviour serves a positive purpose.

Some examples of unconscious positive intentions can be explored below

Behaviour	Positive Intention
Aggression	Protection
Fear	Safety
Anger	Need for boundaries
Resistance to change	Honour or respect the past

Sometimes a particular problem behaviour or symptom may even serve multiple positive intentions. Smoking is often a good example of this as people frequently have multiple positive intentions for smoking even though they know it is bad for their health. These often include the desire to be included (smokers tend to meet together and discuss office gossip), the need to relax (smokers are generally allowed to take more breaks than non-smokers) or the need to be their own person (smoking is now seen as anti-social).

All of the above steps work together to bring about change in an individual but is focused on the whole system rather than one particular area, behaviour or competency. Coaching through a model such as GROW allows the client to change at a far deeper level than if they were being mentored, and creates changes that lasts. A clients resistance to past change or performance may be hiding under a deeper personal value. For example consider the salesperson who has been told since birth that money is corrupt, their performance is not going to be great especially if they are on a high percentage of

commission. If the coach can help the client reframe (or change) that underlying belief, the impact and benefits for both the individual and organisation can be dramatic.

Example coaching call

To give the reader an idea of a typical coaching session, the following is an example of a coaching session where the client (Dave) is stuck, cannot move forward and can't think of any solutions to a problem. The coach (James) helps the client change their perspective and helps them to find new solutions. It is worth noting that this is just an example and highly condensed but shows the coach moving through the GROW model.

Coach: *Great to see you again Dave, what would you like to achieve from this session?*

Client: *James, things are moving so fast in this business I am not cut out for this. I really need some help in keeping myself above water.*

Coach: *Ok, well let's explore that for a moment. What exactly do you want to achieve by the time this session is finished?*

Client: *Well, the core of the problem is that I just don't believe I can do this job. I mean I have just been given this promotion and I don't think I am cut out to manage this team. One moment I was in the trenches with these guys, and now I am the manager. I guess if you had to push me, what I would like to get out of this call is a number of practical things I can put in place to help me deal with this situation.*

Coach: *Ok, I understand. If we were to set a goal for you to walk out of here with a number of strategies to help you deal with your issues, exactly how many would you need?*

Client: *Well, as many as we can, but I don't want to be over loaded, so let's go with two for now.*

Coach: *Perfect, two it is. OK let's have a look at what makes you think you can't do the job. What evidence do you have to support your belief?*

Client: *I don't really have any. The guys seem to like me and my performance figures have been ok but I just can't seem to shake this fear of failure.*

Coach: *That's really interesting and I can empathise with your position. In your last comment you mentioned a fear of failure. What exactly are you in fear of?*

Client: *That's easy, I fear being exposed as a fraud.*

Coach: *What makes you think you are a fraud?*

Client: *Nothing I can put my finger on really, it is just a feeling.*

Coach: *Where did this feeling come from?*

Client: *I was always told at school that I couldn't do it, and I have held that belief all my life.*

Coach: *Ok that is a common issue, but tell me how is this feeling of fear affecting your daily performance?*

Client: *I wake up every morning dreading coming into work and when I am here I am constantly asking for reassurance that I am doing a good job, and I am worried the guys will not look up to me as a leader if I am constantly looking to them for reassurance.*

Coach: *Ok that's fine and I understand. Tell me if you were to be able to remove that fear of failure, what could you achieve?*

Client: *I have never really thought of it that way. Well, if I didn't have a fear of failure I guess I would be able to go back to enjoying my job and over delivering on my targets like I have done for the last 5 years...which is why I guess they gave me this promotion.*

Coach: *Excellent insight Dave, so tell me what is this fear of failure costing you on a daily basis?*

Client: *Whoa that's a different perspective. Thinking about it, I can see that caught in this fear I am not going to hit my targets and with the team not looking to me as a leader, they won't hit theirs either. As our bonuses depend on hitting the numbers, if I continue like this I won't be getting a bonus this year.*

Coach: *Ok well there is certainly motivation to change then. So with that in mind what other times have you been in this situation before where you have overcome a fear of failure?*

Client: *The last time I got promoted. I was just a general clerk, but through hard work I earned my promotion. I had the same feelings of dread then. I overcame them ok and became the top performer in just a couple of years.*

Coach: *Excellent so you have overcome this fear before. What can you learn from that previous experience that you can apply here?*

Client: *Very simple, I learnt that through hard work and focusing on the end goals, not the here and now, I found the skills I needed. You know the other thing I did was find another successful colleague that I could model and learn from.*

Coach: *Good insights, with that in mind what can you do right now to move forwards?*

Client: *Simple, I can just apply the same plan. I need to find someone else who is in a similar role and spend time with them so I can model their success.*

Coach: *Great, what else could you do?*

Client: *The other thing is to get my head down and focus on getting my bonus this year, I really need to upgrade my car.*

Coach: *Excellent, well there are two options you didn't have before the session. So tell me what are your next steps in putting these plans into action?*

Client: *On Monday I will speak with Ben, he is in the same role as me and is a high performer so I will get to know him and find out what makes him tick.*

Coach: *What else?*

Client: *You really got me thinking about what this is costing me and I really want that car. What I will do is get a picture of that car, and put it up in my office to remind me to focus.*

Coach: *When are you going to do that?*

Client: *As soon as I get back to my desk in five minutes.*

Coach: *Excellent that seems very positive. What could stop you from achieving these?*

Client: *Apart from Ben being sick on Monday and the printer not working so I can't print the picture of the car, absolutely nothing. I will get on with it straight away and get on with over delivering on my targets. Thank you so much you have given me new purpose and I feel much better.*

This exaggerated example session underlines the value of coaching and dealing with the person as a whole. By exploring what the underlying fear was about, the coach helped the client move forwards and whilst that was exciting for the client, and allowed him to focus on a new car, the organisation got the benefit of regaining a valuable and high performing individual that will over deliver on his figures.

Benefits to the Organisation and Individuals

As demonstrated throughout this document, coaching has many benefits for both the organisation as a whole and to the clients. These are explored below in detail.

Benefits to the Organisation

- **Improved productivity, quality, customer service and shareholder value.** This 'bottom line' value is shown through the evidence laid out in the ROI report by MetrixGlobal which concluded that a structured and measured coaching program gave a 529% return on investment, which jumped to 788% when the financial benefits of employee retention was taken into account.
- **Increased employee commitment and satisfaction, which can lead to improved retention.** It has been well observed that when an employee feels valued they deliver better value and that coaching is one of the ways an organisation can show the employee they are valued when included as a part of a personal development program.
- **The ability to support employees who've been promoted to cope with new responsibilities.** One of the most common reasons why employees that get promotion struggle with the new responsibilities is that they are not given the skills that are required of them. This is particularly apparent when an employee is promoted due to length of service. Coaching can help an employee raise their awareness of what skills they might need to improve on to perform at their best in the new role, set new goals in line with their new responsibilities whilst giving them confidence in areas of strength that they may not already be aware of.
- **Help employees to sort out personal issues that might otherwise affect performance at work.** As human beings we are the sum of our parts and where consultants and mentors focus on a particular function, coaching has the ability to treat the employee as a whole. This whole person focus allows change to occur in areas that are normally unaddressed including self-esteem, confidence and work life balance. When the whole person is addressed the beneficial effects can be compounding, building strength upon strength, leading to dramatic changes to their lives, inside and outside of work, and therefore their overall performance.
- **Gain a satisfactory process for self-development.** Many organisations have self-development processes or systems in place but very often these do not extend past annual reviews or appraisals. Implementing a formal coaching mentality, an organisation can benefit from constant reviews of employees performance and rapid changes in approach and direction can be implemented. For those organisations with more advanced development programs, coaching can add a new dimension that goes beyond group based learning and further enhances the net effect of the overall program.

- **Increased employee creativity.** When using a coaching model such as GROW, the coach encourages clients to create their own solutions to their problems. This process develops an employee's ability to think differently and often produces ideas to solutions that would not normally occur. Organisations can therefore benefit from the new solutions created and stimulates an organisational culture where creative solutions are the norm and breaks the cycle of doing the same thing and expecting different results.
- **Ability to outperform the competition and economic client.** Working off the back of increased creativity and employees raised awareness, an organisation which instigates a coaching program can create new ways to manage problems like dealing with the competition or overcoming poor economic trading environments.
- **Creation of high performing, interdependent teams.** Beyond coaching individuals, coaches can also work with teams of people and by using the same methodology, can create teams that can work effectively, efficiently and creatively to achieve new goals or to solve complex problems. One key area in creating these teams is the coaches ability to raise the awareness of the teams need to be respectful of one another, which reduces any resistance that is normally in play, especially in highly competitive corporate environments.

Benefits to the Individual

- **Learn to become interdependent and to solve their own problems.** The coaches resistance to generate ideas on behalf of the client leads the individual to learn that they do have the answers to their own problems and removes any unhealthy dependence on an external resource. The removal of any dependence ensures that they can perform consistently without having to rely on the availability of a mentor or consultant, which generates great behavioural flexibility.
- **Improved managerial and interpersonal skills.** Through open questioning and actively listening to what the client says and sometimes more importantly, what is not being said, the coach can assist the client in understanding what managerial and interpersonal skills may need to be addressed. When a clients awareness is raised, the solution or root cause of a problem often becomes clear as they learn the ability to be empathic about the situation and start seeing the problem from both their point of view and through the eyes of the people they manage.
- **Learn how to identify and act on development needs.** The 'G' element of the GROW model encourages individuals to set clear goals with distinct outcomes. This essential learning then naturally extends into their wider lives and as they see the benefits, they become outcome focused. One of the key areas here is they become acutely aware of what they need to change and because of their focus, can set out plans to achieve what is needed to improve on the situation.

- **Have greater confidence.** Whilst coaching is about change, a coach will also spend time reaffirming the clients individual strength which builds their self confidence. In addition to this direct intervention, when a client sees that they are progressing and beginning to achieve their goals, their self confidence builds as they realise they can do it. With some clients these achievements may be small to start with, but when they review their progress over a period of 3-6 months, they can discover just how far they have come and the little steps have turned into major changes. It is worth noting here that encouraging clients to retain a learning log to record their development throughout the sessions can aid them in seeing this growth and can also be used as evidence of the success of coaching.
- **Become more effective, assertive in dealing with people.** Through coaching a client can become aware of new ways to be effective and to become aware of their ability to create rapport. Here a coach may use a toolkit of solutions that help the client break free of their old patterns of thinking and bring them new solutions. This is a radical change from normal training sessions help by external parties as the solutions given by the coach are designed to help the client come to their own conclusions, rather than just being told the answer.
- **Have a positive impact on performance.** Effective coaching questioning techniques like the Cartesian Co-ordinates can make them think not only about the effect of taking action, but also to consider the consequences of not taking action. The latter helps the client create urgency about their actions and can have a dramatic impact on their performance. This is particularly apparent when working with sales teams or individuals where targets are set.
- **Have greater self-awareness and gain of new perspectives.** Tools in the coaches toolkit like Johari's window can open the eyes of the client to their own behaviour and how it may impact the others around them. This new perspective can assist a client in making different choices in their behaviour or actions and has a measured effect on their desired outcomes.
- **Acquire new skills and abilities.** Throughout the coaching process coaches challenge the client to stretch themselves and to identify areas for development. It is in identifying the areas to develop the client can not only learn what they need to work on but also set clear goals on how to achieve them. This often leads to the develop of a personal development plan that the client creates themselves as opposed to one delivered by the organisation.
- **Develop greater adaptability to change.** With all the new awareness and tools that have been delivered through a series of coaching sessions, clients develop a self-reliance and often see change as an opportunity rather than a threat, as they feel better equipped to deal with the changes.
- **Improve work-life balance.** As coaching addresses the client as a whole and explores deep set issues like beliefs and values, they often begin to change at home and at work by being able to

set priorities based on their values. When priorities are set by values, clients experience great congruence which leads to a happier and more effective, employee.

- **Reduce stress levels.** Many clients experience stress when they don't feel they are in control, or don't have the resources to deal with a particular issue or environment. Through coaching the client will gain all the resources they need to be effective and congruent in their lives and behaviours.

How coaching can be measured

This is a tricky problem to solve as most of the time you are working with behavioural change, the focus of coaching, which is difficult to measure directly. How can you put a value on someone who is now more focused or is now better able to deal with the demands of their job?

The answer is surprisingly simple and falls in line with any business practice. Identify the key metric and measure it. But what is the metric?

Coaching is a customised activity, and no one session will be the same and the needs of one individual or team will be different than another, but you are there because there is a perceived need to change something or someone to help the individual or organisation. The most successful coaching engagements align the outcomes of the coaching with a business plan or business strategy and pays greater dividends when the outcomes are linked to competencies.

For example take Simon, a middle manager for a large organisation. He is responsible for 20 sales staff and his department has been seen to be underperforming over the last 12 months. The senior management have invested a lot into Simon and believe that with coaching he can turn his department around. During the first session Simon explains his problems with self esteem and his lack of self confidence and attributes this to his inability to lead the sales team to perform. During the following 3 coaching sessions, the coach is successful in rebuilding Simon's self esteem and as a direct result Simon set about changing the way the department ran and started to become the leader the Senior Management knew he could be. So how do we measure the benefits and value of coaching here as you cannot measure improvements in self-esteem? You can however measure the difference in the department and here is where the coach stepped in.

As part of the initial coaching agreement with the senior management team, the coach insisted that if he was going to be involved, they needed to set hard targets on how the coaching could be measured and since the 'real' problem was getting Simons department to perform better, it was decided that the

departments sales figures would be the measure of the coaching intervention. They set the target of a 20% improvement in sales over the next 12 months.

As you can see by looking past the soft skill (self esteem in Simons case) and looking to see what impact that would have (increased departmental performance), you can simply and easily put in measures to assess the success and value of coaching. Return on investment can then become a simple calculation; cost of coaching vs. Income from improved sales.

There is an argument of course that an improvement in sales cannot be attributed to just coaching, as it could be to do with a high performing individual in the team or indeed the economic climate of their business sector.

In this situation, the coach also insisted on a secondary measurable based on 360 degree feedback sessions. If these are conducted efficiently and a measurement of behaviour is asked for each competency (for example on a scale of 1 to 10), it is then simple to measure the growth of the client over the coaching period.

What the coach did here was to ensure that measurement of the coaching sessions was built into the coaching agreement. Without the agreement the coaching sessions would have had no measure and the coach might find it difficult to justify his role and could jeopardise future business in another area.

In simple terms, the best way to measure the value of coaching is to ask the client to define what they want to see as the outcome of the session. During the initial set up some of the following questions could be asked to gain a better understanding of the organisational goals:

- Enquire into past leadership and training programs that the company has completed. Ask if they were a success and ask how do they know? It is likely that the same measurements can be reused, but where no measurement was used, the coach can work with the client to set ones based on the SMART mnemonic (Smart Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timely)
- Ask what are the current costs of managerial or executive turnover is and enquire what the savings of retention could be? It is wise here to underline the issue that coaching in this context does not guarantee people won't leave a business where they are ill matched, but will ensure that the ones that you have are fully engaged and motivated to perform better.
- As triple bottom line accounting gains popularity in businesses, enquire how the company measures the value of its human capital? Triple bottom line accounting measures a company's value based on the '3Ps'. Profit, People and Planet.

This is a very exciting time for coaches as organisations that adopt the triple bottom line accounting mentioned above (and many large firms are being forced to by their shareholders), will be looking to show how much they invest in their human capital, but highlights the importance that successful coaching engagements will need to measure the return on investment or similar metric to satisfy their demands.

Coaching can also play a part in processes that already may exist in an organisation such as a structured appraisal system. Many appraisal systems include measureable results based on an employee's soft skills, like their ability to manage, set and achieve goals, lead their team or to manage time. Whilst none of these have a direct return on investment, many of them use basic metrics which can be used to measure the result of coaching. If it can be clearly seen that a clients ability to manage their time, in the eyes of their manager, has improved from a 5 to a 9, and that time management was a focus of the coaching sessions, then you have a measureable result.

Measuring the value of coaching does not have to be difficult but best results are seen when the objectives are set at the start of the coaching sessions and where the benefits of coaching can be aligned with a business or departmental plan.

How to get best value out of coaching

Like any organisational initiative great care has to be taken when setting up the coaching relationship as people who are simply placed into coaching are unlikely to respond well and therefore potentially damage the value the organisation puts on the coaching sessions. Coaches need to take great care to ensure that the organisation for which they have been contracted to, has set up any potential arrangements beforehand.

Best practice would be to ensure that before a coaching initiative is started, the coach has had a chance to evaluate the individuals, to ensure they are in a good place to be coached and to talk to the organisation if they feel that an individual will not benefit.

There are a number of ways to establish whether a potential client is suitable for coaching, but one of the most popular models is Carl Rogers client centred approach. In his work Rogers explains that there are 6 core conditions that need to be present so that change can take place. These are:

- **There is a psychological contract between the coach and client.** This is where the client and the coach understand each other. The client is aware of what coaching is and how it can help and most importantly, sees the coach as someone who can help them change. In addition the

coach is happy that this client is suitably motivated and understands the process. Setting expectations on both sides is vital. Unless the client has been through the process before, being told they need to be 'coached', can be a negative experience and may result in anxiety or even hostility towards the coach.

- **The client is incongruent, vulnerable or anxious.** This deals with the needs of the client as coaching is creating change, if there is no need for change, coaching is not needed. Clients that display congruence, resilience and confidence are unlikely to see the benefit of coaching and will ridicule the process. That said, a coach should still explore a working relationship with a client of this nature as it is likely that they are not aware that they do have behaviours that needs working on. Highly successful executives can often fall into this category as they feel successful, and their life on the surface appears to be working perfectly, but a session looking at values can often bring the clients awareness to a problem seen by others. Johari's window is a useful tool here. Clients who are incongruent, vulnerable or anxious however, will generally understand and want that change, so the motivation is already in place.
- **The coach is genuine in the coaching relationship.** Rogers explores the motivation behind the coaches interactions with the client rather than the client themselves. In an unregulated industry such as coaching, there are no barriers to entering the sector and often a coach can set themselves up with the focus on making money rather than eliciting change. The coaches focus has to be on the client and needs to remain genuine in their desire to see the client change. This can often be difficult if an organisation uses internal coaches, as the coach may have to coach an individual who they do not hold in high regard.
- **The coach experiences unconditional positive regard for their client.** Similar to ensuring the coaching relationship is genuine, this condition ensures that the coach holds a positive regard for the client and that they truly believe that through the coaching process the client can change. Coaches that don't have a high regard for the client are unlikely to be able to be effective as rapport is often lost. This can be particularly difficult when coaching a client that holds values that are in direct conflict with your own and it is the coaches responsibility to come to every session with a clean mind but to be strong enough to either refer or stop coaching someone where these values are impacting on the effectiveness of the coach.
- **The coach experiences an empathic understanding of the client's world and endeavours to communicate this understanding to their client.** Effective coaching is built upon the coaches ability to create a good level of rapport with the client. Without that rapport the client is unlikely to open up enough for the coach to assist in change. Rapport and empathy go hand in hand and a coach that can understand the clients world will build additional rapport as the client will see the coach as 'like him' and will help them relax in the sessions. In addition a coach that

can associate with the clients world will be able to gain a different perspective and would allow the creation of outstanding questions that are more focused on the clients real world.

- **The client perceives that the coach understands what's going on for the client.** Following on from the theme of empathy and rapport, a client must feel that the client is sympathetic to their position and how they relate to the world. It is through this that the necessary level of rapport is developed, that allows the client to fully open up and go past any surface structures and go deeper into areas where change may be required.

It can be clearly seen that Rogers work is focused on the client, and how the client feels and if any of the core conditions are not present, the coach should be wary about working with the client.

In addition to ensuring that the client/coach relationship is set, there are a number of other factors that need to be discussed to ensure that the organisation and client get best value from a coaching program. These include:

- **Setting clear objectives.** As already discussed, setting clear objectives or goals for the results that are to be achieved has a number of direct benefits. It has been widely recognised that the simple act of setting and writing goals, increases the chances of success by over 80%. It is therefore very interesting to note that the majority of development programs instigated by organisations have no, or very general, goals.
- **Ensuring there is a suitable environment.** Due to the nature of coaching, it is important that the organisation is aware that one of their responsibilities is to provide the coach and client with a suitable environment to have a session and of course give them the time where they will be uninterrupted. It is very difficult for a client or coach to give their full attention when they are being interrupted or distracted all the time, which is why coaching in canteens, or in rooms where there are interruptions, is not best practice and will limit the effectiveness of the sessions. Additionally it is the responsibility of both the client and the coach to ensure that they themselves are in a good place to have the session. This includes ensuring the mobile phones, laptops and other distractions are switched off and to be in a clear frame of mind. A session held just before an important client meeting is unlikely to achieve the desired results as the client may be focused and concerned about the meeting.
- **Setting Expectations.** If the sessions are set up correctly, the client should be fully aware of what to expect from them and given that coaching doesn't produce right and wrong solutions, should allow them to relax in to a place where they can be open enough to explore change. It is in the times where coaching is forced on a client where there can be difficulties as the clients tend to be defensive and unwilling to participate. It is in times like this where a coach needs to

be prepared to challenge them directly through building rapport and establish the psychological contract that was described in Rogers 6 core conditions.

Summary

In summary coaching has been widely accepted in the corporate world, and is continuing to go from strength to strength as more people see the value of the process first hand. The value of coaching can also be easily measured and has been seen to deliver outstanding returns on investment.

With its flexibility to affect many areas of an organisation and the growing demand for developing leaders to drive a new generation of businesses, coaching remains of high value to organisations and to the individuals within them.

Bibliography

Chartered Management Institute. (2002). *The Coaching at Work Survey*.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2004). *Training and Development 2004*.

Drake Beam Morin. (n.d.). *Six Scenarios That Call for an Executive Coach*. Retrieved from www.dbm.co.uk.

European Coaching Institute. (2004). *Benefits of Coaching in Business*.

Hay Group. (2002). *The Future of Executive Coaching*.

Merril C Anderson PhD, MetrixGlobal LLC. (2001). *Case Study on the Return on Investment of Executive Coaching*.

Sinclair A, F. P. (2008). *Evaluation of Coaching in the NHS*. Institute of Employment Studies.

Viewolve Ltd. (2007). *Executive Development for the 21st Century*.