Executive Coaching: An Outcome Study

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Leadership Development

EXECUTIVE COACHING: AN OUTCOME STUDY

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ABSTRACT

While executive coaching continues to mushroom as a practice area, there has been little outcome research. This articles presents the results of a study that explored factors influencing the choice of a coach, executives' reactions to working with a coach, the pros and cons of both internal and external coaches, the focus of executive coaching engagements, indications of successful coaching engagements, coaching tools executives favored, and the sustainability of coached executives' learning and behavior change. The author also raises a question about which executives are most likely to benefit from this development resource and presents a typology for gauging this issue.

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EXECUTIVE COACHING: AN OUTCOME STUDY

As companies continue to invest heavily in – and become more discerning about – executive coaching, psychologist coaches would be wise to lead the way in exploring critical questions about the value of this costly resource. These questions include: What are the key credential/experience factors in selecting a coach? What are the personal characteristics of effective coaches? Of the myriad tools a coach may use, what do executives really value? What are the indications of a successful coaching engagement? What are the factors that influence the sustainability of learning and/or behavior change?

To date, there has been little executive coaching outcome research (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). In this article, the author presents findings of her research with the caveat that these results are based solely on executives whom she coached between 1985 and 2001. It is hoped this research enriches coaches' thinking about coaching as a major development tool and, about what it takes to achieve positive results. Further, the author asks this somewhat disquieting question: *Are companies wasting money on executive coaching?* This question is not about coach credentials, or coach experience, or about coaching methodology. Rather, it's about the people who are coached: *which executives are most likely to benefit from coaching?* This question is considered under, "Sustainability of Learning and/or Behavior Change as a Result of Coaching." The author suggests use of a typology for evaluating prospective coaching engagements.

Demographics

An overview of the demographics is presented in Table 1. The unusually high response rate (82%) is attributed to strong relationships the author established and maintained with many clients, as well as to the persistent combination of written, phone and email follow-up efforts. The great majority (79%) of the executive participants were in the 40 - 50 age group, male, and held at least Director level responsibility in their places of employment. While people are motivated to learn and/or change behavior at any point in the lifespan, high potential business people are securing (and expecting!) significant leadership positions at earlier ages than have been customary. Therefore, companies focused on bench strength need to provide employees with high impact leader development experiences sooner. One possible and cost-effective approach would be for companies to establish inter-disciplinary networks of internal coaches (drawn from interested and skilled human resources professionals, other functional staff, and line managers/leaders). These individuals could be trained and supported by consulting psychologists. (When/if companies take this idea seriously, perhaps it opens the way for a new role on the corporate roster: Chief Psychology Officer or CPO?).

The vast majority of participants (85%) were white males. As workplace demographics continue to change, ex-patriate rotations increase, and recruiting challenges intensify, companies will need to be more intentional about providing customized developmental resources to a much broader population of employees.

Executives' Reaction to the Idea of Working with a Coach

Reactions to working with a coach were significantly positive, over 75% (see Table 2). However, over one-third of the sample indicated a "guarded" or a negative response. (Note: respondents had more than one choice). These guarded or negative responses are attributed to a host of questions about what executive coaching is, how it works, what value it may bring, and – of considerable significance –how having a coach is perceived in the organization.

As widespread as coaching has become, there is still a need for organization sponsors (boss and human resources professional), as well as coaches, to be explicit about *what* it is, *why* it will bring value to the executive, and *how* it works. An explicit description of methodology that includes activities, roles and time commitments can go a long way in establishing a positive reception to coaching. In Table 3, the author presents this information for one phase (data-gathering) of her methodology

An experienced coach can be an invaluable resource to a senior executive -- even over a sustained period of time. However, there are a few cautions. These include: (1) the involvement of a coach should not absolve the boss from providing frequent and frank performance management; (2) the coach should not be the only "truth-teller" on the landscape; and (3) coaching at its best is not done in isolation; rather, it's a *collaborative* process among the executive, his/her boss, and the appropriate human resources professional (HR).

The "internal collaborators" (boss and HR) must play a major role throughout the coaching process by: (1) providing ongoing feedback to both the executive and the coach regarding perceived progress or lack of same; (2) helping to influence a positive perception among others in the organization of the executive's learning/change in behavior (assuming there is change); (3) providing positive reinforcement to the executive for his/her effort to change; and (4) remaining as engaged, supportive allies after the coaching engagement has concluded.

Further, organizations that use executive coaching as a development resource need to manage how it's perceived in the company; i.e. take steps to position it as a special investment in employees. Coaches, too must be vigilant about the perception of their work and make every effort to influence the appropriate mindset – especially when they are gathering 360 data. For example, when 360-degree feedback is gathered face-to-face (the author's preference), each interview is begun with a probe such as, "What's your understanding of why

we're meeting today?" If the executive has invited people into the 360 sample personally, this probe is most likely to produce an on-target response such as, "Well, you're coaching (name) and he/she wants to have the benefit of how he/she is perceived by others." However, people are not always invited into 360s personally, they may have some axe to grind, or they may be unduly cynical about this type of development activity. When the coach gets a less than accurate response to this probe, it's essential to clarify and attempt to draw the interviewee into a more accurate perspective. Similarly, when/if the boss or HR partner are asked questions about an employee's participation, it's critical that they represent the work as constructively as possible. In some companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, Rohm and Haas Company, Pfizer and Colgate-Palmolive, coaching has been positioned as an executive perk. This perspective of *investing in the best* has obvious positive implications for both organization perception and the client-coach working alliance.

Credential or Experience Factors in Choosing a Coach

The top three credential and experience criteria for executives in choosing coaches were; (1) graduate training in psychology (82%), (2) experience in/understanding of business (78%), and (3) an established reputation as a coach (25%) (see Table 4).

Talented executive coaches must be grounded in *both* business and psychology. Regarding psychology, this finding is consistent with VanFleet's (1999) contention that there are certain general psychological skills essential for effective coaches. These skills include interpersonal effectiveness, listening, empathy for widely differing groups, patience, adaptability, analytical problem-solving, creativity and humor. While coaches from a range of disciplines can possess these skills, there are coaching engagements that require the specific expertise of professionals who have been trained clinically – especially if sustained behavior change is the desired outcome. Wasylyshyn (2001) wrote, "…coaches who have not had training in psychology or in a related behavior science are less likely to be successful in handling referrals where an executive must change a deeply entrenched and dysfunctional behavior pattern (p. 17)." In referring to non-psychologist coaches Berglas (2002) states, "By dint of their backgrounds and biases, they downplay or simply ignore deep-seated psychological problems they don't understand. Even more concerning, when an executive's problems stem from undetected or ignored psychological difficulties, coaching can actually make a bad situation worse (p. 87)."

Regarding business, psychologists who have not held business roles must amplify their business knowledge over time and through the interplay of experiences in different companies, industries and global sectors and, by immersing themselves in the business literature, as well as germane training experiences.   There is another important consideration in this context: semantics. The language psychologists use in speaking to executives and in

applying psychology-based principles to the workplace can make or break credibility. Consider, for example, the difference between describing a company President, who reports to the CEO and is having a tough time getting along with him, as having an "intense negative paternal transference" versus the President's struggle with "being told what to do." Or, consider the difference between talking to a senior executive about the company's "work-family balance problem" versus "work-family *integration* as an employee retention issue." The first depiction of the work-family dynamic would likely not engage the executive very much at all while the second is a more apt representation and is more likely to evoke engagement and even support of proactive policy and practices.

Finally, regarding the coach reputation finding, experienced coaches should be able to provide references from coached executives. While it is helpful to have strong endorsement from people in human resources and line management, little is as powerful as coachee testimonials.

Personal Characteristics of an Effective Executive Coach

The top three personal characteristics of an effective executive coach were; (1) the ability to form a strong "connection" with the executive (86%), (2) professionalism (82%), and (3) use of a clear and sound coaching methodology (35%) (see Table 5).

In terms of forming strong connections with clients, coaches who work from a perspective of the *executive as the client* (versus the organization as client) are likely to form faster and more substantive coaching relationships. Seasoned coaches discover how to work from this perspective – satisfying both the coached executive and the sponsoring organization. The onus is on the consultant to manage those relationships fully and appropriately. How to orchestrate the feedback of 360 data in a manner that satisfies both the coached executive and the internal collaborators (boss and HR) is an example of walking this line. An ideal approach finds (1) the consulting psychologist providing maximum specificity to the coached executive (delivered with empathy and constructive guidance), (2) the coached executive providing "headlines" from the data to his/her boss and/or HR manager, and (3) the psychologist following up with the boss and/or HR manager to discuss/clarify information they've received from the coached executive.

As psychologists, maintaining stringent ethical standards regarding confidentiality, the management of psychometric or other data and, managing the boundaries of relationships is second nature. These are important facets of how psychologists can distinguish themselves from other coaches whose work is not guided by a professional code of ethical practice.

Finally, in the absence of a proven methodology, coaching engagements can flounder, be too ambiguous, and/or limp to an unsatisfactory close. Coaches

must be able to articulate their models *and* demonstrate how they manage engagements for maximum impact. One powerful example of this is the use of customized interview protocols with face-to-face or telephonic data-gathering versus published and/or electronically administered tools. Another is the explicit presentation of all coaching phase activities as partially shown in Table 3.

Pros and Cons of an "External" Coach

All respondents (100%) indicated a positive response in favor of external coaches. Predictably, there was also high negative response (76%) due to external coaches' lack of company and/or industry knowledge (see Table 6).

Trust and confidentiality were the primary factors in the preference for external coaches. If external coaches are to be maximally effective, it's critical that company decision-makers and coaches identify efficient and substantive steps coaches can take to get grounded in the culture. There are distinct advantages for coaches who work in companies for extended periods – assuming they maintain objectivity and build relationships with senior HR professionals and senior executives. This deepens their grasp of major culture themes and the implications of these themes for leader effectiveness.

Pros and Cons of an "Internal" Coach

A majority of respondents also indicated a strong positive response (70%) in favor of internal coaches. The significant negative response (79%) was due to questions about internal coaches' potential conflicts of interest; trust and ability to maintain confidentiality; and skill level (8%) (see Table 7).

Clearly, knowledge of the company and its executives are primary drivers in the preference for internal coaches. Further, there are many coaching indications that can be handled quite well by inside coaches (e.g. skill-building, on-the-spot conflict management, new leader assimilation, etc.). Therefore, as suggested earlier, companies may be well served by establishing inside cadres of coaches who could be trained by consulting psychologists and supported by them on an as needed basis.

Focus of Executive Coaching Engagements

The vast majority of coaching engagements represented in this study focused on *behavior changes* executives wished to make for continued career success. These changes were specified as: personal behavior change (56%); enhancing leader effectiveness (43%); and fostering stronger relationships (40%). Notably, 17% of the sample cited *personal development* as the focus of their coaching. And, another 7% cited a desire for better *work/family integration* as a key concern (see Table 8).

Based on this finding, it would appear that a major challenge for coaches is to learn enough about their clients so they can pull the behavior change levers quickly. In the coaching of these executives, the author used multi-faceted data-gathering that included a developmental history, a battery of psychometrics, customized 360 interview protocol (marital partner often included as a source), and a review of career aspirations, as well as of current business challenges. Typically the psychometric battery included the <u>Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal</u>, <u>Myers-Briggs Type Indicator</u>, the <u>Life Styles Inventory</u>, the <u>NEO PI-R</u>, the <u>BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory</u>, and, at a client's option, the <u>Rorschach</u>. Careful weaving of all these data points accelerated the consultant's understanding of her clients and, deepened the clients' perceived value of the coaching through fresh or deeper insights about behavioral drivers of their leadership.

This multi-faceted data-gathering and weaving of the data through constructive, caring feedback into a coherent and compelling profile also enriched and anchored the coaching agenda. In other words, *specificity* of the coaching agenda was achieved – specific areas were identified – either strengths to leverage or developmental needs. Further, coach and clients crafted preliminary action plans as a beginning template of actions that launched the behavior change efforts or supported new learning. Typically, at the conclusion of a coaching engagement, executive and coach would collaborate on a master action plan (MAP), a living document that captured all of the most useful actions that helped produce new learning and/or behavior change.

Another word about *specificity* of the coaching agenda. It is not uncommon for initial comments from the sponsoring organization's collaborators about a potential coaching agenda to be vague, obtuse and maybe even off-the-mark – especially when there is no mention or consideration of key organization culture factors. For example, there is a big difference between a coaching engagement that's based on the company's depiction of an executive "needing to increase his/ her effectives as a leader" versus a multi-faceted data approach that reveals individual behavioral issues such as perfectionism, micro-management, strained relationships with peers -- AND culture behavioral norms that include second-guessing, intermittent reinforcement, and lack of candid feedback.   In encountering a situation just like this, the author had as much work to do with the executive's boss and HR partner as with her client.

Further, many clients who wanted to become better leaders had issues in one or more of the four dimensions of emotional competence as defined by Goleman (1995) and represented by the author's acronym, SO SMART® (self observation, self management, attunement to others, and relationship traction). Strong emotional competence requires the awareness and management of one's emotions and numerous research studies have made the business case for the importance of emotional competence at work. These include Boyatizis (1999), Spencer (1993) and Walter V. Clarke Associates (1996).

The self-observation (SO) dimension of emotional competence includes the accurate assessment of one's strengths and limitations, a strong sense of self-worth, and the ability to recognize one's emotions and their effects on others. Self-management (SM) includes the ability to control potentially disruptive emotions and impulses, accountability, adaptability, achievement orientation, and the readiness to act. Attunement (A) to others involves the capacity for empathy, organizational awareness, and from a work-related perspective – recognizing and striving to meet the needs of both internal and external customers. In the work context, relationship traction (RT) involves both leading and working with others in ways that foster deep, lasting, and meaningful relationships versus superficial connection. People who are strong in this dimension can align and inspire others; influence change; communicate clearly and convincingly; and they are generally effective at developing the people who report to them. Executives with solid relationship traction can also manage conflict effectively and, build collaborative teams.

These engagements necessitated both new learning and serious commitment to behavior change. While the construct of emotional competence can be a helpful vehicle for learning and behavior change, sustained results are dependent upon coaches who are well-grounded in the knowledge domains of how people learn and change. These domains are primarily psychological.

Coaching where *personal development* issues predominated included proactive career management, career/life transition issues, and concerns about work-related legacy. Since this data was gathered and, especially in the wake of September 11, 2001, the author has experienced an increase in executive coaching clients who want to discuss the meaning of their work and, the pressures of *work/family integration* issues as part of their overall coaching agenda. Is this a trend? Or is it a passing reaction to recent traumatic events? While this is a difficult question to gauge, effective coaches are wise to take a holistic approach in working with senior executives – and this could mean including the executive's marital partner as appropriate.

Ratings for Coaching Tools

Executive coaches vary significantly in terms of the methodologies, approaches, tools and durations of their executive coaching engagements. In this study the author, who typically works with an executive for a number of years, explored coachees' preferences regarding the various coaching tools she employed.

On a 1-10 rating scale, the three highest rated coaching tools were (1) coaching sessions (9.2), (2) 360 feedback (9.0), and (3) relationship with the coach (8.3). Over 50% of respondents also gave high ratings to testing (7.4) and readings on leadership (7.0).

High ratings attributed to the actual coaching sessions and to the relationship with the coach suggest that frequency and face-to-face contact are essential for successful coaching outcomes – especially when sustained behavior change is the desired outcome. These ratings may raise "buyer beware" cautions about increasingly popular coaching-by-phone and other coaching methodologies that minimize the importance of the "live" coach-executive working alliance.

Good chemistry with the coach, trust, confidentiality, and coach availability are key ingredients in a strong coaching alliance. Further, effective coaches maintain momentum, dispense truth constructively, and truly care about the executives with whom they work – as manifested by numerous, spontaneous reach-outs to them throughout the coaching period.

Most executive coaches provide some form of 360 feedback. And while the use of published metrics – especially those that can be administered and scored electronically -- is efficient and well established, the author questions whether they are as useful as a customized approach. The use of customized interview protocols that require the coach to conduct face-to-face or telephonic interviews, while more labor intensive, has the advantages of eliciting rich behavioral examples and can help minimize the likelihood of skewed data.

These data also underscore the fact that *executives like data*. The power of an appropriate battery of psychometrics cannot be underestimated as an efficient way to surface relevant information—and insights. Psychologists have the broadest array of psychometric tools at their disposable and a set of ethical principles that ensures such data is managed appropriately.

The strong showing for readings on leadership underscores the point that different people learn in different ways so coaches need to focus on how their clients learn best – and, tap into a repertoire of tools accordingly. For some, behavioral breakthrough may be a function of what the coach models or teaches in coaching meetings. For others, it may be the fresh insight about a deeply embedded behavior pattern. And for still others, it may be the readings, books, journal articles, audiotapes, films, poems, etc. that the coach selects as vehicles for learning and/or behavior change. Clearly, high impact executive coaching is more art than science—customization of each engagement is key. This is why programmatic, non-behaviorally-based executive development approaches are inherently limited.

Indications of Successful Coaching

As Indicated in Table 9, the top three indications of successful coaching were; (1) sustained behavior change (63%), (2) increased self-awareness and understanding (48%), and (3) more effective leadership (45%).

Two themes merit mention.   The first, is the importance of emotional competence as a learning and behavior change vehicle for coached executives – discussed above.   In the author's experience, executives' abilities to change behavior, increase self-understanding and to become more effective leaders to a large degree hinged on their making progress in one or more of the SO SMART® dimensions of emotional competence.

The second, less apparent theme, is the importance of coaches managing relationships with "sponsors." i.e. the internal collaborators (boss and HR). Beyond the financial implications of managing these relationships, there are the subtle psychodynamics of managing perception. Even the most gifted coaches are unlikely to effect a lasting change in the perceptions of others of the executives with whom they work.   In the author's experience, this is best accomplished by working in close collaboration with the boss and/or HR partner.

If coaches take seriously the axiom that perception is reality in organization life, then coaching engagements must include intentional activities focused on changing perception(s) of a coached executive. At minimum the author suggests a three-pronged approach: (1) throughout the coaching, a coached executive conveys explicit information to the boss and key HR professional regarding status and progress of coaching; (2) throughout the coaching, the coach – while preserving appropriate boundaries of confidentiality—maintains contact with boss and HR contact for the purpose of periodic update, to gain fresh collateral data, to emphasize progress made, and when possible to provide secondary gain to these internal collaborators; and (3) at the end of the formal coaching period, coach and coachee collaborate on the creation of a Master Action Plan (MAP) that captures all that was learned and actions that will reinforce those learnings. The MAP is a living document shared with integral collaborators and includes actions that require the executive to work at managing perceptions. This means the executive is proactive in sending the message that, "Something has changed, I'm committed to sustaining the change, and I'm more effective as a result of it."

Finally, the most positive coaching outcomes begin with executives who are genuinely motivated to learn and/or change. Therefore, sufficient scrutiny of this variable – upfront at the point of referral – is key. (See "sustainability" section below). While coaching is a costly development investment, there are times when a company's true coaching agenda can be hidden and/or fraught with political peril.   Coaches must conduct a thorough needs assessment before commencing an engagement. There will be times when the best course of action is to advise the sponsor that executive coaching is *not* the best intervention, i.e. why something *other than* coaching appears warranted.

Recently, the author was contacted by the Vice President of Human Resources for a regional bank on the east coast. He wanted to secure her services to work with the most senior woman in their organization. As they spoke, the consultant learned that the prospective client was immensely talented but also highly

defensive, rejected negative feedback and was somewhat resistant to the idea of having a coach. She had alienated a number of people on the executive committee, and had such deteriorated relationships with her peers that business results were suffering. The CEO saw executive coaching as a vehicle for being able to say, "We even tried to help her with an executive coach." Rather than initiating executive coaching, the consultant suggested the boss first speak candidly to the woman about her flagging performance and the unlikelihood of her advancing any further in the organization. This lead to a mutually satisfactory decision that she would leave the company with a hefty severance package – including individual outplacement support to help her identify a suitable career move.

Sustainability of Learning and/or Behavior Change as a Result of Coaching.

This research produced many reflective moments when I would see a rolling sea of faces – hundreds of business people whom I've had the privilege to coach. Through my own critical self-assessment, I would say many of these executives were helped immensely, some to a moderate degree, and some probably not at all. What makes the difference between great and mediocre outcomes? How effective is coaching really? These were among the questions that fuelled an exploration of the *sustainability* of executives' learning and/or behavior change as a result of coaching.

On a 1-10 scale, over half of these coached executives reported a sustainability level between 6 and 8; over a third were at the 9-10 level. This was a stunning finding that required closer scrutiny. Obvious factors included the consultant's experience as an external coach with an established methodology, high credibility, professional integrity and sufficient emotional competence to form sound working alliances with clients. Re-analysis of the data suggested that tough probing about the "rightness" of a coaching referral produced a well-qualified, highly motivated group of clients.

This raises an important question that warrants further investigation: how wisely are companies investing resources in executive coaching? Based on this research, the author offers a typology that might prove helpful to decision makers as they gauge the likely value of executive coaching for specific individuals (see Table 10). Surely, many people can benefit from coaching but there are also countless others who, when given this development opportunity, simply won't engage. They won't engage despite the best efforts of experienced coaches. There are personal and/or contextual issues that simply overwhelm the likelihood of forming a satisfactory working alliance with a coach. Coaches should avoid these charades; in the long run, they serve neither these executives or their sponsoring companies well. Further, such engagements do damage to the reputation of executive coaching as a substantive development tool.

In the author's most recent experience, corporate decision makers appear more inclined toward an "Olympian" position vis a vis the provision of one-on-one development services. As one senior human resources executive in a Fortune 100 company stated, "We're investing most in our best." If this thinking represents a trend, it may foster more opportunity for coaching – coaching by well-qualified people of highly responsive executives that yields high value and broad impact consistently. This also leads to questions about elitist development practices – another issue that requires further investigation.

The typology categories – while still clarifying in the author's mind – are as follows:

Primary – successful executives and other high potential employees. There are no performance issues. These people are genuinely interested in their development and evolution as leaders. They believe in the value of having an objective sounding board (coach), want continuous feedback, and do not get trapped or deluded by their own defensive reasoning. Sound development action = customized, 1-on-1 executive coaching.

Secondary -- potential de-railers. There *are* performance issues but they are not so dire that the boss and/or HR manager are raising questions about retention. The executive may or may not be interested in continuous learning. He/she has failed to respond to and/or has not been given straight feedback about performance issues. Best development action = performance management abetted, if possible, by the support of an internal mentor or coach. Note: coaching by an external consultant at a later date may prove useful – assuming the individual has responded to internal performance management and coaching or mentoring efforts.

Tertiary – already de-railed. There are serious performance issues and/or negative perceptions of such magnitude that no coach could salvage the situation. The company should not waste resources on a "rescue fantasy." Best development action = candor about the situation and a severance package that includes one-on-one out placement that will assist the person in getting on with his/her career elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

Probably more questions have been raised by this study than answered. But for now there are strong indications of the following: (1) psychologists with doctoral degrees, experience in business and/or general management, personal characteristics that abet rapid and authentic connections with executives, and who are guided by a strong set of professional ethical principles are perceived by executives as especially effective coaches; (2) executives have a desire for data and personal insight so the armamentarium of psychometric tools psychologists possess enriches their data-gathering capabilities greatly; and (3) behavior change and learning, two knowledge domains of psychology, are key indications

of successful coaching, Finally, there is strong evidence that a psychologically-based model that includes intense scrutiny of the appropriateness of coaching for a referred executive is likely to influence high sustainability rates of learning and behavior change.

The results of this research underscore the distinctive assets psychologists possess as executive coaches. The future appears bright. As Diedrich and Kilburg (2001) stated, "From the way the field has developed in the past 5 years, it appears now that coaching has begun to make its place in the vast armamentarium of behaviorally based interventions available to psychologists and other professionals who work to help people and organizations change (p. 203)." But the future will also bring heightened scrutiny of coach competencies and credentials. Commercial sources that include the International Coaches Federation (ICF), are providing training and certifications to thousands of people who are interested in becoming executive coaches.

Standards of competence or proficiency and possible certification have yet to emerge from the profession of psychology. In the meantime, psychologists are urged to conduct further outcome research that examines the value of executive coaching as a development resource and that explores whether or not psychologists – psychologists who understand business – are distinctively equipped as executive coaches. To not do so runs the risk of executive coaching fading from use because it becomes perceived as a costly fad of variable utility. If this were to happen, it would be a loss for all those executives who could benefit from coaching, a loss for all the people who report to them, and a loss for psychologists who through this work have the chance to effect thousands of lives in workplaces throughout the world.

Table 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total # of Participants: 87*

Gender:	**Male**	**85%**
	Female	**15%**
Age :	**30 to 40**	**16%**
	40 to 50	**79%**
	50+	**5%**

Company Size :	**Fortune 500**	**79%**
	Mid-sized	**19%**
	Entrepreneurial	**2%**

Job Level:	**Senior Executive (SVP & above)** **30%**
	Officer (VPs) **38%**
	Director **32%**

***Survey sent to 106 executives coached between 1985 - 2001; 82% response rate.**

Table 2

REACTION TO THE IDEA OF WORKING WITH
AN EXECUTIVE COACH

76% Positive (47%) - Enthusiastic anticipation (29%)

31% Guarded - didn't know what to expect

6%   Negative - didn't expect to get anything out of it

3%   Other (curiosity, resistance)

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 3

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">**Executive Coaching Model**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**PHASE I - DATA-GATHERING**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Activities**</td><td>**Participants**</td><td>**Timeframe**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Initial discussion/ Needs assessment**</td><td>**SM, HR & C**</td><td>**2 – 4 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**First meeting/needs assessment**</td><td>**IE & C**</td><td>**2 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Agenda-setting meeting**</td><td>**SM, HR, IE & C**</td><td>**1 – 2 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Post agenda setting meeting IE & C**</td><td></td><td>**1 - 2 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Developmental History**</td><td>**IE & C**</td><td>**3 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Testing (use of psychometric tools to profile personality preferences and management style)**</td><td>**IE**</td><td>**3 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Customization of interview protocol (used for 360° feedback)**</td><td>**IE, SM, HR & C**</td><td>**3 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**360 data-gathering – interviewing of company sources (boss, peers and subordinates)**</td><td>**C**</td><td>**10 – 14 hours***</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Interviewing of family members (optional)**</td><td>**FM & C**</td><td>**2 hours**</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Scoring, compilation and analysis of testing and 360 data**</td><td>**C**</td><td>**16 hours**</td></tr>
</table>

Key
SM   Senior management (boss)
HR   Human resources partner
IE   Identified executive
CS   Company sources
FM   Family member
C   Coach

*Depending on number of sources in sample.

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Table 4

CREDENTIALS AND /OR EXPERIENCE
FACTORS IN SELECTING AN EXECUTIVE
COACH

82% **Graduate level training in psychology**

78% **Experience in business/general management**

25% **Coaching experience and positive reputation**

15% **Experience in client's industry/knowledge of company culture**

12% **Trust in judgment of person who recommended coach**

8% **Other** (sufficient flexibility to accommodate to executive's schedule; good communication skill; common sense)

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 5

TOP *PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS* OF AN EFFECTIVE
EXECUTIVE COACH

86% FORMS STRONG "CONNECTION" WITH CLIENT (empathy, warmth, builds trust, listening skill, engages quickly)

82% PROFESSIONALISM (intelligence, integrity/honesty,confidentiality, objectivity)

35% SOUND COACHING METHODOLOGY (delivers "truth" constructively, contextual grounding, unearths core issues, use of psychometrics)

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 6

PROS and CONS OF THE "EXTERNAL" COACH

100% **POSITIVE**
•Objectivity
•Confidentiality
•Breadth of experience (other companies)
•Psychological expertise; better trained
•No "political agenda"
•Trust and Integrity

76% **NEGATIVE**
•Insufficient knowledge of the company, its culture,
industry, key executives

9% **NEGATIVE**
•Quick accessibility, availability
•Continuity, sustaining momentum

8% **NEGATIVE**
•Cost

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 7

PROS and CONS OF THE "INTERNAL" COACH

70% **POSITIVE**
•Knowledge of the company, its culture, industry and
 key executives
•Accessibility (6%)
•Cost (5%)

79% **NEGATIVE**
•Objectivity - conflict of interest
•Confidentiality - pressure to divulge information
•Less trust with clients

8% **NEGATIVE**
•Skill level - "practicing without a license"

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 8

FOCUS OF EXECUTIVE COACHING ENGAGEMENTS

56% PERSONAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE (listening, tact/diplomacy, collaboration, persuasion and influence, harsh self-criticism, timidity/self-confidence, shift from tactical to strategic, customer-focus, stress reduction, managing perception of "ambition")

43% ENHANCING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS (projecting confidence, inspiring and motivating others, assimilation into new role, increase in scope)

40% FOSTERING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS (focus = cluster of "emotional competence" factors, i.e. self-awareness, self-control, attunement to others, and building relationships)

17% PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (legacy, career management, life stage transition)

7% WORK-FAMILY INTEGRATION
(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 9

TOP INDICATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL COACHING (AS CITED BY COACHEES)

63% Change in behavior (more emphasis on building relationships, better work-family integration, sustained progress)

48% Increased understanding of self (personal insight re motivation, more accurate self awareness, valuing importance of emotional competence, need to get proactive re career objectives, clarity re perception of others, understanding one's "fit" or lack of same with company)

45% More effective leader (confidence, motivational ability, results, increased optimism re future)

29% Credibility of coach (perception in company, trust level with coachee)

31% Company satisfaction (shift in others' perception of coachee, retention of valuable asset)

(Respondents had more than one choice)

Table 10

A TYPOLOGY FOR ASSESSING EXECUTIVE COACHING ENGAGEMENTS			
Key Criteria	**3 GENERAL TYPES OF REFERRALS**		
	Primary	**Secondary**	**Tertiary**
EXECUTIVE'S MOTIVATION (for change/new learning)	High	Moderate-low	Low
PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS	Absent	Moderate	High
NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF EXECUTIVE	Absent-Low	Moderate-High	High
CLIMATE OF COACHING REFERRAL	Positive (Self initiated or executive perk)	Reticent-Negative (initiated by boss and/or HR)	Usually Negative (initiated by boss and/or HR; last ditch effort)
EXECUTIVE'S TRUST IN VALUE OF COACHING	High	Variable-Low	Low
LIKELIHOOD OF EXECUTIVE FORMING SOLID WORKING ALLIANCE WITH COACH	High	Variable	Variable-low
IMPACT OF 360° FEEDBACK DATA	Positive	Variable (can be low if coach is first to deliver tough feedback)	Too Little, Too Late
LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME	HIGH	Variable	Low

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