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Coaching and coaching psychology in the workplace: Analytical perspectives and development in theory and practice

Coaching in psihološki trening na delovnem mestu: analiza razvoja v teoriji in praksi

Abstract

A critical perspective on the development and definition of coaching and coaching psychology in theory and practice is essential for the development of this fairly recent form of psychology-based intervention in the workplace. This article considers professional issues and highlights psychological principles and approaches to coaching that may arise in practice. Both theoretical and practical elements require equal critical consideration by firstly evaluating the nature and functions of coaching and coaching psychology in organisations; secondly, discussing the primary functions of coaching in comparison to psychotherapy, counselling and mentoring; and thirdly, by reflecting on the key psychological elements of coaching. Finally, it is imperative to acknowledge the complexity involved in implementing a coaching programme as a resource for managing talent within an organisation and the implications for leadership development and executive coaching in fast changing organisational practices in the western world.

Key words: workplace coaching, coaching psychology, talent, management, leadership, executive coaching

Povzetek

V članku je podan kritični pregled razvoja, teorije in prakse coachinga in psihološkega treninga, ki je nujen za integracijo in evalvacijo tega precej novega področja psiholoških intervencij in svetovanja na delovnem mestu. Prikazani so narava, funkcionalnost, primarna funkcija ter ključni sestavni deli

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coachinga in psihološkega treninga, še posebej v razmerju do mentorstva in psihoterapije. Teoretični, znanstveni in praktični elementi coachinga zahtevajo enako mero pozornosti, doseženo s kritičnim ovrednotenjem narave in namena coachinga v organizacijah ter njegove povezanosti z obstoječimi načeli in znanji v psihologiji. Poudarjena je kompleksnost povezana z implementacijo programa coachinga v organizacijah, še posebej ko se le-ta uporablja kot referenčna točka in vir za upravljanje z nadarjenostjo ter za razvoj vodstvenih delavcev in managerjev v zahodnem svetu.

Ključne besede: coaching, psihološki trening, delovno mesto, upravljanje, nadarjenost, vodenje

Development of Coaching

We shall begin this paper by placing coaching in the context of other staff development approaches, and explaining why it has come to prominence. We shall also consider what coaching is from the perspective of coachee or the individuals being coached. Following this we then consider the same issue from the perspective of the organisation, highlighting what coaching can bring to an organisation but also the associated disadvantages.

Historically organisational planning in Western Europe was conducted from the top down. Senior management made decisions, and middle management ensured that the decisions were carried out. By the 1970's and 1980's, the need for flexibility was seen as increasingly essential, and the hierarchical control of employees which marked the 1960s began to change, at least in management text books, to trust and collaboration with employees. Thorough training at all levels of the organisation was needed in order to help every worker think and behave like a leader and the emphasis was on business performance. Over time, this training came to be supplemented by seminars on teamwork and empowerment, which made the focus much more personal, although training was nonetheless still focused on immediate corporate issues (Ely et al., 2010).

The use of consultants heralded the movement towards the use of coaching in training. These outside consultants worked with key corporate figures and systems interventions, but their approaches to change had one common flaw, namely that they came and went. They did not last. This led to the realisation that if organisations were going to make lasting changes, the individuals working in them must change first. In the late 1980's, corporate coaching came on the scene. The idea was for coaches to work over a period of time with both

individuals and the systems that they worked within. The role of the coaches was to bring about a permanent change in the more general working practices of the individual concerned, so that change occurred in a lasting way. Some of the new emphases that coaches contributed were visionary leadership training, executive coaching, renewal coaching, and transition management (Doh, 2003; Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

The field of leadership, particularly entrepreneurial leadership, has influenced and shaped the new profession of coaching as much as anything else. The trend towards coaching was accelerated by the need for human caring and daring during the corporate convulsions of downsizing, mergers, acquisitions, and outplacement that occurred during the 1980's. Out of this, the professional field of coaching was born – a field promoting continuous resilience and performance in persons and organizations. A major need was to help individuals and corporate entities formulate scenarios for the future, given the complexities and speed of change in the modern world. As Hudson (1999) notes, in the early days coaches were often asked about personal development, succession planning, career shifting, work performance, high-performance teams, outplacement, burn-out, scenario building, leadership training, work-home balance, and individual and organizational renewal.

A pragmatic working definition of coaching that has been used is that coaching is a process of support offered to an individual, which is performance focused and goal centred and results in action (Law, Ireland & Hussain, 2007). Coaching psychology on the other hand is defined as the scientific study of behaviour, cognition and emotion within coaching practice (Grant, 2007; Passmore, 2010) with the purpose of enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches (Palmer & Whybrow, 2019). Although this paper does not explore this distinction between coaching and coaching psychology, it is essential to note the discussions around this issue (Passmore & Lai, 2019). Being a coach or a coaching psychologist is clearly distinguished from being a mentor – both processes are seen as being learner-centred and driven, but a mentor is merely a critical friend who oversees the development of another (Hay, 1995). These pragmatic definitions are not merely pedantry, as they instead enable both coaching and mentoring to interact with relevant psychological theory, particularly in respect to learning and development. Drawing directly on the writing of Hudson (1999), we may outline the functions of a coach and coaching psychologist, and the purposes of coaching for the individual being coached. A coach works with individuals and organisations as clients. The coach works from what is possible, using imagination,

vision and motivation as resources. A coach works with persons, groups and organisations; finds bridges to the future; connects what is to what *might be*; links inner purpose to outer work; inspires others to be more effective as leaders, teams, and networkers; models the way ahead and trains coaches towards that model. A coach guides clients to high performance and optimal quality of life, questions the status quo and seeks creative, transformative results. A coach advocates, criticises, and extends corporate culture and wisdom and fosters emerging scenarios with a long view and a short action plan. A coach endorses and sponsors others without having power of control over them. A coach facilitates professional development and organisational systems development. A coach supports clients and organisations through necessary transitions, encourages networking through alliances and linkages with common goals and is a catalyst for renewal and resilience. A coach motivates, seeks deeper results, explores new directions, innovates and invests in the future. The process of facilitating change in a person or organisation includes clarifying values, beliefs and purpose in the personal lives and in the organisations of the clients (Freedman, 2013). A coach also helps identify key social roles and promotes successful performance in all of these within a balanced daily schedule. Another coaching task is to locate any emergent developmental challenges that might exist, and to invent vital learning agendas for clients, when these seem appropriate (Lane, Khan & Chapman, 2019; Palmer & Whybrow, 2019).

What though is coaching from the perspective of an organisation? Coaching can be seen as a tailored solution, involving conversations that stretch those being coached by allowing them to explore crucial moments in potential or actual organisational change. This might include exploring whether the organisation can be moved at a pace and in a direction which provides a competitive advantage, strengthens major culture-change initiatives, and provides stronger alignment between an individual's objectives and the overall strategic objectives of the organisation. A coach may seek to explore issues that lead to greater self-awareness of the impact an individual is having, both on the success of the business and on the people with whom they work. It is also possible that opportunities will arise for the coach to provide feedback to the organisation, in a confidential and anonymous form, concerning issues that need to be dealt with. For example, the coach may have identified a situation in which it is possible to deploy the skills of an individual to greater effect within the organisation; may have identified a specific need for succession planning and talent development; or might be able to help a team as a whole to operate more smoothly by increasing their awareness of organisational strategy and their position within that. On the other hand, potential disadvantages for organisations encouraging

business coaching include a significant time commitment, and cost (Shaw & Linnecar, 2007). Coaching is a worthwhile practice, from the standpoint of the organisation, only if it produces results that can be clearly identified via an improvement in the individual's working practice. Coaching can be financially costly because it involves one-on-one meetings, and employing coaches with top-level business experience means paying those coaches at a commensurate rate. There is also a longer-term potential cost of coaching to the organisation in question. One side effect of coaching is that those being coached often become more assertive and confident in their own judgements. If higher level managers do not react positively to this (by, for example, paying greater heed to the employee's views) then the individual may become demotivated and even move to a different organisation. Similarly, individuals receiving coaching will often question their life priorities, and in some cases realise that these are not consistent with their current employment status, opportunities and future prospects, or even their chosen vocation; and this again raises the possibility of greater employee turnover. Despite these possible negative outcomes, it remains in the organisation's best interests to learn more about what motivates its employees, albeit in the safe, controlled environment of the coaching session. Providing a safe environment for exploring issues is a key aspect of the coaching process. The coach must maintain confidentiality throughout the process, by not disclosing information from the session to any other person. Moreover, the coach must provide opportunities for the expression of the range of emotions that may emerge when personal issues are confronted and when organisational challenges are presented. Confidentiality and the provision of a safe, open environment are perhaps the most important defining characteristics of coaching in professional practice (Brennan & Wildflower, 2010).

Organisations may be seen as having core values and purposes (Stojnov, 2010). Core values typically include a small number of basic principles or beliefs that have stood the test of time and best represent what the organisation stands for. These basic beliefs may be derived from the organisation's historical roots and may be expected to guide the organisation over time and into the future. Core values inform the members of the organisation about what is important. These values define the nature of these firms or businesses and cannot be separated from them. Although most organisations are very well aware of their values, these are not usually determined or designed: rather, they are usually discovered and described through a process of inquiry. The process of coaching must itself be consistent with these values. For example, an organisation's values may inform the approach that it takes to the coaching process itself and will also inform the strategies and goals that the coaching sessions with individual

employees aim to produce. As such, it is important that the coach and those being coached explicitly understand the organisation's values, and how these should inform the coaching sessions.

Coaching, Counselling and Mentoring

Coaching has, in one sense, been a long standing activity in organisations, whilst in another sense, it has been a much more recent phenomenon. Defining the distinctions between counselling, mentoring and coaching has been a discussion point over the past twenty years, perhaps due to overlaps in practice and theory between all of them (Law et al., 2007b; Passmore & Lai, 2019). Exploring the distinctions between coaching, counselling and mentoring is not simply an academic exercise, but is essential to understanding the fundamental processes involved in each practice (Lane & Corrie, 2009).

There are a range of possible counselling activities in organisations, ranging from those concerned with personnel selection in career guidance to those involved in stress counselling at work. Two fundamental activities are usually involved in counselling at work, namely "advice giving" and "supporting and helping". No matter what its object, counselling involves underlying skills such as active listening and motivational interviewing which includes acknowledging the feelings that the person is trying to communicate, concentrating on what it is that they wish to raise, avoiding criticism and instead accepting the person for what they are (Neenan & Dryden, 2002). Boundaries between coaching and counselling are often blurred and complicated. Depending on the practitioner's skills and competencies, it is not unusual for coaching and counselling to be integrated in their practice (Bachkirova & Baker, 2019). Both coaching and counselling sometimes lead practitioners to explore the past experiences of the client. Depending on the theoretical approach favoured by the counsellor, exploration may sometimes go back as far as to the early childhood of the client. There are a number of different schools of counselling, from the psychoanalytic to the humanistic, constructivist, systemic to more behavioural/cognitive therapies. These range from exploring early childhood experiences in the former, whereas the latter therapies involve cognitive re-appraisal or behavioural approaches. In the organisational environment, the most common form of counselling is stress and well-being counselling. The assumption here is that, as the pace of economic, technological and social change increases, employees show increased signs of job-related stress and burnout. This results in

sickness, absence, and high levels of employee turnover. To address this, stress counselling involves in-house counsellors employed in either the occupational health or the human resources department who make themselves available to all employees on a confidential basis, providing support and advice on a range of problems, including personal issues, marital problems, and also of course career development. There is evidence that stress counselling programmes are able to reduce sickness and absence, and improve the mental well-being of employees (Cooper & Sadri, 1991).

Hudson (1999) notes that the idea of mentoring is an old one. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the King of Ithaca, Odysseus, left his young son, Telemachus, in the care of Mentor, a wise and proven teacher who had agreed to raise the boy until Odysseus's return, which turned out to be twenty-one years later. Mentor modelled the manhood skills that Telemachus needed, and the young prince grew as a whole person, a leader, and a man of integrity. When Odysseus returned home, he immediately recognised the good and faithful work of Mentor. Since the days of Ancient Greece, "mentor" has been used to describe someone who has the inner competence to pass on knowledge and skills through example, inner authority, and dialogue. Mentoring refers to relationships between junior and senior, in terms of experience and age, primarily to support the personal development and career advancement of the junior person (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). These relationships involve a wide range of developmental functions – including counselling, coaching, role modelling, sponsorship, exposure, protection, confirmation and friendship – and they are characterised by considerable emotional intensity and involvement. Mentoring relationships enable both individuals to build new skills and competencies; prepare for advancement and other growth opportunities; adapt to changing organisational circumstances and build self-esteem. There are different learning opportunities in mentoring, depending upon the age and career stage of each individual. For example, new, young employees are likely to learn the basic elements of the job and their occupational identity. More experienced protégés at a later stage of their career are likely to broaden their skills and competencies, and learn how to balance the increasing demands of more responsibility in both work and personal domains. Mentors in later career stages learn how to pass on accumulated wisdom and to nurture talent, while creating a personal legacy (Eby, Rhodes & Allen, 2007).

In coaching, the client is guided to see and explore options for becoming a more effective human being, to improve their performance, well-being and their quality of life (Boyatzis et al., 2013). A coach or a coaching psychologist who works with the emerging human and organisational forces has to have the skills and competencies to tap new energy and purpose, to shape new visions

and plans, and generate desired results (Grajfoner & Shams, 2015). Both coach and coaching psychologist are trained, either by experience or by special qualification, to competence, commitment and confidence. Through the course of coaching, the aim is to develop this competence, commitment and confidence in the client. The classic definition most coaches use is that coaching involves unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance, such that the coach helps them to learn rather than teaches them (Palmer & Whybrow, 2019). In this, coaches rarely explore the client's past, but are concerned very much with the present and more importantly with the future (Bachkirova, 2011).

Counselling, psychotherapy, mentoring and coaching aim to increase the general well-being of the individual client through a process of guidance and learning. While counsellors and psychotherapist most frequently work with clinically-oriented problems, coaching has been taken up by a much larger proportion of clients in a business context (Lai & Palmer, 2019). This does not mean that people who would otherwise tend to seek help in a medical setting might not benefit from taking part in coaching, nor that the distinction between clinically and non-clinically-oriented groups of people is easily drawn. There is though an issue involving the boundaries of competence for the coach who may not be clinically trained. The coach needs to be able to recognise clinical issues and must pass a client with a clinical condition on to a psychiatrist, psychotherapist or to a counselling, clinical or coaching psychologist if the condition warrants specialised handling. Counselling, psychotherapy and coaching call more readily on psychological theories than does mentoring. Both counselling and coaching psychologists draw on psychodynamic, behavioural, person-centred, cognitive, existential, and social psychology, as well as perhaps on other approaches based on the science of psychology, such as positive psychology. Mentoring, counselling, psychotherapy and coaching all draw on motivation, the psychology of learning and instruction. Mentoring does so largely to the exclusion of other theoretical possibilities, although development of the client is a strong concern for the mentor. If the client of a counsellor or of a coach does not learn from the process involved in their sessions there is little purpose in the encounter. Goals and aims for the process are, however, much more likely to be made very explicit in coaching processes rather than in counselling. Providing support for the client remains essential in all three of these areas of activity.

Organisational and Individual Coaching

Rapid changes, modernisation, saving money and resources all lead organisations to outsource and seek partners in areas where organisations are not competitive. This complexity of the work environment and increased expectations of stakeholders force organisations and employees into continuous learning (Law et al., 2007). These issues provide a rich canvass for organisations and a host of opportunities for coaching. The task must be to look first at what a competent organisation might look like and how learning, through coaching, can help the organisation to maintain its competence whilst facing so many sources of change. Ohmae (1982) stressed the importance of organisations focusing their resources on developing functional competencies in order to achieve advantage over competitors. Analysing organisational competencies and the extent to which organisational learning takes place provides an agenda for individual learning, and therefore for coaching. Linking personal development with performance improvement underpinned by the same skills set enables the development of a coherent, integrated framework for coaching interventions. It keeps the focus for individual development at the core of the business agenda, and ensures that coaching focuses on leadership development as well as on organisational improvement. Embedding coaching within the organisation also maximises its sustainability.

A popular coaching model for advancing individual learning is Whitmore's (2009) GROW model (Palmer & Whybrow, 2019). GROW is an acronym made up of the following elements: G – Goals, R – Reality, O – Options and W – Will, or as some coaches like to say, Wrap-up. The clients or coachees should set a long-term goal, short-term-goal, a goal for the session, a goal for each issue raised, and so on. For example, a coach may ask, 'What would you like to get out of this coaching session?' The goal should be optimal and challenging. It might pick up on one or more of the issues identified in the review of organisational learning such as why the organisation frequently repeats the error that is made with a particular process with the question 'How can I play a part in ensuring that we perform better next time?', or it might be a question of exploring ways of developing coachee's confidence in relating to their immediate line-manager. Coaches also need to facilitate in those they are coaching the ability to take ownership of the goal. The goal needs to be realistic and objective, so that they do not suffer from early failure as a result of unrealistic expectations. Coaches need to obtain feedback from coachee about their performance. For example, the coach might ask, 'Of the suggestions we discussed last week, what worked

and what did not work?' (Palmer & Szymanska, 2019)

The coaching task involves guiding the coachee to make a list of the specific tasks necessary to attain the goal in question, and to write an action plan. Generating a list of optional activities that lead towards attainment of the goal enables them to maximise their choices. The coach might ask questions such as, 'What options might help you move towards your goal?', and a useful question at the end of the session might be, 'Can you suggest one more option?' After a list of options has been compiled, they can then work together to sort through the list according to priority and feasibility. The GROW model looks to the future. At the end of the session, coaches may ask, 'What will you do now?' Follow-up questions might include, 'When by?', 'How will this action help you to meet your goal?', 'What might get in the way of your attaining that goal?', and 'Who might help you if there are difficulties in attaining your goal?' The GROW model and in particular goal setting can operate within a range of theoretical approaches offered by coaching psychology (Whitmore, 2009).

As with any major project, a coaching programme for an entire organisation should be endorsed and supported by the management structures or the board. The argument put to the board should include a strategic case which sets out the strategy of the coaching programme and how it helps deliver the organisational objectives. There should also be a cost-benefits analysis, showing how the programme contributes to the commercial operations of the organisation and a project management case, demonstrating that the programme is achievable, which includes a scoping exercise and feasibility studies. As part of this project management case, targets may be set within the proposed programme to help progress in terms of producing outputs, delivering outcomes and meeting the organisational objectives. Examples of the kind of outputs and outcomes specified by these cases might include the number of people assisted, the value of extra output or improvement in efficiency, development of skills, value of extra human capital, qualifications, and improved productivity. More generally, Law et al (2007) advise that these cases should also include some process of quality assurance and specify milestones, key objectives, and resources. They also suggest that all of the targets should follow the conventional SMARTER model, in that they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/realistic, Time-bound, Evaluative and Reviewed.

Opportunities may also arise for a coach to work with an individual coachee outside of the immediate organisational context. Perhaps someone with a wish to develop feels that they would benefit from being coached but there is no provision for this within the workplace. It is important here, as it is within the organisational context, to ensure that involvement is conducted throughout

in a professional manner. It is important to be clear what the practitioner's qualifications are. There are a large number of associations of which coaches may become members. These will have different rules and regulations, and it is a good idea for a prospective coachee to check these out as well as perhaps the coach's standing within them. Coaches themselves need to be clear what their qualifications to practice are, and state them when commencing involvement with a client (Pelz-Linder, 2014).

For example, in the United Kingdom, practising psychologists have to be registered with the Health Professions Council if they wish to use the title "Practising Psychologist" or 'Registered Psychologist', or one of the seven protected titles for psychological work such as 'Registered Occupational Psychologist'. These are protected titles under law. In contrast there is no protected title for Coaching Psychologist anywhere in the EU. So, for psychologists working as coaches it is important that they keep in touch with their national Psychological Association or Society and their debates on rules and ethics, as these provide the best means of maintaining professional standards (Grajfoner & Shams, 2016). The rapid growth of interest in coaching and coaching psychology suggests that statutory issues in many countries will likely develop over the coming years. In the meantime, some of the major considerations relevant to coaches and coaching psychologists in professional practice in any country include: 1. the client's confidentiality, 2. avoidance of dual relationships between coach and client, 3. clear agreement between the coach and the client, and a written contract, 4. knowing the limits of competence, especially when issues that may come up are concerned with mental health, and 5. practice or peer supervision. It is particularly important that coaches make a special effort in this respect because coaching as a psychology-based practice is so new and boundaries are not always very clear.

Practical Application of Coaching: Talent Management, Leadership and Executive Coaching

The management of talent within organisations is a good example where coaching can contribute to employees' quality of life, performance, well-being, stress management, and through that to organisational development. The involvement of coaching in succession management is at least desirable

if an organisation wishes to maintain a flexible, innovative and creative workforce; it is necessary if the organisation is to ensure that it has people in place who can meet the challenges of a rapidly changing, globalized market place (Clayton, 2005). In various survey responses, organisations have identified attracting, leveraging and retaining talent as key challenges facing their businesses. There has additionally been an intensifying of demand for high-calibre leaders, a growing propensity for these suitably-qualified leaders to switch from one company to another, and (rather paradoxically) an increased importance attached to specialised knowledge. Talent is now a critical driver of organisational performance and a company's ability to attract, develop and retain talent will be a major competitive advantage, now and into the future. A number of best practices have been proposed as effective ways for attracting and managing talent, including job design, pay and benefits, growth opportunities, and work-life balance programmes. There is no question that meeting and exceeding performance requirements in today's hypercompetitive environment are becoming increasingly difficult as organisations vie for the same pool of talented people, especially with readily accessible information flows across organisations. Further challenges are encountered as the precise requirements for highly specialised jobs and the diverse needs of talented employees call for customisation and an increased emphasis on person-organisation fit. Perhaps even more importantly, the shift in age distribution of the working population has significant implications for the management of talent. With millions of "baby boomers" preparing to retire across the industrial and commercial world, the competition for the pool of employees that remain may be unprecedented (Luthens, Youseff & Avolio, 2007).

All organisations seek to appoint talented people at the top of their organisations. Newlyappointed Chief Executive Officers and senior executives come under enormous pressure to perform. CEO's and executives across cultures are also subject to increasing scrutiny from shareholders and boards, who are demanding better results faster (Peterson, 2007). Despite this, new senior executives very often lack proper support and guidance (Skeffington & Zeus, 2003): sometimes an outgoing CEO will provide informal "transition coaching", but often there is a staggering loss of corporate intelligence as one person leaves and another takes up the reins. Furthermore, recruitment of a new CEO means that the corporation frequently has to rebuild important relationships from scratch. Research indicates that derailment of a new CEO is generally a function of three major factors, namely failure to build partnerships and teamwork with the executive team and subordinates; confusion about roles and expectations; and a lack of political savvy or insight. Although CEOs are frequently hired to

initiate major changes in an organization, their lack of in-depth knowledge of the business and the prevailing culture means that they often come up against resistance or "forces of regression" that they are ill-equipped to manage. Their leadership competences are often not sufficiently developed to cope with the multitude of demands placed upon them (Peltier, 2010).

It is unsurprising that research indicates that between 30 – 40% of newly hired executives resign, are fired, or are at risk of derailment in the first year or so of their appointment (Hogan, Hogan & Kaiser, 2010). In addition to the hurdles that any new appointee faces, it is arguable that these are exacerbated at senior level by a growing trend to appoint senior executives on the basis of their achievements in other fields, rather than on the basis of extensive knowledge of the particular field of interest of the organisation in question.

Coaching for leadership development is undertaken with selected executives, senior managers and teams, or as part of a company-wide coaching initiative (Ellam Dyson, Grajfoner, Whybrow & Palmer, 2019). Coaches, both internal and external, are also contracted to work with specific business units or with individual referrals. Some areas of leadership coaching include leaders in positions of transition, new hires, and individuals being groomed for promotion; attempts to increase management competencies that will complement technological expertise; attempts to assist in developing and communicating a strategic vision, planning, and culture change; ambassadorship; overcoming isolation; and helping the individual to deal with interpersonal skills such as communication and dealing effectively with colleagues and with power.

Coaching leaders for change involves changing the way they think, improving their ability to deal with ambiguity, and enhancing their creativity. This increases the individual's capacity to step back and reflect on assumptions about such things as culture, values, organisational objectives and vision that were previously taken for granted (Dodds & Grajfoner, 2018). In this process it is important to move away from the subjective point of view, which includes the unquestioned parts of self-image, as well as behavioural patterns that the individual may accept as immutable and not reflected upon. Through coaching, leaders are encouraged to assume a more objective viewpoint from which assumptions can be questioned or changed. Changing assumptions can open up opportunities for using behavioural change techniques to adopt more effective behaviour.

Women executives face not only those issues common to all leaders but also additional challenges arising from internalized beliefs and misconceptions about women in leadership. For example, stereotypically, men who demand their rights are often considered assertive, whereas women are expected to ask

or suggest. Women in top positions may in time internalise male standards and values, but this usually comes at a cost to their self-esteem and a sense of being true to themselves (Haslam, Reicher & Platow, 2011). Research suggests that competencies for successful women executives include being decisive, tough, demanding and ready to take career risks. At the same time, however, most women are socialised to be accommodating, nurturing and collaborative. Because of the increasing number of women in the workforce and in executive positions, there is a greater demand for women to be coached. Some of the most common coaching issues that surface include life balance and the expectations of peers and family; political manoeuvring and relationship building with key stakeholders; and being assertive, delegating, and managing dissent and conflict (Bennis, 2007).

Shaw & Linnecar (2007) note that an organisation that wants to make a success of coaching will be clear about what its own broader objectives and values are. For instance it will be clear about what it wants its senior and middle managers to be focusing on and delivering; have an accurate assessment of the interrelationship between organisational competencies in the organisation and the desired outcomes of coaching; be clear what the development needs of individuals are in both the short- and the long-term; be able to differentiate between the needs of different groups in terms of their development; and be able to articulate a clear prospectus of the coaching needs within the organisation. In implementing a coaching programme, the organisation should begin by assessing the different priorities that may apply to different groups in the organisation in terms of the return on their investment in coaching. For example, it may choose to prioritise receipt of coaching by the top team, those promoted to a new grade, individuals identified in the processes of talent management, or individuals who have specific identified behaviour which is holding them back. As this makes clear, it is important that the objectives of the coaching programme are in response to the specific business needs of the organisation in question, rather than seeking to develop a coaching culture in which every employee is given a coach.

Conclusions and Future Recommendations

A critical perspective on the development of coaching practice in the workplace on both an organisational and individual level is essential for establishing the role of coaching in organisational development, changes of management, leadership development and well-being of employees. A more detailed consideration of the nature of coaching in relation to mentoring and counselling is essential to establish the place of coaching in practice and research. Coaching has clearly played a substantial and effective part in helping organisations to develop the core competencies through which they can gain strategic advantage, both through performance and well-being of employees. For coaching to work on both organisational and at an individual level, fundamental models frequently used in practice, like GROW, must be further explored and tested. Talent management and leadership development are areas where coaching practice has thrived, however it requires more research to establish the body of evidence needed to evaluate and support activities in practice.

Organisations are facing new challenges, including a fast changing work environment, cross-generational and cross-cultural teams, global developments, ageing workforce, gender, diversity and equality at workplace. Given the impact that organisational leaders have on both the development of the organization and on the performance and well-being of their teams, these new organisational demands require leaders who can develop, respond and adapt in order to lead efficiently. Research is now needed into leadership and executive coaching as executives in particular benefit from coaching.

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