INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICE IN COACHING PREPARED FOR THE ICBE COACHING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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1. INTRODUCTION
This short review of international literature on good practice in coaching will cover the following: Background and development of coaching, who is coaching globally, key areas of coaching, coaching methodologies, Executive Coaching, team coaching and leadership development, best practice re internal and external coaches, in house and external coaching, coaching methodologies, ROI and finally, best practice in terms of developing a coaching culture. The review will draw out key elements within international models of good practice. It is envisaged that emerging themes will be linked with the findings from the survey of member companies conducted by ICBE and, over time, will form the basis of the development of an Irish Model of Good Practice for Coaching.

2. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF COACHING
In the 1850’s the word ‘coach’ was used to describe someone who helped students to prepare for examinations in English Universities e.g. a tutor. Whitworth et al. (1998) describes how, over the years, the notion of coaching has evolved from assisting and helping individuals into a profession where the underlying philosophy is based on an active, collaborative partnership approach. Coaching as an aspect of business management was first introduced into management literature in the 1950’s as a management skill. During the 1960’s, 70’s, 80’s and 90’s the practice grew, particularly in terms of leadership development. To-day, coaching is recognised as an effective organisational development tool which has solid foundations in psychology, philosophy and education and derives many of its principles and practices from the field of sports psychology. (Zeus and Skeffington (2002). Whitmore (2002) has described coaching as ‘unlocking a persons potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them’ (pg 8). Hudson (1999) summarises what coaches do by saying ‘good coaches know how to listen, find core values, empathise, reflect, probe, ask questions, relate issues, challenge, foster alternative scenarios, find network resources, foster alliances, sustain ongoing evaluation and conduct strategic reviews’ (p 17). Everard and Selman (1989) describe coaching as action orientated, results orientated and person orientated. Goldsmith et al. (2000) describe coaching as establishing a set of behaviours that help the client develop a new way of seeing, feeling about and behaving in a problematic situation. In more recent times, Clutterbuck and Meggison (2005) describe coaching as having the potential to set the tone for the way relationships are managed throughout organisations where hierarchy is not given great credence. This allows managers to manage by coaching and it takes place up, down and across all levels within an organisational structure.

Clutterbuck, D., Meggison, D, (2005) Making Coaching Work, Creating a Coaching Culture, CIPD
organisation. An even more recent development as described by Dickenson (2005)\(^8\) is Transformational Coaching which is aimed at getting people and organisations to see themselves differently, rather than training a person to perform in a different manner. It is about thinking differently and not just acting differently, it also impacts on the whole organisation.

In summary, coaching has evolved from its initial ‘tutoring’ role to one which can deliver both personal and organisational change. It continues to evolve as a methodology and has its roots in a range of professions including, psychology, philosophy and education. It can impact at the level of the individual and the organisation.

3. WHO IS COACHING?

The following sections will look at the results of two global surveys of coaches and a very recent UK study of companies who use coaching as a development tool. The International Coaching Federation, through Price Waterhouse conducted an extensive global survey of practicing coaches in 2007\(^9\). They estimate that over 30,000 coaches operate throughout the world. The highest percentage of respondents to their survey are based in the US, 50.6%, 10.00% in the UK, 9.5% in Canada, 6.5% in Australia, 4.2% in France, 2.0% in Sweden and 17% in the rest of the world including Ireland. Acknowledging that coaching is a relatively new profession, they were not surprised to find that despite the mature age profile of respondents, (60.1% between 46 and 65); the vast majority have been coaching for less than 10 years (86.4%). The greatest levels of growth within the coaching industry are found within the South American (21.9%) and African regions (21.5%). Coaches also appear to be well educated with over half of the respondents (53.0%) stating they had obtained an advanced degree such as Master’s or Ph.D. 88%.2% indicated they held at least a Bachelor’s Degree. The report also pointed that as nine out of ten of the respondents (86.4%) have been coaching for less than ten years, ‘the future success of the coaching industry will be highly correlated with ongoing coach specific training and development.’ (pg 6)

4. AREAS OF COACHING.

The third Sherpa Survey (2008)\(^10\) is the latest global surveys of coaches and clients conducted under the aegis of the Tandy Centre executive leadership and a university. The first was conducted by them in 2005. The current report has identified a number of emerging trends within the world of coaching. They found a significant increase in coaching as a leadership development tool. Three years ago, 43% of respondents indicated they use coaching as a development tool for leaders. This has risen to 50% of current respondents. The survey also found that over the 3 year timeframe, coaching to address a specific problem or challenge dropped from a previous high of 37% down to 32%. 19% of respondents indicated they offered executive coaching to people in transition; promotions, transfers and new hires.

The Acuity (2008)\(^11\) study of 70 UK based organisations employing over 2,500 employees found the majority of coaching assignments arranged by HR departments are aimed at supporting leadership development programmes and facilitating the development of a coaching style of leadership. Other applications of coaching include: new hire coaching; talent and maternity cover. The report went on to say the

\(^8\) Dickson, L. F. (2005) Transformational Coaching, Bland, Garvey, Eads, Medlock and Deppe
more sophisticated users of coaching focus on performance coaching. While the term can be confusing, it mostly refers to improving the performance of high performers. The report concludes that some organisations have moved coaching from an individual service for executives to a valuable tool for developing organisations. This development will be discussed further in this review.

The ICF global study found the three most popular areas of coaching cited by respondents focused solely on business coaching, namely: Leadership (58.1%); Executive (57.8%); and Business/Organisations (53.6%).

The evidence noted above indicates a significant rise in coaches offering executive and/or leadership coaching. This impacts on individuals, teams and organisations and if current trends continue, will be the focus of the future development of coaching.

5. COACHING METHODOLOGIES

The Sherpa study found that in person communication has continued to gain in favour despite widespread availability of technology which allows people to talk and teach without any personal contact. It accounts for 49% of executive coaching, up from 40% two years ago. 72% of executive coaches believe in-person delivery is most effective, up 5% since 2006 and 92% of HR professionals and coaching clients believe in-person delivery is the most effective. Overall, about 40% of executive coaching takes place over the phone and this is often within companies who have less than 10 employees. The use of webcam and email has not been seen to be notably effective to date. The study also cited the development of coaching sessions based on the following: regular and structured meetings, fixed length engagements and adoption of industry standards for training and certification. There also has been a significant increase in the use of psychometric assessment tools including 360 feedback methods of feedback. (Rock (2005) 12)

A central theme emerging within the literature appears to be that coaching is constantly evolving and this evolution is guided by the efforts to untap the huge potential within individuals and organisations to grow and develop. New and innovative coaching methodologies continue to evolve. Whitaker (2008) 13 found coaching can be more than one to one dialogue. She maintains that different insights can be gained from using creative methods of working together, in addition to talking e.g. thinking in pictures is faster than words. She concludes that using creativity (using both the left and right sides of the brain) in problem solving ‘has helped to recognise how we can all expand our ideas and learning through whole brain thinking and extend the variety of ways we work together.’ (pg 3). Cockburn (2008) 14 reported on a study which explored how to make coaching ideas and techniques accessible to the management teams of two manufacturing plants in North East England. He found managers were successful in using drama techniques to build their confidence in utilising coaching skills on a day to day basis for the purpose of embedding a coaching driven style of leadership.

Overall, coaching methodologies continue to evolve; currently the most popular is in person delivery. Telephone coaching also appears to be used extensively, particularly in smaller companies. Templates for structured meetings also are beginning to be developed. New methodologies are also emerging which explore creativity within the context of coaching relationships.

12 Rock (2005)
13 Whitaker V (2008) Creative Choices in Coaching, EMCC
14 Cockburn M (2008) Making Coaching Accessible through Drama Based Learning, EMCC
6. EXECUTIVE COACHING, TEAM COACHING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Sherpa study also found that half the organisations who use coaching allow managers at every level to participate, while an equal number limit coaching to senior managers and executives. Executive Coaching is defined as ‘regular meetings between a business leader and a trained facilitator, designed to produce positive changes in business behaviour in a limited time frame’ (Sherpa Coaching (2008) (pg 4). As stated earlier, in the early days of coaching most efforts were directed towards problem solving and ‘career saves’. An executive who wasn’t living up to expectations was the most likely to receive coaching. This created a certain stigma in certain circles about coaching e.g. the person needed to be ‘fixed’. There is now a meaningful movement towards providing executive and leadership coaching as a pro-active strategy. A much smaller proportion of coaching is designed to address specific problems. Unlike the earlier days of coaching, having an executive coach is not a sure sign of trouble any more. In fact, it’s becoming a status symbol which marks the grooming of an up and coming leader for greater possibilities.

The literature shows strong correlations between leadership development and executive coaching. Hernez- Broome (2004)\textsuperscript{15} studied two groups of managers, one group received one to one coaching and the other did not. The results suggested that even a minimal coaching programme offers meaningful benefits in reinforcing the developmental experience and produces on the job behavioural change. They identified three significant outcomes; firstly managers who received coaching tended to be more focused in forming their developmental goals and objectives, second they were more successful in achieving their goals and third, their new learning and behaviour was more closely related to their roles as leaders and managers. A study by Du Toit (2007)\textsuperscript{16} of a change management process which introduced coaching as a methodology over a traditional training and consultancy model found the power of coaching could not be underestimated in terms of organisational change and learning. Munro M and Wilson Stephen (2008)\textsuperscript{17} developed a range of coaching interventions for different stages of leadership development. Turner (2004)\textsuperscript{18} found that executives can change their behaviour with their peers, their direct reports and bosses, as a result of good coaching experiences. Outcomes include the development of a culture of understanding, caring, exploration, open dialogue and improved business practices.

In terms of specific skill development, Brockbank and Mc Gill (2006)\textsuperscript{19} found that coaching supports clients to develop reflective learning skills where the focus is not just solution based but on reflective learning over a period of time. Chapman et. al. (2003)\textsuperscript{20} found coaching can equip individuals and teams with the ability to give and receive feedback, an extremely important skill in the workplace to-day. This enables

\textsuperscript{15} Hernez- Broome (2004) Impact of coaching Following a Leadership Development Programme: Coaching is Key to continued Development. International Coachign Federation


\textsuperscript{17} Munro M and Wilson S (2008) Developing Leaders – Coaching for Renewal, The International Journal of Mentoring an Coaching (vol xx


teams and individuals to learn through action. Dunlop (2006)\textsuperscript{21} highlighted the skills developed through coaching which can support a team to communicate effectively, achieve shared purpose, challenge assumptions and implement change.

Overall, the evidence shows that good coaching experiences can result in the development of a range of skills for those who are coached. These include the ability to give and receive feedback, reflective learning skills, learning through action, team building, change management and leadership.

7. BEST PRACTICE AND ROI (Return on Investment)
Coaching is still a relatively new profession when compared to others and one of the key challenges is the development of standards and good practices that are recognised both nationally and internationally. This is echoed by Zeus and Skeffington (2002) who state: ‘Professional standards, coach specialities and coaching niche areas will further evolve and change as coaching continues to establish itself as a recognised stand alone profession.’ (pg 23).

Bush (2004)\textsuperscript{22} studied client’s perceptions of effectiveness in executive coaching. She identified six areas of effectiveness aimed at helping coaches and clients assess and improve the quality of their coaching engagements. They are as follows:
1) the client is motivated and committed to the coaching process
2) they are working with a seasoned coach with whom there is positive rapport
3) the coaching engagement is supported by a structured process and focused on development.
4) the profile of the coach should include the following: background, experience, expertise, roles, personal qualities and including others in the coaching process
5) results are achieved which benefit the client
6) there is a recognition that effective coaching involves sharing responsibility between the three stakeholders: client, coach and organisation.

In terms of the three stakeholders, she elaborated further and identified a number of elements for consideration: the client brings motivation, willingness to be coached, openness to the process and commitment to do the work: the coach provides experience, personal qualities that foster rapport, trust, credibility, tools, processes and resources that will benefit the client: the organisation offers a culture which supports development and learning, sponsoring and paying for structured programmes. She also went on to say coaches should continue to engage in their own professional development, organisations should give clients a role in coach selection and offer opportunities for coaches to learn about the organisation culture within which they operate.

Rock (2005) noted the growth of internal coaching for lower levels of staff. He identified key elements of best practice in executive coaching. They include: linking it to organisational goals and strategies; careful choosing of an appropriate coaching model; managing the entire process for consistency and quality; building a team of quality, screened coaches; preparing staff in advance and not forcing anyone to engage in coaching; providing strong organisational support; ensuring coaches are grounded in the companies culture; allowing each coaching relationship to follow its own path; ensuring there are documented feedback loops and building measurement and assessment into the process.

\textsuperscript{21} Dunlop, H (2006) An Exploratory Investigation into the Perceived Effects of Team Coaching in the Construction Sector, The International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching, Vol IV(2)
7.1 Best practice re Internal and External Coaches

The Sherpa study noted that executive coaches come in two types: employees of an organisation who provide services to colleagues (internal coaches) and independent service providers (external coaches). More than two out of three organisations who hire coaches use a combination of internal and external service providers. One in ten relies exclusively on external coaches.

In a summary of studies of coaching within organisations CIPD (2005) noted that coaching was increasingly offered to all sorts of employees, rather than being restricted to senior executives. They also pointed out that cost is clearly an important factor in opting to train line managers as coaches. They found that large organisations who regularly use external coaches are increasingly using fairly stringent criteria to make their choices when buying coaching services. They listed the most important criteria as follows: the right cultural ‘fit’; personal style; a positive track record; a structured approach; relevant qualifications; adherence to professional standards and evidence of supervision.

Bluckert (2006) described supervision as ‘professional supervision’ as opposed to management supervision. This is a fairly new development within the field of coaching. The points out that a growing number of professional coaches regard it as good practice. He describes it as a time and space to reflect on ones work with either a senior colleague, in a led group or with a number of peers. The key functions of supervision would be educational, support, administrative and managerial. He quotes the Code of Ethics of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council which states: ‘A coach/mentor must maintain a relationship with a suitably qualified supervisor, who will regularly assess the competencies and support their development.’ It is also important to note that international coaching organisations e.g. the ICF and the EMCC have identified core competencies for practicing coaches which are tested periodically.

When selecting a coach, the CIPD recommends in its guide that organisations consider a range of areas such as: appropriate coaching experience; relevant industry experience; references; the background of the coach; supervision; breadth of tools and techniques; understanding of boundaries; relevant qualifications/training; membership of a professional body; professional indemnity insurance; personal characteristics; assessing quality. They also identified criteria aimed at assisting in the selection of internal and external coaches.

They found that internal coaches are preferable under the following conditions: when knowing the company culture, history and politics is critical; when easy availability is desired; when it is necessary to build up a high level of personal trust over a period of time; when it is necessary to not be seen to be ‘selling’ consulting time; when keeping costs under control – and it may be less expensive to utilise an internal coach.

External coaches are preferable under the following conditions: providing sensitive feedback to senior business leaders; when there are political reasons, this can be difficult for an internal coach; when bringing specialised expertise from a wide variety of organisational and industry situations; when individuals are concerned about ‘conflict of interests’ and whether confidentiality will be observed; when providing a

23 CIPD How to Select a coach (2005) CIPD Enterprises Ltd
wider range of ideas and experience and when it is important for an organisation to see external coaches are less likely to judge and are perceived as being more objective

7.2 ROI
In a study by Mc Govern et. al. (2001)\textsuperscript{25} which aimed to address the paucity of empirical research into the effectiveness of executive coaching, they attempted to demonstrate the chain of impact (Philips 1977)\textsuperscript{26} of a coaching programme. They utilised Kirkpatrick’s (1983)\textsuperscript{27} and (1997)\textsuperscript{28} 5 levels of impact to ascertain the impact of a coaching programme on executives and the level of return on investment. They found strong evidence of the effectiveness of executive coaching at each of the five levels. ‘Most exciting of all were the estimates of return on investment….when estimated in the most conservative manner, ROI averaged nearly 5.7 times the initial estimate.’ (pg x). They went on to say the study also yielded a wealth of information about factors that contributed to (or could detract from) the effectiveness of coaching. They include:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Selecting coaches with care e.g. they should be formally trained and use structured coaching processes
  \item They should be well matched to the executives they are coaching
  \item There should be strong organisational support for coaching and in particular the coaches manager must be supportive of the process
  \item Communication issues should be addressed by establishing a process to closely involve the participants manager and HR representative from the outset and throughout the programme
  \item The organisation should work to establish strong alignment between participants and stakeholders regarding the significance, implications and goals of the coaching
  \item They should frequently check in with stakeholders regarding progress and fine tuning of the coaching goals
  \item Organisations should be encouraged to do all possible to provide the participant with enough time to take advantage of the coaching and engage in on the job developmental activities
  \item The organisations commitment to the process should be publicised and recognition should be provided for progress that is made
  \item Coaching should be positioned effectively within the organisation as a positive initiative and a sigh of the organisation’s commitment to leadership development
  \item The impact of coaching should be measured and communicated as they can lower organisational barriers to acceptance of executive coaching as well as enhance its desirability to future participants.
  \item It should be made more widely available among all cohorts of employees
\end{itemize} 

Metrix Global (2001)\textsuperscript{29}, a consulting and leadership coaching company, reviewed the benefits and return on investment of an executive coaching programme for a Fortune

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  \item \textsuperscript{29} Anderson, M. C. (2001) Case Study on the Return on Investment of Executive Coaching, Metrix Global
\end{itemize}
500 Firm. They found that the coaching produced a 529% return on investment and significant intangible benefits to the business. The study also provided powerful new insights into how to maximise the business impact for executive coaching. Key recommendations included:

- Manage the entire coaching process to ensure consistency and quality
- Prepare clients in advance for coaching and don’t force coaching on anyone
- Offer clients the ability to select their coaches
- Provide strong organisational support for coaching
- Ensure coaches are grounded in the company’s business and culture
- Allow each coaching relationship to follow its own path
- Build performance management into the coaching process

A study of the coaching experiences of 158 executives at BMW found that participants improved in 13 of the 18 competencies identified as part of the coaching programme. ROI that could be directly calculated was 120% and those in coaching reported the highest estimated tangible benefit was the reduction in number of issues reported and the second highest was fewer hours spent in meetings.

Fortune Magazine reported on a poll of executives and upper level managers who had six to twelve months coaching with a Masters or Doctoral level coach (fortune 19th Feb 2001). The recipients valued the coaching at six times the cost their company paid for the service and the return on investment was calculated at 120% in cost terms.

There is still some work to be done in terms of measuring ROI for coach specific interventions, particularly in terms of capturing the non-tangible elements of organisation and individual development. The Sherpa study developed a draft template for capturing ROI from coaching. A number of other studies have been conducted which looked at developing specific models of ROI to reflect both the tangible and non tangible elements of coaching. (Pfeiffer 2004)\textsuperscript{30}, Acuity Coaching (2008)\textsuperscript{31} and Schlosser et. al (2006)\textsuperscript{32}. The findings suggest that these models will require further work, particularly in terms of identifying clearly the tangible and non tangible benefits to be measured. However, all studies appear to agree that there is significant return on investment when executive coaching is delivered well.

Overall, the findings suggest there are significant opportunities to gain a return on investment if good practice in coaching is implemented. The evidence also suggests the returns are both tangible and intangible.

8. Coaching Culture

One of the key findings within the literature review is that coaching cannot be effective if it is conducted outside the context of a coaching culture. This is defined by Clutterbuck and Meggison (2005) as one where ‘coaching is the predominant style of managing and working together, and where a commitment to grow the organisation is embedded in a parallel commitment to grow the people in the organisation.’ (pg 19).

They recommend HR departments do not spend money on coaching until they have ensured ground work has been conducted on developing a coaching culture. ‘If not, it

\textsuperscript{30} Pfeiffer, L (2004) Corporate Coaching for Management Development and ROI, Informatica Corporation
\textsuperscript{31} Acuity Coaching (2008) Maximising Performance and Reducing the Cost of Executive Coaching, Acuity Coaching
can be a fast track to failure’ (pg x). Everard and Selman (1989) \(^{33}\) recommend replacing management cultures which focus on controlling behaviour by a leadership culture. This culture, through skilful coaching can create the climate, environment and context that empowers employees and teams to generate results. They describe coaching as ‘that conversation which creates the new leadership culture, not as a technique within the old culture.’ (pg 10). The following is a description of Clutterbuck and Meggison’s recommendations on how to establish a coaching culture:

- Ensuring managers have at least the basic skills of coaching
- Equipping all employees with the skills to be coached effectively
- Providing an advanced coaching skills programme for senior managers
- Providing opportunities to review good coaching practice
- Recognising and rewarding managers who demonstrate good coaching.
- Measuring and providing feedback on the quality, relevance and accessibility of coaching
- Ensuring top management provides strong, positive role models
- Identifying cultural and systems barriers to developmental behaviours
- HR Practitioners can track how much the organisation is perceived to support development and coaching activity in a variety of ways, including through employee attitude surveys.
- Creating a coaching culture generally involves implementing a long-term, strategic organisational development programme in an organisation.

9. Summary

This short review of literature has explored the background and development of coaching within an international context. It has shown how coaching is increasing at all levels within organisations. The practice has moved from a ‘tutoring’ role to one which aims to transform organisations and the individuals working within them. It is seen to be a significant leadership development tool. A number of examples of good practice have been identified in terms of executive coaching, team coaching and leadership development, when to work with internal and/or external coaches, good coaching practice and ROI.

Much of the evidence shows that within this fast growing profession, the potential for further growth and development is significant; however the overarching theme of the review suggests that unless there is the potential to truly develop a coaching culture within organisations, the full potential of the practice cannot be realised.

It is envisaged that key elements from this review will inform the ICBE Coaching Community of Practice on the development of a good practice coaching tool for member companies.

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