

INTERNAL COACHING – AN UPCOMING FIELD FOR EXPLORATION RESEARCH GAPS IN INTERNAL COACHING

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Abstract: Companies look for ways to reduce cost and increase effectiveness for which executive and professional coaching provided by internal coaches may be a viable solution. Internal Coaching is an upcoming area of Interest which is now being a challenge for innovation in HR; a challenge for HR to innovatively create a sustainable internal coaching program.

It was unheard of five years ago to be focused on internal coaching as a strategy. External coaching was all that was thought of, and companies were focused on that. Companies had sufficient experience of external coaching to see the benefits and people were starting to ask how this could be taken to the next level.

Once reserved for the executive suite, coaching is becoming more common for other employees, such as new hires, sales people and midlevel managers. Lisa Ann Edwards, author of “Creating an Internal Coaching Program”, explains that companies that are implementing coaching for employees – especially outside senior levels – are often using Internal Coaches.

This conceptual paper aims to synthesize and demystify the research gaps in Internal coaching which will further open avenues for future research.

Keywords: Coaching, Internal Coaching, Research Gaps in Internal Coaching, Performance acceleration.

Introduction: Internal Coach: An Internal coach is a regular employee of the organization who has appropriate coaching skills to support a specific business strategy. (Anonymous, 2014).

Kilburg (2002) defined executive coaching as a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals ... to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization, (pp. 65-67). In addition to the aspect of a helping relationship, O’Neill (2000) also made a link between coaching and performance in that “executive coaching is the process of increasing the leader’s skill and effectiveness in accomplishing the responsibilities of leadership” (p. 6) including communicating the territory: (a) the purpose, the vision, and goals of the organization, and outlining opportunities and challenges; (b) building relationships and facilitating interactions that result in outstanding team performance; and (c) producing results and outcomes (pp. 5-6). (EVANS, 2007)

Need for Coaching: “The goal of coaching is not in fixing what is broken, but in discovering new talents and new ways to use old talents that lead to far greater effectiveness” (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Still others want an authentic partnership with an individual who is willing to provide an honest appraisal of their life experiences so that they can maximize current abilities and develop new capabilities. Crane (2002) suggests that “A coach acts as a guide by challenging and supporting people in

achieving their personal and organizational performance objectives” (p. 31). Tobias (1996) maintains that coaching is more aligned with the activities of personal training: “the coach helps the individual maintain a consistent, confident focus on tuning up strengths and managing shortcomings” (p. 87) Edwards (2003) provides one of the most comprehensive summaries of the purpose of coaching: it facilitates learning rather than teaching, provides a conduit for and places emphasis on unlocking potential and maximizing performance and assigns ownership of outcomes to the client. (Marshall, 2006).

Focus areas for Internal Coaching: According to Hargrove (2000), Appleton (2002), Crane (2001), O’Neill (2000), and Whitworth, Kimsey-House, and Sandahl (1998), the potential implications for an organization that successfully employs an effective coaching strategy include increased employee retention, satisfaction, commitment, and respect, and improved communication and team effectiveness. An effective coaching strategy can also enhance motivation and morale; improve organizational performance, and leverage learning and creativity while lowering the cost of errors or rework. (GREENE, 2003).

Implementing Internal Coaching practice in the areas of Onboarding, Skills Development, Transition Management and handling High Performers will benefit the Organization greatly. Other focus areas for Coaching are 1. Building business strategy, 2. Role Transition / Career advancement, 3. Identifying values, mission and purpose, 4. Building leadership skills, 5. Career change, 6. Building coaching practices, 7. Making / Support for decisions, 8. Work

- Life balance, 9. When Job is in jeopardy, 10. (Marshall, 2006)

The reasons for Organizations to create Internal coaching program were a) Leadership development, b) demand for coaching, c) Budget, d) Management valuing coaching. (Castillo-Ramsey, 2010). They are primarily aimed at a) Leadership development, b) Expanding skills, c) Improving communication, d) Moving up the corporate ladder and e) Improve performance.

Methodology: A conceptual paper is primarily based on theoretical considerations, theories, frameworks, models, etc. Such papers tend to use no empirical data (sometimes to support certain thoughts and conclusions). The conceptual paper has normally no intentions to run specific analytical procedures, due to the lack of empirical data.

This is a conceptual paper is important in current context for Internal coaching as it is an emerging field and there is dearth in the literature exclusively on Internal coaching. It also aims to bring out the research gaps synthesized so as to build a strong empirical and theoretical base to support and meet the challenge for HR to build a sustainable coaching process.

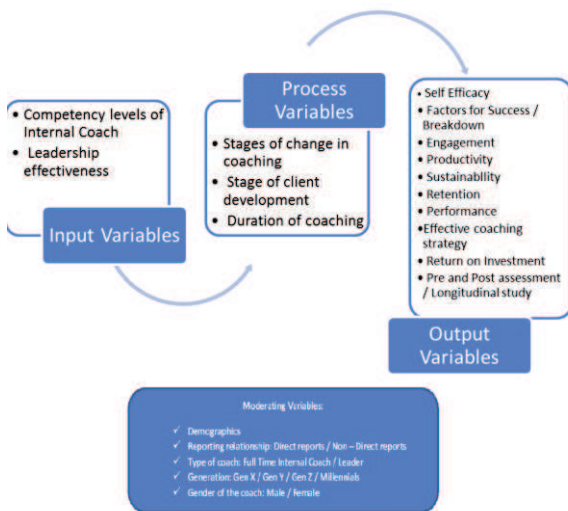
Research Gaps as per the available literature:

- Return on investment (ROI) was also considered and evaluated with most participants indicating that there was some type of measurement that was utilized; however, a majority of the interviewees suggested that measuring ROI had not been accomplished successfully. (Castillo-Ramsey, 2010).
- There is now a need to link empirical research to these training programs as well as to design research studies that inform coaching practice based on the integration of empirical knowledge and practice wisdom. (Marshall, 2006).
- Exploration of the relevance of stages of change in coaching and stages of client development would help in the identification of effective coaching strategies. Prochaska et al. (1994) have researched stages of change on addictions and a number of other behaviors, but no research studies examine the best coaching strategies for differing stages of change in combination with the client's stage of personal development. (Marshall, 2006).
- Designing studies with pre and post-assessment measures would help to delineate any other factors that lead to successful coaching outcomes. (Marshall, 2006).
- A study comparing participants undergoing internal coaching vs. a similar number of participants undergoing external coaching. (David Rock)
- Coaching direct reports vs. non-direct reports, and difference in corporate culture (David Rock)
- Competency levels of internal coaches (David Rock)
- Length of time that leaders coach for, on an ongoing basis (David Rock)
- Full-time dedicated coaches vs. leaders as coaches (David Rock)
- Systemic impact of coaching programs on engagement, retention, performance and productivity across the coach, the coach's direct reports, the client and the client's direct reports. (David Rock).
- Future research should continue to examine internal coaching programs, coach – client dyads, involve clients' managers, compare outcomes of internal and external executive coaching engagements, and follow up on engagements six to twelve months later to ensure sustainability of changed behaviors. (YEDRESHTEYN, 2008).
- Newman's study on Self Efficacy improvement through Internal Coaching in a Fortune 500 Company measured the Efficacy through GSE Scores. He suggests alternative instruments, such as the NGSE (Chen et al., 2001), PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007) or other measures, may uncover new effects. Future research could also consider alternative measures of self-efficacy, stronger alignment with coaching goals, changes in coachee performance, linkage to engagement, and involvement survey scores. (Newman, 2011)
- Value could be gained by conducting longitudinal studies to show if coaching results are sustainable over time. If data could be collected by the client, it would be easier to show improvement over time and to connect with specific client goals of coaching. (Newman, 2011)
- Clients and coaches expressed difficulty in measuring the results attributed to coaching. New ways to evaluate the impact in terms of both tangible and intangible results will provide evidence of what works in the coaching process and how to positively impact business results. These changes may entail considering measures in addition to ROI that tie to business impact both in hard and soft business measures. (Newman, 2011).
- There has been little empirical research on the impact of coaching on leadership effectiveness and what specifically is required from the coach to make that impact. While this study offered an opportunity for an initial exploration, there is room for further empirical research. (EVANS, 2007)
- Other areas that may benefit from further exploration are: (a) expanding future sample frames to include those graduates who are not practicing executive coaches, (b) conducting a comparison between external and internal

coaches, and (c) examining the return on investment of the executive coaching training. Another area for future research could involve learners participating in a baseline assessment across a number of competencies, followed by engagement in a 360 assessment process at a future date, for example, one year later. (EVANS, 2007).

- Impact of Gender on Internal Coaching, Impact of coaching on various demographics (Baby boomers, Gen X and Millennials). (GREENE, 2003).

Research Gap for further study:



Conclusion: 79% of the organizations expect to see 40% or large 39% increase in Internal Coaching over the next 3 years. Internal coaching is seen as a key

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means of supporting the development of a coaching culture, encouraging managers to use a coaching style in leading their teams and influencing others. (Ridler Report, 2013)

The 2011 Ridler report found that internal coaching was seen as better value of money than external coaching. The 2013 Ridler report data supports this finding – 44% agreed that internal coaching is a better value for money than external coaching compared with 13% who disagreed. (Ridler Report, 2013)

With a huge scope for study, Internal Coaching still has a dearth in availability of literature. Both Qualitative and Quantitative empiricism is still in the budding stage. The current available literature is more done through Qualitative research on Action Research model. As the studies are of qualitative nature, the sample size is majorly less than 20. The synthesizing of available literature brings to light that there are quite a lot of dimensions to be studied. One repeated mention is on the Return on Investment to be studied. (Newman, 2011), (EVANS, 2007), (Castillo-Ramsey, 2010).

With the identification and organizing of the research gap in the form of Input, Process and Output variables, there is a large scope identified for studying each and every element in relation with the other variables that would impact each other. It will provide empirical evidences which would in turn contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

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