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# Mind on the Job

A **CavanaughLeahy** Communication ♦ Fall 2000 ♦ Issue 9  
& COMPANY

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## SPECIAL ISSUE

*Coaching*

*inside*  
the  
**MIND**

- ◆ The Questions ..... 1
- ◆ Ten Coaches on Coaching ..... 2

## ◆ The Questions

**T**here is great demand for coaching. Yet, given its newness, little research has been conducted on its value and efficacy. So we decided to ask coaching practitioners to share what they know in response to the following dilemma.

### QUESTIONS

The director of leadership development at a large company recently posed the following problem.

Coaching is a very popular practice in his organization. The demand is high; lots of executives are engaging coaches to support their folks. He wonders whether this is a passing fad or something he should factor into future planning in the area of leadership development. What counsel would you give him?

This stimulated some research on my part, research in the management literature and a conversation with Carolyn Steigmeier who has conducted her own research on coaching. Carolyn and I concluded that there could be others who want to know answers to questions like these:

- Do I need to be using coaches?
- Is this a fad?
- Is it worth the money?
- How would I even go about knowing that I had a need or finding answers to the other questions?

We'd love your thoughts on coaching. Since there isn't as much written here as there is, say, on leadership, we felt that many might benefit from the reflections of professional coaches. The Jungian analyst June Singer was once asked by a professor to tell her how she would explain individuation to a person on the street in Zurich in five minutes. I realize I'm making a similar unreasonable request but what would you say in one paragraph? Based on your experience, what is it that would be important for those engaging coaches to know?

*Martin J. Leahy*

## 2 Coaches on Coaching

### DICK McCOLLUM

It really isn't very interesting to me to speculate on whether it is a fad or not. Given our new paradigm we could say the industrial revolution was a fad. Passed. The interesting question that I would counsel is: Is the coaching that is going on helping your managers/executives to be more effective, to generate more creative and productive ways to leverage people in ways that they and their people feel good about and provide them with a sense of shared commitments? In short, is the coaching emboldening, encouraging, or enspiriting folks to take committed risks on behalf of the enterprise and are they seeing themselves working for something larger than themselves? And finally, is all the above and the coachees' balance/quality of life something that is a cut out of a future? If not *all* those things, maybe there is something much better that we haven't named or invented yet!

*Dick is based in Martha's Vineyard and can be reached at 508-696-8530.*

### PAM CAVANAUGH

I would coach the director of leadership development to go talk with both the executives who engage coaches and those being coached. Questions that might be explored:

- Why is the demand high?
- What difference has coaching made?
- Are those coached leading more effectively?
- Are they focused on what is needed from leadership in their real live setting—in this organization in this market at this time—as opposed to textbook theory?
- Are they being coached on what matters to them personally, what they care deeply about?
- Is there evidence that the executive being coached has gained critical awareness about what matters to him or her, about their strengths and areas in need of development, and about how he or she is viewed in the organization?
- If so, has this awareness expanded their capacity to act effectively—effectively means producing results for the organization while doing work that really matters to them personally?

More often than not, today's leaders and managers are being asked to create what never existed before. What they need are new skills and techniques, usually around building commitment, collaboration, and communication. But, maybe more importantly, they also need a place to examine and challenge their beliefs, thinking, and attitudes. Coaching provides a place where a leader/manager can safely inquire and expand his/her capacity to learn and act. And both of these must be present. Awareness—or knowledge—without action serves neither the organization nor the executive.

*Pam, a co-founder and CEO of Cavanaugh Leahy & Company, is based in New York and can be reached at 914-969-5114.*

**CAROLYN STEIGMEIER, Ph.D.**

Coaching may be a fad. But if it helps individuals achieve personal goals and organizations reach theirs, why not “ride the wave” until the next opportunity for learning, development, and success arrives! In our culture, at this time, the process we label “coaching” seems to offer unique benefits to a wide range of individuals in a variety of settings.

I would counsel the director of leadership development at a large company to factor coaching into his planning, as well as a method of evaluating the results after a designated period of time. To increase his understanding and make it easier for him to evaluate and hire coaches, I would have a discussion of what to expect from coaching and what to look for in coaches. Although terms and credentials are still in flux, he will be looking for a “professional coach” or “executive coach” (versus “personal coach”) with credentials that seem appropriate. Coaches range from those with no specific training to those with PhDs and years of business experience. In addition, coaches may be experts on work/life balance, stress, communication, midlife issues, women's leadership development, and other specialized areas that can contribute to higher levels of health and functioning for the leaders, and ultimately affect the organization's bottom-line.

I'd also point out that changes in the workplace have reduced the availability of traditional mentors and altered the environment that fostered mentoring relationships. Hiring coaches becomes a practical alternative.

Finally, because the relationship between coach and coachee is a significant part of the process, he should factor into his plans an opportunity for the leader being coached to meet perspective coaches and make the final choice as to which coach—if any—is hired.

*Carolyn is based in New York and can be reached at 914-725-7003.*



**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**Coaching & Productivity**

An action research study, involving 31 managers in a municipal agency, examined the effects of coaching on productivity. Managers went through a conventional management training program followed by eight weeks of one-on-

one coaching. Training increased productivity by 22%. Coaching, when added to the training, increased productivity by 88%.

Why? Researchers attribute the dramatic increase in productivity to the following elements in the coaching program:

- ◆ Goal setting
- ◆ Collaborative problem solving
- ◆ Practice
- ◆ Feedback
- ◆ Boss involvement
- ◆ Evaluation of end-results
- ◆ Public presentation

They believe that their research demonstrates the import of developing skills rather than simply transmitting knowledge.

*Olivero, G., Bane, K. D. & Kopelman, R. E. (1997, Winter). Executive Coaching as a Transfer of Training Tool: Effects on Productivity in a Public Agency. Public Personnel Management, 26(4), 461-469.*

**DAN WESTON, Ph.D.**

I believe coaching is more than a fad; it has the potential of becoming a significant tool for individual and organization performance improvement. Performance improvement is the desired outcome. A simplistic, yet powerful, measure of performance is the *People Effectiveness Index*, defined as revenue divided by people cost. For many organizations PEI is less than three. In some organizations, because of high material or capital costs or unusual people performance, the PEI is much higher (10 or greater). The higher the PEI, the more productive the organization is. A small increase in individual performance produces a large increase in organization results. Low PEI organizations struggle.

Every leader and employee, with a few exceptions, desires to be productive. They work as hard and smart as they can based on their understanding of their world. Organizations train, lead, manage, and appraise performance of employees for improved performance. Yet I believe effective coaching has a greater potential for improved performance and resulting PEI. The leveraging power of coaching comes when the person being coached discovers a more powerful understanding of his/her world that results in improved performance.

The ineffectiveness of all the traditional performance improvement methods may help create the fad notion of coaching (new, low risk, individualized, huge potential payout, etc.). So, for coaching to be more than a fad it must deliver. All of us involved must strive to deliver coaching that produces profound results—a higher PEI.

*Dan is based in Dallas and can be reached at 972-250-5222.*

**MARSHALL GOLDSMITH, Ph.D.**

Executive coaching (especially behavioral coaching) will not be a “passing fad.” The leaders of the future will (largely) be managing knowledge workers. These knowledge workers can find other alternatives very easily. They will not tolerate the dysfunctional behaviors that many leaders of the past were allowed to get away with.

Executive coaching (when combined with feedback and follow-up) has been shown to help leaders achieve

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**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**What is a Coach?**

*Carolyn Steigmeier surveyed the coaching literature to deconstruct “coaching” not merely for the sake of critique but to construct an understanding of what coaching is becoming.*

*Among her findings are four dominant frames, important in that they influence expectations in the coach and the coached. She asserts approaches to coaching are built from some parts of each of these frames while ignoring other aspects.*

**Coaching Frames**

**Consultant.** *Collaborative partner who has no direct control over implementation of the action plan for change (Peter Block)*

**Therapist.** *While clearly not therapy, coaching borrows its tenet of the client as the expert*

**Mentor.** *Trusted counselor or guide, usually wiser and older*

**Friend.** *Someone you can count on or lean on; dependable, generous*

*Steigmeier, C. (1998). Executive Coaching Theory and Practice: A Participatory Conversation about Men and the Search for Meaning. The Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara, CA: Unpublished paper.*

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positive, measurable long-term change in behavior. As the pace of change increases and the “stakes” for leaders becomes greater, this type of coaching will only increase in popularity.

Executive coaching is still a very new field. Organizations are still not clear on “coaching whom to what!” In the future, executive coaching, like consulting, will be broken down into very distinct fields with specialists focused on helping specific types of leaders achieve specific types of change.

*Marshall's newest book is Coaching for Leadership: How the World's Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn. (Jossey Bass, 2000) and can be reached at Marshall@KGCnet.com.*

## **SANDY BOWERS**

**My question:** *Is Leadership Development a “fad?”*

**Answer:** Of course not. As long as there is a need for organizations to be effective and competitive, there will be a need for strong, capable leaders. Developing these leaders—whether from young, high potential talent, from the best and the brightest of middle management, or from externally recruited seasoned executives—will always be an essential activity if an organization is to continue to thrive. And to keep the talents of existing leaders at the leading edge, it will always be critical to give them all the tools available to help them continue to hone their knowledge, skills, and behavior.

In my view, coaching is now, and will continue to be, one of the many processes available to do this. It is unfortunate that, frequently, the concept of “coaching” is put under a single umbrella when in fact coaching can take many different forms. In the realm of leadership development, it is important to target what areas of development the coaching is to address. Is the coaching meant to help the person acquire an expanded knowledge of a particular function or activity, i.e., strategic planning, organizational structure and design, recruiting and selecting for excellence? Is it meant to help the person build a particular skill, i.e., matrix management, creating a team, managing change? Is it designed to assist an executive in understanding and managing a complex organizational culture? Is it meant to help the person enhance, refine, or change her/his interpersonal effectiveness or leadership behavior?

Rarely can a single coach address all of the many specific areas in which coaching can help executives become more effective and contribute more to the organization's success. As with all leadership development efforts, coaching must be targeted accurately, selected wisely, and measured regularly. If those things are done,

coaching will be one of the most effective and lasting tools in leadership development programs.

*Sandy is based in New York and can be reached at 212-865-3142.*

### **CHARLES ADAIR, Ph.D.**

*Is coaching a passing fad or should it be factored into my future leadership development plan?*

The importance of coaching as a developmental strategy has risen in tandem with the growing emphasis on personal leadership as being more critical to breakthrough organizational success than traditional management. Training is essential to the goal of providing groups of employees with the generic skills all managerial candidates are considered to need to be competent. Coaching is the best and perhaps only vehicle to maximize the unique gifts of the individuals recognized by their organizations as having the potential to be “value-added” leaders.

*Do I need to be using coaches?*

Virtually every field of competitive human endeavor indicates that outstanding performance is achieved by those who engage credible, creative, and challenging coaches with deep commitment to the highest standards of behavioral effectiveness and success.

Few championship performances, however, result from canned, short-term classroom experiences or from “quick-fix,” prescriptive consultations with conventional “you listen, I speak” gurus.

*How would I determine that I have a coaching need?*

Leadership development coaching is different from other kinds of coaching as a result of its total focus on maximizing the effectiveness of the unique individual being coached. It is appropriate if organizations have high potential individuals with extraordinary gifts who:

- Are not functioning as well as they might, and
- Are considered worthy of a serious personal developmental investment

Leadership coaching offers recipients a personally guided and supported process that enables them to gather feedback data, assess current behavior patterns, explore behavioral alternatives, and achieve advanced levels of leadership conduct. It is designed to enable recipients to gain a:

- Profound understanding of the business environment and sociopolitical “force-field” in which they are operating.

- Mature awareness of themselves and the effect they have on others.
- Strategic and multi-functional orientation that identifies complex casual relationships and grasps the long-term implications of business decisions.
- Trust in their own abilities to envision a successful future, to analyze the options for realizing that future, and to formulate plans of action to achieve that future successfully, and
- Personalized set of interpersonal and communication skills that maximizes their ability to direct and motivate others to achieve challenging goals.

*Where would I go for coaching support?*

There are many successful management and executive coaches who are excellent in imparting a predetermined set of skills to their coaching clients in a standardized, “one-size-fits-all” manner, but these coaches are not always well suited to the demands of leadership development coaching.

The requirements for successful leadership coaching are as follows:

- **Business experience and credibility**—relevant and real-life battle “scars” with the stories to back them up
- **Professional focus on the client**—not on oneself or one’s process
- **Creativity, adaptability**—skilled and comfortable “going with the flow”
- **Toughness, honesty**—able to deliver difficult messages and hard lessons
- **Ability to analyze** complex organizational behaviors and work relationships
- **Interpersonal skills**—rapport building

There is no one place where such coaches can be found, but all candidates for serious leadership coaching assignments should be screened against these criteria.

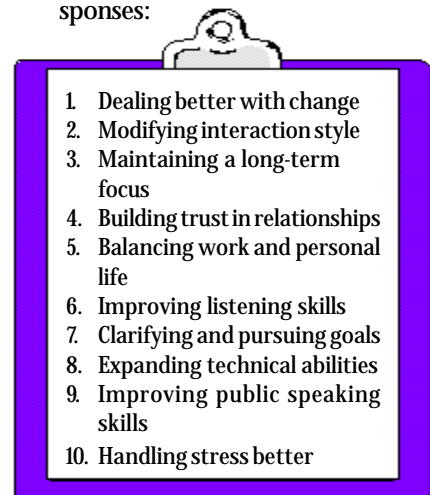
*Chuck is based in Princeton and can be reached at 609-730-0708.*

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## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Top 10 Areas for Executive Development

Based on telephone interviews with coaches and survey responses:



*Judge, W.O. & Cowell, J. (1997, July-August). The brave new world of executive coaching. Business Horizons, 40(4), 71-77.*

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**THE BOSS AS COACH**

An important part of a leader's job is to coach people and provide guidance for them to be successful . . . there's a slim difference between too little and too much guidance. Too much can frustrate initiative, like a parent who helps a child with homework so much it becomes the parent's homework, and not the child's. The leader who provides excessive coaching and guidance often has a need to be needed. He or she thinks, "they can't do it without me—they need my direction." In one case, after 10 months of being overcoached, the employee was unable to make the smallest work decision by herself without first consulting with her supervisors. Too much help . . . destroys people's initiative . . . makes people dependent and as their dependence grows, they increasingly doubt their skills and abilities.

On the other hand, too little coaching or guidance can cause excessive frustration and failure.

*Sidebar continued  
opposite page*

**BOB SILVERSTEIN, C.S.W.**

**Question:** *Do I need to be using coaches?*

**Answer:** Yes if you accept certain facts: (1) that even the best managers and executives are human; (2) that organizations are constantly changing and posing new challenges; and (3) that human beings tend to function—cognitively, behaviorally, psychologically, and physiologically—at less than optimal levels when exposed to ongoing and significant demands and stressors.

From this perspective, business needs to hire coaches, not to teach managers and executives how to do their jobs, but to assist them to stay at or resume their productive best. The coach helps the coachee to look at the demands faced in a variety of different and challenging ways and, in so doing, facilitates a broader and more energized response.

Rather than shutting down and feeling overwhelmed by the ongoing demands of their jobs, the coachee is empowered to address them from a more open and informed stance. The organization needs coaches, because coaching keeps its "engine" tuned up and ready to run.

*Bob is based in New York and  
can be reached at 212-989-8647.*

**LINDA WEBB, D.P.H.**

**IS COACHING A FAD?**

First of all, I'd want to ask what is underneath the question. Why is the director of leadership development *really* asking this question? Then my response might be more helpful.

Given I don't have that opportunity, I'll respond to the question at face value with an analogy. Some might ask if the increased interest in "alternative medicine" is a fad. For example, are massages really helpful, or is this just a fad? Only time will tell if it is a fad. Psychic as I am, I cannot predict the future. There really isn't enough scientific research to demonstrate one way or the other whether massages are helpful. But ask the millions who pay money to get a massage on a regular basis whether massages are helpful, and they can tell you. Their reasons are varied, but look at the evidence. This has become a billion dollar industry, an industry that did not exist 25 years ago.

Where this analogy breaks down is that the choice for coaching is often the organization's, not the individual's. I strongly believe that the choice for coaching should be the individual's. Coaching that is intended to 'fix' someone, or is part of a mass effort to

change an organization that all the leaders go through is often not particularly effective. Coaching that is requested and sought by the client can be very powerful and effective in varied ways.

*Linda is based in Houston and can be reached at 713-664-1447.*

**H. SCOTT SMITH-ADAIR**

Just as the long-term employee contract is a thing of the past . . . so is the opportunity to prepare employees and managers for organizational leadership with thorough consistent, organized development through a long-term developmental curricula.

Coaching is invaluable to a company’s future leadership development strategy when:

- There is a commitment to prepare individuals as required to support and meet the needs of the business.
- There is a focus on developing the competencies of younger managers.
- Ongoing organizational change is requiring seasoned managers and executives to demonstrate a new and/or different leadership approach.

*Do I need to be using coaches?*

You should be utilizing coaching as an integrated piece of your overall management development process if you want to help:

- Individuals better understand how to integrate their respective strengths and talents into a success leadership presence.
- Teams maximize the strengths of individuals into a force greater than the sum of the parts.

*And . . . senior management needs to be realistic about the time commitment required for effective coaching, the importance of mutual involvement in the feedback and planning process and the need for opportunities that will allow *coachees* to exercise new competencies.*

When you have . . .

- An employee who is technically astute but lacking the needed level of sophistication in the areas of relationship building, socio-political awareness, and interpersonal communications.

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Not overcoaching is one quality that distinguishes good leaders from average ones. Sometimes people in leadership roles want so badly for people to succeed that they do everything for them. That takes away people’s chance to experiment, learn, grow, and develop. I like the quote by businessman J.C. Penney: “I’m grateful for all my problems. As each of them was overcome, I became stronger and more able to meet those yet to come. I grew in all my difficulties.”

Effective coaches realize that each person is different, and what’s appropriate for one may be overkill for another. A good question leaders need to ask themselves is, “What’s the least amount of guidance this person needs to succeed? Providing the least amount of guidance requires the person to show initiative to learn and grow.

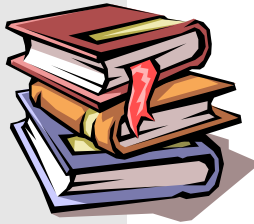
*Thorton, P. (2000). Be the leader; make the difference: The Three C Leadership Model (Challenge, Confidence, Coaching). Torrance, CA: Griffin Publishing Group.*

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**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**Limited  
Empirical Study**

Richard Kilburg (2000), in his new book, *Executive Coaching: Managerial Wisdom in a World of Chaos* (Washington, DC; American Psychological Association) reviews the literature on coaching. He indicates that while 14 books have been published on coaching since 1994, there have only been about a dozen empirical studies.



Practice, as usual, is way out ahead of research.

*Safferstone, M. J. (2000, May).  
Book review: Executive Coaching:  
Developing Managerial Wisdom  
in a World of Chaos.  
The Academy of Management  
Executive, 14(2), 131.*

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- Leadership competency issue (i.e., handling employee relations, moving from tactical management to strategic management, etc.) that would benefit from the development and implementation of a targeted action plan to develop those competencies.
- Leadership judgement problem or issue requiring specific performance adjustments and consideration of new perspectives. Coaching guidance and feedback can greatly assist an individual in his/her achievement of the performance targets, developing alternative perspectives, and in reestablishing professional respect in the organization.

Effective coaches come from many sources and backgrounds and need to demonstrate the following:

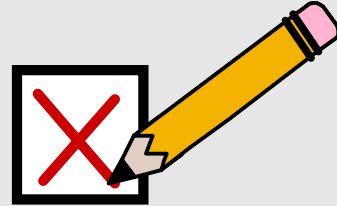
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Comfort and willingness to deliver feedback
- A knowledge of his/her particular coaching expertise
- Contracting skills
- Organizational experience with the level of individual to be coached

*Scotti is based in Princeton and  
can be reached at 609-730-0708.*

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### What Works and What Doesn't?

A study by Boston University's *Executive Development Roundtable* and *The Policy Institute* involved interviews with 75 executives receiving coaching at Fortune 100 companies, and interviews with 15 executive coaches. Coaching overall received very high marks from executives: an average of 4, or "very satisfactory," on a scale from 1 to 5.



#### What Works

- Results-oriented
- Honest, reliable feedback
- Good action ideas or 'pointers'

#### What Doesn't Work

- Rare, according to execs, but . . . when coach has a personal agenda
- Overly negative feedback or feedback based solely on feelings without data or results
- Naïve, unrealistic, or impractical recommendations or action

Coach responses tended to emphasize the import of the quality of the relationship while the executives being coached stressed recommendations for action.

Hall, D. T., Otazo, K. L. & Hollenbeck, G. P. (1999, Winter).  
*Behind Closed Doors: What Really Happens in Executive Coaching.*  
*Organizational Dynamics*, 27(3), 39-53.

## CAVANAUGH LEAHY & COMPANY'S EXECUTIVE COACHING

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*Executive Coaching* provides individually customized consulting to valued executives and leaders. The coaching increases personal effectiveness while producing results for the organization. Our process aligns management talent with organizational strategies and expands both the individual's and the organization's capabilities.

### WHO benefits from Executive Coaching?

- Executives, managers, and team leaders accountable for implementing restructuring or change initiatives.
- Individual contributors promoted to leadership positions.
- Executives and managers with interpersonal or communication styles that adversely affect performance.
- Leaders who are challenging their teams to produce extraordinary results.
- Executives faced with career decisions.

### WHY Executive Coaching?

- Enhance the effectiveness of key performers.
- Build new leadership skills essential for successful implementation of corporate restructuring.
- Prepare executives and managers to take on new or increased responsibilities that support the organization's strategies.
- Improved working relationships and communication to increase executive effectiveness and achieve business goals.
- Provide data to make informed succession or career decisions.

### WHAT is Executive Coaching?

- A process which creates awareness and action through confidential communication.
- A process that allows individuals to see new opportunities and go beyond what was previously possible.
- A process which identifies an executive's strengths and developmental needs given the organization's capabilities and strategies.
- A process where the individual uncovers barriers and areas of resistance to job performance and leadership effectiveness.
- A process where an individual discovers opportunities for success.
- A process which provides clarity regarding role, projects or process with defined outcomes and measures.

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We help leaders find them.

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