

SABPP FACT SHEET

NUMBER 9: October 2013

COACHING AND MENTORING

1. Introduction

Coaching and mentoring are popular tools in the talent management “toolkit”. Positioned and implemented carefully, both coaching and mentoring programmes can deliver a range of organisational benefits.

Coaching has, over the past two decades, grown tremendously as an industry and, increasingly, people who practise coaching are establishing themselves as professional coaches, with qualifications that can nowadays extend from short courses right up to doctorates.

Coaching used to be regarded as exclusive and expensive – sometimes even as a top executive “perk”, and/or as remedial to correct under-performance in critical positions. External coaches can be extremely expensive. More recently, coaching has been recognised as a valuable developmental alternative in leadership development and performance development at many levels of the organisation.

Mentoring often overlaps with coaching. Definitions vary widely and sometimes contradict each other – what one organisation or person calls mentoring, another calls coaching and vice versa.

As the use of coaching and/or mentoring increases, organisations realise that such interventions deliver best value when positioned strategically and coordinated. The HR department is usually the function charged with this positioning and coordination. HR practitioners therefore should ensure that they are competent in understanding and managing coaching and mentoring and keeping up to date with the latest trends.



“The significant growth and increased popularity of coaching, especially for individuals assuming leadership positions in organisations, can partly be explained by major organisational changes overarching all sectors of the economy. Leaders will continue to seek help from coaches as the complexity of the business environment increases.”

“An exploration of coaching practices in leading South African companies”. Z. Attlee. (2012) Masters dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand,

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING AND MENTORING?

COMENSA differentiates the two as follows (although it should be noted that the many experts in the field rarely agree with each other and there is a large amount of literature on the subject):

Coaching is “a professional, collaborative and outcomes-driven method of learning that seeks to develop an individual and raise self-awareness so that he or she might achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level. Coaching is about creating change that helps enhances performance and learning. Coaches emphasise new competencies, learning and goal attainment. In fact, a coach is a personal navigator for the journey of life, focusing on what the clients want. Everything in coaching hinges on listening with the client's agenda in mind.”

Mentoring is “a partnership in which a mentee is assisted in making significant advances in knowledge, perspective and vision in order to develop their full potential; the mentor's wisdom is utilised by the mentee to facilitate and enhance new learning and insight.” The mentor's focus is the development of the learner, and about passing on personalised, domain-specific knowledge. Mentors help to set the agenda, their primary aim to develop an individual or small group to learn more comprehensively from their day-to-day working experience.”

This Fact Sheet will start with an exploration of coaching, looking at what benefits an organisation and individual employees might expect, and important aspects of coaching programmes. The Fact Sheet will then look at mentoring programmes and the implementation of such programmes.

2. Expectations of coaching and returns

Internationally, those organisations that use coaching expect impacts such as:

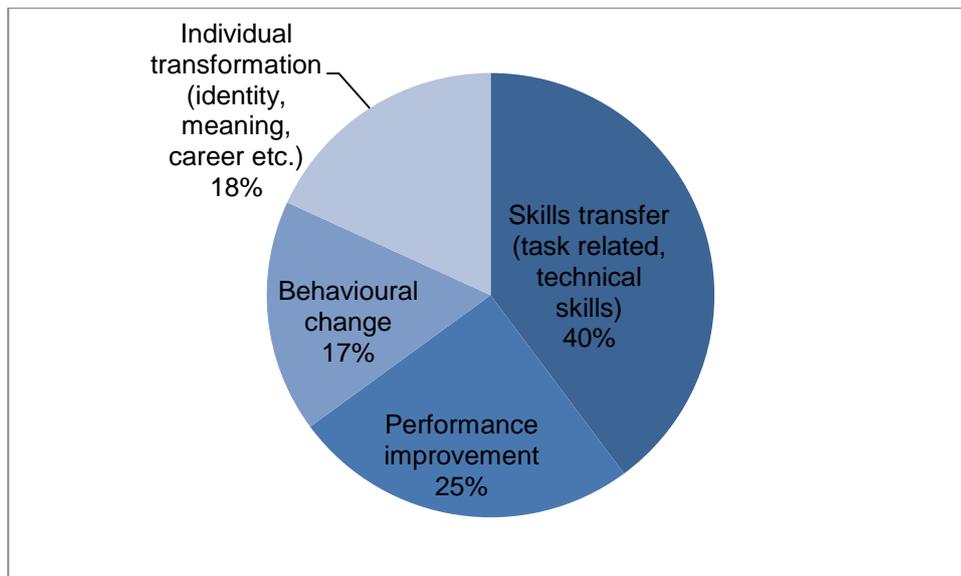
- Leadership development and performance
- Increased levels of employee engagement
- Reduced attrition
- Improved team working.²

The 2011 Coaching Survey conducted by Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) showed that, in South African organisations, the most common uses of coaching in organisations are performance enhancement (93.2%) and management development (90.9%). Many other reasons for using coaching were reported, including various forms of skills development or planned, accelerated development programmes. 34.1% of respondents reported employee retention as a reason for using coaching.

The 2013 SABPP/ASTD 9th Annual Survey into Learning and Development showed that a different sample of organisations used coaching for four quite different purposes:

¹ Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) www.comensa.org.za

² 2012 International Coach Federation Organizational Coaching Study. PWC



Zia Attlee's 2012 research in South Africa (cited above) showed that coaching is considered to have been successful when one or more of the following are evident:

- Outcomes are achieved
- Behaviour change from the coachee is evident
- Improvement in coachee's performance
- Improved business results
- Both organisation and coachee gain from the process
- The coachee no longer requires supervision
- The coachee is promoted.

The Ridler report from the UK/Europe "Trends in the use of Executive Coaching" 2013 shows that organisations using coaching expect the coaches to "work insightfully to raise coachee's awareness of their ingrained patterns of behaviour" and to "deliver challenging feedback to coachee".

Quantification/measurement of the returns from coaching presents problems for organisations. According to the 2013 ICF Organizational Coaching Study by PWC, none of the respondents to this study had attempted to calculate a financial Return on Investment or even a Return on Expectation. Measurement of results is typically measured through 360° feedback and employee engagement surveys. In South Africa, according to Zia Attlee's research, 62% of leading organisations measure results using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative methods typically include feedback from coach and coachee, and sometimes from the line manager.

3. Coaching programmes

Who is coached?

Usually, due to the cost of engaging an external professional coach, coaching has been reserved for senior people. However, it is increasingly common for organisations to make use of both external coaches and internal coaches who have been trained to a greater or lesser extent. With the availability of cheaper options for coaching, organisations have extended the eligibility for coaching to wider pools such as high potential candidates at various management levels, and occasionally opened up coaching to all employees.

The 2011 COMENSA survey showed the use of coaching at different levels and for different purposes:

Coaching used for:	Frequently	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Executives	54.5%	38.6%	4.5%	2.3%
Senior Managers	45.5%	50%	2.3%	2.3%
Middle Managers	38.6%	47.7%	11.4%	2.3%
High Potentials	43.2%	52.3%	2.3%	2.3%
Problem employees	22.7%	40.9%	27.3%	9.1%
Any employees	13.6%	50%	11.4%	25%

Who is doing the coaching?

In South Africa, coaching is normally conducted by external coaches (81.8%) while a significant number of organisations report that internal coaches and HR practitioners also coach (59.1%). In 20.5% of organisations, the line managers are reported to coach.³

Zia Attlee’s research confirmed this finding and differentiated the target groups of coachees:

Employees coached	Internal coaches (# of responses)	External coaches (# of responses)
Executives	7	28
Senior Managers	12	31
Up and coming talent	19	19
All employees	8	1
Graduates	12	4

The 2013 Ridler report (previously cited) found a distinct trend towards internal coaching and respondents to this survey expect the trend to continue, mainly due to cost factors. At executive levels, however, the preference is still for external coaches, mainly because external coaching is seen as a safer space to discuss sensitive personal or organisational issues.

The Ridler report discusses how some organisations, particularly professional services firms, are deliberately developing large internal coach capabilities, because this is seen as contributing towards the creation of a widespread coaching culture in the organisation and because coaching skills are useful in client relationships.

Internal coaches are sometimes minimally trained, but good practice is to offer the same degree of training and coach development to internal coaches as would be expected from external coaches.

Finding and selecting external coaches

Coaches may be sourced from:

- Referrals by employees who have been coached or from professional networks
- Tenders issued to firms of coaching providers

³ COMENSA 2011 Survey

- Searches on websites such as COMENSA, ICF
- Approaches by coaches direct to the organisation.

Some organisations set up intensive assessment and selection processes to build up a panel of coaches available to employees. Other organisations specific membership/accreditation of one or more professional associations such as COMENSA or the ICF. (Here it must be noted that there is a difference between membership of a professional association and accreditation/credentialing by those bodies – only coaches who can show accreditation after a credentialing process are “quality assured” by the professional body.)⁴

Criteria for selection of coaches typically include:

- For senior coachees – track record of coaching at that level (gives credibility and gravitas acceptable to senior coachees)
- Ability to quickly grasp the breadth and depth of challenges faced by coachees in their particular organisation and industry.

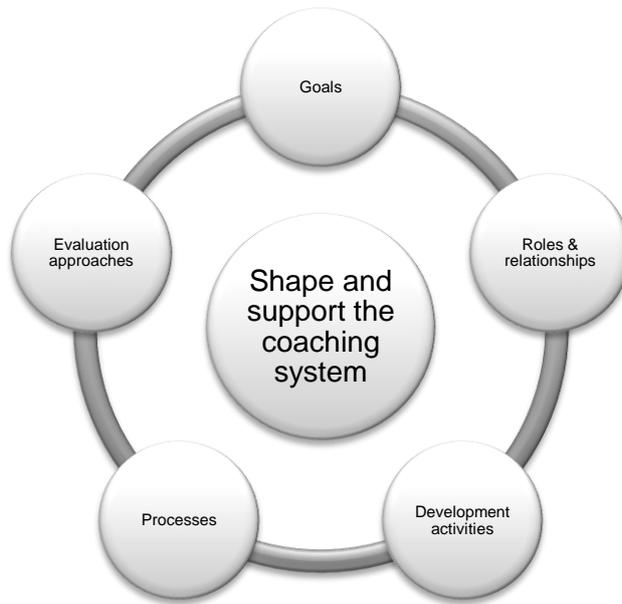
Zia Attlee’s research showed that, in addition to the above criteria, recommendations and coaching qualifications are considered important. The COMENSA study showed a passion to develop others and people skills are important selection criteria.

What are the key success factors for a coaching programme?

In order to deliver the results expected from coaching, some fundamental organisational aspects need to be in place. It is also important to understand how much money is being spent on coaching across the organisation in order to get some idea of what results might be expected. But it appears from the SABPP/ASTD 2013 survey that most coaching is not delivered in the context of a structured programme. More coaching is delivered through ad-hoc contracts entered into by employees themselves. This is confirmed in the 2011 COMENSA survey, which found that most coachees choose their own coach rather than being matched by a coordinator. However, Zia Attlee’s research amongst leading SA organisations showed that the choice of coach is more often made by line managers or coordinators such as the HR department than by the coachee him/herself.

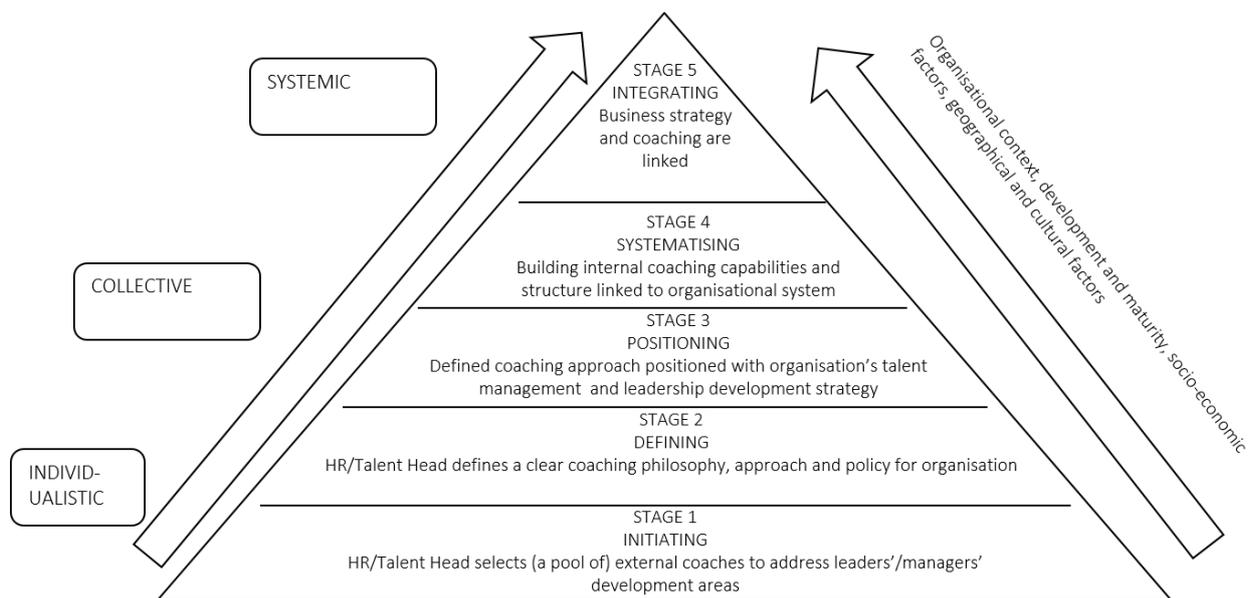
The UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development published a report in 2008 entitled “Creating Coaching Capability in Organisations. The report points out coaching must be considered as a system, thus the following elements and their inter-relationships must be considered:

⁴ *Guide for Coachees*. 2011. P. Abbott and K. Bennett. Knowledge Resources



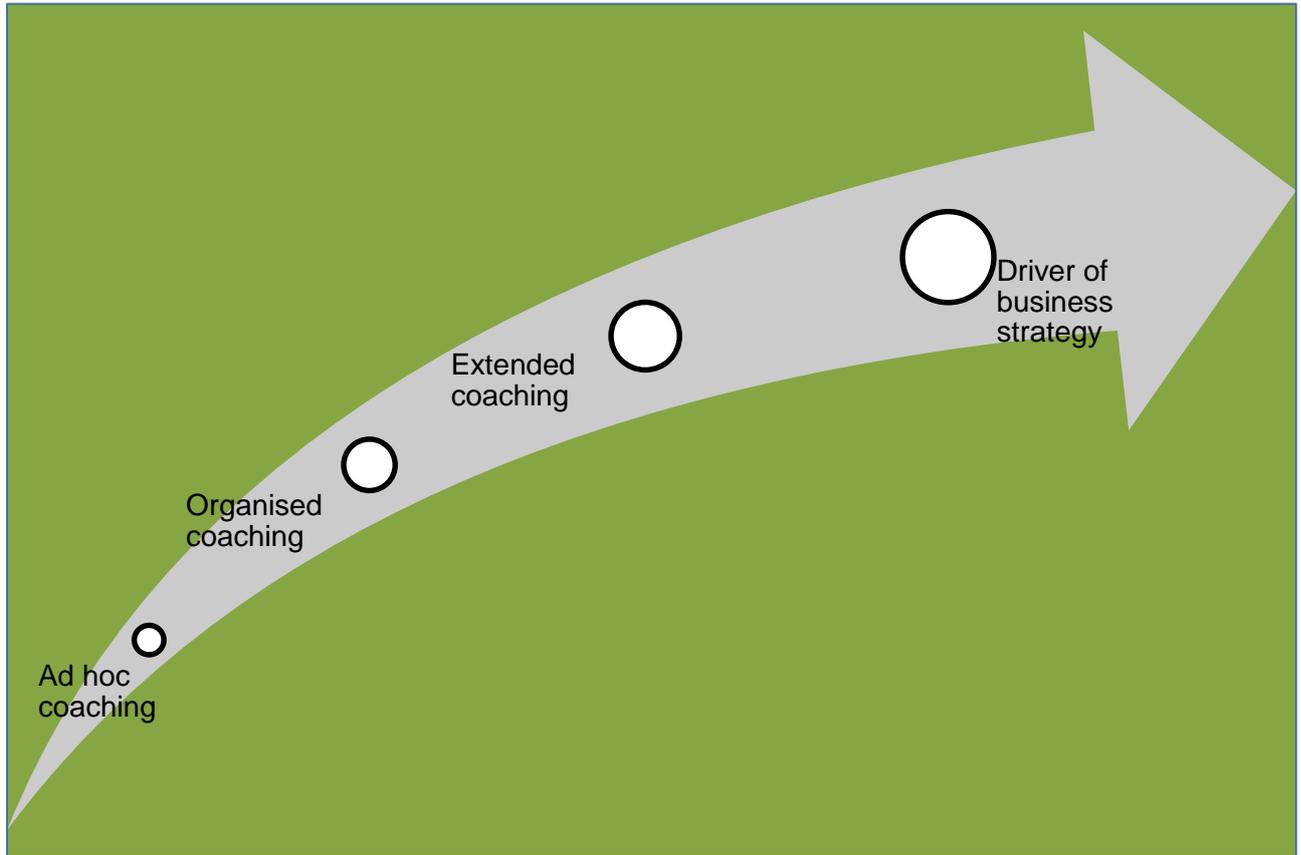
The Centre for Creative Leadership distinguishes five levels of progress towards a fully integrated coaching system in an organisation, through levels of readiness:

Levels of coaching readiness in organisations



Another way of viewing progress towards the strategic linking of coaching is the CIPD's model of stages of introducing coaching:

C



Anticipated changes affecting coaching programmes

Changes discussed in Zia Attlee’s research include that the major challenges of creating value and ensuring quality must be addressed. The coaching industry is growing fast, driven both by demand from organisations and from individuals. There are issues in the industry that impact on the quality and level of service to organisations making use of coaching, including professionalisation, regulation, and accreditation.

The role of HR

The use of coaching in an organisation must, as shown above, be linked to the HR strategy, usually through the talent management strategy. The role of HR therefore is to identify the purpose(s) for which coaching will be used and to develop policies around the use of coaching. HR also needs to identify affected stakeholders and involve/consult them in the design and implementation of the programme.

4. Mentoring programmes

Mentoring programmes often co-exist with coaching programmes and where they do, it is important that a clear differentiation is made between the two in terms of purpose, who will be the mentors, who will be the mentees, how mentoring will be structured and how mentors will be recognised/rewarded. Because of differences in choice of definitions and differentiations between coaching and mentoring, a mentoring

programme in one organisation may differ greatly from that in another organisation. Benchmarking and derivation of good practice is therefore not straight-forward.

The two main models of mentoring adopted by organisations are:

- Sponsorship mentoring, in which a senior person “adopts” a more junior person and helps him or her with career development, often through direct intervention such as allocating projects, putting forward for promotion and so on;
- Developmental mentoring, in which any person with more experience in any particular dimension of the organisation that is the target for mentoring enters into an equal partners relationship of joint exploration and achievement of insight and shift in thinking. Thus the mentoring could be peer to peer, junior to senior, expert to new employee, a mother who has successfully returned to work with a pregnant woman about to go on maternity leave, and so on.

Combinations of these models can occur, but it is important that in designing the programme the nature of the model is clear to all.

Usually a mentor is not the immediate superior of the mentee and preferably should not be in the reporting line upwards. Mentors are normally internal and mentoring is normally an unpaid additional activity taken on by volunteer mentors who are keen to assist in developing others. Some form of recognition of mentors is recommended.

Good practice in mentoring programmes is set out simply in the International Standards for Mentoring Programmes in Employment (ISMPE)⁵:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Stakeholder Training and Briefing
- Processes for Selection and Matching
- Processes for Measurement and Review
- Maintains High Standards of Ethics and Pastoral Care
- Administration and Support

South African research in 2009/10 into the role of a mentoring programme coordinator⁶ included a pro-forma job description, stating the critical tasks as:

1. Project management of preparation, design and implementation of a new mentoring programme
2. Manage all stakeholder relationships to ensure organisational support for the programme
3. Lead the scheme management once implemented, including ensuring high levels of support for the mentoring pairs
4. Manage for close integration of mentoring with other organisational programmes, systems and processes
5. Evaluate and review the scheme against stated objectives, making recommendations for improvements where appropriate.

⁵ www.ispme.com

⁶ *The role of the coordinator in structured mentoring schemes*. 2010. P Abbott. M Phil Dissertation. University of Johannesburg

This same project stated the essential skills of a coordinator as:

- a. Well above average interpersonal skills, especially listening, empathy and communication skills. A high level of personal credibility
- b. Good facilitation skills with individuals, pairs and groups at all levels
- c. Track record of delivery of successful complex organisational change or community development project demonstrating good project management, multi-tasking and self-organisation skills
- d. Deep organisational knowledge and ability to implement effective change in the prevailing culture, including good influencing/"marketing"/"selling" skills
- e. Having been a mentor or mentee in a meaningful mentoring relationship.

Often mentoring programmes fail to deliver on the expected changes because of lack of clear purpose and direction, lack of resources and lack of perseverance.

6. Conclusion

Coaching and mentoring can deliver remarkable results in an organisation if well positioned, well planned, and well implemented. Stakeholder involvement is critical.

The need for leadership development and the need for skilled people at all levels demands the use of a range of well managed programmes, coaching and mentoring among them.

HR practitioners must become knowledgeable and skilled in the management of these programmes.

COMPILED AT THE SA BOARD OF PEOPLE PRACTICES BY:

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SABPP FACT SHEET SERIES

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