



Association for Coaching UK Executive Coaching Report Dec 2003

1.0 Objective

The objective of the survey is to get a better understanding of the nature of Executive Coaching in the United Kingdom - to include the perceived needs of clients, the benefits obtained through coaching currently practiced, and the likely future of coaching.

2.0 Methodology

In September 2003 a questionnaire was sent out to members of the Association of Coaching (AC), and to other individuals and organisations involved in Executive Coaching. With a sampling of just under of 50 responses, this report begins to provide some insight into the executive coaching market.

3.0. Summary

3.1 Preferred Method of Coaching - By far the preferred method of coaching is:

- Face-to-face meetings (97%)
- Telephone sessions (71%)
- Group coaching (43%)

Coaching traditionally has been delivered on a one-to-one basis however, as these results illustrate group coaching is also an acceptable and used medium.

3.2 Most popular reasons for clients seeking an Executive Coach

- Career-related issues (54%)
- Personal development goals (51%)

However, clients typically seek support in many aspects of work related life. Areas where coaches have added most for clients is in raising awareness of their own personal development needs and their purpose (vision/direction/goals).

3.3 Assessments, methodological frameworks, or 360 tools

Over 50% of coaches use a variety of these tools, possibly reflecting the increasing trend in importance of measuring the improvements that coaching can bring.

3.4 Chartered Society or professional body?

Overall, 71% of Executive Coaches responding in this survey believed creating a chartered society or professional body will improve the standing and recognition of the coaching profession.

4.0 Demographics

4.1 Structure

- Over three-quarters of this survey's respondents have their own coaching company, or are an independent.
- A third of coaches work for an associate either solely or in addition to having their own practice.

4.2 Income from coaching

- Three-quarters of all respondents earn less than £49K from coaching related business, and just over half of those earn less than £25k.

It appears likely that coaching is just one stream of income for people rather than their sole income. And coaches are likely to have a mixture of 'life' clients as well individual executive clients.

- Nearly two thirds of coaches have a total of 1 to 10 coaching clients a month, while for 50% of the respondents, the number of executive clients will be limited to 5 or less a month.

5.0 Results

5.1 Industry Issues

- Clients' lack of understanding of what gains are possible is the main issue facing coaches offering executive coaching is as stated by just over a third of respondents.
- However, there is clearly an expectancy that the awareness of coaching will grow (71%) and it will mostly likely happen through promotion (57%); demonstration of results (54%), while others are expect to come to coaching as they become **aware** of their need (29%).
- Another issue currently confronting coaches is the building of their personal/business credibility (23%), while an issue for the coaching industry as a whole is perhaps the concern surrounding coaches with poor training (23%).
- Other issues include market visibility (14%) and loneliness (9%).

The above are several issues the **Association for Coaching** have already recognised and will proactively address in 2004 through increased activity of their corporate programme of coaching workshops and the co-coaching forums.

5.2 Future of Coaching

Delivery - in the future it is believed that Executive Coaching will be delivered by a number of sources including:

- HR organisations
- Outplacement consultancies
- Individuals
- Specialist coaching companies and
- Internal coaches of commercial organisations

To become coach, the majority of respondents stated that they expected a coach to have an accreditation, or some form of qualification.

- The most popular specified qualification was a combination of psychology/sociology with management training/ (20%),
- A third thought business experience was needed.

Ultimately this may lead to the creation of a chartered society or professional body such as the AC to improve standards and professional recognition, an outcome desired by just less than three quarters of the Executive Coaches responding

Technology - considered to have a key role to play in delivery systems (49%), and how it will influence coaching. 11% of respondents expect technology will bring new tools. For example virtual one-to-one meetings will be enabled and additional resources such as e-learning can be utilised to accelerate and generally improve the process.

5.3 Reasons and Rational for Coaching

Respondents primarily use Executive Coaches for:

Career-related issues (54%) or to *improve their own personal performance at work* across a range of topics such as business development - 29% and skills training - 49%)

Few clients initially search for personal development in areas such as self-confidence and self-esteem. However, coaches regard personal development requirements as one area that 1:2 times may not be initially obvious to clients but comes to light as a result of the coaching intervention.

Creating a vision and finding a direction is also a revelation for clients, according to 37% of coaches.

5.4 Coaching methods

By far the preferred method of coaching is face-to-face meetings (97%) but telephone sessions are also popular (71%). Coaching traditionally has been delivered on a one-to-one basis. However, group coaching is also an acceptable and used medium. It is used by 43%, of the survey based. Resources such as books (31%) and e-learning (29%) are often used, while coaching sessions in instances are supplemented by emails (11%) and seminars.

5.5 Coaching toolkit

Two thirds of Executive Coaches use standard assessment tools, slightly less use 360 feedback and a half use psychometric testing. While the standard tools are popular some coaches also use their own systems. The most popular methodological frameworks used are **NLP, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Jung, Rogers** and frameworks that draw from a range of approaches. There are also a variety of non-psychological models implemented for business coaching.

5.6 Measurement

The importance of measurement is considerable. For half of the respondents' clients it is very important to have measurements.

- 37% of respondents stated it is high for their clients
- 40% said it is becoming increasingly so

Highlighting the growing need to develop cost/benefit models. An area the Association for Coaching is currently researching as part of its ROI project with Penna.

The Success Criteria for the majority of coaches:

Currently the measurement process is through a variety of forms, which could either be qualitative or quantitative method.

- Against goals set and objectives achieved (60%)
- Feedback (29%)
- 360 feedback (14%)
- Questionnaires (11%).

6.0 Research Implications

1. Creation of awareness campaigns to explain what coaching is, so coaches do not have to start with the basic 'sell' but can focus on the specific benefits and value-add they can deliver
2. Ethical standards for executive coaches to raise the profile of coaching and ensure businesses are provided with a memorable and profitable service
3. Formal qualifications / accreditations for executive coaches
4. Formation of a chartered society
5. Models, frameworks etc. to enable coaches to provide demonstrable benefits as a result of coaching
6. Minimum training requirements, a 2 day weekend course is unlikely to deliver lasting and effective results for clients

7.0 Conclusions

Based on this initial study Executive Coaching appears as to be a growing sector. However, its success is likely to be determined by the quality and professionalism of coaches and their ability to deliver demonstrable value to their clients. Value will not just be a quantitative measure. Clients will expect their coaches' approaches, methods, tools etc. to become more sophisticated, as they learn how to do the basics for themselves. Clients will demand a more aware and considered coaching space as they tap further into their deeper more hidden reserves of potential.

Coaching bodies such as the Association for Coaching recognise they can be of tremendous support to the Executive Coaching industry sector, in particular raising the profile of coaching within the business and corporate community through their network of contacts and media work. The AC has also established an organisational coaching forum for Executive Coaches to come together to share knowledge, collaborate on projects, and develop professionally.

Looking to the future the AC intend to build on the survey conducted in September 2003 to bring updated research reports to the Executive Coaching community on at least an annual basis.

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