

Impact of Executive Coaching on Small Businesses and Franchisees

by

Steven Thomas Whiteside

ABSTRACT

The question for this research was: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees? Six volunteer franchisees participated in 3-month coaching engagements, where different coaching methods and philosophies were utilized, such as co-active, facilitative, cognitive-behavioral, leadership, and positive as well as other executive coaching methods from which it was hoped franchisees would benefit.

An independent professional coach interviewed the participants at the end of six sessions. Through narrative analysis and a qualitative approach, the participants' experiences of being coached were reviewed in depth to discover if they found the coaching experience successful.

The outcome of the research showed that overwhelmingly, the participants found the executive coaching experience to be a positive one. Four main findings were revealed: (a) coachees were the ones who decided if the coaching was successful or not for them, (b) participants had not set high expectations for their coaching experience, (c) participants identified six main categories of learning, and (d) trust between coach and coachee was built at the first coaching session.

Participants identified the most significant competencies they had learned communication, time management, confidence building, how to clear their mind, and business development. Six conclusions were developed to help coaches in their future work with franchisees and small businesses: (a) previous background of a coach is important for a

successful coaching engagement; (b) success is achieved through meeting goals, facilitating change, and learning; (c) trust between the coach and coachee is a necessity; (d) multiple factors influence future hiring of a coach; (e) coaching can enhance an inner understanding through learning and change; and (f) through developing their own emotional intelligence and self-awareness skills, franchisees will be more able to resolve issues with their franchisors.

Lastly, I developed a theory of the 7 Cs, which reflects the seven large bodies of knowledge that can be worked on for a lifetime and from which all franchisees can benefit: create trust, confidence building, clear and effective communication, concentrated time management, continuous learning, coordinated business development, and clear the mind. To make sure no harm came to the participants, Fielding Graduate University's research ethics policy was strictly followed.

Key words: co-active coaching, cognitive-behavioral coaching, leadership coaching, positive coaching, executive coaching, communication, time management, confidence building, franchisee, franchisor, franchise, business development

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I must dedicate this dissertation to family. I have learned over the years that if one is blessed with a supportive and loving family, life not only becomes easier but also more meaningful. In my situation, I could have never overcome my obstacles without the help, support, and at many times, the pushing from all of my family. So, to you family, and to all families who support each other, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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Learning has never been easy for me. I have dyslexia and have always been labelled learning disabled. So instead of learning, I went into the business world to learn. After owning many private business colleges, starting the Franchise Leadership Center, and being a serial entrepreneur, I chose to go back to university and learn on a different platform through scholarly work. I hope I have made the scholarly world as proud as I can. I have a totally new respect for the scholarly world and am glad that I can be a part of both the practitioners' world and the scholars' world. For that, I thank Fielding and all of the students I have been lucky enough to meet. Thank you for your sharing and the growth you have allowed me to have.

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saying how proud of me you are, but truly if that is so, I am only a mirror image of you.

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A FAMILY

F- fiercely loyal to those we love.

A- accepting each for who and what they are.

M- matchless in our hopes and dreams for one another.

I- instilling pride in our hard fought heritage.

L- learning about our past guides us in the future.

Y- you love and cherish the people of your heart.

By: Patricia Biddle (2012, para. 2)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I conducted research to help determine the effect of executive coaching on franchisees. Although there is an array of research on coaching and its effects on clients (Blakey, 2012; Chinsky, 2007; Duckworth & de Haan, 2009; Du Toit, 2007; Simon, 2009), there seems to be very little research specifically on coaching franchisees. Writers such as Murphy (2008) have tended to explain more about what the franchisee is doing wrong than how the franchisee can find the right answers for his or her specific need. Additionally, a number of articles have been written on what a franchisee should do (Luangsuwimol & Kleiner, 2004; Rahatullah & Raeside, 2008; Tikoo, 2005). However, there has been very little to no research on how coaching affects franchisees and, more importantly, how franchisees feel about the use of coaching and if it has any effect on their success.

In this chapter, I outline the introduction to my dissertation and explain why I have come to understand that this research is important. The background and context will be presented to explain what coaching has accomplished for others in the past and how it is used now. The focus of my research will be explained in the research question discussion. In the opportunity and significance section, the intent of the research is outlined with the hope that people can understand the uses of coaching for franchisees, as well as small- to medium-sized companies. An outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis concludes this chapter.

Background

Coaching is a relatively new field in human and organizational development. Although it was used in the corporate world in-house, the actual use of outside coaches seems to have started in the early 1980s, with the first coaching schools opened in the UK in 1988 (Drake, Brennan, & Gørtz, 2008). The term *executive coaching* became popular in the

late 1980s (Tobias, 1996). In 1996, over 60 journal articles, television and radio interviews, and newspaper articles were published on the topic of coaching (Tobias, 1996). It has been agreed that executive coaching stems from the science of psychology (Drake et al., 2008; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Rogers, 2008; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Coaching techniques have developed from many of our most-established fields and leaders, such as Carl Rogers, Carl Jung, Frederick Hudson, and Robert Kegan among others (Drake et al., 2008).

Coaching has grown so large in North America that the International Coaching Federation (2012b) reported that there are 15,800 coaches earning over \$707,000,000 in total revenue annually in North America. Globally, there are 47,500 coaches, in 117 countries, with total revenue of \$1,979,000,000. ICF reported that North America had an increase of 23% from 2006 to 2011 in all four trend indicators: (a) clients, (b) fees, (c) sessions, and (d) revenue. Latin America showed the largest growth, with 29% in the same four key trends. The lowest still showed a 19% growth, and that was in Eastern Europe. Based on these statistics, the International Coaching Federation has shown coaching is growing quickly across the globe.

Because the coaching field is a new area, there are many different ideas of what one needs to know or what skills one needs to have to be a successful executive coach. Many different skills can help one be an executive coach, such as broad managerial experience, familiarity with business and government worlds, knowledge of psychological dynamics, and an understanding of adult development (Levinson, 1996). Others have said that in co-active coaching, one needs to concentrate on and help the client discover, be aware, and make choices, thus empowering the client to decide what to do. Therefore, a coach's role can

entail empowering and supporting the client as the coaching relationship moves forward (Whitworth, 2007).

In our North American corporate business world, many young leaders enroll in or complete MBA programs. Often, they are taught finance, business models and practices, marketing, and sales. However, many of these young MBA graduates are not trained and do not understand important concepts behind leadership, such as using intuition, relationships, or communication.

Therefore, it is easy to understand why executive coaching has become a very popular corporate tool over the last few years: “Coaching is the most potent tool for inducing positive personal change, ensuring better than average odds for success, and making the change stick for the long term” (Eggers & Clark, 2000, p. 66). Eggers and Clark (2000) also mentioned research outcomes that show “executive coaching is twice as effective as behavior modeling” (p. 66). This may be why coaching is the fastest growing area in consulting companies as well as with sole practitioners (p. 66).

Executive coaching is often set aside for top executives of large companies. Much of the research talked about executive coaching being for “corporate America . . . [and] the world’s most admired corporations, from GE to Goldman Sachs, invest in coaching” (Horn, Elliott, & Forbringer, 2010, p. 50). It seems that smaller businesses have not used executive coaching as much. With hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on coaching in the United States alone (p. 66), coaching is a tool that smaller companies may find useful as well. Much of the research has shown that coaching is a very useful tool for clients: “Clients see measurable differences at the completion of a coaching engagement. Some gain enhanced thinking and decision-making skills while others come away with increased

interpersonal proficiency and self-esteem” (Chinsky, 2007, p. 53). Throughout the literature research, no reason was found as to why the elite or wealthy companies should be the only ones benefiting from executive coaching. I found myself asking, “Is there any reason that small businesses should not also be able to benefit from coaching?”

My research focused more on the medium to small companies and, specifically, franchisees. For the purposes of this research, franchisees are also considered entrepreneurs. Franchisees must learn to run a business and ultimately be responsible for their business, which is what all entrepreneurs must do as well. In a study of 12 entrepreneurs using executive coaches, Audet and Couteret (2012) found that the entrepreneurs had confidence in the coach’s ability to help. Another success factor identified by Audet and Couteret was the positive relationships formed between entrepreneur and coach, and another factor of the coaching relationship was the contract or the oral agreement made between the entrepreneur and the coach during their sessions (p. 528). It seems that when the goals of the entrepreneur were not met, the contract was not respected (pp. 526-527). Therefore, in conducting the coaching engagements of this research, the focus was on clearly setting the contract at the start of the coaching relationship, which proved to be a key factor.

This dissertation encompasses many ideas common in executive coaching, such as evidence-based coaching, small businesses, franchisees, franchisors, relationships, and how to leverage a coaching relationship to see if a company’s success can be enhanced through coaching. The idea of success is an issue in itself, but one of the aspects of this research was to define what success is to the particular franchisee being coached. This information helped define my research.

Context

Because no research could be found that addressed how coaching affects franchisee success, the intent was that this research would show the effects of coaching franchisees. As more organizations are trying to create collaborative leaders and build communication skills (Bennet & Bennet, 2004, p. 147; Whiteside, 2009, p. 78), it was hard to understand why there has not been more research specifically on franchisees using coaching to become better leaders or collaborative leaders.

As already noted, the International Coaching Federation (2012b) recently reported on the growth of coaching throughout the world, noting that globally, there are 47,500 coaches. In 2006, the International Coaching Federation estimated there were a minimum of 30,000 coaches worldwide. However, these two numbers cannot be compared to each other as the International Coaching Federation used different methodologies to obtain these numbers. What is clear from these statistics is that coaching and the numbers of coaches are growing. If coaching can be so successful for so many business executives, leaders, and managers, how will coaching affect the success of franchisees? In addressing this question through my research, the intent was to raise franchise organizations' interests in looking at executive coaching as an option to help solve problems and groom leaders so that in the future, franchisees and franchisors would turn to coaching when needed. Data presented in this research report can be used by franchisors to identify when they might need help from outside professionals and to provide reasons why this may be an appropriate option.

This research focused on how franchisees felt about their coaching experience. Many members in the Vancouver chapter of an organization called Entrepreneurs Organization were asked if they could suggest any franchisees as potential participants for this research.

All of the names suggested were local in the Vancouver area, and six of the people contacted agreed to participate in the research, all of whom were franchisees. I coached the franchisees who participated in the research.

Coaching is a complex and multifaceted type of interaction (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002). Although no one type of coaching theory has been specifically used, different methods from the popular theories are presented around evidence-based coaching (Stober & Grant, 2006; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011), mindful coaching (Silsbee, 2010), and engaged coaching (O'Neill, 2007). It is very important that coaches use theories that their clients need, which is why it was necessary to gain knowledge about the various theories that could be used in a successful coaching experience.

I am certified by the International Coaching Federation (ICF), have my Professional Coaching Certification, and coach using the core competencies of the ICF (2011). ICF has developed core competencies to make sure that it can hold a strong rigor to how professional coaches work with clients. These core competencies are the only real governing set of rules that I cannot change position on as an ICF-certified professional coach. These core competencies are presented in Table 1.

Separate from these core competencies are many different coaching philosophies, and the different models a coach can use will be developed further in Chapter 2. Although there is no right way, there are preferred ways for business coaching as opposed to personal coaching. Evidence-based models exist that are tied to science (Stober & Grant, 2006) as well as more theoretical philosophies in coaching, such as co-active coaching (Whitworth, 2007).

Table 1

*Core Competencies that Govern a Certified Professional Coach*¹

Core Competency	Description
A. Setting the foundation	1. Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards 2. Establishing the coaching agreement
B. Co-creating the relationship	3. Establishing trust and intimacy with the client 4. Coaching presence
C. Communicating effectively	5. Active listening 6. Powerful questioning 7. Direct communication
D. Facilitating learning and results	8. Creating awareness 9. Designing actions 10. Planning and goal setting 11. Managing progress and accountability

I am trained in many different methods of coaching, and for this research, it was my responsibility to find the proper method for each research participant. Just as cars run on many different grades of gasoline, clients also need to be helped with different methods of coaching. Like most cars, they can run on any grade of gasoline, but by choosing the right grade, the car performs at its highest level. A coaching client can experience the same high performance by his or her choice of a coach. When I have been able to find the best approach or methodology to connect with my clients, they too have been more effective in

¹ *ICF Core Competencies* (para. 3-6), International Coaching Federation, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/core-competencies/> Copyright 2011 by International Coaching Federation. Adapted with permission.

the coaching relationship and in realizing the change that could come from the coaching engagement.

Research Question

The research question for my dissertation was: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees? To achieve a more in-depth understanding of responses to this question, six subquestions were asked.

1. What learning was gained from executive coaching?
2. Is executive coaching useful for franchisees?
3. What were the expectations of the participant and were they met?
4. What is success in an executive coaching experience and was success achieved?
5. Was trust built with the coach from the beginning and why or why not?
6. What worked in this coaching engagement and why?

After six coaching sessions held over a 3-month period, participants were interviewed by an independent, qualified coach who focused on a number of key questions.

Participant's past experience with coaching. Basic questions to find out what a participant's past experience has been in coaching were asked of the participants.

Participants were also asked what it felt like, to make the commitment to be coached in this research project.

The coaching relationship. Questions asked during this research sought to find if participants felt like they had set up clear expectations and outcomes with the coach. They were also asked if the expectations were met and what these expectations were.

Learning. Participants were asked what they felt they had learned in the coaching experience and if what they learned would affect the success of the way they continue to

work in the future. Participants were asked if the learning was more or less what they expected it would be from when they started.

Challenges. Participants were asked if the coaching was helpful and what change they felt would come from the coaching. Specific questions were asked as to whether the participant felt that the coaching helped him or her work through any specific challenges. Lastly, participants were asked to recount an experience that illustrated that change had taken place.

Trust. Participants were asked if they felt trust in the coach, and if so, how long did it take to gain that trust. They were also asked to identify the factors that helped build that trust and what could have been done differently to build more trust.

Closing. In the last portion of the interview, participants were asked if they felt the coaching was a positive experience and what made it positive or not positive. Participants were asked if they would consider hiring a coach in the future. Each participant was asked if she/he felt other franchisees would benefit from coaches and why. Participants were asked about what a franchisee could particularly learn from coaching, as well as what the coach could have done better to improve on the coaching experience.

By coaching franchisees for a number of months, the intent was to discover if the franchisee had gained a good understanding as to how executive coaching did or did not work for him or her. It was anticipated that this experience would have an effect on the franchisees' business and might even affect their personal lives as well.

Next, it was important to understand who the different players were in my research. As the research was focused on coaching franchisees, it was important to understand what a

franchise is as well as what a franchisor is. Therefore, the differences between franchise, franchisees, and franchisors are explained.

Overview of Franchise, Franchisor, and Franchisee

My research dealt with small- to medium-sized companies and, specifically, franchisees. In order to understand this research, one should understand more about a franchise, franchisor, and a franchisee. Although this report is not meant to be a business lesson, my goal is to provide an overall understanding of their differences and definitions.

Franchise. A franchise is normally an organization that sells its goods or brands and systems to a franchisee for a fee. There are normally two kinds of franchises in North America: (a) product or trade name franchise, and (b) business format franchise. In legal terms related to North American franchisees, three situations must be present for an organization to be considered a franchise: (a) substantial association with trademark, (b) payment of fee, and (c) marketing plan/community of interest/ significant control. Under a substantial association, the organization is relying on its trademarks or commercial symbols to sell and recognize their company (Grueneberg & Solish, 2010, p. 11).

Under a payment-of-fee situation, a fee is paid by the franchisee to the franchise organization, often called the franchisor. This fee can be for the rights to use the trademarks and symbols and for systems that the franchisor has developed. Usually, there is an upfront fee to gain entry into the franchise and have the rights to use the product and trademark, and then there is an ongoing franchise fee that is usually a percentage of sales for the franchisee (p. 11). The marketing plan/community of interest/significant control approach is a harder element to define, but it is when a prescribed marketing plan is given to the franchisee on

how to sell and market the products or trade name. Community of interest is also difficult to define, but Grueneberg and Solish (2010) have defined it:

At a minimum, there must be a continuing financial interest between the parties and they must be interdependent. Factors that are salient in determining whether a community of interest exists include the length of time the parties have been involved with one another; the extent and nature of their obligations; the relative amount of time and revenue attributable to the licensor's products or services; the percentage of revenues received from the licensor's products or services; any territorial grant; the use of the licensor's trademarks by the putative franchisee; the investment in inventory, facilities, and goodwill; the proportion of the putative franchisee's personnel that work on this part of the business; advertising expenditures for the licensor's products or services; and the extent of any supplemental services. (p. 12)

The last part of the third element is control. If the franchisor has control over the franchisees in terms of how they must operate their business and gives significant assistance to the franchisee in order for them to operate, this would be proof that the franchisor has control over the franchisee, and hence, the organization would be considered a franchise (p. 12).

Ultimately, a franchise is an organization that enters into a long-term agreement with another organization for a payment. For that payment, the franchisor grants rights to the franchisee for their trademark and systems, and the franchisor plays an important role in helping the franchisee be successful through systems, training, and up-to-date product. Although these elements do not always exist in the franchise relationship, these elements are the generally accepted principles behind what a franchise is (Luangsuvimol & Kleiner, 2004, p. 27).

Franchisor. In the context of this paper, the term *franchisor* is used in business terms as the person or group of people or the legal entity that owns the trademarks, symbols, and systems. Often, the franchisor is used interchangeably with the word *franchise*. The word franchise refers to what the franchise does, and the word franchisor refers to who is

doing it. The simplest definition of franchisor found was: “one that grants a franchise” (“Franchisor,” 2013, para. 1). The importance of the franchisor in my research was the focus on the franchisor/franchisee relationship. This has often been a contentious issue for franchisees. While it is obvious that franchisors and franchisees should get along and work as a team, research has found this is often not the case (Whiteside, 2009).

Franchisee. A franchisee is the person or organization that purchases the rights from the franchisor. Usually, this is accomplished through a legal entity such as a corporation, and in these cases, the franchisor is still considered the person or organization who owns that legal identity of the brand, but not the legal identity of the franchisee’s company. However, the owner of an individual Subway or McDonalds is considered the franchisee.

Franchisees purchase franchises for two main reasons. First is the ability to own a company without having to start from a concept idea, thus they anticipate having a higher probability of success. Harmon and Griffiths (2008) explained that the “greatest benefit is the minimization of risk due to the mode of market entry” (p. 260). The second reason is benefits, such as quality product, brand, standardization, and/or brand, because all franchisees operate under the franchisor’s systems. The standardization brings a trusted system and a type of value to franchisees (p. 260), which they would not have if they had opened a business on their own.

Franchisees are dependent on the franchisor for many of the most important parts of their business, such as brand and product. To have the best opportunity for success, a franchisee must build a positive relationship with the franchisor: “In a nutshell, no prospective franchisee should forget that buying into a franchise system means becoming involved in a symbiotic relationship” (English, 1989, p. 49).

The franchisee's responsibility is to stay within the confines of the franchise agreement and then grow his or her business just like any other business. Many franchisees rely on the franchisor for growth and profit, which can be a mistake. Being a franchisee means working within a franchise agreement, but a franchisee should run their company just like any other company. Ultimately, franchisees must take responsibility for their company, as would any owner of any business, and use the franchisor as a tool and extra support. Coaching can help a franchisees more clearly identify their goals and objectives, including how to achieve them.

Opportunity and Purposes

The largest opportunity and purpose of this research was to find the answers to my main question, does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees, and to find answers to the subquestions associated with it. Not one research participant had ever hired a coach outside of their organization to help them accomplish goals or to help them move forward in their business. The only coaches who were used were provided by the franchisor and given for free to the franchisee. Although this is the predominant practice, it still begs the question: Why were franchisees not hiring their own coaches?

A common thought amongst franchisees has been that the franchisor will give them what they need to operate the business. Franchisors feel that their systems support and sustain franchisees with what they need to be successful. When one really looks at this, the flaw is that one system can be built that works for many, but since so many different types of people buy franchises, how can any one system account for all of these variances? This research offers alternatives to only working with the franchisor or the franchisee, but also shows how coaching can be a positive force for both franchisors and franchisees.

As this was only one research project, it was decided to limit the research to outcomes in the hopes that if franchisees could see the significant success of using coaches, they might be more inclined to try coaching when it would fit their needs. Even if their choice was in-house coaching, that would still be a large benefit for the franchisee. Frost (2007) explained how in-house coaching can be effective: “The in-house coach and mentor is an incredibly valuable resource to a company, not least because, in theory at least, it can be a much more cost-effective solution than using specialist external coaches” (p. 52). He went on to explain that moving to a coaching culture should be treated like a change initiative: “Developing a coaching culture is a business change and should be treated in the same way as any other change initiative” (p. 54).

This research provided the opportunity to identify how effective coaching can be to franchisees. Ultimately, whether it is outside coaching or in-house coaching is a question for another research project. However, through looking at the literature, it seemed that both types of coaching have much to offer the client.

After reviewing extensive literature sources, there still seemed to be an idea that coaching is for the senior executives or CEOs. Rogers (2008) wrote that “having a coach is still unusual and is reserved for very senior people with performance problems” (p. 5). The purpose of this research was to examine if coaching could be useful for franchisees as well as to answer why franchisees who have utilized coaching found it useful or not.

A major theme revealed from this research was how franchisees measured success of their coaching engagement. Authors have written their ideas about this subject, such as “the primary measure of success of executive coaching is its impact on the development of more effective workplace behavior” (Passmore, 2007, p. 69). Others have felt that the success for

a coaching client is based on having the best coach and using methods that work best for the client. Peterson (2007) wrote,

The best coaches will always be those who coach with an open attitude of curiosity and interest, who meet people where they are who accept them for what they are, and who project genuine desire to be helpful to each person on their own terms. (p. 270)

There are many ways to measure success and excellent coaching. It cannot be brought down to any one specific approach. Ultimately, every coaching relationship is different. The purpose of this research was to find out what these participants thought success was for them and participants' identification of why their coaching relationship in this research was or was not successful.

Significance

The significance behind this research was twofold. First, this research has formed the first piece of research I could find that dealt exclusively with how executive coaching affects franchisees. Secondly, the research inquiry provided a process to open the minds of franchisees and take a closer look at executive coaching as an option when faced with difficulties, challenges, or when franchisees just wanted to grow or improve their situation. The hope was that this research would impact franchisors so that they might reach out to executive coaches more often when their franchisees are having difficulties, need to overcome challenges, or just maximize their performance.

Daniel Goleman (2006), the father of emotional intelligence, wrote extensively about how to improve emotional intelligence and how to have a more successful life. Many of the topics he wrote about are practiced in executive coaching, which included, but were not limited to optimism, self-efficacy, resisting impulse, coping with anxiety, and dealing with stress and inept criticism. In my practice, if clients can even start to think about some of

these issues and how they can affect their lives, coaching becomes a more powerful tool. In my years of coaching, all of these subjects have come up in conversation in one way or another. I have always felt that everyone deserves the right to deal with them—not only the high-powered executives in large corporations, but also the smaller companies like franchisees and small business owners, which has also been supported by Silsbee (2010) and Stober and Grant (2006).

As a practitioner/scholar, it is my duty to help find answers that the business world can use to become a better place. I want to add to academia, but that is only one goal. The other goal through this research was to find answers coaches and clients can use right away in the real world.

In Chapter 2, the important ideas behind what coaching is, the different theories used in coaching, and important ideas that help make coaching a useful tool for businesses and for the people who work at the businesses are introduced.

In Chapter 3, the methodology used to accomplish the research is explained, which covers the importance of qualitative information gathering and how narrative stories and ideas can give deep and rich meaning from the participant to the research itself.

In Chapter 4, the results of the research are explained. The findings are detailed to provide an understanding of why coaching can be an effective method to help organizations grow and overcome difficulties. Findings include stories that the participants told about how coaching helped them learn and grow and why they came to feel coaching is an important tool for franchisees.

Lastly, in Chapter 5, the conclusions and recommendations that evolved directly from analyzing research participants' input are provided. Ultimately, the benefits study

participants experienced are shared, which have provided ideas how this may work for other organizations that may want to try coaching to help them in their organization.

Ultimately, coaching is about many different ideas and theories. Coaching works in different ways, and no one method of coaching is right for every person who seeks coaching. Some of the latest ideas in coaching are explained in the next chapter, including some of the current research as to how coaching has been used successfully for organizations other than franchisees.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are so many different ways to coach a client that it could take hundreds of pages to just explain them. In this literature review, the theories in coaching that are most popular and the ones I use the most are explained. The final discussion relates to current research on the benefits of coaching and why coaching can be so helpful for people: in particular, business owners and executives. What success is to a client and why organizations and individuals use coaching are also discussed. The goal for this research has been to add a new area of research around helping franchisees be more productive through executive coaching.

Methods and Philosophies in Coaching

The many different coaching philosophies and the different models a coach can use are examined in this section. Although there is no right way, there are preferred ways for business coaching as opposed to personal coaching. Evidence-based models exist that are tied to science (Stober & Grant, 2006) as well as more theoretical philosophies in coaching, such as co-active coaching (Whitworth, 2007). In this section, some coaching options and their strengths and weaknesses are shared as to when they are used for businesses and, in particular, franchisees.

It should be noted that some individuals in the human resources field feel that coaches should be psychologists or behavioral scientists. However, most coaches operating today do not have this type of training, and many of the coaches practicing today do not always use coherent approaches and scientifically validated theories (Grant et al., 2010). Furthermore, many human resources personnel feel that although psychologists may seem to have the training, they may not be the right type of coaching practitioner for the organization's staff

(Grant et al., 2010), particularly because coaching and counseling have distinct differences. This makes coaching that much more unique and elusive to the average client, whether that is an organization or an individual, who may not know how to make a choice about who to choose for a coach.

Because of this, I conclude with ideas as to which philosophies can work best for coaching in a business realm. The case for using a multitude of different coaching styles as well as models to best help individual clients reach their set goals are shared. It is believed that “any method or technique contributes only a small portion to the success of a coaching session” (Szabó, 2009, p. 9); therefore, different methods of coaching can work with different clients for different reasons.

Some philosophies and models used in coaching are based in science, such as humanistic psychology, cognitive-behavioral therapy, positive psychology, transactional analysis, adult development social constructionism, leadership, and team and group behavior (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Yet other philosophies are more esoteric and steeped in the coaching culture as a coaching approach only, such as co-active coaching (Whitworth, 2007), executive coaching (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002), mindful coaching (Silsbee, 2010), gestalt-based coaching (Simon, 2009; Wright, 2012a, 2012b), and brief coaching (Szabó, 2009), to mention just a few.

There is no right or wrong way to coach; this is part of the coaching dilemma and why so many different ideas about coaching exist. As noted by Du Toit (2007), “A succinct definition of coaching remains an enigma” (p. 282). My goal is to provide a more in-depth examination of some of the more popular ideas in coaching and why they are popular.

In a recent ICF (2012b) global coaching study, when asking coaches what theoretical model they work from, 58% chose the leadership model, 35% used organizational development, and 28% said organizational psychology. Interestingly enough, 13% said they did not work from any theoretical model at all. It is common for coaches to use a mix of theoretical models, and ICF identified that “the mix of theoretical models on which coaches draw varies substantially according to the client’s position” (p. 108).

Consequently, not only do different coaches choose from a combination of mixed methods of coaching, but the type of client being coached seems to also have an effect on the models a coach will draw upon. The theoretical coaching models are discussed, including co-active coaching, facilitative coaching, leadership coaching, cognitive-behavioral coaching, positive coaching, mindfulness-based coaching, and brief solution-focused coaching. Some are perceived to be connected to leadership, organizational development, and adult education, but the ones discussed in this section are more specific to coaching and less specific to the science of psychology, starting with a popular model, co-active coaching, which is just over 10 years old, but is very popular now among newly trained coaches.

Co-active coaching. Co-active coaching is the main model for the Coaches Training Institute founded in 1992, which is now one of the largest trainers of coaching in the world (Whitworth, 2007). Whitworth (2007) is one of those who coined the term co-active coaching, which she has defined as “Co-active refers to the fundamental nature of a coaching relationship in which the coach and the client are active collaborators. In co-active coaching, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the client’s needs” (p. 3).

Co-active coaching can be used with many types of people in many different kinds of organizations. For example, it has been used with health professionals for leadership and professional development (Martínez Sánchez, 2010, p. 52b). Many young practitioners, faculty members, and students would like to have some form of co-active coaching support to help accomplish their career goals of professional and leadership development (p. 52b).

In co-active coaching, inquiry and curiosity are key elements to building a relationship with the client. By asking questions with no expected outcome, the coach can discover much about a person and the issues he or she may want to deal with (Whitworth, 2007). By asking open-ended questions, the coach can open the conversation to allow the client to go to a place he or she want to be. As noted by Tofade (2010), these types of questions are considered powerful questions: “Powerful questions are not ones with yes or no answers and are not typically ‘why’ questions as these types of questions can put the person in a defensive mode or limit opportunities for inward reflection and truthful expression” (para. 6).

When the coach asks a powerful question, it opens the doors to reflection and the ability for the coachee to understand (Tofade, 2010). Curiosity allows clients to find their own answers and to open their world up in a way that allows them to be honest with themselves (Whitworth, 2007). A powerful question will “evoke personal exploration” (p. 70) by the client. In this research, some powerful open-ended questions were asked that allowed the client to self-explore: for example,

1. What did being coached feel like to you?
2. How can you improve the time you spend with your employees?
3. What can you do to lead your organization towards its mission?

A powerful question is created when the coach asks something that provides the opportunity to think, expand, and come up with new ideas (Whitworth, 2007). Curiosity is a way to ask questions to draw clients out and get them interested in sharing and exploring answers (Whitworth, 2007), without the fear of right or wrong, good or bad, yes or no. These powerful questions are an important aspect of co-active coaching. Additionally, to develop a co-active coaching relationship, a coach must master the skill of listening. Simply stated, “To be listened to is a striking experience, partly because it is so rare” (p. 31). When clients feel they are being listened to, they open up, feel safer, have more trust, and feel secure. The good news for coaches is that listening can be learned, and it can be mastered: “Masterful coaching requires masterful listening, attuned and adept, and the ability to maximize the listening interaction” (p. 32).

I once was told by a friend that “adults do not listen; they just wait to be heard.” So, although listening is not natural for most, it is important for all coaches. It takes work to listen, it is not passive, it takes action, and we use all of our senses to do so. Therefore, a coach’s listening skill has a great impact on the client (de Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011; Whitworth, 2007). This does not mean a coach will never give advice; it just is important to know that a coach is better off listening than giving advice in most cases. As Hicks and McCracken (2009) wrote, “Successful coaching involves mainly listening and questioning rather than telling” (p. 54).

The last important part of co-active coaching is maybe the one part a client will measure the most, which is the action or change. Action is probably the number one reason a client hires a coach (Whitworth, 2007), which enables the client to move forward and deepen his or her understanding. This is the point at which the client is truly learning: “In fact, it’s

this cycle of action and learning over time that leads to sustained and effective change” (p. 87). Most clients feel they want to be a big part of the change: “The co-active model is a natural fit and provides a basis for clients who desire to actively participate in the coaching process” (Brock, 2008, p. 57). Co-active coaching may be one of the newer models in coaching, but it is being used by many coaches, and it is the contrary approach of facilitative coaching.

Facilitative coaching. Some organizations would like to have a more direct way of change and prefer consulting over coaching. In facilitative coaching, the coach may even start with the organization before the coach meets the client. These coaches are also referred to as on-boarding experts. In many cases, “the coach’s job is to ensure that new leaders take the steps that experience and leadership theory strongly suggest will lead to better business outcomes” (Berman & Bradt, 2006, p. 246). This type of coaching would be contrary to co-active coaching in many ways. First, the facilitative coach would already have an agenda and would be working to that agenda before the client is even met. Additionally, the coach would be leading the client more than allowing the client to be curious and to find the answers for him/herself (p. 247). The company might look for someone who has more knowledge as an expert in their industry and who might even be a consultant who feels comfortable with knowing what needs to be accomplished in their industry and how to accomplish the goal even before meeting the client “In the ideal world, the facilitative coach begins before day one with a leader, providing practical models and recommendations for creating a good initial impression” (p. 246). Alternatively, the company may look for a coach who can help its manager engage in more effective and alternative ways of thinking and behaving, often referred to as cognitive-behavioral coaching.

Cognitive-behavioral coaching. Coaching is a cognitive procedure (Stober & Grant, 2006). In the 1960s, Aaron Beck observed that clients would have internal dialogue, which might be revealed during coaching sessions (McMahon, 2007). This helped him understand that thoughts and feelings are connected. From this, Beck started to understand that when people felt badly, they would tend to have negative thoughts; these he called automatic thoughts (p. 54). From these ideas, cognitive-behavioral theory, also known as CBT, was born (McMahon, 2007). By understanding the power of the connection between thoughts and feelings, one can help formulate the direction and feelings that can help the client be more productive and accomplish goals.

When a coach works with a client in identifying the types of thought he or she produces, the coach can understand the process of what will eventually change the future events in the client's life. "As a thought partner, I help my clients think with more depth, greater clarity, and less distortion—a cognitive process" (Stober & Grant, 2006, p. 103). Keeping this in mind, it is important to understand that our moods are directly connected to our thoughts. If we can be conscious of our thoughts, we will also be able to be proactive and conscious with our moods and feelings, which is a skill the cognitive-behavioral coach tries to develop with his/her client (p. 104).

Although the CBT field is large and encompasses many ideas and theories, there are some underlying ideas that carry throughout CBT. Ducharme (2004) said there are three fundamental assumptions at CBT's core. "1. cognitive appraisals of events can affect behavioral responses to those events . . . 2. cognitions may be accessed, monitored, and altered . . . [and] 3. changes to an individual's cognition can result in desired behavior change" (pp. 214-215).

CBT is also closely related to the rational-emotive theory (RET), which has identified that when people have unrealistic or faulty beliefs, they develop self-defeating habits that can cause negative consequences (Stober & Grant, 2006). RET and CBT are related and show the power of an individual's inner thoughts and the power these thoughts have on the outcome of the behavior therapy coaching clients receive (p. 105).

Cognitive-behavioral coaching works by asking questions in a way that facilitates guided discovery to allow client to come to his/her own conclusions and solutions (McMahon, 2007, p. 53). Neenan (2009) explained that this is also called Socratic questioning:

Derived from the Greek philosopher, Socrates, this stance focuses on asking a person a series of open-ended questions to help promote reflection; this, in turn, is likely to produce knowledge which is currently outside of her awareness and thereby enable her to develop more helpful perspectives and actions in tackling her difficulties. (p. 250)

Socratic questioning also “promotes awareness, allowing a more rational decision-making process to take place” (McMahon, 2007, p. 53).

Overall, cognitive-behavioral coaching is appropriate and successful for many reasons. It appeals to many executives due to its intuitive approach and its transparency. Executives will also appreciate the constant and honest feedback. Cognitive-behavioral coaching can also help with effectiveness in “managing high levels of stress and its negative side effects” (Neenan, 2009, p. 221). Furthermore, cognitive-behavioral coaching also empowers the client to realize she or he has the power to make change and open new perspectives, which are not all predestined (Neenan, 2008, p. 14).

By using a behavioral approach, the coach may stick to some of the assumptions that are important in coaching—mainly, that the coachee has the answers. Cognitive-behavioral

coaching may help the coach stay on the right track to empowering the coachee (Visser, 2010, p. 898), which may also entail using a leadership coaching style.

Leadership coaching. As long as there are leaders, leadership coaching will be in demand. Leaders live in a fast-paced world. Leaders, no matter what their title, are the key to any organization's success. From CEO to CFO or middle managers to employees who take leadership roles without the title, leaders are the people who take the rest of the team to the goal (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). ICF (2012b) found that 58% of all coaches surveyed said they pulled from the model of leadership coaching. Wildflower and Brennan (2011) noted that leadership coaching pulls from behavioral psychology and has been influenced by Drucker, Bennis, Collins, and Wheatley. Wildflower and Brennan noted that Drucker, who is considered to be the father of management,

focused on the need for the leader to think through and define the organization's mission, to energize others with vision and integrity, and to establish an environment that fosters trust so that individuals and the team might thrive. (p. 144)

These traits that Drucker spoke to are coachable issues that take time, thought, and reflection with a coach for the client to start to learn and master. Because leaders have followers, it is their responsibility to set a vision, build trust, and inspire the followers with passion and hope (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). This is precisely why leadership coaching can be so valuable.

Margaret Wheatley (2006) said, "We cannot continue to use information technology and management systems as gate keepers, excluding and predefining who needs to know what" (p. 107). Wheatley posited that the old ways of command and control will not work to develop a leader in today's modern ways of leadership. When one looks at how fast change comes to an organization, it is a wonder that leaders can ever catch up with the changes they

are handed. Therefore, leaders need to be ready for change, and leadership coaching is fast becoming a significant tool to help the leader prepare (Goleman, 2006; Wheatley, 2006).

Wildflower and Brennan (2011) listed many applications for leadership coaching, and they differed from theories to theorist (see Table 2).

Table 2

Applications for Leadership Coaching

Leadership Application	Supporting Scholar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage client to explore his/her strengths and weaknesses and to consider whether there are areas that he/she might benefit from; • Work with client to raise awareness of how she/he handles delegation; • Encourage client to build trust by engaging in clear, open, and honest communication. 	Drucker, Bennis, Collins, and Wheatley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your client to explore his or her leadership style and approach; • Help the client build awareness and understanding of emotional intelligence; • Challenge the client to develop those areas where he or she is not comfortable; • Challenge the client to listen for understanding without trying to fix a problem. 	Goleman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with client to clarify beliefs, values, and vision; • Encourage the client to gather feedback from direct reports, peers, and others to expand his or her perspective; • Work with client to raise personal self-awareness. 	Kouzes and Posner

Note: Compiled from Wildflower and Brennan (2011, pp. 145-149).

If one wants to be successful as an executive coach, one must master the skills it takes to use leadership coaching. The majority of coaches have pulled from the leadership coaching theory (ICF, 2012a), and it would be wise for every coach to be familiar with this theory and incorporate it into his or her coaching approach. As has been shown in this section, leadership coaching can be viewed as a positive approach to working with clients.

Positive coaching. Positive coaching comes from the theory of positive psychology (Drake et al., 2008; Gold, 2012; Seligman, 2007; Stober & Grant, 2006; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Where traditional psychology most often comes from a place of problems, fixing, and weakness, positive psychology builds upon a client's strengths and uses the positive power and attributes a client has within him or herself (Gold, 2012). Overall, positive psychology can be defined as "an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005, p. 410).

In positive coaching, the shift is away from removing pain to a focus on adding pleasure (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). When coaching with a positive intent, flourishing is a key goal for the client, recognizing that the "capacity to experience positive emotions may be a fundamental human strength central to the study of human flourishing" (p. 23). Wildflower and Brennan (2011) spoke to the research done by Fredrickson and Losada, who put forward that the "optimal positive-to-negative emotional ratio for flourishing is three to one" (p. 23). This alone showed the importance of positive coaching, as many executives do not have the opportunity to change this important ratio in their lives without the help of an executive coach.

Under the theory of positive coaching is the approach of appreciative inquiry, which “is regarded as a positive, strength-based operational approach to change, learning and development that seems most suitable to coaching mental toughness” (Drake et al., 2008, p. 121). There are many tools in the positive coaching tool case, and appreciative inquiry is just one. Other main theories in positive coaching include resilience, values in action, and the concept of flow (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). It can be seen from the literature that the number of different coaching models are vast and will keep growing, which is why so many coaches use a variety of these methods with a single client to achieve success.

In a study by Rust, Diessner, and Reade (2009), it was reported that students who were aware of and tasked to work on their strengths, as gauged by the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), had significant gains in life satisfaction as compared with students who were aware of their strengths but were not tasked to work on them. This study reasserted the emphasis of positive psychology on giving focus to strengths and how to further improve them, rather than focusing on weaknesses, illness, and defects. The Rust et al. study, however, did not find any significant differences in the increase in life satisfaction of students who were tasked to work on two strengths and students who were tasked to work on one strength and one weakness.

The use of positive psychology in the workplace has increased in recent years, as it is used integrally in coaching, mentoring, team-building, and overall organizational management (Kerns, 2011). However, because it is a relatively new field, little research has studied specifically how positive psychology works and what its exact effects are in the organizational setting. Further research into these issues is necessary to prove the effectiveness of this coaching approach.

Mindfulness coaching. The origins and history of mindfulness are rather difficult to trace, as it has roots in both psychology and Eastern contemplative traditions (Ben-Hur, Kinley, & Jonsen, 2012; Fries, 2009). The concept of mindfulness, however, is rather simple and is largely considered to be a way of life or a lifestyle that needs to be integrated into daily life in order for it to become truly effective (Collard & Walsh, 2008). Mindfulness is loosely defined as giving focused attention to the present moment nonreactively, without judgment, and as open-heartedly as possible (Fries, 2009; Hall, 2013). It necessitates the recognition of one's thoughts, emotions, and motivations and identifying and focusing on which ones support and further one's goals and agenda (Ben-Hur et al., 2012). The process helps in the recognition that one's actions need not be controlled by one's thoughts and that one can choose how to respond to such thoughts (Hall, 2013).

Given the generality and depth of its principles and core constructs, mindfulness has a wide range of applications, including stress-reduction (Fries, 2009; Zeller & Levin, 2013); addressing grief, anxiety, and depression (Jacobs & Blustein, 2008); mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (Hall, 2013); and professional and executive coaching (Ben-Hur et al., 2012; Collard & Walsh, 2008). Studies have shown that mindfulness training can significantly improve physical and mental health, increase one's ability to manage stress (Hall, 2013), and reduce anxiety and chronic pain (Collard & Walsh, 2008). In work organizations, such improvements can lead to increased efficiency, higher productivity, and reduced absences due to illness (Hall, 2013). Multiple applications of mindfulness in contemporary practice have become increasingly popular in recent years. Mindfulness-based stress reduction is used to address high stress levels, chronic pain, and other intrusive illness; mindfulness-based cognitive therapy helps clients suffering from recurring depression

through small-group therapy settings; and sensory awareness mindfulness training helps clients develop a better life/work equilibrium by balancing cognitive and emotive activities (Collard & Walsh, 2008).

In relation to coaching, mindfulness can be used to ensure that coaches retain the skills they learn through coaching by incorporating these new skills in their everyday tasks, not only at work but also in their personal lives. In their report, Ben-Hur and colleagues (2012) indicated that coaching executive teams towards better decision-making skills and processes would be greater if mindfulness techniques are used. Using mindfulness in coaching executives in teams or boards that often make critical decisions ensures that new skills and disciplines are instilled in each individual, thus improving their future decisions within the team and in another team. Specifically, using mindfulness coaching can potentially improve information flow among executive team members, enhance team each member's ability to articulate relevant information, and develop mindfulness in each individual executive to ensure the sustainability of the coaching intervention (Ben-Hur et al., 2012).

Brief solution-focused coaching. Similar to coaching founded on positive psychology concepts, brief solution-focused approaches emphasize a person's resilience, strengths, and resources, which teach how one can utilize such strengths in the attainment of goals and the enactment of positive behavioral change (Grant, 2012). As with positive psychology, solution-focused approaches evolved out of dissatisfaction with the traditional psychological approach of putting much focus and attention on weaknesses, illnesses, and problems. Solution-focused approaches proved to be more effective in enacting positive behavioral change by helping clients identify their strengths, capabilities, and available

resources and in facilitating the formulation of solutions that could address both current and future problems (Grant, 2012). The identifier term *brief* was used to emphasize how much time was saved when coaches and counselors started asking questions that led to the realization of a solution as compared to time spent when clients were asked to recall their problems and their perceived causes.

Although solution-focused approaches are relatively new, literature revealed that such approaches have been proven effective in addressing a wide range of problem situations, such as troubled marriages, suicidal tendencies, criminal behavior, and mental disorders such as schizophrenia (Grant, 2012). In the work environment, solution-focused approaches reveal that coaching can be highly effective even if given in a single session, thus implicating that a longer time duration is not necessary for successful coaching (Szabó, 2009). Brief solution-focused coaching provides a different perspective of useful, helpful, and effective coaching. While other approaches focus on the coach influencing the client, the key to solution-focused coaching is asking the right question in order to inspire a solution that would enact positive change (Szabó, 2009).

In order for a coach to ask the right questions that would inspire solutions and produce positive and active change, he must be able to make quick, well-founded assumptions during the initial contact with the client, thus shortening coaching time and producing quick results. First, the coach can assume that the first coaching session can be very useful and successful that the client may be able to continue the process of solution-finding on his own (Szabó, 2009). Second, because of their unique context, clients bring the relevant resources into the session, and the coach's task is to help the client analyze and start constructing a solution. Third, the coach may not need to know any detailed fact of the

problem or situational context to be of help; rather, the coach need only know the goals and the available resources that can be used to reach that goal (Szabó, 2009). Fourth, clients know best what may be helpful or useful for their own progress. Fifth, talking about possible solutions can create actual solutions. For example, the exchange of ideas, however disorganized or random, can inspire solutions instantaneously (Szabó, 2009).

Sixth, clients are able to describe their preferred future even without knowing if and how they might get there, and this ability further increases the probability of the occurrence of desired events (Szabó, 2009). Seventh, real antecedents of desired future outcomes exist. For example, the subconscious retains desirable past events that we perceive as desired future occurrences (Szabó, 2009). Eighth, it is assumed that progress is inevitable as an effect of the first assumption that clients will follow through with the process on their own. The ninth assumption is that coaches merely help clients realize solutions that are already available to them. In this perspective, coaches only offer a fresh set of eyes to see the context of the desired goal. Lastly, it is assumed that the coach is a listening witness to the path toward achieving the goal, and the actual work rests on the client (Szabó, 2009). These assumptions, however, are based on the extensive experience of a single professional coach, and other coaches may have similar, additional, or contradicting assumptions that they use in providing brief solution-focused coaching.

Factors that Contribute to the Effectiveness and Success of Coaching

Defining and measuring success in coaching is a complicated subject. The cause for such a complication lies in the possible differences in opinion of the coach and the trainee. While some may perceive coaching to be successful if the trainee learns and is able to demonstrate a certain skill or to respond adequately to some form of test or stimulus, others

may identify coaching success as specific behavioral changes. Research on the effectiveness of executive coaching is still inconclusive because of the lack of common criteria that can be used to assess such effectiveness across different corporate, academic, and public service settings (Smither, 2011). Additionally, as researchers and coaches have not established a detailed taxonomy of specific coaching goals, coaching success cannot also be readily measured through research (Smither, 2011). Due to the absence of these core research items, coaching success will be assumed and defined in this research as the success perceived by the client.

One factor that adds to the success of coaching engagements is the provision of feedback. When clients are allowed to receive feedback from their co-workers about the effects and effectiveness of the coaching they currently receive, clients are more likely to improve and show these improvements to their co-workers (Goldsmith, 2012). In Goldsmith's (2012) study of CEOs who received executive coaching, it was revealed that positive changes in the leaders' attitudes and managerial techniques were improved when subordinates were allowed to provide feedback for their bosses. Such feedback mechanisms did not only improve the leader's management skills, but also increased the productivity and efficiency of the employees, as their motivations and engagement increased with knowing that management valued their feedback. Additionally, having responded actively to his subordinates' feedback and suggestions, the leader was also able to improve communication and overall work relationships with his subordinates. In such cases, the value of executive coaching grows exponentially, as an improvement in the executive's behavior or managerial skill also translates into an improvement in professional relationship, employee productivity and efficiency, and organizational output (Goldsmith, 2012).

The strategies and tactics employed by coaches during sessions are also important to the effectiveness of coaching. Since coaching is, in its core, a way of influencing thought and behavior towards personal and professional growth, the effectiveness of the tactics or strategies used by coaches to influence their clients directly predicts the effectiveness or success of the entire coaching engagement (Lewis-Duarte & Bligh, 2012). Yukl (2012) listed 11 common influence tactics employed by executive coaches in training their clients. These are (a) apprising: explaining the benefits of carrying out a request; (b) collaboration: offering to provide assistance towards reaching the objective; (c) ingratiation: the use of flattery; (d) exchange: promising reciprocation; (e) personal appeals: use of personal relations; (f) coalition tactics: enlisting the help of other parties in persuasion; (g) consultation: gaining commitment by soliciting advice or input; (h) inspirational appeals: drawing on one's values or ideals to gain commitment; (i) rational persuasion: using logic and facts to support the request; (j) legitimating tactics: citing rules or official documents to establish the request's authority; and (k) pressure: using demand and persistence until the goal is achieved.

A survey of 110 executive coaches revealed that consultation, inspirational appeals, and apprising were often utilized during initial influence attempts or when requests are initially made, and pressure and coalition were frequently utilized during follow-up influence attempts (Lewis-Duarte & Bligh, 2012). The coaches also indicated that the choice of influence tactic often depended on the desired outcome and the nature of the request. Coalition tactics, inspirational appeals, and pressure were often used to modify behavior, while consultation and rational persuasion were used to change behavior and assign work (Lewis-Duarte & Bligh, 2012).

The success of executive coaching also depends largely on the coach's specific knowledge and skillset (Dagley, 2007; Smither, 2011). Other cited factors that influence the success and effectiveness of executive coaching include the engagement and commitment of the client, the quality of the working relationship between the coach and the client, and the effective management of confidential issues (Dagley, 2007).

Clients' Perceptions on Coaching

As success and effectiveness is gauged from the perspective of the client, it is also important to study the clients' perceptions, comments, or feedback regarding the coaching experience and its outcomes. However, research has shown that when clients view coaching as helpful or have successfully influenced their behavior or action, they experience helpfulness in a general manner and not due to a specific technique or approach utilized by the coach (de Haan et al., 2011). Such reports from clients may be because clients are often unaware of which influence tactics their coaches use on them, thus they are unable to report them. While coaches can accurately report having used specific influence tactics such as consultation, personal appeals, or pressure, clients did not have the same level of certainty as to whether their coaches are personally appealing to them or pressuring them into doing a request; hence, the discrepancy between reported effectiveness of influence tactics from the coaches' perspectives (e.g., Lewis-Duarte & Bligh, 2012) and from the clients' perspectives (e.g., de Haan et al., 2011).

A survey of clients who received executive coaching rated the three most important and most appreciated qualities in a coach as listening, understanding, and encouraging (de Haan et al., 2011). From these responses, it is obvious that clients' perceptions of their coaches are described by personal qualities and the characteristics of their professional

relationship and not by specific approaches or tactics. Another survey of clients who have experienced coaching revealed that clients who sought coaching on their own accord were more satisfied than those who did not seek coaching on their own (Visser, 2011). Clients who chose their own coaches also reported more satisfaction with the experience than clients who did not get to choose their own coach. Both cohorts, however, showed similar satisfaction levels with the coaching process and with goal attainment (Visser, 2011).

Coaching in business, particularly of managers and executives, has often been conducted to improve work performance and to facilitate an employee's professional development (Moen & Federici, 2012). These two goals can be attained if a person is able to meet his basic psychological needs that will allow him to achieve personal growth and development, and these needs can be loosely categorized into three subneeds: the need for competence, the need for autonomy, and the need for relatedness (Moen & Federici, 2012). In a study of 127 executives and middle managers, results indicated that executive coaching positively affected need satisfaction at work, particularly on the need for autonomy and the need for relatedness (Moen & Federici, 2012). The same research also revealed that coaching-based leadership positively affected the need for autonomy and the need for competence (Moen & Federici, 2012). The increased need for relatedness may imply that undergoing executive coaching improved executives' attachment or connectedness to their co-workers and subordinates, possibly as a result of their improved relational skills. Additionally, the increased need for competence in middle managers may have resulted from the acquisition of new knowledge and skills from the coaching they received. In sum, business coaching can positively affect executives' and managers' competencies, relational

skills, and autonomy, which could further help them make better decisions for the company (Moen & Federici, 2012).

Another study on management training and coaching analyzed the managerial tools or skills clients learned through coaching (Berg & Karlsen, 2012). As much literature has discussed, there are a considerable number of leadership tools or skills that leaders use in leading their subordinates toward a goal. While it is close to impossible and relatively risky to attempt to study the effect of coaching on the acquisition or improvement of all leadership tools, Berg and Karlsen (2012) chose a specific set of leadership tools to study. These leadership tools, derived from the field of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship, included goal setting, emotional intelligence, empowerment, feedback, conflict management, identifying talents and strengths, self-management, signature and character strengths (i.e., courage, self-discipline, holistic thinking, wisdom, and emotional intelligence), and positive emotions (i.e., joy, optimism, gratitude, confidence, and self-efficacy). Through the analysis of interview transcripts, survey results, and observations of 14 participants, Berg and Karlsen identified that management training and coaching allowed participants to identify which tools were most important in their position and aided them in acquiring the skills or the behavior to learn these skills.

The Relationship between the Coach and the Client

Phillips (1994) has listed some of the most important points from a client's perspective as to what a successful coaching relationship must have (see Table 3). In his article, Phillips emphasized the importance of the reciprocal relationship between the coach and the client in the success of the coaching engagement. This relationship is highlighted by strong and open communications between the coach and the client, which allows them to

honestly discuss needs, goals, challenges, and deficiencies. It is important to note that while clients may often find difficulties in learning new skills or adapting to new behaviors, coaches may also be presented with challenges especially when working with clients whose perceptions contradict their own. The relationship, thus, must also have a certain flexibility to allow both parties to accomplish their targeted goals.

Table 3

Examples of Reciprocal Relationship between Coach and Client

Leadership Coaching Skills	Examples
Assertive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients need to make clear what they want to achieve
Take Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client may need to request a meeting with coach, who may be unaware the client needs help
Open and Honest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches need to know if learners have specific reasons for doing or not doing particular tasks
Ask for Feedback and Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches sometimes have to be prompted to give a full review of learners' successes and mistakes
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching offers clients an opportunity to build valuable networks
Clarify Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching project should have a clearly written statement of objectives
Take Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of all, clients need to take responsibility for their own learning

Compiled from Phillips (1994, Central Factors section).

Several studies also indicated that the relationship between the coach and the client, including their behavior towards one another and how they communicate with each other, is

a greater predictor of coaching effectiveness than the approach or technique used by the coach in influencing change in the client (Visser, 2011). As coaching approaches and methods often overlap in processes, procedures, and basic philosophies, it is often difficult to assess which coaching method or approach would yield better results. Hence, the focus of most studies has been to determine which behavior or specific tactic of the coach successfully influenced change in the client, which was greatly predicted by the nature of their professional relationship with each other (de Haan et al., 2011; Visser, 2011).

Coaching by Context: Family Business Environment

There are times when the coach will need to use different skills, such as in coaching a family business in order to achieve success. The coach will need to take numerous aspects into account, such as the family business environment, family culture, present family leader, incumbent family leadership, and other family values that may not be found in a nonfamily business (Härtel, Bozer, & Levin, 2009). The research has clearly shown that although there are many aspects that can determine success to a client in coaching, there are many organizations that are unique and need to be looked at individually, such as a family business.

Audet and Couteret (2012) wrote a useful article on coaching entrepreneurs who were novice owner-managers. With many small businesses and franchisees, they have little support other than that which may be provided to franchisees by their franchisors. This can create unfortunate problems, as entrepreneurs who do not have the support they require risk their business being unsuccessful. Coaching can reveal alternatives for the entrepreneur to help and support them (pp. 515-516).

In Audet and Couteret's (2012) study, the factors that played the most importance to the entrepreneurs were selection of coach, frequency of meetings, role of the manager, listening skills and empathy of coach, credibility, client's receptivity to coaching, commitment to the coaching relationship, moral contract, and oral communication (pp. 523-524). Items like frequency of meetings were very important; when a coachee had a problem and had to have fewer meetings, this had a negative impact on the coaching relationship and outcome (p. 525). In Audet and Couteret's study, it was also important to note that "contact by e-mail or telephone does not appear to be an adequate replacement for personal contact" (p. 525).

Finally, credibility was a very important part of the coaching relationship in Audet and Couteret's (2012) particular research. "Interestingly, in the two relationships that failed, the coaches did not feel they had this credibility, even though the entrepreneurs said they had full confidence in the coach's ability to help" (p. 526). Therefore, it seems that even if the coachee is to give the benefit of the doubt to the coach, if credibility is not present, this could be a reason for an unsuccessful coaching relationship:

All the entrepreneurs in our sample said they were generally satisfied with their coaches in this respect. It would thus appear that even when coaches possess all the desired attributes, the relationship can still end in failure, as was the case on two occasions. (p. 526)

The conclusion of Audet and Couteret's research was that "among the wide range of tools available to entrepreneurs, coaching is increasingly popular as a support structure" (p. 528).

The authors noted it was interesting that most small business owners do not use coaching. They posited that this was due to the fact that "most small business owner-managers know very little about coaching" (p. 526). This is why more research such as this must be done.

I have shared what much of the research has stated about what success is and how it is measured, but it seems to be a varying list of items and outcomes. Later in my dissertation, I share more about where the gaps are and thoughts on how to try and connect more of the dots to measure success of coaching for franchisees and small business owners.

Chapter Summary and Critique

As has been presented, there is a great variety of approaches, methods, and tactics currently employed in executive coaching. The coaching approaches presented in this review had different theoretical bases, focuses, and applications. However, in practice, these coaching approaches had significant similarities in motivations and methods, thus creating an overlap between two or more approaches. Given such overlaps, it has become difficult for researchers to investigate the effectiveness of specific methods and approaches. The effectiveness and success of coaching remains difficult to define and assess, and as such, studies that attempt to identify success factors for coaching often assume the definition of success and success factors as those perceived by clients undergoing coaching. Current literature shows that the most commonly cited factors that contribute to the success of coaching include the coach's engagement level, the tactics and strategies employed by managers, and the reciprocal and professional relationship between the client and the coach. Without a standardized set of definitions for coaching success, results of studies remain anecdotal and ungrounded in empirical research.

It is also worth noting that the approaches discussed in the literature above were designed broadly for managers and executives of business organizations, and there was no approach specifically designed for franchise businesses or any specific form of business, such as corporations, limited partnerships, or sole proprietorships. Additionally, studies

often focused on executives of high-profit companies regardless of the form of business and the type of goods or services they offer. Current researchers have not explicitly chosen to understand the effects and effectiveness of coaching from the perspective of executives belonging to a specific sector or industry. The lack of research and theory specifically focused on certain forms of businesses was seen as a gap in literature and practice. It is believed that in order for coaching to be adequately studied, effectively and consistently provided, and result in success, there should be a specific coaching approach or designed theory that would guide future coaching for franchisors and franchisees. This is critical because the unique structure of franchise businesses presents greater risk for organizational breakdown, and as such, specified steps must be taken to ensure optimum leadership and management toward profitability and success.

In the next chapter, the methodology of qualitative research and narrative inquiry are explained to show how the information to help answer the question was collected. The research question was: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees? How the information was collected, coded, and analyzed are described in Chapter 3, which led to identification of the findings that provided answers to the research inquiry questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to understand the importance and the effectiveness of executive coaching when provided for small business owners, specifically, franchisees. Moreover, this study sought to build a framework for understanding how executive coaching works and what effect it has on the target population of franchisees. As executive coaching has been so popular in organizations, most often in large organizations, this research attempted to explain how franchisees can use executive coaching and to examine how effective executive coaching may be as well as to find out if franchisees find executive coaching a way to strengthen learning. Also examined were what the franchisees considered successful coaching, and participants were asked if they felt the coaching in this research had been successful for them.

Research Approach

This study sought to create a framework for the effects of executive coaching and for the mechanisms by which it improves business processes and business performance among small business owners, specifically franchisees. Given that executive coaching has not been used for small-scale business owners like franchisees (Audet & Couteret, 2012; Horn et al., 2010), there was a need to identify the aspects of business performance and business skills that executive coaching could affect within this given population. Moreover, the mechanisms by which executive coaching could affect these aspects of business performance and business skills must be identified and understood in a cohesive theoretical framework, which would guide the future use and the future study of executive coaching among small business owners and franchisees.

With these specific study goals in mind, it was determined that a narrative analysis would be the best research approach to use in gathering and analyzing data. According to Riessman (1993), narrative analysis is about storytelling: sometimes as short as one sentence and other times many pages. The research data are comprised of the stories received from the research participants. When using narrative analysis, the story becomes the main object of investigation. Narrative analysis is used with individuals' stories, as nature and the environment around us do not tell stories. Narrative analysis is used constantly in our everyday life, when we hear a story and try to make sense of it.

When participants are asked questions or are asked for stories, rich information is obtained. "The purpose is to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives" (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). Not only is information collected, but additional questions are often asked: Why was the story told that way? What was the participant feeling when this was being told? What can be understood from this information (Franzosi, 2010)?

Stories are something that humans have relied on for millennia. Frank (2002) posited, "Stories give lives legibility; when shaped as narratives, lives come from somewhere and are going somewhere. Narratability [*sic*] provides for legibility, and out of both comes a sense of morality—practical if tacit answers to how we should live" (p. 111). The stories that are told and the stories that are heard leave an impression on us that causes change in every one of us—no matter how small (Frank, 2002).

Freedom from prior assumptions and findings was important to this study because there were very little data to build on regarding the use of executive coaching among small business owners and franchisees. It would have been dangerous to the validity of whatever

information this study created if the information was based on past data regarding the use of executive coaching among populations other than small businesses and franchisees. This study focused on franchisees; this is an area that seemed to have little to no prior research when studied with a focus on executive coaching.

This is why narrative analysis was chosen, to get right to the point and understand what the participant was thinking, feeling and how he or she experienced the coaching sessions. For this research, personal narratives were used as a method to gather participants' data. In defining narrative inquiry, Riessman (1993) stated that "it refers to talk organized around consequential events" (p. 3). Narrative allows people to share experiences by couching it as a story. These stories hold the meaning and information for the researcher.

Role of the Researcher

For this study, I, as the researcher, occupied several roles. First, it was important to identify prospective participants to the study and establish primary contact with them. Many members of the Vancouver chapter of the Entrepreneurs Organization were asked to suggest names of any franchisees who might be interested in participating in this study or to give names of franchisors who could help find franchisees who would be willing to a part of the study. All of the names suggested were local in the Vancouver area. This meant that prospective participants had to be briefed on the goals of the study, along with the data collection and data analysis procedures that the study would employ. In addition, it was important to explain to the prospective participants the ethical assurances and the confidentiality measures that the study would utilize. These steps were carried out prior to securing signed informed consent forms from the participants as well as before the participants started to contract with me, as the coach, on what their coaching would focus on.

Without a signed informed consent form, the prospective participants were not allowed to be coached or take part in this study (see Appendix A).

I also conducted the executive coaching for the participants twice a month for a period of 3 months. I have been certified by the ICF and have received the Professional Coaching Certification, which means the core competencies of the ICF (2011) formed the guidelines for any coaching engagements. Given my credentials and past experiences with executive coaching, I had the necessary skills and capacities to conduct executive coaching among the study's participants. What is more, conducting the executive coaching sessions myself saved me from the large expenses necessary to hire professional private coaches to conduct the executive coaching. However, to avoid researcher bias, a trained, third-party coach certified by the ICF was engaged to facilitate the end-of-session interviews.

Furthermore, one benefit to conducting the coaching myself allowed me to look at the data in a depth that others might not have been able to do or that traditional forms of research might not have found (Jarvis, 1999). Being a practitioner-researcher (Jarvis, 1999) allowed for a deep understanding of the issues as well as the data.

Given that I, as the researcher, was conducting the executive coaching among the participants, it would have been detrimental to the validity of the data if I had also conducted the interviews after administering the coaching. Creating such a design and assigning such roles to the researcher could have created certain biases, which could have skewed the data generated from the study participants.

One such bias has been called interviewer bias (Hammer, du Prel, & Blettner, 2009). According to Hammer et al. (2009), interviewer biases may arise because of prior relationships and prior knowledge shared between the interviewer and the participants. For

example, if an interviewer knew more about the experiences and concerns of one participant compared to others, the interviewer might inadvertently ask that particular participant more questions (p. 667). This could result in the interviewer amassing a larger quantity of richer information from the participants whom the interviewer knows more about (Hammer et al., 2009). This type of bias could easily happen with some of the coaching participants, thus skewing the data and the resulting analyses and conclusions created by the researcher from the information and experiences related by the participants (Hammer et al., 2009).

Apart from interviewer bias, another effect stemming from the relationship between the researcher and the participants could have come into play. This effect comes in the form of the participants' sensitivity to the feelings of the researcher. According to Knapik (2006), when participants are required to provide feedback regarding the skills of a researcher in conducting certain processes or stages of the research endeavor, participants usually show a particular reluctance to delve deeply into the interview. They could display a reluctance to be completely truthful, at the risk of perceiving that they have hurt the researcher's feelings. Hence, participants might feel pressured to give positive responses and evaluations of the executive coaching if the researcher is both the coach and the interviewer.

This effect was particularly significant to the current study. Because I, as the researcher, delivered and conducted the executive coaching sessions, some form of rapport was developed between the participants and me. This was especially true because the coaching sessions did not span mere hours, but were spread out over 3 months. This length of time increased the likelihood of fostering bonds with the participants. What is more, the guidelines for conducting executive coaching have prescribed the establishment of trust and intimacy between the coach and the coachees (ICF, 2011).

Because it was important to establish bonds with the participants, I could not conduct the interviews after the executive coaching sessions. It was perceived that the participants might be particularly reluctant to respond truthfully to questions regarding the executive coaching sessions because of their relationship with me, as I had conducted the coaching sessions. What is more, even if they were willing to answer honestly, they may not have been conscious of biases towards the researcher, which they may have if the researcher were the one gathering the feedback from them regarding the executive coaching sessions.

Given these challenges, an external party who has been trained at conducting interviews questioned the participants after the executive coaching sessions. The interviewer was also a certified coach, which allowed for a more rich collection of information about the coaching experience. After the interviewer had gathered and stored the necessary data, I analyzed the information to build a theoretical framework on the effects and mechanisms by which executive coaching may have worked for small business owners and franchisees. The interviewer also signed a confidentiality agreement to insure that confidentiality was understood and kept for the participants (see Appendix B).

Research Questions

This study sought to understand the effects of using executive coaching on franchisees. Moreover, using the narrative analysis approach, through this study, I endeavored to create a framework that would outline exactly how executive coaching would or would not ensure success among franchisees, with a goal to find out how the participants felt about the success of the coaching. Thus, the main research question for the study was: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees? To fully grasp the data that

answered this main research question, several research subquestions helped guide the data collection and data analysis procedures of this study.

1. What learning was gained from executive coaching?
2. Is executive coaching useful for franchisees?
3. What were the expectations of the participant and were they met?
4. What is success in an executive coaching experience and was success achieved?
5. Was trust built with the coach from the beginning and why or why not?
6. What worked in this coaching engagement and why?

Methodology

Studies that make use of the narrative analysis approach use qualitative methodologies to gather data (Riessman, 1993). More specifically, for this study, interviews were used to gather data regarding the perceptions and experiences of franchisees regarding the executive coaching that they received. These interviews yielded data that provided rich information needed for qualitative narrative analysis and the recommendations made on executive coaching, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

According to Creswell (2006) and Moen (2006), qualitative methodologies examine phenomena in their natural settings and as they naturally occur. Because this study aimed to create a theoretical framework based on raw and rich data regarding the real experiences of participants, as they experienced them, qualitative methodologies were appropriate for this study.

Population and Sampling

This study aimed to gather data on the perceptions and experiences of a very specific population—franchisees. Hence, this study, like most narrative inquiry studies, made use of

self-selection sampling (Lund Research, 2012) comprised of a two-step process. The first step entailed publicizing the need for cases or asking others to suggest the type of candidates needed for the research (Step One section, para. 1). In this step, names and contact information were collected to identify prospective participants based on whether or not they met the criteria for participation in the study (i.e., being a small business owner or franchisee willing to receive executive coaching). In the second step of the process, it was necessary to “check the relevance of units (or cases) and either invite or reject them” (Step Two section, para. 1). During this step, it was verified that the potential participants actually did meet the criteria and could follow through on the study.

In the end this study had six participants, all of whom were franchisees. I asked many members of an organization called Entrepreneurs Organization in the Vancouver chapter if they could suggest any franchisees to contact. All of the names provided were local in the Vancouver area. Ten franchisees were contacted, and out of those initial contacts, six were willing to make the commitment, and all six of these individuals participated in the research. According to Creswell (2009), having a smaller number of participants in qualitative studies, relative to quantitative studies that make use of around 30 participants, allows for the generation of richer data, which illustrate more completely the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the phenomenon of interest.

It was much more difficult to find participants than I had imagined. I worked on finding participants for about 5 months and then stuck with the six who were willing to participate. Because I wanted to do the coaching face to face and I only had local franchisees to choose from, this lowered my ability to gain more participants. I also was very clear how important it was that they did not miss any sessions in the 3 months, and this again was

another reason I may have had a hard time getting commitments from franchisees. By the end, I was very happy with the six people who volunteered to be participants of this research.

Instrumentation

The only instrument used for this study was an interview guide used by the third-party interviewer, which outlined the questions to be asked of all participants in the study. Participants were asked a series of questions (see Appendix C). The questions focused on (a) past experience of coaching, (b) expectations about executive coaching, (c) skills learned from executive coaching, (d) most helpful aspects of coaching, (e) the level of trust built/recognized during the coaching experience, (f) how useful executive coaching will be for other franchisees, and (g) how highly they would recommend executive coaching to other franchisees.

These questions helped identify the specific areas in which executive coaching could improve in the professional lives and professional skills of small business owners. These questions also identified which areas participants still found lacking in executive coaching, so that these may be addressed in future instances when executive coaching is used among small business owners and franchisees. What is more, these questions uncovered rich information regarding the importance of executive coaching among franchisees. From this information, my hope has been that executive coaches will gain some new knowledge as to what they can do to specifically help small businesses and franchisees.

Data Collection

After securing informed consent forms from the participants (see Appendix B), a schedule for executive coaching was set that was convenient for each participant. The executive coaching was conducted twice a month for 3 months. These executive coaching

sessions were carried out by me, as the researcher. Coaching was delivered through one-on-one and in-person coaching sessions that lasted one hour. Though there are numerous reasons a person may ask for coaching assistance, the focus of coaching for participants centered primarily on goals, time management, building confidence, feeling comfortable with coaching assistance, and learning various skills to enable them to improve their leadership skills. In this section, I address the approach to executive coaching, the time frame for the interviews, and the transcription process that helped ensure the accuracy of the data collected.

Executive coaching. No one type of executive coaching theory was specifically used during the coaching session. Instead, different methods from popular theories on evidence-based coaching (Stober & Grant, 2006; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011), mindful coaching (Silsbee, 2010), and engaged coaching (O’Neill, 2007) were utilized. Not restricting the coaching to a specific theory or style allowed me to respond to the different needs of the different participants of the study.

As mentioned, I am certified by the ICF and have experience owning small businesses as well as franchises. In coaching, the core competencies of the ICF (2011) were used, as a certified coach must not deviate from the governing set of rules of the ICF. These four rules have been broken down as (a) setting the foundation, (b) co-creating the relationship, (c) communicating effectively, and (d) facilitating learning and results (para. 3-6).

Setting the foundation. Setting the foundation of executive coaching entails meeting the following goals successfully: “1. Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards [and] 2. Establishing the coaching agreement” (ICF, 2011, para. 3).

Co-creating the relationship. Executive coaching relies heavily on the relationship between the coach and the client. Thus, relationships must be co-created, which means that the following specific goals must be met, which include: “1. Establishing trust and intimacy with the client [and] 2. Coaching presence” (ICF, 2011, para. 4).

Communicating effectively. Apart from relying on the strength of the relationship between coach and client, executive coaching is also built on effective communication. To achieve effective communication, the executive coach must ensure that the following processes are incorporated and met during executive coaching sessions: “1. Active listening, 2. Powerful questioning [and] 3. Direct communication” (ICF, 2011, para. 5).

Facilitating learning and results. To create learning and to generate results, the executive coach must ensure that the following processes are integral parts of the executive coaching sessions: “1. Creating awareness, 2. Designing actions, 3. Planning and goal setting, [and] 4. Managing progress and accountability” (ICF, 2011, para. 6).

Time frame of interviews. After the 3-month period of conducting executive coaching, the participants were interviewed regarding their coaching experience. The interviewer was able to ask all of the questions in the guide (see Appendix C). Some answers were short and some longer, but the interviewer was able to ask all questions of all participants. This approach resulted in rich data for the study, which enabled identifying frameworks and storylines generated from the interpretation of the participants’ responses to the interview questions, which were confirmed with participants to ensure they were truthful and faithful to the participants’ actual experiences and stories.

Transcription of interview data. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed by an independent third party to ensure that no data were lost and that all data would be

available for data analysis. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving the interview tapes (see Appendix D). After receiving the transcribed interviews, I coded data in a program called ATLAS.ti. This program allowed me to gather a large amount of rich information, code all of it, and have that information sorted in a way that could be understood easily, which was useful in analyzing the findings.

Data Analysis

Narrative analysis was used to interpret the interview data. Narrative analysis focused on how people interpret the world through stories (Schwandt, 2007). The data given by participants were interpreted as stories and interpretations that explained how the participants felt and perceived their coaching experiences (Schwandt, 2007). By using narrative analysis, the stories participants shared through their responses to the interview questions were interpreted.

Coding. There were three basic rounds of coding. The first was a method called holistic coding. “The method is a preparatory approach to a unit of data before a more detailed coding or categorization process” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 142). This approach allowed me to get a very good feeling of the data before committing to the more in-depth coding that came next.

The second round of coding was what Saldaña (2013) called descriptive coding: “Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (p. 88), which allowed me to take the stories and answers and try to find the meaning that the participant was explaining. While using descriptive coding, I also used in vivo coding as part of the descriptions, which means to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (p. 91).

The third part of coding entailed developing a theory. After the holistic coding, descriptive coding, and in vivo coding were completed, a product was identified to form a theory that would sum up the research and be helpful to the reader. Saldaña (2013) explained this last step of my research well:

Social science theory has three main characteristics, as it is traditionally conceived: it predicts and controls action through an if-then logic; explains how and/or why something happens by stating its cause(s); and provides insights and guidance for improving social life. (p. 250)

Narratives. In a reflection on narrative research, Moen (2006) echoed past researchers in defining a narrative as the primary means by which humans make sense of their experiences. What is more, Frank (2002) stated that narratives are ways by which individuals contend with challenges in their lives. Taking these two definitions together, it can be inferred that when individuals attempt to make sense of their experiences and troubles, it is always done so through a narration of events, or a story (Boothe, Grimm, Hermann, & Luder, 2010; Moen, 2006). Accordingly, narrative research is interested in identifying the mechanisms by which individuals ascribe meanings to their experiences (Boothe et al., 2010; Moen, 2006).

According to Creswell (2006), a narrative is a piece of text within a qualitative research endeavor that relates the experiences of the study's participants. Bailey and Jackson (2003) added that this text is usually a narration of connected events, including a past, a present, and relating to a future. Because the concept of a narrative originated from disciplines such as literature, history, linguistics, and anthropology, it has traditionally been used as the subject of a study (Bailey & Jackson, 2003). The narrative of a culture might be of particular value to an anthropological research endeavor. However, the concept of

narratives has been appropriated in studies conducted by other disciplines as well. As such, the concept has been used in disciplines such as organizational studies, not as the phenomenon of interest, but as a method of analyzing data and understanding participants' experiences (Bailey & Jackson, 2003). In fact, similar to the current study, narrative analysis has been used in past research endeavors that examined the effects of particular interventions (Angel et al., 2012; Price, 2011). Not all the information collected was comprised of stories, but almost all of the information could be treated as such because the data reflected the ideas, feelings, and reality of the participant.

Narrative analysis. According to Polkinghorne (as cited in Creswell, 2006), narratives can be used as data analysis tools in two ways. First, an “analysis of narratives,” which is significantly different from “narrative analysis” (p. 9), can be carried out. This analysis of narratives entails having a strong theoretical background or theoretical framework for a research endeavor. This framework can then be used by the researcher to analyze the different experiences and stories related by the study's participants (Riessman, 1993). Thus, the analysis of narratives makes use of a more deductive or top-down approach to data analysis. Therefore, through the interview process carried out by a third party, I actively sought to identify stories that related to the experiences the participant had over the 3-month coaching time.

On the other hand, narrative analysis uses a more inductive, or bottom-up, approach to analyzing given data. Unlike analysis of narratives, which relies on a strong theoretical framework to make sense of participants' stories and experiences, narrative analysis does not hinge on any such prior knowledge. Narrative analysis makes use of collected data to make sense of an experience (Ross & Green, 2011). Simply put, narrative analysis interprets the

stories and experiences related by the study's participants in order to create a framework to describe their experiences and their perceptions (Creswell, 2006; Riessman, 1993). In this study, many of the answers did not come across as narrative, although the answers did represent the feelings and reality of the experience of being coached.

This form of data analysis was particularly appropriate for this study. Narrative analysis occurs when a study does not have a strong theoretical background or a definite theoretical framework to base its findings and analyses on. Narrative analysis relies on the gathered data for the purpose of generating knowledge and creating a framework for the experiences related by the study's participants, which is seen as an inductive process for knowledge creation (Creswell, 2006; Riessman, 1993; Stephens, 2011).

Appropriateness of narrative analysis. Many factors had to be considered in determining if narrative analysis was indeed appropriate for this study. According to Creswell (2006), before conducting narrative analysis, several steps must first be taken to ensure its appropriateness for a particular research endeavor. First, the study's goals must be determined to be appropriate for generating the data needed by narrative analysis. This means that narrative analysis must only be used if the study aims to collect detailed and rich information about the lived experiences of its participants (Creswell, 2006). Second, the researcher must ensure that the participants of the study will be able to provide these rich and detailed pieces of information that narrative analysis requires in order to be effective (Creswell, 2006). This means that the participants in a study that aims to use narrative analysis must be intimately acquainted with the phenomenon of interest to the researcher, and they must be willing to share experiences and information about the phenomenon.

Based on the nature and the purpose of this study, the conditions necessary to make narrative analysis a valid data analysis tool have been met. Not only did the study seek to generate rich and detailed narrations of experiences regarding the phenomenon of executive coaching, but my study also included participants who had first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest. Coaching builds strong relationships (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002), which allowed for the depth of collected information.

Conducting narrative analysis. Once the data collection processes were completed, narrative analysis could begin. This can be a complicated and tedious process (Dibley, 2011); however, Creswell (2006) outlined the necessary steps to be followed in conducting the interpretation of data. This process of narrative analysis has much to do with what is called “restorying” (p. 155). This means that the narratives of experiences provided by the participants can be reformatted or restructured to create a meaningful framework that explains the phenomenon of interest to the study (p. 156).

In conducting this restorying, analysts and researchers must first identify key ideas that are significant or that are recurring in the narrative experiences shared by the study’s participants (Creswell, 2006). This was accomplished, as explained under the Coding section, by descriptive coding. After identifying these key ideas through descriptive coding, by using concepts from the narratives, the analysts and researchers can establish causal relationships between the ideas (Creswell, 2006). Of course, signifying causality is very important in creating the theoretical framework, which is a goal of narrative analysis.

In addition to establishing causality, researchers and analysts conducting narrative analysis can also create a sequence for the ideas and experiences related by the participants (Riessman, 1993). This is quite important for a few reasons. First, this is important in

making sense of the ideas put forward by participants. Whenever participants relate experiences or narrations of past circumstances, they sometimes forget to do so chronologically (Creswell, 2006). Thus, establishing a sequence or a chronology for the ideas created by the participants is important in making sense of the participants' experiences and key ideas. Second, the sequencing of ideas and experiences is important for the creation of the theoretical framework, which will attempt to explain the phenomenon under scrutiny. Because the theoretical framework will be an explanation of a phenomenon, an understanding of the sequence of events and experiences is necessary for the researcher to be able to build it successfully.

The sequencing of the events and experiences of participants will then create a storyline or an integrated narration culled from the different narratives of the participants (Creswell, 2006). This storyline can be edited by the researcher or the analyst to include several elements that are found in stories or novels, such as characters, conflicts, settings, predicaments, resolutions, and themes (Creswell, 2006). Participants will not always share their experiences in order, and the researcher will need to tie the different stories together as how they may relate to each other. This is what is different from analytic strategies of analysis and ethnographic analysis (Riessman, 1993).

From this storyline generated by the narrative analysis, main themes and significant experiences will be emphasized and underlined (Creswell, 2006). In this research endeavor, these informed the framework and the theory on the significance and effects of executive coaching on the business skills and business performance of franchisees.

Challenges in narrative analysis. Despite the benefits of using narrative analysis and because of how flexible its interpretations can be (Stephens, 2011), Creswell (2006)

suggested that certain precautionary measures must be taken into consideration to ensure that the resulting analysis and framework are valid and truly reflective of the reality of the experiences of the participants. First, according to Creswell, researchers cannot stop at merely collecting and interpreting data; researchers must contextualize whatever information they generate from participants. This involves being knowledgeable about the participants' histories and present circumstances. According to Creswell, it will be difficult for a researcher to create a restorying, or a storyline, from the narratives of the participants if they do not understand where the participants are coming from. Erroneous linkages between ideas and erroneous sequencing of experiences shared by the participants may arise if the researcher is not careful in understanding these ideas and experiences based on the participants' contexts and histories (Riessman, 1993). In the case of this research, I had the ability to build a professional relationship through coaching that was able to overcome this problem.

The need for understanding the importance of context was echoed by Moen (2006) in a reflection on the importance of the practice of narrative research. According to Moen, while the narrative is a story created by the individual, relating his or her personal experiences, the individual is still inextricably linked to his or her context and environment. Hence, inasmuch as the individual is responsible for creating the narrative, so are his or her context and environment. This implies that anyone wishing to make sense of an individual's narrative can only do so if sufficient information is gathered regarding the backdrop within which the individual's story or narrative is created (Griffith, 2010). Otherwise, the interpreter of the narrative is susceptible to making errors in the analysis of data and in the sequencing and construction of the desired storylines and frameworks.

For example, in a study conducted by Ahlsen, Mengshoel, and Solbraekke (2012), a narrative analysis was used to describe the experiences of men with chronic muscle pain. However, the particular context of the participants' gender had to be taken into consideration for the interpretation of data to be accurate. The authors had to use gender-sensitive lenses in drawing forth their analyses from the data to ensure that the analyses were valid and faithful to the experiences of their participants. In this research, I was a franchisee as well as an entrepreneur, which helped me apply the lenses necessary to understand not only what the participants were saying, but also what they meant.

Although the methodology worked well and was thought out in depth before the study began, it did change somewhat as the research continued. Also, even with the best-laid-out research, there will always be some shortcomings. Next, some of the limitations of this research are discussed.

Assumptions and Limitations

It is important to outline the assumptions and limitations of this study in order to allow future studies to understand fully the methodology of the study, as well as the applicability of the study to other research endeavors. Identifying the assumptions and limitations will also affect how well the study's findings will be applied to future circumstances and to different samples and populations.

Assumptions. This study was built on several assumptions. The first important assumption to consider was the fact that the study assumed the participants would be completely honest in relating their experiences and perceptions of the executive coaching sessions that they received.

Another important assumption for this study was that I, as the researcher, would be able to deliver optimal executive coaching in response to the needs of the participants. This assumption was based on the fact that I am a certified coach and have had experience delivering executive coaching to various past clients.

A third assumption for this study was that the narrative analyses and the resulting storylines and theoretical frameworks would echo as closely as possible the actual experiences of the participants. As Creswell (2006) has stated, there may be some discrepancies between the analysis of the researcher and the actual experiences of the participants in such a study. However, because the necessary steps to ensure the truthfulness and the viability of data were taken, it has been assumed that the storylines and frameworks generated during this study reflected the participants' experiences as closely as possible. These steps included gathering data on the histories and contexts of the research participants to help me interpret their experiences better, which included collaborating with the participants in the generation of the analysis of the study (Moen, 2006; Riessman, 1993).

Limitations. The main limitation of this study had to do with the population under investigation. Because the study was only concerned with applying executive coaching to franchisees, the applicability of its findings is limited. Any theory built on the data gathered and analyzed in this study will have limited future applications. They cannot be used with complete confidence among other populations, although it should be noted the research could apply to a large number of businesses, as franchising is so pervasive in our world today. Additionally, though not necessarily a limitation, ethical assurances were established for this research.

Ethical Assurances

Before potential participants could be contacted, approval from Fielding's IRB committee had to be received, which allowed for the research to be conducted with human participants. Also before participating in the study, all participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix A). The informed consent form was given to the participants after the nature of the study had been explained to them, as well as its data collection procedures. The possible risks and benefits participants might experience because of their participation in the study were also explained to them. Due to the nature of this study and its design, no grave risks to the participants were foreseen, apart from spending their personal time in executive coaching sessions and subsequent interview sessions. On the other hand, it was possible that certain benefits could be experienced by the participants from the executive coaching sessions. Specifically, the sessions could have positive effects on their business skills and, in turn, on their business performance.

Prior to the study, all participants were assured that they had the right to refuse participation in the study. They were assured that if at any point of the research process they decided to withdraw their participation, such a decision was well within their rights to do so. Furthermore, they were assured that their withdrawal from the study would not jeopardize themselves or the outcomes of the study.

Throughout the study, the confidentiality of the participants was ensured. Any data gathered from them were kept anonymous. As a means of identifying them, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code in place of their actual names. In this way, only I, the interviewer, and the transcriptionist had knowledge regarding which participant supplied which responses. To ensure confidentiality, the interviewer signed a confidentiality

agreement as well (see Appendix B) and the transcriptionist also signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D).

All electronic data were stored in password-protected databases. Only I, as the researcher, had access to these databases and knew the passwords of these databases. All physically stored data were kept locked in a storage space to which only I had access. All electronically transcribed data will be deleted from their database several years after the research has run its course. Any physically transcribed data will be shredded at the same time.

Chapter Summary

The qualitative methodology used in this study has been outlined in this chapter. Because the study sought to build a framework on the effects of executive coaching for franchisees, a narrative inquiry approach was used. After 3 months of executive coaching sessions, interviews with each participant were used to gather raw data on which to build a theoretical framework. The use of interviews was important, as it allowed for the generation of rich data on the phenomenon of interest. Because I conducted the executive coaching sessions, an independent interviewer was used to conduct the subsequent interviews for gathering feedback from the participants regarding their experiences in the executive coaching sessions. This was done to avoid any bias from me, as the researcher, or from the participants during the interview process.

Once the interview data were collected, narrative analysis was used to interpret the participants' experiences. Narrative analysis works under the premise that humans make sense of their experiences by arranging them into narratives or stories (Moen, 2006). Hence, narrative analysis culled out themes and key ideas from the responses and experiences related

by participants, and they were arranged in a meaningful sequence, thus creating associations and establishing causality along the way (Creswell, 2006). This process resulted in a storyline, or a framework, that explained the experiences of participants regarding a particular phenomenon. The assumptions and limitations of the study, as well its ethical considerations, were also outlined in this chapter.

In the next chapter, the outcomes of the research that arose from this project are explained. How the coaching developed for the franchisees in this research is explained as well as how they felt the coaching worked for them. Finally, the areas that the franchisees felt worked for them or did not work for them are listed.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY FINDINGS

The findings from the data collection conducted in this research are explained in this chapter. The research question asked was: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees? Through the research inquiry, I also addressed many subquestions that dealt with issues such as (a) participants' past experiences with coaching, (b) coaching relationship, (c) learning, (d) challenges, (e) trust, and (f) suggestions from participants as to how coaching could be used in the future for franchisees.

Study Findings

Through this research process, it was found that executive coaching was a very positive experience for franchisees. The emergent findings and conclusions of this research will be supported by quotes from the interviewees, notes from the coaching, and my personal notes while doing the coding. Initially, six people volunteered to participate in the research, but one participant chose to leave the study after the first coaching interview, stating that s/he just did not have the time to follow through. His/her right to do this was respected, and no further questions were asked. Each participant has been given a pseudonym, in order to help personalize the comments without disclosing or breaking confidentiality. After having an independent professional certified coach conduct the interviews and an independent person transcribe the interviews, the recordings and the printed transcripts were used to code the data in Atlas.ti.

The findings were surprising in that many of the participants had similar answers to the interview questions (see Appendix C). This will be explained more through the discussion of each emergent finding. The information from the data has been broken down in four major areas.

1. Coachees were the ones who decided if the coaching was successful or not for them.
2. Participants did not set high expectations for their coaching experience, as they had never really experienced coaching before.
3. Participants identified six main categories of learning realized through the coaching experience.
4. Trust between coach and coachee was built at the first coaching session.

Participant data were reviewed and analyzed, which revealed findings that showed how all of the findings tied together to make a narrative of how executive coaching can work for franchisees. The data analysis also revealed why and what participants identified as the most important for the best possible coaching interaction and engagement. These findings led to the study conclusions, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

There is no doubt that the right coaching relationship is comprised of the coach being ready and prepared for the coachee as well as the coachee being ready, open, and prepared to be coached. Much of the writing about coaching relationships put a larger emphasis on the coachee being prepared. Bacon and Spear (2003) wrote, “Clients’ openness and willingness to explore their attitudes, perspectives, behaviors, alternatives, and operational effectiveness are shaped by the context in which coaching occurs” (p. 10).

To have a direct understanding of the coachee’s expectations and what made the coaching experience a successful one, it was important to understand what the coachees were feeling about their coaching experiences. This research went beyond what the coachee should be ready to do before he or she engages a coach. Rather, after 3 months into the coaching relationship, the feelings, ideas, and truths that a coachee felt about a coaching

engagement were examined through interviews conducted by a qualified coach who had not been involved during the coaching engagements. By doing this, my hope was to know more about why or why not participants, in this case franchisees, felt that coaching was a positive and useful experience.

Although it is important that a coachee and the coach are ready before a coaching engagement starts (Whitworth, 2007; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011), that is not always the case. The hope of this research was to find out why coaching has worked or not for these participants so the findings might be useful to others when developing a coaching plan with franchisees or when franchisees are thinking about engaging a coach to help them with their needs. The intent was to identify what participants felt were their learnings and the positive aspects of coaching as well as what could have been better. First, what participants identified as success in a coaching engagement is discussed.

Finding 1: Coachees were the ones who decided if the coaching was successful or not for them. What is success to a coaching client? This question was asked by my dissertation team, and I chose to develop a definition of this question as: Success to a coaching client was identified by participants as meeting the expectations of the client, so that the client felt he/she has achieved personal success in the process. I chose not to define what success is to me, but left it up to what the participants thought their personal success was, which they shared through answers and stories during the interviews and coaching. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the measure for a successful coaching relationship was identified in answer to the question: Did the coachee feel the coaching engagement was successful? Ultimately, the coachee is the one who decides if the coaching was successful or not for him/herself.

When the interviewer asked Fred, “How will this affect your success in the way you work in the future?”, the answer was very clear: “I think it will definitely increase my success in the future, solely due to an ‘I’ll be able to feeling.’ I’m a lot more confident in what I do and what I know. I think that helps a lot.” Fred went on to say, “[Coaching] will help me [develop] different methods to do it. I’ll be able to train and improve my managerial skills so that again, in time, we’ll improve or [I’ll] increase my experience.” Much of what was shared by the participants on what success is to them was similar (see Table 4).

Table 4

Participants’ Interpretation of Success in Coaching

Participant	Comment
Cindy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success for me would be that I no longer had this muddle in my mind, that I knew how to focus, and I could see the benefits, definitely the benefits from focusing in on what I think I’m supposed to be doing.
Dave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, yeah, the coaching session has been effective because it led me to that point where I’m already thinking ahead of the game, thinking—okay before I get all wild and crazy, jump a 100 and 1,000 miles an hour, what is the end goal going to be and how do you get there?
Fred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success in coaching is making sure that the student or the employee or whoever is benefiting from what you’re telling them or how you’re helping them. As long as they’re walking away and they’re achieving the goals that they set out to get from you, I think that would be success as a coach. • Seeing improvement . . . making sure that what you’re doing is actually improving a situation and not degrading it or diminishing it in any way.
Sam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An output of this coaching will be our training manuals, our standard operations procedure manuals, our employees are trained to train, trained to improve the systems and to record it. I’m just so excited for that because that’s what I want.
Sue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well, I think success in coaching is really . . . finding [the] underlying problem. . . . If you’re not performing in a certain way, a coach should have the ability to pull out of you why that’s happening and help you move forward in a better direction. • I need to continue to listen to my gut feeling on things. Sometimes you get wrapped up in our franchise’s core values and that, although you know, I live my core values and I, I really resonate with their core values, sometimes, you lose a little bit sight of business sense.

Success was expressed differently by everyone, but the word “goal” was often expressed in answer to the questions related to success and expectations. When a client met a goal, this was considered to be success. Also, accomplishments or being able to complete something was also considered success. One participant wrote, “Being able to help achieve the goals and the tasks was also, I would define, as success [for me] as a coachee” (Fred). Entrepreneurs often are goal focused and want to use their time wisely. You will often hear an entrepreneur say at a seminar, “If I can just walk away with one thing I can take back to my company and use, then this seminar would be worth it.” This research showed that is also how some participants felt, as expressed in this statement: “If I can just walk away with one thing I can take back to my company and use” (Sam), which seemed to be a theme with franchisees who participated in the research.

When the interviewer asked participants about what success was to them, it was clear that the participants found it much easier to explain what was successful for them in the coaching experience than actually trying to define an abstract concept of success. When expressing what had been successful to them during the coaching engagement, each participant expressed success differently, but the main categories were similar and consisted of goals, time management, building confidence, feeling comfortable, and learning (see Table 5). In identifying what a coachee in this research was looking for as success, these would rank among the highest categories.

Table 5

Categories of Successful Coaching Engagement as Identified by Interviewees

Category	Comments
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Coaching] leads me to that . . . point where I'm already thinking ahead of the game, thinking . . . [about] what is the end goal going to be and how do you get there? (Dave) • [I had] a goal at the start of the program to look at three challenges, and by the end of that, my three challenges were [met], plus others were definitely achieved. (Sue) • It'll help me make more aware of my goals that I'm setting out to achieve, the tasks I have to do in order to . . . create a successful business. (Fred) • Goal we set out to do was just to randomly pick up the phone and start calling franchisees and just seeing how they're doing and when they're not expecting it. . . . I'm already noticing a big turnaround and appreciation from them and confidence in us. I did see quite a lot of success from that. (Fred) • An output of this coaching will be in our training manuals, our standard operations procedure manuals. (Sam) • Marketing strategies was definitely another one that helped. (Fred)
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He gave me some pretty good ideas as to how other franchisers are set up from a legal and an accounting perspective, as well as perhaps how to move forward, turning this from basically a . . . 7-day week job to an actual business, and there's the big crunch, I think, that has to be achieved. (Dave) • Using simple tools like Evernote and things like that will help better my time management. (Fred) • There were already issues in the business that were suffering due to bad time management, so that was another one that really, through the learnings, has helped me improve—improve a lot! (Fred) • What he's helped me with is really prioritizing, making systems which I knew going in I needed, but it's just a whole different level. (Sam)
Building confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I definitely walked away with a lot of confidence in knowing what I'm doing and reassurance . . . it's just gonna help me in my everyday life in managing people as well. (Fred) • I can provide my employees with a bit more confidence each week and each month. You know, I think that's definitely gonna make my business grow and become successful. (Fred)

Table 5 continued on next page

Table 5 - cont'd

Category	Comment
Feeling comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I looked forward to going because it was such a positive experience. . . . We were talking on the same level. He truly showed that he believed in what I could do, and it wasn't from a phony perspective. . . . I got that he was truly committed to making a difference in how I saw my abilities, and so I think that was really, really, really important. (Cindy) • [Steve said] Put your head down and get with the program, a few adjustments you need and be better at what you do, I was up for that. And what I found with Steve is, because he has a really good energy about himself, like he's engaged but at the same time very grounded. (Sam) • Well the positive experience in just that every session . . . there was just one session where I really was . . . just like, "Oh I don't really know what to talk about." We ended up having a really great session that was . . . really full of ideas and new thoughts and plans. (Sue)
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The validation was extremely important just to make sure I was on the right path. . . . I've learned that I'd been procrastinating, and that was one of the things that I really wanted to focus on in the coaching. (Cindy) • I think it was probably one of the biggest [learning] contributions . . . [to] take the opportunity now so that [I could] deal with the details afterwards. (Dave) • I'll be able to train and improve my managerial skills. (Fred) • [To do with time management] That was one of my biggest weaknesses. It always has been, trying to stay on top of things and just learning the different ways in which I can help manage that better and hold myself accountable rather than someone else only accountable (laughs) and reminding me it's definitely going to create a lot more success in the future for me. (Fred) • Helping to change the communication strategy and calling them out of the blue just to see how they're doing, realigning their expectations and explaining things properly and thoroughly really has helped over the past 6 weeks. (Fred) • Learning how to clear my head because, you know, it's crazy when you can't sleep at night and (laughs). . . . I'd have to say [this learning] was the . . . second top. (Sue) • It wasn't all about like meditation and being calm, but calming your mind so that you're open to what's happening at the situation. (Sue) • When we were planning to let go of that client, . . . I'm very much a person that shies away from any kind of. . . . I did work through that with Steve. (Sue)

In this finding, what participants believed reflected success during their coaching engagement has been shown. Moving forward, the expectations of the coachee; were the expectations met; and if so, why and how, and if not, why are reviewed.

Finding 2: Participants did not set high expectations for their coaching experience, as they had never really experienced coaching before. It has become clear that although coaching is growing, the majority of entrepreneurs have never engaged in a self-planned coaching engagement. Even out of the five participants who finished the 3-month commitment, none of them had ever had a full coaching engagement that was from outside of their company or franchisor (see Table 6).

Table 6

Participants' Previous Experience with a Coach Outside of Their Organization

Participant	Comment
Cindy	No coaching; only coaching classes and a workshop
Dave	So, I'd say minimal
Fred	Franchisor sent in some people to teach some concepts such as team work
Sam	Not much; just some inside coaching from franchisor
Sue	Only some help from inside coaching style staff

This research found that the participants did not set high expectations for their coaching experience, as they had never really experienced coaching before. There was very little shared in terms the expectations before the first coaching session. One participant thought it would be a much more mechanistic relationship consisting of what the coach wanted to tell the coachee and the coachee asking questions that had to do with systems the coach wanted to have the coachee perform (Fred). Fred was happy this was not the way it was.

One participant simply wanted “validation” and soon found out she could get much more and was able to give herself the validation she needed (Cindy). A couple of the participants wanted help with items such as growth of business, time management, and focus on what they felt was important: employee development (Dave & Fred). When asked about what was his expectation, Fred said, “I wasn’t expecting anything really.”

When pushed on what expectations were met and what expectations were they glad they had covered, both the interviewer and I received much more information. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being *not at all* and 10 being *the best*, one interview question asked participants to please rate how the coaching engagement had met his or her expectations. One participant rated the coaching engagement at 8, two participants gave a 9, one participant gave a 9.5, and one participant gave a 10. Interestingly enough, when Cindy was asked why she gave a rating of 8, she responded that the coaching was not long enough, which may give the impression that the participant’s expectations would have elicited an even higher rating had the research lasted more than 3 months.

Overall, the average of the score measuring the participants’ expectations being met was a 9, which spoke highly of the overall effect that coaching had on the participants. More importantly, why was the score so high? The interviewer asked questions to find out what expectations were met and what did it look like to have expectations met. This was where the interviewer really tried to start getting some stories and narrative from the participants in order to gain a clear understanding of why the expectations were given such a high rating.

In particular, Fred did not have any large expectations. Therefore, it was simple to meet or exceed his expectations, but when pushed for more clarity, some expectations did surface. Fred thought coaching definitely brought out a lot more truth and honesty in what

he was saying, which included a lot more in-depth discussion of problems and problem solving, which Fred did not think was going to happen at the start. Fred's experience of depth of issue and problem solving was much more than he had expected. Fred went on to say,

I just thought that through this, I would say [what] my problems [were], and you'd give me some tools to use, but not really dive deep into them and not really make me figure out the answers myself, which I quite, I really liked.

Sam actually felt like the expectations were all met and then some. He stated,

It's been 10. It's been kinda like in Spinal Tap, where they have, they have the volume and they have that 11 thing on the volume, and it's like. . . . That's been the way it is generally with Steve. It's off the charts [for] what I thought it was gonna be.

Sam mentioned that his expectations were met in many areas of his life:

The key thing from my perspective was to have someone with a sounding board. It relieved a lot of pressure in a lot of other aspects of my life, other relationships. It allowed me to get clearer, and you know, safe environment if you will.

Cindy gave meeting expectations a rating of 8: "I would say an 8, and the reason for that is [that] it wasn't long enough." Cindy really was looking for validation and to feel like what she was doing was OK or was going in the right direction. She said,

It's a matter of validating that I have the energy, the personality, the commitment, the education, in order to be successful at what I'm trying to accomplish. That was where the validation came in. I knew it, but I needed to see if somebody else saw it.

Cindy also stated that the coaching gave her the will to be more of a leader and work with the other franchisee partners to accomplish things. Cindy provided some positive examples of what she had done between the coaching and the interviews, which were separated by about 4 weeks. Her examples had to do with feeling validated and, therefore, feeling more in control and being empowered to accomplish things that were larger than just her business or territory.

Sue gave a rating of 9.5 on meeting expectations. She appreciated the experience that the coach had. She noted that even when she started coaching sessions and did not have anything to say, something good would come out of the session:

Steve went above really with his experiences that he has. I felt that it was really a good step with us. I mean, sometimes . . . I didn't have something in mind that I wanted to talk about, and somehow we found something to work on.

Sue felt that the coach's experience in business and consulting as well as coaching made a big difference in helping to feel comfortable to ask questions and bounce ideas off the coach. The other big unexpected experience was that she felt she came up with some great ideas in marketing, such as a referral program, by just talking about what was important to her organization, which exceeded her expectations as well.

In discussing expectations during the interviews, Dave noted that he gained knowledge into how to change, navigate, and look into the future. The most significant unexpected benefit for Dave was the fact that the coach was able to help him think through a very important decision, and then Dave was able to decide what to do and feel good about the choice.

Overall, the expectations of the participants seemed to be fairly low, and in the long run, the coach was able to meet and exceed the expectations of the participants. This may be one thing to keep in mind for other organizations or coaches who work with franchisees. The expectations may be low at the start of the coaching engagement, but the coaching did get very in-depth quickly, and much was accomplished, even though the participants had to work their way into finding out how they wanted to use coaching as a tool.

Next, the research aimed at looking at what the participants, in this case the franchisees, learned from the coaching engagement, including what the similarities and

differences were. So much was learned by all the participants that much of the next section needed to be abbreviated.

Finding 3: Participants identified six main categories of learning realized through the coaching experience. It was difficult for the participants to share particular stories about the learning that occurred, although there were many small stories and even answers that could be seen as a story when put into context or interpreted with narrative inquiry in mind. As Riessman (1993) wrote, “We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret” (p. 8). As the researcher, it was my job to interpret what the interviews, transcription, and audio told me. I listened and interpreted to give context so that I could learn from the data provided through the coaching and the interviews. When it came to asking about the participants’ learning, I had to work hard to put the words and stories the participants shared in context with the whole interview, which I now present in the discussion of this finding. The learnings identified by participants included the importance of (a) communication, (b) time management, (c) confidence building, (d) trust and making the right choice, (e) clear the mind, and (f) franchise/business guidelines.

Communication. From the stories and answers that Fred shared, his largest learning from the coaching sessions was a better way or sense of communicating with others. Fred’s largest learning experience was as simple as learning to communicate over not communicating. He shared that often, he would just go without communicating when there was a problem. Now he “picks up the phone or uses email.” Fred realized that communication was a major issue that he never gave much thought to. Fred had a moment of real learning and explained it like this: “I think a better communication strategy will help the most in the future because everything we deal with: people and communication.”

It is sometimes surprising when a coaching participant has the ability to find out or realize that such a basic concept as communication is so important to the success of his or her business. The participants often looked at the coach and said, “Why did I not think about this already? This is the learning that coaching offers small- to medium-sized franchisees.”

As Fred explained and shared stories, he would back up his learning with things that have happened just in the last 3 months since the coaching had started. Fred said, “I’m already noticing a big turnaround and appreciation from them [staff] and confidence.”

Time management. Another area that was common in some of the coaching clients had to do with time management. It seemed that these business owners felt their time could be used more effectively. Fred stated, “I’m completing tasks on time.” Simply by working with each participant on small tasks to be accountable for by our next session, this seemed to help empower the participant to finish the task on time. Fred noted that one of the real learnings he walked away with from a coaching session, which he liked and used, was “at least one thing to work on every session.”

Confidence building. The last major learning for Fred was the fact that as he felt more confidence and reassurance that he could also help the people he worked with feel the same way. This was a common idea with coaching participants; they felt they could use what they learned with their staff and co-workers. After explaining how he walked away with more confidence and reassurance, Fred said, “If I can provide my employees with a bit more confidence each week or month . . . my business will grow.” Fred went on to say that through coaching, you actually learn the questions to ask your employees and that helps them become more self-directed.

Sam found some of the same things as Fred, but referred to them differently. Instead of reassurance and confidence, he called it “joy” and “who I am.” Sam’s learning was more personal than others. One thing he said that coaching really taught him was “I found joy again.” In my notes, I mentioned that

[Sam] feels that as his mind moves at 1,000 miles an hour and he has new ideas every day, there must be something wrong with him. He now knows that there is nothing wrong; that he just needs to allow the thoughts to come and go and be a positive force in their business and life.

Sam felt that he learned to focus the important thoughts and let go of the ones that were not so important or urgent. Sam explained that he must prioritize and learn to be methodically ruthless with his focus. This was a very large piece of learning for a person who, at the start of coaching, thought that his ideas were scattered and that his thinking might be somewhat “crazy.”

Cindy was similar again to some of the other participants in terms of finding out personal breakthroughs. Cindy mentioned many times during the interview as well as in the coaching session that she felt validated. She reflected that there were many times when others would take away power from her or make her feel less than. Through the coaching sessions, Cindy reported that she felt validated. In her story, she mentioned that coaching was very helpful: “The validation was extremely important.”

Cindy not only enjoyed answering questions, but also asked many of herself, such as “Why do I procrastinate?” She figured the answer was simple and finally said, “Get out from behind your desk, and [the coach] helped me with that.” Cindy went on to say that what helped her a lot with the coaching was the ability to understand and realize she should “think outside the box” and feel empowered to do that. Her tendency to procrastinate went down

because she found a rhythm: “The rhythm is really, really important,” and “It’s not just going out there, but it’s the follow up.” This was another example of how, when using a coach, what may seem simple to some is a very important learning event for others.

The validation also helped Cindy to feel stronger. She said, “Coaching helped me see that I am stronger and I am a leader.” She had a very powerful story, and in the story, she used an analogy that she felt like she was becoming a butterfly and spreading her wings again. She said, “The biggest ‘aha’ was just bringing that butterfly out again.” This was a powerful moment for Cindy.

Trust and making the right choice. For Sue, three themes stood out: (a) trusting her gut, (b) making the right choice, and (c) quieting the mind. One of Sue’s main learnings was mentioned four times, with the same words, during the interview: “following my gut” and “listen to my gut.” Other research participants expressed some of these same concepts as the other participants. Sue believed that listening and trusting her gut feelings would help her be a better business manager and person in general.

In a very complex story, Sue mentioned a very difficult choice that had to be made. If the choice she thought was right, the employees would be happy and treated well, but the company would lose money and profits. She knew what to do, but it was not easy. Sue said, “I knew what was wrong. . . . It was a potential liability.” Sue explained that she does not like confrontation, but something had to be done, and letting go of the customer was the right choice.

Sue chose to do some role playing on different scenarios and found that none of them were as difficult as she thought they might be. This allowed her to trust her gut and follow through on the decision. Sue felt bad for the customer, but she stated, “I felt relief when I did

it.” Understanding why the choice was made, role playing, and then executing the plan was a relief and built trust in the participant. The main learning came at the end of the story, when Sue said, “If I plan properly and set everything out, then it’s not quite as bad, and you’re gonna probably feel better for your business and your client.” Participating in such a process can be a liberating breakthrough for an entrepreneur.

Clear the mind. Sue mentioned her need to clear her mind, but we never had time to work on it during our coaching sessions, which would have entailed discussing how to clear the mind so that one can stop, take time, and think properly or even sleep properly. Sue was taking off 2 days in a row for the first time in many years and mentioned that she did not know if she remembered how to relax or even quiet the mind. As a coach, I suggested a small book about meditation (Davich, 2004), and I witnessed a very big paradigm shift for this participant after she read the book and practiced what was in it.

Sue shared that when she came back from the small amount of days off, she actually relaxed and learned how to slow her brain down: “I have a hard time shutting off my brain, so that was a really big learning for myself.” She went on to say how important this was not just for life, but also to stop and think at work. Sue said, “Learning how to quiet my mind was really important” before there was a real problem. Ultimately, Sue said the major learning and benefit was “the ability to like, clear my mind and think about what’s going on and be objective and not jump to conclusions.” As with all of the coaching participants, there was deep learning that was part of behavior change. Though many of the participants’ specific business examples cannot be discussed here due to anonymity concerns, 90% of the coaching was around changing behavior and thinking in new ways.

Franchise/business development. Dave was the only participant who was much different from the others. In coaching, you should allow the client to choose the subjects and the areas to explore (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002; Silsbee, 2010; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011), and that is what I did. During most of our coaching sessions, we spoke about business issues and things that were about the finances, marketing, and other things that Dave was interested in. The contract at the start of most sessions was around finding out more about a business choice or a legal matter. Ultimately, Dave had many learning moments, and they revolved around business matters much more than behavioral change. The main learning for Dave can be broken down with quotes like this: “finding a direct formula for a commission structure for an employee,” “really paying attention to some numbers I had not in the past and basic metrics,” “setting up a separate company for the next franchise,” and “freeing up your time to work on the business.”

Another area Dave was interested in was finding out how other franchisees worked and how they run their businesses. As I have worked with many franchise companies, I could share some information that was not secret or proprietary, but this did make me feel uncomfortable as a coach, and I started to feel more like I was consulting. Dave said he gained a lot of value and learning from those sessions: “[The coach] gave me some pretty good ideas as to how other franchisers are set up from a legal and accounting perspective, as well as perhaps how to move forward, turning this from a job to a business.”

Dave experienced a lot of learning, and his learnings were much different than the other participants. I found it was much more difficult to have Dave open up on any kind of a personal matter, but this was the client’s choice and not mine. The coach should not have an

expectation of how the sessions will go; this should be set by the client (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011).

Participants' learning ended up being even more than I could have imagined for a 3-month coaching engagement. The findings presented in this discussion have shown just how powerful executive coaching can be for franchisees. In Table 7, I have provided an overview of some areas of learning that the participants had in common.

Table 7

Common Areas of Learning as Identified by Participants

	Communication	Personal Growth	Building Relationships	Staffing Issues	Business Development
Cindy		X	X		
Dave	X			X	X
Fred	X	X	X	X	
Sam	X	X	X	X	
Sue	X	X	X	X	X

As shown in this table, out of the five major areas of learning identified in the research, four of them scored in 80% of the participants. However, business development scored just twice, which was a finding that surprised me, since the research participants were franchisees who were small- to medium-sized business owners. I would have thought that all the participants would want to focus on profit first then on everything else. Soft skills jumped out as being much more important than hard skills to the participants, and it seemed

like they understood that one must build a strong foundation before one can work on profits. Behavioral change ended up being a key factor, and that is what coaching is really based on.

Also, to coach franchisees in business development, a coach may need some proprietary information about how the franchise works. In many cases, a coach may not be allowed to receive this information in a short coaching engagement. If a coach is hired for exclusively helping business development, the coach should be given information on how the franchisor suggests things be done and make sure that the coaching is in line with the franchise systems. The coach would not want to cause more issues by stepping in. The idea of coaching is to minimize the issues and help reach the goals. It is the franchisor's job to teach the systems, and the coach's role is to help maximize the systems based on the individual needs of the coachee.

In the next section, I focus on what can be considered the most important thing in the coaching relationship: trust. This is important before any relationship can grow and be productive; members in that relationship must have trust or build trust with each other.

Finding 4: Trust between coach and coachee was built at the first coaching session. For participants, trust seemed to be important, and with all participants, it was built at the first session. Because there were so many similar comments and trust seemed to be such a positive, I have chosen to present these results through Table 8.

Table 8

Comments Made about Trust within the First Session

Participant	Comments
Cindy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was really strong communication skills, really strong connection and connectivity on a human basis, really strong eye contact, really good listening skills, and was able to allow me to understand this was about me [participant] not him [coach]. • It was the warmth, the sharing, the honesty; I guess that would be it. • I felt validated [and] trusted that I could say anything and it was confidential; I was not being judged.
Dave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was good to have someone with a business sense just monitor where I was going with things. • He encouraged me on some items [and] would say, “If you think it’s right, go for it; it’s a no brainer.” • I had no problem with his trust because Steve set the pace correctly. He explained his credentials. I also know he is a franchise owner; I had no problem with trust. • It was not just telling me stuff; it was more of me doing the talking and being challenged by his questions.
Fred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found him to be a very open and honest guy. • I had been referred to him from another guy, so I felt that helped. • He seemed like a successful business guy. • As soon as I walked in, I felt at ease, like I did not have to hold anything back. • He created a very good open environment; . . . within the first session, the trust was there.
Sam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow, I’ve met this person who I really can hope to keep as part of my coaching for many years. I didn’t expect that. I expected three months that’s all. • I felt a bit crazy, but after my sessions, I felt like all was ok, and I was going to be just fine. • I felt trust in our very first session, I felt very comfortable with Steve.
Sue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has a very trustworthy personality, explaining his objectives, just his openness to whatever we wanted to dig out in every session. • He is a franchise owner as well so I trusted that he was going to have experience that helps, not just make something up, that’s important to me. • I looked at his website; he is a certified professional coach [by ICF]. I saw his education. He told me who he was on that website and that built trust. • He is very open minded, easy to speak to . . . you know when someone is actually listening and remembers what you talked about in the past and helps you move forward.

The research was clear in this case that a relationship of trust was built with all of these participants. They also explained how that helped them open up and communicate. When asked if the coach could have done anything more to build trust, no suggestions were made as to what the coach could have done better to build more or a higher level of trust. The inference from all participants was that the trust was either satisfactory or better than anticipated from even the first session of working with the coach.

When looking at the four major points, I have just covered: (a) what success was in a coaching engagement, (b) expectations met, (c) coachees' learning, and (d) trust, I discussed most of what the research revealed to see how executive coaching can help franchisees become more successful. Analysis of these findings has led me to six conclusions, which I will address in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

It was clear that the participants had much more in common than they did not have in common. Most of the answers showed that coaching did help with the participants' issues and was a great sounding board for the participants to work with. Communication, personal growth, and building relationships seemed to be the foundation for what the participants wanted and needed to work on. Staff issues and business development seemed to be much less important to them in these coaching engagements. .

In Chapter 5, through the discussion of conclusions and recommendations, I will take a look at why this may be and provide some suggestions that coaches may use to help small-to medium-sized business, in this case most importantly franchisees. I will put together a system that will help franchisees build a foundation on which they can grow a solid base so

that they can work more specifically with their franchisors to build their business around the systems that are in place.

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research outcomes showed four major themes, and when coding and working through all of the data, I have identified six conclusions, which are shared in this chapter. One of my goals was to make sure I did not lose the voice of the original narrator, in this case the participants. During the coaching engagements, I asked open-ended questions to get stories and answers the participants wanted to share. At the end of the coaching period, an independent certified coach agreed to do the end-of-research interviews with participants. During the interview process at the end of the 3-month coaching experience, the interviewer often did this by repeating the words and ideas to the participant, which enabled him to grow the story or answer in an honest and nonintrusive way (Riessman, 1993, p. 34).

While working on this research and during the data analysis, I believed there would only be four conclusions, and they would match the four findings I mentioned in Chapter 4. While dealing with the data, I had the time to become more in tune with how the participants felt and to understand how the participants were affected by the coaching and what truly moved them in their coaching sessions. Consequently, I made the decision to break my conclusions into six parts, and the two I added were (a) success and how it affects the coachee and (b) trust and what that is. I also wanted to tie the conclusions together with the research question: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees?

Study Conclusions

Although the findings were clear in Chapter 4, when all of the data were analyzed, not just the major similarities, but what the coachees shared in different ways, it seemed to come back to the same two additional outcome conclusions: success and trust. Therefore, I could not leave these two conclusions out of this section. I believe putting them into this

conclusion section not only was appropriate, but has also allowed me to use the data that were collected in order to fully cover what I found while coaching the participants. The order that the conclusions are listed in is not necessarily in order of importance. They are more reflective of the chronological time frame in which I was able to see the information. Six conclusions are discussed in this chapter.

1. Previous background of a coach is important for a successful coaching engagement.
2. Success is achieved through meeting goals, facilitating change, and learning.
3. Trust between the coach and coachee is necessary in any coaching relationship.
4. Many factors can influence future decisions to hire a coach.
5. Coaching can enhance an inner understanding through learning and change.
6. Though there were issues with franchisors, most participants felt the work that needed to be done was from within themselves.

Each of these conclusions will be discussed in detail.

Conclusion 1: Previous background of a coach is important for a successful coaching engagement. Most interviewees identified that the background and knowledge of the coach impacted the success of their coaching experience. Fred shared how important it was to have a coach who had practical experience in a business. In this same tone, Fred also found it important that the coach not only had experience in business and as a franchisee, but could also ask the right questions on important areas he was struggling with. In one answer, Fred explained how the coach had filled a void to help him work with the staff to empower the company staff to work on their own job descriptions so that there would be buy-in as a team from all levels.

Sue shared that it was important to her that the coach had many skills that she was looking for, such as marketing, consulting, and being a franchisee, which suggested she wanted a consultant and not a coach; this combination was also key to the way she communicated with the coach. She also said, “I met him and knew his background, then it was easier to bounce ideas and to work on things with him.” Dave said, “It’s good to have somebody who has this experience, specifically franchising experience.”

However, this went against the common thinking in coaching, as most researchers said one does not have to know the industry or job that one’s client is in to be a successful coach (Audet & Couteret, 2012; Bacon & Spear, 2003; Berman & Bradt, 2006; Whitworth, 2007; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). The participants clearly saw this knowledge as a benefit to them. It could have been that if the coach did not have any experience in this area, the coaching experience could have still been successful, if not better, but this was not part of the research. However, it was clear that the participants found the coach’s experience in business and franchising very beneficial.

To know how a coach’s familiarity with the coachees’ business focus would really affect a participant, a study would need to be conducted on this question alone. It only became more important in this research when it was clear that the participants found it so important that the coach actually had experience in business and was an entrepreneur.

Conclusion 2: Success is achieved through meeting goals, facilitating change, and learning. This was something that was very clear to me after going through all of the data. Success to the coachees was identified as change, learning, and reaching goals. In Table 1 as presented in Chapter 4, an example that makes this very clear was provided. For example, Fred said, “Walking away and they’re achieving the goals that they set out to get from you. I

think that would be success as a coach.” For Cindy, it was about learning how to focus; she said, “Success for me would be that I no longer had this muddle in my mind, that I knew how to focus.” Also, in Chapter 4, information presented in Table 2 broke these subjects down further by adding time management, building confidence, and feeling comfortable.

When a coach and coachee start to work together, the ICF’s (2011) core competency of “Establishing the Coaching Agreement” (para. 4) is so important, as this entails establishing a coaching agreement. Many coaches call this the coaching contract, which is often set up at the beginning of every session. This is not to be confused with any written contract a coach may have with a coachee to start a coaching engagement. ICF (2011) has stated that to accomplish the coaching agreement, the following guidelines must be met:

Establishing the Coaching Agreement—Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship.

1. Understands and effectively discusses with the client the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship (e.g., logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate).
2. Reaches agreement about what is appropriate in the relationship and what is not, what is and is not being offered, and about the client's and coach's responsibilities.
3. Determines whether there is an effective match between his/her coaching method and the needs of the prospective client. (Establishing the Coaching Agreement, para. 1-4)

By following this core competency established by the ICF, a coach and coachee are much more likely to have success in the coaching engagement. They will understand what is to be accomplished during the coaching engagement, the coachee will share his/her expectations, and the coach will make sure his/her coaching style will work and can also choose from the proper grouping of tools he or she may have.

If the coachee feels like he/she has worked on what he/she wanted to and moved closer in that direction, my experience and the data have shown that the coachee will feel that

the coaching session has been successful. Again, it is necessary to stress that in the context of this research study, coachees identified that success was about meeting goals, facilitating change, and learning. In other coaching sessions, the coaching agreement may be different.

If you review most research on coaching, you will find that coaching almost always involves change of some sort (Whitworth, 2007; Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). The success of the coaching engagement seems to take place when the coach and the coachee have agreed on what the change will be and then work to accomplish that change. Often while the coaching process takes place, the change and the coaching agreement may change, but this should always take place by the agreement of both the coach and coachee.

For example, one day I was working with Sam, and we agreed to coach on how to raise the sales in his company. Before long, the conversation turned to what should a sales person get paid and what kind of a commission structure is best for his company. When the conversation seemed to be going in a different direction, I asked, “Do you mind if we change our coaching agreement to sales employees and how to pay them from our original agreement of how to raise sales?” Sam agreed, and at the end of the coaching session, he came up with how he wanted to pay his sales staff and shared with me that this was a very big load off his shoulders. Sam was happy with the change of goal, and he felt that the coaching session had been a great success.

This is just one example of how I have come to learn what success is for a coachee. Time and time again, it was obvious that if the goal was set at the beginning and then you worked to that goal or even agreed to change the goal on the fly, the coachee would consider the coaching session a success. Interestingly enough, even when the goal was not fully

accomplished, a coachee would feel success as long as the coachee perceived that he or she was closer to meeting that goal.

I would find this out after every coaching session, as I have always asked one or two of the following questions:

1. What was your learning today?
2. Did you get from this session what you needed?
3. Could we have been more effective than we were today?
4. Is there something we left unfinished today?

Asking these questions at the end of each session allowed me to see how the coachee felt and if he or she felt that the session was successful. In almost all cases, the coachee did feel good about the session, even when the full answers were not clear. The fact that they are moving closer to the answers had a huge positive affect on the coachees.

Conclusion 3: Trust between the coach and coachee is necessary in any coaching relationship. It was clear that trust was a major factor in how the coachee integrated with the coach. Two aspects of trust stood out in the data: (a) Trust was very important to the coachee, and (b) trust is built in the first session.

Trust was very important to the coachee. Participants stated that if they were to be able to share some of the most private issues in their life, they must trust the person they do that with. The more important part of this trust was what the coachees determined trust was. The following coaching traits were listed by participants as important to the coaching experience: open and honest, strong communication skills, connection on a human basis, really good listening, understand me, warmth, sharing [coach], I could say anything, not being judged, confidentiality, had business sense, giving encouragement, supportive, set pace

correctly, had credentials, was [is] a franchise owner, being challenged by his questions, referred to him, successful business guy, sense of ease, open environment, all was OK, I was going to be fine, trustworthy personality, experience not just make something up, his website, his education, remembering what we talked about from session to session. The number one trait mentioned over and over was the coach's openness.

Reading this list of coaching traits identified by the research participants can humble any coach by the mere fact of what a coachee wants in a coach. However, the research data showed that these coaching traits added to the participants' sense of success in the coaching sessions during the research. It seems like a lot for any one person to try to meet. For me, I now believe it came down to five traits.

1. Committing to help my client,
2. Unrelenting personal value of always being honest,
3. Being able to learn from others, as I have gained many of these qualities through what others have taught me,
4. Treating others as I would want to be treated, and
5. Fully trusting in the client that he or she is honest, trustworthy, and has all of the answers within him/herself.

I feel I emulated my trustworthiness to my clients through these five qualities, and I came to realize the importance of that first session in building trust.

The data showed that trust is built in the first session. All five participants were clear that building of trust started from the first session, and when that first session was over, their trust in the coaching engagement was set in a very positive way. The data showed that one must be very cognizant of building trust in the first coaching session. One participant

said that trust was built in the first session because “he let me know what his job was and would work with me at the start of the session to decide what we needed to deal with” (Sue).

Simply put, almost every literature source and all of my data have identified trust as being a major component of the success of any coaching relationship. O’Neill (2007) explained it well and with simplicity: “The coaching relationship is built on trust, the ability to give and receive feedback, and genuine presence on the part of both coach and leader [or coachee]. It is a highly interactive process” (p. 10). This can only be accomplished with a deep sense of trust in the coaching relationship.

There would be no doubt that hiring a coach or rehiring a coach would have much to do with trust. Next, how trust, as one factor, can affect the coaching relationship is presented.

Conclusion 4: Multiple factors influence future hiring of a coach. The likelihood of whether the participants would hire a coach again in the future is depicted in Table 9. These are comments from the answers the participants gave when asked about this subject.

Table 9

Participants’ Plans to Hire a Coach in the Future

Participant	Yes	Maybe	No	Participants’ Comments
Cindy	X			Oh, yeah, I would, yeah, I would definitely.
Dave	X			I’d definitely hire a coach in the future based on this experience.
Fred			X	For the purpose that I’ve had it in, no.
Sam	X			You have an accountant; you have a lawyer; you should have a coach as well.
Sue	X			Definitely, I would hire a coach in the future.

The research data showed that four out of five of the participants would hire a coach in the future. The participants said they found value in the coaching and thought it is a tool they should use in the future. One participant was very specific in stating she would if she could afford it. This may be one stumbling block for franchisees, as they may only think about hiring a coach when their business is having trouble, and at that point, they may not have the financial resources to afford a coach. Franchisors may want to have a program for franchisees who need coaching and cannot afford it. It was also clear that the franchisees who participated in this research would want an outside coach and not an inside coach from the company or franchisor.

Additionally, franchisors could offer their franchisees a list of coaches whom they may want to connect with to help grow their companies. This research clearly showed that the coaching experience was helpful and successful. If franchisors would help initiate coaching for their franchisees by cost sharing or even just giving this information out to their franchisees, the likelihood would be that it would pay off in two major ways: (a) bring more profit to the franchisees, which, in turn, would give more profit to the franchisor; and (b) coaching would help franchisees accomplish goals, change, and enjoy their business and life more, which, in turn, would also have many positive consequences to a franchisor.

Fred, the one participant who said he would not hire a coach for the purpose that this coaching engagement covered, did say he would hire a coach for his employees. Fred said he believed there are a number of places to get help and information for free in the industry, such as working with other people in the industry and talking about their successes and failures. Rather, he felt joining support groups and business groups would be a better way to go for himself.

Conclusion 5: Coaching can enhance an inner understanding of self through learning and change. In Chapter 2, the subject of behavioral change and understanding what needs to be worked on was identified as an important part of goal setting and change. In this section, some examples of participants' understanding about some of the behaviors they need to change are provided. This new-found knowledge was accomplished through an enhanced inner understanding of themselves and how they work and live. In this section, the participants' pseudonyms are left out, as some of this information is more private.

One participant found she/he needed help to start changing the way he/she thought about many things. By the end of the 3 months, during the interview the participant had seemed to show that he/she understood some of the shortfalls he/she wanted to change, such as employee remuneration, what and how to figure out these kind of questions, and delegating to others so that he/she did not have to do all of the work. This participant was starting to understand the big picture in his/her company and what would happen as the company shrinks or grows. The participant was starting to see the big picture in a snapshot so that she/he could find the important areas to drill down into.

This understanding was more than just change; it reflected an inner understanding of how he/she thinks, problem solves, and responds to others. When participants started to really understand what made them tick, it was much simpler for them to find many answers that they were looking for. This seemed to be a very large breakthrough, as it not only dealt with immediate issues, but also identified some long-term results and tools to work with.

Another participant realized that fear was a big part of the way she/he treated employees and clients. Although this participant must make sure basic laws are followed, the participant discovered there was much more that could be accomplished when he/she faced

this fear head on and dealt with the problem as soon as it arose. This was a very difficult thing for this participant to deal with after being in business for so long.

One participant realized that she/he needed to start looking at her/his own actions and hold her/himself accountable just like she/he does her/his staff. The participant identified that this has been a personal ongoing battle, but she/he said if she/he could start holding her/himself accountable more, she/he would be much more successful. In our coaching sessions, the participant came up with many ideas to make this goal work.

The participant acknowledged that this was a big personal breakthrough, as it was not easy to talk about personal change. He/she found it easy to hold other staff members accountable, but now he/she realized that she needed to hold him/herself accountable as well. In one of our sessions, the participant even said, "I wonder what the staff thinks about me when I am the only one who is not held accountable?" This statement proved to be an important moment that would serve the coachee well in the future. These moments are more than mere change; they reflect new-found knowledge to help understand self and be able to make change from this understanding.

Time management for another participant had been an ongoing concern from the first day as an entrepreneur. Together, we found tools such as programs to help the participant keep track of tasks and unfinished business. These tools took away some of the clutter and seemed to work well for the participant. The participant said that being more organized and having less procrastination has made for a better company and happier employees.

The big difference with this coachee was that he/she did not even realize that the problem was time management at the start. After talking about all the different issues he/she had with others and different situations, this participant came to the conclusion that time

management was one of the main contributing factors: “This has been an ongoing issue for me for years, ever since I started to be an entrepreneur.”

At first, the participant was looking for what he/she could do to effect change in others, and many questions were asked around what it would look like when that change took place. Participants were then asked if the problem would still be there, and in many cases the participant thought it might, which is when he/she started to take a personal look inside. Soon after that, he/she started focusing on time management and how to spend time on tasks and mostly in between tasks.

All three of these examples showed behavior change, but the data and the coaching sessions showed a deeper meaning to that change. There is an inner understanding that comes from looking deep within oneself to create that change. When one has this deep and inner understanding, the person can be more honest and introspective; this leaves a lasting effect to allow the coachee to work through even more issues when the coach is not around. As one coachee said, “I needed validation.” It was not from the coach that she needed the validation; it was truly herself. She needed to stop wondering if she was enough and understand she was exactly perfect so she could move on and be open and honest with herself to work through issues that she was stuck on.

Conclusion 6: Through developing their own emotional intelligence and self-awareness skills, franchisees will be more able to resolve issues with their franchisors.

This area was surprising for me. Although in our coaching sessions the participants talked about their franchisors and had some complaints and things they wished their franchisors would do differently, it was clear by the time they participated in the closing interviews that the participants felt most of the work that needed to be done was from within themselves.

There were only two strongly worded comments about franchisors. One was around the fact that the inside coaches they are given do not really coach for them, but work for and have the franchisor as the main customer. Participants felt that the inside coach was more responsible to the franchisor than to them as the client and franchisee. The second comment was that there was no real system for this participant to share feedback on how the franchisor is doing and on what the franchisee would like to see done differently. The coachees who experienced inside coaching explained to me during our sessions that they felt that the inside coach was focusing on what the franchisor wanted. For instance, the coach might deal with one subject like sales with every franchisee that month. The coaching that the coachee received in this research was much less preconfigured and was open to dealing with whatever the coachee needed. The coachees in this research explained that this was much more useful and comfortable.

There were a few more small issues in the coaching sessions to do with the franchisor, but the coach and coachee always tried to find answers that were within the power of the franchisee, rather than pointing a finger or blaming the franchisor. There is not a lot a franchisee can do by complaining, but by building strong relationships with the franchisor, much more can be accomplished. Coachees in this research felt that the coaches provided through the franchisor had their main allegiance to the franchisor. The coachees did like and trust the inside coaches they dealt with, though the coachees did say that a lot of good came from the sessions with the inside coaches. Ultimately, the coachees just felt that an outside coach was more open to ideas and had the coachee's best interest in mind at all times.

These issues are another reason for the franchisor to support outside coaching, which will support communication and the will to find answers together so that the blame game is

not a part of the issue, but jointly working on answers is. Franchisors could take a larger role in the personal happiness of the franchisees with very little effort, but could achieve large success by supporting or even paying for outside coaches to come in and work with franchisees. This help goes beyond building franchise councils or franchise help groups, but would actually help franchisors to take the responsibility for franchisees' growth on a more personal level. Executive coaching can be a major and affordable way to help build the personal growth and success of franchisees, which, in turn, may build the strength and profitability of the franchisor.

Although only 3 months and six sessions were spent with each participant, much was accomplished in this time frame. My research was not to find out what the perfect length of coaching would be, but rather to see if coaching would help the franchisee be more successful. Many franchisees may find that they would like a longer coaching relationship. As a matter of fact, I have worked with two of the six participants since the research ended, as they felt they wanted to work on more things.

Some coachees may find one or two sessions is all that is needed to resolve a small issue they are having, and other franchisees may find they want or need a much longer coaching relationship that could last 6 to 12 months even in some cases years. That should be the coachee's choice and everyone will be different.

Recommendations: The 7 Cs—Skills that all Franchisors Could Use

When this research started, many questions came to mind about helping franchisees and franchisors, but the ultimate goal of this research was to give tools to the franchise industry to become even more productive and to make franchising an even better business segment to work in. This is why I finally came to the question: "Does executive coaching

impact the success of franchisees?” By asking this question, not only could knowledge be gained for the franchising field, but the findings could also enable others to have a tool of executive coaching if the research showed that it was as positive a tool as I thought it was.

From data obtained and analyzed in this research, it became clear that participants felt there were some benefits in participating in coaching sessions. More research will need to be done to convince franchisors that have been operating the same way for so many years, but the changes are happening slowly and surely in the franchise industry. Twenty years ago, you would not have seen inside coaches within a franchise organization. You would have seen franchise area directors only. In the future, I can see outside coaching being more and more a standard as franchisees use them and when the franchisees can show that this will benefit the franchisor as well as the franchisee. The truth is that in most cases now, franchisees are hiring executive coaches on their own and benefiting from the services of coaching. The more this takes place, the more franchisors may be willing to look at contracting outside coaching for their organizations, as they could be more objective.

While doing my research, I also developed a set of skills that I have come to see that franchisees are looking to build or, in some cases, just need to build. I have called them “The 7 Cs: Skills that all Franchisees Should Use.” The 7 Cs are (a) create trust, (b) confidence building, (c) clear and effective communication, (d) concentrated time management, (e) continuous learning, (f) coordinated business development, and (g) clear the mind. As you can see, the 7 Cs are not the seven great bodies of water that the title suggests, but they are seven large bodies of knowledge that can be worked on for a lifetime. These 7 Cs of knowledge are included in my recommendations, as they seem so clear now and would never have developed without this research and the help of the participants in this research.

While these seven bodies of knowledge may appear to be too general to be labeled as a single set, it is important to note that the franchising business, in general, is a diverse form of business that can be part of many different subsectors, have different structures, and take various forms, hence, the generality of the proposed skillset. The review of literature revealed that there are several approaches or forms of executive coaching; however, research on coaching often focused on the position of the client (e.g., executive, middle manager), the method or approach used by the coach (e.g., cognitive-based coaching, co-active coaching, mindfulness-based coaching), the behavior or nature of the coach and client's interaction, or the goal or objective of the coaching engagement. As of writing, there were no available theories or coaching approaches specifically designed for business franchise owners and franchisees.

It is believed that the unique structure of franchise businesses and the wide range of services and goods they can offer warrant specific coaching approaches and knowledge skillsets. Franchises are seen as high-risk businesses because the franchisor does not have much hold on the core processes and policies set by each franchisee; process optimization and quality control standards may be set at different levels. Additionally, a mistake of one franchisee may affect an entire brand, and could, therefore, potentially harm the whole enterprise. Thus, it is necessary for franchisors to ensure certain levels of standards are met by all franchisees in order to protect the brand name and maintain profitability. While many franchisors offer standard business operations training to their franchisees, coaching would instill greater change and has the potential to positively affect each franchisee's employees. Since the key motivation behind executive coaching is to create behavioral change in the workplace, and given the uniquely diverse nature of franchise businesses, it is necessary that

the proposed skillset needed by franchisors and franchisees remain general and flexible in order to accommodate the diversity of franchise businesses.

The literature review revealed that most existing coaching methodologies are based on behavioral approaches or schools of psychology (Orenstein, 2002), which is natural because coaching involves influencing the behavior of the trainee or client. However, as clients differ in personalities, it is implied that there is no single coaching approach that can be effective for all clients. Similarly, as clients from various managerial levels and industries also differ in roles, the coaching approach that would be effective for them would also be different. Therefore, managers and executives who belong to different forms of business (i.e., corporation, partnership, small-business, or franchise) should be subject to different coaching approaches and methodologies as appropriate for their roles. This reasoning is in parallel with the fact that people with different personality types have different learning styles (Sadeghi, Kasim, Tan, & Abdullah, 2012). Research has shown that success in learning is affected not only by cognitive skills, but also by the affective, motivational, and personality of the learners (Sadeghi et al., 2012). As coaching is in essence teaching a certain behavior or skill to a client, it is implied that coaching should be tailored effectively to the specific personality or role of the client.

Create trust. This is an area that franchisees as well as entrepreneurs have a hard time with. They feel insecure and vulnerable when they have to be sincere and honest. Often, they also feel that they have sort of a privilege as the owner to be able to bend the truth. This attitude has also caused entrepreneurs and their employees to trust each other less. When you know you are not trusted, you cannot trust either (Goleman, 2004).

To build trust, one must have a commitment to honesty and being part of the team. As one of my participants mentioned, “When I started getting my hands dirty, the way I was perceived changed . . . almost overnight” (Dave). This must also be a core value of the entrepreneur; it cannot be something that one practices at work and not at home. Humans are skilled in the area of perception and often develop a very good feeling as to whether or not a person can be trusted, which can often happen soon after they meet. A person will usually have a gut feeling if trust is a major value of that person. It is a value that cannot be faked easily. When you create trust, you have a foundation to build on forever (Goleman, 2006).

Confidence building. All people need confidence. Entrepreneurs need it more. So often, people look at entrepreneurs who are just people as strong and unbreakable (Brown, 2012). Often, entrepreneurs who are just people do not believe they can be vulnerable, and then they end up putting themselves in a situation where they cannot make a mistake (Brown, 2012). This actually causes many walls to go up, lowers confidence, and then shame follows shortly behind. Brown (2012) addressed this concept in stating,

The secret killer of innovation is shame. You can't measure it, but it is there. Every time someone holds back on a new idea, fails to give their manager much needed feedback, and is afraid to speak up in front of a client you can be sure shame played a part. That deep fear we all have of being wrong, of being belittled and of feeling less than, are what stops us taking the very risks required to move our companies forward. (p. 65)

Building confidence is all about letting go of the stereotypes of what a hard, tough, and mean entrepreneur is and living up to, but rather being the honest, sincere, and confident leader that he or she wants his/her business and team to follow and emulate. When one can build one's confidence on qualities from within, one's team will be able to do the same thing (Goleman, 2006), and this can only lead to a much stronger organization.

Clear and effective communication. The number one thing my clients felt they needed help with, and often they asked for it before it even became obvious to me, was communicating and developing their emotional intelligence to a higher level. It was incredible to experience the improvements when a person started to become aware of what he or she said, how he or she said it, and how what he or she said affected others. This has often been the largest “ah ha” moment for many clients. Daniel Goleman’s (2004, 2006) research over the last couple of decades has shown that emotional intelligence can also be taught. Goleman’s research has also shown an owner and executive’s success depends on developing his or her emotional intelligence as well as IQ.

Building emotional intelligence is the one area that will help a person master clear and effective communication. It can take years to feel like one is doing an acceptable job, but I have seen change in this area within 30 days when a leader is committed. Based on my research and personal experiences, I will devote the rest of my life to constantly building my emotional intelligence skills.

The other important part of this skill is effective communication. However, only working on communicating could result in wasting a lot of air, time, and paper without making any difference at all. There are many ways to determine the effectiveness of your communication that were not part of my research, so I will not get into them here. However, the easiest and fastest one is to just ask the people with whom you are communicating: How effective was my communication; do you understand what I am saying? It is absolutely amazing how easy this can be and how infrequently it is used.

Concentrated time management. Have you noticed how busy you are or how busy other entrepreneurs and high-level managers are? My research has shown that people are

busy being busy. Research participants were often asked about what they have accomplished in a given day, and they would frequently say how busy they were. They were then asked what they were busy with, and often they are not even sure. Often, they would actually say, “I was busy with so much, I got nothing done.” They were busy being busy. The amount of actual work that gets done is far less than could be done if one were to organize oneself and find ways to maximize working on what one is good at, while giving some tasks to others when one is not good at those tasks. This comes down to what many call time management, and building this skill in a focused and concentrated way is vital. One of my clients, who owns one of the largest franchises in North America, said it best when he said, “I need to be brutal with my time management” (Dave).

What Dave was saying is that he felt there was no place to do this skill halfway. Either you find a way to set up time management skills that work for you and concentrate on them every hour of the day or do not bother even trying. As discussed by many of the participants in this research, our minds wander, we want to help others, we want to do what gives us more pleasure; all of these behaviors will take away from our time management. We must not allow anything to come between us and the commitment we make to time management, or we will be spinning our wheels much more than we want to.

People often ask me, “How can you own three private business colleges, an ad agency, an executive coaching company, a Firewalking and facilitation company, get your PhD, sit on different boards, raise children, have a good marriage, and still leave town all the time?” My short two-word answer is “time management,” and anyone can do it!

Continuous learning. Based on numerous conversations with business owners, and confirmed through discussions with research participants, most entrepreneurs need to feel a

sense of accomplishment. Learning, on a continuous basis, is one way for them to feel this sense of accomplishment. This is why there are so many support groups for entrepreneurs and high-level executives (e.g., EO, WPO, TECK, Forum Team, and many, many more). Learning is an important necessity for entrepreneurs.

What is one of the first things an entrepreneur does when his/her company is doing great? He or she looks for new companies to start or buy, but often without knowing enough about that industry. To grow as a human and as an entrepreneur, it is important to continue the individual's learning journey (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 309). The good thing about learning is that it allows us to grow in the areas we want with less risk and more enjoyment.

Many of the participants in the research study were going to take classes in the near future or were enrolled in classes, or they belonged to some kind of a networking group that revolves around learning. Yet, many of them did not know or understand they were learning. If one can focus on continually learning, not only will one feel that need for learning, but one will also be able to use it in the next steps of one's life (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

I have also come to understand this skill myself through personal experience. Six years ago, I was barely a high school graduate, with an average grade of C. Being labeled a slow learner always turned me off from school, but I now know I have dyslexia, which simply means I need to use a different approach to learning. Learning was always a part of my life, but I did it through mentors. After owning many businesses, including colleges, I figured it was time to go back to school and get some education beyond what my mentors could give me. In the last 6 years, I have earned two master's degrees, and by the time you read this, I will have my PhD. This learning has filled so many gaps in my life and has

allowed me to truly start a new path that I feel will motivate me throughout the rest of my life.

Learning is the fuel that keeps our minds sharp, imagination strong, and our hope for the future intact. New knowledge fills those gaps that we did not even know we had until we started the learning process. Lifelong learning is much more than a catch phrase; it is something every entrepreneur should live by, especially as they work in developing their business.

Coordinated business development. Just like humans can move forward through learning, so too do businesses have to prepare for moving forward (Wheatley, 2006). There are two directions a business can go: (a) One is growing and the other is shrinking, or (b) It can also be stated as profiting or losing money. There is no true neutral for a business. A business plan and goals are a way by which owners and executives form a vision and a direction to take their business. Without this, people can feel lost, walk around the office, and do not know what to do next.

Businesses are not closed systems like a machine that will eventually wear out and die. They are open systems that can go in a direction of growth or in a direction of destruction. However, many entrepreneurs do not understand this concept and, therefore, have not put the importance into a coordinated business development plan so that they can continue to grow. All too often, entrepreneurs look for the perfect system and try to stay with it. This can only fail, as treating an open system like a closed system turns it into a closed system.

Margaret Wheatley (2006) said, “It is both sad and ironic that we have treated organizations like machines, acting as though they were dead, when all this time, they’ve

been living, open systems capable of self-renewal” (p. 77). If we treat our companies and organizations as live, open systems and build coordinated business development plans that all stakeholders can help create, the accomplishments of this type of organization or boundless.

In order to do this, one would need some of the previously mentioned skills, such as creating trust, communication, continuous learning, and creating confidence. It is easy to see how all of these steps can work, intertwined with each other, to help build an incredibly dynamic organization.

Clear the mind. Almost 100% of the entrepreneurs in my research gave themselves no daily routine to clear their mind: to stop, relax, and allow themselves the time to just be. How can we plan to be at full speed all of the time? Ten minutes of clearing the mind one to three times a day allows for one to be re-energized and to be clear when focus is needed. The good news was it was fairly easy to build this into my clients’ lives if they wanted to. It was not successful, however, for people who felt it would be a waste of time. I have never found a client who built this into their daily routine and felt like it was a waste or it was silly. All of them have found that finding the time for clearing the mind helped them in one or more ways.

A person can call this what he or she needs so that it will meet the individual’s personal beliefs system and idea of what an entrepreneur should do. However, I assure the reader that we all have one thing in common: We are all human with certain needs that include food, shelter, connection, and rest. I have called this skill “clearing the mind.” Some call it meditation, prayer, or relaxing, and many other definitions arise. Doug Silsbee (2010) wrote about two simple methods for clearing a person’s mind:

At its most basic, meditation involves sitting still, focusing on your breathing or a symbolic object, noticing the thoughts, images, and feelings that arise, and then letting them go to come back to the object of meditation. . . . [and]

Centering is a practice of bringing our attention into the body. It reduces the brains compulsive activity and allows a different sense of self to emerge. (pp. 50-51)

When one learns to clear the mind, it allows for so many special things to happen within one's body and soul. Many entrepreneurs do not even like using the words body and soul, but I cannot share my research and ideas without being authentic about these concepts. As a leader who has dyslexia and attention deficit disorder (ADD), I can personally attest to you how helpful this skill has been for me. Craig Stimmel (n.d.) wrote,

Is ADDH a negative trait? I'd say just the opposite. Their high energy level, willingness to put in the hours, and ability to do a great many things is a recipe for success in business if the individual can also manage his/her time effectively. (para. 3)

I have presented "concentrated time management" as my fourth of the 7 Cs. Stimmel also wrote about how important time management is:

So how do ADHD entrepreneurs manage and do so well? Often their secret is a technique of dealing with the challenges by using a very carefully managed calendar. That means that they live/breathe and work to the tune of a tightly controlled schedule of things to do today, tomorrow and beyond. Most will agree that the moment they start to deviate from that schedule, their ability to be productive and get "stuff done" is negatively impacted. (para. 8)

I also have seen my clients without ADD benefit from clearing the mind. Overall, it not only will help one get through the day and focus on the things that need to be accomplished, but it will also make a person feel better and give the person more energy throughout the day. Before anyone may feel that Skill 7 is not for them, I ask you to try it. Only 10 to 20 minutes a day can cause a positive change in a person's life.

Summary. These 7 Cs were developed from my research as an executive coach. Although some may get them confused with large bodies of water, there are similar

characteristics. These skills are large steps for most to take, and there are many areas to explore in each skill. I challenge coaches to use these skills, make them fit, and ultimately, I hope they will help other coaches to take one step closer to where they want to be.

These 7 Cs or skills will not be the full answer, nor can I share what all the answers are. I do not know them, and this research was not capable of finding all the answers. It must also be recognized that there were some limitations in this research.

Theories on the 7 Cs

This section will briefly discuss available theories and studies on each of the individual components of the 7 Cs skills enumerated in the previous section. In this section, I will tie in already proven theories to help strengthen the theoretical foundation regarding the 7 Cs. Future research could then develop the theory to provide further justification based on the findings of this study.

Create trust. In a franchise business setting, trust can be characterized by a belief that a partner, whether a franchisor or a franchisee, will act in the best interest of other members of the partnership (Altinay & Brookes, 2012). Developing and maintaining a climate of professional trust is critical to well-being of any relationship, including that between a coach and the franchisees he/she works with. While trust cannot be taught directly, coaching or workshops can teach individuals appropriate behavior that can lead to the development and maintenance of trust among business partners (Whitworth, 2007).

Confidence building. Confidence is closely related to trust because both characteristics strengthen relationships, which in this case is the relationship between a coach and a franchisee (Altinay & Brookes, 2012). Some definitions even go as far as defining one as part of the other, such as identifying trust as the confidence and predictability in one's

expectations of another's behavior and actions or equating trust as the confidence in the expected goodwill of others (Johnston, McCutcheon, Stuart, & Kerwood, 2004). While its definition may be contested and lacks standardization, researchers have agreed that building confidence among business partners and ensuring consumer confidence in a trademark are critical to the success of a business (Reilly, 2007). Maintaining high confidence levels in a franchise system is more difficult for several reasons. First, confidence and trust are fragile in complex relationships such as those between the coach and the franchisees (Reilly, 2007). The franchise structure also allows franchisees to make specific decisions about their services on their own, and this frequently diminishes consumer confidence in the trademark because of inconsistencies in quality of service. These issues indicate the need to build confidence among members of a franchise system and to standardize and strengthen consumer confidence in a trademark or franchise identity (Zachary, McKenny, Short, Davis, & Wu, 2011). It is believed that both of these milestones may be effectively and consistently coached to franchise system members through coaching.

Clear and effective communication. Studies have shown that effective communication is important in any relationship: for example, between workers of the same rank, between subordinates and their superiors, and between company representatives and their stakeholders. Additionally, clear, effective, and efficient communication has been shown to reinforce franchisees' trust and overall satisfaction with their boss, the franchise system, and the brand they sell (Chiou, Hsieh, & Yang, 2004). Adequate communication not only establishes mutual trust, but can also reduce conflicts in the relationship between the coach and the franchisee (Chiou et al., 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to teach the

franchisee how to effectively communicate, especially on expectations, perceptions, and techniques.

Concentrated time management. Workshops and seminars that aim to increase the management techniques and leadership credentials of business owners, managers, and executives can offer to teach or improve a wide array of skills and techniques, and one of the most common skills taught at such events is time management. Time management is a broad skillset that often includes knowing how to make better use of one's time, how to effectively schedule tasks that need to be completed, and how to separate one's time for work and for personal matters (Billington, Neeson, & Barrett, 2009). Effective time management can be beneficial to an individual and the overall organization. Individuals with effective time management skills are more resilient to stress and are more efficient in the completion of their tasks. Consequently, such skills in workers and managers increase an organization's productivity and profitability (Billington, Neeson, & Barrett, 2009).

Continuous learning. In the world of business, it is critical to increase efficiency and productivity and ensure the provision of the best goods and services at rational costs in order to ascertain profitability and success. Firms and organizations must take measures to increase their credibility and maintain competitiveness in their specific industries, and one way to do so is to keep up with best practices. Best practices in industries can be established through benchmarking and can be learned through continuous learning. Continuous learning allows organizational members to learn new technologies and improve technical and relational skills, which can be taught through seminars, workshops, mentoring, and coaching (Zairi & Whymark, 2000). Keeping up with best practices often results in improvements in the provision of services and in the quality of sold goods, which ultimately improves the

brand trademark, thereby ensuring profitability for the near future and possible success in business expansion.

Coordinated business development. Due to the increased development speed and complexity of the global market, firms must learn to operate optimum and efficient business processes to maintain profitability and competence. Coordinated business development allows managers to ensure that business processes keep up with the technological advancements in the industry and that employees are updated and trained on the use of new technologies and processes. One popular method used by many firms and companies as a means to coordinate business development while reducing employee stress and burnout is the *getting things done* method. This method teaches a worker to effectively manage everyday tasks and activities in order to maximize personal productivity and reach predetermined goals (Heylighen & Vidal, 2008). The basic principle behind this method is the coordinated use of task management tools, such as calendars, to-do lists, and note-taking devices, in order to keep up with a high workflow in a relaxed manner (Heylighen & Vidal, 2008). In the context of a franchise business, such methods can be very effective in managing an individual branch or store, while simultaneously keeping up to date with the methods of other franchisees and regularly reporting results to the franchisor.

Clear the mind. Research has shown that clearing the mind, often through meditation, allows an individual to relax, become receptive to new information, and increase productivity (Schmidt-Wilk, 2003). One popular technique used by organizational managers and executives is the transcendental meditation technique. Research on the effects of this meditation technique revealed that it promotes the psychological maturation and develops the cognitive, affective, and team behaviors of managers and executives, which subsequently

lead to improved management skills and increased productivity among subordinates (Schmidt-Wilk, 2003). This meditation technique has also been proven to reduce both individual and social stress among workers and professionals by lowering cortisol excretions (Walton, Cavanaugh, & Pugh, 2005). Because of its effective stress-reduction method, meditation or clearing the mind can effectively increase productivity and efficiency (Walton et al., 2005).

Limitations

The main limitation was that this research reflected the coaching of just one coach, Steve Whiteside. If there were a number of different coaches in the study, it may have added more views of how different coaches work within ICF (2011) guidelines, which could have revealed if the outcomes from these different coaches were similar or different. I suspect that if a coach is trained in the ICF values and competencies, they should be similar, but more research would have to be conducted to find out if that was true.

Another limitation was the number of coachees who participated. I started the research with six coachees, due to the volume of coaching engagements that would have to be accomplished and the number of interviews and the hundreds of pages of transcription that would need to be done. If a team of coaches could get together and work with a number of coachees, the outcomes would be richer and have deeper meaning. By the end of the research, five participants finished the research, as one participant chose not to go on. This person chose not to continue after the first coaching session, stating he did not have the time for five more sessions as well as complete the face-to-face interview. As per the IRB rules, a participant could drop out of the research at any time, and he chose to do so. The interviewer

and I were glad that the other five participants finished the research and did so with a great attitude and the desire to be a part of the research.

Another limitation was the length of the research. If a researcher had the time to possibly add another 3 months of coaching that would give a total of 6 months, which would have been more like what my normal engagements have lasted. Although some coachees were only looking for a month or two to deal with one subject, I have found that previous clients I have coached have usually asked to be coached for between 5 and 9 months. I have actually worked with some clients for upwards of 2 years, but that is the exception, and usually, we deal with life coaching more than executive coaching by the end of that time.

A coach's job is to help a coachee get through problems and hurdles that the coachee is having and enable the coachee to move on and figure out what he or she needs to do next. One thing that the research and academic books spoke very little to was identifying when a coaching engagement is over. I do not just mean due to a contract expiring, but how does one know that the coach has done what he or she can and the coachee is ready to take a break from the constant support of a coach?

Ultimately, this is up to the coachee, but also the coach should have a good idea and feeling when the learning and behavioral change starts to slow down and the relationship becomes more one of comfort. I believe this is the right time to take a break from coaching until the coachee needs more specific help on an item in the future.

Ultimately, this research project was a dissertation for my PhD and had to have a start and end date, and that in itself was a limitation. In the next section, what I believe would help the business community, coaching field, and the world as a whole are shared, and I provide some ideas as to what future research can be accomplished.

Future Research

As mentioned before under limitations, this research was accomplished in one year, by one person, with a limited amount of resources. To dig even deeper into how executive coaching can help the franchisee and franchisor, as well as entrepreneurs as a whole, it is important to look at some more complex studies that would allow for new questions to be asked, many more participants to be part of the research, and collaboration between more researchers, clients, and organizations. Here are some questions that could be asked.

1. What are the effects of a coachee one year, 3 years, and 5 years after a coaching engagement?
2. How can coaching franchisees help the goals of the franchisor?
3. What areas of coaching best help franchisees grow their business?

Some of these questions have been answered in this research, but there is the potential for more in-depth research to be done.

Ultimately, larger agencies are needed to help sponsor and support research for these areas. The ICF, which is the most highly respected coaching organization in the world, could be proactive and take a very small part of their budget to help sponsor some of these types of research questions. They carry out a very large survey almost every year, but it is more about the quantitative facts on demographic and earning of coaching as well as location and geographical intensity (see ICF, 2012b). It is a great scan of the industry and offers far more information than any other environmental scan previously provided in the coaching industry—or even in most other industries. ICF could do their members a great service by sponsoring more in-depth research on answering some of the questions above. The

International Franchise Association may be interested in supporting this kind of research. Large franchisors may be interested in it as well.

Also, universities and colleges could get more involved in research using faculty instead of only PhD students who have limited research. The universities that have MBA programs could do multi-year research projects in these areas. One of my dreams is to one day start a department in a university that would focus on the franchise environment and help lead more in-depth research as well as teach and help the franchise industry move forward. After all, franchises are the most widely used business model around the world, but it is underrepresented or not represented at all in most business departments in universities.

When it comes to research for the future, I have a bit of an agenda, as I find this franchising area to be such an underserved area for coaching and self-help. I did not get here by only doing my research or dissertation; it has been my experience of more than two decades. To conclude, I will share some of my personal reflections that I have come to understand and how I would like to move them forward to serve the world.

Concluding the Journey: Reflections

For me, executive coaching has been somewhat like Quinn's (2004) *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It*. I feel like I have been building my bridge for some time now, but for every step I take, I must put another stone down to have something to stand on.

Executive coaching has given me a new understanding of myself, but more importantly, a new understanding for the world and all of us who live in it. It has become clear to me that we all have questions, and the beautiful part is we also have the answers. Sometimes, they seem to be the right answers; sometimes, they seem to be the wrong answers. However, I have come to understand they are always the perfect answers.

As I work with franchisees, and at times franchisors, I have witnessed a disconnect between these two groups: not because this is what they want, but rather because this is what they think is needed. Although in many franchise organizations, the franchisor and franchisees may feel they have different goals, I believe the truth is closer to the fact they have a symbiotic relationship and truly count on each other for their existence. If franchisors and franchisees could work from this starting point more often, I believe they could solve many more issues and problems, and they could accomplish much more—not the least of which is more revenue and profits for both the franchisor and the franchisee.

In the future, my goal is to help franchisees and franchisors find new answers for building success, relationships, and their lives. The symbiotic relationship of the franchisee and franchisor is so intertwined that neither one really pays any attention to it. They just go about their daily lives taking each other for granted and taking when they can and giving when it seems appropriate. To this, I say, “It’s time to start over and build with each other a new understanding of what we can accomplish just by looking for new answers.”

The other truth I have learned is that franchisees do not give themselves the time they deserve to grow inside as well as outside. They do not allow themselves permission to make the mistakes that will help them find even better answers to the many questions they have. Although franchisees buy a franchise so that they will not have to make the same mistakes as a company that starts up on its own, it is still a fact that every business, franchise, and organization will make mistakes and have issues to overcome.

I would like to work with as many franchisees as I am able to and help them find the answers they are looking for by asking the questions they are not even thinking of. After all, that is what much of coaching is all about. I would also like to work with franchisors to help

them understand the immense opportunity they have to empower their franchisees and their teams to create new ideas and new ways of doing things. This is not accomplished by making large strides all at once, but by building a culture of understanding, listening, and inquiry.

My studies at Fielding Graduate University while taking my PhD and intertwining their Evidence-Based Coaching program has been an experience that I cannot measure. What I can do is move forward and, in my own way with my own voice, try to help others find what it is they are looking for. This research has given me a path and a method to work with so I can try to be sure I cover the important issues coachees have and to better understand what coachees are concerned with.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INVITATION AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the Research: How does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees?

Principal Researcher Steve Whiteside
 Student, School of Human & Organizational Development
 Fielding Graduate University
 [email address]
 [phone #]

Supervisor Leonard M. Baca
 Fielding Graduate University
 [Location]
 [email address]

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research because you are an executive in a small- to medium-sized company, and you are a franchisee. I am doing research on how small- to medium-sized companies and franchisees can benefit from executive coaching. As such, being a small- to medium-sized company, you have experience in managing businesses as well as having management and leadership experience. The hope of this study is that it will help you move forward in your professional career, and I would like to know if executive coaching would be a helpful tool for you.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to explore how executive coaching can be a part of small- to medium-sized companies and, in particular, franchisees. This research is to find out what the strengths and weaknesses are for small- to medium-sized companies when they use executive coaching.

As a participant, you will take a survey given by me, Steve Whiteside. You have already had many months of coaching with me, so you should be prepared to take this survey now. It will be important for you to be committed to the coaching relationship and the coaching experience. As with most things in life, you will only gain from the coaching relationship as much as you give to this coaching relationship.

At the end of the three-month coaching period, you will participate in an interview, where you will be asked how you benefited or did not benefit from the coaching. This interview will take about one hour. You do not have to answer any question you are not comfortable with.

At any time during the research project, you can pull out of the research, and you will not be required to take part any further.

The information you give through the coaching or the interview will not be used in a way that can be attributed to you. Only pseudonyms will be used in the final research project report.

With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded. You may decline to answer any question and still remain in the study. In addition, the interviewer will make notes during and following interview. The recordings will be transcribed by a transcription service that will commit to comply with the confidentiality and anonymity standards set out below. After the interview, I may contact you by telephone to clarify your comments, and I will use direct quotations without attribution. The follow-up phone call would take no more than 20 minutes.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your confidentiality will be respected. Your name will not be used for identification purposes. Instead, each participant will be assigned a tracking number for identification as well as a pseudonym. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific prior written consent to disclosure.

Interview materials will be used for graduate course work and may be included in my dissertation, as well as for subsequent journals, books, presentations, or virtual publication. If my supervisor or dissertation team reviews the transcripts, it will be with the tracking number only. The same confidentiality measures will apply if the interview is conducted by telephone or Skype rather than in a face-to-face coaching or interview. The dissertation and potential publications will be public documents where respondents may be quoted without attribution.

Data will be securely stored so that only I will have access to it. I may retain transcripts and notes, but all recordings will be destroyed after three years.

Potential Risks

There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this research.

Potential Benefits

You may receive potential benefit by being coached for three months at no cost.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no known conflicts of interest associated with this research.

Free and Informed Consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you:

- have read and understand to your satisfaction the relevant information;
- understand that you may ask questions in the future; and

- are giving free and informed consent to research participation.

In no way does your consent waive your legal rights nor release me or any involved person or institution from our legal and professional responsibilities.

The Institutional Review Board of Fielding Graduate University retains the right to access the signed informed consent forms and study documents.

Participation is Voluntary

Your participation is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reasons for your decision. During the face-to-face, telephone, or Skype interview, if you feel uncomfortable to continue for any reason, you may indicate your desire not to participate, and the interview will be suspended at that time. The data captured until then (recorded or non-recorded) will be destroyed immediately if you request it to be destroyed.

Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent. Feel free to ask for clarification or new information before and throughout your participation. If you have further questions regarding this research, please contact me or my supervisor at the coordinates listed on page one.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Fielding Graduate University Institutional Review Board by email at irb@fielding.edu or by telephone at [phone #].

Participant's Signature	Printed Name	Date
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Principal Researcher Signature	Printed Name	Date
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A copy of this informed consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Would you like to be provided with an email summary of the study results?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, email address:

APPENDIX B: AGREEMENT FOR INTERVIEWER

Title of Project: How can executive coaching impact the success of franchisees?

Name of Researcher and Affiliation with Fielding: Steve Whiteside – Doctoral Student
Lynn Skotnitsky has agreed to assist Steve Whiteside in his research study on “How can executive coaching impact the success of franchisees”?

I understand that all participants in this study have been assured that their responses will be kept confidential and/or anonymous. I agree to maintain that confidentiality and/or anonymity. I agree that no materials will remain in our possession beyond the operation of this research study. I further agree that I will make no independent use of any of the research materials from this project. At no time during the research or after will I disclose anything that I have learned from the information I work with in this research project.

Signature_____

Date_____

Printed Name_____

Company name_____

Title_____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

What to say at the start of meeting before recording starts:

Thank you for taking part in this interview. You should know I am independent from Steve Whiteside's coaching company. I am a certified coach and will be conducting this interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about how coaching participants feel about the coaching experience, as well as to find out what lessons they learned from the coaching sessions and the coaching relationship. I have six basic areas of questions. This research has been approved by Fielding University's Institutional Review Board for CONDUCT OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS.

Your name and company name will be kept completely confidential. You have the right to not answer any question you do not want to. You also have the right to stop this interview at any time, with no repercussions of any kind. I will be recording this interview, and then it will be transcribed by another person who has already signed a confidentiality agreement. The transcription and recording will be given to the researcher, Steve Whiteside, for data analysis. Do you have any questions?

I will start the recording now and begin the interview is that ok?

Basics (5 minutes)

I have started the recording. Ok?

1. What has been your experience with executive coaching before these three months?
2. How did you feel about making this three-month commitment to work with a coach?

The coaching relationship (10 minutes)

3. Did you feel you set up clear expectations (outcomes for the sessions) with your coach?
4. If you were to rate on a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent were your expectations met? 1 being not successful and 10 being very successful, what number would you use?
5. What were your expectations and what do you feel success would be in coaching?

Learning (15 minutes)

6. What were some of the big things you learned from your coaching?
7. How will this affect your success in the way you work in the future?
8. Was your learning more or less than you thought it would be?

Helpful items (15 minutes)

9. Explain to me how coaching helped you the most and what things will come from your coaching?

10. Do you feel that the coaching helped you work through any of the following, and if so, please explain:
 - a. Relationships
 - b. Franchisor issues
 - c. Business problems
 - d. Finance
 - e. Other things
11. If you were to recount an experience that illustrates any of these themes, what would where they?

Trust (10 Minutes)

11. Did you feel trust towards your coach within the first session of working together?
If not, was there a time that you did, and if so, when did you begin to feel trust towards your coach?
12. What most helped you to build trust with your coach?
13. What could have been done better to build more trust?

Closing

14. If you were to rate on a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent did you feel this coaching was a positive experience? What made it a (number given)?
15. Would you hire a coach in the future? Why or why not?
16. Do you feel owners or managers of small- to medium-sized companies that are franchises should use executive coaches to help them become more successful? Why?
17. What particularly do you feel franchisees can learn from a coaching experience?
18. What else you would like to share about the coaching experience?
19. What could the coach have done to make your experience better or more meaningful?

APPENDIX D: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR TRANSCRIPTION

Title of Project: Does executive coaching impact the success of franchisees?

Name of Researcher and Affiliation with Fielding:

_____ has agreed to assist Steve Whiteside in his research study on “How can executive coaching impact the success of franchisees”?

I understand that all participants in this study have been assured that their responses will be kept confidential and/or anonymous. I agree to maintain that confidentiality and/or anonymity.

I agree that no materials will remain in our possession beyond the operation of this research study. I further agree that I will make no independent use of any of the research materials from this project. At no time during the research or after will I disclose anything that I have learned from the information I work with in this research project.

Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____

Company name _____

Title _____ transcriptionist _____