Coaching as a Leadership Style: The Perceived Benefits of a Leader Adopting a Coach-Approach Leadership Style

Andriana Eliadis, MHRM, PCC

Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration in Organizational Behavior and Executive Coaching

University of Texas at Dallas

Jan Austin, PhD

December 2016

DEDICATION

      This Capstone project is dedicated initially to my parents, who taught me and "coached" me in believing that everything is possible and empowered me in every step I made; also to my sister Roula, who encouraged me to continue my graduate studies and never give up, to my brother Gianni and Roula, who have been like second parents to me since I was born, and of course to my two loving daughters, Kalliopi and Marianna, and my husband Christo, who have been patient and supportive during my educational and academic endeavors. I love you all dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must thank from the bottom of my heart all my professors who contributed to my academic development in UTD since March 2015. To Dr. Jan Austin, for her inspiration, patience, genuine interest, and collaboration to conclude this capstone project; also to my entire cohort, 12B, who supported me and collaborated so well during really demanding times. Last, to my personal assistant Sofia, who has been a great support at work, and my financial assistant, Dimitri, who understands me and takes on responsibilities and initiatives to help alleviate my work load and stress.

You have all inspired me and given me strength to continue.

I am grateful to have met and worked with you all!

A sincere thank you.

Andriana

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The stimulus for conducting this study is twofold. Initially it came from the numerous executives, managers, supervisors, and plain employees, whom I have met these past years through my collaboration with their companies to conduct corporate training and coaching programs for them, and from my formal coaching education at University at Texas at Dallas (UTD).

Coaching as a leadership style has been discussed a lot in the recent years in corporations, in HR departments, and in executive training rooms. Since change is inescapable, leaders have been trying to find more effective paths to lead and manage their people. My study is focused on the perceived benefits a leader and his/her people can have if a coach-approach leadership style is applied. I would like to start by tracking down where the word *coach* derives from and when it originated:

The word *coach* derives from 15th-century Hungary, referring to the village of Kocs, where fine transportation coaches were first constructed. The purpose of a coach was to transport people from where they were to where they wanted to go. Similarly, executive coaches facilitate the transportation of leaders to new levels of development and effectiveness. (Underhill, McAnally, & Koriath, 2007, p. 7)

In today's modernized, technological age, with intellectual awareness and international stimuli all around us, leaders and their teams have the need to feel acknowledged, respected, rewarded, and valuable within their corporate realms. According to Nohria, Groysberg, and Lee (2008), in their article, "Employee Motivation: A Powerful Model," there are four drives that improve employee motivation. One important drive they discuss is the drive of a bond; they say, "to engender a strong sense of camaraderie – is to create a culture that promotes teamwork,

collaboration, openness, and friendship" (p. 82). Employees need to believe that there is a future for them and that developmental opportunities exist.

> Motivation and inspiration energize people, not by pushing them in the right direction as control mechanisms do but by satisfying basic human needs for achievement, a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem, a feeling of control over one's life, and the ability to live up to one's ideals. Such feelings touch us deeply and elicit a powerful response. (Kotter, p. 93)

Therefore, when a person feels and believes all the aforementioned, then he/she is happier, more energized, and more productive within his/her work environment. This outcome can benefit all stakeholders, first of all the corporation itself, all the leaders entailed, the employees themselves, and ultimately the clients of this firm. Therefore, this can drive productivity and profitability to rise. Ultimately, the "perceived benefits" will come back to the same stakeholders from where the positive corporate climate once began.

The challenge is, for leaders to see the benefits that a coaching leadership approach has and utilize it to elicit and maximize their results. When employees are not happy within their work environment, they are more likely to start the "job hunt" for better opportunities. "In general, people leave their jobs because they don't like their boss, don't see opportunities for promotion or growth, or are offered a better gig (and often higher pay); these reasons have held steady for years" (Harvard Business Review, 2016, p. 20).

Chapter 2: Problem Description

The goal of this assignment is to discuss and analyze, via various literature and a case study, the benefits leaders, their organizations, and their people, can have when a coach-approach leadership style is adopted. When leaders can create "more effective ways to create and sustain change" (Stober & Grant, 2006, p. 1) for their corporation, they can empower their people, create a positive corporate culture, increase motivation, and at the same time improve their own leadership strategies by focusing on the essential leadership issues. This can be attained, by giving ownership and responsibilities, by delegating effectively, by training and developing others, and by trusting and respecting their people. According to Cappelli, Singh, Singh, and Useem (2010), in the article, "Leadership Lessons from India":

> To engage employees, these leaders create a sense of social mission that is central to company culture, encourage openness by developing and personally modeling systems that provide transparency, empower employees by enabling communication and pushing decision making down through the ranks, and invest in training. (p. 1)

It is essential for leaders to recognize the importance of a "coach-like" culture and commit to spreading it throughout their organization. Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries (2014), in his article, "Coaching the Toxic Leader," says, "Senior executives have the power to create an environment that allows people to grow and give their best – or a toxic workplace where everyone is unhappy" (p. 102). Thus, adopting a coach-approach leadership style must begin from the senior leaders of an organization and work its way down to the last employee.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

As aforementioned, one of the reasons my interest in this topic sparked was from my formal coaching education at UTD while studying the book, *Coaching as a Leadership Style*, by Robert F. Hicks (2014). The book analyses a study conducted primarily for healthcare industry executives, but its theory is applicable in all business sectors. This book studies how leadership and coaching can work together to create a better corporate environment where its executives can communicate effectively and conduct their day-to-day business via better constructive, more open, more motivating and empowering approaches. As the author states, "A case is made for coaching as a means to help Elite Professionals make the transition to a team-based, task-interdependent work environment, and for coaching as a skillset that will help operationalize the components of transformation leadership" (p. xiii). He has included dialogues and conversations in order to understand how a coaching conversation can alter the leadership style of an executive and what the effects of that can be.

Another source of information is the book, *Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart* by Mary Beth O'Neill (2007). In chapter 11 of the book the author describes how leaders can effectively coach their employees. She discusses possible pitfalls and gives a great explanation of the path leaders can take to coach their people. She says that bosses should take two distinct roles when coaching employees: "Role 1: Articulate performance expectations, and ensure that the employee commits to them. Role 2: Coach and develop the employee to accomplish those expectations" (p. 263). Mary Beth O'Neill argues in her book that when a boss uses coaching effectively, there are many benefits created that will influence the entire organization. Specifically, she says that once effective coaching is used, "it has ripple effect throughout the organization"

(p. 281). This source will be used to show how a leader can use coaching to improve his people's performance and relationships within the team and the organization.

In the book, *The Psychology of Executive Coaching*, the author, Bruce Peltier (2010), discusses bad and good leader traits. He analyses the habits that can jeopardize a leader's position and points out that "poor working relationships and inability to develop or adapt (including inflexibility)" and "authoritarianism and excessive ambition, insensitivity, aloofness, lack of follow-through, and inability to do strategic planning" were examined to be characteristics of leaders, in the United States, "who had fallen by the corporate way-side" (p. 334). He also gives a list of positive leader traits which all link to coaching as a leadership style.

Dianne R. Stober and Anthony M. Grant (2006), in the book, *Evidence Based Coaching*, define coaching by defining its nature and discuss "effective ways to create and sustain change" (p. 1). They give several definitions of what coaching is and establish a core base of what is common to the definitions they have cited. They say that the common themes:

> include a collaborative and egalitarian rather than authoritarian relationship between coach and coachee; a focus on constructing solutions and goal attainment process, rather than solely analyzing problems; the assumption that clients do not have clinically significant mental health problems; an emphasis on collaborative goal setting . . . and is typically directed at fostering the ongoing self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee. (p. 3)

Here the editors support the coaching style as an effective means of development and leading. There are also case scenarios that explain how coaching can make a difference and help various businessmen and/or businesswomen reach a desired and self-designed goal.

In his article, "What Leaders Really Do", John P. Kotter (2001) explains what the job of leaders actual is. He states that, "Leadership . . . is about coping with change" (p. 86). He discusses

the difference between "motivating people versus controlling and problem solving" (p. 93), and states that employees can be motivated by being supported by their leaders via coaching, feedback, role modeling. Thus, coaching helps "people grow professionally and" enhances "their self-esteem" (p. 93). He claims that successful motivation gives employees the energy to deal with problems and obstacles and better cope "with the inevitable barriers to change" (p. 93). This concept supports my topic by linking it to the definition of coaching and to its potential benefits.

Another article that supports a coach-like culture is the article, "Leadership Lessons from India" (Cappelli et al. 2015). In this article, the authors explain the way leaders in India lead their people and the success stories behind this leadership style. They say that in order:

> to engage employees, these leaders create a sense of social mission that is central to company culture, encourage openness by developing and personally modeling systems that provide transparency, empower employees by enabling communication and pushing decision making down through the ranks, and invest heavily in training. (p. 1)

This article validates the initial premise of this project and supports a coaching leadership style method. This article discusses how this leadership style has been applied in the real business world and its positive outcomes.

"Primal Leadership" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001) analyses an interesting route to high-level leadership. They study leadership behavior via emotional intelligence and also see it from a neuroscience perspective. The connection here with coaching is that, according to their findings, for leaders to tap into their emotional intelligence, there is a five-step process, which "is designed to rewire the brain toward more emotionally intelligent behaviors" (p. 37). This five-step process is basically asking themselves five open-ended questions, which will bring awareness of oneself and, therefore, self-knowledge.

<u>Coaching as a Leadership Style</u>

James Waldrop and Timothy Butler (1996), in their article, "The Executive as Coach"

explain the benefits that a coach approach can have on managers of organizations. They say that

"Good coaching is simply good management. It requires many of the same skills that are critical to

effective management . . . Similarly, the goal coaching is the goal of good management" (p. 110).

The authors of this article analyze which coaching techniques can be used by a manager to become

"more effective" in his/her "new role" (p. 116). They emphasize the importance of organizational

behavior and sate that, "Being an effective coach is one essential part of that key to success" (p.

117).

The article, "Driving Organizational Change with Internal Coaching Programs: Part One," by

David Roch and Ruth Donde (2008), describes how companies benefit when internal coaches are

used in an organization to promote change management and acquire new skills. "Requiring leaders

to coach ensures their skills are embedded . . . with regular usage of coaching muscles, the opposite

happens – leaders find themselves suddenly applying their coaching skills in new and unexpected

ways" (p. 12). They state that by not giving people the answers and thus helping them to work out

any issues both they develop their people and at the same time leaders are less stressed and have

more time to use for other tasks.

A very interesting investigation is described in the article, "The New Science of Change" by

Christopher Koch, (2006). It proves via scientific and neuroscience methods how the human brain

functions when it faces change and when it is told what to do. Koch states, "The traditional

command-and-control style of management doesn't lead to permanent changes in behavior. Ordering

people to change and then telling them how to do it fires the prefrontal cortex's hair-trigger

connection to the amygdala" (p. 1). He comes to the conclusion that asking questions is the best

method managers can use to elicit change and bring solutions. This is a great article that

scientifically proves that the coaching method of asking questions and being open to responses from employees can bring optimum results.

Another great article, by Carol Wilson, (2004), "Coaching and Coach Training in the Workplace," discusses how companies have evolved from an authoritarian style "towards self-directed learning . . . companies are moving away from consultancy towards coaching." (p. 96). She discusses how "Companies are falling over themselves to provide their senior and middle managers with personal coaches, and to train them in coaching skills" (p. 96). When a person builds your confidence, supports you, brings about a new perspective for you, and inspires you, that person makes a difference in your life. These are "key elements in both coaching and in managing successful teams in the workplace" (p. 96). Wilson, in this article, also discusses the management style of the Virgin Records founder, Richard Branson, which as she says "embodied all the principles currently recognized as effective coaching, although at the time the term in its current sense had not been invented" (p. 96). The key elements were: ownership, acknowledgment, and blame-free culture. As history proved, Branson's management style was effective and benefited both the employees and the company. "The staff loyalty to the brand was phenomenal, and sales outstripped predictions year by year . . . Branson's management style filtered down through the company" (p. 97), providing an ideal example for all his people to follow. This is a key element that must be considered when a company desires to adopt a coach-like leadership style; the senior executives must "lead by example."

Chapter 4: Project Description

Methods

This capstone aims to observe how leaders and their corporations, in real-life business situations, can benefit when applying coaching as a leadership style. Therefore, qualitative methods are the most appropriate to uncover the perceived benefits of leaders adopting a coach-approach leadership style. As Yin (2015), says in his book *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*:

> Qualitative research most of all involves studying the meaning of people's lives, as experienced under real-word conditions. People will be performing in their everyday roles or will have expressed themselves through their own diaries, journals, writing, and photography − entirely independent of any research inquiry. (p. 9)

As he says, "qualitative research has an array of specialized types or variants" (p. 8); the case-study method is one of the 12 variants that Yin argues to be "frequently recognized" (p. 8). Thus, a case-study method has been utilized for this capstone:

> As a research method, the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena. Not surprisingly, the case study has been a common research method in psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, education, nursing, and community planning. . . . Whatever the field of interest, the distinctive need for case study research arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, a case study allows investigators to focus on a "case" and retain a holistic and real-world perspective—such as in studying individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial

processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations, and the

maturation of industries. (Yin, 2014, p. 4)

Conducting a case study is the most suitable method to explore the aforementioned research

question, as the behavioral events of the sales executive examined in this case study cannot be

controlled by the researcher, and the study is basically examining "how" an executive can lead

effectively via coaching approaches (Yin, 2014). Yin says that:

Doing case study research would be the preferred method, compared to the others, in

situations when (1) the main research questions are "how" or "why" questions; (2) a

researcher has little or no control over behavioral events; and (3) the focus of study is a

contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon. (p. 2)

The case study in this capstone project is examined "in its real-world context" (p. 2) and backed up

with contemporary research and business leadership journals by distinguished scholars in this

business arena.

Skills of the Case-Study Researcher

Case studies have been thought to be "easy" and many social scientists believe that all they

need is to simply "tell it like it is." "No beliefs could be farther from the truth. In actuality, the

demands of a case study on your intellect, ego, and emotions are far greater than those of any other

research method" (Yin, 2014). The reason for this is that, unlike a laboratory experiment, case study

"data collection procedures are not routinized" (p. 72). Consequently, besides the "technical aspects

of data collection," there are "ethical dilemmas, such as dealing with sharing of private information

or coping with other possible field conflicts" that "only an alert researcher will be able to take

advantage of unexpected opportunities rather than being trapped by them—while still exercising

sufficient care to avoid potentially biased procedures" (p. 72). Unlike standardized testing, like

GMATs, GREs, LSATs, or other tests like math or science tests that can assess levels, such as a person's knowledge and intellectual capabilities, there is no "test" to measure a person's ability to become a good case-study researcher. However, Yin (2014), distinguishes five attributes that a good case-study researcher should have. They are the ability to:

(1) *Ask good questions*−and interpret the answers fairly.

(2) *Be a good "listener"* not trapped by existing ideologies or preconceptions.

(3) *Stay adaptive,* so that newly encountered situations can be seen as opportunities, not threats.

(4) *Have a firm grasp of the issues being studied,* even when in an exploratory mode.

(5) Avoid biases by being sensitive to contrary evidence, also knowing how to *conduct research ethically.* (p. 73)

Yin, argues that if any researcher lacks one or more of these attributes, the attributes can be developed as long as one is "honest in assessing her or his capabilities in the first place" (p. 73). Subsequently, every researcher must have the ability to acknowledge his/her biases and have the ability to not judge or create false assumptions, which are rooted in his/her beliefs, but are not part of the particular case-study phenomena.

The author of this study has extended organizational experience with numerous executives in the USA and Europe. She has acquired a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Administration, a Masters Certification in Human Resources Management, and is presently perusing a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) in Organizational Behavior and Executive Coaching; also she has received professional coaching training and a professional coach certification (PCC) from the International Coach Federation (ICF). She has been training and coaching executives in various business fields for over 10 years. The assumptions that have been formed through her

education and professional experiences in relation to how executives can lead effectively are the

pivoting points of this study. The author of this study shares the outlook of Austin (2013) in terms of

what some effective traits of leaders are and how they lead. Austin writes in her Ph.D. dissertation:

1. Effective leaders are aware of themselves and others, and they use this awareness to
   improve their interactions

2. Effective leaders actively pursue their development as leaders—they are enthusiastic
   about coaching and other means to improve

3. Leadership skills are not innate—they can be learned through the active pursuit of
   various developmental experiences and sense-making as a result of experiencing
   adversity. (p. 68)

Moreover, another basis of this study, as it examines the perceived benefits of a leader

adopting a coach-approach leadership style, is presented by Bungay (2016), who says:

So let's look at why coaching others helps *you*. It lets you work less hard and have more

impact. When you build a coaching habit, you can more easily break out of three vicious

circles that plague our workplaces: creating overdependence, getting overwhelmed and

becoming disconnected. (Location Nos. 136–140)

Thus, the executives who have adopted a coach-approach leadership style are leaders who have all

the aforementioned leadership attributes in combination with the perceived benefits, as Bungay

states above.

Chapter 5: Case Study Profile

This chapter will provide the case profile of the sales executive receiving corporate training in management, leadership, business communication skills, and coaching. She is being coached on how to adopt a coaching leadership style approach toward her team, director, CEO, and her colleagues in general. The sales executive, who will be given the pseudonym Alicia Torres, to protect her identity, has been trying to find better means of communication via coaching methodology to improve her team's effectiveness, communication, and ultimately, her company's profits. A weekly journal was kept by the trainee/coachee, and a copy was given to the corporate trainer/coach. In addition, a 360-degree assessment was conducted, as agreed, for this leader by her team and colleagues at the conclusion of her training to determine the progress of this executive. An empirical investigation is being conducted via coaching and teaching methods to observe and examine the results that such a method can produce.

Alicia is a sales manager of an international pharmaceutical company. She had been working for the company for 15 years when, as the best sales person in her division, she was promoted to sales manager. She has been a sales manager for 5 years now and supervises a team of four sales representatives. Alicia reports to the sales director of the company, to whom we will give the pseudonym James Miller. James manages all the sales divisions of the company and he reports directly to the CEO of the medical sales division, to whom we will give the pseudonym, Martha Stew. The human resources manager, whom we will call, Kelly Christa, oversees the general movement of the employees as they are either promoted and/or change departments and/or divisions. Also, Kelly oversees the training and development sector of her company.

Coaching as a Leadership Style

        Although Alicia was an outstanding sales person, as a sales manager, she felt inadequate and insecure. She had never worked as a manager before and never had the opportunity to become a team leader or head of a team in the past. Consequently, Alicia requested support from her sales director, CEO, and human resources manager, to hire an external executive coach to assist her in improving her managerial skills, her team communication skills, her effectiveness as a sales manager in general. She hoped through this process to achieve better team sales results and increase the market share of her company's products in the long run. As Alicia is a valuable executive to her company, her request was approved and an executive coach was hired for her, on her company's budget. Therefore, about 6 months ago the author of this study was interviewed and hired as Alicia's executive trainer and coach.

Chapter 6: Case Study Analysis

The coaching agreement with the company and Alicia was twofold. Initially, she needed to learn basic managerial, leadership, communication, and coaching skills. At the same time, she was being coached to see what works for her, what does not, and how and in what way(s) she can develop and become an effective sales manager. The ultimate objective of this corporate training program is a challenging one for Alicia, as she has to reach her full potential—100%–in the arena of effective delegation and team management, and 90% of her potential in communication and coaching skills. Therefore, it was agreed to design a training program consisting of two training cycles. Each cycle is comprised of 16 business training sessions and 16 coaching sessions, then, at the end of each business cycle, a 360-degree assessment is conducted. Alicia's targets must be reached by the end of her second training cycle, which will be concluded by the end of July 2017. The first cycle began in June 2016 and was concluded at the end of October 2016, with a 360-degree performance appraisal. The second cycle will commence in February 2017 to enable her to reach the initial target set by both Alicia and her company. The meetings in the first cycle were conducted both online and/or face-to-face, depending on Alicia's and her coach's availability, travels, and so on. Two 90-minute weekly sessions were set up; one meeting per week was a business training session and the second a coaching session. The curriculum taught was reviewed by and agreed upon by all the parties involved—Alicia, James, Martha, and Kelly. The business-training curriculum included theoretical and practical approaches of general management, team management, leadership, coaching, emotional intelligence, business communication, and employee developmental skills.

Coaching as a Leadership Style

Following is selected data from the compiled report submitted to her company:

Alicia Torres Business Training and Executive Coaching Report

This coaching report provides manager/coach with narrative about the Executive's

managerial and/or coaching knowledge and effectiveness. It offers developmental feedback to help

the participant(s) professional development.

Table 1 *Corporate Training Basic Data*

Period:	**Cycle A: June – October 2016**
Trainee:	**Ms Alicia Torres**
Training:	**Business Training - Executive Coaching**
Executive Coach:	**Ms Andriana Eliadis**
Materials Used:	**Management, development, and executive coaching articles & journals**
Attendance:	**100%**

Table 2

Attendance Table

Alicia Torres	**Business Training sessions**	**Coaching Sessions**
Attended	16	16
Cancelled	0	0
Total Sessions	16	16
Attendance % Rate	100%	100%

Sessions Objectives:

The focus of this training is business management skills and executive coaching with Alicia

Torres. Business and Coaching objectives for Alicia include enabling her to:

- Comprehend her managerial, administration style.

- Develop management and coaching skills for current and future assignments in XYZ

  company

- Learn the fundamentals of emotional intelligence.

- Develop team management and team organizational skills.

- Develop specific managerial/coaching competencies in accordance with her company's and manager's requirements and feedback.

- Broaden her repertoire of managerial styles in accordance with her company's culture, values, and policies.

Cycle A Business Topics Covered:

Management skills

- How good are your management skills?

- Team management skills

- How good are your people skills?

- Management roles

- Common management misconceptions

- Fundamentals of team emotional intelligence

Improving team effectiveness

- Building an effective team

- How does your team work together?

- Improving team effectiveness by analysing daily activity

- Team briefings

- Staying in touch with your team

- Matching tasks to interpersonal skills

- Learning what your people think

- Why rules are there. Helping people understand and enforce rules

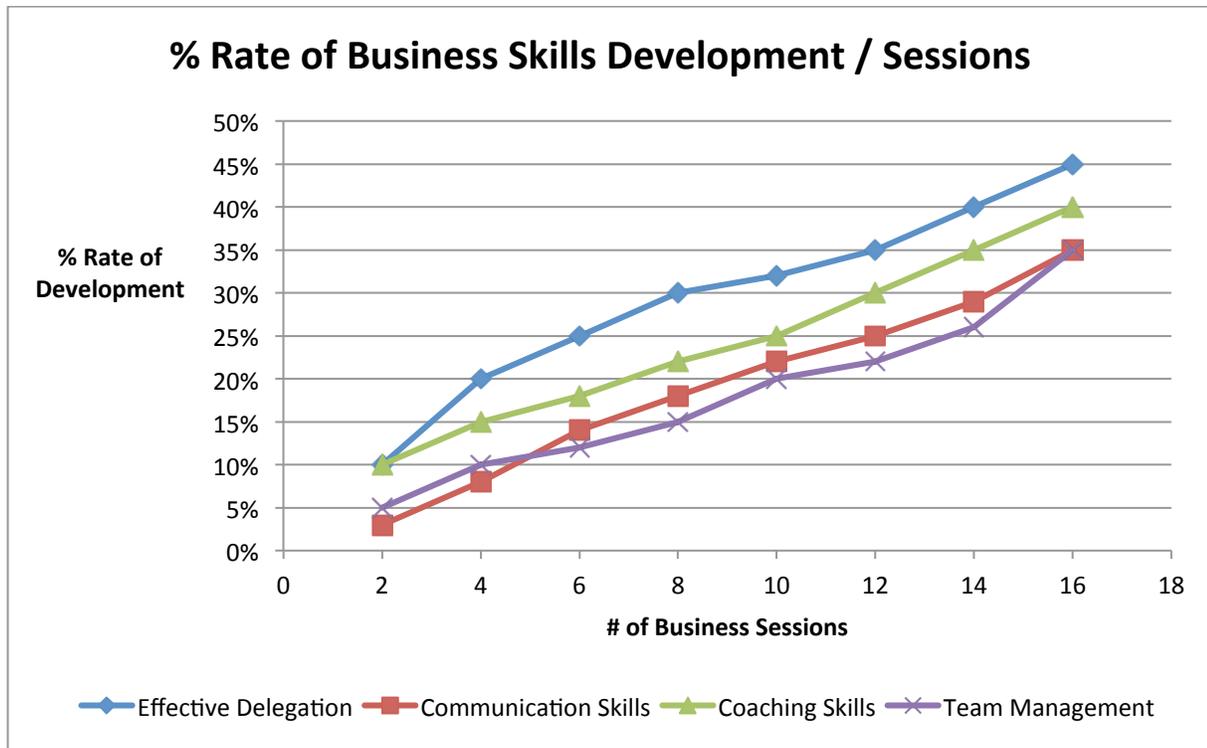- Building confidence in other people

% Rate of Business Skills Development / Sessions

% Rate of Development

# of Business Sessions

● Effective Delegation ■ Communication Skills ▲ Coaching Skills ✕ Team Management

Figure 1. *A Chart of the % rate of business skills development*

Executive Coaching—Progress to Date

During the training, Alicia held weekly one-on-one business and coaching sessions for the purpose of discussing and learning effective methods of managing and coaching her team, which consists of four members.

The coaching objectives that have been targeted thus far have been to:

- Improve her team communication, management, and organization skills.

- Formulate and communicate the roles of each member of her team.

- Use effective delegation to improve projects, task effectiveness and team support.

- Broaden her repertoire of managerial styles, particularly a coaching style that encourages the long-term development of direct reports

Feedback on Coaching Style

 Milestones and feedback:

- Self-evaluation and personal development targets.

- The vision of her team's role within this company.

- Team communication development and team bonding techniques

  During her coaching sessions Alicia worked on her personal management skills and completed tasks related to team development and communication. She successfully fulfilled her tasks, which enabled her to commence a more effective communicating pattern with her sales team. She was able to start recognizing her own roles, the roles of the members of her team, and the responsibilities those roles entailed. This, permitted her to become a better task delegator and to initiate managing her team and its projects in a more efficient manner. Alicia has demonstrated motivation and willingness to try out new skills and behaviors. This was an enlightening and promising prospect for her, as change starts to take place from within. Clemmer (1999), in his book, *Growing the Distance*, says that "Albert Einstein once observed that we can't solve a problem with the same type of thinking that created it" (Location No. 1087). In other words, a leader cannot influence his/her peers to change by using "the same behaviour that contributed to their current behaviour" (Location No. 1087). Therefore, Alicia, from her training and coaching sessions, has understood the need to change her behavior and see things differently, so as to be able to positively influence her team's effectiveness.

  Further on, introduction to the fundamentals of emotional intelligence enabled her to recognize her weaknesses and begin to design an action plan for her personal improvement. As Kite and Kay (2012) say in their book, *Understanding Emotional Intelligence*:

Whether it's getting on with others, reacting to situations at home or at work or simply reflecting on life's purpose, our emotions play a critical part in defining who we are, what we want to achieve and our effectiveness in managing our routes to success . . . *The sign of intelligent people is their ability to control emotions by the application of reason.* **Maya Mannes**. (p. 40)

They continue by saying that:

Self-awareness is a requisite of personal competence. Self-awareness can be split into three parts: emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. Emotional self-awareness is acknowledging what you feel about situations and how they affect you. Accurate self-assessment requires an examination of your own strengths and weaknesses. Self-confidence is being sure of your own self-worth and what you are capable of achieving. In order to be able to manage yourself, your emotions and your actions you need to know yourself." (pp. 40–41)

When Alicia was introduced to Emotional Intelligence (EQ) literature, and conducting coaching sessions, she was able to comprehend her own EQ and be more open and prone to listening to her people and her colleagues in order to increase her engagement with them and improve her team's communication quality.

If you are emotionally intelligent, you will be fully aware that all others may not be so. This means that you must manage their perceptions. This involves a degree of positive manipulation, an understanding of the psychology of effective communication and a judicious choice of what you show and say to your audience. (Kite & Kay, 2012, p. 224)

Receiving feedback from her manager(s) and peers and direct reports from her professional environment was an important facet of her development. Alicia, like many others, has been having

trouble with receiving "negative" or developmental feedback. Alicia discussed this issue in one of her coaching sessions. She realized that when others gave her negative feedback, she felt intimidated, resistant to the feedback, perceiving that she was being critiqued, judged, that they were ungrateful toward her. She ultimately felt anger and disengagement. Clemmer, (1999) says:

> Like beauty – or service, quality, honesty, or integrity – leadership is in the eye of the beholder. I judge myself by my intentions. Others judge me by my actions. My intentions and the actions that others see may be miles apart. Unless I know that, I am unlikely to change my actions or try to get others to see me differently. I can become trapped in their reality and get very frustrated when they don't respond to me as I'd like. (Location No.1043)

This is what happened to Alicia; it hurt her to receive negative feedback and that had negative effects on her overall performance as a manager. Once she realized that, she began to see feedback from a different perspective and tried to listen to it, accept it, and learn from it. This was a major step for her to see where she thought she was and what she was doing right and/or wrong, and how others saw her and her actions.

% Rate of Coaching Skills Development / Sessions
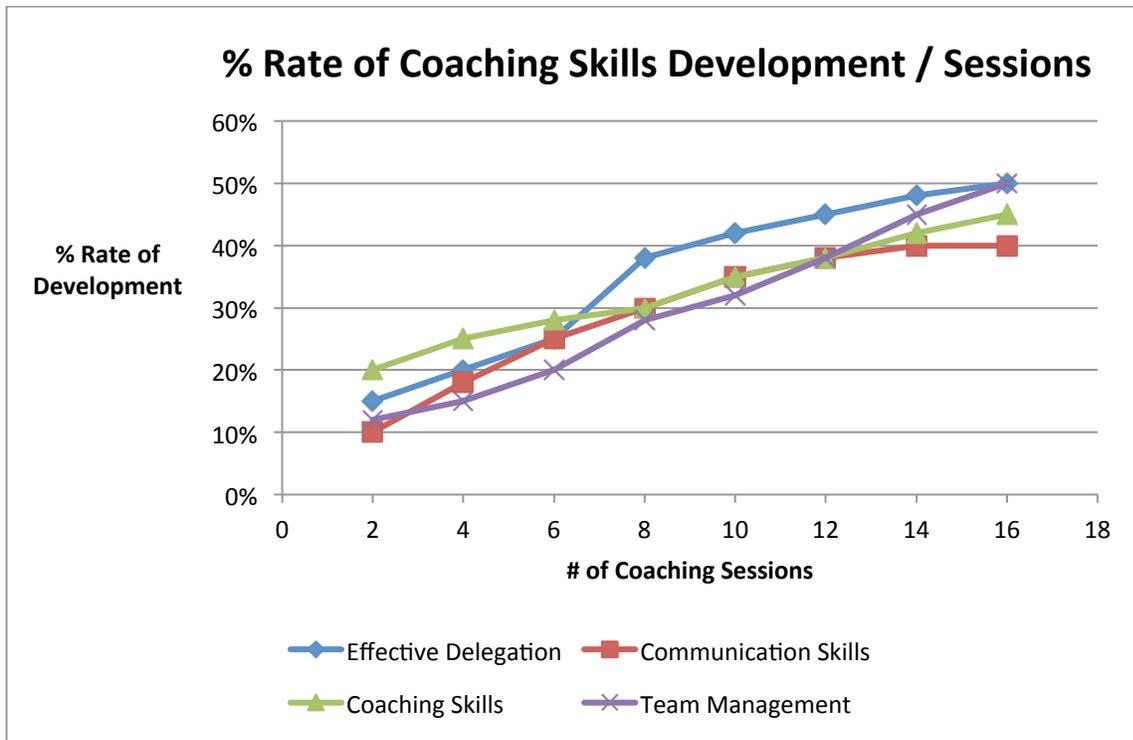
Figure 2. A graph of the % rate of coaching skills development.

Milestones and feedback include: the quality of her managerial/coaching ability, her personal professional development, and business communication performance will be improved even more when she begins the second training cycle of her corporate training program. Being exposed to sophisticated professional material, studying case studies and relating them to her real business settings, and formulating her knowledge and bringing it into application in her pragmatic professional challenges, will help accelerate her progress.

Coaching as a Leadership Style
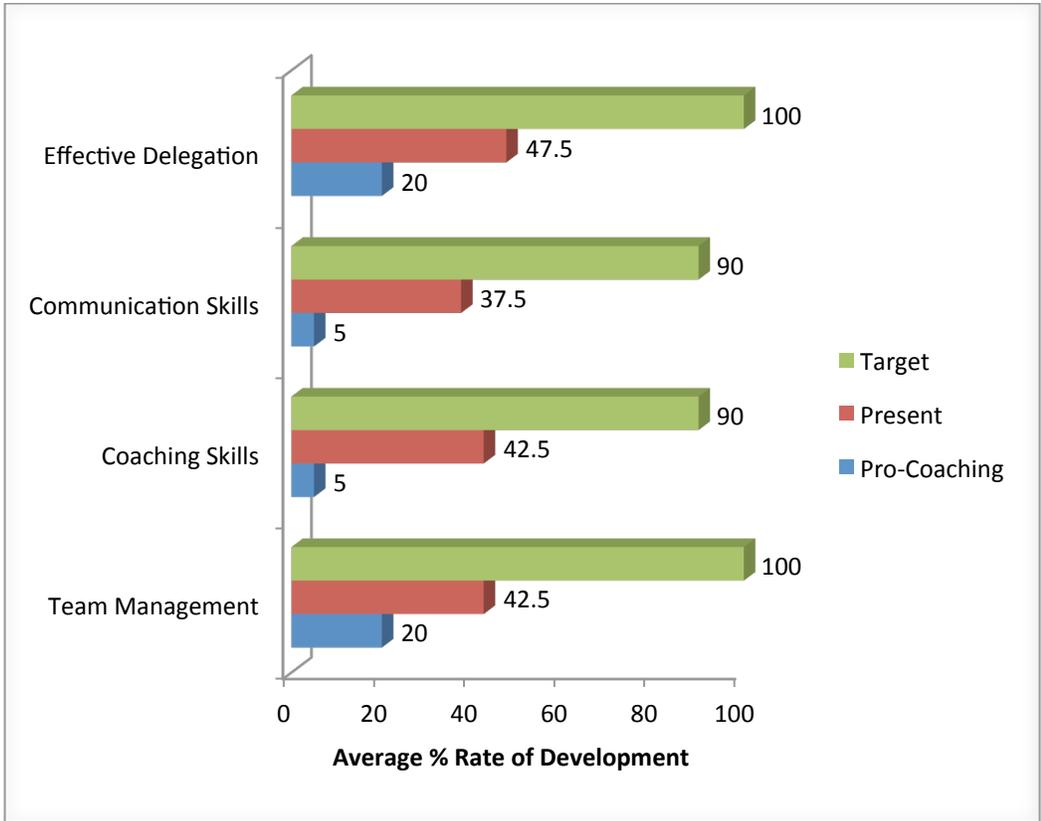
Figure 3. A Bar chart of the average % rate of development from pro-coaching/business to after

coaching/business sessions and target rate

Figure 4. A picture of Alicia's self-designed behavioral change model:

Recommendations

To achieve effective managerial and coaching skills, protracted, unhindered, persistent exposure to and application of the material and discussions with the coach are required. However, the managerial system of an organization matters significantly. "Problems of organizational behaviour and performance stem from a poorly designed and ineffectively managed system" (Beer, Finnstrom, & Schrader, p. 55). Therefore, it is not enough to train and coach an employee, "Changing that system to both support and demand new behaviours will enable learning and improve effectiveness and performance" (p. 55). This process requires the determination of the candidate as well. After all, it is challenging to subject oneself to a demanding organizational environment, which consists of everlasting change, complexity, and human behavior that appears

incomprehensible at times. "So . . . The primary target for change and development is the organization-followed by training for individuals" (p. 55).

Comprehending, being proactive, developing abilities, balancing work life with personal life, is cumbersome: It requires constant consultation, patience, and intellectual ability. Likewise, trying to manage people, may at many times hinder communication and the progression of projects and tasks which can bring stress and frustration. "One powerful way to connect with your team members is to get up and [sic] from your desk and talk to them, to work with them, to ask questions, and to help when needed. This practice is called Management By Wandering Around, or MBWA" (Mind Tools, 1996–2016). As with all challenges, managing and coaching people requires managerial self-knowledge, determination, and commitment. No matter how much work is done in the coaching sessions, if there is no self-motivated exposure to the tasks entailed, progress will inevitably stall.

The most important aspect of our work as corporate trainers and coaches is to offer the bedrock of knowledge, plant the seed of motivation, and then keep "watering" this seed until it blooms. That is why our sessions combine the intellectual with the instinctive: Managing and coaching people, after all, is an intuitive thing, and should be treated as such.

Continuing coaching efforts will focus on development of other leadership competencies such as:

- Continuation of improving peer group teamwork

- Delegating responsibility clearly

- Negotiating effectively

- Active Listening

- Behavioral change

- Briefings and meetings

<u>Coaching as a Leadership Style</u>

The coaching can proceed after the 360-degree performance review is conducted and by reassessing her target focus aligned with the company's strategy and vision.

360-Degree Assessment

As aforementioned, a 360-degree performance appraisal was conducted at the end of the first training cycle to determine if and how her business training and coaching had affected her leadership and managerial style. The 360-degree performance evaluation form given to her colleagues can be seen in Appendix III. Selected data from the 360-degree performance evaluation forms have been summarized and provided in the subsequent section.

First, we must examine the benefits of 360-degree assessments. "It is becoming widely recognized that 360-degree feedback offers several advantages over single-source assessment" (Fleenor, 1997, p. 52). Since 360-degree assessments include feedback from a wider audience, e.g., colleagues, direct reports, upper level management, and so on, the perspectives vary and the result gives a more realistic view of a person's performance. An important benefit of multi-rater feedback is that individuals are able to gain insight into how a particular audience evaluates their behavior and perceives their competencies. Also, the use of this type of instrument can decrease some of the biases and subjectivity that a single individual's performance appraisal can generate. Fleenor and Prince say: "Although it is true that all raters may be affected by biases, the use of more than one perspective permits the ratings to be averaged across a number of respondents, which may provide a truer evaluation of the focal manager's performance" (p. 53). An additional advantage to a 360-degree assessment is the insertion of self-assessment. Fleenor and Prince share "discrepancies between self and others' ratings can provide important insights about managerial and leadership effectiveness" (p. 54). Gaining an understanding of the differences between the self-observation and the view of the other organizational members is a vital step in identifying areas for leadership

development. Further, this data can help an individual in developing a more accurate self-assessment, a trait of Self-Awareness – which is one of Goleman's (2000) fundamental capabilities of Emotional Intelligence. The feedback gathered from this assessment will prove pivotal in the development of Alicia's leadership and management skills and in combination with her corporate development and coaching it will escalate her performance and improve the effectiveness of her team.

Selected Data from Alicia Torres' 360° Performance and Feedback Review – October 2016

Comments from direct managers and/or directors higher in the organization hierarchy:

*Person A***:** She is passionate with her job. Will come out of her way to assist a client and/or a colleague. She is a perfectionist and cares about the details. She is a great sales person and clients like her a lot. She has improved her team communication skills since she began her corporate training-coaching program. Listens more carefully and asks more clarifying questions. However, she is too sensitive and gets very much influenced when something happens in the company. She often thinks that everybody is talking about her or criticizing her. Sometimes I feel like she wants to be pampered.

Person B: Alicia is very knowledgeable about her work. She has helped me in many ways since I came to the company. Sometimes it's hard to work with her because she "assumes things," but lately she has been asking more questions before she comes to her own conclusions. Her team meetings have improved also; they were monotonous (she would talk all the time), now she involves her team members more into the discussions, asks more about their experiences and ideas; she brainstorms more and tries to help her team come up with creative solutions. She has also been trying to empower her reps more by assigning projects to them rather than her doing all the work (she always thought she did everything better than everybody else).

Person C: Alicia has been very happy since she started her corporate training and coaching sessions. She seems more promising and prosperous. She has all these new ideas and I think that she believes in herself more now. She sometimes is too apologetic, though, and is very anxious of what everybody else thinks of her. Maybe she needs to work a bit more on her people skills and start coaching again.

Comments from direct reports lower in the organization hierarchy:

Person D: Alicia has changed a bit since she started her coaching program. She asks more questions, she considers our ideas and gives us more responsibilities than before. I know she cares about the company and us but sometimes I feel like she is my mother.

Person E: Our meetings have improved from being boring to a bit more interesting. I like that she gave me a project that she always undertook, so I hope that means she trusts me more. In general, she looks happier and it reflects when we go out to meet clients. She is such a good saleswoman. I try to copy her style. I think we need to work more on our team bonding, but she has been trying to engage us more.

Person F: She tries to listen to us and actually takes our ideas seriously. I thought she was only interested in the numbers we bring to the company. She is trying to connect with us more than before, but we have to get used to this new Alicia. It may work, I am not sure yet. I like our brainstorming meetings because I get the chance to speak more than before and it makes me feel more acknowledged. I can see a difference in the way she approaches us and it is for sure better now than before.

Person G: Alicia is dynamic. She always was. She is devoted to our company and I respect that. I know that she was promoted to sales manager because she was a star sales person. I am not

sure she has managerial knowledge but it seems to me that she is willing to learn and tries hard to help us. I like working with her I am sure she will enhance her skills.

Comments from various colleagues and peers in the organization:

Person H: As a colleague Alicia has been polite and helpful. She has gone out of her way many times to help others and me. Sometimes I think she says too many "yeses" to people and then is drained and tired. Then she complains about it . . .

Person I: Alicia works in another division than me. However, we have collaborated in some cases where our departments had joint projects. She was always willing to help and seems to be devoted to our company. I think she is too good to others sometimes. In general, I have no problems with her.

Person J: She complains to me sometimes that she doesn't feel respected and acknowledged for her efforts by her director and her CEO. It seems like she wants to gain their attention and is not sure how. She is friendly with others and me though and is an ethical person. Change is not her best friend and in general wants to feel secure before she goes on to something new. She seems ambitious and I think she wants to go up the ladder.

Self-evaluation: I am a perfectionist with high standards, I am helpful with others and try to listen more than before and delegate tasks effectively to my team. I sometimes overwork myself to please everybody. I have passion for what I do and want to improve my business skills even more. I believe that I have a great team and want to get out the best of them. It does seem overwhelming sometimes. I hope I can do it.

Chapter 7: Findings

"We must be the change we wish to see in this world."

(Clemmer, Location No. 1071)

Once the initial training cycle (cycle A) was completed and the 360-degree assessment concluded, the literature of this study along with the weekly journals, and the 360-degree evaluation results were studied and observed to report the findings of this research project. The primary finding(s) was completely different from what the company, the trainee/coachee, and even the trainer/coach had in mind when this case study commenced.

To begin with, it was observed, that although Alicia was an excellent trainee, was supported via coaching, and was able to initiate some changes in her management and leadership style, there were still many traits from her "old self" left to work on. She was able to change the way she once managed her team by incorporating coaching-like approaches, like active listening, empowering her people, asking powerful questions, giving and receiving genuine feedback, delegating effectively, and so on. However, she continued to feel that she was criticized and not appreciated by her higher-level executives. She still wanted to attract their attention by overworking herself in order to prove what she was worth. She is still very sensitive to what others think of her and say about her, which influences her ability to function efficiently, to think clearly without biases, and it lessens her performance overall. So, although she is helpful with her people and colleagues and has gained significant theoretical business knowledge from her initial state, via coaching, it was observed that more needed to take place to change her leadership behavior. Thus, she was asked the following question: "What is the major obstacle that prevents you from engaging a full, coach-like, leadership approach behavior now that you have gained valuable business training, significant coaching knowledge, and on-the-job live practice, of some of your new coach-like skills, and you saw that

whatever you have changed brought you success?" The answer to this question, after Alicia reflected and thought about it a bit was: "That's a good question! Now that I have been exposed to so much theoretical business management, leadership, and coaching skills training, and I have seen how all this has influenced me to improve, and without a doubt, I do believe that this is the most effective leadership style of all that I have been exposed to in my career so far; however, it seems to be a bit more challenging to me perhaps, maybe, because I feel that I am personally *not* receiving this kind of leadership style from my peers above me. I feel as they are leading me via other managerial/leadership styles, like a more authoritarian style or maybe as we learnt, via transactional leadership style. I don't feel they are there for me."

This was the "aha" moment for Alicia. She now knew what she could do and not do. She now knew that she needed the "same support" she was learning during her corporate training and coaching sessions to be applied to her as well. She said that: "If I could be led under the same or similar conditions, I feel my performance would boost so high and that it would help me, help my team members, leverage the company's sales results."

According to Robbins, Judge, and Vohra (2012), Transformational leaders versus Transactional leaders:

> Inspire followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the organization and have an extraordinary effect on their followers . . . They pay attention to the concerns and needs of individual followers; they change followers' awareness of issues by helping them look at old problems in new ways; and they excite and inspire followers to put out extra effort to achieve group goals. (p. 409)

This is exactly what Dr. Hicks (2014) argues:

> Without the ability to coach, it will be impossible to demonstrate one of the core components of transformational leadership: Individualized Consideration . . . One way in which transformational leaders personalize their relationships is to know people as individuals; their desires, needs, and concerns. In the process, they pay attention to each person's needs for achievement and growth. New learning opportunities are created to help followers reach successively higher levels of development. Through informal conversations, which encourages two-way communication, and by listening effectively, transformational leaders become familiar with how people are doing and when help is needed with problem situations. As a result, they are seen as accessible and approachable for coaching and mentoring. For the transformational leader, showing Individualized Consideration through helping conversations is not a passive process, but one that is proactively practiced. (p. 21)

Therefore, although we have observed through this research project that coaching, as a leadership style, is an effective approach of leading, empowering, developing people and leveraging their potential, for it to be realistic and prosperous, it must be applied by senior management first. Wilson (2004), discusses how he has:

> Often noticed how you can tell what the CEO is like by talking to the receptionist, no matter how many lines of management exist in between. If the receptionist is rude to you, chances are there is a bully at the top. Every boss is a role model, consciously or otherwise, and some of their attitudes will inevitably be reflected by the staff." (p. 97)

He continues to say that, "everyone can change their management style" (p. 97), toward a coaching culture approach, as long as they are provided with the necessary tools to do so; he argues that besides learning and understanding the principles, the techniques need to be practiced "in real work

situations in order to become fluent." Plenty of practice is needed "with the safety net of an instructor by one's side" (p. 97).

Moreover, according to Beer, Finnstrom, and Derek (2016):

> Senior executives and their HR teams continue to pour money into training programs, year after year, in an effort to trigger organizational change. But what they actually need is a new way of thinking about learning and development. Context sets the stage for success of failure, so it's important to attend to organizational design and managerial processes first and *then* support them with individual development tools such as coaching and classroom or online education. (p. 52)

They continue by saying that there has been research conducted with such problems as early as the 1950s:

> They found that one program succeeded in changing frontline supervisors' attitudes about how they should manage, but a follow-up study revealed that most supervisors had then regressed to their pre-training views. The only exceptions were those whose bosses practiced and believed in the new leadership style the program was designed to teach. (p. 52–53)

In conclusion, as we have seen from the various literature review and case study, coaching can have many promising aspects to help improve leadership approaches and corporate culture. However, for these tactics to be grounded and made part of the organizational corporate culture they must be built within the companies' foundations, starting from the top executive layers. The senior leaders need to begin adopting the coaching approach leadership style, practice it actively, and lead by example. As Clemmer, said, "Leaders don't seek to change others, but to change themselves. They become models of change for others" (Loc. 1071). The message of this quote can have a dyadic approach to coaching as a leadership style in correlation to Alicia's case study. Initially, as

discussed, it can suggest that Martha (CEO), and James (sales director) comprehend their personal

leadership styles, define them, assess them for their effectiveness, and amend them where and when

necessary to reflect the executive positions they currently hold in relation to their company's

international leadership and management value pathway, (see appendix II). Secondly, it can create a

great opportunity for Alicia to learn and adopt some additional leadership competencies, which have

principles from coaching as a leadership style, and can help her comprehend how to "lead from the

middle of an organization," and as Maxwell (2005), states, to become a "360-Degree Leader." In his

book, "*The 360° Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization,*" he argues

that individuals do not need to reach the top of an organization to lead; they can lead effectively

from the middle levels of a corporation. Alicia, seems frustrated; she even considered leaving the

organization when she realized that she was led by ineffective leaders. Nonetheless, Alicia can

increase her chances of making a difference in her company and maybe even influence her leaders

above her by utilizing her new leaderships skills, acquired form her corporate training, by

employing Maxwell's nine principles of leading−up. Maxwell claims:

> Influencing your leader isn't something you can make happen in a day. In fact, since you
>
> have no control over the people above you on the organizational chart, they may refuse to be
>
> influenced by you or anyone under their authority. So there's a possibility that you may never
>
> be able to lead up with them. But you can greatly increase the odds of success if you practice
>
> the principles . . . Your underlying strategy should be to support your leader, add value to the
>
> organization, and distinguish yourself from the rest of the pack by doing your work with
>
> excellence. If you do these things consistently, then in time the leader above you may learn to
>
> trust you, rely on you, and look to you for advice. With each step, your influence will
>
> increase, and you will have more and more opportunities to lead up. (p. 83)

Coaching as a Leadership Style

According to Maxwell, the nine principles 360−degree leaders need to lead up, are:

1. Lead yourself exceptionally well.

2. Lighten your leader's load.

3. Be willing to do what others won't.

4. Do more than manage−lead!

5. Invest in relational chemistry.

6. Be prepared every time you take your leader's time.

7. Know when to push and when to back off.

8. Become a go-to player.

9. Be better tomorrow than you are today. (p.157)

The international corporate realm has witnessed many cases like Alicia's, Manfred F. R. Kets de

Vries (2016), in his article, "Managing Yourself: Do You Hate Your Boss?" says that Stacy, who

worked at a top tech company, loved her job,

> Until her boss left for another firm. The new manager, Peter, seemed to dislike pretty much
>
> everyone on the team he had inherited . . . He was aloof, prone to micromanaging, and apt to
>
> write off any project that wasn't his brainchild." (p. 98)

Stacy was not able to escape the situation with Peter, which made her feel "stressed, depressed, and

increasingly unable to do good work. She worried that the only way out was to leave the company

she loved" (p. 98). Thus, Stacy and Alicia both viewed their situations as an anathema, which

unfortunately, is not uncommon. Kets de Vries (2016), states that a recent study conducted by

Gallup, "State of the Global Workplace," found that "half of all employees in the United States have

quit jobs at some point in their careers in order to get away from their bosses" (p. 98). Kets de Vries

gives several opinions on how this predicament can be confronted. In one of his views he says that

the preliminary approach is practicing empathy and considering "the external pressures your manager is under . . . Most bad bosses are not inherently bad people; they're good people with weaknesses that can be exacerbated by the pressure to lead and deliver results" (p. 99). He believes that empathy can create a significant shift "in difficult boss-subordinate relationships, and not just as a top-down phenomenon" (p. 99). He discusses the importance "of emotional intelligence to manage up," and argues that, "Neuroscience also suggests that it's an effective strategy, since mirror neurons in the human brain naturally prompt people to reciprocate behaviors" (p. 99). Hence, he concludes by saying that if employees work on understanding and empathizing with their managers, it is likely that they will begin mimicking their empathizing behavior. This behavioral modification can have tremendous beneficial effects on all organizational stuff.

Consequently, for coaching as a leadership style to be implemented successfully, it must be embodied within the roots of the corporation itself and spread its seeds from its "head" to its "toes"; and as Maxwell discusses, from the middle of the organization to the top. Moreover, extending Maxwell's premise, change might also occur from the "toes" of the organization to its "head", not just from the middle. This way, the results can be concrete, supported, sustained, and applied as part of its organizational strategy, culture, and leadership value pathway by all its organizational members.

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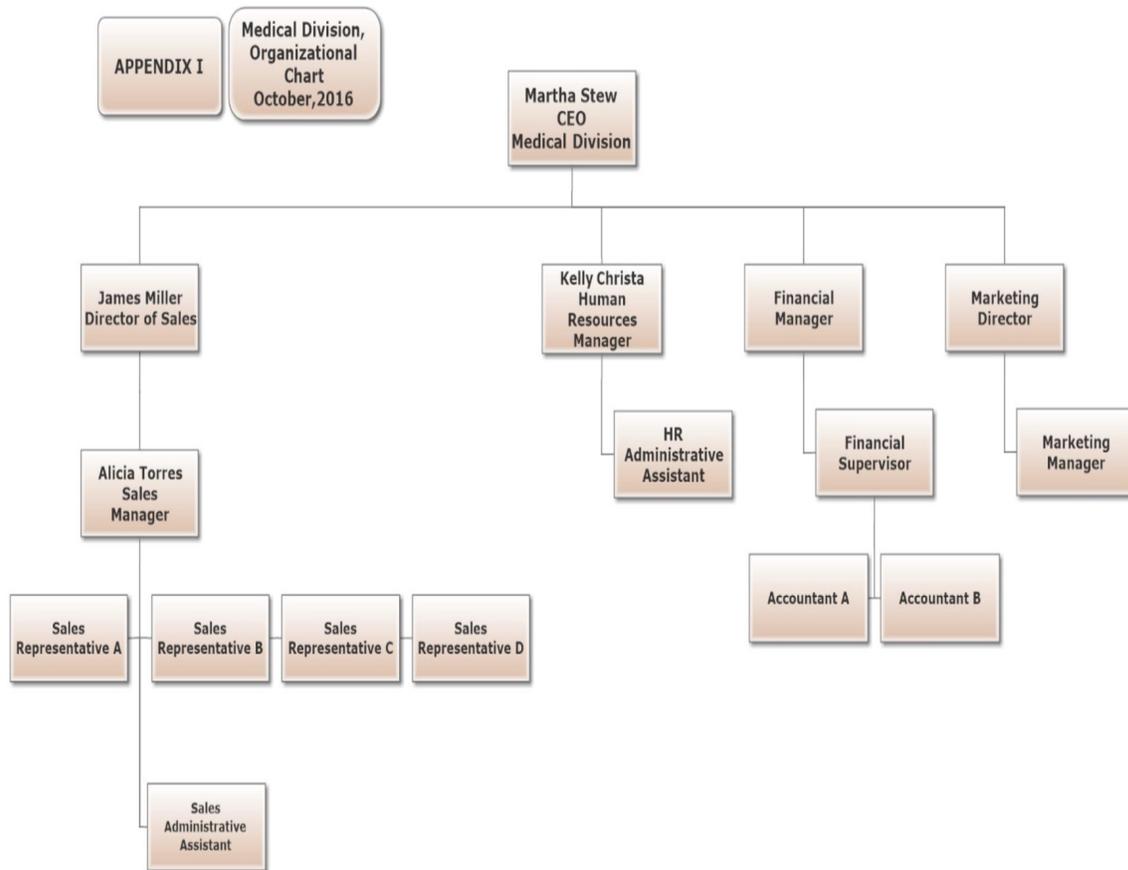
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Appendix I. Medical Division Organizational Chart

APPENDIX I

Medical Division,
Organizational
Chart
October,2016

Martha Stew
CEO
Medical Division

James Miller
Director of Sales

Kelly Christa
Human
Resources
Manager

Financial
Manager

Marketing
Director

Alicia Torres
Sales
Manager

HR
Administrative
Assistant

Financial
Supervisor

Marketing
Manager

Sales
Representative A

Sales
Representative B

Sales
Representative C

Sales
Representative D

Accountant A

Accountant B

Sales
Administrative
Assistant

Appendix II: Overall Managerial and Leadership Ideology of the Organization

The company has a common international leadership and management value pathway. This company trains its executives and managers to lead with the following values and mindset. Some of its main values and attributes of leading include:

- Committed to a promising future

- Being open to new learnings and help others learn

- Bring results

- Empower and develop others

- Accountability

- Self assessment

- Respect & honesty

- Commitment to goals

- Leading as a coach

- Listening generously

- Action and feedback

- Move forward

- Overcoming barriers

- Engaging others

Appendix III: 360-Degree Performance Evaluation Form

[Appraisal period from 6/1/16 to 10/30/16]

Employee Name: _Alicia Torres_____
Relation to Employee: _____
Your Name (Optional):   _____

Time Spent	Every Day	A few times a week	A few times a month	Every few months	NA (Never)
Your interaction with employee					

Quality of Work	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Sets high standards for quality of work output					
Ensures work is error-free before submitting					
Helps others improve the quality of their work					

Communication	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Communicates well orally and in written-form					
Displays good listening skills					
Shares information freely with others					

Coaching as a Leadership Style

Teamwork	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Contributes positively to team					
Helps define team roles to maximize output					
Can be counted on to complete tasks correctly					

Personal Qualifications and Leadership	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Presents a positive image to outsiders					
Is friendly and easy to work with					
Adapts well to change					
Has high professional and ethical standards					

Please provide additional comments in the space below:

[Type comments here]