

The Case for Development Coaching

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There has been a phenomenal increase in interest in coaching over the past decade or so. A 2004 survey of the HR/Training community conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK showed that four-fifths of respondents now use coaching in their organisations¹. The Australian Institute of Management claims 70% of its member companies hire coaches².

Based on their research with 900 companies in Europe, Professor David Lane and colleagues (2000) reported that “coaching is a growing trend rather than a fad”³. Quite simply, “coaching works” according to David Peterson & Kurt Kraiger (2004). “Based on dozens of case studies, hundreds of personal testimonials in scores of organisations, and diverse threads of research, it is clear that coaching has an impact on people and on business results”⁴.

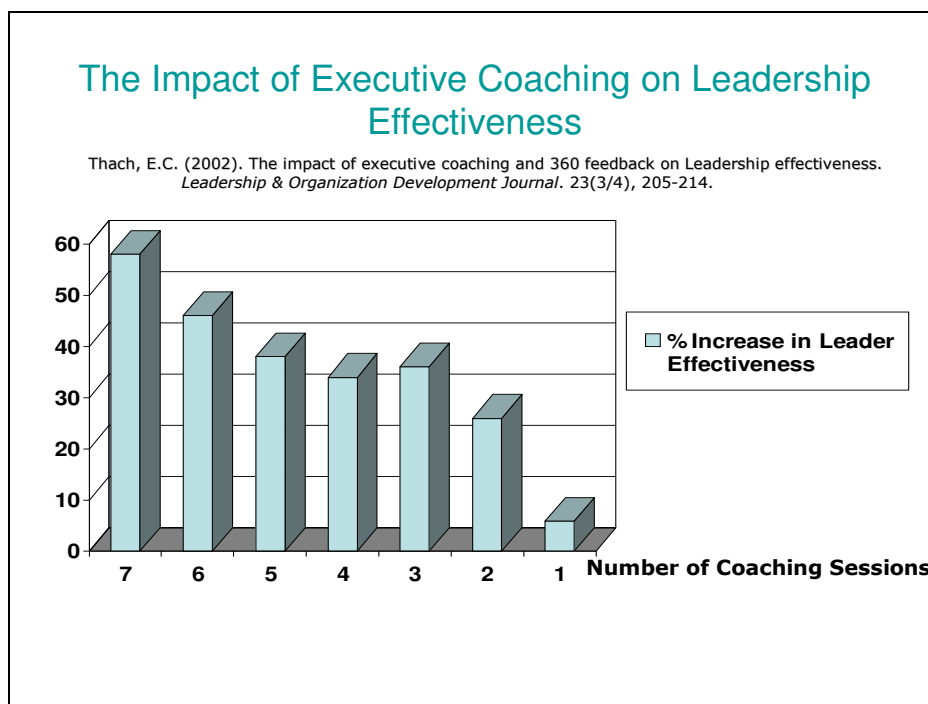
“Workplace coaching is a collaborative, solution-focused, result-oriented and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance and the self-directed learning and personal growth of individuals.”⁵

Is coaching worth the time and investment? Based on the results from the 2004 CIPD training and development survey, two thirds of respondents reported that coaching activities had been “effective” (61%) or “very effective” (6%) in meeting objectives¹.

A study of 370 coaching participants in 1993 concluded that “a case can be made that coaching is at least *three times more effective* than the typical training program in producing results”⁶.

In one of the first empirical studies of the effects of coaching, Gerald Olivero and colleagues (1997) found that training alone accounted for a 22.4% increase in productivity, but when followed with coaching productivity increased *88.0%*⁷.

Elizabeth Thach (2002) from Sonoma State University in California used multi-rater (360) feedback to determine the impact of executive coaching on leadership effectiveness. 281 members of a mid-size, global, Telco firm with headquarters in the western USA participated in 360 feedback before and after an average of 6 months of coaching. The overall impact on leadership effectiveness, as perceived by direct reports, peers, and managers was an average of *55%* and *60%* respectively during the two phases of the study⁸.



Contrary to the “touchy-feely” image of coaching often perceived by line managers, it seems that organisations are using coaching to address significant business issues such as driving *performance improvements* and *productivity*. For example, 78% of respondents in the CIPD 2004 survey reported using coaching for “improving individual performance”, 30% used coaching for “dealing with underperformance”, and 28% for “improving productivity”¹.

In summary, coaching is evolving as a practical, cost-effective, evidence-based, organisational method for helping people improve their performance in areas of leadership, communication, interpersonal, and cognitive skills.

References

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