THE NEED FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this report was done by myself and that all the work is my own.

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ABSTRACT

"I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual, and which invariably finds its way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable".
John Russel, MD, Harley-Davidson, Europe Ltd

Executive coaching is one of the latest and most dynamic new influences in today's fast-paced business culture. The need for educated and quick decisions, the ability to have them communicated clearly, and be supported by peers, co-workers and employees, has never been greater. It is also crucial that leaders can be confident that they are in fact delivering the message they think they are; obtaining the response they are hoping for; and building a dynamic team of loyal supporters around them.

Leadership should be viewed as the most valuable resource in any organisation. If this intellectual capital is not effectively used within the organisation, sustainability is hard to achieve. Thus leadership capability is a significant investment and is directly tied to success and profitability for most organisations. Therefore, companies that engage in coaching are interested in seeing their people develop to their fullest potential in order to achieve better business results.

The researcher aims to provide the reader with an orientation to the subject of this type of coaching, covering its background, purpose and significance, as well as the contribution which executive coaching makes to the world of business and management. Finally, an overview of such coaching in South Africa is given.

By means of qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interviewing, experience surveys and causation as part of exploratory techniques, the writer has attempted in this research report to explore the territory of executive coaching in the South African Context. Both Human Resource Directors and coachees have been interviewed to test specific hypotheses and problem statements concerning the topic.

It is argued that executive coaching is becoming a prerequisite for anybody aspiring to be a key executive, and that it is becoming a core part of executive development in many companies.

Results of the present research show that a high percentage of companies invest in executive coaching and that both the HR Directors and coachees surveyed believe that executive coaching contributes towards the development of leadership skills. It is perceived as a major factor in the successful and effective development of executives and this in itself contributes to the success of the companies surveyed.

The research has also indicated that some shortcomings exist, the largest being the effective measurement of the value contributed by executive coaching. A real need therefore exists to develop and implement an empirically tested process to measure its effectiveness. Furthermore there is a need to govern the profession in South Africa, which is necessary to protect the profession as a whole and to guard against the development of a negative perception of executive coaching. If no official governance is developed the profession will be damaged irreparably and this is in nobody's interest.

Executive coaching adds tremendous value to corporate South Africa and can play a major role in the development of future executives, especially black ones. This is a leadership development tool that must be urgently developed and protected by the necessary professionalism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1	Introduction and Background	1
1.2	Objectives of the Study	2
1.3	Problem Statement	4
1.4	Importance of the Study	6
1.5	Layout of Report	7

CHAPTER 2 - THE STATE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING IN THE WORLD AND SOUTH AFRICA

2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Executive Coaching defined	9
2.3	The state of Executive Coaching in South Africa	13
2.4	Types of Coaching	16
	2.4.1 Directive Coaching	17
	2.4.2 Non-Directive Coaching	19
	2.4.3 Coaching vs. Mentoring	20
	2.4.4 Internal vs. External coaches	20
2.5	Purpose of Executive Coaching	24
2.6	Effectiveness of Executive Coaching	26
2.7	The focus of Executive Coaching	26
2.8	Process of Executive Coaching	30
	2.8.1 Step 1 : Appraisal	32
	2.8.2 Step 2 : Scheduling	32
	2.8.3 Step 3 : Coaching	32
2.9	Psychology of Executive Coaching	34
	2.9.1 Advantages of Executive Coaching	35
	2.10 Coaching as Management Function	38
	2.10.1 Advantages for the Coach	39
	2.10.2 Advantages for the Executive	39
	2.11 Unique problem in South Africa	40
	2.12 Conclusion	42

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES

3.1 Introduction 43
3.2 Background to approach 43
3.3 Research design 44
3.4 Sampling 45
3.5 Process 46
3.6 Data Collection 47
3.7 Data Analysis 47
3.8 Delimitations 49
3.9 Limitations 49

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction 50
4.2 Results from HR Directors interviews 50
4.2.1 The definition of Executive Coaching 51
4.2.2 Measuring the effectiveness of Executive Coaching 52
4.2.3 The effectiveness of executive coaching as a leadership development tool
4.2.4 The purpose for which Executive Coaching is used 53
4.2.5 Budgeting for Executive Coaching 54
4.2.6 The levels of the organisation involved 54
4.2.7 The process and types of executive coaching used 55
4.2.8 Whether external or internal coaches are used 55
4.2.9 Female specific coaching 56
4.2.10 Role of Executive Coaching in developing black executives 56
4.2.11 Future plans with executive coaching 57
4.2.12 Summary 57
4.3 Results obtained from interviews with coaches 58
4.3.1 The process being followed 58
4.3.2 The benefits of executive coaching 59
4.3.3 Drawbacks of executive coaching 60
4.3.4 Effect of executive coaching on productivity and effectiveness 60
4.3.5 Do you prefer an external or internal executive coach 61
4.3.6 Expectations of executive coach 61
4.3.7 Would you like to continue with the coaching 62

4.3.8 Summary of coachees' responses 62
4.4 Integration of HR Directors' and coachees' responses 62
4.4.1 Definition of executive coaching 63
4.4.2 The effectiveness of executive coaching 63
4.4.3 Executive coaching as a leadership development tool 63
4.4.4 The expectations of executive coaching 63
4.4.5 External vs Internal coaches 64
4.4.6 Future plans for executive coaching 64
4.4.7 Concerns of Coaches 64

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction 65
5.2 Themes 65
5.2.1 Definition of executive coaching 65
5.2.2 The effectiveness and measurement of the effectiveness of executive coaching 66
5.2.3 Levels involved in executive coaching 67
5.2.4 External coaches vs internal coaches 68
5.2.5 Executive coaching for cross-cultural purposes and females 68
5.2.6 The role of executive coaching in developing black executives 69
5.2.7 Future plans for executive coaching 69
5.3 Propositions 69
5.3.1 Executive coaching as a tool for Leadership development assists leadership to deal with the demands and adversity of modern day Corporate life 70
5.3.2 Executive coaching as such a tool assists leadership to perform sustain ably over time 70
5.3.3 Executive coaching as such a tool is critical to the fast-tracking of BEE employees 70
5.3.4 Executive coaching as such a tool contributes significantly to the job performance of previously disadvantaged groups such as people of colour and women 70
5.3.5 Executive coaching implemented effectively as a leadership development tool decreases the turnover of targeted groups in the Organisation 70

5.3.6 Executive coaching assists leaders to deal more effectively with the challenges of cultural diversity and transformation in South Africa 71
5.3.7 Executive coaching helps to manage the paradox of the African humanistic concept versus Westernized approach evident in Organisations 71
5.3.8 External coaches are more effective than Internal coaches 71
5.3.9 A non-directive approach to Executive Coaching is more successful than a directive approach 72
5.4 Conclusion 72
5.5 Recommendations 73
5.5.1 Regulation of executive coaching 73
5.5.2 Development of black executives 74
5.5.3 Measuring of effectiveness of executive coaching 74
5.6 Concluding remarks 74

6. LIST OF REFERENCES 75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1 Coaching Distinctions 12
Table 1-2 The differences between External Coaches and Mentors 23
Table 1-3 Coaching Topics 29

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1 Different Coaching Methods 17
Figure 1-2 Changing Management Roles 30

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

Introduction and Background

"Once original strategies change, you need coaches. Division heads don't have time to coach each manager. Plus it's not their expertise; changes are different than operations. Most of the executives are competent operators, but not competent at getting changes to take place. That takes special coaching agents." Pat Mene VP of quality and merchandising, Ritz-Carlton

In today's dynamic and challenging business world, it is essential that organisations proactively manage their human resources in order to realise their strategic goals. In trying to push themselves to ever higher levels of competitive performance and productivity, organisations must understand that optimising the performance of their employees, especially those at the very core of the business, is of crucial importance.

The challenging, changing, turbulent and unpredictable nature of the new economy has not only required of organisations and their people that they be more flexible and innovative, but also demands that people constantly develop a different set of skills to handle these challenges. Leaders are bombarded with everything from mergers to acquisitions, consolidations to restructuring, all of which has an immense impact on sustainable performance. The above-mentioned situations require leaders to demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, experience and insight (McLoughlin, 2006).

The reality, however, is that the leaders who are being appointed are becoming younger and younger and that companies have reduced the layers of management with the aim of cutting costs and increasing flexibility and efficiency. The impact of this on top executives is that, although they possess the potential and qualifications, they lack experience and are left with little or no support, guidance, mentors or role models.

In addition, the new notion of recruiting top leadership talent from other company cultures and other industries has led to many executives often finding themselves in novel roles and divergent company cultures, with new responsibilities they are not equipped to handle. In situations such as these, executive coaching can be a catalyst in lifting individuals and teams alike to their highest potential. Simply put, coaching enhances the impact of executives, increases their speed in becoming effective within the organization, and improves overall job satisfaction and retention. Executive coaching is directed to increasing the beneficiary executive's ability to integrate new-found confidence and strategic insight into her or his current leadership style. An investment in executive coaching is therefore a direct investment in both collective leadership capability and in organisational sustainability. As Schnell (2005) explains, coaching is a valuable instrument to provide support to executives as an organisation grows and a different leadership is required.

Executive coaching has been perceived as an effective and essential tool in US and European companies, but many South African companies are still wary of hiring such coaches (*Business Day*, 2006).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to demonstrate that a major need exists for professional Executive Coaches in order to ensure the sustainable development of executives in South Africa. The study thus focuses on creating a business case for the importance of executive coaching here.

Why is there a need for executive coaching in this country? Not only are younger and younger people being appointed in executive positions in South Africa, but a shortage of executives also exists in the South African Market. For too long in the history of SA, as a result of apartheid, the power of executive

positions rested in the white male's domain (Booysen, 2005). As regards the transformation of SA and the promulgation of legislation to rectify the injustices of the past, corporate SA faces a problem: where to find good, experienced black executives and how to retain existing white executives?

Every company is prepared to pay a premium for black executives and these results in much job-hopping as they comprise sought-after resources (Booysen, 2005). In a normal society a great need exists for executive coaches to help executives develop the abilities to cope with the demands of the day. In SA additional demands exist that will increase the necessity for executive coaches.

Van der Colff (no date) argues in an internet article that it is important for leaders to realise the potential of valuing the diverse perspective and talent of each person. This applies especially in the South African context. She describes the leader of the future as a person who has to learn to assist people of divergent values, beliefs and backgrounds and understands how to integrate individual efforts into benefiting each individual and the organisation. Executive coaching can assist in creating enhanced emotional capability in leaders, in order to deal with the challenge of managing diversity.

In another study by Stevens (2005) seven top managing executives were questioned on their views regarding executive coaching. "For them the helping process as represented by executive coaching is not focused on fixing, ameliorating, or healing personality deficiencies or behaviour deficits but, rather on helping successful, healthy individuals more fully meet and carry out their role responsibilities as defined by their position and status in an organisation" (Stevens, 2005: 283). Clearly these executives value executive coaching as a value added in terms of executive development. Every one of these executives stated that they prefer external executive coaches rather than internal ones. They feel that internal executive coaches are not objective and become embroiled in company politics (Stevens, 2005).

It is the purpose of the current study to present Executive Coaching as a credible, value-adding developmental leadership initiative that could significantly contribute to leadership acceleration, retention and the available talent pool. The importance of leadership for organisational culture and ultimately performance, productivity and sustainable business growth in itself presents the need for the optimisation of this organisational function.

1.3 Problem Statement

A proposition can be identified as:
"A statement about concepts that may be judged as true or false if it refers to observable phenomena" (Cooper and Schindler, 2001: 770).

The following research proposition was identified: **Executive coaching as a tool contributes significantly to the development of executives.**
The sub-propositions identified are: Executive coaching as a leadership development tool assists leadership:

a) with the demands and adversity of modern day corporate life.
b) to perform sustainably over time.
c) with the fast tracking of BEE-employees.
d) by contributing significantly to the job performance of previously disadvantaged groups such as people of colour and women.
e) to decrease the turnover of targeted groups in the organisation.
f) to deal more effectively with the challenges of cultural diversity and transformation in South Africa.

Furthermore:

g) Executive coaching helps to manage the paradox of the African humanistic concept versus a westernised approach, which is alive and well in organisations.
h) External coaches are more effective than internal ones.

i) A non-directive approach to executive coaching is more successful than a directive approach.

Ellinger (1999) discussed the use of coaching to facilitate the development of learning organisations and finds that managers' commitment to coaching can impact on employee, manager and organisational performance. Patton (2001) outlines a nine-step ROI process that determines the value of executive coaching. It includes a list of measurement tools and important ROI measurements.

Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2006), state that the diversity of coaching methods indicates that we are in the developmental phase of the industry. The student is of the view that within the next ten years, we will see further refinement of research and consolidation in the field.

According to Smith (2005: no page) successful Executive Coaching is important because: "Leaders often need to change their perspectives, capabilities or approach. Yet they may not have appropriate resources within their organisations or social circles to help them grow. So we bring experience and capacity, plus objectivity, to help leaders effect these changes." The writer will attempt to illustrate the value added by executive coaching in the South African context.

Due to the disproportionate influence of the executive and the impact of one-on-one training it is clear that this field of study could contribute significantly to sustainable transformation in organisations.

Leadership has a 74% impact on climate that in turns leads to a 24% impact on productivity (Schutte 2004). Because different views today exist with regard to the effectiveness of executive coaching as an intervention to improve leadership behaviour and thus ultimately organisational performance, it is critical that

research is done to prove whether the impact of executive coaching on South African leadership is sustainable and whether the field of such Coaching deserves its rightful reputation as contributing to leadership effectiveness.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The study emphasises the necessity of executive coaches in the new South Africa and the important role they could play in the development of future leaders, especially black ones. Only a limited amount of literature on executive coaching, whether in South Africa or worldwide, could be found. This study could contribute to the topic of leadership development in the South African context and add to the base of collective learning, thus enhancing the credibility of the field of study.

What evidence exists does indicate that executive coaching could have a major impact on productivity. Olivera, Bane and Kopelman (1997) showed that training improved productivity by 22, 4% whilst coaching improved productivity by 88, 0%. A shortcoming of their study was that both training and executive coaching were researched although they were presented in two phases and tested as such.

Similar research in South Africa could present hard evidence for this type of soft behavioural intervention. The study will provide valuable information to those decision-makers inside companies who are making decisions based on evidence of the effectiveness of interventions, and will also assist external coaches to better meet the needs of South African organisations.

1.5. Layout of Report

In this research study the following content will be covered:

Chapter 1:

Here the reader will find an introduction to the field of executive coaching as well as some relevant background to coaching and leadership development. Research propositions are made. The objectives of the study are described. The writer ends by arguing for the importance of the study and the contribution that it could make to the field of leadership development.

Chapter 2:

In this chapter a literature review of the relatively new and scarce resources on the topic is offered. After a working definition is identified, the researcher focuses on the state of executive coaching in South Africa and its potential benefits. The difference between directive and non-directive coaching is discussed. This definition is used as a basis to determine the effectiveness of current coaching practices in South Africa. The writer also addresses the focus, effectiveness, purpose and importance of coaching. An effort is made to describe the psychology of coaching. Cross-cultural coaching and the impact of coaching on leadership by women in South Africa are also explored. The discussion ends with a brief discussion of the unique problems that face employees, employers and coaches in this country.

Chapter 3:

The research methodology and research processes are described here together with an explanation of the sampling design, the research design, the data collection phase and the data analysis phase. A specific effort is made to explore the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4:

As the study relies heavily on qualitative analysis, an overview of this method of statistical analysis is given.

Chapter 5:

Tendencies are identified and similarities and differences are discussed. The propositions are tested in this chapter and an executive coaching philosophy/ model is formulated. The student draws conclusions from the research process and attempts to make recommendations that could contribute to the field of study.

CHAPTER 2 – THE STATE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING IN THE WORLD, AND IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

The concept of executive coaching is explored and studied in this chapter and a working definition is developed as the basis of this study. In paragraph 2.3 the student presents a literature review of the state of executive coaching in South Africa. Different types of coaching are discussed and the difference between directive and non-directive coaching is illustrated. The purpose of executive coaching, as summarized from the literature study, is discussed in paragraph 2.4. The focus and effectiveness of executive coaching are described in the subsequent paragraphs. In paragraph 2.7 the process of executive coaching is described in terms of the following steps: Appraisal, Scheduling and Coaching. The student argues that re-measurement is important to prove the success of the interventions. The importance of understanding human behaviour and group dynamics is discussed in paragraph 2.8. The specific value added by executive coaching across cultural and gender boundaries is subsequently explored. The advantages for the supervisor and for the coach as well as the results of executive coaching are considered in paragraph 2.9.

2.2 Executive Coaching defined

"A collaborative, solution focussed, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee".
Grent (2000)

More and more companies are using executive coaching to develop leadership skills, retain key executives, and ensure that their executives deliver the leadership the company requires. Exploring what executive coaching is,

however, calls for a consideration of all the advantages of this process. It is also vital to distinguish between coaching and other forms of support intervention in order to understand the real essence of executive coaching.

When looking at various definitions of coaching and executive coaching in particular, the core remains the "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop them and become more effective" (Peterson, 1996: 14). Executive coaching pertains to the development of the top executive's full potential by coaching her or him to think and act beyond existing limits and paradigms (Berlyn, 2006). The ultimate aim is to help these leaders learn more about themselves and to insightfully change the behavior that is not serving them or their organizations in a positive manner. It further aims to ensure that leaders have the emotional, technical and transformational skills needed to lead an organization through complex challenges. The journey of coaching provides executives with a sounding-board which enables them to work through key issues and which empowers leaders to provide high-quality solutions to the very problems that have kept them from realizing their top performance.

Executive coaching sessions act as a support mechanism and a sounding-board for their ideas, theories, different scenarios and decisions. The process of coaching can be compared to holding up a mirror which shows the leader their existing skills and strengths while building his or her confidence to leverage their potential and develop further skills. It should thus be seen as a highly individualized form of leadership development and support given to individuals who are put in very difficult situations in which they are set up to fail if they are not given support.

Coaching is an especially useful tool at the executive level because these individuals have access to few other assisted means of continued development owing to the exceptionally busy nature of their everyday life. At executive level

the need for formal training also diminishes, while the requirement of more objective and sustained feedback with a thought partner intensifies. It is often lonely at the top where the environment is characterised by "never admitting failure or ignorance" and where executives are supposed to know everything. Executives thus generally keep to their own counsel, mainly because they find it difficult to discuss matters with colleagues and they cannot or choose not to share their concerns with spouses and families. Executive coaching offers a way out of this by providing an opportunity for the executive to have an independent sounding board and strategic partner in a safe and confidential environment (Berlyn, 2006).

In this safe and confidential environment, it is easy for the coach and coachee (in their combined wisdom) to highlight any blind spots. The process of inquiry and personal discovery is used to build the client's level of awareness and responsibility and provides the client with structure, support and feedback (Rostron, Upton, Lention, Raiz, Hughes & Sievers, 2006: 13). A coach can identify that there are perhaps certain essential elements missing in the executive's profile/make-up and can promptly take the rectification and/or supplementary action needed. Executive coaching thus creates the space, frame and structure for leaders to see issues with greater clarity and added insight, then to tap into their own inner resources and make the necessary adjustments. Where new skills and competencies need to develop, these are done in the leaders' own time, privately practising the new skills with the coach and becoming comfortable before applying them in real situations.

An executive coach often also needs to play devil's advocate by holding a different perspective to that of the leader. This enables the leader to perceive a broader picture and possibly see behind some of the obstacles that may have been temporarily blocking his or her vision and judgement. The executive coach thus needs someone whom the executive beneficiary can trust and communicate with well. It is important fully to comprehend what executive

coaching is and what it is not, in order to set it apart from other helping processes that can also be implemented at executive level. Table 1-1 indicates how coaching differs from interventions such as mentoring, counselling etc. (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). From this table it is clear that coaching is a much more enabling process to increase performance, development and fulfilment (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). It entails a collaborative process where leaders put their own ideas and needs on the table and the coach helps them to translate these into action. It is thus an equal partnership with the purpose of facilitating learning and achieving identifiable business results.

Table 1-1 Coaching Distinctions
Coaching is: ▪ Solution and action-focused ▪ Awareness-based ▪ Focussed towards task, performance and development ▪ Non-directive ▪ Structured ▪ Engaged with a "boss", peer, colleague or external coach
Mentoring is: ▪ Delivered by an experienced and usually senior internal or external manager ▪ Focused on career development, policy, politics and networking ▪ Giving advice ▪ More free-form
Counselling/ Therapy is: ▪ Meaning-focused ▪ Analytically-based ▪ Focussed more on feelings ▪ More free-form
Training is: ▪ Focused on developing skills and capabilities ▪ Concerned with imparting concrete knowledge and concrete matters such as

products, corporate objectives and processes ▪ More group-orientated
Consulting is: ▪ Focused on considering problems, arriving at a conclusion and recommending ▪ Advice Specific to the consultant's area of expertise

Alexander & Renshaw (2005, 105)

The Professional and Personal Coaches Association defines coaching as "an ongoing relationship that focuses on clients taking action towards the realisation of their visions, goals and desires" (Rostron, Upton, Lention, Raiz, Hughes & Sievers, 2006:13).

In this study the definition by Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2005: 25) is employed as the working definition for this research report, namely:
Coaching is "to take good people and make them the best they can be, position them to work more effectively and cohesively in their environments, and make the most of their capabilities. In other words, coaching is now most often applied to top performers whose leadership and growth potential are highly valued by the organisation."

The definitions of executive coaching as discussed in paragraph 2.2 will now be tested against the state of such coaching in South Africa by means of an in-depth literature review of research worldwide and in this country concerning executive coaching.

2.3 The State of Executive Coaching in South Africa

"A leader's clarity of purpose, and his ability to connect the people in his or her organisation to that purpose, goes a long way toward mobilizing the nacessary changes for change" O'Neill (2000: 4)

As noted, the literature on executive coaching is limited. The author, however, is of the opinion that this kind of coaching could play a cardinal role in the future growth of South African organisations and especially the development of black corporate leadership.

With the democratization of South Africa and the subsequent promulgation of legislation to rectify the injustices of the past, the development and positioning of black leaders in corporate South Africa has become a key objective. The pressure placed on organisations to adhere to BEE requirements has however led to organisations promoting and appointing black leaders into senior executive positions, with the potential and necessary qualifications, but limited experience at top management level. Without the necessary experience and inadequate support and guidance these leaders are often ill equipped to deal with the demands of the corporate world, resulting in high turn-over levels (Booysen, 2005).

High attrition rates are experienced among black recruits and one of the reasons for this is ascribed to the fact that black employees have restricted access to mentors, coaches and role models (Booysen, 2005). It is surprising that companies are prepared to pay exorbitant premiums for black executives but are wary of paying a small premium to ensure their success. Due to the current shortage of executives in the South African job market a new phenomenon of job-hopping has started to become prevalent. These high potential, qualified black leaders are a sought after resource and whenever they are not coping and a better offer comes along, they will move, without ever learning how to deal with such a high-level position (Booysen, 2005). Poaching of highly skilled black leaders has also become common practice. The unsettling effect this has on companies and leadership teams can however, not be measured. It is for this reason that it is necessary to appoint executive coaches to guide these executives to cope with the demands of upper management

positions, to ensure the successful growth and development of business in South Africa.

A further need in South Africa has been identified in that black middle managers and especially black women are not promoted because they are not trusted to cope with the demands of executive positions since their experience is limited. Seeing that companies are becoming more and more streamlined, these individuals never have the chance to learn from a senior manager how to cope in this situation and thus never acquire the experience. The vicious circle simply continues and these talented individuals are kept from positions they should be able to enjoy. If the support of an executive coach, dedicated to an individual and the individual's development, could be put in place, the demographics in companies will move closer and closer to the ideal picture.

The cultural diversity and transformation of South Africa also place additional demands on the ability of executives to manage effectively in a diverse landscape. South Africa is experiencing many leadership challenges due to societal changes since the first democratic elections in 1994 (Booysen, 2005). These changes effectively mean that all adults in the different groups are functioning on a different interaction level from that in the era when they were brought up (Booysen, 2005). Johnson (2004) argues that there is little doubt that management development programmes which target women are crucial in developing leadership and presents a business case for putting into place a coherent, strategic programme of organisational development in organisations, aimed at increasing both the number and the quality of women leaders.

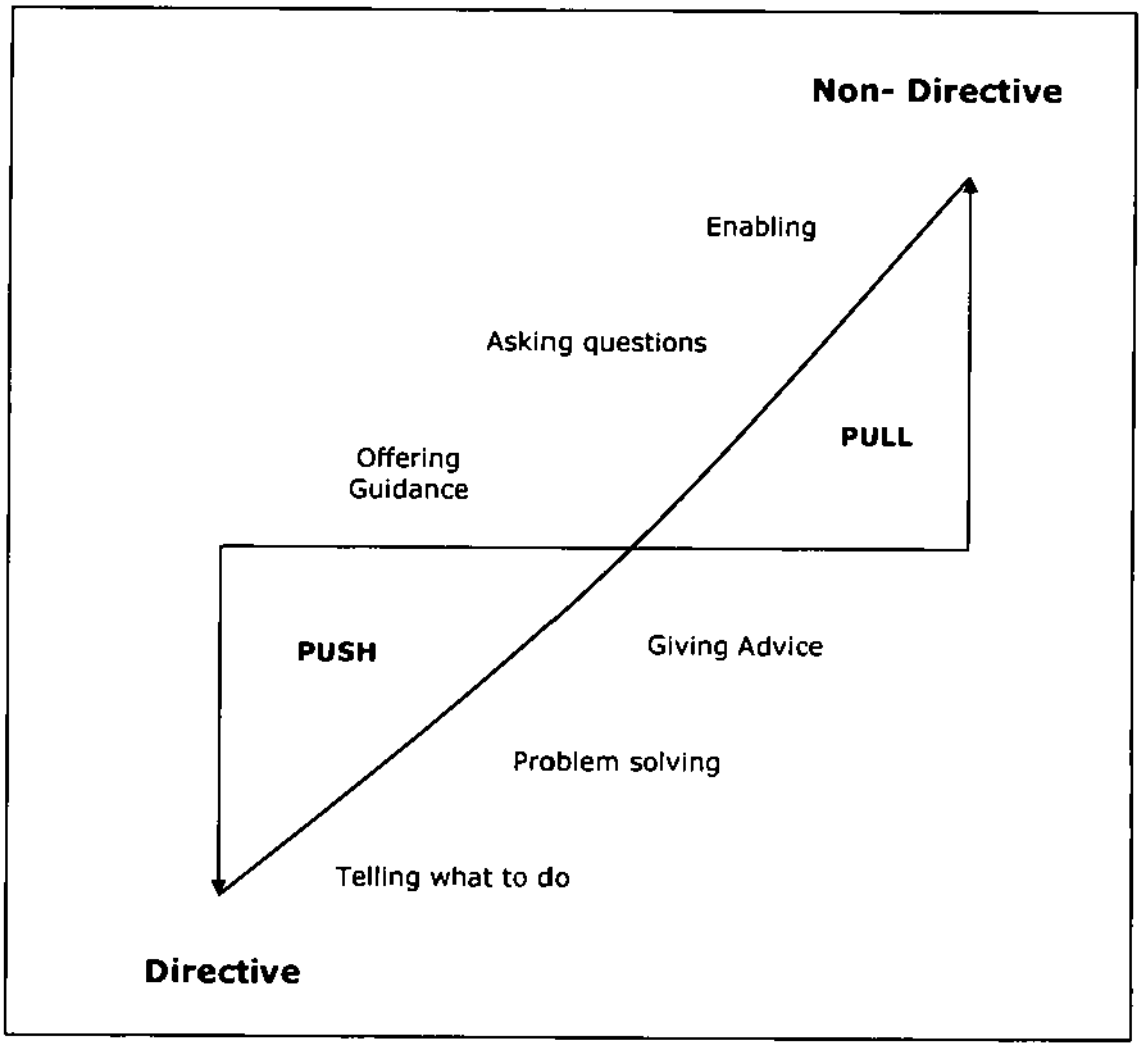
In a normal society a great need exists for executive coaches to help executives develop the abilities to cope with the demands of the day. In SA additional demands exist that will increase the need for executive coaches. Yet despite their positive reputation elsewhere, many South African companies are still reluctant to hire such coaches (Business Day, 2006).

With the current shortage of executives in South Africa and the value that executive coaching is already adding to executives in the developed world it seems that it could play a major role in the development of executives in South Africa (Business Day, 2006).

2.4 Types of Coaching

There are fundamentally two types of coaching: directive and non-directive. It can be delivered by internal or external coaches. The basic difference is one of approach (Bacon & Spear, 2003). Directive and non-directive coaching does not refer to a specific style that a coach can choose because it is appropriate to his or her personality. An executive coach needs to have both types of coaching in his or her repertoire as well as the insight to know when each type is called for. Figure 1-1 illustrates the difference.

Figure 1-1 Different Coaching Methods



Adapted from Alexander & Renshaw (2005, 98)

2.4.1 Directive Coaching

Directive coaching entails a process in which the executive coach shares his or her knowledge and experience, opinions and observations with the person being coached. As these coaches are experts in their fields, the flow of knowledge is one-way. The coach is the source and the coachee is the receiver of inputs. The coachees benefit from the coach's knowledge and therefore the coach does not really ask the former about their experiences or views. The fundamental characteristic of directive coaching is that it springs from within the

coaches themselves (Bacon & Spear, 2003). It is thus the coach's perspective that drives the interaction.

The fundamental modus operandi is to direct a leader toward the path the coach thinks the leader needs to take (Bacon & Spear, 2003). The coach will observe the leader performing, telling them what he or she is doing well and what not so well and how to improve what is being done. The coach may also use assessments and critical incident discussions, to enlighten the coachee regarding the impact he or she is having on others. The coach will then advise the coachee on more appropriate behaviour and direct the leader to higher effectiveness.

It is important to note that although directive coaching is a perfectly legitimate and effective way to coach, it is crucial to possess insight into the specific circumstances in which it will be effective and when it should be avoided at all costs. Some critics say that by their very nature, instructions are limiting and serve as impediments to the learning process (Lewis, 2000). They argue that instructions are designed to tell others what should be done and therefore do not allow individuals the opportunity to review the situations in which they find themselves, analyse them and devise appropriate courses of action to manage them. They argue that individuals are not empowered and will remain dependent on the coach for guidance.

Directive coaching, however, has its place especially in situations where the coach is much more of an expert on the topic than the coachee. Similarly when there is only one way of doing something, for instance by using effective body language, directive coaching is the best method as the coachee's own opinions on a topic they are not knowledgeable on will be futile. Especially in situations which are hazardous or require a special way of handling, directive coaching is also most effective. Finally, directive coaching is also suitable in situations of limited time and tight deadlines (Bacon & Spear, 2003).

2.4.2 Non-directive Coaching

Non-directive coaches usually hold a more egalitarian view of themselves: that they have no right to advise others. They also resist from telling others what to do, based on a belief that they can never fully understand the nuances of another person's situation. At most they can offer suggestions or ask questions that will help the other person to reach a conclusion themselves. The non-directive coach also believes that they need to ensure that the coachee takes full ownership for the discovery, problem-solving, and skill-building processes (Bacon & Spear, 2003). The coach offers support for thought, and offers frameworks so that the process of solution-finding is aided (Pemberton, 2006).

Non-directive coaches thus choose by design to work with subtlety and near-invisibility as their influence fades into the choices they help their coachees to make. They thus act more as counsellors and guides, rather than teachers or mentors. They exhibit self-restraint in not telling their clients what to do and tend to ask rather than to tell. They facilitate sessions by asking and exploring the coachee's perceptions and ideas and helping them to reach their own solutions. The two primary skills of non-directive coaches are thus those of asking and listening. They employ a repertoire of questions which help the coachee with self-discovery and also assist him or her to think of various possibilities (Bacon & Spear, 2003). The non-directive coach helps the coachee through quantum questions to help expand the problems that the coachee experience. The coachee is further asked to take up the other person's position; they are then able to see the other person's world map and powerful insights can be gained (Pemberton, 2006)

The main characteristic of non-directive coaches is that they exercise great patience in the belief that the coachee will find the right path and exercise the right options which will lead to the best results in the long run (Bacon & Spear, 2003). Non-directive coaching is founded on the age-old wisdom that:

"You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself" (Galileo Galilei, 1564-1642).

2.4.3 Coaching and Mentoring

It is important to distinguish between coaching and mentoring to clarify the present research. According to the *Oxford Dictionary* a coach is a tutor who gives private or specialized teaching while a mentor is an experienced and trusted adviser or an experienced individual in an organisation who trains and counsels new employees and students. "Mentor coaches serve as wise advisers. They are generally older and far more experienced than their coachees, and they act as shepherds -- gently guiding in the right direction, posing questions that help coachees discover the path for themselves" (Bacon & Spear, 2003: 103). Judge and Cowell (1997) define an executive coach as an external coach who is compensated for helping to improve the executive's performance whereas a mentor performs the same functions as a coach but is somebody from inside the organisation. Although a difference exists between coaching and mentoring the mentoring process can be used in the coaching process.

2.4.4 Internal vs External Coaches

The first question that needs to be answered when beginning with an executive coaching programme is whether to use external or internal coaches, or a combination of both. Although the skills required are virtually the same, circumstances will dictate whether to use an internal or external coach (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002).

A number of reasons exist why external coaches are preferred. These include a strong cultural bias for external coaches, a HR department that is more tactical

than strategic, a very senior executive coachee, a highly political situation and a specialised need that internal coaches cannot meet (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002).

Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmin (2006) argue that coaches who work at lower levels in the organisation can carry out life coaching, strategic coaching, habitual coaching and organisational coaching at the same time. They added however that top executives want to deal with serious experts and are of the view that experts specialise in what they do.

Conversely internal coaches can be the best in other situations. They can offer in-depth knowledge of the company and the industry and an understanding of the corporate system within which the executive operates. They may strengthen HR's reputation if they are effective and may be more cost-effective than external coaches. They may be able to link the coaching experience with other HR functions and thereby optimise the executive development plan. Internal coaching can also be an exciting development opportunity for HR staff (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002). Companies should guard against mixed roles in organisations, where the same person undertakes performance appraisals and coaching. The recommendation will be that internal coaching should take place across organisational boundaries.

Wasylyhyn (2005) carried out a study that indicated a 100% positive response towards using external coaches. A negative response of 76% was indicated towards an external coach's lack of company and industry knowledge. Trust and confidentiality were the primary factors influencing the preference for external coaches. In contrast to this his study also indicated that a majority (70%) of the respondents showed a positive response towards the use of internal coaches. The significant number of negative responses (79%) was due to the internal coaches' potential conflict of interest, trust and the ability to maintain confidentiality and level of skill. Knowledge of the company and the industry is by far the norm determining positive responses towards internal coaches.

In an article written by an unknown author (2005) the following proposition is offered: Being a confidant to a senior executive, to help them with difficult strategic and operational problems, emphasises the fact that a coach on this level needs to be an outsider (Unknown, 2005). Although internal coaches will add to expert knowledge about policy and procedures in the organisation, and have an effective network of influential contacts, the need for fastidious confidentiality remains. Stevens (2005) concurs with the issue of confidentiality and adds that lack of objectivity can also be a disadvantage of internal coaches. They operate from a basis of shared experience and understanding of the organisational strategy and goals but offer ready answers when organisational problems present themselves (Schnell, 2005).

Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2006) found a high degree of satisfaction with both internal and external coaching, with a slight statistical preference for external coaching. The question whether to use an internal coach or an external coach is not an either / or question but the question of on what level and for what purpose the executive will be used. Both external as well as internal coaches have a place and function to fulfil. The choice between external or internal will largely be determined by the purpose of the engagement and on what level of the organisation the engagement will happen.

The differences between external coaches and mentors are illustrated in table 1-2. From this table it is clear that an external executive coach is an individual being paid to help with the personal development of an individual. Furthermore the relationship is based on absolute confidentiality and no internal employees are involved. The mentor is normally an internal senior executive who is not paid and the mentoring is based on career development and fast-tracking with the full knowledge of the individual's manager.

Table1-2 The differences between external coaches and mentors

External Coaching	Mentoring
Two parties are involved, the executive and the coach.	Three parties are involved: the executive, the mentor and the manager of the executive.
The coach is normally an independent outsider	The mentor is normally a senior executive in the same organisation
Coaches are appointed and paid	Mentors are nominated and not paid
Driven by coach and executive	Driven by steering committee
External coach's lack of company and industry knowledge is by far the main reason for negative responses.	The knowledge of the company and the industry is by far the reason for positive responses towards internal coaches
Relationship is formed by choice of coachee	Relationship is formed via matching
Used to promote individual development	Used for a variety of reasons, e.g. career management, fast-tracking, equity, etc.
Relationship based on absolute confidentiality.	Relationship based on career development and learning based on the internal policies of organisation, not necessarily trusted with confidential information.

Meyer & Fourie (2006:6)

The choice of whether an external coach or an internal mentor will be used must be based on the aim of the development intervention. An internal mentor is usually made use of to help the individual with development and growth in terms of the organisation's policies and procedures whereas an executive coach becomes involved when the executive has reached a level where he/she has received all the possible training and has acquired all the necessary academic qualifications but needs to look at the development of his/her entire life.

2.5 Purpose of Executive Coaching

"Unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance".
Whitmore (1996)

The concept of coaching in the business world undoubtedly has its roots in the world of sport (Whitmore, 1996). Sports coaches gear their efforts towards to motivating the people they coach to perform at their best at all times, and offering them appropriate support by assisting them to improve and perfect their sporting techniques. Executive coaching is a collaborative partnership focused on helping one's leaders and teams reach peak performance, increase their productivity, and develop more effective leadership skills in their workplace, resulting in significant corporate growth and profitability.

Executive coaching focuses on developing executives who are better able to handle the pressure of constant change, challenges beyond their experience and the difficult interpersonal arena of top management. Some of the forces behind a need for executive coaching include driving change, preparing for professional advancement and dealing with disruptions and extraneous challenges. Most commonly, executive coaching is utilised to develop key leadership capabilities or focus required for the current role and also as an

instrument to prepare them for the challenges of the next level. Sometimes an executive might also feel that they are adequate to the task at hand, but slightly unsure of the interpersonal or political requirements of the level they are operating on. Most difficulties that executives face at work relate to interpersonal relationships with co-workers, supervisors, peers, direct reports, or internal customers, and less frequently to technical problems related to business. To be effective as a leader, one need to gain co-operation, support and collaboration from all or many of these groups while dealing with the day-to-day restraints such as time-management issues, transitions from technical to managerial responsibilities, etc. This is where executive coaching plays a role (McLoughlin, 2006).

In the confidential, highly-personal learning process, which involves action learning and working in partnership, an executive coach's observations and capabilities are combined with the executive's own expertise. The whole experience is structured to bring about effective action, performance improvement, and personal growth for the individual executive, as well as better results for the institution's core business. The process helps beneficiaries take a step back from their busy work schedules so they can look, from a strategic position, at potential personal and professional changes that will lead to improved effectiveness and long-term success. The process of executive coaching thus simply helps to identify, enhance, challenge and creatively expand those insights to give the beneficiary more freedom and direction in their own personal and professional life (McLoughlin, 2006).

This means that the coaching is concentrated on where leaders are and what they must do to get where they want to be; to achieve this, executive coaches must work with executives to help them focus on what they need to do in order to improve their performance and build commitment to an action plan. The coaching process also allows them to examine the reasons for previous

decisions, work out scenarios to practise appropriate responses and to develop new skills.

2.6 Effectiveness of Executive Coaching

Executive coaching thus mainly entails increasing the skills and effectiveness of leaders to enable them to accomplish three main responsibilities:

- Communicating the territory, that is, the purpose, the vision, and goals of the organisation, to key constituencies, and outlining opportunities and challenges.
- Building relationships and facilitating interactions that result in outstanding team performance.
- Producing results and outcomes, more from the direct efforts of others than from their own efforts (O'Neill, 2000: 5).

Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2006) describe the necessity of challenging assignments, structured learning, performance and results and conclude that the fundamentals of leadership and coaching in sports, business and life have remained largely unchanged. They state that the rules applied have however changed dramatically and describe the impact of business cycles, lifelong learners and organisational change on the effectiveness of leadership.

2.7 The focus of Executive Coaching

"Executive coaching assignments at the executive vice-president level bring a very different set of developmental challenges. In my experience, coaching at this level often means addressing issues of personal integrity and continuing commitment to work and organisational life."
Axelrod (2005:122)

The reasons expressed for selecting coaching are directly connected to changes desired at three levels: the individual executive level (intrapersonal), the interpersonal, and the strategic or organizational level. The premise is that

changing executive behavior at any of these levels may drive the changes which will affect the business results of the organization.

Intrapersonal higher-order needs that are addressed during executive coaching include: coaches becoming more at ease with themselves and those around them; building and maintaining a balance between life and work; building self-esteem and enhancing professional presence; developing and/or expanding strategic vision; enhancing flexibility and responsiveness to any situation that might arise; growing the ability to achieve buy-in from others; improving ways of handling stress; increasing articulation skills and credibility (Berlyn, 2006).

On an interpersonal level executive coaching is focused on enabling the coachee to deal with difficult people and situations; enhance organisational performance; give the executive a confidential sounding-board; increase the value of the executive within the organisation; make it possible for an executive to plan his/her personal development there; and to promote organisational development and communications.

The most common issues identified by Berlyn (2006) as well as Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2006) that leaders normally bring with them to executive coaching sessions include: creating high-performing teams; leadership development; developing emotional intelligence, influencing and negotiating skills; efficient and effective time and situation management; behavioural change / change management issues (and organisational politics); maintenance of a life/work balance; personal career development and its impact; problem-solving complex issues and strategic business issues.

Executives are also sometimes experiencing difficult life-change stages. The growth of an individual in the late-forties and fifties is founded on resilience in the face of setbacks and challenges, an increased concern with the meaning of life and the process of taking stock and greater self-acceptance (Axelrod, 2005).

Morgan, Harkins & Goldsmith (2006) reiterate the importance of life-coaching. Just as the coach helps the young executive to cope with the transition from early adulthood to middle life, the coach helps the executive vice president to leverage the strengths of late middle age (Axelrod, 2005).

Coaching not only concerns helping people produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives, but also pertains to organisational performance. Alexander and Renshaw (2005: 49) enumerate the following organisational areas which include:

- Heightening self-awareness and self-management.
- Developing astute relationship management.
- Building strengths and mitigating weaknesses.
- Accelerating results and clarifying decisions.
- Improving the execution of the task.
- Being receptive to learning and development in general.
- Focusing on new skills and capabilities.
- Increasing enjoyment and satisfaction.

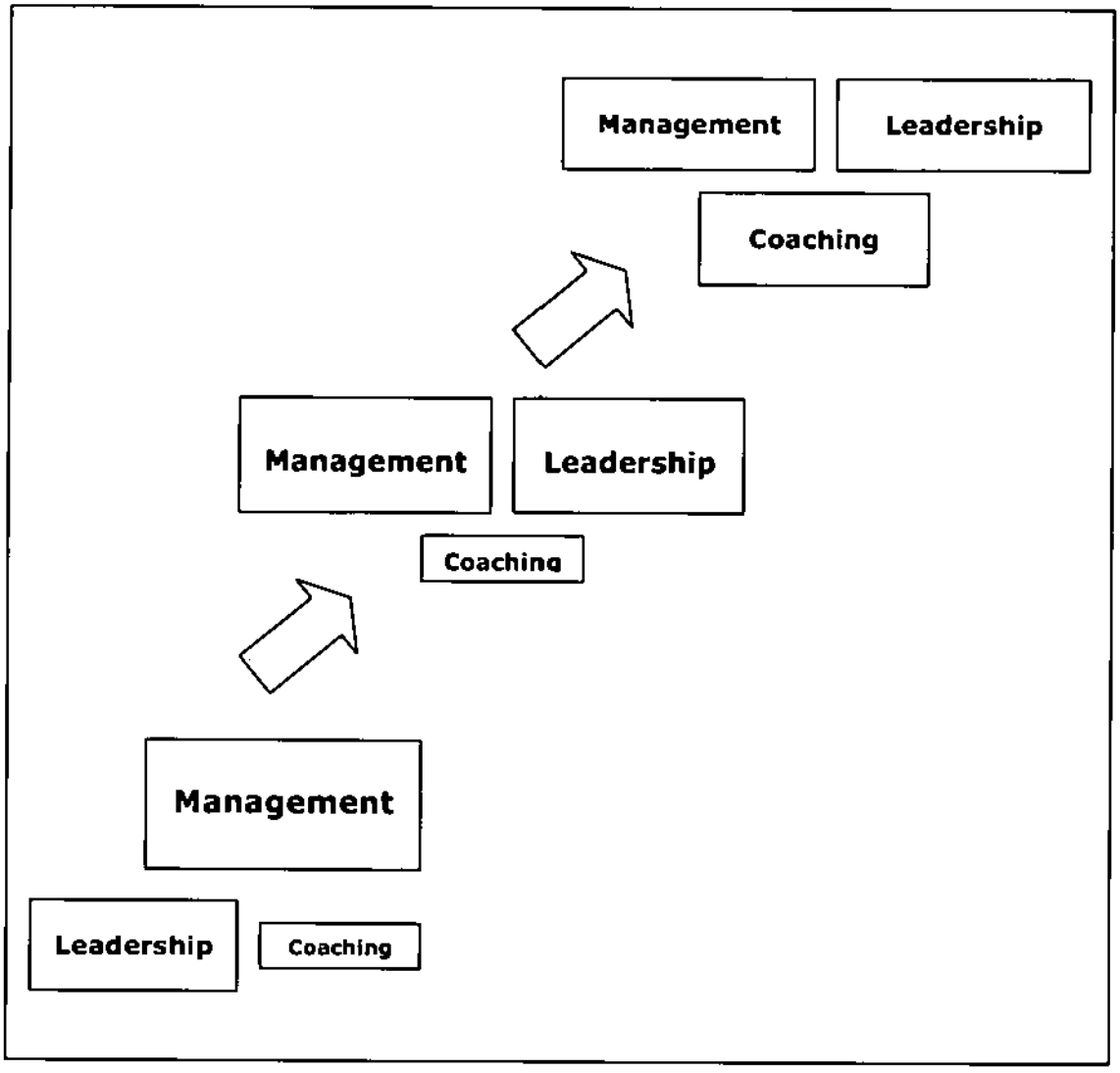
The following include some of the most common topics encountered in coaching with an organisational focus (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005: 47). For executive coaching to be effective for the organisation it is important to focus on the right topics. Table 1-3 illustrates the typical topics which form part of the executive's coach's role in influencing organisational results.

Table 1-3 Coaching topics				
Direction	Performance	Change	Relationship	Learning & Development
▪ Leadership ▪ Vision ▪ Mission ▪ Values ▪ Strategy ▪ Planning ▪ Goals	▪ Management ▪ Coaching ▪ Roles ▪ Procedures ▪ Objectives ▪ Results ▪ Behaviour ▪ Measurement ▪ Problem solving/ issue resolution ▪ Self-management	▪ Will ▪ Motivation ▪ Support/ challenge ▪ Resilience	▪ Communication ▪ Impact ▪ Understanding and trust ▪ Openness/ honesty ▪ Processes	▪ Capability ▪ Skills ▪ Confidence ▪ Fulfilment ▪ Well-being

Alexander & Renshaw (2005, 47)

Owing to the importance of topics covered in executive coaching sessions, there has subsequently been an adjustment in the way management priorities are viewed. Figure 1-2 illustrates the sizes of the blocks, indicating how the focus has changed, finally arriving at the view that executives need to give equal attention to management and leadership as well as coaching.

Figure 1-2 Changing Management Roles



Alexander & Renshaw (2005, 69)

2.8 Process of Executive Coaching

"One reason why people often feel less successful than they are is due to the fact that they have simply failed to define what success means."
Alexander & Renshaw (2005: 47)

Although each executive coaching situation is a highly personal form of interaction and different every time, executive coaching is based on the understanding that in order to be maximally effective, executives must accurately identify their strengths and weaknesses, examine the impact of their

behaviour on others, and regularly and intentionally reflect on their values, goals, and effectiveness (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

Executive coaching is driven by what the beneficiary of the coaching sessions believes to be important. The focus is on the beneficiary's life, aspirations and personal and professional development. This is because the coach appreciates that the executive is the expert on their own life and business, offering only an external perspective informed by personal experience and providing wise, integrated advice and strategic thinking (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

This can however only happen after the coach has conducted a thorough assessment of the executive with regard to personality, leadership style and alignment with organisational culture. A detailed investigating and probing into the executive's roles and responsibilities, the company culture, what his or her needs and dreams are, and in collaboration with the specific competencies that they require for success in their institution, is necessary. This assists in defining short and long-term business, management, and behavioural goals and competencies linked to the institution's strategic business plans and the individual's own personal long-term career objectives. After identifying, prioritising and selecting major institutional goals and objectives, the coach then assists the executive to stay accountable for achieving them. Coaching is not just a talking and sharing exercise but has measurable goals with each session striving to achieve tangible outcomes in the area of performance and personal effectiveness (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005: 48).

The coaching programme should produce lasting results without being excessively structured and restrictive for either the beneficiary or the executive coach. In his notes on executive coaching, Berlyn (2006), explains that this comprehensive task can be broken down into three basic steps, namely 1) Appraisal; 2) Scheduling; and 3) Coaching.

2.8.1 Step 1: Appraisal

This is the foundation on which the basic executive coaching plan is created and is derived from general and specific assessment information collected by using one or more assessment methods and tools, as well as a personal interview with the coachee. The coach then collates and analyses the results of these assessments, interprets what needs to be accomplished during coaching and feeds the results back to the executive. The feedback session is critical for setting up the relationship (Morgan, Harkins & Goldsmith, 2006).

2.8.2 Step 2: Scheduling

After the appraisal phase, information gained is used for the creation and scheduling of an effective personal development plan for the executive. In this development plan the executive's strengths are identified, weaknesses pinpointed and plans are made for the achievement of specific goals over a designated period of time. The coach and the executive need to work closely together so as to ensure that the development plan is aligned with both organisational and personal goals. Pertinent and allied institutional matters, as well as issues of management and behavioral aspects that are supported by a variety of initiatives, need to be identified in order to achieve the specified outcomes.

2.8.3 Step 3: Coaching

The executive coach should meet with the executive on a daily-, weekly- or bi-weekly basis for a minimum of six months. The longer the period, the greater the likely hood of long-term sustainability. The executive coaching sessions should take place, preferably at an off-site location, in person, with no interruptions or 'outside' interference.

The executive sets the broad agenda for the meetings and then the executive coach and the coachee can discuss a variety of topics (some general, some confidential) ranging from successes and failures, to learning needs, to ways to overcome difficulties and barriers to bringing about change. The focus always stays on the goals the beneficiary intends to achieve.

The executive coach then listens carefully and non-judgementally, serving as a sounding board, from time to time asking questions which may help the beneficiary to clarify their own values, beliefs, goals, dreams, and personal meaning. The executive coach does not only need to act as a sounding board but can also offer information and relevant literature to assist the executive with their growth. The executive however still remains responsible for making decisions, designing solutions, and for taking the steps to produce the desired behavioral changes. A plan developed from a developmental perspective requires that some disequilibrium is created in the executive's thinking, but not so much that it creates fear or confusion and undercuts motivation (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002).

The researcher is of the opinion that a pre- and post-measure of leadership effectiveness for example a 360-degree feedback form or emotional intelligence measures could indicate personal growth and the impact of the coaching on interpersonal effectiveness. As executive coaching is a journey of growth, it is crucial that benchmarks are identified and growth determined. This may also be the distinguishing factor between effective and non-effective coaches.

The process of executive coaching must be based on a sound foundation and the psychology of the process should be clearly understood by the executive coach.

2.9 Psychology of Executive Coaching

How is this essentially different from tasks?
"The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them." Ralph Nichols

The executive coaching process where the coach and coachee freely discuss delicate issues, explore blind spots, biases and shortcomings, shed defences, provide feedback and attempt to alter perspectives and to gain new skills, is a very intimate support mechanisms (Judge & Cowell, 1997). The coach needs also to detect all the subtleties underlying people's words and behaviour, analysing the restrictions the leaders have imposed upon themselves, tapping into their potential and abilities and abolishing suppressed limiting beliefs and low self-expectations while replacing them with empowering ones. The coach will also provide sensitive but honest and direct feedback, demonstrating commitment to the person being coached, their concerns and the need to work with him or her to help bring about whatever changes the beneficiary is working towards. The similarities with psychotherapy are frightening. It is thus of great importance that an executive coach possesses the necessary psychological and behavioural change skills needed in executive coaching sessions (Judge & Cowell, 1997).

Berlyn (2006) argues that an executive coach should also be able to blend an understanding of behavioural and organisational dynamics with an expertise in psychological assessment. This will enable coaches to tailor their coaching interventions to the unique needs of their beneficiaries. Problems also usually reside one or more levels deeper than the presenting issue and therefore the executive coach who is well-versed in attempts to change some long-standing behavioural pattern, will understand it when an individual, who now understands the impact their behaviour has on others, reverts back to their 'type', using the MBTI as an example.

The psychology of the session is one where an executive coach continually stresses the fact that the executive possesses all the latent talent needed to transform his/her institution situation and should therefore capitalise on opportunities to leverage the resident and latent strengths and capacities. An executive coach observes behavioural patterns and listens for those bottlenecks, diversions and challenges that contribute to or impede the beneficiary's intended outcomes, and then helps them to gain focussed insights and new perspectives by offering candid, constructive feedback. In using competency frameworks, the executive coach will also be able to show an individual the key inherent requirements of a position at his or her level and help them develop those. This can bring focus to the sessions and can also act as a neutral sounding-board when an individual becomes too intimately dependent on affirmation from the coach. It is therefore clear that an executive coach firstly needs to be a very experienced facilitator and professional with in-depth organisational, psychological, behavioural and emotional knowledge.

2.9.1 Advantages of Executive Coaching

"As is our confidence, so is our capacity". William Hazlitt

The greatest impact of executive coaching is to be found in the alignment between the executive's personal and professional goals which gives them the tutored ability to tackle the ever-changing demands of the institution and the business he or she is in. Factors such as increased emotional intelligence and improved communication strategies which result in stronger relationships boost morale and enable the beneficiary to develop a sharper focus on fewer high-impact goals of critical importance.

The available information about executive coaching shows that coaching can provide enormous benefits in terms of both problem resolution and personal development where the improved functioning of executives not only creates

benefits for them, but also for their teams and for their entire organization (Fitzgerald & Berger, 2002).

At an institutional level executive coaching enables the institution to retain and maintain the loyalty, confidence and commitment of key employees because of the investment of time and money into them. The added advantage is that it helps the beneficiary take responsibility for their own career advancement. Executive coaching empowers and develops the individuals being coached to become more proficient at performing their jobs as they learn more skills, acquire more knowledge and improve their overall ability to perform effectively at work. The executive with their own distinctive leadership style and confidence will lead to effective retention of key people and higher productivity in their institution. It is possible that executive coaching can also lead to a shift in the institutional culture by creating the conditions to sustain individual and organisational learning. In creating the correct environment, the executive coach assists in developing or improving the listening and questioning skills required by the beneficiary. These skills are passed down to his or her subordinates and so a new culture is created.

Berlyn (2006) and Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2006) identify the following advantages of Executive Coaching: it

- affords a confidential sounding board for the beneficiary executive;
- assists the institution in attracting higher-calibre talent;
- decreases turnover by reducing reasons for poor-/under-performance and dissatisfaction;
- enhances the value of the institution by ensuring better decision-making and a more confident executive mindset;
- heightens the beneficiary's job satisfaction;
- helps to turn managers into leaders by giving them founded confidence in themselves;
- increases personal productivity by increasing capability and potential;

- reduces job-related stress by providing for the survival and growth needs of the beneficiary executive.

In research carried out by Wasylyhyn (2003), the behavioural changes which were effected comprised mainly the following: personal behaviour change (56%), enhancing leadership effectiveness (43%), and fostering strong relationships (40%). The top three indicators of successful coaching were found to be:

- sustained behaviour change (63%),
- increased self-awareness and understanding (48%)
- and more effective leadership (45%) (Wasylyhyn, 2003).

Olivera, Bane and Koppelman (1997) undertook a study to test the effects of coaching as a transfer tool. Their study found that executive coaching plays a major role in the development of executives. The effectiveness of one-on-one coaching sessions after training and feedback from coached executives was investigated. This research proved that one-on-one coaching after a training intervention offers a safe environment in which practice and feedback can take place. From their research two themes emerged: coaching was beneficial to the individuals personally and also to the company (Olivera et al.,1997). The research demonstrated the dramatic effects of one-on-one coaching as a transfer of training tool. When archival data were collected the results showed that training on its own improved productivity by 22, 4% and training augmented with one-on-one coaching improved productivity by 88 % (Olivera et al., 1997).

On the individual level, executive coaching can play a very important role in helping the beneficiary to 'think outside the box' in order to be able to perceive options and solutions that they were unable to see in the first place and allow them to explore new avenues of possibility, approach problems from a different angle, change their perspective and notice things differently.

Executive coaching satisfies certain individual needs because it addresses career/life balance issues for the present and future and enables the executive to see the way others perceive them. Executive coaching also tends to encourage continuous learning, training and professional development and enhances performance in communication, inter-personal skills and relationships. This in turn improves the self-awareness of the executive and even provides career motivation and direction.

An executive coach is an additional resource to the beneficiary executive and can often provide him/her with a creative new model or technique to address what may seem to be a big or insurmountable issue, a new attitude or emotional response, a new perspective, a case study or simply a piece of information that needs to be fitted into the scheme of things. The coach provides the beneficiary with tacit and moral support, as well as guidance; this therefore involves moving the beneficiary towards achieving certain goals in a swift and focussed way because when two people genuinely work together with a win-win approach, they are more likely to produce some exceptional results than not to succeed in their endeavour.

2.10 Coaching as a Management Function

Resilient executives who are well-coached develop into effective coaches and underwrite the type of organisational culture which is necessary for today's companies to stay competitive. This continuous cycle of learning keeps the executive and the company ahead of the competition (Giglio, Diamante & Urban, 1998).

The coaching intervention empowers and develops the individuals being coached to become more proficient at performing their jobs. In this process, they learn more skills, acquire more knowledge and improve their overall ability

to perform effectively at work. These are all skills that the individual can again transfer to subordinates through the coaching he or she also needs to do.

2.10.1 Advantages for the Coach

Coaching interventions also offer opportunities for development to the coach. They provide a forum for coaches to practise and improve their coaching skills in the context of actual coaching encounters.

2.10.2 Advantages for the Executive

Both tangible and intangible results are to be gained from executive coaching because the executive coach helps the beneficiary to:

- assist the beneficiary executive to apply and evaluate the effectiveness of their enhanced performance approach.
- develop the requisite implementation strategies, thus aligning coaching goals with the institution's vision and mission.
- identify resources necessary to implement the organisational plans and communicate with others in the institution.
- understand which of his/her skills and experience are of most value to the institution.
- unleash the latent potential of the executive in such a way that the coaching skills can be transferred to enable the executive to create more effective teams, higher morale, and better bottom-line results in his/her institution.

From the above studies it seems as if executive coaching leads to dramatic results for greater productivity as well as positive changes in personal behaviour.

Executive coaching assists an executive to:

- achieve greater success in their professional life;
- acquire new leadership strategies and tactics and use them properly;
- capitalise on inherent leadership strengths and bridge gaps;
- cultivate awareness of how the executive is perceived by others;
- develop self-awareness of their behaviour patterns and passions.
- gain greater balance between work and home;
- improve strategic thinking; and
- increase self-awareness and interpersonal effectiveness

2.11 Unique Problems in South Africa

"The art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another". Downey (1999)

Since independence in 1994 South Africa has been experiencing huge leadership challenges owing to major societal changes and the effects of globalisation (Booysen, 2005). With the implementation of affirmative action (AA) legislation and the Employment Equity (EE) Act and the demands to change the racial composition of management in South African business, traditional leadership solutions are unlikely to work effectively in a changing South Africa because they presume a relatively homogenous environment in which people share a common culture and values (Booysen, 2005). Jackson (2004) refers to a tension between the need to make organisations lean and mean and the need to develop people within the organisation; furthermore there is a cultural need amongst Africans to recognise people as having a value in their own right and as part of a social community, which may be in direct conflict with the Western view in organisations that people are a means to an end.

In order to utilise all talent we have to build a leadership style that is inclusive, where people feel they are heard, seen and respected. This requires a leadership philosophy which maintains a balance between African and western

principles and where feminine and masculine management practises are accommodated (Booysen, 2005). Relationships are normally viewed by black groups as more important than work, and time is not viewed as a priority, and vice versa among white groups (Booysen, 2005). So a conflict between task- and people-focused cultures is prevalent in South African organisations.

In many companies the lack of communication can lead to coaching being seen as something "done TO me" not "done WITH or FOR me'. Companies that make use of coaching must thus be sure to position executive coaching as an investment in the development of employees (Wasylyhyn, 2003).

Other obstacles to coaching found all over the world were identified by Whitmore (1996) and can be grouped into two main categories, namely those external and internal to the coach. External obstacles include the factors that the organisation's culture may not be open to coaching as a management intervention; that coaching requires training and training takes time; and also that employee scepticism needs to be bridged. Internal obstacles include the erroneous belief that one is, has always been and will always be a good coach; a lack of ability to coach effectively; and the failure of coaches to see the benefits of the coaching intervention.

Bacon and Spear (2003) suggest that cultural differences should be acknowledged during coaching and that it is important to find synergies and use differences creatively to seek solutions from multiple perspectives in order to find one that is mutually acceptable.

Jackson (2004) refers to the importance of understanding the complexity of operating constraints in Africa. He states that it is critical to assess the appropriateness of management techniques in different socio-cultural contexts and adds that leaders should develop an awareness of their own cultural values and the way they influence the management of people. Executive coaching can

assist greatly to create an awareness of one's self and can breed cultural awareness.

2.12 Conclusion

Today's world is changing, turbulent and competitive and requires people and organisations to alter and grow if they want to stay ahead of the game. If development is a key driver for organisational business performance, then coaching needs to move towards the centre of the development strategy and although implementing and sustaining a coaching programme requires careful consideration and planning, as this report has indicated, coaching can reap enormous benefits for both the individual and the organisation.

Elaborate and highlight mentoring of female and cross cultural the matching of coaches and executives.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology and research processes are described. The following are explained: the sampling design, the research design, the data collection phase and the data analysis phase. A specific effort is made to explore the limitations of the study.

3.2 Background to approach

According to Creswell (1994) five fundamentally different assumptions separate quantitative from qualitative research:

- The ontological assumption: quantitative researchers typically assume a single objective world and qualitative researchers typically assume that multiple subjectively-derived realities can co-exist.

- The epistemological assumption: quantitative researchers assume their independence from the variables under study whereas qualitative researchers commonly assume that they must interact with the phenomena they study.

- The axiological assumption: quantitative researchers act in a value-free and unbiased manner, while qualitative researchers act in a value-laden and biased manner. The present researcher does not necessarily concur with this statement and feels that qualitative research is not necessarily biased. It all depends on whether the interviews held were fundamentally the same and whether the same questions were asked of the interviewees. Although bias cannot be excluded and is acknowledged the researcher has attempted to be objective.

- The rhetorical assumption: quantitative researchers use impersonal, formal and rule-based text / language where qualitative researchers use personalised, informal and context-based language. The writer used the language determined by the literature review and interpreted the responses in those terms to ensure objectivity.

- The methodological assumption: quantitative researchers apply deduction, limited cause-effect relationships and context-free methods whereas qualitative researchers tend to apply induction, multivariate and multi-process interactions and context-specific methods.

It is also assumed that qualitative research is better suited for theory creation, whereas quantitative research is better suited for theory testing. This however is not always the case. Both traditions of research offer valuable and useful research designs and techniques and should be viewed as complementary. Creswell (1994) proposes that blending quantitative and qualitative research can be beneficial to organisational research.

In this study qualitative analysis methods will be used to analyse data received from interviews and questionnaires with the purpose of contributing to an enhanced understanding of the topic of executive coaching.

3.3 Research design

During this phase of the research, the researcher decided on the research propositions, the method of data collection, the purpose of the study, the time dimension, the topical scope of the study and the research environment. Qualitative statistics and techniques are used to explore the problem statements identified. These techniques include in-depth interviewing, surveys of experience and causal relationships. Six HR Directors and three coachees were interviewed in-depth. Two structured interview schedules were developed in

order to test the research questions discussed in paragraph 1.4. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, where after the results were compared and key words were coded to identify emerging themes.

The goal was to obtain important information on coaching trends. The researcher surveyed the Human Resources Directors of major South African companies to determine their strategic intent, coaching philosophy and realities with regards to implementation. Coachees were also surveyed to determine the benefits and the drawbacks of the coaching process, and the perceived value added. Both target groups were asked to describe the process that they follow and whether they use internal or external coaches. The structured interview schedules are attached in Appendix 1 and 2.

The researcher attempted to unpack the results of the survey by means of qualitative statistical methods in order to present the reader with a clear understanding of the perceived importance and effectives of executive coaching in the South African context.

3.4 Sampling

A sample must represent the characteristics of the population it purports to represent. The basic notion of sampling is to use only some elements of a population to draw conclusions about the entire population. The benefits of using a sample are reduced cost, greater accuracy, greater speed and ensuring the availability of the population elements can be achieved much more easily (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

The relevant population from which the sample was drawn consists of all Insurance and Assurance companies in South Africa. Due to the cost implications and practical administration of a research project of that magnitude, the student decided to draw the sample group only from companies in the financial services industry, and specifically from the five big life assurance

companies, namely: Old Mutual, Sanlam, Liberty, Momentum and Discovery, and the four big short-term insurance companies, namely: Santam, Mutual and Federal, Hollard and Auto and General.

If the population is small any sample that one may draw might not be representative of the population. A good sample is tested by how well it represents the characteristics of the population. The sample must be valid and validity is determined by accuracy and precision (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). According to Cooper & Schindler (2003), a census is feasible when the population is small and necessary when the elements are quite different from each other.

As the sample group has only nine members, it was decided to follow a census approach and all the HR Directors were contacted for interviews. Each HR Director was asked to identify 2 – 3 coachees to be interviewed, utilising the structured interview schedule. In the end six HR Directors and 3 coachees were interviewed. The coachees interviewed were limited to only three as the whole coaching process is seen as confidential and not all HR Directors were prepared to allow coachees to be interviewed.

3.5 Process

The student addressed the research in terms of two perspectives:
1. That of the HR director who pays the bill of the Executive Coach and is ultimately responsible for leadership development, and
2. The coachee, who is partaking in the process.

Each HR director was asked to identify coachees to be interviewed. The researcher gave the following instruction to the HR director to ensure that the target group was comparative in nature:
Those interviews are held with executives who have been coached over at least a 12 month period.

A cross-sectional study was carried out since it represents a snapshot of one point in time. As actual environmental conditions were studied, we can classify the study as a field study.

All participants were interviewed using the structured interview schedule; the interviews were recorded and transcribed after every interview. The results were coded and interpreted in order to analyse them in terms of the literature study.

3.6 Data Collection

Although structured interview schedules were developed, one-on-one interviews were used to obtain the answers. The structured interview schedules however dictated the conversation and the student ensured that questions were asked in the same context as indicated on the questionnaire.
The following techniques were mainly used:
Experience Survey: The researcher looked for ideas on important issues and attempted to discover what important themes exist on the topic of executive coaching.

The data collected took the form of views, opinions, preferences, inclinations, or feelings towards executive coaching. Reasons for using or not using executive coaching were explored. Perceptions about executive coaching were tested.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken by means of content analysis, which measures the aspect of the message or its semantic context. The breadth of the tool makes it flexible and ideal for a problem-solving tool or perhaps used as a methodology (Cooper & Schindler, 2003)

"Content analysis has been described as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of a communication" (Cooper & Schindler, 2003: 460).

"Content analysis follows a systematic process with the selection of a unitization scheme. The units may be syntactical, referential, propositional, or thematic.

- Syntactical units are illustrated by words, which are the smallest and most reliable units.
- Referential units may be objects, events, persons, and so forth, to which an expression refers.
- Propositional units use several frameworks.

Thematic units are higher-level abstractions inferred from their connection to a unique structure or pattern in the content (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).
Other aspects of the content analysis methodology include:

- Selection of a sampling plan.
- Development of recording and coding instruction.
- Data reduction.
- Inferences about the context.
- Statistical analysis.

Content analysis provides for rigorous application of reliability and validity criteria, it guards against selective perception of the content and is amenable to computerisation (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

The process used was the identifying, coding and categorising of the primary patterns in the data. Similar units were gathered and sorted into categories so that meaning could be derived and patterns or themes emerged.

3.8 Delimitations

This report endeavoured to identify:

- the use being made of executive coaching in the financial services industry,
- any future planning for executive coaching,
- the use of internal versus external coaches,
- what methods of coaching are employed,
- whether non-directive coaching is more successful than directive coaching
- cross-cultural coaching and provision for female executives.
- the role that executive coaching will play in the development of black executives.

3.9 Limitations

The study did not research the effectiveness of executive coaching and this subject could be explored in future research particularly to determine the impact of executive coaching on productivity. The researcher specifically recommends that the effect of executive coaching on emotional maturity is researched. Unfortunately time constraints in the present study played a role in not doing this as coachees in these studies will need to be tested before and after coaching interventions. As limited data are available, the researcher had to follow an exploratory research approach. The objective was thus the development of assumptions and not the testing of hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Interviews were conducted with six HR directors and three coachees. The former comprised one black male, one white male, one black female, two white females and one coloured male. Their ages ranged from 40 to 50. The coachees were all white males between 45 and 55. All the interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed. The results from the interviews by the HR directors will first be discussed per theme.

4.2 Results from HR Directors interviews

The results are discussed in the same sequence as the questions in the structured interview schedule. Nine insurance and assurance companies were contacted to participate in the survey. Only seven responded and only six were prepared to participate. The whole process of executive coaching is seen as confidential and only two of the companies were prepared to identify coachees for interviewing purposes. The main themes identified in these interviews were the following: Their definition of coaching; The measurement of the effectiveness of executive coaching; The effectiveness of executive coaching as a leadership development tool; The purpose for which executive coaching is used; Whether firms budget for executive coaching; What levels of the organisation are involved; The process and types of executive coaching used; Whether external or internal executive coaches are used; Cross-cultural and female coaching; The role of executive coaching in developing black executives; Future plans with respect to executive coaching.

4.2.1 The definition of Executive Coaching

Although a variety of definitions were offered by the HR Directors a spectrum of themes, i.e.: confidentiality, organisational needs, self mastery and the development of leadership skills, was apparent. The interviewees were clear that executive coaching comprised an important part of their leadership development initiatives. Executive coaching is seen as a self mastery process by means of which executives are given the opportunity firstly to identify their weaknesses and secondly to acknowledge that they have weaknesses. By acknowledging the latter they then receive the opportunity to test the implications of their decisions in a safe environment and try to understand the unintended consequences of their actions before taking action. The Executive Coaching process is used to empower them to determine their own potential and to use it maximally. Executive coaching is typically used as a tool to develop promising individuals with expert technical knowledge but limited people skills, or to help with their transition into a new role. Most of the HR Directors were adamant that Executive Coaching is used to help the individual understand the company's strategic objectives and to develop their own skills to ensure that these are achieved.

Leadership is perceived as the differentiating factor determining the success of a company; therefore care must be taken in the development of leadership skills. Two quotations that describe the HR Directors' definition of Executive Coaching are: *"Executive coaching is the support of executives to achieve their business objectives. It is the personal confidential consulting about the individual's weak points within the framework of the company goals. Executive coaching does not only focus on weak points but also focus on the leveraging of strong points"*, and the second definition: *"We use Executive Coaching where an external person is confidentially giving senior executives the opportunity to freely think, strategise and plan about leadership issues, and to anticipate the*

implications of their decisions in a safe environment, to ensure that when they go into action they have a very good idea what it is they must do".

The frequency of references to different themes was coded and indicates the following results. The highest proportion of references (83.33%) was made to the importance of acquiring self mastery through Executive Coaching. The second greatest number of references (66.67%) was made to the importance of executive coaching in assisting executives to achieve company objectives and the third largest number (50%) was made to the confidential nature of such coaching.

4.2.2 Measuring the Effectiveness of Executive Coaching

None of the HR Directors surveyed uses a scientific measuring instrument to determine the effectiveness of executive coaching. They focus more on the use of a 360-degree feedback system or simply a contract with the Executive Coach in terms of specific outcomes desired for specific individuals. Information received and actions observed are used to indicate what outcomes must be achieved. After and during the coaching process observations and feedback from the executive's peers and managers are made use of to try and determine the effectiveness of the coaching process. Individuals are annually evaluated to determine whether any behavioural changes have taken place and these results will be discussed with the executive coach to contract for future focus areas. The process stays confidential and the focus falls on the individual executive's behaviours in the work environment. A lot of time is spent on the selection of quality Executive Coaches and here references and due diligence studies are used to help with the selection process. It is believed that if the correct quality of coaches is selected, the results and the process being followed by the coach can be trusted. Some of the HR Directors surveyed expressed a definite need for a

scientific method to measure the effectiveness of the executive coaching process as large amounts of money are spent on the initiative.

4.2.3 The Effectiveness of Executive Coaching as a Leadership Development Tool

The response varied from 'very effective' to 'not working in all cases'. There was consensus amongst the respondents that Executive Coaching is effective on the whole. Five of the HR Directors specifically mentioned that they experience it as effective. Three of the five respondents who felt that executive coaching is effective however expressed some preconditions for the process to be effective. These respondents were of the opinion that when applied properly and with the correct people, executive coaching was very effective as a leadership development tool as an alteration in behaviour could be noticed in most of the executives being coached. There were however reservations that if the executive is not interested and the relationship between the coach and the executive is not on the right footing no coaching will help such an individual.

Although the majority of HR Directors felt that executive coaching is an effective leadership development tool they added that for the process to be effective certain conditions must be in place, e.g.: the attitude of the individual being coached, a trusting relationship between the Coach and the executive, the age and the potential of the coachee, and whether the process is part of a total development process and not an isolated event.

4.2.4 The Purpose for which Executive Coaching is used

The general feedback indicated that executive coaching is made use of as part of executive development. Four of the respondents see executive coaching as part and parcel of their leadership development programs. Executive coaching

is furthermore used for specific developmental issues such as: to entrench certain strategic issues such as the company vision and values, to invest in worthwhile individuals with expert technical knowledge but with a lack of people skills, to address certain problem areas, or to address a specific need identified in specific individuals. Executive coaching is also used where executives are no longer challenged by academic studies and need stimulation on a different level, and lastly to help newly appointed executives with the transition into their new role.

Executive coaching is therefore definitely not used to address problematic individuals but rather as a general developmental tool for executives.

4.2.5 Budgeting for Executive Coaching

The respondents indicated that they budget specifically for executive coaching and a significant amount of money is invested in executive coaching, as the initiative is expensive and coaches charge anything from R2 000 to R10 000 per 2-hour session.

4.2.6 The Levels of the Organisation involved

Executive coaching in all the companies surveyed is mainly focused on the top executive levels in the company. Middle management and junior levels are also coached but less frequently and internal coaches are used to focus on these levels. It is quite clear that the HR Directors saw the need for Executive Coaching only in the top two to three levels of the company. In all the companies the top 30 executives, more or less, would receive executive coaching.

4.2.7 The Process and Types of Executive Coaching used

Five of the six HR Directors indicated that a 360-degree questionnaire is part of the process used. The feedback from this questionnaire will then be given to the coach and the coach and coachee will agree on an agenda. A non-directive coaching approach seemed to be preferred but a number of companies expressed no preference. Business goals must form at least fifty percent of the agenda. The following quote noted some worries about the process followed: *"We use coaches that use a non-directive approach. But we would expect them to challenge coachees to a certain extent. We are worried that if they are indulgent they just validate the executive's current behaviours".*

4.2.8 Whether External or Internal Coaches are used.

Five of the six respondents surveyed indicated a preference for external coaches, especially for their executive levels. Some companies would use internal coaches or mentors but only for lower levels. The reasons for using external coaches were the following: Confidentiality is a major issue; External coaches are seen as objective; no intimidation from external coaches; it is difficult to work with colleagues; external coaches are preferred because they hold a different worldview; external coaches possess a wider experience of the business world and they come into contact with other executives in the same and different industries.

The major reason why respondents prefer external coaches is the confidential nature of executive coaching. The respondents felt that the safety offered by the non-aligned individual who fulfils the coaching role is imperative to ensure that the coaching is successful. It is important that the executive or coachee experience the process as confidential with no interference or any feedback to

his/her superior. If it is suspected at all that any of the sessions are discussed with anybody in the organisation, the coaching relationship will be seriously hampered and the coachee will close up and not share any personal problems or performance problems with the coach.

4.2.9 Female specific coaching

All the respondents saw female coaching as part and parcel of normal leadership development and felt that if it is done separately the individuals who are part of this experience view it as discrimination or feel that they are seen as different from their white male colleagues. It is again important to match the executive coach with the coachee, and an effort should be made to give female coaches to females if so preferred by these coachees.

4.2.10 The role of Executive Coaching in developing Black Executives

This question solicited passionate responses, such as: *"Yes executive development will definitely play a major role in the development of black executives for the future. Our biggest challenge is the group dynamics within which the black executives have to function. A big need is coaching on group level to develop the group on how to manage diversity. The biggest problem is for black executives to gain credibility in the group"*, and*" Most definitely. It should be done more. We normally place a black person in a position with the potential, but they are not there yet. You set that person up for failure. You should actually not place that person in that position without being coached beforehand"* and *"Executive coaching will absolutely play a role in the development of black executives. More than any development programme ever"*.

It is quite clear that most of the HR Directors felt that much more emphasis should be placed on preparing black executives for their roles and that every newly appointed black executive should be properly coached to help them succeed not only in their new role but also to gain credibility.

However it was stressed that coaching for blacks should not be a separate initiative but should be handled as part and parcel of leadership development

4.2.11 Future plans with Executive Coaching

There was general consensus amongst the respondents that executive coaching would stay part of their future leadership development plans but that an emphasis should be placed on finding more scientific ways to measure the effectiveness of executive coaching. A further need was to develop a reliable panel and selection criteria for executive coaches.

4.2.12 Summary

In summary, the HR Directors were clear that executive coaching is part of their executive leadership development programs, it is very successful, they prefer to use external coaches, they budget annually for the initiative, only the top two to three executive levels are exposed to executive coaches and that coaching of females and cross-cultural coaching play a major role in leadership development but no special programmes should be offered.

The respondents felt that a specific initiative should be launched to use executive coaching to develop black executives for the future. It was felt that executive coaching could play a major role in fast-tracking the government's BEE initiatives and developing and retaining good black executives. It was

furthermore felt that the profession of executive coaching needs to be regulated to protect the industry and to ensure that fly-by-nights and unqualified individuals are kept out of the industry. A real need exists to find or to develop a scientific instrument to test the effectiveness of such coaching.

4.3 Results obtained from interviews with Coachees

The results are discussed according to the following themes: The process being followed; the benefits of executive coaching; drawbacks; personal benefits derived from the process; external or internal coaches; expectations of an executive coach; the continuing relationship.

4.3.1 The Process being followed

The respondents indicated that the executive coach follows a non-directive approach with an agenda as the basis of all discussions. The coach does not tell the coachees how to change or what the correct behaviours are but uses a self-discovery process to help the coachees identify developmental areas and develop acceptable behaviour themselves. Leadership tools and structures are provided to assist with the development of leadership techniques and skills. A mind map is provided after each session to help the coachee think about issues. The coach and coachees meet on a three-weekly basis for two hours. The meeting takes place at the coach's premises and this private time becomes sacrosanct. The executive coaching process focuses mainly on relationships with colleagues and team members, in order to explore ways to leverage these relationships and to improve the functioning of the leadership group and the coachee's team. The coach focuses on discussing business problems and not personal problems or the individual's private life. The coachees however felt that a whole-person approach should be followed as all influences play a role in

one's personal as well as one's work environment. The following quote expresses this effectively: "*I am not interested in a management consultant that helps me with strategy. I am looking for somebody that could help me to function properly as a whole human being*".

Two of the three coachees were happy with the present coach and felt that major development was taking place in their personal leadership abilities but the third coachee had previous experience and perceived the present coach purely as a sounding board. The time with the coach is however viewed as precious.

4.3.2 The Benefits of Executive Coaching

The respondents were convinced that the executive coaching intervention offers major benefits for them and the company. Four main themes emerged from the responses: The fact that the coach is used as a sounding board; the synergy that the coach creates in the team; the fact that the coaching is used for reflection; and the time with the coach is viewed as sacrosanct.

- Sounding board. The coachees felt that the coach is an excellent sounding board with whom personal as well as work issues can be discussed freely and honest and impartial feedback is given.
- Private time. The coachees saw the private time with the coach as critical and value it a lot. It seems as if the busy nature of an executive's schedule does not allow for any private time and that the time with the coach is very important for them to sit and freely test hypotheses and strategies in a safe environment.
- Synergy. The fact that the coach works with the entire executive team seems to create much synergy, which develops far more quickly as the coach can make use of the information regarding each individual to mesh the team much more rapidly than in a situation with no coach.

- Reflection. The fact that these executives are forced to set aside two hours in their diaries to be with the coach and have some time to reflect about life and the issues at work is seen as very important for the coachees.
- The following quote sums up the feeling of coachees about their executive coach: *"it is quite nice to be able to discuss both personal and business issues with a coach when you are in a stressful situation and get an impartial view".*

The benefits experienced by the coachees are clearly those of having the luxury of reflecting in a safe environment and of receiving impartial objective feedback about issues. An added benefit is experienced when the same coach works with the whole executive team to improve its synergy.

4.3.3 Drawbacks of Executive Coaching

Coachees do become suspicious from time to time as to whether the agenda is being driven behind the scenes by the shareholders who are footing the bill, to ensure that the necessary results are achieved. Coachees were however very positive about executive coaching and did not experience many disadvantages.

4.3.4 The effect of Executive Coaching on Productivity and Effectiveness

The Executive Coaching process is viewed by the coachees as helping greatly to improve their own as well as their team's productivity and effectiveness. They felt that the coaching helped them to prioritise strategic issues and give greater direction. The coaching was seen as developing the coachees' ability to find their own solutions and to have confidence in these solutions. It also helped the individuals to improve relationships in their own functional teams which fostered effectiveness and productivity. In the higher-level executive team the

coach helped to realise synergy much faster, with the result of a much more effective and productive company. The coach helped the coachees to develop a much better-balanced life approach, with the result that a healthy balance developed between time spent at work and with the family. The work is still done in normal office hours and the executive is a healthier individual. This benefits the company as well.

The following quote puts the benefits in a nutshell: *"I work normal office hours, exercise more, spend more time with my family and live an overall healthier life".*

4.3.5 Do you prefer an External or Internal Executive Coach?

All the coachees preferred to work with an external executive coach for the following reasons: *"If it was an internal coach I would have been more sceptical and would have felt that it was driven by the Shareholder and MD interference"* and *"I prefer an external coach, even for our middle management an internal coach would be too close to the issues. If you want to end the relationship it will be very difficult if it is an internal coach"* and *"I prefer external coaches because they work with a number of industries and high level individuals. If it was an internal coach they would mainly have had experience of the same company".*

4.3.6 Expectations of Executive Coach

The respondents indicated that they expect a coach to listen and to offer structures and tools with which problems can be addressed. Different approaches to problems should also be suggested by the coach. The coachees definitely do not expect the coach to tell them how to do their jobs. They expect, rather, to receive honest objective feedback on issues and to be allowed to find their own solutions.

The respondents, expectation of an executive coach is to follow a non-directive approach but to be given tools and structures which will help the individual to solve problems and issues by means of their own solutions.

4.3.7 Would you like to continue with the Coaching?

All coachees indicated that they regard the coaching process as valuable and would like to continue with the relationship on a long term basis.

4.3.8 Summary of Coachees' responses

In summary all the coachees felt that executive coaching is a worthwhile initiative with many benefits to them and the organisation. They prefer external coaches and would like to continue for the time being with their coaching relationship. They experienced real development of their leadership skills and expect coaches to follow a non-directive approach but that he or she must be able to provide effective leadership tools that can be used to solve problems and issues.

4.4 Integration of HR Directors' and Coachees' responses

From the above results the following similarities emerged between the way HR Directors saw executive coaching and the way coachees are experiencing it:

4.4.1 Definition of Executive Coaching

The HR Directors define executive coaching as a private, confidential discussion where individuals can reflect on difficult and important issues so that they are better enabled to understand the consequences of their decisions and actions.

4.4.2 The effectiveness of Executive Coaching

The HR Directors were convinced that executive coaching is a very successful leadership development tool although no empirical results exist to confirm this. The coachees similarly confirmed that they value the executive coaching interventions as very effective and extremely valuable in helping them to develop their own leadership abilities as well as successfully to take over new roles.

4.4.3 Executive Coaching as a Leadership Development Tool

The HR Directors were clear that they view executive coaching as a normal leadership development tool and that executive coaching is not used to focus on problem individuals. The coachees also indicated that they value the fact that the company is investing in their future development and none of them experienced the initiative as a process aimed at rectifying unacceptable behaviour.

4.4.4 The Expectations of Executive Coaching

The HR Directors' expectations of the process that executive coaches should follow and the expectations of coachees were 100% aligned. Both parties

expected that a non-directive process should be followed but with the proviso that candid and direct feedback is given, whether it be positive or negative.

4.4.5 External vs Internal Coaches

The HR Directors clearly indicated that only external executive coaches will and should be used on executive level. This was confirmed by the coachees as they felt that confidentiality and wider industry experience are necessary.

. 4.4.6 Future plans for Executive Coaching

The HR Directors indicated that their future plans were either to continue with the existing programmes, or to increase the use made of executive coaches. Coachees similarly indicated that they would prefer to continue with the executive coaches for the long term.

4.4.7 Concerns of Coachees

Coachee's' experiences and their expectations were aligned with the expectations of HR Directors. The only negative reactions found were some suspicions regarding shareholder interference with instructions given to the executive coaches. This suspicion, in my view, was not serious, however, and did not hinder the effectiveness of the programme.

The results were discussed in chapter four, these results will be analysed in the next chapter in terms of the literature review and propositions to determine whether there is any correlation with the literature review and whether the propositions are proven or not.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research results indicate a strong correlation with the literature review. Executive coaching is however a new leadership development is field in the world and is even newer in South Africa. The value of the discipline has not been properly researched and communicated. A great need exists for this profession to be properly regulated; and the real value that it adds to individuals as well as to corporate bottom lines needs to be researched and empirically determined. This will enhance the profession and will ensure that the added value that it offers is properly recognised.

From the results it is clear that both the HR Directors and the coachees regard executive coaching as beneficial to the individual beneficiaries and the company. The research results will now be discussed in view of the literature review, the themes and the proposition and sub-propositions identified.

5.2 Themes

5.2.1 Definition of Executive Coaching

This research confirms the working definition of executive coaching as given by Morgan, Harkins and Goldsmith (2005: 25): "*Coaching is to take good people and make them the best they can be, position them to work more effectively and cohesively in their environments, and make the most of their abilities. In other words, coaching is now most often applied to top performers whose leadership and growth potential are highly valued by organisations*"

The HR Directors and coachees confirmed that executive coaching is viewed as a normal leadership development tool and that it represents money spent on the development of all executives, as well as other individuals, identified as having potential. The themes identified by HR Directors were: confidentiality; organisational needs; self-mastery and the development of leadership skills. HR Directors further confirmed that executive coaching is perceived as an intervention to help executives to reflect in a safe and confidential space about important leadership issues and to try and anticipate the implications of decisions. This clearly relates to helping executives to work more effectively and cohesively in their environments. The challenge is to develop executives to help the organisation to achieve its goals and implement its strategy successfully.

The statements by HR Directors that executive coaching is used to help the individual to be able to determine their own potential and to use it maximally further demonstrates that executive coaching is used to develop good people to make the most of their capabilities. It grows the individual through a process of self mastery. Typically individuals with specialist technical knowledge and limited people skills are put through an executive coaching process to develop such skills.

Hence the working definition of this paper is confirmed.

5.2.2 The Effectiveness and Measurement of the Effectiveness of Executive Coaching

According to O'Neill (2000) executive coaching mainly aims to achieve three objectives: Communicating the territory, that is to ensure that all constituents are well informed regarding the purpose, vision and values of the organisation; ensuring that relationships and interactions are built that will result in

outstanding team performance; and to ensure that results and outcomes are produced through the efforts of others.

The main aim of executive coaching, according to the respondents, is to improve the executive's ability to work in synergy with their teams and to enhance the successful achievement of company goals. It is further used to entrench and improve the communication of the company's values and strategic plans for the future. The respondents were in agreement that the purpose of executive coaching is to better the leadership abilities of executives.

Although both HR Directors and coachees were in agreement that executive coaching is very effective in improving leadership abilities, no recognised tool exists that is used by any of these companies to measure the effectiveness of executive coaching. This represents a huge shortcoming and a real need exists to identify a reliable tool with which the effectiveness of executive coaching can be tested and proved. At this stage it is believed that executive coaching is effective and the feedback from coachees confirms this, but it is only an assumption and no proof exists.

5.2.3 Levels involved in Executive Coaching

Coaching is an especially useful tool at the executive level because these individuals possess few other assisted means of continued development due to the exceptionally busy nature of their everyday life (Berlyn, 2006).

The HR Directors interviewed confirmed that executive coaching is mainly aimed at the top executives of the company and that internal coaches or mentoring will be used for middle and first line management.

5.2.4 External Coaches vs. Internal Coaches

Wasylyhyn (2005) undertook a study that indicated a 100% positive response towards using external coaches. The significant negative responses (79%) were due to internal coaches' potential conflict of interest, trust and the ability to maintain confidentiality and skill level.

The HR Directors as well as the coachees in the present study confirmed Wasylyhyn's results and external coaches were preferred in all the cases researched. The same reasons were.

5.2.5 Executive Coaching for cross-cultural purposes and Females.

Johnson (2004) argues that there is little doubt that management development programmes which target women are crucial in developing leadership and presents a business case to put into place a coherent, strategic programme of organisational development in organisations aimed at increasing the number and quality of women leaders.

All the HR Directors interviewed were of the opinion, though, that no special programmes should be developed and implemented for either women or blacks, as these create a perception that the beneficiaries are different and they experience these programmes as discriminatory. These Directors held the view that all coaching programmes and leadership development programmes should be the same for everybody. They did however indicate that the matching of coaches and coachees is important and that it must be determined what coach a coachee prefers. They also mentioned that it might be easier to match a black coach with a black executive and a female coach with a female coachee.

5.2.6 The Role of Executive Coaching in developing Black Executives

Booysen's research (2005) regarding the pressure placed on organisations to conform to BBBEE requirements and the concomitant demands on black executives indicate that black executives move around a lot and specifically when they experience pressure to cope with difficult business situations.

Her findings were confirmed by the majority of the HR Directors interviewed who were of the opinion that executive coaching will play a major role in assisting these black executives to cope with the demands of corporate life. They felt that executive coaching would help these executives to gain credibility from their colleagues and also assist them to gain acceptance within their teams.

5.2.7 Future Plans for Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is a relatively young profession and most of the companies interviewed have only been making use of it for the last three to four years. Some of the companies only began with the initiative last year. All the HR Directors were, however, of the opinion that executive coaching forms a very important part of their leadership development plans and that they would continue with their existing coaching programmes.

In the next section the findings will be analysed in terms of the earlier stated propositions.

5.3 Propositions

Executive coaching as a tool contributes significantly to the development of executives.

Sub-propositions identified are:

5.3.1 Executive Coaching as a tool for leadership development assists leadership to deal with the demands and adversity of modern day corporate life

This proposition is demonstrated by the literature as well as the research results. The HR Directors and coachees were all convinced that executive coaching does exactly what this profession stands for.

5.3.2 Executive Coaching as such a tool assists leadership to perform sustainably over time

This proposition is verified by the literature review as well as by the interviews held with HR Directors and coachees.

5.3.3 Executive Coaching as such a tool is critical to the fast-tracking of BEE employees

This proposition is attested to by the HR Directors as all of them were convinced that executive coaching is necessary and must be made available more often to ensure the successful integration of black executives into their executive roles.

5.3.4 Executive Coaching as such a tool contributes significantly to the job performance of previously disadvantaged groups such as people of colour and women

This proposition is true but it is true for all recipients of such coaching.

5.3.5 Executive Coaching implemented effectively as a leadership development tool decreases the turnover of targeted groups in the organisation

This proposition was proved accurate by the HR Directors' expectations of executive coaching.

5.3.6 Executive Coaching assists leaders to deal more effectively with the challenges of cultural diversity and transformation in South Africa

This proposition was proven to be true, but not only for the given challenges in this country: for all challenges faced by executives in South Africa.

5.3.7 Executive Coaching helps to manage the paradox of the African humanistic concept versus westernized approach evident in organisations

This proposition was not proved and may require further research.

5.3.8 External coaches are more effective than internal coaches

This proposition was emphatically verified, not only by the literature review but also by the research results.

5.3.9 A non-directive approach to executive coaching is more successful than a directive approach

Non-directive coaching is clearly the preferred process, according to the results, but it was not demonstrated that a non-directive approach is more successful than a directive approach. It was proven that a need exists in some of the HR Directors and coachees to receive more direct honest and candid feedback from time to time. This proposition would require some more research either to prove or disprove it.

5.4 Conclusion

The fact that all the companies researched make use of executive coaching was a surprise in itself. This shows that executive coaching is made use of in the financial services industry in South Africa and that the statements that South African companies lag behind in using executive coaching with their Western counterparts were disproved.

It is clear that executive coaching is valued as a leadership development tool and that all the companies interviewed viewed it as very necessary to develop their executive teams and boards. Executive coaching is perceived as highly effective but no measuring instrument is used to determine its effectiveness scientifically: this is a 'gut feel'.

The preferred process used is the non-directive approach and the levels exposed to executive coaching comprise mainly the top executive teams in the company. In all cases external coaches were preferred and for specific reasons, e.g. confidentiality.

Although all the HR Directors felt that no special coaching programmes need to be implemented just for women and blacks they were, on the other hand, convinced that executive coaching will play a major role in the successful development of black executives.

The future of executive coaching seems to be promising as all companies indicated that executive coaching constitutes part of their future plans; a need however exists to regulate such coaching to protect the reputation of the industry and to assist companies to identify the coaches to be hired.

5.5 Recommendations

In analysing the research results and literature review the following recommendations are made:

5.5.1 Regulation of Executive Coaching

It was indicated by some of the HR Directors that a number of unscrupulous operators operate as executive coaches, and I quote: "*Executive coaching is a very daunting process to manage as a number of coaches approach us to sell their services. They have a very varied approach and you can find high touch approaches to coaching by e-mail*". I would recommend that a governing body be formed to regulate the industry and to license coaches according to an accreditation system. This will protect the industry, create clear development paths for future coaches and will make it much easier for companies to select the proper coaches.

5.5.2 Development of Black Executives

All HR Directors were in agreement that executive coaching will facilitate the development of future black leaders. With the BEE requirements pressurising companies to promote blacks it would be in the interest of all, and of the future of South Africa, that the government incentivise companies to spend money on the leadership development of black executives through executive coaching.

5.5.3 Measuring of Effectiveness of Executive Coaching

All HR Directors agree that executive coaching is an effective leadership development tool, but nobody can prove this scientifically. It is recommended that a scientific tool is identified or developed to measure the effectiveness of executive coaching and provided to all companies which make use of such coaching to measure its success. Such a tool which can scientifically prove that executive coaching is effective will add value to the industry and will demonstrate the worth of executive coaching as a leadership development tool.

The researcher specifically recommends that the effect of executive coaching on emotional maturity is researched. Emotional maturity is very effectively used to measure the development of leadership in organisations and would therefore lend itself to be used in the measurement of the effectiveness of Executive coaching.

5.6 Concluding Remarks.

This study was challenging and it was surprising to find that virtually all the companies that were contacted make use of Executive coaching. It was clear that everybody felt that Executive coaching was a useful executive development

tool and that a need exist to ensure the professionalism of the industry. Further studies in this field will definitely benefit the whole industry and can ensure the future viability of the Executive coaching profession.

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Annexure 1

This questionnaire is purely a guideline for interviewing purposes.

Questions to be asked of HR Directors.

Biographical information.

Name.....

Age.....

Race.....

Sex.....

Positional title.....

Questions about executive coaching.

Does your company use executive coaching or any type of coaching?

If yes, can you explain the following?

What is your definition of executive coaching?

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How do you measure the effectiveness of executive coaching in your organisation?

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How effective would you rate executive coaching as a leadership development tool?

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When and for what purpose would you use executive coaching?

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Do you have a budget for executive coaching? How do you budget for EC?

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What levels in the organisation are involved?

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Could you give a brief description of the processes and types of coaching that are used?

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Do you use external or internal coaches? Please explain why, and if you use both, on which levels and for what purpose are they used?

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Do you train your own coaches, and if yes how is this done and which institutions do you make use of?

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When choosing a coach what selection criteria is used?

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Does your company do any specific cross-cultural coaching; please explain how this is done?

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Does your company cater for female coaching specifically; if yes how is this done?

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What are your future plans with executive coaching: are you going to extend it or curtail it; are there specific initiatives planned?

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If you do not make use of coaching do you plan to develop executive coaching in the future, please explain your answer?

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Do you think executive coaching can play a role in the development of black executives for the future?

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Annexure 2

Questions to be asked of coachees.

Name.....

Position.....

Age.....

Sex.....

Race.....

How long have you been involved with a coach?

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Can you explain the process that was followed by your coach?

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What would you think are the benefits of this coaching relationship?

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What are the drawbacks of this coaching relationship?

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How did this coaching relationship help you to improve your own productivity and effectiveness?

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Is your coach external or internal? What would you prefer and why?

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Are you happy with the experience and background of your coach, please explain?

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What personal benefits did you derive from this coaching relationship?

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How did you feel about the fact that your company is paying a coach to help you to develop your leadership skills?

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