

# Managerial Coaching: A Review of the Empirical Literature and Development of a Model to Guide Future Practice

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## Abstract

### The Problem.

While managerial coaching becomes increasingly popular in both scholarly and practical circles, the line managers who need to execute this coaching may be neither capable nor interested in the coaching process. Furthermore, while the research on coaching seems promising, little is known about how to test the individual and environmental appropriateness of a coaching intervention.

### The Solution.

This review will inform and support evidence-based human resource development (HRD) professionals tasked with developing managers' coaching capability. It is designed to help line managers who wish to enhance their managerial coaching practice.

### The Stakeholders.

This literature review and model will benefit organizations, HRD professionals, and line managers to determine whether coaching is an appropriate learning intervention for their context and at that particular time. Furthermore, if it is deemed appropriate,

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this review and resulting framework may aid in determining how practitioners should approach coaching within their organizational setting.

**Keywords**

managerial coaching, literature review, coaching modes, integrated coaching model

**The Research Problem**

As with other forms of coaching discussed in this special issue, managerial coaching has grown rapidly over the past 10 years. While welcome, this growth should not be viewed as unproblematic. One of the major weaknesses of managerial coaching, as with other forms of coaching, is the lack of empirical evidence (Hagen, 2012) demonstrating the impact this form of coaching has on individual and/or organizational learning and performance. Amid the absence of research support, organizations, managers, and employees have been presented normative and idealized notions about coaching. Such optimistic framing of managerial coaching may underplay the challenges managers and their direct reports encounter, resulting in unhelpful learning experiences. In addition, unlike executive coaching, which is commonly a discrete role, line managers (at all levels) have a number of roles to play. Concurrently, some managers may welcome opportunities to support their employees' learning and development; however, others may view it as a "training burden," or may lack the competence, confidence, and appropriate behaviors (A. E. Ellinger, Hamlin, & Beattie, 2008) to undertake this key human resource development (HRD)-related activity.

The purpose of this article is to provide an integrated review of the literature on managerial coaching. Unlike past reviews, it is based predominantly on empirical studies that have been carried out in corporate, public, and third-sector organizations in several national contexts. The epistemological perspectives adopted by the various researchers have included inductive, deductive, and abductive approaches adding to the reliability and validity of our conclusions. We then present an integrated model based on this review that we have developed to inform and support evidence-based HRD professionals tasked with developing managers' coaching capability, and helping line managers who wish to enhance their managerial coaching practice. This framework can be used by organizations, HRD professionals, and line managers to determine whether coaching is an appropriate learning intervention for their context and at that particular time. Furthermore, if it is deemed appropriate, it may also aid them determine how to approach coaching within their organizational setting. Finally, we identify gaps in the field and propose avenues for further research.

The main aim of the article is to provide HRD academics and practitioners with a body of empirical evidence that they can use to make the case for managerial coaching (Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2009), while acknowledging the challenges and limitations associated with it.

## Managerial Coaching Modes

Managerial coaching can take place in multiple contexts, applying various skills and behaviors. Operational definitions of coaching, and appropriate settings and frameworks are provided.

### *Defining Managerial Coaching*

There are many variants of coaching practice in business and organizational contexts, as this issue demonstrates. In an attempt to bring some clarity to the field, Hamlin, Ellinger, and Beattie (2008) conducted a comprehensive literature review and identified 37 coaching definitions. Based on an analysis of the definitional descriptions, purposes, and processes of the supposed (and claimed) different types of coaching reported in various literatures, they identified four broad categories (variants) that they labeled “coaching,” “executive coaching,” “business coaching,” and “life coaching.” The coaching process found to be common to all four variants was that of providing *help* to individuals, groups, and organizations through some form of *facilitation* activity or intervention. And held in common to all variants was “the explicit and implicit intention of helping individuals to improve their performance in various domains, and to enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, and personal growth” (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 291). The only significant differences between the variants were related to focus and emphasis. In the case of “life coaching,” some personal growth aims were intentionally extended to include life-changing experiences. Whereas “business coaching” had been conceptualized as a collaborative process that holistically helped businesses, owner/managers, and employees to achieve their personal and business-related goals, “executive coaching” was primarily a one-to-one relationship between a coach and an executive (or manager) with the focus on achieving personal-job- or organizational-related goals with an intention to improve organizational performance. In contrast, the focus and emphasis of “coaching” were “. . . to improve existing skills, competence and performance, and to enhance personal effectiveness or personal development or personal growth” (Hamlin et al., 2008, p. 295), which we argue is the type of coaching conducted not only by self-styled “professional” executive, business, and life coaches but also by HRD professionals and line managers to a greater or lesser extent. For line managers who actively engage in coaching activities, which we term “managerial coaching,” the focus tends to be mainly on improving the skills, competence, and performance. And it is this emphasis on the interaction between coaching and performance that has been a central focus of much academic research (e.g., A. D. Ellinger, Ellinger, Hamlin, & Beattie, 2010; Hagen, 2012; Kim, Egan, Kim, & Kim, 2013).

Just as there are variants of coaching, there are also variants of managerial coaching, labeled as “hierarchical,” “peer,” “team,” and “cross-organizational” as follows:

## *Hierarchical Coaching*

Hierarchical coaching mainly involves line managers coaching their own subordinates. It is the most well-known form of managerial coaching and the most widely researched. Over the past 5 years, in the United Kingdom, this variant of coaching has featured consistently in the annual Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Learning and Talent Development survey as one of the most, if not the most, effective form of learning and development in organizations. Based on 601 organizations, the CIPD (2011) survey found coaching by line managers to be the second most effective form of learning and that there had been incremental increases over the previous 2 years. Its application was most associated with performance management (43%) and leadership development (33%), though in conjunction with forms of mentoring it supported the development of “international managers” (43%). In terms of future development, nearly half of the surveyed organizations expected hierarchical and other variants of managerial coaching would become increasingly integrated with organizational development (OD) and performance management to drive organizational change.

These U.K. findings support the earlier and more focused research instigated by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Based on a survey of 129 key informants who had been identified as coaching experts within European organizations, EFMD/EMCC (2009) found that (a) the five biggest benefits were “improved performance,” “motivation,” “team cohesion,” “retention,” and “conflict resolution,” and (b) the group of employees most likely to receive coaching were managers themselves or individuals identified with potential as part of the organization’s talent pipeline. However, although many of the organizations reported that line managers were considered to be effective coaches, the researchers queried whether some overconfidence had been demonstrated because only 53% of the organizations had trained their managerial coaches, and only 20% had received support through coaching supervision. A structural weakness identified by the researchers was that less than two fifths of the respondent organizations employed someone to coordinate the coaching activities, and they postulated that this may have meant that the organizations had not been as serious about creating a coaching culture as they had purported. Only 11% believed coaching was organizationally embedded, with just a further 23% reporting it was strategic; 67% of respondents said that their coaching culture was only nascent or tactical (i.e., ad hoc and low-level). These factors may in turn have contributed to the finding that around 75% of the problems regarding coaching in these organizations were said to be “lack of support,” “inadequate coaching skills,” and “lack of understanding.” Consequently, three areas of improvement were recommended as follows: (a) the creation of a systematic approach to coaching; (b) the provision of training, peer coaching, and supervision for managerial coaches to improve their coaching skills and behaviors; and (b) increased evaluation of coaching activities to assess the value for money. We suggest that if these recommendations go unheeded by the HRD profession (see also Hamlin et al., 2009) then it will lead to a weakening of its own case for increased managerial coaching within organizations.

A key aspect of effective coaching is ensuring that managers have appropriate skills and demonstrate facilitative behaviors within their respective coaching relationships. However, what are these skills and behaviors? Until recently, we have had to rely on normative literature providing anecdotal lists of common sense managerial coaching behaviors. However, this gap has been addressed by the work of Hamlin, Ellinger, and Beattie (2006) who conducted a meta-analysis of a range of empirical studies into managerial coaching behavior. These studies included A. D. Ellinger's (2003) and A. D. Ellinger and Bostrom's (1999, 2002) work into coaching within the U.S. corporate sector; R. S. Beattie's (2002, 2006, 2007) work into line manager's behaviors supporting workplace learning in Scottish nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and Hamlin's (2004, 2005) various studies of perceived managerial and leadership effectiveness across the English public sector. While these authors initially worked independently, they asked similar research questions of their respective research populations and used similar data collection methods. However, they used different data analysis tools, including content analysis and open coding, manager profile analysis, grounded theory, and factor analysis. Despite these analytical differences, they were able to corroborate each other's findings, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of each study and contributing to the slowly growing body of "best-evidence" in support of evidence-based coaching. Their corroborated findings found common themes for behaviors associated with the effective facilitation of learning, which included *creating a learning environment, caring and supporting staff, providing feedback, communicating, and providing resources including other people*. Indeed, the commonalities across their respective findings were so similar that even the language used by their respective research respondents in different organizational contexts and countries were replicated almost verbatim in some instances. For example, in response to questions regarding the respondent's managerial role in providing feedback to their employees, two stated,

I see that as holding the mirror—a reflection of what has just taken place. (A. D. Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999, p. 763)

I genuinely do endeavor to be a mirror and reflect back at him. (R. S. Beattie, 2002, p. 412)

A summary of two different perspectives of behavior identified by Hamlin et al. (2006), interpersonal and cognitive, are summarized in Table 1.

Such were the strengths of these coaching relationships at both the interpersonal and cognitive levels that a number of (managers acting as) coaches reported learning from and with their staff; an activity which could be described as upward coaching where the dyadic relationship is sufficiently strong and the coach managers sufficiently confident that they will accept coaching from their subordinates. The meta-analysis also revealed from the perspective of both managers and employee that when done well, managerial (hierarchical) coaching produces very powerful results for individuals and organizations, including increased confidence, improved communication,

**Table 1.** Interpersonal and Cognitive Perspectives.

	A. D. Ellinger and Bostrom (1999)	R. S. Beattie (2002)	Hamlin (2004)
Interpersonal	Stepping into other to shift perspectives, i.e., empathy	Caring—support, encouragement, approachable, reassurance, commitment, empathy	Genuine concerns for people/ looks after the interests and development needs of staff
Cognitive	Broadening employees' perspectives—getting them to see things differently Empowerment	Thinking—reflective and prospective Empowerment	Empowerment and delegation

enhanced team working, quicker induction, and reduced stress. Indeed, Hamlin et al. (2006) concluded from their study that “truly effective managers and managerial leaders are those who embed effective coaching into the heart of their management practice” (p. 326). Interestingly, recent research into the role of line managers in supporting employee health and well-being has found similar results (Barrio, 2012). However, based on management research in the field of nursing, education, and management, Kroth and Keeler (2009) argued that contemporary managerial strategies and models do not adequately address the importance of caring between managers and employee. Indeed, as A. E. Ellinger et al. (2008) found from their studies, even good coaching managers can sometimes be overcontrolling and communicate less effectively when under pressure.

### Peer Coaching

Exploring the links between individual and organizational learning across sectors, McDougall and Beattie (1997, 1998) found that during times of personal and organizational change, individuals organically developed learning dyads. Building on the seminal work of Kram and Isabella (1985), they identified these relationships as three different forms of peer mentoring reflecting the relative depth of the dyadic interaction and labeled them as “information peer,” “utilitarian,” and “holistic.” In retrospect, having recently read the work of Goldman, Wesner, and Karnchanomai (2013), on reciprocal peer coaching, the relationships labeled as utilitarian mentoring could be regarded more appropriately as examples of peer coaching because they had arisen from individual employees (usually managers) learning from each other about a specific task. McDougall and Beattie (1997) found that learning dyads formed naturally between individuals who shared the same values. For example, in the words of one respondent, “We share the same philosophies about the job, not necessarily shared by other people” (McDougall & Beattie, 1997, p. 430). Many of these dyads involved managers from different professional backgrounds learning from each other. For example, nursing managers learning about different perspectives on care from those with social care backgrounds and vice versa. As one respondent said, “He’s not wiser, I’m not wiser—we have a different view . . . makes sure we see something from a standpoint we wouldn’t normally occupy” (McDougall & Beattie, 1997, p. 430). The

genesis of many of these utilitarian peer coaching relationships was through getting to know one another organically at formal organizational events such as in-house training courses and management meetings. The most frequently reported benefit of such relationships was that they were able to share concerns about people management issues which they could not share with staff, and/or staff problems which they did not necessarily want to share with their own line manager in case it made them appear weak. By being able to share their problems, these managers had “a safety valve” which reduced their stress, another valuable outcome.

The difference between the identified utilitarian peer coaching relationships and the more holistic mentoring relationships was that the latter went beyond work issues. For example, they involved discussion of family and other personal issues; many led to long-term friendships. McDougall and Beattie (1997) argued that apart from being supportive of such learning relationships, organizations should not become directly involved. However, although holding to the view that holistic relationships cannot be “manufactured,” R. Beattie and Crossan (2013) have found examples of utilitarian peer coaching being established by the employer.<sup>1</sup>

### *Team Coaching*

Managerial coaching of teams in organizations is probably the type of workplace coaching that bears closest resemblance to coaching that originated in the world of sport. Furthermore, team coaching is potentially the most challenging for line managers. Here, goals or targets must be developed and agreed; team members need to be ideally placed in their best role (i.e., play their “best positions”) to complement others; regular feedback must be provided; and, hardest of all, the manager must manage the dynamics between team members. Ironically, although team coaching by line managers in organizations is closest in form to the sporting origins of coaching, it is relatively under-researched and practiced (EFMD/EMCC, 2009). Hagen and Aguilar (2012) have explored the relationship between “coaching expertise,” “project difficulty,” and “team performance outcomes” on “team learning outcomes” within the context of Six Sigma projects conducted by High Performance Work Teams (HPWTs) in the corporate sector. Brady (2005) had previously found that the team leaders, known as “Black Belts” had only received training in the tools of Six Sigma, with no coverage of soft skills (such as coaching) for people management and development, whereas Hagen (2010) had also earlier identified that there as a significant gap in our understanding of Six Sigma coaching.

A particular strength of Hagen and Aguilar’s (2012) study is that it explored the relationship from the perspectives of both team leaders and team members, as well as looking at the contribution of coaching to quality management which is generally team orientated. They hypothesized and confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between the team leader’s coaching expertise and team learning outcomes. Their second hypothesis linking the team leader’s willingness and ability to empower their teams was also confirmed, which supports the findings of R. S. Beattie (2002) and A. D. Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller (2003). They concluded that “the way a team

is managed impacts the learning that takes place within that team” (p. 379), and confirmed the value of managers delegating challenging work to enhance learning outcomes (see also R. S. Beattie, 2002). Hagen and Aguilar (2012) argued that key lessons for leadership development had emerged from their research, that their results confirmed Hamlin et al.’s (2006) contention that generic models of managerial and leadership effectiveness existed, and that a number of the traits, skills, and behaviors essential for effective management and leadership were among the attributes of those individuals “who could be considered to be effective managerial coaches” (p. 308). They claimed that their study added to the body of evidence supporting the case for coaching as a key activity of management and leadership. And they concluded that their results had confirmed the concept that if leaders invest in supporting learning within their teams there is more likelihood that team members will have opportunities to learn and ultimately improve performance.

As well as contributing to coaching team theory, Hagen and Aguilar (2012) also made recommendations for improving practice. These included providing team leaders with learning and development in coaching and team empowerment so that they are more capable of implementing coaching and empowerment into their normal team leadership actions, and to recruit and select team leaders who are capable of or have the potential to exhibit managerial coaching practices.

### *Cross-Organizational Coaching*

Cross-organizational coaching is a relatively new development and involves coaching activities that have resulted from collaboration between two or more organizations. For example, as part of a wider middle-management leadership development program, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) in partnership with three local employers has developed a “cross-organizational coaching initiative” (COCI).

This program involves middle managers from two public sector organizations—a local authority (Greenacres) and a health board (Scotia)—and from a private sector organization—a bank (FocusDirect)—being matched with one another as coaches. While the three organizations are operating in very different sectors, their common HRD requirement is to develop a total of 50 middle managers who are key to the delivery of current and future strategy. Furthermore, each organization is currently undergoing transformational change, particularly in response to current economic and political pressures. The program was developed by HRD academics (Mains, MacLean, & Beattie, 2012) working in partnership with senior HRD professionals from the respective organizational partners; this is a good example of faculty and practitioner collaboration. One of the first vital tasks was to make a business case to each organization’s senior management to gain support. Second, senior management needed reassurance that confidences shared within learning dyads went no further; fortunately, none of the organizations were competitive or this may have been a more challenging issue.

COCI, the coaching element of this leadership development program, involves managers from one organization matched into a coaching relationship with managers

from one of the other organizations. Although these dyadic relationships may be based on hierarchy, many of the managers are at equivalent levels within their respective organizations and thus engage in peer coaching. While organizations in the National Health Service and local authorities are expected to increasingly work in partnership, Greenacres and Scotia do not share common geographical territory, so none of the interprofessional rivalries that have blighted some other utilitarian peer coaching initiatives (see R. Beattie & Crossan, 2013) have been an issue here. Senior HRD/OD managers at participating organizations have stated that some of the key drivers for becoming involved in this innovative HRD program included “providing additional leadership development opportunities” and “increasing the skills and knowledge of our people.” Even though the program is still in its pilot phase, an initial evaluation study by R. Beattie, Mains, MacLean, and Masson (2013) has provided positive results and some lessons to improve future programs.

For the benefit of organizations and HRD professionals considering such cross-organizational learning, the more prominent and popular benefits of cross-organizational coaching are presented here. These were considered to relate to getting an opportunity to expand knowledge and learning outside of their own organization and sector. Of the options provided, the highest perceived benefits were (a) access to wider experience (81%), (b) allowing sharing of best practice (78%), (c) gaining access to information regarding other organization’s approaches (75%), (d) access to fresh ideas (72%), and (e) the overall opportunity to develop knowledge of other organizations/sectors (66%). Over half of the responding managers (57%) considered networking opportunities to be a key benefit, with one manager considering “Potential collaborations for new outcomes” to be a possibility. In addition, 53% of the managers viewed the opportunity to apply skills within a different setting, and support from an objective, independent individual as benefits to the initiative. Indeed, one manager stated that “Provided ‘trust’ has been established—[it is an] opportunity to share ideas/issues and discuss challenges” and “use as a sounding board.”

One of the biggest challenges with any dyadic learning relationship is how to *match* the learning partners; and in the case of coaching between organizations, this is even more complicated. With regard to the COCI, a significant majority of managers (91%) rated the matching positively (47% very effective, 44% effective). The matching strategy involved managers exchanging short biographies highlighting both their strengths and learning needs, followed by the opportunity to meet at a social occasion marking the official launch of the leadership program. In relation to the matching process itself, the specific aspects rated positively by the vast majority of managers were as follows: commitment to the coaching initiative (97%) and personal/professional values (94%) were considered to be most effective, closely followed by the learning styles (91%) and personality (91%) of the coach. However, an occasional concern was expressed with one respondent indicating “Some uncertainty as to personality match” in relation to their pairing. Complementary objectives in the matching process were considered to be effective by 84% of managers. Complementary job roles were considered to be effective by 78% of managers. However, this element of the matching process attracted the highest rating for perceived ineffectiveness, with the remaining 22% of managers

rating it as ineffective or very ineffective. Clearly, as with previous research into learning relationships, the sharing of values was significant in determining the initial match and its ultimate effectiveness.

## **Gaps in Managerial Coaching Evidence**

While all of the modes of managerial coaching above could still benefit greatly from further empirical research, three particular aspects of managerial coaching have been identified by the authors as significant gaps. These are, “virtual” or “e-coaching,” “cross-cultural coaching,” and the interaction between “demographic variables” and coaching efficacy.

### *Virtual or E-Coaching*

E-learning has pervaded many learning processes in recent years. Therefore, a key question is whether e-coaching is a viable and appropriate learning intervention. However, to date there has been limited empirical work exploring this mode of coaching. Although something of a generalization, it could be argued that Baby Boomers will be reluctant to be coached virtually given their preference for face-to-face communication. While by contrast GEN Y learners will be comfortable with such an approach given they have grown up with technology and engage in many of their relationships virtually through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Acknowledging that these are generalizations, they could impede intergenerational coaching because currently, in the labor force, many line managers are Baby Boomers supervising GEN Y employees. However, another area of research that may examine such intergenerational issues might be upward coaching or reverse managerial coaching by a manager’s direct reports.

One organization, which has integrated technology and coaching for learning and development, is IBM through their IBM Connections for new employees program (IBM, 2004). This blended program involves e-learning modules, half-day training workshops, executive communications, on-the-job coaching, and mentoring. Clearly, their employees are comfortable with technology but even here e-learning was combined with face-to-face learning interventions “to help set employee skill development in motion, cultivate initiative and harness efforts to the corporate mission” (IBM, 2004, p. 9). Furthermore, this use of coaching, alongside other learning interventions, provides an example of employee transition, in this case induction and socialization, identified by A. D. Ellinger (2003) as a catalyst for coaching.

### *Multicultural/Cross-Cultural Coaching*

A significant gap in the managerial coaching literature is examining its practice and impact outside of Western countries. A pioneering study by Kim, Egan, Kim, & Kim (2013) in the South Korean public sector organization found a strong relationship between coaching, job satisfaction, and role clarity which are some of the antecedents

for employee engagement. Less strong relationships, but nevertheless connections, were found between coaching, career commitment, organizational commitment, and job performance. Building on this study, Kim, Egan, and Moon (2013) undertook substantial research through large-scale surveys, comparing coaching and employee outcomes across public organizations within South Korea and the United States. One of the main drivers for this research was the lack of research into coaching in eastern cultures; the researchers wanted to explore whether the significant sociocultural differences between the United States and South Korea had any impact on the relationships between coaching and the antecedents to employee engagement. They found significant commonalities, however these presented with subtle nuances. U.S. and Korean respondents who felt they received positive managerial coaching were clearer about their role, felt more satisfied, and “outperformed respondents . . . who had a perception that their managerial coaching was limited” (Kim, Egan, & Moon, 2013, p. 18). Kim, Egan, and Moon also observed that there were almost identical amounts of managerial coaching received across both countries despite the differences in national culture (e.g., low power distance vs. high power distance). While, almost surprising, to find such similarities the authors noted that the findings for some of the interactions between variables were somewhat less significant in the Korean data, particularly in relation to role clarity and performance. The authors acknowledged that this may be a result of a methodological limitation with one factor inadvertently dominating another. Alternatively, it may be explained by sociocultural differences. For example, communication modes tend to differ between these cultures. In a strong eastern culture such as South Korea, “cultural homogeneity promotes confidence in the unspoken languages, less descriptive and indirect communication skills, and avoiding confrontation” (Kim, Egan, & Moon, 2013, p. 19). In the United States, a more diverse society than South Korea, “cultural heterogeneity encourages the active use of verbal skills, explicit and direct communication, and confrontation” (p. 19) and clearly impacts the nature of learning relationships. Another potential sociocultural difference suggested by the authors as a possible explanation for the subtle differences relates to Hofstede’s (2001) uncertainty–certainty dimension. In case of this research, South Korea falls into a high uncertainty avoidance preference, while the United States by contrast falls into a low uncertainty avoidance. This means that U.S. managers and employees may be more willing to take risks. Kim, Egan, and Moon acknowledge that these are only potential explanations and that there is a need for further investigation to drill down into these differences.

Furthermore, it is pleasing to note that Kim, Egan, and Moon (2013), when calling for further research into the transfer of results related to effective coaching from the United States, noted the need to undertake this “with careful consideration of indigenous cultural characteristics” (p. 21). As well as arguing for more research into coaching across and within different cultures, Kim, Egan, and Moon suggested a related gap in the literature: the use of coaching to support and develop multicultural teams, an increasing phenomenon given globalization. This would be particularly useful for organizations with geographical responsibilities, for example, United Nations, European Union, African Union, ASEAN, as well as multinational corporations.

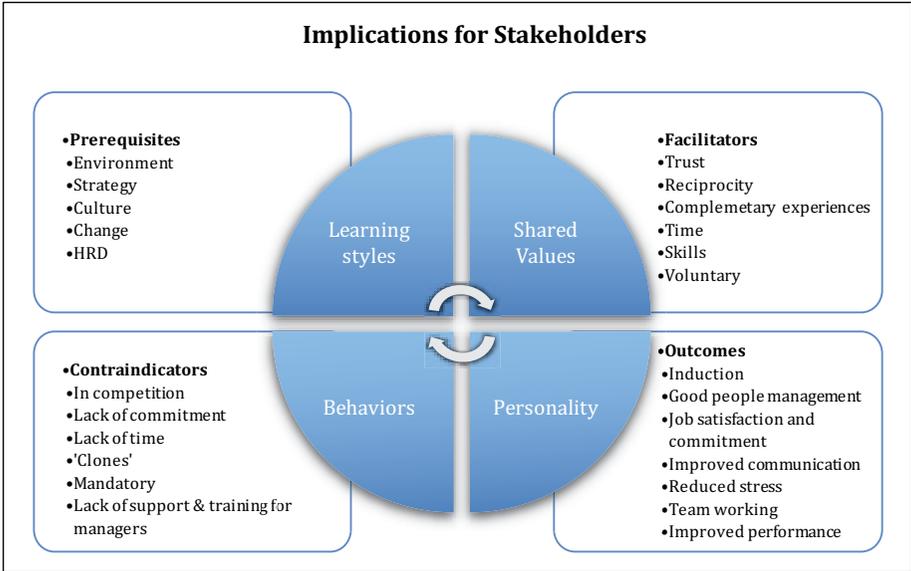
Perhaps Kim and Egan's (2011) work on multicultural mentoring within higher education might provide us with a starting baseline.

### *Demographic Variables*

Compared with the mentoring literature, there is a relative paucity of research into the interaction of demographic variables such as gender, age, race, intergenerational, and cross-cultural teams. The first two variables were considered, as part of a wider piece of research, exploring the relationship between coaching and leadership by Anderson (2013). However, coaching and leadership scholars need to build on her work to explore these interactions with greater breadth and depth. Furthermore, A. D. Ellinger, Beattie, and Hamlin (2014) report on Anderson's (2013) research which examined the factors that affect managers' propensity to assume coaching roles; Anderson found that leader–team relationships and occupational self-efficacy were predictive of managerial coaching behaviors, thus underscoring the importance of relationships and self-efficacy. This suggests that there are a wider range of theoretical lens and behavioral instruments available, than have been used to date. These can be utilized to further our understanding of the managerial coaching process and the behaviors required by the effective managerial coach.

As identified in our introduction, our main aim is to help key stakeholders make well-informed decisions regarding managerial coaching development and practice. Four key stakeholders involved in managerial coaching include (a) senior managers, who may sponsor the coaching program and who could act as coaching role models to their own direct reports; (b) line managers, who provide coaching to their direct reports and who may receive coaching from their own line managers; (c) individual employees, who should be only exposed to safe and competent coaching practice; and (d) HRD specialists within the organization, who should be considering the development needs of managerial coaches and who indeed themselves may act as coaches for line managers. With solid evidence of increased interest in managerial coaching research and practice, these stakeholders will benefit from our investigation and elaboration of current key literature. To assist these stakeholders, we present in this section a managerial coaching framework derived from the review of the empirical studies above to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of managerial coaching within (and between) organizations (see Figure 1). Finally, we present an agenda, for academics, HRD professionals, managers, and organizations, of the future research required to enhance our understanding and practice of coaching.

The center of our framework represents the coaching dyads and highlights four key variables central to the efficacy of the coaching relationship: complementary learning style profiles, shared values, exhibition of appropriate coaching and learning behaviors, and complementary personality traits, in effect the chemistry that “sparks” the relationship—this was stressed as critical by the participants in the cross-organizational program facilitated by GCU. All of these attributes have been identified as critical across the various modes of managerial coaching. The four outer quadrants represent other factors that organizations, and HRD specialists in particular, should



**Figure 1.** Characteristics of good coaching outcomes.  
 Note. HRD = human resource development.

consider when developing and implementing a coaching program. The first of these relates to prerequisites that represent environmental and strategic issues that need to be considered (e.g., is the organization’s culture ready for coaching given R. Beattie and Crossan, 2013, identified premature entry into coaching may be detrimental to its potential success). Indeed, we would advise HRD professionals engaged in building a business case for coaching to ensure it is underpinned by a robust environmental analysis, just as with any other HRD or business investment. The second quadrant presents factors that will facilitate coaching such as providing coaches with training and the time to coach, which we have found consistently in our studies and those of others such as the EMCC, is a key factor in those managerial coaching programs that are effective. The third quadrant represents contraindicators that have been identified in much of the coaching literature as limitations on or constraints of coaching (i.e., factors that might inhibit the efficacy of coaching such as lack of support from HRD or senior management for coaches and forcing people to participate either as coaches or coachees). Also in terms of matching, it is best to avoid individuals whose experience is too similar, as “clones” are less likely to learn from each other than from individuals with a different set of experiences. Lack of time is consistently raised by managers as preventing them from providing coaching to their staff; or is it an excuse to cover up other concerns they have about coaching? The final quadrant represents the potential outcomes of effective coaching, which can also be used to support a business case. These include outcomes, highlighted by some of the respondents to our empirical studies, such as increased job satisfaction and commitment, improved communication,

improved team working and reduced stress; and improved induction as identified by A. D. Ellinger (2003) and IBM (2004) all likely to contribute to improved individual, team, and organizational performance. We hope that by applying this framework as an analytical tool, or adapting it to make it fit-for-purpose, will enable all organizational stakeholders, including senior management, HRD specialists, and managers as coaches, to create and participate in a coaching system that fits the contingent needs of *their* organization.

## **Recommendations for Future Research and Practice**

Overall, the growing base of empirical research reported here supports the efficacy of managerial coaching and begins to address the pleas from scholars advocating for more comprehensive research that examines the antecedents or factors that influence managerial coaching, the skills and behaviors that managers possess and enact, factors that might influence the managerial coaching process, and the outcomes that emanate from such coaching (Batson & Yoder, 2012; Hagen, 2012). However, the apparent benefits of managerial coaching have been established primarily for those recipients of coaching. Future research should therefore examine the benefits that managers receive from serving as coaches, and being engaged in coaching relationships relative to their own learning and development (Gomez & Gunn, 2012). And, because there are likely drawbacks to managerial coaching, more research is needed to better understand its limitations within workplace contexts (A. D. Ellinger et al., 2014).

In terms of future research, all of the areas discussed above would still benefit from further empirical investigation, particularly in different organizational and international contexts. However, areas needing particular attention are highlighted here. First, much of the research above is based on case studies or one-off surveys, and while contributing to our knowledge of coaching, they have the limitations of being a snapshot in time. However, longitudinal research would enable scholars to explore the changing nature of coaching relationships over time: to identify key moments in the coaching life cycle, evaluate personal outcomes, and identify organizational outcomes. Second, research into the interaction between demographic variables including gender, race, educational background, and generations, would enhance the development and delivery of coaching programs within and across organizations. Third, with the growing use of technology in the workplace, research examining the benefits and limitations of e-coaching would help organizations determine whether to invest in this mode of coaching. It could of course be used as a blended learning strategy supporting face-to-face learning activities and would be particularly beneficial, to enhance the consistency of communication and learning, for organizations with a dispersed labor force and/or with global operations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly given globalization and the increasing diversity of organizational and national labor forces, investigations into the role of coaching to support cross-cultural *teams*, not just the individuals in such teams, would be most welcome.

In conclusion, we hope that this article has contributed to widening and deepening our empirical and theoretical understanding of managerial coaching. We look forward

to contributing to the above research agenda, as well as continuing the debate on the process and impact of managerial coaching with all the stakeholders involved.

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### Note

1. Full details of examples can be provided by the lead author Professor Rona S. Beattie.

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