THE MANAGER-COACH’S

ROLES AND SKILLS AS NEEDED TO

OPTIMISE THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF

WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Coaching has been identified as a primary means of enabling growth, development, retention and change amongst those employed in organisations. Executive and external coaching are the primary means of delivering this coaching, and, as a result, coaching often only reaches those at the most senior levels of the organisation. The use of the manager-coach in South African organisations is not widespread but coaching has been identified as a key component of effective leadership in the 21st century and it has been suggested that it is a key leadership style. This research therefore explores the roles that manager-coaches can play in an organisation as well as the skills required to optimise this role. This research therefore took place in an organisation that is implementing a manager-coach approach. Coupled with this was the concept of work-life balance and the realities that working women face in attempting to achieve work-life balance, with the primary objective of the research being to identify the roles and skills needed by the manager-coach to optimise the work-life balance of working women.

The data was gathered through face-to-face interviews and contact with a representative focus group and analysed by means of content and thematic analysis. A detailed literature review covering the areas of coaching, and in particular manager-coaching, what optimal work-life balance is as well as the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance was also conducted.

The findings show that, to optimise work-life balance in working women, the manager-coach plays a critical role in communicating with working women and optimising flexibility and choice for these women. In addition to this, the findings showed that the manager-coach plays a role in facilitating the growth and development of the women who report to them, as well as enabling their performance and providing recognition. The findings showed that these roles are enabled by manager-coach skills such as empathy, support and effective communication.

The research concludes by reflecting that the manager-coach has an important role to play in enabling choice and flexibility and the growth and development of working women and it is anticipated that this has a direct impact on both the work-life balance and the retention of these women in the workplace.
DECLARATION

I, Lynda Jane Gouveia, declare that this research report is my own original work. Where technical assistance was received, this has been reflected in the acknowledgements. This research report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Masters in Management in Business and Executive Coaching (University of the Witwatersrand Business School). No part of this research report has been previously submitted to this or any other institution for this or any other degree or examination. Where the work of others has been referred to, this has been referenced in accordance with University requirements.

__________________________________
Lynda Jane Gouveia

__________________________________
Date
DEDICATION

I firstly dedicate this to all the women who grapple with the daily challenges of balancing work and family and who, whilst striving to achieve and succeed, so often feel like they are not winning at all.

I would also like to dedicate this to my amazingly supportive husband and three children who understand these challenges and have encouraged me to pursue my dreams.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like thank my supervisor, Natalie Cunningham, for designing this Masters programme so I could embark on this journey of learning and discovery. I would also like to thank Natalie for her wisdom, encouragement and accessibility. It was a pleasure to be supervised by her.

I would like to thank all those who so willingly participated in interviews and the focus group. Their input was invaluable and the eagerness that they showed in sharing their thoughts and ideas with me was intensely rewarding.

I would especially like to thank my colleague Ilona for her continual support, her belief in me and her willingness to listen.

I would like to thank Julie Rathbone for her assistance with transcribing the interviews and focus group and Natalie Cunningham for her assistance in proof reading.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Abstract* ........................................................................................................................................... i

*Declaration* ........................................................................................................................................ ii

*Dedication* ........................................................................................................................................ iii

*Acknowledgements* ............................................................................................................................. iv

**Table of contents** ................................................................................................................................. v - x

List of tables ........................................................................................................................................... xi

List of figures .......................................................................................................................................... xi

List of graphs .......................................................................................................................................... xi

**Chapter 1: Introduction** ..................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 Purpose of study ............................................................................................................................... 1

1.2 Context of the study .......................................................................................................................... 1

1.3 Problem statement ........................................................................................................................... 3

1.3.1 Main research problem ............................................................................................................... 4

1.3.2 Sub-problems ............................................................................................................................. 4

1.4 Significance of the study ................................................................................................................ 4

1.1 Delimitations of the study .............................................................................................................. 6

1.6 Definition of terms .......................................................................................................................... 6

1.6.1 Manager-coach .......................................................................................................................... 6

1.6.2 Employees ................................................................................................................................ 7

1.6.3 Work-life balance ....................................................................................................................... 7

1.7 Assumptions .................................................................................................................................... 8

1.8 Structure of the report ...................................................................................................................... 9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2: Literature review</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Conceptual Framework or Paradigm</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Background discussion</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The manager-coach</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Research question 1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Coaching defined</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3 A comparison between external, internal and manager-coaching</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4 The manager-coach defined</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.5 The roles of the manager-coach</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.6 Manager-coach skills</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Understanding work-life balance</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 Research question 2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 Work-life balance</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Understanding the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 Research question 3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 Working woman’s reality</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Conclusion of literature review</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1 Research question 1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2 Research question 2</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.3 Research question 3</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Research methodology</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research design</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Population and sample</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Population</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Sample and sampling method........................................................................60
3.4 Research instrument..........................................................................................61
3.5 Procedure for data collection............................................................................62
3.6 Data analysis........................................................................................................62
3.7 Limitations of the study.....................................................................................65
3.8 Validity and reliability.......................................................................................65
  3.8.1 Validity.............................................................................................................66
  3.8.2 Reliability.........................................................................................................66

Chapter 4: Research Findings..................................................................................67
4.1 Introduction to the research findings.................................................................67
4.2 Interview questions.............................................................................................67
4.3 Respondent demographics................................................................................68
4.4 Findings for research question 1........................................................................71
  4.4.1 The roles of the manager-coach.................................................................71
    4.4.1.1 Communicating.....................................................................................72
      4.4.1.1.1 Communication............................................................................72
      4.4.1.1.2 Being present and showing interest............................................73
      4.4.1.1.3 Directing and collaborating.........................................................74
    4.4.1.2 Optimising flexibility and choice........................................................75
    4.4.1.3 Facilitating growth and development.................................................76
    4.4.1.4 Enabling performance and providing recognition..............................77
    4.4.1.5 Understanding the working woman....................................................78
    4.4.1.6 Goal setting, planning and aligning expectations...............................79
    4.4.1.7 Providing support.................................................................................79
    4.4.1.8 The regularity and informality of manager-coach conversations........79
    4.4.1.9 Building relationships and trust............................................................80
4.4.2 Manager-coach’s skills

4.4.2.1 Required manager-coach skills

4.4.2.2 Skills to develop further

4.4.2.3 Development approaches

4.5 Findings for research question 2: Optimal work-life balance

4.5.1 Optimal work-life balance

4.5.1.1 Support

4.5.1.2 Choices

4.5.1.3 Time

4.5.1.4 Flexibility

4.5.1.5 Balancing dual roles

4.5.1.6 Achieving happiness

4.5.1.7 Income and organisational level

4.6 Findings for research question 3: Realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance

4.6.1 Realities facing working women

4.6.1.1 Conflict

4.6.1.2 Need for achievement

4.6.1.3 Need for fulfilment and a sense of meaning

4.6.1.4 Guilt and sacrifice

4.6.1.5 Lack of time

4.6.1.6 The need to belong

4.6.1.7 Commitment to family

4.6.1.8 Switching off from work

4.7 Organisational culture as applied to manager-coaching and work-life balance

4.7.1 Creating a culture of work-life balance

4.7.2 The value of manager-coaching within the organisational context
4.7.3 Male-dominated environment.................................................................................98
4.7.4 The perceptions of woman and their traditional role.............................................98

Chapter 5: Analysis and discussion.................................................................................99

5.1 The roles and skills of the manager-coach.................................................................100
  5.1.1 The roles of the manager-coach.............................................................................100
    5.1.1.1 Communicating..............................................................................................101
    5.1.1.1.1 Communication.........................................................................................101
    5.1.1.1.2 Being present and showing interest.........................................................102
    5.1.1.1.3 Directing and collaborating.......................................................................102
    5.1.1.1.4 Understanding the working woman.......................................................104
  5.1.1.2 Optimising flexibility and choice......................................................................105
  5.1.1.3 Facilitating growth and development..............................................................106
  5.1.2 The skills of the manager-coach............................................................................107
    5.1.2.1 Communicating, listening and questioning..................................................108
    5.1.2.2 Showing empathy, care, understanding and interest.....................................110
    5.1.2.3 Providing support, feedback and training.....................................................111
    5.1.2.4 Being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction................111
    5.1.2.5 Showing openness, honesty and trust............................................................112
  5.1.3 The development of manager-coaches.................................................................113
  5.1.4 Overview – research question 1............................................................................113

5.2 Optimal work-life balance.........................................................................................114
  5.2.1 Support...............................................................................................................117
  5.2.2 Time and flexibility..............................................................................................118
  5.2.3 Choice..................................................................................................................119
  5.2.4 Balancing dual roles............................................................................................120
  5.2.5 Overview – Research question 2..........................................................................120
5.3 Understanding the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance
5.3.1 Conflict, guilt and sacrifice
5.3.2 The need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning
5.3.3 Overview – research question 3
5.4 Summary of findings

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations
6.1 Conclusion
6.2 Areas for future research
6.3 Recommendations

References

Appendix A – Letter to respondents
Appendix B – Actual research instrument
Appendix C – Transcripts (CD attached)
List of tables

Table 1: Summary of the roles of the manager-coach aligned to author..............................................22
Table 2: Summary of the skills of the manager-coach aligned to author................................................28
Table 3: Summary of the themes emerging from the literature on work-life balance and aligned to author.........................................................................................................................36
Table 4: Summary of the themes emerging from the literature on the working woman’s realities and aligned to author.................................................................................................................................45
Table 5: Profile of respondents..................................................................................................................60
Table 6: Role / level of management of respondents................................................................................61
Table 7: Respondent demographic information..........................................................................................69

List of figures

Figure 1: Coaching role, agenda and supervision (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006)........................................18
Figure 2: The spectrum of coaching skills (Downey 2003) ........................................................................26
Figure 3: The inferred connections between coaching, work-life balance and retention (Gouveia 2012)........................................................................................................................................116
Figure 4: The inferred connection between the research focus areas and the themes evident in the findings........................................................................................................................................126

List of graphs

Graph 1: Number of statements pertaining to the roles of the manager-coach.........................................71
Graph 2: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in communicating..........................................................72
Graph 3: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in communicating about personal issues in manager-coaching conversations.........................................................73
Graph 4: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in
directing and collaborating........................................................................................................................................74

Graph 5: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in enabling flexibility and choice........................................................................................................................................75

Graph 6: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in enabling performance and recognition........................................................................................................................................77

Graph 7: Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in understanding working women........................................................................................................................................78

Graph 8: Number of statements pertaining to the skills of the manager-coach........................................................................................................................................81

Graph 9: Number of statements pertaining to what optimal work-life balance means........................................................................................................................................84

Graph 10: Number of statements pertaining to support as a factor of optimal work-life balance........................................................................................................................................85

Graph 11: Number of statements pertaining to the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance........................................................................................................................................89

Graph 12: Number of statements pertaining to conflict as a reality facing working women attempting to achieve work-life balance........................................................................................................................................90

Graph 13: Number of statements pertaining to the lack of time as a reality facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance........................................................................................................................................92

Graph 14: Number of statements pertaining to the difficulties experienced in switching off from work as a reality facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance........................................................................................................................................94

Graph 15: Number of statements pertaining to organisational culture, manager-coaching and work-life balance........................................................................................................................................95

Graph 16: Number of statements pertaining to creating a culture of work-life balance........................................................................................................................................96

Graph 17: Number of statements pertaining to the value of manager-coaching........................................................................................................................................97

Graph 18: Percentage of statements made pertaining to the role of the manager-coach........................................................................................................................................100

Graph 19: Percentage of statements made pertaining to the skills of the manager-coach........................................................................................................................................108

Graph 20: Percentage of statements made pertaining to optimal work-life balance........................................................................................................................................114

Graph 21: Percentage of statements made pertaining to the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance........................................................................................................................................121