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The Manager as Coach Role: A Strategy to Enhance Performance in Organizational Life

by

Richard K. Ladyshevsky, Curtin University of Technology

Send correspondence to Richard K. Ladyshevsky, Graduate School of Business, Curtin University of Technology, 78 Murray Street, Perth 6000 Western Australia (rick.ladyshevsky@gsb.curtin.edu.au) +61 08 9266 3832 (phone) +61 08 9266 3368 (fax)

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The Manager as Coach Role: A Strategy to Enhance Performance in Organizational Life

**Associate Professor Richard K. Ladyshevsky
Graduate School of Business
Curtin University of Technology**

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Preface

The focus of this working paper is to report on two specific problem questions related to coaching in the work place. Coaching is becoming a popular management device to increase productivity and manage performance in organisations. However, there is a tension between being a manager and a coach. The former uses authority to ensure performance is appropriate for achievement of the organisation's goals. The latter uses influence and learning as the strategy for ensuring performance is appropriate for the achievement of the organisation's goals. The questions that emerge from this tension, therefore, are how does the manager as coach (MAC) build a relationship with his/her staff to promote learning and performance whilst ensuring organisational productivity? The second question, which is related to the first, is what factors influence the MAC relationship to yield positive outcomes. So the 'how' and 'what' of the MAC role is the focus of this paper.

Answering these questions stems from the analysis of a case study related to this topic, the nature of which is described later in this paper. The literature on coaching and the MAC, and some of its related sub-components such as trust and emotional intelligence are considered along with literature on performance management (PM) and performance appraisal. An overview of this literature assists in understanding the context in which the MAC must operate. Performance management, whilst oriented towards development, is also situated within a control based context. Similarly, the MAC role, is also oriented towards development, but is situated within an operational role called 'the manager', which is also a control based position. Managing this paradox between development versus control and the skills required to do so, are necessary for optimising the MAC role and the potential outcomes through the performance management process.

The outcomes of this work suggest that the MAC role continues to evade many managers, thus indicating a significant training need for this cohort. Other managers, in contrast, appear to have grasped the competencies associated with this role, and are implementing them successfully, with good results, in the workplace. Further support and development of this cohort to further develop their MAC would also be warranted.

The implications of this work suggest that there is still further room to further develop the MAC role in organizations and to improve the performance management process.

Introduction

Coaching is one of those managerial practices that everyone agrees is important, and yet most people will only have one or two bosses in their entire career who takes coaching seriously, and this is especially true when you become a manager yourself... As a manager, having a coach/mentor can make a real difference in your performance.” (Longenecker and Neubert 2005)

Coaching within the business context has received considerable press in the literature over the past decade (Thach 2002) and is increasingly becoming embedded into business practice (Longenecker and Neubert 2005) as a strategy to improve business performance (Baek-Kyoo 2005). Staff development units, consulting organisations and coaching associations have grown in number to provide this service (Hall, Otazo, and Hollenbeck 1999). Research suggests that coaching does boost organisational productivity (D'Abate, Eddy, and Tannenbaum 2003) particularly in organizations where PM and coaching are used, as opposed to performance appraisal (Goleman 2000; Lindbom 2007; Yu 2007; Olivero, Bane, and Kopelman 1997).

The definitions of mentoring, coaching and other constructs that describe ‘developmental interactions’ have been reviewed in the literature (D'Abate, Eddy, and Tannenbaum 2003) as they often overlap in their descriptions. Developmental interactions involve two or more people with the goal of personal and/or professional development. These developmental interactions can take a variety of forms ranging from coaching, mentoring and apprenticeship through to action learning and tutoring. These interactions may occur in a brief manner (e.g. when a coach provides information and advice in a one-time exchange) or in a long-term relationship (e.g. in-depth mentorship). What is clear from the literature is that there is considerable overlap in how individuals define the range of developmental interactions that can take place between individuals in the workplace.

There is certainly no consensus on a definition of coaching and to ease this ambiguity researchers have developed a taxonomy of six categories, with a total of 22 sub-categories describing developmental interactions (D'Abate, Eddy, and Tannenbaum 2003). For coaching, many of the taxonomic sub-categories are shared with other developmental interactions, although teaching was a particular component linked to coaching. Coaching is considered a short-term developmental interaction focussed on performance, goal setting, providing practical application, feedback and teaching ((D'Abate, Eddy, and Tannenbaum 2003). Coaching can also be performance-based, focussing on improvements in specific and practical issues, or in-depth, which explores issues at a deeper level by examining core values and motivations (Thach 2002).

In the context of management and organizations, coaching is becoming a popular organisational development strategy that focuses on changing the relationship between manager and employee (Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller 2003). The purpose of coaching in this context is designed to help employees consider how they might work and behave differently, with more effective behaviors that produce better work related outcomes (Wakefield 2006). This focus is inextricably linked to PM systems whereby the effectiveness of such systems relies on the managers' communication and coaching skills (Wood and Marshall 1993) in transforming employee behaviour and performance.

A distinction for the purposes of this working paper must also be made between developmental and executive coaching. The former focuses on managers helping employees address individual functional knowledge gaps and skills, the MAC role, whereas the latter is more about changing behaviours in managerial leadership (Yu 2007; Baek-Kyoo 2005). Employee coaching by the manager is a process where opportunities for an individual to gain insights into their performance takes place (London 2003). The aim here is guiding and inspiring employees to improve their work. Employee coaching is also considered to be a core managerial skill which involves effective and open communication, a team focus, valuing people over task, and accepting the ambiguous nature of the working environment for the purpose of developing employees and improving performance (McLean et al. 2005). A distinction is also made between 'performance management' and 'performance appraisal'. The former focuses on improving performance through the MAC relationship. The latter is more focussed on measuring or evaluating performance against a set of key indicators or specific duties (Wood and Marshall 2008). While the manager must still 'appraise' performance, the development and upskilling of deficits, or elevating strengths further, flows from the MAC in the PM relationship.

The Manager as Coach

The concept of the MAC has been developed in the literature since the 1980s (McLean et al. 2005) although the role of the MAC was noted by MacGregor (1957 cited in (Wood and Marshall 1993). The MAC is seen as a strategy to change the relationship between a boss and a subordinate and is based on a set of skills that can be learned and developed. It is focussed on sharing power and discovering actions that empower people to contribute more productively and comprehensively than traditional control based management paradigms which involve measurement, appraisal and evaluation (McLean et al. 2005).

The MAC role is a distinct developmental interaction. It is not akin to the traditional coaching role where the coach's only role is to support an individual in their professional and/or personal development. The MAC does use a coaching approach with his/her staff, but this role is not their main function. The MAC who adopts this coaching role as part of their skill base rejects the 'command and control' model, builds a relationship around trust, and believes in the capabilities of the individuals who form part of his/her team.

Because of the often long term relationships involved in the workplace, the MAC may also focus on long-term development plans with their team as well as strategies to strengthen their working partnership.

These advantages in the MAC role are also accompanied by challenges which influence the coaching role. For example, finding the time to coach is always a challenge given the multiple demands on the role (Goleman 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2001). Maintaining confidentiality may also be difficult given the potential need to consult with other workforce members to assist the coachee. Hence, the MAC may find paradox inherent in the role (Quinn et al. 2003).

There are certain skills that the MAC cannot survive without if they are to be successful in this role. They require skills such as interpersonal effectiveness, listening, empathy, patience, adaptability, problem solving, creativity and humour, to name a few (Wasylyshyn 2003). A more detailed description of coaching's core components has been described in the literature (Evered and Selman 1989) and include: an ability to develop a partnership; a focus on goals; compassion and acceptance; communication skills that drive action; responsiveness; respecting the individuality of the coachee; practice and preparation; openness to being coached in return; and sensitivity.

A further conceptualisation of coaching has also been outlined in the literature even though its focus is on executive coaching (Baek-Kyoo 2005). Important antecedents include the characteristics of the coach (experience and skill), the coachee's characteristics (developmentally ready, intrinsic factors such as motivation) and organisational support (extent to which the culture and practices of the organisation support coaching). Process factors involve the coaching approach (counselling, coaching, mentoring, advice giving), the coaching relationship (trust and openness) and feedback receptivity (how receptive is the coachee to receiving feedback).

The MAC needs development in ensuring they have good coaching skills as part of their role. Managers recognise that coaching is a vital tool for developing talent in organizations and may desire higher level competency in performing this role (Wakefield 2006), particularly in light of evidence which suggests that coaching promotes a positive organisational climate and productivity (Goleman 2000). The core elements of coaching behaviour needed by managers to achieve coaching competency involve guidance, facilitation and inspiration (Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006). Guidance involves providing clear performance expectations and constructive feedback, including how to improve. Facilitation involves helping staff analyze and explore ways to solve problems and grow whereas inspiration involves challenging staff to develop their potential.

Despite the positive outcomes that appear to be associated with coaching, managers may not be undertaking this role with their staff (Longenecker and Neubert 2005) as it can be perceived as time consuming and too much like personal development (Goleman 2000; Lindbom 2007). The issue of time constraints has been noted by others (McLean et al. 2005) and may be a function of role strain.

The concept of role strain relates to occupying roles that require more time, energy and commitment

than managers can spare and hence coaching is left undone. This can be a particular problem when managers have a large number of direct reports. Managers, for example, who had eight or less people to supervise generally received better ratings on their coaching skills from their subordinates than those who had larger spans of control (Graham, Wedman, and Garvin-Kester 1993). This suggests that other means of supporting staff in their learning and development may need to be put in place, particularly where there is a large span of control. Peer coaching is one such area that appears to offer significant outcomes in this regard (Ladyshevsky 2006; 2007).

A manager's inclination to coach subordinates, however, may not only be a function of a lack of time. Managers differ in their inclination to coach subordinates and this can be linked to implicit person theories (London 2003) or how they view individuals and their potential. Individuals who hold an 'entity theory' are disinclined to invest in others to develop and improve (Dweck 1999; Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006) as they see human attributes as innate and unalterable. Managers who believe that personal attributes can change and be developed are labelled 'incremental theorists'. A person's implicit theory perspective has been shown to predict their coaching behaviour, and can be shifted towards a more incremental perspective through training (Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006). However, the practice of effective coaching by manager's goes beyond attending a simple training program (Longenecker and Neubert 2005), ongoing reflective practice about one's performance in the role is critical for expert practice to develop.

A manager's emotional intelligence, for example, is critical in predicting coaching outcomes. Coaching is a psychological interpersonal process, and the role of emotions and how these are leveraged is critical to learning and development in a coaching relationship (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2002). Those who can manage the competencies of self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management, have consistently been found to be high performers and are able to use these skills to enhance others' human performance (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2002). Those high in emotional intelligence are more likely to understand their own motives, as well as those of others, and build social relationships which positively influence performance (Howard 2006). Research indicates that emotional intelligence appears to increase the higher one ascends the managerial ranks and is clearly valuable in these sorts of roles (Fiedeldej-Van Dijk and Freedman 2007). Although, it can be argued that those with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to be recruited or selected for managerial roles.

To further illustrate the importance of how emotional states influence learning and development, Boyatzis (2004 cited in (Howard 2006) discusses intentional change theory and how positive and negative emotional states influence learning outcomes, such as those expected in a coaching relationship. Positive and negative emotional attractors are governed by the left and right prefrontal cortex respectively, and are part of the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system. Both of

these systems help coachees to think, learn and cope in moments of challenge and change. The positive emotional attractor encompasses goal setting, optimism and self-direction. The negative emotional attractor looks critically at the reality, shortfalls and problems that require improvement goals. The two systems interact to prevent negative affect from creating defensive and inappropriate adaptive responses, and the positive affect from being unrealistic. Through this co-activation, resiliency is developed and individuals can look at both aspects of goal driven possibilities and potential barriers more objectively and critically (Diamond and Aspinall 2003). Managers who can build coaching processes that enable individuals to engage with both activating systems in a productive way will achieve better results.

Looking beyond the MAC and coachee relationship, a significant part of the coaching outcome is also based in the organization's culture towards learning and development (Orth, Wilkinson, and Benfari 1987). Research indicates that people rate purpose, fulfilment and learning and development as more important than money (Cartwright and Holmes 2006). A culture of coaching, therefore, involves regular discussions of performance. This occurs in between formal meetings designed for this purpose, along with just in time information on performance (Lindbom 2007) that supports learning. Further, it should revolve around discussions related to core competencies, with processes in place to help employees understand what targets they need to reach, and strategies and resources to help them get there. The processes that support the employee are regular, at some times daily events, with formal and informal elements. They are not a once a year measurement experience.

The MAC and the Importance of Trust

Trust is an important component of any coaching relationship (Baek-Kyoo 2005) and is highly influential in effective social organisations (Rotter, 1967). Trust is constructed by individuals in organizations to create a level of predictability, but it is quite precarious and held together by social structures and discursive practices in organisations and its people respectively. It takes a significant amount of time and energy to build trust, yet it can be destroyed in an instant.

Trust can be defined as:

“... the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (Nelson-Jones 1997) p. 712).

However, organisational trust has suffered under the era of ‘leaning and meaning’ in many organisations and the focus on improving short term bottom line performance (Davis and Landa 1999; Cartwright and Holmes 2006). Plunging morale, declining productivity, increases in work related stress, and destruction of trust have occurred as a result of economic rationalisation (Farnham 1989)

with the relationship between employer and employee reduced to a purely transactional employment contract (Cartwright and Holmes 2006). Yet, ironically, interpersonal trust is central for ensuring long term organisational performance and effectiveness (Rosseau et al. 1998).

In the MAC role, the issue of trust is critical if successful coaching is to take place. Managers, and the companies they work for, who can create a climate of trust gain a competitive advantage over others as people are attracted to productive and supportive environments (Hurley 2006). It creates an aura of justice in an organisation, which should encourage more engagement and commitment. Interpersonal trust also improves cooperation as a result of the effective working relationships that develop between individuals (Massey and Kyngdon 2005). The building of trust, however, is a complex social process that varies between individuals. By increasing one's understanding of the mechanisms behind trust, managers can develop strategies to gain the trust of their subordinates and move into more successful coaching partnerships.

A two dimensional conceptualisation of interpersonal trust is consistently described in the literature where multi-item reflective measures are utilised (Massey and Kyngdon 2005; Driscoll 1978; McAllister 1995). The conceptualisation of trust, as possessing two dimensions, is important for managers to understand, as it provides a richness for understanding how to build trust with their subordinates (Massey and Kyngdon 2005). The two dimensions of interpersonal trust are cognition-based trust and affect-based trust. Cognition-based trust focuses on a person's rational basis for trusting another person. Factors which may be considered in this rational process are how competent, reliable and dependable the trusted person has been. Affect-based trust is characterised to a greater extent by the emotional bonds between individuals; for example, how much genuine concern is exhibited for the care and welfare of that person. Credibility, another cognitively based perspective, has also been described as a moderator of trust (Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande 1992).

A slightly different two-factor structure, which incorporates the importance of values, has also been described in the literature (Lane 1998). In norm-based trust, trust emerges from shared values held across a community or society. In cognition-based trust, trust focuses on players' expectations and cognitions about self and others. The importance of shared values in trust has also been identified in the literature by others (Jones and George 1998; Brashear et al. 2003; Gillespie and Mann 2004; Yilmaz and Hunt 2001; Smith and Barclay 1997). When value congruence is evident, parties are more likely to cooperate and demonstrate positive affect with each other even if it involves some personal sacrifice. This unconditional trust, stemming from shared values, enables individuals to be future oriented and to develop their longer term relationships (Cartwright and Holmes 2006). When only conditional trust exists from the cognition based perspective, individuals cooperate with each other largely to ensure they stay in the 'good books' with their peers, but they are far less likely to ensure personal sacrifices for the relationship (Jones and George 1998).

These same bi-dimensional aspects of trust can be seen in another model of trust (Hurley 2006). This model involves decision-making (akin to cognitive-based) and situational consideration (akin to affect-based). Hurley describes three decision-making factors at play in trust. The first is risk tolerance. An individual's level of risk tolerance will vary according to their need for control, their personality and culture. The second is level of adjustment and relates to how much time an individual needs to build trust. Well adjusted people can build trust relatively quickly as opposed to less well adjusted individuals who see the world as having potentially more threats. The third factor is relative power. When the person asking for trust has little relative power, then they are more vulnerable and may be less comfortable trusting. This is often the case in manager-subordinate relationships where the staff member has low relative power.

The second dimension of trust encompasses situational factors, which are concerned with the relational aspects of the manager-subordinate relationship (Hurley 2006). The first is security, and how much is at stake in the relationship. When the stakes are very high, trust decreases, when the stakes are low, trust is easier to build. Secondly, the more similar the individuals appear to one another, the easier it is to trust, and these similarities can include values (personal or organisational), membership in defined groups or personality traits. Increasing similarity increases trust. The third factor is how well do interests align with one another. If interests align trust will increase, if interests do not align, then trust is harder to build. The fourth factor is termed benevolent concern and involves demonstrating interest in your staff, and if necessary, putting yourself at risk to support them. This increases trust considerably and also builds loyalty and commitment (Nelson-Jones 1997). The next three factors involve the extent to which the manager's actions demonstrate capability, predictability and integrity. Managers who simply are not capable or competent in the eyes of their subordinates will not be able to build trust. Nelson-Jones (1997) has also noted the importance of the manager's ability in the trust equation. Predictability and following through on what you say also increases trust significantly. Lastly, the communication skills of the manager are important. Poor communication increases suspicion, and miscommunication makes people feel betrayed. Honest communication, however, increases trust and a sense of integrity.

The interplay between affective and cognitive-based trust is seen as a complex and interdependent phenomenon (Grey and Garsten 2001). For example, cognitions are dependent upon the social value systems in place. If one examines current organisational changes in society, many businesses have experienced a reduction in formal levels of hierarchy, an emphasis on flexibility rather than rule following, more permeable boundaries as a result of sub-contracting, temporary work, and the use of consultants. Job security, which employees once held in high regard, is waning and raises interesting questions about trust in manager-subordinate relations. With organizations reducing control systems,

trust becomes an even more important consideration to manage organisational life (Sheppard and Tuchinsky 1996).

As employees are given more personal freedom in the workplace, and experience less direct line management, the importance of trust and its alignment to corporate values increases. However, trust is still somewhat inscribed in control (Grey and Garsten 2001; Ray 1986) as it is embodied in the rules, roles, norms and relationships within organisations. As a result, trust is considered to have a socially regulatory aspect in the corporate world (Fox 1974). For example, the PM philosophy of an organisation can have a significant impact on trust between the manager and coachee. This philosophy can reinforce hierarchical control through top-down supervisor to subordinate feedback, or decentralise decision making and increase employee engagement and involvement (Wood and Marshall 1993). If management espouses teamwork and cooperation yet performance appraisal is used to emphasise accountability, efficiency and productivity, trust may decline. As noted, much of the rhetoric in management is about participative work culture, team and empowerment of individuals through coaching and delegation (Wood and Marshall 1993). However, there is still a large reliance on performance appraisal to stress accountability and decisions about performance-based pay and promotion (Guest, 1990). Much of this tension around trust in organisations may be linked to accountability. At the end of the day, someone must be accountable for organizational outcomes and this is usually the line manager. Managers may only be able to share power and let people explore their development to a point, because performance, key performance indicators and business targets still have to be met. This tension complicates the MAC role and concomitant measures of trust.

Trust between manager and coachee is also not a static phenomenon. It is a very fragile process to the extent that it has to be continually reaffirmed through social practice (Grey and Garsten 2001). When this occurs routinely, trust becomes implicit because it is consistently reinforced in practice and becomes embedded in the psychological contract between a manager and his/her followers (Rousseau 1989).

The Manager as Coach and Performance Management

Performance appraisal has a long history in the human resource management literature which is summarised in this paragraph (Wood and Marshall 1993; 2008; Marshall and Wood 2000). Performance appraisal research has progressed from a focus on measurement, which concentrated on design issues to a focus on appraisal interviews which concentrated on the judgements of the rater. It then progressed to a focus on social cognitive processes, which concentrated on rater decision making, its influences on accuracy and underlying motivations and was subsequently supplanted by the present day PM school. This contemporary PM focus looks at how expectations are shaped, staff motivation, assistance with problem-solving, and how organisational key performance indicators link into the analysis. Hence, performance appraisal has evolved from being used solely for administrative purposes, through to employee counselling and feedback, followed by management by objectives, to its current integration into corporate planning and budgeting processes.

This evolution of performance appraisal as described by Marshall and Wood in the preceding paragraph creates an interesting dynamic between PM approaches (which are control based) and coaching (which is about learning and dismantling power). Both approaches are an integral part of PM. Moving into more coaching practice can create real fear in management about loss of power and control, which is seen as core to their practice (Foegen 1998). Hence, the concept of coaching raises interesting challenges for the MAC because of issues of span of control (Graham, Wedman, and Garvin-Kester 1994) and may explain the reluctance of its adoption by some managers. However, the practice of performance appraisal continues to present with dissatisfaction and problems as noted in the literature (Marshall and Wood 2000). These researchers posit that this is due to the fact that performance appraisal does not adequately deal with the practical problems most managers have to deal with in the work environment, perhaps due to its focus on design and measurement as opposed to context, motivation and relationship building. This is supported by Niemes (2002) who notes that the primary emphasis in a business setting for coaching should be developmental and not corrective or remedial action. A distinction needs to be made, therefore, between performance appraisal and coaching; the latter being part of a broader developmental PM philosophy and incorporated into the more expansive thinking of the PM school. Managers need to understand this distinction and the practices that are needed to operate within each perspective. Managers must also be cognisant of the varying roles they must play in this process (Grant 2003). Coaching is focussed on producing learning, behavioural change and growth (Baek-Kyoo 2005) and requires a specific set of skills separate from measurement and appraisal.

As noted earlier, many organisations are in a 'trust crisis' and managers themselves may be more apprehensive about performance conversations than the actual employees at the centre of the process because of these trust issues. Increasing trust may reduce this apprehension. However, this can only

occur if the psychological basis of the relationship between the parties is developed and secure. The relationship between a manager and a subordinate is a psychological one, and one cannot just separate out performance. This has been evidenced in research on over 50,000 employees in the public and private sector (Davis and Landa 1999). In this study, researchers found that supportive managers, where trust and respect were dominating characteristics of the relationship, had employees who were less stressed and more productive.

Interestingly, when coaching practices are brought into the PM process, acceptance can be increased (and this is what the PM school contends). This has been echoed in previous research over 20 years ago, and yet is re-surfacing under the badge of coaching. For example, when information about performance was frequent, consistent with information from other sources, and situated in a process that was perceived as reasonable, individuals found the experience more positive (Greenberg 1986). Similarly, increasing mutual levels of participation in discussions about performance (Greller 1975), establishing goals (Latham and Yukl 1975; Locke 1996), and demonstration of support and concern by the manager (Nemeroff and Wexley 1977) also increased commitment to the process.

Communication style is also critical. The seminal work of Maier 1958 cited in (Wood and Marshall 1993) found that a problem solving approach, where manager and employee share information and work constructively towards solving problems and improving performance, led to more positive employee reactions and work related outcomes than other approaches. Regular and specific communication about expectations and performance between parties influence the PM experience positively as does avoiding negative or dissonant emotional comments (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2002).

Interpersonal Communication and the MAC

Coaching in the workplace, between a manager and a subordinate, as part of an overall PM philosophy, requires trust, emotional intelligence and communication skill in order to create a positive interpersonal relationship. The model of trust proposed by (Hurley 2006), and the Johari Window (Luft and Ingham 1955) provide a framework for understanding the dynamics of this relationship. The Johari Window illustrates how self-disclosure in human interaction influences relationships due to issues relating to trust and power emerging during communication. A range of outcomes may ensue, which impact upon the relationship either positively or negatively. The early work of Luft and Ingham argue that the act of disclosing or providing information between people sets up power or status relationships depending on the nature of the communication. For example, a manager providing negative feedback to a subordinate may consciously or unconsciously elevate his/her status and power through their positioning, negativity and implied authority. While creating an 'open window' to discuss the performance issue, the outcome of such communication may result in the staff member withholding future information from their manager, and decreasing trust behaviours, because of the

negative reaction caused by the feedback. In this case, the 'hidden or private window' increases in size.

On the other hand, if the same subordinate disclosed a personal performance challenge to their manager, and the manager asked questions to assist the individual to understand how they might improve, status and power are moderated, and the parties enter an exploratory conversation designed to increase learning. In this situation, the 'open window' increases in size and begins to characterise the nature of the communication relationship between the parties. The role of emotional intelligence in communication is a particularly important distinction in building the capacity of the MAC (Goleman 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2001; Mayer and Salovey 1997) to operate within this 'open window'. A high level of emotional intelligence in communication on the part of the manager puts subordinates at ease, and increases the likelihood of self-disclosure, because subordinates feel safe doing so.

The MAC: Exploring the Dynamics of this Relationship

As noted in the preface, the aim of this paper and associated research is to explore how the MAC can be more effective in the PM process. The MAC role is focussed on producing learning, behavioural change and growth (Baek-Kyoo 2005) and requires a specific set of skills separate from measurement and appraisal. Given some of the trends noted in the literature described above with respect to PM and coaching, the two questions that are points of interest in this paper are:

1. How does the MAC build and influence the relationship with his/her subordinates to build effective developmental interactions that support growth and development and PM.
2. What factors influence the MAC relationship with subordinates, thereby, impacting on the outcome of the developmental interactions and the PM process.

A Case Study on the MAC Role

To provide further insights into the MAC role, along with relationship factors that influence PM, a case study approach was taken to link theory to practice. A case study approach was taken as it provides multiple tools and methods for data collection and can generate and extend theory (Meredith 1998). Case studies enable investigation of contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 1994). Further, they focus on understanding interpersonal dynamics within settings (Eisenhardt 1989). They can be exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, or test and/or generate theory (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1994). Case studies examine the how and why of a question without requiring control over behavioural events (Yin 1994).

There are several advantages and disadvantages in using case study research (Eisenhardt 1989; Meredith 1998). In terms of advantages, it provides an opportunity to explore and understand the relevance of contemporary issues and explore them in some depth, with the ultimate purpose to test and confirm theory. Disadvantages include the time it takes to collect data, the lack of control in the design and triangulation requirements. Data management ceases when the iteration between theory and data become minimal, often termed theoretical saturation (Creswell 2003).

The approach taken to investigate the MAC and the two questions noted above was qualitative and adopts an interpretive approach as the assumption taken by the investigator is that access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meaning (Chua 1986). Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings people assign to them. The philosophical basis for this is hermeneutics and phenomenology (Boland 1985). Hermeneutics is concerned with the meaning of text. (Radnitzky 1970). Hence the research does not assign variables but focuses on the complexity of human sense (Kaplan and Maxwell 1994) and how the phenomenon can be explained within the context of the organizations they work within.

Method

The data source for this research was from an asynchronous discussion board forum in a post-graduate business unit on managerial effectiveness. Collection of data from web-based discussion boards offer content that is already in digital format and represents the views of individuals on particular topics which can be qualitatively analysed through case study analysis (Ladyshevsky and Gardner 2008; Tan 2009; Marshall, Wood, and Evans 2003a; 2003b). Data was collected after the completion of two unit administrations. This occurred retrospectively as the investigator realised that what was emerging from the discussion was a deep socio-cultural dialogue on the MAC role and its influence on relationships within PM contexts. Hence, the contributions offered by individuals had authenticity as they were not influenced by their knowledge that their comments were being collected for research purposes. It also avoided a situation where they may have felt coerced to write inauthentic things because they knew their writings were under the microscope. The investigator was also not the instructor for the unit but the unit controller. Hence, the investigator did not have a role in the discussions and did not shape or influence the conversations that ensued.

To ensure that the study met ethical requirements, however, after the unit administrations were complete and students had received their final grades, a group email was distributed to all participants outlining the nature of the investigation that was to take place. If a student wanted their contributions removed from the data set, they were to inform the investigator. No requests to remove data were received. To further ensure an ethical approach to the analysis of the data, all names and identifying

information was removed from the data set. With these measures in place, the study received ethics approval from the University's ethics committee

It is important to note that the individuals in this study were a sample of convenience. The sample was comprised of 74 adult participants who shared their personal views and experiences on the MAC role. Participants in the post-graduate course must have at least 3 years of work experience and have an undergraduate degree. For those individuals without a degree, they must have seven years of work experience and maintain a course weighted average of 70 percent to progress further in their post graduate course.

The participants discussed their views on the MAC role from both perspectives where appropriate, that is, being in the MAC role itself or on the receiving end as a subordinate. Of the 74 participants, 40 were female and 34 were male. A total of 54 participants possessed a bachelor degree, with 11 of these individuals also having a post graduate qualification. The remaining 20 participants had entered the program without a degree through the recognition of prior learning route. The employment sector of these individuals could be clustered into the following categories: health (17); government (10); business, marketing, sales (25); oil, mineral, gas engineering (12), with the remaining individuals scattered across other sectors (10).

Participants were required to post at least one main entry in response to the case study question posed by the course designer (investigator). They were also required to respond to the comments of at least two other peers. This discussion was worth 10 per cent of their unit grade. One hundred and fifty-seven pages of text were generated from this discussion over the course of two unit administrations. The specific case study questions were framed by providing the following information to participants.

Research by (Goleman 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2001) provide evidence in support of the effects of coaching on organisational climate and productivity. They argue that coaching helps employees identify their strengths and weaknesses and this, in turn, helps them to work on improving their work performance. Coaching helps employees develop long term goals and the iterative process that takes place with the manager/coach creates a partnership that enhances organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This in turn has a positive effect on organisational climate and improves productivity and outcomes for the business.

However, research demonstrated that coaching is one of the least used styles by managers because they see it as time consuming (Goleman 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2001). Many managers don't value being a teacher or spending time engaged in dialogue about job performance as this smacks of 'personal development' and detracts from activities related to meeting the 'bottom line'.

1. Having explored the theory of coaching in this module, share your perspectives on the above paragraphs in the discussion board. In preparing your comments consider your own personal experiences in your work life where you have been coached successfully and unsuccessfully. What were the outcomes for you and the organisation and why?
2. Reflect upon the experiences that you have had as a manager who has tried to coach others? What were the critical factors that led to your success or failure as a coach. ... What actions might you undertake to improve your coaching expertise now that you have increased your understanding of coaching?

Upon completion of the unit, the data from the asynchronous discussion board was copied from the learning management system verbatim, edited to remove identifying information of individuals and organisations, and converted to a text file and uploaded into nVIVO for analysis. nVIVO is a software program that facilitates the analysis, coding and management of textual data in qualitative research.

Data Analysis

In order to analyse textual data, reduction strategies are needed to gain a holistic understanding of the information contained in the written passages. This is accomplished by coding the data through an iterative process whereby the investigator compares, categories and interprets what appears in the text. The investigator must also 'bracket' or be aware of personal biases that may influence data analysis. The investigator has a particular research interest in coaching. Hence, if one is to consider the MAC role in the context of PM, the investigator is likely to encounter the influence of personal theories, and those in the literature, within the study of the MAC role. Hence, being aware of these issues and identifying them helps to elevate the investigator's objectivity.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are measured in different ways and include terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Golafshani 2003; Byrne 2009). Trustworthiness and credibility is attained through triangulation, which is a validity procedure where the investigator looks for convergence among multiple sources to form themes or categories (Creswell 2003). It is also attained through building a credible research design and building in data collection processes. This was achieved, through the use of a case study design, an open dialogue between participants for two full weeks, and through analysis of the multiple perspectives offered by participants, exploring their relationship to the literature, and bracketing any potential investigator bias.

Transferability refers to how the findings can be applied to other contexts and occurs through offering rich descriptions of the themes that emerge from the research (Byrne 2009). This makes the content plausible to others. Transferability and plausibility was confirmed by member checking. Two experts in PM reviewed these rich descriptions and the codings that emerged to confirm plausibility.

The coding of data can take different forms. Codes can be descriptive, interpretive or used to denote patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Descriptive codes describe a class of phenomenon in the text, whereas interpretive codes have a meaning that has been ascribed by the investigator. Both of these codes are first level codes and are useful for summarising data. Codes which denote patterns are highly inferential and explanatory and illustrate an emerging theme that has surfaced across the texts. All three coding practices were used in this data analysis to understand further the role of the MAC in influencing relationships leading to effective PM and development.

Results and Discussion

Thematic categories for the MAC and the subsequent impact on PM can be conceptualised into three main categories presented in Table 1. The first major theme appeared to cluster under principles of how the MAC builds relationships with his/her subordinates and whether this supports coaching or not. Within this category are five sub-categories. The first is the MAC's attitude towards coaching and subsequent support or impediment of successful partnership. The second category, and associated sub-sections, had a focus on how trust is built between the MAC and subordinate. The MAC's skill in coaching is a third sub-category, along with its influence on the outcome of the developmental interaction. The fourth sub-category is the MAC's confidence in the process and their belief in being able to execute a successful PM conversation. The last sub-category related to the MAC's ability to understand the distinction between feedback and coaching and how this influences engagement and participation in the process.

The second major theme for the MAC and PM can be explained by a range of influential factors that impacted on the developmental interaction. Four sub-categories emerged, the first of which is the organisation's culture and philosophy towards learning and development. A second sub-category was the organisation's focus on productivity and profit. These two sub-categories form a tension that all organisations must face. For example, to what extent does an organisation enable learning and development, which involves risk and takes time, at the expense of productivity and profit, and vice versa? The remaining two sub-categories were time pressure, and issues about status and power in the relationship between the MAC and subordinate.

The third major theme describes some of the outcomes of coaching for individuals and organisations, in particular, the benefits individuals experienced by being involved in the process. Similarly, when these outcomes did not occur, what negative consequences emerged for the organisation and individual.

The structure of web based asynchronous discussions meant that individual conversations were set up as 'strings'. For example, one student would make an original posting, and then several students would respond in sequential order, sometimes making several contributions before that discussion 'string' came to an end. As a result of this data layout, it was not possible to examine each individual person's views in isolation, as they are linked to a conversation string. Hence, one is not able to provide an indication of how many individuals pointed to a specific thematic category. To provide some sense of depth to a thematic category and coding label, however, the number of isolated pieces of meaning (PoM) used to build a coding label and thematic category are provided in table 1.

Table 1: Thematic Categories and Code Labels

Major Themes	PoM	Sub-Categories	PoM
Building the Relationship	252	Attitude Towards Coaching	87
		Trust	17
		• Confidentiality	
		• Values identification	
		• Relinquishment of control	
		• Capability of the manager	
Influential Factors on Relationships	93	Coaching Skill	119
		Confidence	19
		Feedback versus Coaching	10
		Organisational Culture and Philosophy	30
Outcomes of Coaching	58	Profit and Productivity Focus	27
		Time Pressure	20
		Power and Status	16
		Benefits of Coaching	58

These various categories and themes are unpacked in greater detail in the following pages. Collectively, they deepen understanding of the MAC construct and its influence on PM in both positive and negative directions.

Theme 1: Building the Relationship

Sub-category 1: Attitude Towards Coaching

The MAC’s attitude towards coaching is central to building an effective development relationship with staff. This orientation towards learning and development is obviously strengthened by an organisational philosophy that values employee learning. However, this attitude can still be positive, although more difficult, if the organisation is oriented towards productivity rather than development. This attitude towards learning and development was noted in the literature, in particular, those managers described as incremental theorists when it came to staff development (Dweck 1999; Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006). Managers with this perspective believed that the personal attributes of their staff can change and be developed further. As noted by these researchers, a person’s implicit theory perspective has been shown to predict coaching behaviour. Those who have an incremental or positive perspective are more successful in building a coaching relationship with their staff. This is evidenced in the following sets of quotations*.

“I firmly believe that most people want to learn and improve and that developing staff is important for organisational performance. I think that the biggest requirement necessary for a manager to be successful with the coaching style is the drive to help people.”//“... I find that I actually do a lot of basic coaching, however more as a result of my nature and the type of person/manager I am...”//“...I am big on empowerment and focus on creating an environment where people are happy to try new skills without fear of failure.”// “...the biggest requirement necessary for a manager to be successful with the coaching style is the drive to help people. If a

manager genuinely wants to help people grow they will be pre-disposed to approaching people in a way that will make a coaching experience far more effective.”

Note: The quotations represented here and elsewhere in this section are relevant pieces of meaning that illustrate the construct in question. Only a segment of the full quotation is provided. Further, the quotations are taken from a range of individuals from different sets of discussions and are separated by the markers ‘//’. Collectively, they provide some depth to the construct.

The belief by the MAC that his/her staff possess the capability to grow and develop, is also important for building trust, which in turn, builds the strength of the learning relationship. Having ‘benevolent concern’ (Nelson-Jones 1997) or actually caring for your staff is also an attribute that manager’s need to possess in order to build trust. Benevolent concern demonstrates to staff that you are interested in their development and performance and that you will put visible energy into supporting them.

Managers who were focussed on developing their staff in the workplace and demonstrated benevolent concern also reaped rewards for this investment as noted in the quotations that follow.

“I get a great deal of satisfaction helping people to realise their potential and in assisting them to achieve their aspirations.”//“I have found the experience to be a mutual learning process and satisfying to see the development that occurs over that period of time. “// “I usually reflect on the fact that in one year (or one week for that matter) who will remember the ‘fire’ that I dealt with that day, however if I spend the time meeting with my report or peer and discussing their issue and coaching them, then the benefit of that will be a lot greater; both for the company and the individual.”

In contrast, those with a negative perspective on staff development saw coaching as an unproductive waste of time, and were not able to engage and build a developmental relationship with their staff.

They fail to demonstrate benevolent concern and would be considered to hold an ‘entity theory’ which makes them disinclined to invest in others to develop and improve (Dweck 1999; Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006). Their focus would more likely be centred on productivity and meeting targets, with staff viewed as mediums to be used to achieve these outcomes. This opposing and non-humanistic perspective is illustrated in the following quotations.

“My response to the leader acting as coach is ambivalent....this stems from negative experiences dealing with leaders who were of the opinion that coaching is to help employees develop work practices that promote the agenda of the manager...”//“...coaching is not promoted within my current workplace as my boss feels that the office is constantly overloaded with work and is cautious about placing “non-productive” strain on his employees.”

Sub-category 2: Trust

The literature also suggests that managers who can create a climate of trust with their team gain a competitive advantage over others, as people are attracted to productive and supportive environments (Hurley 2006). Interpersonal trust improves cooperation as a result of the effective working relationship that develops between individuals (Massey and Kyngdon 2005; Longenecker and Neubert 2005). Trust is embodied in the rules, roles, norms and relationships within organisations. As a result, trust is still considered to have a regulatory aspect (Fox 1974). For example, the PM philosophy of an

organisation or individual can have a significant impact on trust between the manager and coachee. This philosophy can reinforce hierarchical control through top down manager to subordinate feedback, or decentralise decision making and increase employee engagement and involvement (Wood and Marshall 1993). Managers and organisations that are much more flexible in their orientation towards structure and interaction and rely less on hierarchy and control, need to be able to build relationships with staff that are trustful and engaging (Baldwin and Grayson 2004).

Examining the information shared by participants in this case study is consistent with what is reported in the literature on trust and engagement. When information about performance is frequent, consistent with information from other sources, and situated in a process that is seen as reasonable, individuals experience a more positive outcome (Greenberg 1986) and are trusting. Similarly, increasing mutual levels of participation in discussions about performance (Greller 1975), establishing goals (Latham and Yukl 1975; Locke 1996), and demonstration of support and concern by the manager (Nemeroff and Wexley 1977) also increased commitment and trust in the process (Longenecker and Neubert 2005).

The sub-category of trust, and its sub-dimensions, are below. The sub-dimensions, when discussed, are underlined to highlight their reference.

Confidentiality, investing time in the relationship, displays of integrity by following through on one's word, personal self-disclosure, honesty, and being authentic about wanting to invest in the relationship were all factors that built trust between the manager and subordinate. All of these dimensions of trust building are seen in the following quotations:

“Mutual respect and trust were fundamental to the success of my positive coaching experiences.”//“Discussions are very open and a feeling of trust and honesty exists”//“Feeling able to discuss feelings and values openly and honestly ... and knowing you can talk freely without retribution.”//“We discussed confidentiality and agreed nothing would go any further I guess we tend to believe people until they give us some reason not to.”//“...demonstrating confidentiality is a major component of trust building... you have to demonstrate it too”//“...displaying integrity builds trust – do what you say you are going to do, be reliable.”

In order to build trust, the MAC must be able to relinquish control and re-direct their focus towards learning. This importance of this relinquishment of control has been noted in the literature (Ellinger and Bostrom 2002). Managers who saw themselves as facilitators of learning were able to build trust and engagement with their staff. Managers who control staff through their authority, therefore, would be less likely to get the engagement of their staff in a development interaction. This is illustrated quite strongly in the following quotations.

“I have come from an organisationthat has had authoritarian leadership for two decadesa problem for the successful introduction of coaching by managers is the total distrust of managers by the operational employees.”//“Building trust took some time as the culture in the organization was very traditional and control oriented...”//“I had one manager make an attempt at coaching...in the end I don't think it was very successful ...because her usual style of management was to be

controlling and directing.”//“The whole experience working under her made me dislike my job and the people I worked with as they had fallen to her coercive style of leadership.”

There are also other determinants that build trust between staff and the MAC. These have been described in the literature (Hurley 2006) and are also used by the MAC to build trust and engagement with staff. The importance of similarity and interest alignment is an important feature of building trust. The MAC can build upon these similarities to build trust. Some examples include having shared values (personal or organisational), membership in defined groups, or personality traits. For most individuals in the workplace, they seek accomplishment, interesting and meaningful work, and a sense of contribution to others (Cartwright and Holmes 2006). The MAC who understands these motivations and underlying values of their staff will be more successful in the PM conversation.

The importance of *values* as a way of demonstrating similarity and building trust in the relationship were noted by many individuals in this research. Managers had to make an effort to get to know their staff at a personal level, and engage in discussions which identified values which could increase alignment between the MAC, the individual staff members and the organisation.

“...becoming familiar with the basic core values of your employees and your workforce.”//“...the importance of managers understanding their team members aspirations, values,I agree that this is key to effective management.”//“...a coach is more than that, it is about getting alongside someone and understanding their vision and values and helping them make it happen.”//“...taking the time to build a relationship with each staff member, find out their aspirations, values ...”

Another factor in the building of trust is the *capability* of the MAC. Managers who simply are not capable or competent in the eyes of their subordinates will not be able to build trust (Nelson-Jones 1997). In this situation, staff developed negative views of their manager and were less likely to engage or welcome coaching.

“Her approach to coaching was a failure ... she lacks the communication skills to communicate with our team.”//... She does not communicate her expectations clearly and ... does not know the problems faced by the team. The low job satisfaction and lack of support has resulted in team’s poor performance.” // “...the lack of commitment and direction by my manager lead to myself, and later other colleagues, to seek other environments in which to achieve our career goals. This included leaving the organisation, due to the unconvincing effort by our manager to Coach her staff.”

Sub-category 3: Coaching Skill

Even though an orientation towards developing staff and building trust through some of the strategies identified above are important, the MAC still requires fundamental skills in coaching. Coaching is a skill that has specific competencies and practices which must be executed to get positive results. Acquiring the capabilities to become an effective MAC was seen as something that could be achieved

with training by many of the participants in this case study and supported by the research (Heslin, Vandewalle, and Latham 2006).

The specific skills needed to become an effective coach were noted by the participants in this case study and link strongly to what has been described in the literature as good coaching practice. Part of this perspective was no doubt influenced by their study of coaching in the unit, but this in turn, made them more knowledgeable to comment on their experiences. Participants saw coaching as a skill, with specific competencies that can be mastered with practice. McLean et al. (2005) for example, describe good coaching practice as involving open communication, asking questions, being patient and active listening. The importance of skills and programs to build these skills in the MAC are noted below.

“If organizations are serious about commitment to the development of their workforce, they need to teach their managers how to coach.”// “...there is no formal training available for staff to become coaches. This would need to be implemented I think before appropriate coach/coachee relationships could commence ...”// “...you just can't tell your managers to use coaching if you don't train them in how to coach, provide the necessary skills in coaching and have the right supportive organisational environment.”//“...there is still a lack of true coaching from Managers to Subordinates and I don't think we have given our managers the necessary skills to know how to effectively develop their own people.”

Training and development were seen as key features for the MAC to be successful in this role. Without this training, the risk of alienating staff increases. The importance of skill development, in the MAC role, is noted in the quotations below as a result of the negative outcomes associated with a lack of this skill in Managers.

“I had one particular experience of unsuccessful coaching from a very laissez-faire style department head, who seldom offered any managerial support. Whenever I tried to engage her in discussion about my performance ...she would just tell me what worked for her with no consideration for my lack of experience, different style and skill set. I remember once asking for very specific help and she gave me a lecture basically saying ‘you should be able to do this’ without explaining the process or listening to why I was struggling... The end result for me was demoralisation, alienation, feelings of low self worth, and greatly increased stress.”// “I have been on the receiving end of good and bad coaching experiences, from my first manager who thought that delegation was his right (based on seniority) and that he was not paid to “train” me, so I learnt the trial and error way and was regularly reprimanded for failing to complete tasks as he would have.”// “...several recent coaches failed to provide me with support, encouragement or guidance, especially during some very stressful periods. On these occasions, I felt alone, vulnerable and fully responsible for remedying problems without the ability to consult higher levels of management.”

Investing in training for the MAC does make a difference. For those staff that had experienced positive coaching interactions with their boss, the importance of skill is evident.

“In one of my previous roles I decided to coach several people so that they could grow to fill roles that would best fit their potential and desire. Their commitment to the coaching process was very high, especially when they saw that some rewards could come as a result of getting results.”//“I often share my coaching successes and failures with other staff members! It helps create a more open approach to the coaching experience.”//“I am now in the process of teaching myself to allow others to learn from their mistakes and giving them the time and chance to reflect, thus providing real learning and guidance”//“... letting people finish their sentences - something I have had to learn.”// “The other part of this is letting people make their own mistakes, and being there to coach them with making amends, not to clean up after them or take over...”// For an interfering busy body I am getting better at coaching, but have learned to offer reflective comments, ask probing questions, play devil's advocate, offer

stories of my experience rather than my "solution".// "During these discussions I apply concepts I have previously learned through counselling courses, such as open ended questions, active listening and paraphrasing."//

Sub-category 4: Confidence

In addition to possessing the requisite skill base in coaching, the MAC needs to have confidence in his/her abilities, also known as self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Managers often find themselves in their position not because of great talent as a leader, but because of their technical expertise and tenure. When occupying a management role, technical competency does not provide much support in leading and managing individuals and will subsequently lower perceived self-efficacy in relation to this role (Bandura 1997; Jaina and Tyson 2004). While training, as noted previously, can help to build confidence (Wood and Marshall 2008), the MAC also needs to believe in their ability to coach and accept they will have to develop their skill base in this area. Research suggests that the motivational variable of self-efficacy produces significant influences in PM, in particular, a greater sense of effectiveness in the process and greater levels of agreement between parties (Wood and Marshall 2008), This is evidenced in the following quotations.

"...mid-level managers tend to focus on operational type matters as it was primarily their technical ability that would have led to promotion to management....unfortunately, technical based work is not the work that a successful manager needs to do."// "For many managers the concept of an empowered workforce through coaching is threatening, possibly for reasons such as lack of self-confidence."// "... many managers not having the confidence to give constructive feedback."

Without confidence in their abilities as a MAC, the potential benefits of the PM process can be compromised. Because of fear of negative reprisal from staff, and the impact this has on a manager's self efficacy to undertake PM, managers may divest from the PM process because they feel they do not have the skill to manage these developmental interactions. A focus on performance appraisal may occur rather than participation in the more encompassing process of PM, thereby disengaging and potentially escalating difficulties between parties. The following quotations illustrate these concepts.

"... most people don't like to give negative comments or weak points to subordinates."// ... even simple things like yearly evaluations that are discussed with employees usually only contain positive points with maybe one slightly negative point."// "...made me wonder why I don't seem to place the same coaching focus on other team members as I do with the grads...there is a chance of experiencing some resistance."// "I dislike any form of confrontation and try to avoid the anger and distress of people in difficult situations."

Sub-category 5: Feedback versus Coaching

Perhaps the most complex and difficult aspect of the MAC role is the ability to differentiate between feedback and coaching. When feedback, either positive or negative, is provided to a staff member, the giver of that feedback is placed in the position of judge or evaluator (Showers 1984; Joyce and Weil 1996). Individuals who take an evaluation role are elevated into higher status positions relative to the other individual who is receiving the feedback. This can occur overtly or covertly, but is often an

artefact of giving feedback. Through the elevation of status as a result of making evaluative comments, power starts to manifest in the relationship, and as a result, the tendency to withhold information on the part of the receiver of feedback in the development interaction increases (Luft and Ingham 1955). When this occurs, the mutuality of the interaction decreases because equality is compromised (Damon and Phelps 1989). The issue of managers giving feedback to staff about their performance often creates negative engagement between the parties and strains the MAC – Subordinate relationship. This is evidenced in the following quotations.

“He had a very direct feedback approach, often gave instruction rather than working through a solution, and frequently used ‘person-oriented’ feedback (ie. “you have a problem in this area”). I found his approach often overly confronting, and particularly had difficulty receiving communication in this form.”//“In my experience most managers don’t mind sharing and guiding subordinates but when it comes to coaching they feel threatened, conflict arises between the coach and coachee as it is very difficult for the coach not evaluate the performance of their coachee thus creating tension and reducing the level of openness and meaningful communication...”// “I was getting so much feedback, I felt overloaded. I was perceiving it as negative information.”//“ I was very critical of his performance and he was very defensive. In the end we both turned against each other and traded personal insults. The whole experience left me sceptical and not a keen follower of coaching. Looking back I can trace the problem back to a number of issues. Lack of understanding of the whole process.”// “it takes courage to provide feedback on someone’s performance and more so good communication skills especially when feedback relates to poor performance. The danger for the coach is that feedback can easily develop into a list of criticisms.”

Managers who understood the evaluative impact of feedback and instead asked questions of their staff to generate mutual understanding had far better developmental outcomes. The use of questioning enables the staff member to discover the insights needed to improve performance independently. This in turn keeps the interaction non-evaluative. The importance of this non-evaluative status has been discussed by (Showers 1984; Joyce and Weil 1996). Being non-evaluative reinforces the mutuality and equality of the relationship (Damon and Phelps 1989) which leads to greater dialogue, disclosure and learning, or the open window of communication as noted by (Luft and Ingham 1955). The following quotations illustrate this concept.

“For a more experienced person ... I would start by asking them how they thought they went in the situation. They are usually able to identify what went well and what didn’t.”//“I also find that if I suggest they reflect back on their performance in a particular situation then I can hopefully get them to highlight the areas they need to improve first... It helps to keep them in control of their performance and reduces the chance of negative feedback being taken to heart.”// “I believe these successes have been founded on ... working through solutions with the coachee rather than being instructional.”//“...get them to highlight the areas they need to improve first before prompting them for ways they can improve. It helps to keep them in control of their performance and reduces the chance of negative feedback being taken to heart.”//“... I tend to start with asking people for their self-assessment, as this is an easy way to get some things on the table that I may have felt a little uncomfortable in raising.”//“Questioning is such a brilliant way to help people understand things. It is way more effective than the technique most of us fall back on which is to tell people what we think.”

The ability to create a space for open discussion of development needs stems from having a good understanding of the communication principles required to create a non-judgemental interchange. Participants were able to identify these communication competencies that promoted open dialogue and ensured equality and mutuality (Damon and Phelps 1989).

“... this manager’s coaching communications were validating (he always sought my input and views), conjunctive (you got a real sense that you were reaching a shared conclusion, rather than being instructed), and heavily based on supportive listening.”//“The use of open ended questions, ensuring inquiry is descriptive and not evaluative and seeking the coachee’s opinions.”// “The use of supportive communication often led me to feel as if my manager was interested in what I had to say and prevented me from becoming overly defensive.”//“...she focuses on "how can we solve this problem". Even though in most cases I would trust her to tell me what to do, she asks me what I feel are my obstacles and systematically asks for my suggestions to overcome each of these. This develops my sense of ownership.”

These managers also understand that creating the space to have these sorts of conversations with staff must occur on a regular, informal basis and not only at annual/semi-annual performance reviews (Antonioni 2000). Relying solely on formalised PM schedules at six monthly or yearly points in time, fails to recognise that the MAC role is an ongoing one and requires engagement with staff at regular intervals. This is clearly seen in the outcomes reported by participants when their only access to a development conversation with their manager was once or twice a year.

“I would say that I would be lucky to get feedback on my job performance (mentioned twice in the last 5 years and normally done as a paperwork requirement not because of genuine interest in the process.”//“...we also have reviews but these are never followed up so once you have been told what you need to achieve nobody bothers to find out if you have done it or not!”//“... a number of matters were raised wherein my manager believed my performance could be improved. Unfortunately, as these matters had not been discussed at all during the year, I had no prior opportunity to address the perceived weaknesses or demonstrate my actual proficiency in these areas. ... I did lose respect for the overall process and the manner in which my manager chose to raise these issues.”// “... appraisals are an annual event whereby employees tick boxes on forms and managers submit this document to human resources for filing. All staff receive an annual salary increment, regardless of performance or behaviour. ...most staff do not want more management involvement, perceiving the annual appraisal negatively and enough trauma for one year”.

These bi-annual or yearly PM meetings are fraught with difficulty because much of the meeting is to review past behaviours, work practices and outcomes. This focus on the past pushes people into a defensive position because they must justify their actions. It is also difficult to undo what has occurred in the past, so focussing on historical aspects of performance has little value. It is not surprising, therefore, that individuals become defensive, or disengaged in PM meetings that have this focus. Regular ongoing discussions of performance appear to be much more valued and effective coaching practices.

“...regarding performance appraisals, I also agree that they should be conducted on a regular basis ... when I conduct an annual performance appraisal with my staff, there are no surprises as it is simply a formalisation/ summation of the numerous less formal reviews conducted throughout the year.”//“Whenever my staff demand my attention, which is usually as soon as I walk in the door, ... I try and turn it into something more constructive along the lines of coaching. I must admit that this small change has produced a positive effect,...”//“...you probably talk or catch up with your staff on numerous occasions throughout the day, maybe it just takes a mind-set change to be a little more intentional about the types of questions you’re asking them, or what you’re discussing?// ... if you invest the time initially to define your role as a coach, and then build on it with regular specific thought provoking questions, you may find that coaching is in fact something you can do during your busy day.”

The MAC, who can assist their staff through questioning, to identify things they can do to improve future performance, on a regular basis, is more likely to gain engagement. This is seen as solution

focussed coaching and is gaining greater popularity in practice and in the coaching literature (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; O'Connell 1998; Held 1996; Whitmore 1999). It has a positive focus and makes people less defensive because the focus is on goal achievement, which has a strong motivating force (Hill 1997; Latham and Yukl 1975; Locke 1996). Enabling learners to make these discoveries for themselves, on a regular basis, also appears to reinforce the permanency of these changes, as indicated by studies of the brain, and what happens when a moment of insight is generated by the learner (Rock and Schwartz 2006).

“I turn the problems back on him. Rather than try to change his mind and make him see a positive side, I take the approach of OK so if this is a bad thing how can we change it into something good.” // “I personally would feel more comfortable with this scenario [informal coaching], rather than it being infrequent and very formal (too daunting otherwise).” // “I agree that an informal process, particularly where applied to high performance employees, can work well. I too am far more comfortable with this style, than I am with the formalised PM / enhancement process.”

The next section focuses on influential factors that have an impact on the MAC and their ability to build positive developmental interactions with their staff.

Theme 2: Influential Factors on Relationships

Sib-category 1: Organisational Culture and Philosophy

The underlying organisational culture and philosophy, and its impact on coaching and learning in the workplace was a large area of discussion by the participants in this research. As was noted in the literature review in the first part of this paper, a significant part of the coaching outcome is based in the organization's culture towards learning and development (Orth, Wilkinson, and Benfari 1987). Organizations that appeared to have a culture that fostered learning and development were seen as positive empowering environments to work and grow within.

“...firmly embedding coaching into the culture of an organisation fosters high staff motivation and commitment.” // “Ideally for coaching to be embedded within an organisation, the company needs to implement a formal coaching model, provide training on that model and coaching in general and make coaching a core objective for every manager.” // “...my point is that you just can't tell your managers to use coaching if you don't train them in how to coach, provide the necessary skills in coaching and have the right supportive organisational environment.” // “... coaching has to be integrated in an organization's vision. Since coaching refers to learning, continuous improvement, communication, trust openness (values) it should fit in the bigger picture.” // “There has been a shift in the thinking in my organisation over the last couple of years - our graduate program (with the average intake age of 21) is as much about the technical training of the individual as it is about their emotional and personal development... happier staff are more likely to stay in the organisation.”

The leaders of the organisation have responsibility to set this culture and tone and to build systems within the workplace that foster learning, growth and development.

“CEO's who see their staff as a true asset of the business, are those who see the value in investing time and money into this resource.” // “... one of the biggest impacts on the coaching environment is the attitude of the Director or CEO. ... it would be very hard to establish a coaching environment without their commitment and support.” // “... it is difficult to establish a coaching culture in an organization with a hierarchical culture were it is assumed that those at the top have all the answers.”

Organisations that are very hierarchical and control oriented, in contrast, are viewed far less favourably as places to work and grow within. In these organisations, it is quite clear that cultural factors impede the implementation of learning and development programs.

“...,(my) sector works on a very bureaucratic, hierarchical structure, where the role of a manager is often a mix between legitimate and expert power with developmental tools like coaching seen as threat to power.”//“Being a semi-paramilitary organisation, with rigid management and chain of command structures and a formal rank system works against supportive communication ... we tend to focus on the bottom line ...our organisational culture works against supportive communication.”//“... given this history and inequality, the coaching process has been somewhat restricted. In order for coaching to be incorporated into the health field, I believe there would need to be a shift in culture within the medical and nursing profession.”//“In the overwhelming majority of organizations with which I have worked, the prevalence of technician-managers has created cultures where the cultivation of people skills for manager-coach is not a priority and as a result the non-coaching culture is perpetuated.”

Sub-category 2: Profit and Productivity Focus

An organisation whose predominant focus is on bottom line profits and productivity, at the expense of staff growth and development, was seen as a short sighted profit driven strategy.

“A coaching culture is usually found in those organizations who care for employees’ well being and treat them as though everyone is in a big family. Merely striving on bottom-line at the expense of staff well-being is only targeting short term benefits. ”

This economic focus did not facilitate learning and development and the underlying trust needed to move into coaching. Again, this profit driven focus and the impact on employee engagement has been discussed in the literature (Davis and Landa 1999) and certainly comes out strongly in the perspectives shared by the participants in this research.

“An unsuccessful coaching experience occurred when I was working under a manager who was simply in the role to make sure that the “bottom line” was met. Despite my efforts to discuss my concerns with her in regards to skill development, enhancing my knowledge and providing better patient care, she was more interested in getting her job done and making ends meet.”//“Your company appears to acknowledge the benefits that coaching can provide and will reap the rewards from you. My company on the other hand has difficulty in seeing this and cannot see where the ‘extra’ time will come from as we are always fully stretched with workload.”//“In the organisation where coaching was considered a key element in the PM process, the failure was the ultimate focus on financial performance. There was such a focus and skewed weighting on the achievement of budget figures that employees were almost singularly driven by the achievement of their financial targets.”

The issue of productivity and profits versus learning and development is a tension that will always be present within an organisation. On the one hand, an organisation’s focus is to remain financially and economically viable. At the same time, the long term prosperity, productivity and efficiency of a company is also determined in part, by how well people are supported to carry out their duties. This tension is best illustrated by two opposing views by participants who offered their views.

“A typical organizational set-up for large construction barges and drilling rigs is a pyramid structure based on bureaucracy and clear line of command. The ultimate criteria of

organizational effectiveness are productivity and profit. The task of the supervisor ... involves handling or controlling the work of other people ... inefficiency will not be tolerated and personnel who do not demonstrate efficiency or competency will be replaced. Due to the nature of the work scope, there is little margin for error. Negligence ...to the procedures could result in catastrophic damages... Therefore, under such organizational climate, it is not surprising to see coercive leaders gaining popularity and manage the operation in paramilitary style....”

In contrast to this perspective on the organisation’s views on risk management versus coaching, another perspective illustrates how coaching can still be a large focus within a similar sector.

“..in the mining industry, when commodity prices are high, the climate in mining workplaces is extremely turbulent. The largest pressure at this point in time is the lack of skilled or experienced personnel to complete the required tasks. Because of the lack of experience in the mining industry, effective coaching techniques become vital in order to cope with such a turbulent work environment.”

These two viewpoints, both with merit, illustrate the tension between profit and productivity and learning and development, and in the end, the organization’s underlying philosophy and culture. Learning involves some risk tolerance, and in organisations with low risk tolerance, engagement with coaching practices may be lessened.

Sub-category 3: Time Pressure

Issues regarding lack of time to coach staff emerged very strongly in the participants’ discussion. This is also strongly echoed in the literature as one of the influencing factors that explain why managers don’t coach their staff (Goleman 2000; Lindbom 2007; McLean et al. 2005).

“...managers often do not have time for coaching. I can relate to this statement. The pressures of completing work, and satisfying customers ...means that coaching of staff is not a high priority.”//“I am so engaged with the day to day functions of running my business unit and ‘putting out fires’ that I simply do not have enough time or energy to put into coaching”//“The time constraints and workload of managers means there is insufficient time available to make the initial investment in coaching.”

However, time was not always the enemy, and some managers could identify ways of making time restraints work in their favour, or just simply make the time investment. Antonioni (2000) for example, notes that brief coaching conversations can have more impact than a longer coaching conversation. Longer sessions can open the door for issue jumping or increase the probability of excessive feedback being administered which can lead to defensiveness in the conversation. Respondents were able to identify ways of providing coaching within typical organisational time constraints.

“...As a manager it is important to give them (staff) support. Because this process takes a lot of my time, I usually coach one or two staff and let them coach other junior staff.”//“I struggle to find the time to do it (coaching) although am getting better. ... it all boils down to being able to prioritise things to enable this...it will create efficiency...it is like an investment.”//“...whenever my staff demand my attention ...I try and turn it into something more constructive along the lines of coaching, I must admit that this small change has produced a positive effect.”//“The time taken to coach staff in times of limited resources can be an issue, however, the cost to the overall team effort of not having all members ...going in the same direction with the same vision and the desired skill sets is often a greater burden

that the initial investment in time.”//“Time invested at the early onset, saves time in the future, as you develop a high performing team.”

As noted in these quotations, some managers were able to overcome or re-frame time pressures and developed practical and useful strategies for managing this factor. They also recognised that by investing the time now, it saved time in the future because staff understood how to do their jobs well.

Sub-category 4: Power and Status

Another factor that appears to influence the relationship between the Manager and his/her staff is power and status. This was touched upon when examining differences between feedback and coaching earlier but is expanded upon in this section. The control philosophy of an organisation, along with its management, has a significant influence on the developmental interactions between the parties. This in turn has an impact on trust in the relationship. For example, (Hurley 2006) discusses the issue of security in relationships and how this is influenced by how much was at stake in a relationship. If stakes are high, trust decreases and may explain why some managers find engaging in a coaching relationship, where empowerment and shared responsibility takes place, threatening. By sharing responsibility and giving up some power, subordinates are elevated in perceived status relative to their superior. This in itself may threaten the perceived position and authority of the manager and therefore, make them reluctant to invest in coaching. This perceived threat is seen in the following quotations.

“...managers that disregard coachingare probably fearful that someone may take their place if they share their experience with them.”// “Managers do not want to coach their workers for fear that an empowered employee will attempt to usurp them out of their leadership role.”//“...when I discussed coaching with some of my colleagues, many thought that it was a threat to their existing position, what if the coachee was promoted due to my hard work and I wasn't.”//“Senior members were clearly focussed on developing their own careers, and stunting any worker who threatened their rank, or position within the company.”//“There is often a fear that coaching will only promote competition for the established manager's position.”

Hence, the attitude towards power and status in an organisation appears to be an important factor in moderating the relationship between staff and their MAC. This attitude rests within the organisational culture and philosophy and the orientation towards these factors by the MAC.

Where differences in status are reinforced or maintained in the coaching relationship, this reduces self disclosure between the parties and often shifts people into hiding or withholding information (Luft and Ingham 1955). This sort of behaviour does not facilitate good learning outcomes in a coaching process. Status and power have to be moderated in the coaching relationship, if one is to achieve trust, mutuality and equality (Damon and Phelps 1989) as these lead to more open dialogue and learning. This issue of status, and how it facilitated or hindered the coaching relationship was clearly expressed by participants. Where the manager reinforced their authority or status, or it was perceived as being very great, either intentionally or unintentionally, it led to less effective coaching.

“My feeling is that when the coach is much senior to the coachee, then the relationship is more likely to look like mentoring with the senior officer passing on their wisdom. The more junior coachee could potentially show some hesitation to opening up fully and exposing their weaknesses to someone that may ultimately have a say in a future promotion.”//“... the other graduates did not learn from their supervisor simply because they felt uneasy discussing problems with their supervisor.”// “It is interesting ... that your positive experience of coaching actually came from a peer while the negative experience came from a department head.”//“... the relationship with the more junior staff is hindered already by the resistance of the more experienced staff. I believe if new staff are paired with staff on the same level that have worked in the area for a longer period, then a more appropriate coach/coachee relationship make take place.”

The notion that peers may provide good coaching illustrates how status and power interfere with coaching when carried out between manager and subordinate. The use of peer coaching has been demonstrated to be a powerful source of learning and development for individuals because of its ability to create mutuality and equality in the developmental interaction (Ladyshevsky 2001; 2002; 2004; 2007; Ladyshevsky and Ryan 2006; Ladyshevsky and Varey 2005; Peters 1996; Bowman and McCormick 2000). This occurs because peers are equals, which in turn, promotes self-disclosure for learning.

In contrast, where the manager was able to moderate status and share power, it created a more positive relationship and coaching experience.

“... I turned the tables and changed the direction of our relationship by asking if she could reciprocate the coaching and coach me in areas I had weaknesses. She was taken aback but agreed and it brought us closer together and added a sense of equity to our relationship.”//“Although I was aware of the differentiation in job responsibilities, this supervisor never made any comment or action that she was superior (and hence I was inferior) and involved me in nearly all aspects of her job role.”

The manager must therefore, understand and work hard at moderating the effect of their status on their relationship with their coachees. By doing this, the MAC creates the environment of trust and openness necessary for coaching.

This last section describes the reported benefits of coaching in the workplace, and what participants gained as Managers as Coach or coachee.

Theme 3: Outcomes of Coaching

Benefits of Coaching

Participants in this research reported a range of benefits associated with coaching in the work environment. Coaching has been demonstrated to boost organisational productivity (D'Abate, Eddy, and Tannenbaum 2003), particularly in organizations where PM employs the use of coaching as opposed to performance appraisal (Goleman 2000; Lindbom 2007; Yu 2007; Olivero, Bane, and Kopelman 1997).

Participants in this research reported a range of outcomes associated with their experiences of coaching in the workplace. These benefits included increased motivation to complete their work, a

greater sense of loyalty and job satisfaction to their employer, which in turn, had an influence on retention. They also reported greater self-awareness and self-efficacy about how to do their job, greater knowledge transfer and skill development, and improved team performance. These benefits are summarised in the quotations described in Table 2.

Table 2: Reported Benefits of Coaching

Benefit	Quotation
Goal Achievement	"...coaching between Manager and Staff has been very positive for our organisation. It has helped me understand my staff, helped me see what their drivers are and I am then able to assist them within the organisation to meet their goals."
Retention	"I believe this (coaching) will go a long way towards retaining these young people and I know the effort we put in will bring rewards associated with keeping them on staff and helping them progress through the organisation."
Efficacy	"I have noticed that the ... Managers are more energised and motivated since his arrival ... this manager is going to have a very positive effect on the productivity, competence, confidence of the managers and in turn a very positive effect on the organisation, through coaching."
	"... effective coaching has real positive organisational impacts. Personally, benefits I have experienced include a far better understanding of my strengths and more importantly my weaknesses and blind spots, and a growing level of confidence in my abilities (in particular my capability to extend beyond current role responsibilities)."
	"...being coached has made me so much more self aware of my strengths and weaknesses and rather than just ignore my weaknesses and believe that is just who I am, by actually working on improving them and moving out of my comfort zone I become a better worker"
Skill Development	"In my first year of teaching I had a great coach he was supportive and organised. He knew what he was doing and did it well and my skills grew immensely as a result of his guidance. I became a better teacher as a result which was good for my school and students."
Job Satisfaction	"As this coaching happened with the other team members as well, our business unit work very well as a team. Job satisfaction was high in the whole team and I improved my work performance, increasing the challenges of my goals each year."
	"The result of this coaching to the organisation was a very loyal, committed and productive employee. The benefits to me were great job satisfaction through being asked to stretch myself and greater confidence in my abilities."
Knowledge Transfer	"Coaching is a very important part of our organisation operations where a large amount of our corporate knowledge is based on "tacit knowledge". The best medium to transfer this knowledge is through two way communication. Tacit knowledge is also difficult to document in procedures and policies. Therefore continuous maintenance of knowledge transfer is a major factor in knowledge transfer."
Organisational Productivity	"As performance targets were clearly defined, recurrently reported and readily measurable, areas of declining performance were visibly identifiable. In such circumstances, my coach would always provide me with support and encouragement, whilst also offering suggestions and seeking my input, as to how we could (mutually) address any performance related issues. As a direct result of his coaching ability, the Region was consistently one of the most

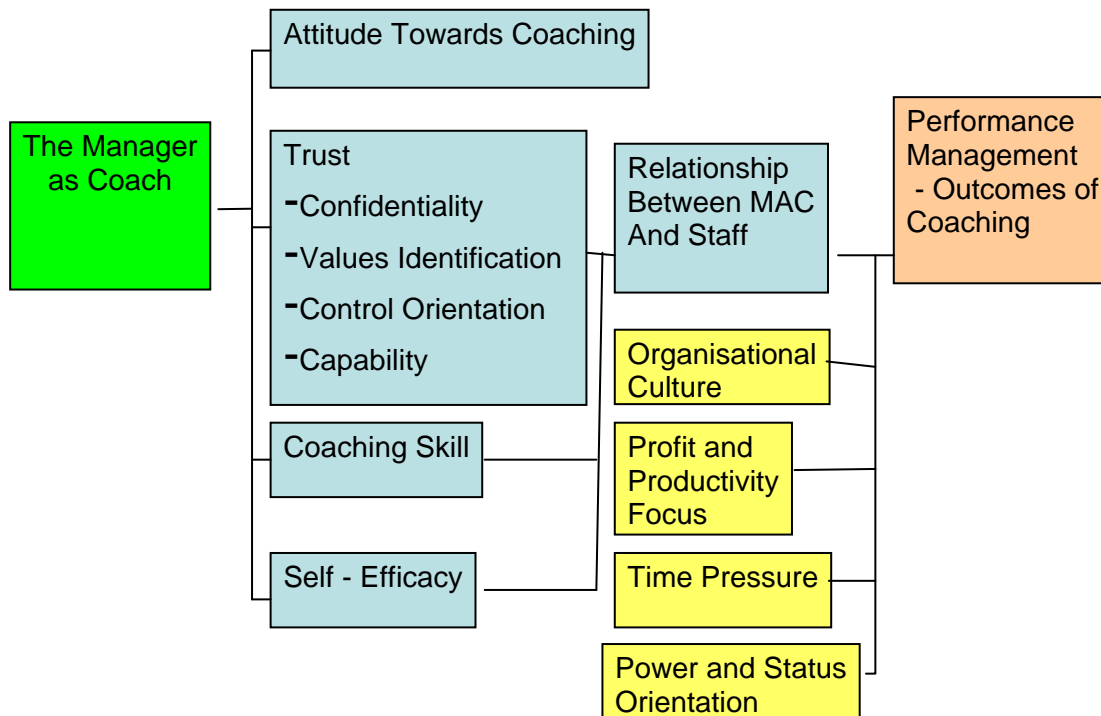
	successful in Australia.”
	“Being honest, sincere and specific in my feedback, the team were able to build on their existing knowledge base. Frequent coaching sessions and applying various techniques (i.e. role plays, joint customer visits) helped to improve their overall competence, confidence and results. Within 6 months, my team was one of the top nationally, consistently exceeding revenue and productivity targets.”

A Model of the Manager as Coach and Performance Management Outcomes

The outcomes of this case study, along with the review of the literature, suggest a conceptual model that might be tested more deeply in a quantitative manner using larger samples and specific measurement scales designed to explore the MAC role. The limitations associated with a qualitative case study are that it does not provide for representativeness. It merely provides a picture or description of the phenomena called the MAC role and its influence in performance management processes. While a large number of people shared views in the discussion boards, the data is not controlled for in any way. Further, participants themselves, having enrolled in a unit called management effectiveness, may not be representative of the broader management community. What the case study has provided, however, is a framework for building a model that might be tested in organizations more broadly. This would increase the rigour of investigation in to the MAC role and its impact on performance management.

The model, which stems from this case study research, is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework For Measuring The Impact of the MAC Role on Performance Management Outcomes



The model illustrates that the MAC’s ability to build a relationship is dependent upon several variables. These variables include the MAC’s attitude towards coaching, their ability to build trust, maintain confidentiality, understand core values of their subordinates, the ability to reduce power disparities between the parties, and their capability as a manager. Their coaching skill and self-efficacy or confidence is also fundamental to the success of the relationship. These variables combine to determine the quality of the interaction between the MAC and his/her staff. Theoretically, exploring this component of the model would provide further insights into what is key and integral to the MAC role, and the impact this has on the interpersonal relationship between the MAC and subordinate.

There are also moderating variables which influence the relationship between the MAC and the PM outcomes. These variables include the organisation’s culture towards learning and coaching, its profit and productivity focus, the time pressures individuals must work against, and the power and status orientation of the organisation. These moderating variables can influence PM outcomes regardless of the relationship between the MAC and a staff member. For example, a MAC may be able to build a good relationship with a staff member and be effective in the PM process. However, if the culture of the organisation does not support such an investment and there is a great deal of pressure to be highly productive, participants in the process may divest from the process. This ultimately produces a negative influence on the relationship between the MAC, his/her staff and the outcomes of coaching. Exploring the impact of moderating variables on the outcomes of coaching is an important

individuals who want to invest in this developmental strategy. If moderating variables are found to have a significant impact on the outcomes of coaching, then organisations that elect to adopt more coaching methodologies in the workplace are going to have to consider their internal core values and philosophies, as these will impact on performance management outcomes and the coaching process.

Conclusions

This working paper has attempted to bring forward current conceptualisations of the MAC role as viewed by a sample of individuals in contemporary workplaces. Through this case study, and a review of the literature, it appears that the MAC role is an important competency of current day managers as it does lead to noteworthy outcomes for organizations. The principles of coaching, the MAC role, and the literature on performance management, when considered as a whole, raise important practical questions about the role of managers and their training for contemporary workplaces.

The MAC role is executed typically through a PM philosophy and process within the organisation. As noted in this working paper, there are important factors that managers need to consider in order to develop effective relationships with their staff as these facilitate the PM process. However, the practical implications for integrating the MAC role into workplaces requires that senior leaders of organisations be aware of institutional factors which influence coaching outcomes in the workplace. There are a range of factors which have the potential to reduce organisational learning, despite efforts to implement the MAC role in a ongoing and regular performance management process. By being aware of the interplay between all of these variables (the MAC role, the PM philosophy, and organisational factors) managers can more effectively build successful PM processes through the MAC role by understanding more deeply what makes it work.

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