The Manager as Coach as a Driver of Organizational Development

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this case study research is to explore the Manager as Coach (MAC) role as an organisational development strategy, in particular, aspects of the relationship between manager and employee that make it successful. The purpose of the MAC in the business context is to help employees consider how they might work and behave differently with more effective behaviours that produce better outcomes, without a reliance on the formal authority the manager possesses. **Design:** A qualitative case study approach was adopted in which individuals shared their experiences as MAC and/or as an Employee receiving coaching from a Manager in an asynchronous online discussion forum. These discussions were then qualitatively analysed. **Findings:** The findings illustrate the complexity of the MAC role and why many managers fail in this role, leading to a loss of engagement and motivation of staff. Similarly, factors which strengthen the relationship between the MAC and employee, such as trust, shared values, and benevolence lead to success in this organisational relationship. **Practical Implications:** Managers need to understand how to operate as a MAC to elevate organisational performance. Similarly, organisational developers need to understand what is required in training programs to develop managers into coaches if they are to employ this strategy successfully. **Originality:** This practitioner oriented paper builds upon a case study which explores the MAC role and integrates the findings with contemporary knowledge on performance management and coaching.

Key Words: Manager as Coach, Performance Management, Trust

Paper Category: Case Study/Conceptual

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Introduction

Research would suggest that coaching does boost organisational productivity (D'Abate et al., 2003) particularly in organizations where performance management (PM) and coaching are used, as opposed to performance appraisal (Goleman, 2000, Lindbom, 2007, Yu, 2007, Olivero et al., 1997). In the context of management and organizations, the Manager as Coach (MAC) role is an organisational development strategy that focuses on changing the relationship between manager and employee (Ellinger et al., 2003). The purpose of working with staff in the MAC role is to help employees consider and discover how they might work and behave differently with more effective behaviours that produce better outcomes (Wakefield, 2006). This is distinct from using one's authority as a manager and telling staff what they have to do to improve work outcomes. The former approach, which helps employees to consider and discover, is inextricably linked to success in PM whereby the effectiveness of the process relies on the MAC to support, and not dictate, employee development (Wood and Marshall, 1993).

Employee coaching through the MAC role should be a core managerial skill. It 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). There are certain skills that the MAC cannot live without if they are to be successful in this role. These skills are interpersonal effectiveness, listening, empathy, patience, adaptability and problem solving (Wasylyshyn, 2003) to name a few.

Whilst it may seem relatively straightforward how the MAC role is embedded into the performance management conversation, the literature suggests that despite the positive

outcomes that appear to be associated with coaching many managers may not be undertaking this role with their staff. Views of managers suggest that the MAC role is far too time consuming and feels too much like personal development (Goleman, 2000, Lindbom, 2007) which interferes with achieving bottom line performance targets.

The aim of this conceptual and practitioner oriented paper, therefore, is to explore the MAC role, and to discuss how this is enabled or disabled between the manager and their subordinate. Hence, the key question that emerges from this aim is: what are the factors that build an effective relationship between the MAC and their subordinate, thereby enabling effective developmental interactions that support growth and development in the PM process. Before this question is interrogated, three components of the literature are reviewed, namely, the MAC, trust, and performance management.

Literature Review

The Manager as Coach

The definitions of mentoring, coaching and other constructs that describe developmental interactions have been reviewed and categorised in the literature as they often overlap in their descriptions (D'Abate et al., 2003). There is certainly no consensus on a definition of coaching and to ease this ambiguity (D'Abate et al., 2003) have developed a taxonomy of six categories, with a total of 22 sub-categories describing developmental interactions. 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, with goal setting, providing practical application, feedback and teaching as components.

In the context of management, coaching is becoming a popular organisational development strategy and is designed to help employees address individual functional knowledge gaps and

skills (Yu, 2007, Baek-Kyoo, 2005). The MAC role is a process where managers create opportunities for an individual to gain insights into their performance, aimed at guiding and inspiring employees to improve their work (London, 2003). The concept of the MAC has been developed in the literature since the 1980s (McLean et al., 2005) and is seen as a strategy to change the relationship between a boss and a subordinate. It is based on a set of skills that can be learned and developed. The MAC role 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 quite distinct from 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 of leadership. Instead, the MAC builds a relationship around trust and believes in the capabilities of the individuals who form part of his/her team.

However, as noted earlier, coaching is not the only role of the MAC. There are other roles and beliefs which may create complications for the MAC role. For example, finding the time to coach is always a challenge given the multiple demands on the manager (Goleman, 2000, Goleman et al., 2001). 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 et al., 1993).

Managers may also differ in their inclination to coach subordinates (London, 2003). For example, individuals who hold an entity theory perspective are disinclined to invest in others

to develop and improve as they see human attributes as innate and unalterable (Dweck, 1999, Heslin et al., 2006). Managers who believe that personal attributes are malleable and can be developed have a more incremental theory perspective to human development. A person's implicit theory perspective, therefore, will have an influence on their coaching behaviour (Heslin et al., 2006). Thankfully, individuals can shift from an entity theory to incremental theory belief system through training.

There is also a specific skill base that the MAC requires if they are to be successful in this role. What is commonly described as being fundamental to success in coaching is: 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 (Evered and Selman, 1989).

A manager's emotional intelligence is also 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 et al., 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 et al., 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).

The manager's inclination towards coaching, workload and available time, coaching skill and emotional intelligence are all factors which underpin the success of manager in the MAC role. These factors influence the likelihood of trust being developed between the subordinate and the manager as coach. The importance of trust is paramount, hence, it is explored in more detail in the next section.

Trust

Trust is an important component of any coaching relationship (Baek-Kyoo, 2005) and is constructed by individuals in organizations to create a level of predictability. Interpersonal trust improves cooperation as a result of the effective working relationships that develop between individuals (Massey and Kyngdon, 2005) but it takes a significant amount of time and energy to build trust. 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).

The MAC needs to develop strategies to gain the trust of their subordinates in order to move into more successful coaching partnerships. Unfortunately, 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). Edmondson (2008), for example, demonstrates how a focus on execution-as-efficiency versus execution-as-learning led to record losses in profits in a large company. Plunging morale, declining productivity, increases in work related stress, and destruction of trust have occurred as a result of this economic rationalisation (Farnham, 1989). Employees have lost psychological safety as a result of this bottom-line perspective (Edmondson, 2008) thus making it even more challenging for the MAC to build trust. In order to do this, a more personal focus on the relationship between the MAC and subordinate is required. To do this, however, an understanding of trust as an interpersonal phenomenon needs to be reviewed.

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 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. 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 more so by the emotional bonds between individuals, for example, how much genuine concern is exhibited for the care and welfare of that person.

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 longer term relationships.

These same bi-dimensional aspects of trust can be seen in another model of trust (Hurley, 2006) which is used to guide discussion in this paper. This model involves decision-making (akin to cognitive-based) and situational consideration (akin to affect-based). There are 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. Where 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 encompasses situational factors, which are concerned with the relational aspects of the manager-subordinate relationship. The first is security and how much

is at stake in the relationship. Where the stakes are very high, trust decreases to ensure security. 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. The third factor is how well do interests align with one another. If interests align, trust will increase. 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. Predictability and following through on what one says also increases trust significantly. Lastly, the communication skills of the manager are important. Poor communication increases suspicion and miscommunication makes people feel betrayed, thus creating a loss of integrity. Honest communication, however, increases trust.

The MAC needs to understand these basic constructs of trust as they are key to building a relationship with staff. Until trust is established, it is difficult to enter MAC role in the performance management context.

Performance Management and the Manager as Coach

The performance management philosophy of an organisation also influences the MAC relationship with subordinates and the outcomes of the coaching relationship. It 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). For example, if management espouses teamwork and cooperation yet performance appraisal is used to emphasise accountability, efficiency and productivity, it may be more

difficult to create trust and engage subordinates in a coaching paradigm. A distinction must be 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. While the manager must still appraise performance, the development of deficits and the elevation of strengths, flows from the MAC in the performance management relationship.

Much of the rhetoric in management is about participative work cultures, teams 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). These mixed messages and reward systems can interfere with the engagement process needed in the MAC and subordinate relationship.

The organization's culture towards learning and development is also a significant component of the PM process (Orth et al., 1987). The MAC needs to have regular discussions of performance with subordinates. This extends beyond formal meetings designed for this purpose and must include just in time information on good and poor performance (Lindbom, 2007). The conversations should revolve around discussions relating 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. A move towards more coaching practices in the PM process, however, can create real fear in management about loss of power and control (Foegen, 1998). Hence, the concept of the MAC role raises interesting challenges for the manager because of issues of span of control (Graham et al., 1994) and may explain the reluctance of its adoption by some managers.

Despite all the literature and information on developing human resources, the practice of performance appraisal continues to present with dissatisfaction and problems (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. The focus is still too centred 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. The MAC needs to understand this distinction, and the practices that are needed to operate within each perspective. 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. To provide evidence for this claim and to see how theory fits practice, a case study review was undertaken.

A Case Study on the Manager as Coach Role

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) and 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) and 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 studies (Eisenhardt, 1989, Meredith, 1998). In terms of advantages, it provides an opportunity to explore and understand the relevance of contemporary issues in some depth, with the ultimate purpose of testing 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 this particular case study data was qualitative and adopted an interpretive approach (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 the phenomenon can be explained within the context of the organizations they work within. This philosophy refers to the assumption that reality is constructed by people; and that individuals are attempting to understand and interpret the world in which they live (Guba and Lincoln, 2005).

Method

The data source for this case study was extracted from an asynchronous discussion board in a post-graduate business unit on managerial effectiveness as the investigator realised that what was emerging from the discussion was a deep socio-cultural dialogue on the MAC role and its influence within performance management contexts. The unit ran twice, and data was collected from the discussion boards in each of these unit administrations. Collection of data from web-based discussion boards offers content that is already in digital format, which accurately represents the views of individuals on particular topics as they enter the data themselves. This data can then be subjected to qualitative analysis using case study approaches as has been the case in other studies (Ladyshewsky and Gardner, 2008, Marshall et al., 2003a, Marshall et al., 2003b). Hence, the contributions offered by individuals had authenticity and trustworthiness, as they were not influenced by their knowledge that their comments were being collected for research purposes. By analysing the data after the unit

was completed, it prevented a situation where participants may have felt coerced to write inauthentic things about their coaching experiences because they knew their writings were being investigated. The investigator was also not the instructor of the unit. Hence, the investigator did not have a role in the discussions and did not shape or influence the conversations that ensued, which again helped to ensure authenticity and trustworthiness in the data set.

In terms of ethics, after the unit administrations were complete and students had received their final grades, a group email was distributed to all participants in the unit outlining the nature of this case study research that was to take place. If a student wanted their contributions removed from the data set (asynchronous discussion board), 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 approval from the University's ethics committee

The individuals in this study were a sample of convenience and involved 74 adult participants who shared their personal views and experiences on the MAC role. 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 in the unit. 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 et al., 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 et al., 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 (text) from the asynchronous discussion board was copied from the learning management system verbatim by the investigator, 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, using a process termed constant comparison (Creswell, 2003). The investigator must also 'bracket' or be aware of their own personal biases that may influence data analysis (Creswell, 2003). The investigator has a particular research interest in coaching. Hence, if one is to consider the MAC role in the context of performance management, the investigator is likely to encounter the influence of their own 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. This was achieved by maintaining a memo system, where these issues would be documented and 'bracketed' so that this awareness did not extend into the interpretation of the data.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are also measured in different ways in qualitative research and include terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Golafshani, 2003). 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). Trustworthiness and credibility was achieved through analysis of the multiple perspectives offered by participants in the asynchronous discussion board, and then exploring relationships within the data as well as to the scientific literature (triangulation). Transferability and confirmability 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. This makes the content plausible to others. Transferability and confirmability was confirmed by having two experts in performance

management review these rich descriptions offered by the participants. There was very good consensus regarding the plausability of the coding and themes that emerged from the data analysis among these experts. This check ensured that the interpretation of the data was sound and addressed concerns in qualitative research about transferability and confirmability.

The coding of data can take different forms. Codes can be descriptive, interpretive or used to denote patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994, Creswell, 2003). Descriptive codes describe a class of phenomenon in the text (invivo coding), whereas interpretive codes have a meaning that has been ascribed by the investigator (open coding). 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 (axial coding). All three coding practices were used in this data analysis to understand the role of the MAC in influencing relationships leading to effective performance management and development.

Results and Discussion

In summarising the information that was shared by participants in this case study, the concepts that emerged parallel those that were discussed in the earlier part of this paper in the literature review concerning the MAC, trust and performance management. For example, 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 and trusting outcome (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 benevolence by the manager (Nemeroff and Wexley, 1977), all important components of the MAC role, increased commitment and trust in the process.

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 (Hurley, 2006) between the manager and subordinate. All of these dimensions of trust building were seen in the following quotations:

> "Mutual respect and trust were fundamental to the success of my positive coaching experiences." *(integrity, mutuality)*
>
> "Discussions are very open and a feeling of trust and honesty exists" *(self-disclosure)*
>
> "Feeling able to discuss feelings and values openly and honestly … and knowing you can talk freely without retribution." (*authenticity, positive*)
>
> "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." *(confidentiality)*
>
> "…displaying integrity builds trust – do what you say you are going to do, be reliable. *(investing time, authenticity, integrity)*

In order to build trust, the MAC must be able to relinquish control and re-direct their focus towards learning. The 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, were less likely to get the engagement of their staff in a PM interaction. This is illustrated quite strongly in the following quotations.

> "I have come from an organisation …..that has had authoritarian leadership for two decades …..a problem for the successful introduction of coaching by managers is the total distrust of managers by the operational employees." *(authoritarian focus)*
>
> "I had one manager make an attempt at coaching…she used reflecting, listening, probing questions and encouraged self-direction. In the end I don't think it was very successful …because her usual style of management was to be controlling and directing." *(authoritarian focus)*

The inability of managers to relinquish control may stem, in part, from their own views of sharing power (Foegen, 1998) and create real fear in some managers about loss of power and control, which is seen as core to their practice. With this perspective, managers would see the need to use power and authority to invoke change, as noted below.

> "Managers do not want to coach their workers for fear that an empowered employee will attempt to usurp them out of their leadership role." *(loss of power)*
>
> "Senior members were clearly focussed on developing their own careers, and stunting any worker who threatened their rank, or position within the company." *(loss of control)*
>
> "There is often a fear that coaching will only promote competition for the established manager's position." *(loss of power, means of control)*

This suggests that organisational developers, wanting to develop the MAC role in their institutions must invest time and energy into changing beliefs, building a learning culture and training managers in this role.

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. The importance of values as a way of demonstrating similarity and building trust in the relationship (Jones and George, 1998, Brashear et al., 2003, Gillespie and Mann, 2004, Yilmaz and Hunt, 2001, Smith and Barclay, 1997) were noted by many individuals in this case study. Managers had to make an effort to get to know their staff at a personal level, and engage in discussions which identified values. This helped to increase alignment between the MAC, the individual staff members and the organisation.

> "…the importance of managers understanding their team members aspirations, values, ….I agree that this is key to effective management." *(interest alignment)*
>
> "…a coach is more than that, it is about getting alongside someone and understanding their vision and values and helping them make it happen." *(values identification)*
>
> "…taking the time to build a relationship with each staff member, find out their aspirations, values …" *(building shared values, creating membership)*

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) as they lack credibility. In this situation, staff develop negative views of their manager and are not likely to engage with or welcome coaching.

> "Her approach to coaching was a failure … She does not communicate her expectations clearly and by lack of communication with her staff she does not know the problems faced by the team. The low job satisfaction and lack of support has resulted in the team's poor performance." *(lack of credibility)*
>
> "…the lack of commitment and direction by my manager led 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." *(lack of capability)*

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. 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 can't just separate out the performance dimensions. 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.

When coaching practices are brought into the PM process, and a removal away from appraisal takes place, it appears that acceptance with the process can be increased. This has been echoed in previous research over 20 years ago, and is re-surfacing under the badge of coaching, which seems to be taking the business world by storm. When managers provide frequent, non-evaluative feedback about performance, which is consistent with information from peers and other sources in the workplace, employees are more likely to engage in the coaching process and make PM easier and more accepted. The process must be seen as fair and reasonable and managers must invest the appropriate time to create the mutuality that is important for engagement in the process (Greenberg, 1986). While there is still space for

appraisal in the human resource processes of most organisations, as individuals still need to attain key benchmarks for performance, the process of moving individuals towards these targets is often better achieved through coaching. By looking at the skill base of the MAC, the context of PM, and relationship factors that build trust, it is possible to elevate the influence and effects of coaching in workplaces by managers.

Conclusion

Coaching in the workplace, between a manager and a subordinate, is part of an overall organizational development and performance management philosophy. It is a core skill required of managers and should be emphasised in organizational development initiatives to ensure managers understand the importance of this process in performance management. This paper has noted the importance of coaching skill, trust building, and awareness of PM processes in the MAC – subordinate relationship. Managers need to learn how to build trust by understanding its components and putting in to place practices that support this engagement. Trust, however, is only one component of a successful MAC – Subordinate relationship. Emotional intelligence, communication skill, the manager's conceptions of power and authority, and the framing of the PM process appear to be critical factors that create employee engagement in coaching processes.

Training and development of managers in the coaching process, and encouraging leadership to adopt more learning centred practices in their organizations, also will facilitate the adoption of coaching practices more readily into the workplace by all parties. This will facilitate engagement between managers and subordinates in the process and hopefully lead to more successful learning and development and worker performance. The training experience, however, must go beyond teaching managers basic coaching skills. Factors such as emotional intelligence, building trust and understanding the role of values and how these inspire and

motivate staff need to be addressed in these training initiatives. In addition to these

components, exploring the personal perspectives of managers with respect to staff

development must also be considered in training and development programs. For some

managers, such training will be quite transformational for them in their role as manager as

coach. The MAC role requires a paradigm shift in many managers, and any training or

organisational development strategy to position these leaders in to the MAC role must take

this into consideration.

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