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Does Management Education Need a Facelift? The Intersection of Managing, Leading, and Coaching. Part I

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the premise that coaching should be actively integrated into management education. This paper will be the *first* in a series of papers that will explore coaching as a meaningful body of knowledge, skills, and theories, for business managers and leaders. The premise of coaching as a component of management education probes the alignment with workplace preparation. The growing profession of coaching and its integration into the workplace, demands our attention as business educators. We must ensure that business education remains cutting-edge and relevant to both the needs of organizational leaders *and* to our students' professional goals. A review of the business accreditation expectations finds an invitation for coaching to integrate smoothly as a relevant and meaningful component of management education. The alignment of *coaching theory* and the *organizational behavior curriculum* suggests a natural fit that will modernize business education. The outcome will empower our students as they prepare for their professional journey. The goal of this *multi*-paper exploration is to seek answers related to the question, *Does Management Education need a facelift? If so, should the coaching body of knowledge, skills, and theories, be integrated into management and business education?*

Keywords

Pedagogy, Coaching, Leadership, Manager Development.

1 INTRODUCTION

A series of scholarly papers will explore management education and *coaching* as a meaningful body of knowledge, skills, and theories, for business managers and leaders. The discipline of coaching lives outside of the traditional business curriculum; at the most, it lives at its fringe. Yet, the skills and knowledge of coaching can serve senior leaders as they face their daily challenges. Coaching aligns with, and supports, participative leadership and empowerment (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2020; DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019). A coaching approach serves leaders and managers as they gain insights on their own thinking; it also serves leaders as they learn how to motivate and empower their followers.

The profession of coaching has significantly expanded. Executive coaches partner with senior leaders to onboard them to their new roles. They also prepare highly valued talent to rise-up and be *ready* for the senior leadership opportunities that require self-awareness and thought-leadership.

As scholars and educators, we must explore whether coaching knowledge and skills should be actively integrated into the program-level learning outcomes for graduate business education? Currently, training for coach practitioners and internal executive coaches emerges from external organizations, rather than from the universities and colleges. Are business schools lagging behind this shift in leadership preparation? Coaching can be a powerful tool, as well as can lay the foundation as a meaningful philosophy, that can serve emerging and future leaders.

This Paper is the First in a Series of Papers that will Explore Coaching.

The relationship of leader behavior and management education is the lens that will guide the future exploration. The full exploration will include the definition of coaching, the theoretical foundation of coaching, the practice of coaching, the coaching profession, the intersection of coaching, managing, and leading, the influence of coaching on its clients, the influence of a coaching philosophy upon an organizational culture, and role of higher education business education to prepare future leaders to *be* coached and *to* coach.

The introduction, value, and understanding of a coaching culture has **not** explicitly found its way into the canon of management education. A forward thinking leader, who seeks to create a coaching culture in his or her organization, may find resistance or reluctance from many of the organization's emerging or subordinate leaders and managers. One reason may be that these individuals were not introduced to coaching as a legitimate management practice within their traditional business curriculum and management education (Jamison, 2018).

The goal of this multi-paper exploration is to answer the question, *Does Management Education need a facelift? If so, should the coaching body of knowledge, skills, and theories, be integrated into management and business education?*

2 WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

The Relevance of Higher Education and Business Education.

Higher Education is limping away from the Global Pandemic. Enrollment is down for many institutions. College Presidents point to the pandemic as the source of their financial woes. Yet, the challenges that higher education leaders and stakeholders are facing are being *masked* by the 2020 Pandemic. In the March 6, 2020 Chronicle of Higher Education, *prior* to the shutdown of face-to-face education across the United States, it was reported that 30% of colleges face some market risk with 10% of colleges facing *severe* market risk.

Covid-19 has become the 'go-to' phrase for everything that has disappointment attached. Academics are soothing themselves and deflecting blame. At the 2020 NBEA Conference, I presented the factors that influenced higher education under-performance *prior to the 2020 Pandemic*. Acceptance and accountability may inspire academic leadership to recognize the factors that had weakened Higher Education; the global pandemic was the straw that broke our backs. (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2020).

The influencing factors of Higher Education's underperformance *prior to the 2020 Pandemic*, started with **Public Doubt**. There is questionable confidence in the value of a college education. The student debt crisis has severely fed the doubt that a college education is relevant and worth the cost. Evidence reflects that earning a college-degree will significantly improve the economic future of an individual (Source: Georgetown University), yet, *public doubt continues to rise*; "Americans worry that college costs too much, wonder what students are learning, and questions the **value** of a degree" (The Trends Report, 2019, CHE). The cost of college is so severe that students and their parents are looking for the tangible economic outcomes of this significant financial investment. Is the knowledge, skills, and disposition gained **relevant to the professional journey and goals of the student?**

The role of the academic scholar is to keep his or her thumb on the pulse of the discipline and to explore and create new knowledge that will serve the discipline. The university scholar *translates* this gained knowledge into a robust educational environment that should be cutting edge. That is what we *say*, but is that what are *doing*?

Premier Workforce Preparation.

The market is changing; organizational life is changing. The threat of professional organizations becoming the 'go-to' educational providers, as is the case with *leadership and executive coaching*, is chilling. Business Schools must take the lead as the premier source of business education. The Mega-university offers a degree at a low cost with high convenience. Some students believe that the credential of a college education is all that is needed, regardless of the educational content. Low cost + speed + convenience = Degree (Mackenzie-Ruppel, 2020). The student's strategy may be to get *any* degree and then let industry certifications educate! We, as scholars, academics, and business educators, need to re-ignite our roles; we must become the influencers of cutting edge business practices.

3 BUSINESS EDUCATION

Higher Education in the United States is decentralized. There is no universal set of requirements that define *good* education for a discipline. Education oversight emerges from four viewpoints: (1) state government, (2) academic disciplines and their voluntary national associations, (3) educational institutions and their regional and national associations, and (4) the federal government (Harclerod, 1980). The long arm of the Department of Education has reach with funding for students and colleges with regional accreditation, yet, neither the Department of Education nor the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHE) accredits individual institutions. CHE provides national advocacy for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation. The Higher Education Act of 1965 authorizes a range of federal resources for individuals and institutions of higher education (Hegji, 2018). Regional accreditors have been accountable to the Department of Education and organically developed from 1885 to 1923. These non-profit organizations set standards for the higher education institutions (e.g., MSCHE), but did not dip deep into the disciplines (Harclerod & Eaton, 2005). The discipline-specific business program accreditors filled that role. The business program accreditors seek to provide evidence of educational quality at the program level (e.g., AACSB). And finally, it is the state government that holds the authority to permit an institution to grant a degree such as the Bachelor of Science or the Masters of Business Administration.

Within this web of accreditation and authority, where would the rewriting of an academic discipline be valued and expected? Explicit New York State Education Department (NYSED) requirements for business education appear to be limited to Liberal Arts and Science credits, seat-time, and that the curriculum proceeds in an orderly fashion from an introductory level to an advanced level. The content is *not* explicitly controlled. Rather, NYSED simply states that the degree curriculum is coherent and expresses the philosophy of the program and institution as well as is consistent with the *professional expectations of the field*. When seeking approval, the guidance from the state is that the “syllabi are demonstrably consistent with, or superior to those of comparable courses and programs at comparable institutions” (Program Registration, 2020).

Business Education Accreditation.

In seeking guidance as to the professional expectations *of the field*, the deep dive should be with the program level accreditors for business education. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) was founded in 1916 with the intent of connecting educators, students, and business so these stakeholders would develop the curriculum for the next generation of leaders. A business school that chooses to be accredited by the AACSB must be prepared to follow its rigorous standards, yet there is no explicit clarity on curriculum *content*. Recently, there has been an intentional move away from a model or prescribed curriculum (AACSB, 2021), leaving the institutions to make their own decisions as to the content of their business curriculum.

A review of the AACSB standards provides *invitation* as to the coaching skills, theories, and knowledge. The AACSB had shifted from its 2013 defined list of skills and knowledge areas to a broader definition of what is expected of curriculum content. The 2013 standard 9 included required skill development of *reflective thinking*, which was further defined as the student’s ability to “*understand oneself in the context of society*” (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). Also included in the skills requirement was *Interpersonal relations and teamwork; the ability to “work effectively with others and in team environments”* (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). The knowledge area where the coaching knowledge would fit is in the “*approaches to management*” and “*group and individual behaviors in organizations and society*” (AACSB, 2013, p. 35). The first time leadership emerged in the 2013 standards is at the graduate level with a fit for coaching theories: *Leading in organizational situations, thinking creatively, and framing problems and developing creative solutions in the specialized discipline*” (AACSB, 2013, p. 35-36).

The current AACSB standards articulate that a valued business curriculum “*promotes a lifelong learning mindset in learners, including creativity, intellectual curiosity, and critical and analytical thinking.*” Program standards expect the program to “*foster a lifelong learning mindset,*” expecting that “*curriculum should reflect current and innovative business theories and practices.*” (AACSB, 2020, p. 38, standard 4.3). At the graduate level, it is expected that students are prepared to *lead an organization, manage in a diverse global context, think creatively, make sound decisions and exercise good judgment under uncertainty.* (AACSB, 2020, p. 39, standard 4.1). Essential to the AACSB standards is that the “*Faculty demonstrate a lifelong learning mindset with respect to their domain expertise. This means faculty take responsibility for continuing their professional development to maintain currency and relevancy in their field of expertise and embrace the idea that we never stop learning.*” (AACSB, 2020, p. 47, standard 7.3). In both the 2013 and the current standards, ‘Executive Education’ is discussed, but positioned **outside** of the degree, defined as “*educational activities that do not lead to a degree but have educational objectives at a level consistent with higher education in management. Examples include corporate training or professional development seminars*” (AACSB, 2020, p. 41, ‘Definitions’; and 2013 & p. 42 under ‘Standard 5’, ‘Assurance of Learning’).

Most compelling is the recent research by the AACSB on lifelong learning and talent management. The coaching skills and knowledge are *not* explicitly cited, but to a coaching professional it is implied. For example, “*...learners themselves must take on more responsibility, including the assessment of their own needs and the identification and selection of learning alternatives to address those needs. New tools and platforms are being built to help learners address this challenge.*” (AACSB 2018, p. 6). Relevant to the focus on management education within business schools is the AACSB’s recognition that much education is taking place within the corporate world. Its exploration focused on the “*overlapping space between lifelong learning and company-based talent management.*” (AACSB, 2018, p. 7). Chilling is the emerging insight that some “*companies are beginning to question whether their degree requirements are hindering rather than helping their efforts to attract talent with the skills they need*” (AACSB, 2018, p. 14). Two challenges in the talent management arena included: (1) a pedagogical approach for closing the skill gaps and (2) skills that the talent managers require (AACSB, 2018, p. 19).

4 COACHING IS A GROWING PROFESSION

Professional Organizations.

In 1995 a Thomas Leonard, a professional coach, started a non-profit called the International Coach Federation (ICF). Its purpose was to support fellow coaches. By 1996 a president was appointed and a board established; by May there were over 60 ICF chapters. A coach referral system was set up in 1997 and the discussion of credentialing began. By 1998 the first ICF credentials were awarded and in 1999 the ICF hired an executive director, hired a management company to manage the day-to-day tasks, and began to accredit coaching programs. At this early stage, ICF membership exceeded 2100. By 2000 ICF membership was consistently growing with members coming from Asia, Australia, and Europe. In 2001 a unique 24 hour coaching conversation was hosted by the ICF board members. In 2002 the ICF established a Regulatory Committee to protect and preserve the integrity of the coaching profession. In 2004 membership reached 7900 +. The ICF embarked on a strategic review of its practices with

an outside consultant. In 2005 the ICF raised its standards of its credentials. In 2006 the ICF began work on a strategic plan and in 2007 ICF and PriceWaterHouseCoopers (PWC) published results of its global coaching study. In 2010 the ICF celebrated 15 years with 17,000 members, 6900 holding ICF credentials. Credentialed-members rose to 10,000 in 2013, 15,000 in 2014, and 25,000 in 2018. In 2020 ICF celebrated 25 years as a source of research and served as a leading global organization for coaches and coaching. It is dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by setting high standards, providing independent certification and building a worldwide network of trained coaching professionals. By May 2019 the ICF had 36,848 members in 145 countries (ICF 2021; International Coaching Federation, 2020). The latest membership is at 41,500 (International Coaching Federation Website).

Additional professional and international coaching organizations that have strengthened the profession include: The International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentoring (IAPC&M), Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC), International Association of Coaching (IAC), and the Association of Coaching (AoC).

The Profession.

In 2019 the ICF commissioned PriceWaterHouseCoopers (PWC) to conduct its fourth major research study (International Coaching Federation, 2020). ICF's first study was in 2007, with follow-up studies in 2012 and 2016. The results revealed a growing profession as both individuals and organizations have adopted and integrated coaching practices. The use of coaching skills has expanded beyond professionally trained coach practitioners to include managers, leaders, human resource professionals, and talent-development professionals. These stakeholders are applying coaching competencies in their daily workplace interactions. For that reason, the scope of the 2016 study was widened to include managers and leaders who *use* coaching skills in the workplace. The 2019 study was launched in nine languages and attracted 22,457 responses from 161 countries and territories. Returns represented a 46% increase from 2016 study. The study sought to understand the coaching continuum, which describes the range of modalities in which coaching approaches and competences are being used. The coaching continuum includes five categories: (1) Managers and leaders who uses coaching skills, (2) Human Resource and Talent development professionals, who uses coaching skills, (3) individuals who work as both internal and external coach practitioners, (4) individuals who serve solely as internal coach practitioners, and (5) individuals who serve solely as external coach practitioners.

Results revealed that there were approximately 71,000 coach practitioners in 2019. This reflected an increase of 33% on the 2016 estimate. Add to this statistic the number of managers and leaders using coaching skills, which was estimated to have risen by 46%, bringing the total estimate to 86,900 individuals using coaching skills and approaches in the workplace. The majority of coach practitioners were in the Generation X age cohort overall, but in North American, the majority of coaches were Baby boomers. 70% of coach practitioners were female (75% in North American) and 68% of managers and leaders using coaching skills were female; 77% in North America (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

The estimated global total revenue from coaching in 2019 was \$2.849 billion USD, which reflected a 21% increase over the 2016 estimate. 99% of the responding coach practitioners reported completing coach-specific training. 85% of the training was accredited or approved by a professional coaching organization (e.g., ICF). Compelling to this exploration is that only 10% of the training was university-based (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

Business Coaching, which includes leadership, executive, business, organizational, and small businesses, is up to 65% in 2019 from 62% in 2016. 94% of coach practitioners offered other services (e.g., consulting, training, facilitation services). 50% of coaches reported that clients are mostly managers and executives. A typical coaching client was between 35 and 44 years of age (37%); 30% were 45-55 years old and 24% were under 35 years old (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

Related to the group of Managers and Leaders who were using coaching skills, 61% have a masters or doctoral degree and 34% have a Bachelor's degree. 55% of these managers agreed that their coaching clients expected them to have a credential. 48% of these managers and leaders are members of professional organizations (International Coaching Federation, 2020).

5 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Business education is not an end in itself, but rather a means to developing future leaders who have both the skill and motivation to positively influence their organizations. The intersection of managing, leading, and coaching may strengthen future leaders toward this end. Research has revealed the criteria for establishing a strong coaching culture and has explored related topics such as: coaching and employee engagement, training and professional development for leaders and managers to learn coaching skills, coaching and leadership development for new managers and for millennials, as well as coaching to manage change (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019).

A series of studies spanning six years, sponsored by the Human Capital Institute (HCI) in collaboration with the International Coach Federation (ICF), have focused on coaching cultures in organizations (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019). The most recent study explored professional development for internal coaches and for organizational managers and leaders who use coaching

skills and approaches. The study evaluated the impact of the coaching on the organization. The 366 subjects included Human Resource, Learning & Development, and Talent Management Professionals.

The results revealed that thirty-two percent (32%) of responding organizations used internal coach practitioners, external coach practitioners, and have managers and leaders using coaching skills. Approximately 83% of organizations reported plans to expand the use of coaching skills by their organizational leaders and managers. Respondents reported that coaching activities were used to develop leaders (55%), enhance performance management discussions (49%), and to develop talent (51%) (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019).

When selecting coaches for the organization, it was revealed that both trust and credibility are selection factors. Referrals from consulting firms and trusted individuals supported coach selection. Both coaching credentials and previous coaching experience were essential qualifications in selecting external coach practitioners. Related to budgeting, 25% of responding organizations have a dedicated coaching budget allocating approximately 21% of their training budget for coaching related activities. Organizations that reported a strong coaching culture also had more resources for coaching initiatives such as coach specific training for internal coach practitioners and for managers and leaders who use coaching skills (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019).

A challenge is effectively evaluating the impact of coaching on the organization. This inability to measure is an obstacle to building a strong coaching culture. However, the study respondents did reveal that characteristics of high-performing organizations were correlated with organizations reporting a strong coaching culture, including high-performer retention (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019).

6 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF COACHING

Coaching is defined by the ICF as *partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential* (International Coaching Federation website, 2021). The coaching process is different from mentoring, consulting, and therapy. The coach uses powerful questioning to discover, clarify, and align with what the coachee wants to achieve. The coach encourages coachee self-discovery, so that the coachee can generate solutions and strategies that move forward the coachee's agenda toward goal attainment (Filipkowski, Heverin, Ruth, 2019, p. 5).

The theoretical foundation for coaching builds on a rich history. The early influencers include Napoleon Hill (1883 -1870), who focused on positive thinking for mental gain; Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) who believed that attitude creates progress; Dale Carnegie (1888-1955), who developed a philosophy and training for personal improvement; and Bill Wilson (1895-1971) and Bob Smith (1871-1950), who together founded Alcoholics Anonymous and developed the Big Book. Collectively these self-help philosophers place the emphasis on self-reliance (Wildflower, 2013).

The emergence of Humanistic Psychology (1950s) leads to the next step of understanding the human drive, moving beyond Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis and B.F. Skinner's Behaviorism. Humanistic Psychology sees the individual as good. Pathology is not the focus. A holistic view with a focus on raising up human potential emerges (Maslow, 1968; Wildflower, 2013).

Managerial coaching is the term used by managers who coach their employees. Research results have suggested that the use of coaching to optimize potential is a style of participative management and leadership, rather than an autocratic or directive style of management. Mace and Mahler introduced managers using coaching skills and by the 1970s, this idea began to take hold in the business world (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019).

The theoretical foundation of coaching further evolved as Richard Price (studied Psychology at Harvard) met Michael Murphy (influenced during his time at an Ashram in India), to found the Esalen Institute in Big Sur California. The influences of Zen Buddhism and eastern philosophies emerged at a time when social constructs, such as racial inequality, gender stereotypes, and anti-war activism, were being challenged (Wildflower, 2013). The exploration of human potential allowed for new beliefs to emerge that "*human beings could be greater, achieve more freedom, and accomplish more than had been commonly imagined*" (Wildflower, 2013, p. 13). An early contributor to Esalen's thinking is the same theorist that is foundational to the study of Organizational Behavior, Dr. Abraham Maslow. His book, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Maslow, 1968) was considered breakthrough in the field of human potential and popular reading at Esalen. Kurt Lewin's work on Group Dynamics (coined in the 1940s) was heavily used at Esalen to help individuals explore what happens inside groups and how people react to the different encounters. Will Schultz (1925-2002), a Harvard Professor, left academia and joined Esalen as the group encounter became a primary experience for attendees. Schultz' development of the Firo-B instrument intended to help bring people together for self-understanding, and to understand the connectedness among others (Wildflower, 2013, p. 15). The Firo-B instrument recognized that people have interpersonal needs that will influence interactions with others. His instrument measured the three dimensions of need, which included (1) inclusion, (2) control, and (3) affection. Schultz' research revealed human stumbling blocks related to fear, rigidity, and defensiveness, as well as other reasons human interactions are not always smooth (Schultz 1994; Wildflower 2013, p. 145).

7 WHY IS COACHING UNIQUE?

More organizations are hiring executive coaches to help onboard senior leaders, to remove barriers so that talented leaders are able to move up, and to optimize leaders' abilities and influence by removing limiting thoughts. More senior leaders are being trained to coach others within the organization. The coaching profession is growing. The ability to increase human potential through coaching by partnering with a coachee to change the way he or she thinks, is gaining recognition in organizational life.

Management education regularly includes within its curriculum a course on Organizational Behavior (OB). The theorists that are foundational to the coaching profession are also foundational to the OB discipline (e.g., Kurt Lewin, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow), yet business education leaves the education of, skill building, and delivery of coaching skills and knowledge, in the hands of external professional organizations.

Perhaps Business Education needs a *coach* to help us remove the limits to *our* thinking about the educational paths for our students and emerging leaders. Why do we allow the discipline of coaching to live outside of the traditional business curriculum? Why are coaching skills not being actively taught to our business students at a foundation level when they are undergraduates and at an advanced level within graduate school? Why are we not giving our students the tools they need to face their daily challenges? Coaching directly aligns with and supports participative leadership and empowerment. It serves leaders and managers as they gain insights on their own thinking; it also serves leaders as they learn how to motivate and empower their followers.

8. NEXT STEPS

A study has been designed to explore the attitudes of the stakeholders of business education. Those stakeholders are: (1) faculty, (2) students, and (3) employers. The research questions will explore the interest, the process, and the potential benefit of integrating coaching skills, theories, and knowledge into management education. The goal of this exploration is to answer the question, *Does Management Education need a facelift? If so, should the coaching body of knowledge, skills, and theories, be integrated into management and business education?* Stay tuned for Part II in this series of scholarly papers!

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