

# **The Purposes and Devices of Workplace Coaching**

by

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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Signature:.....Date:.....

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing a PhD is a big achievement and by far the most challenging developmental experience I have had to date - it has been a life shaping experience. This challenge was not because the process of the PhD was beyond me, but because of all of the competing demands that come with managing life at the same time and the sacrifices that have to be made.

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# ABSTRACT

A goal of human resource managers is to capture the value of their organization's workforce and maximize their contribution to its success. So any tool, which can help them achieve this mandate is in demand, and workplace coaching is reported to be one such tool. In this respect, to meet the organizations developmental needs is a key function of both human resource management and coaching alike and in theory will result in instrumental gains. Whilst there is a developing body of knowledge that focuses on individual constructs, there is a lack of empirical research about its instrumental value at an organizational level of analysis.

Much of the individual level analysis focuses on investigating coaching from a humanistic perspective, and it appears to have some efficacy in helping organizations cater for the 'human element' of work, although there is still much more work to be done. However, a very significant question for the management coaching literature is how this translates into a more effective organization – the answer is not entirely clear. So, this study seeks to engage in an organizational level of analysis by exploring its key research problem: what are the purposes and devices of coaching in a management context? It adopts an interpretive and exploratory approach to the research design, utilizing multi-methods of data collection including in-depth interviews and open-ended qualitative surveys. Its key informants consisted of 35 workplace coaches comprising a unique combination, including 27 external coaches, 5 managers as coach, and 3 managers as coach in training. It identifies and explores one purpose and three devices of coaching, and in doing so suggests that organizational culture, systems, and coaching design are three devices that might explain how catering for the human element of work translates into organizational effectiveness. In doing so, it is hoped that this PhD provides some groundwork upon which to build a management theory of coaching and develop a future research agenda.

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## **KEY TERMS**

OD = ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

L&D = LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

HR = HUMAN RESOURCES

HRD = HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

ICF = INTERNATIONAL COACHING FEDERATION

OPQ = OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

NLP = NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

CBT = COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY

REBT = RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOUR THEORY

DBT = DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY

ORG = ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL CONSTRUCTS AND CONCEPTS

IND = INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CONSTRUCTS AND CONCEPTS

CPD = CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

IPT = IMPLICIT PERSON THEORY

MBA = MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION