

# Evidence-Based Professional Coaching: A Resource Guide

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From many perspectives, the field of professional coaching is at a stage of early maturation. Professional coaching practices are blossoming throughout the world, there are many coach training institutes and coach-certification organizations that are vying for market-share and credibility. At the heart of the matter is the question: does professional coaching work as a strategy either for the improvement of personal life-quality or leadership-effectiveness? An even broader (and probably more important) question must be asked: which professional coaching strategy works best in addressing specific personal and organizational challenges?

There is no easy answer to these questions – just as there is no early answer to comparable questions in other human service fields (such as medicine and psychotherapy). For those of us who are concerned with the maturation of this field—and who in certain ways are trying to serve as “stewards” of the field, the need for ongoing research that focuses on professional coaching practices is essential. An evidence-based foundation for coach training and contracting of coaching services is a desired outcome of the research that is being conducted.

In preparing this brief resource guide, I wish to provide some modest assistance. I identify several of the major organizations, publications and agencies involved in coach research, as well as a few of the folks doing work in this area. I also offer a brief description of a research project being conducted by the Library of Professional Coaching and invite you, the reader and user of this resource guide to consider joining us at LPC in work on this project. I finish by offering a brief listing of some articles identified several years ago in LPC, by Lew Stern. It is not an update to date list, but rather (hopefully) a gently persuasive message to you, the user of this guide, to discover for yourself the abundant research reports that are already available to serve as an initial foundation for evidence-based professional coaching.

## **Major Institutions Involved in Coaching Research**

Here is a list of organizations, publications and agencies involved in research activities (as well as many other domains of coaching – often including promotion of their own coach training program or coaching strategy.

International Coach Federation

[https://researchportal.coachfederation.org/?navItemNumber=736&\\_ga=2.120495112.165897279.1511728084-809322334.1486485449](https://researchportal.coachfederation.org/?navItemNumber=736&_ga=2.120495112.165897279.1511728084-809322334.1486485449)

International Association of Coaching

<https://certifiedcoach.org/certification-and-development/coaching-research/>

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (USA)

<http://www.siop.org/WhitePapers/execemployeecoaching.pdf>

Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring (British)

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d5f2/819de6ef359ca47468978069a68149153ba5.pdf>

Training and Development Agency for Schools (British)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/MCM01/MCM01.pdf>

Institute of Coaching (USA: Harvard University: McLean Hospital)

<https://www.instituteofcoaching.org/research-grants>

The Psychologist (British)

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-27/edition-8/does-executive-coaching-work>

International Coaching Institute

<http://international-coaching.org/research>

## **Some Key People in the Field**

This is a very short and highly biased list of key players in the field. You might want to follow their work, or even contact them.

Anthony Grant

<https://instituteofcoaching.org/anthony-grant-phd>

Lew Stern

<https://instituteofcoaching.org/lew-stern-phd>

Francine Campone

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francine\\_Campone](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francine_Campone)

## **Development of Coaches Research Project**

The Library of Professional Coaching has produced a series of reports that convey and interpret results from two versions of a questionnaire that was initially prepared by the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research. The initial survey was completed in 2009 by 153 coaches from throughout the world.

The second version, distributed in 2015, was based on the first (with only minor editing changes) by the Library of Professional Coaching in cooperation with ITLCInsights. Fifty-eight coaches provided responses to the second questionnaire -- yielding a total of 211 responses to the two surveys. The time interval between the two surveys was six years, enabling us to get a preliminary sense of possible changes in coaching attitudes over this period of time, as well as a sense of stability (low levels of difference in mean scores and variance) in the attitudes of professional coaches regarding their own development.

Unlike most coaching surveys, the two surveys conducted in 2009 and 2015 were directed toward those actually doing the coaching, rather than the users of coaching services.

Furthermore, these surveys were completed by a widely ranging group of coaches -- coming from several different countries and from several different coaching schools and perspectives, as well as ranging widely in age and years of experience in providing coaching services.

While many surveys of practitioners in a specific field are funded and sponsored by organizations with a particular stake in the outcomes (such as surveys in medicine and psychotherapy that are funded by pharmaceutical companies) or are conducted by faculty in high prestige, research-oriented universities (who tend to seek responses from others of similar status), these two surveys are being conducted by sponsors (the Library of Professional Coaching and ITLCInsights) who have no specific stake in the outcomes, and are

being distributed to practitioners at many levels of practice and status. These surveys are truly "neutral" and "democratizing."

## **Methods**

Both versions of the Development of Coaches questionnaire are based on one devised by the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research in their international study of development among professional psychotherapists described by Orlinsky and Rønnestad in *How Psychotherapists Develop* (Orlinsky & Rønnestad (2005). Both of the coaching studies include questions that parallel those used in the Society's Development of Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire.

This enables us not only to study varied aspects of coaches' development, but also compare responses of coaches to these made by psychotherapists. Many questions have been posed over the past twenty years concerning the similarities and differences between professional coaching and psychotherapy. The data being gathered in these two surveys will provide some of the first (and preliminary) answers regarding this comparison.

**Modification of Development of Psychotherapists Survey:** In adapting the questionnaire, members of the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative drew on their own experiences as coaches to ask questions that they hoped would seem meaningful and relevant to those responding to the questionnaire. Most of the questions could be answered quickly by checking the response alternatives that most closely reflected the respondent's own experience.

**Instructions to the Respondents:** In the case of both surveys, respondents were asked to answer all of the questions and were provided with the following framework:

The complete set of responses provides us with a fuller understanding of your own work and the context in which you work. You may find these questions offer a useful opportunity to reflect on your own coaching career. If any seem difficult to answer exactly, give your best estimate and continue. To ensure confidentiality, the

questionnaire is completed anonymously. Information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

Designers of the original survey proposed that the respondents would benefit in two ways. These two benefits made this truly a collaborative effort between those who designed the questionnaire and those who completing it. Following is a statement offered to those considering completion of the second survey:

You can sign up to receive the report findings from this study when they become available. . . These reports will also be made available at no charge to the general coaching public through the Library of Professional coaching. The reports will identify which modes of development have been found to be the most effective. . . . [Furthermore, results from this survey may] increase the credibility of the coaching profession. As Francine Campone, one of the creators and initiators of the original survey has indicated, a culture of research and evidence needs to be created in the field of professional coaching. The more we learn from one another about professional coaching practices, the more collectively knowledgeable we will become. The more knowledgeable we become, the greater the opportunity for building evidence-based coaching strategies and tools. The better the strategies and tools the more effective we will be as coaching professionals. The more effective we become as a profession, the greater the demand will be for our services.

As noted at the end of this appeal to prospective respondents, the benefits are potentially widespread with regard to the credibility of coaching when a research and evidence-based culture is created: "A rising tide lifts all ships".

## **Results**

Two of the founders of the original project, Francine Campone and Deepa Awal, reported on results from one qualitative question in the first questionnaire. This report is contained in their 2012 article published in *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* (Campone and Awal, 1012). We referenced the findings from their report in our own discussion in the articles we have published

With 76 questions in each of the coaching surveys, there are many areas in which to concentrate in this study. In reports that have already been prepared and published in the Library of Professional Coaching, we provide results from many of the 74 questions, as well as offer more detailed analyses about relationships between responses to these questions -- including the potential differences in responses between various demographic groups and correlations between responses to various questions. We will also offer more advanced statistical analyses (multiple regression and factor) as we seek to provide a more comprehensive and systemic portrait of the respondents' sense of their own development as coaches.

### **An invitation**

*There is much more to be done in the analysis and reporting of findings from this important study of professional coaching. We also might wish to follow this study up with another (perhaps more widely distributed, with higher percentages of completion). Would you be interested in joining our research team and co-author one or more of the reports, based on analyses that you help to perform? If you are interested, please contact William Bergquist, co-curator of the Library of Professional Coaching and director of the Development of Coaches Research Project.*

### **Coaching Outcomes:**

#### **Low Stern's List of Coaching Research Reports [Edited]**

Low Stern's superb (and exhaustive) list of published articles on professional coaching is still of value -- even as a resource that is several years old. I have selected a relatively short list of the articles Stern identified that directly reflect the diverse ways in which coaching research is being conducted. These are certainly not the only studies conducted during the ten year period of time that Low Stern surveyed -- and there are many more studies done since he conducted the survey. Nevertheless, this list provides some examples of how this challenging research can be conducted in studying something as elusive and diverse as professional coaching.

Fischer, R.L., and Beimers, D. (2009). "Put me in, Coach": A pilot evaluation of executive coaching in the nonprofit sector. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 19(4), 507- 522.

Moen, F., and Allgood, E. (2009). Coaching and the effect on self-efficacy. *Organization Development Journal*, 27(4), 69-81.

Moen, F., and Skaalvik, E. (2009). The effect from executive coaching on performance psychology. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 7(2), 31-49.

Passmore, J., and Brown, A. (2009). Coaching non-adult students for enhanced examination performance: A longitudinal study. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(1), 54-64.

Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E., and Schaufeli, W.B. (2009). Work engagement and financial returns: A diary study on the role of job and personal resources. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82(1), 183-200.

Baron, L., and Morin, L. (2010). The impact of executive coaching on self-efficacy related to management soft-skills. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 31(1), 18-38.

Cerni, T., Curtis, G.J., and Colmar, S.H. (2010). Executive coaching can enhance transformational leadership. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 81-85.

Leonard-Cross, E. (2010). Developmental coaching: Business benefit - fact or fad? An evaluative study to explore the impact of coaching in the workplace. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 36-47.

Liu, X., and Batt, R. (2010). How supervisors influence performance: A multilevel study of coaching and group management in technology-mediated services. *Personnel Psychology*, 63(2), 265-298.

Wenson, J.E. (2010). After-coaching leadership skills and their impact on direct reports: Recommendations for organizations. *Human Resource Development International*, 13(5), 607-616.

Ogilvy, H., and Ellam-Dyson, V. (2012). Line management involvement in coaching: Help or hindrance? A content analysis study. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 7(1), 39-54.

De Haan, E. (2008b). I doubt therefore I coach: Critical moments in coaching practice. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(1), 91-105.

De Haan, E. (2008c). I struggle and emerge: Critical moments of experienced coaches. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(1), 106-131.

Agarwal, R., Angst, C.M., and Magni, M. (2009). The performance effects of coaching: A multilevel analysis using hierarchical linear modeling. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(10), 2110-2134.

Cremona, K. (2010). Coaching and emotions: An exploration of how coaches engage and think about emotion. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 3(1), 46-59.

Dagley, G.R. (2010). Exceptional executive coaches: Practices and attributes. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 63-80.

Hagen, M. (2010). Black belt coaching and project outcomes: An empirical investigation. *Quality Management Journal*, 17(2), 54-67.

Passmore, J., Holloway, M. and Rawle-Cope, M. (2010). Using MBTI type to explore differences and the implications for practice for therapists and coaches: Are executive coaches really like counselors? *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 23(1), 1-16.

Newnham-Kanas, C., Irwin, J., and Morrow, D. (2011). Findings from a global survey of certified professional co-active coaches. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(2), 23-36.

Stelter, R., Nielsen, G., and Wikman, J.M. (2011). Narrative-collaborative group coaching develops social capital - a randomized control trial and further implications of the social impact of the intervention. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 4(2), 123-137.

Franklin, J., and Franklin, A. (2012). The long-term independently assessed benefits of coaching: A controlled 18-month follow-up study of two methods. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 7(1), 33-38.

Passmore, J., and Velez, M.J. (2012). Coaching fleet drivers: A randomized controlled trial (RCT) of "short coaching" interventions to improve driver safety in fleet drivers. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 8(1), 20-26.

Kombarakaran, F.A., Yang, J.A., Baker, M.N., and Fernandes, P.B. (2008). Executive coaching: It works! *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(1), 78-90.

Peel, D. (2008). What factors affect coaching and mentoring in small and medium sized enterprises. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 6(2), 1-18.

Perkins, R.D. (2009). How executive coaching can change leader behavior and improve meeting effectiveness: An exploratory study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(4), 298-318.

Mathieu, A., and Pousa, C. (2011). Does supervisory coaching behavior reduce salespeople's

lies? *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(1), 16-28.

Wheeler, L. (2011). How does the adoption of coaching behaviors by line managers contribute to the achievement of organizational goals? *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(1), 1-15.

Berg, M.E., and Karlsen, T.J. (2012). An evaluation of management training and coaching. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 24(3), 177-199.

Campone, F., and Awal, D. (2012). Life's thumbprint: The impact of significant life events on coaches and their coaching. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 5(1), 22-36.

Brockbank, A. (2008). Is the coaching fit for purpose? A typology of coaching and learning approaches. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 1(2), 132-144.

Ellinger, A.D., Hamlin, R.G., and Beattie, R.S. (2008). Behavioral indicators of ineffective managerial coaching: A cross-national study. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 32(4), 240-257.

Griffiths, K., and Campbell, M. (2009). Discovering, applying and integrating: The process of learning in coaching. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 7(2), 16-30.

McKenna, D., and Davis, S.L. (2009b). What is the active ingredients equation for success in executive coaching? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 2(3), 297-304.

Stein, I.F. (2009). Which hat am I wearing now? An evidence-based tool for coaching self-reflection. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(2), 163-175.

Carey, W., Philippon, D.J., and Cummings, G.G. (2011). Coaching models for leadership development: An integrative review. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 5(1), 51-69.

De Haan, E., Culpin, V., Curd, J. (2011). Executive coaching in practice: What determines helpfulness for clients of coaching? *Personnel Review*, 40(1), 24-44.

Hatala, J., and Hisey, L. (2011). Toward the development and validation of a career coach competency model. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 24(3), 101-122.

Lewis-Duarte, M., and Bligh, M.C. (2012). Agents of "influence": Exploring the usage, timing, and

outcomes of executive coaching tactics. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 33(3), 255-281.

Corrie, S., and Lane, D.A. (2009). The scientist-practitioner model as a framework for coaching psychology. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 5(2), 61-67.

De Meuse, K.P., Dai, G., and Lee, R.J. (2009). Evaluating the effectiveness of executive coaching: Beyond ROI? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 2(2), 117-134.

Grant, A.M., Curtayne, L., and Burton, G. (2009). Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace wellbeing: A randomized controlled study. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(5), 396-407.

Newnham-Kanas, C., Gorczyński, P., Morrow, D., and Irwin, J.D. (2009). Annotated bibliography of life coaching and health research. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 7(1), 39-103.

Greif, S. (2010). A new frontier of research and practice: Observation of coaching behavior. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 6(2), 97-105.