

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXECUTIVE COACHING:

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE
RESEARCH LITERATURE

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Key Takeaways:

- Executive coaching works. Coaching leads to a moderate-to-large amount of change in executives' skills and/or performance.
- Executives and companies are generally favorable toward coaching.
- Instead of asking the question of ROI, organizations should align coaching objectives to strategic and business needs to maximize the impact of executive coaching.
- Assessing and addressing an executive's coachability is necessary for effective coaching. In addition, organizations should hire capable coaches and match coaches to the coaching objectives.
- Employ both outside-in and inside-out approaches to sustain coaching benefits.

While executive coaching has increased markedly during recent years, the professional application of coaching, our understanding of when to use coaching, and the evaluation of its effectiveness has lagged far behind. A recent *Harvard Business Review Research Report* asserted: "The coaching field is filled with contradictions. Coaches themselves disagree over why they're hired, what they do, and how to measure success" (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009, p. 26).

In practice, only a small proportion of organizations appear to formally evaluate the impact of coaching (Bolch, 2001). In academia, review studies consistently have concluded that there is a paucity of empirical data to support the anecdotal evidence that coaching produces positive outcomes (MacKie, 2007). Although the published literature has begun to reflect the emergence of professional coaches, rigorous empirical investigations of the outcomes associated with coaching are greatly outnumbered by practitioner articles purporting the benefits of it.



Knowing the benefits of executive coaching, practitioners will be able to communicate realistic expectations to their clients. In addition, empirical evidence will help practitioners understand how coaching works and how it can work even better.

There are two types of studies in the literature: (a) Empirical Studies in which the gain or the amount of improvement due to coaching can be directly observed or indirectly inferred, and (b) Retrospective Studies whereby the perceptions of the effectiveness of coaching were surveyed after it was completed.

Ultimately, a key question asked by companies and executives is whether coaching *actually* makes a difference on leadership behavior and organizational performance. Academicians likewise want to know the answer. If we can demonstrate that executive coaching does work and where it works, coaches will be able to communicate realistic expectations to their clients. Further, empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of coaching will help practitioners understand how it works and how it can work even better.

The purpose of the current study is to review empirical studies on executive coaching in the literature, synthesize their findings, and explore implications for the delivery of executive coaching.

REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE COACHING LITERATURE

There are two categories of studies in the literature that have examined coaching effectiveness. The first category employs various levels of rigorous research design. In these studies, the gain or the amount of improvement due to coaching can be directly observed or indirectly inferred. The second category uses an “after-the-fact” methodology. Those studies ask participating individuals (and in some instances, the coaches themselves or the coachees’ managers) to simply report their *perceptions of the effectiveness* of coaching after it was completed. We call them retrospective studies. Because the data collection was at one point in time (typically following the completion of the coaching), we are unable to accurately estimate the amount of gain.

We located the studies measuring coaching effectiveness through two different data bases – *PsychInfo and Business Source Premier*. We also searched for unpublished studies through references cited in these articles. A total of 23 research studies were identified. We divided the 23 studies into the two categories and presented our findings accordingly. Initially, we performed a meta-analysis on those empirical studies employing a rigorous research design. A meta-analysis is a statistical procedure for summarizing empirical results across studies. It enables us to quantifiably calculate the precise amount of gain or loss following an organizational intervention, such as executive coaching. Subsequently, we conducted a traditional content analysis on the remaining retrospective studies.

Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Studies

The following four criteria had to be satisfied for inclusion in the meta-analysis: (a) the focus of the intervention had to be exclusively executive coaching, (b) the services of an *external* coach were used, (c) the methodological design was one that provided both pre- and post-coaching ratings, and (d) statistics, such as means, standard deviations or t values, and sample sizes had to be reported in the article so that an effect size could be computed. The screening process eventually led to six empirical studies meeting the requirements for the meta-analysis.

All six of the studies examined skills and/or job performance improvement. Two studies also investigated coaching outcomes related to individuals (e.g., job attitudes) and organizations (e.g., clarification of organizational vision and mission). Two different types of ratings were collected. Four of the six studies measured the responses from the coachee (referred to as “self-ratings”). Four of the six studies likewise assessed the responses of the coach or the coachee’s manager (referred to as “others’ ratings”). We conducted separate meta-analyses on skill/performance improvement for the two categories of rater sources. We readily acknowledge that the number of studies included in our analysis is small. Thus, caution should be used when generalizing the findings.

We followed the meta-analytic procedure described by Burke and Day (1986). An effect size initially was calculated on the criterion variable in each study. Subsequently, this effect size was corrected for unreliability. If a study had more than one criterion measure, the *average* effect size was used for that study to remove sampling redundancy. The “estimated population true effect size” was the sample size of the study weighted by the observed effect size and corrected for sampling error and unreliability. Table 1 presents the results of the meta-analyses for self and others’ ratings, respectively.

We performed a meta-analysis to the empirical studies and content analysis to the retrospective studies.

Table 1 Results of Executive Coaching on Skill/Performance Ratings

Rater Category	K	N	V_{obs}	V_e	% of Variance Accounted For	M_θ	V_θ	90% C.V.
Self Ratings	4	173	0.72	0.04	5.22%	1.27	0.67	0.23
Others’ Ratings	4	591	0.40	0.01	2.04%	0.50	0.45	-0.35

Note. K reflects the number of studies measuring this rating. N denotes the cumulative sample size of these studies. V_{obs} is the observed effect size variance. V_e is sampling error variance. M_θ is the estimated population true effect size corrected for sampling error and unreliability. V_θ is the estimated true effect size variance. C.V. denotes credibility value.

*Findings from
the meta-analysis:*

- *Overall, we found a positive impact for executive coaching*
- *Participating executives reported more improvement than others did.*
- *The outcome of coaching was not consistent across studies.*

According to Cohen (1988), an effect size less than 0.30 would be considered small, an effect size between 0.31 and 0.50 would be moderate, and an effect size higher than 0.50 would be large. As can be seen, executive coaching generally leads to a moderate-to-large amount of change in the coachees' skill and/or performance ratings.

This improvement is perceived to be relatively larger by the coachees themselves – an effect size of 1.27 – as opposed to others ($M_d = 0.50$). Thus, self-ratings of improvement were higher than others' ratings of improvement. However, the percentage of variance accounted for by artifactual sources was relatively small – less than 75% – for both self and others' ratings, suggesting the effectiveness of coaching is really situation specific (Hunter & Schmidt, 1995). This finding reinforces Corporate Leadership Council's (2003) finding that coaching results in inconsistent returns.

The 90% credibility value was *above* zero for self-ratings, indicating that executives themselves perceived a positive impact from coaching most of the time. In contrast, the 90% credibility value for others' ratings was *below* zero, suggesting that coaching at times might have an adverse impact.

There are a number of explanations for the potential adverse impact of coaching. First, the assessment method might be flawed. Some scholars have opposed direct pre-post comparison as a measure of improvement for several reasons (Buda, Reilly, & Smither, 1991). For instance, the raters themselves may change between 360-degree evaluations due to employee rater attrition or the hiring of new employees. Further, the observed improvement is confounded by beta change and/or gamma change (Golembiewski, Billingsley, & Yeager, 1976). When *beta change* occurs, the rater's yardstick for the variable shifts or stretches, such that benchmarks on the scale do not remain constant between the two assessments. *Gamma change*, on the other hand, involves a redefinition or reconceptualization of key variables. Secondly, coaching indeed may have a negative impact on some executives. For example, MacKie (2007) questioned whether executive coaching always had a positive impact. Kilburg (2000) identified several factors in executives (e.g., lack of motivation, unrealistic expectations, lack of follow-

up) and in coaches (e.g., insufficient empathy, lack of expertise in the area of concern, poor techniques) that mitigate against a successful coaching outcome.

Content Analysis of Retrospective Studies

Because many retrospective studies included evaluations of multiple criteria, we applied Donald Kirkpatrick's (1977) model of evaluating training interventions to frame the review. However, we used three levels of evaluation rather than four as prescribed in the Kirkpatrick model. Unlike training, coaching usually does not intend to enhance the coachees' knowledge base in an area. Rather, the purpose of most coaching engagements is to change or improve skills or performances.

Three levels of evaluation. Consequently, the three levels of evaluation used in our analysis include: (a) reactions to coaching, (b) coaching effectiveness (as assessed through change or improvement in skills or performance at the *individual level*), and (c) coaching impact at the *organizational level*.

The evaluation methodology employed by most of the retrospective studies was a post-test measure, with ratings typically obtained via a survey administered immediately after the coaching was completed. Reported success was in terms of percentage of favorable responses. Table 2 summarizes the results from these retrospective studies.

Table 2. Results of Retrospective Studies

Reactions to Coaching

- 80% of the participants were favorable to the coaching (Talboom, 1999).
- "Very Satisfactory" ... This was the way clients most frequently rated the overall effectiveness of their coaching experience on a 5-point scale, where 4 was very satisfactory (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenback, 1999).
- Respondents were very satisfied with coaching: 86% rated coaching as very effective; 95% are doing things differently as a result of coaching; and 95% would recommend coaching to other staff members (Parker-Wilkins, 2006).

The three levels of evaluation include...reactions to coaching, individual coaching effectiveness, and coaching impact at the organizational level.

- Executives' reactions to the idea of working with a coach were substantially positive – over 75% (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Coaching Effectiveness on the Individual Level

- 96% of organizations report to have seen individual performance improve since coaching was introduced. Nearly as many (92%) also have seen improvements in leadership and management effectiveness (“Coaching Counts,” 2007).
- 70.7% to 93.8% positive responses, suggesting that coaching contributes to sustained behavioral change (Genger, 1997).
- At the level of learning, 70 – 90% of the participants were favorable to the coaching; at the behavioral level, it was over 50% (Talboom, 1999).
- Participants considered 73% of goals to have been achieved “very effectively” or “extremely effectively.” Stakeholders were more conservative, evaluating 54% of goals as having been achieved with this level of effectiveness, and 85% as having delivered results “effectively” or higher (McGovern et al., 2001).
- 75% of survey respondents rated the effectiveness of coaching as a 3 or higher on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not effective” and 5 being “very effective.” Only 15% of respondents rated coaching as a 1 or a 2 (“Is Coaching Worth the Money,” 2005).
- Executives improved significantly and mostly on behavioral dimensions related to the coaching objectives (15 of the 19 items, 79%) (Orenstein, 2006).
- Coaching assisted in the development of three main competencies: (a) leadership behavior (82%), (b) building teams (41%), and (c) developing staff (36%) (Parker-Wilkins, 2006).
- 55% of the participants increased leadership effectiveness as rated by others. 52% increased as rated by self (Thach, 2002).
- The top three indications of successful coaching were (a) sustained behavioral change (63%), (b) increased self-awareness and understanding (48%), and (c) more effective leadership (45%). On a 1-10 scale, over half of these coached

executives reported a sustainability level between 6 and 8; over a third were at the 9-10 level (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Coaching Impact at the Organizational Level

- 77% of the respondents indicated that coaching had a significant or very significant impact on at least one of nine business measures. Productivity (60% favorable) and employee satisfaction (53%) were cited as the most significantly impacted by the coaching (Anderson, 2001).
- At the organizational level, the participants asserted they witnessed lower rates of absence among subordinates (Talboom, 1999).
- 35% improved on leadership. 28% improved as a management team. 33% improved on business deliverables. And, 67% improved on personal balance (“When Coaching Measures,” 2005).

Overall, the findings from the retrospective studies were very positive. Executives generally were favorable to and satisfied with the coaching provided to them. Their favorability ratings ranged between 75% and 95%. The respondents rated coaching effective at improving their skills and performance, particularly in areas related to the coaching objectives.

The coaching also was perceived to have a significant impact on some business results (e.g., productivity, business deliverables). Several authors provided estimates of return on investment (ROI) of the coaching intervention. For example, McGovern et al. (2001) reported that executives realized improvements in productivity, quality, organizational strength, customer service, and shareholder value – realizing an average ROI of almost six times the cost of coaching. Likewise, Parker-Wilkins (2006) and Anderson (2001) estimated an ROI approximating 700% due to coaching.

Hindsight bias and cognitive dissonance. While these retrospective studies support the effectiveness of executive coaching, they suffer from several methodological problems. For example, executives may possess *hindsight bias*, in that their memories may have influenced the data collected (Evers Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006). Furthermore, the managers who experienced coaching might have perceived

Findings from the content analysis:

- *At the reaction level, executives were favorable to and satisfied with the coaching provided to them.*
- *At the individual level, coachees reported that coaching improved their skills and performance.*
- *At the organization level, coaching had a significant impact on business results (e.g., productivity, business deliverables).*

that it was in their personal interest to report the coaching worked. Cognitive dissonance also might be a factor (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). After all, their organization spent a lot of money on hiring a coach, plus they personally devoted much effort and time to various coaching activities. It is reasonable to expect that they should report their performance improved.

In addition, the evaluation of coaching success in some retrospective studies was conducted by the consulting firm providing the coaching. Although we are not questioning the veracity of the effectiveness ratings, it is in the self-interest of the consulting organization to find positive results. MacKie (2007) declared that data from such studies are “at the level of collective anecdotes” (p. 311) and have limited usefulness in demonstrating that coaching is effective. Hence, although the findings of this review of retrospective literature reveal that coaching is successful, we must interpret the results cautiously.

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THIS RESEARCH?

Summary of the Findings

In this study, we reviewed the current state of executive coaching effectiveness. Both the meta-analysis of the empirical research and the review of the retrospective studies revealed an overall positive effect of executive coaching. Below we highlight the following observations.

1. *Skills/performance improvement.* Coaching does work – the coachees made a moderate-to-large improvement in skills and/or performance. Both the executives themselves and others perceived a positive difference as a result of coaching.
2. *Coachees rate higher than others.* As one might expect, individuals experiencing the coaching (self-ratings) report stronger effects than do others (others’ ratings).
3. *Effects of coaching are far-reaching.* Coaching influences a wide range of organizational arenas, such as individual skills and behavior, team performance, productivity, employee job satisfaction, and some measures of business deliverables.

4. *Coaching effectiveness is greater when tied to objectives.*
Coaching has a more positive impact on areas related to the coaching objectives, less on indirectly related areas.
5. *Coaching ROI varies by situation.* The return from coaching is inconsistent. Coaching impact varies from situation to situation, and even may lead to negative outcomes in some organizational circumstances.

Based on our review of the empirical research on coaching effectiveness, we will discuss implications of these findings. What are the lessons we learned from this literature?

The Difficulty of Calculating ROI

Validity generalization. During the 1970s, Schmidt, Hunter, and Urry (1976) presented the concept of *validity generalization* to demonstrate the validity of various personnel assessments. The authors persuasively argued that one should be able to accumulate validity coefficients across several different empirical studies, weight the findings by the respective sample sizes, correct for the unreliability of the psychological measure, and then derive an overall index of validity. Their approach became the foundation for meta-analysis.

Coaching ROI. A popular measure advocated by some authors today is the concept of ROI. By using such an all inclusive, straight-forward index, the “return on investment” of an intervention such as coaching can be readily calibrated. Unfortunately, the realities of executive coaching engagements are not that simple.

The expertise of the coach, the length and intensity of the coaching assignment, the level of the organization where the coachee resides, the receptivity of the manager receiving the coaching, whether the coaching is for offensive or defensive reasons, the culture of the organization, and myriad of other individual and organizational factors all can directly and indirectly affect that ROI index. We believe that the desire to sum findings across studies and deduce a single measure of effectiveness must be weighed in light of the danger of arriving at an erroneous or misleading ROI answer.

Certainly, we understand people’s instinctive interest in using ROI as a measure of coaching efficacy. Coaching is expensive. A six-

Coaching ROI is affected by the expertise of the coach, the length and intensity of the coaching assignment, the receptivity of the coachee, the reason for the coaching – offensive versus defensive reasons, the culture of the organization, and myriad other factors.

It is likely that a coaching intervention is too many causal linkages away from financial results to demonstrate direct and significant relationships.

The more the coaching objectives are aligned with organizational strategies and business needs, the greater the ROI companies are likely to achieve.

month engagement for one executive can range between \$15,000 and \$75,000. Moreover, coaching requires regular chunks of highly compensated executive time (Johnson, 2007). Because of this significant investment, the ROI of coaching has become an important issue for many leaders of talent management and HR professionals.

However, in reality, the search for ROI appears to be of little practical utility or even necessary. Executive coaching has been used to enhance skills and improve performance in a wide range of organizational arenas. It can have tangible and intangible effects on organizational effectiveness to varying degrees.

According to our research, coaching has a larger positive impact on micro-level outcomes (e.g., improving leadership behaviors and individual employees' performance) than on macro-level outcomes (e.g., strategy execution and change management). It is likely that a coaching intervention is too many causal linkages away from financial results to demonstrate direct and significant relationships (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; McDermott, Levenson, & Newton, 2007).

Among the empirical studies we identified in the literature, only a few investigated the ROI of executive coaching. And these studies suffer severe methodological flaws. We do not criticize such methodology in these studies out of hand. It simply becomes very tenuous to draw firm cause-and-effect financial conclusions through such a perceptual-based, qualitative process. Overall, the difficulty with ROI investigations may be inherent in executive coaching itself.

Evaluate coaching against its objectives. Perhaps, the single best outcome criterion to use is the *coaching objective*. It seems reasonable that coaching interventions should be evaluated against the goal(s) for which the coaching is designed to achieve. Research has found that when organizations fail to clearly articulate objectives, coaching is far less likely to succeed (McDermott et al., 2007).

For any engagement, the coaching goals and the success criteria should be understood and agreed to between the coach and the client at the outset of the coaching relationship (Valerio & Lee, 2005). In practice, however, the coaching objectives frequently evolve during the coaching engagement (Valerio & Lee, 2005). It is important to continue to communicate them between the coach, executive, and other stakeholders.

Align coaching objectives to business needs. For people who are interested in ROI, the question really is a matter of how much the coaching objectives are related to business or organizational strategies. In other words, the coaching objectives should be strategic and mission critical. The more the coaching objectives are aligned with the organizational strategies and business needs, the greater the impact (or ROI) companies are likely to achieve from executive coaching. Consequently, in order to maximize this impact (ROI) of executive coaching, companies will have to establish clear and strategic coaching objectives.

Determining an Executive's Coachability

It is generally agreed among researchers that commitment, motivation, and accountability are essential for a successful coaching engagement (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2001). Executive coaching is a helping relationship which is formed between an executive who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a coach. The coach has no formal authority over the executive (Kilburg, 2000).

Executive motivation determines coaching success. Consequently, it is largely up to the executive's self-control and motivation to follow the coaching agenda and act on the improvement plan. A coach can be instrumental in encouraging and inspiring, but ultimately, the changes must be embraced by the executive (Witherspoon & White, 1996). Many executives resist coaching (Goldberg, 2005; McDermott, 1996). This resistance may be stronger when the type of coaching is remedial rather than developmental.

For remedial coaching, executives may experience a threat to their self-identity. Thus, coaching would seem to be less successful when executives are involved in self-defense than in growth, development, and advancement. On the other hand, one could speculate that an executive's commitment to change would be greater if his or her job or career was on the line (as with remedial coaching).

The simple truth is that not everyone is motivated to change their behavior. Some coaches do not want to work with executives who are not motivated; others view changing a coachee's motivation as an integral component of the coaching process.

A coach can be instrumental in encouraging and inspiring, but ultimately, the changes must be embraced by the executive.

A coach should attempt to ascertain the coachability of the executive to maximize effectiveness.

Executives most coachable are those who are highly self-aware and learning agile.

Regardless, it is necessary to consider an executive’s “coachability” early in the coaching process. If a coach does not think his or her client is coachable, it is best to be transparent about it and discuss it. A coach should attempt to ascertain whether the likely outcomes of coaching are worth the investment of time, energy, and money.

Levels of coachability. The determination of the client’s coachability also will help the coach plan the coaching process accordingly. Terry Bacon and his colleague developed a framework which can be used to assess executive coachability (Bacon & Spear, 2003). This framework includes seven levels of coachability, reflecting the degree of difficulty in coaching a particular client. Table 3 presents these seven levels. Not surprisingly, executives most coachable are those who are highly self aware and learning agile. Coachability appears to be a factor that can greatly influence the effectiveness of coaching. It is interesting to note that no study that we reviewed measured this factor in ascertaining its effectiveness.

Table 3. *Seven Levels of Executive Coachability*

Coachability Level	Description
Not coachable at present	Identified psychological or medical problem that is beyond the scope of a coaching intervention in the workplace.
Extreme low coachability	Narcissistic personality. Arrogant. Sees no need to change.
Very low coachability	Resists or deflects feedback. Rationalizes negative perceptions. Is openly negative toward the coaching, saying that it is not helpful.
Fair coachability	Is complacent and unmotivated to change. Pays lip service to change, but is not really committed to it.
Good coachability	Demonstrates some resistance to the coaching process, but has a growing awareness of the need for change.
Very good coachability	Accepts feedback and shows an earnest desire to improve.
Excellent coachability	Has an intrinsic need to grow. Is a lifelong learner. Has a realistic sense of self.

Note. Terry Bacon is the founder and chairman of Lore International Institute, a Korn/Ferry company.

The Sustainability of Coaching Benefits

Another critical question regarding the effectiveness of coaching is whether the coached executive sustains the improvement over time. If the executive returns to his or her previous level of competence, the financial investment made in such a program is of little value.

Obviously, the executive's coachability is related to sustainability. However, coaching benefits also are greatly affected by the level of organizational support. The immediate manager of the coachee has a critical role in the coaching process. The coachee's manager needs to acknowledge and positively reinforce improvement. Further, the coachee's direct reports and peers can play a role in cementing the new behaviors.

Preventing post-coaching "relapses." An executive coach also should directly address the possibility of relapse. When a coaching process identifies strategies and activities to prevent "relapses," behavioral changes are much more likely to be sustained. Such tactics can include the development of after-coaching action plans and inviting coworkers who witness a lapse to point it out to the coachee.

In addition, we propose that coaching sustainability is a function of the interaction between the coaching objectives and coaching approach. For example, some coaching objectives are very skill and behaviorally focused – they are a matter of learning and skill acquisition. Other objectives tend to be tacit, embedded in individual experiences and involve intangible factors – such as personal beliefs, long-held assumptions, and perspectives. Because of this tacit nature, executives may not be aware of them. The development of these areas requires self-discovery, deep learning, and sometimes fundamental changes in one's value system and behavior patterns (Brantley, 2006). This second type of behavioral change is more subject to behavioral relapse than the first type.

Coaching methods generally fall into two broad categories: (a) outside-in and (b) inside-out. According to Cashman (2008), most descriptions of leadership focus on the outer manifestations of leadership (i.e., vision, innovation, results, drive, etc.).

Outside-in coaching. Leadership usually is seen as a mastery of something outside of ourselves. Training, coaching, and educational systems that focus on learning about external things constitute an *outside-in approach to leadership development*.

The coachee's manager needs to acknowledge and positively reinforce improvement. Further, the coachee's direct reports and peers can play a role in cementing the new behaviors.

“Leadership from inside-out involves clarifying our inner identity, beliefs, motivation, and purpose, so that our leadership (and our lives) has more sustainable service and enduring impact.”

—Kevin Cashman

Clearly, we can conclude that coaching works in most cases. Both individual coachees and their organizational benefits.

Inside-out coaching. Leadership from inside-out takes a different approach. It directs our intentions and aspirations into a purposeful focus where increased effectiveness is a natural result. Inside-out coaching intends to develop and deepen the authenticity of leaders that fosters self-awareness and openness – the fundamental principles supporting sustainable leadership.

Consequently, one can hypothesize that the inside-out approach would be more likely than the outside-in approach to achieve sustainable behavioral change. It also is possible that the combination of the two coaching approaches will have the most positive and sustainable results. The distinction between the outside-in and inside-out coaching approaches likely should be considered by future researchers and practitioners when evaluating the overall effectiveness of coaching.

Conclusion

The possibilities of coaching are endless. And, the opportunities for executive coaches to substantially impact the business world are great. However, the effectiveness of executive coaching needs to be clearly and scientifically demonstrated for us to achieve these outcomes.

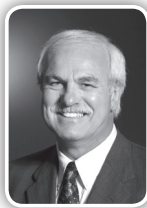
In this study, we reviewed several studies which investigated the impact of coaching and discussed what we can learn from the findings. Clearly, we can conclude that coaching works in most cases. Both individual coachees and their organizational benefits. While we cannot draw any firm conclusions with regard to ROI, our findings reveal that coaching has a positive effect. The extent of ROI and the extent of this positive impact are affected by several factors in the coachee, the coaching objectives, the coaching approach employed, the organizational support given the coachee, and the expertise of the coach.

Coaching is a complex activity implemented to dynamic individuals in a multifaceted environment. The calculation of an index of ROI may be a meaningless exercise that leads to erroneous conclusions regarding the efficacy of coaching. However, practitioners and scholars alike will benefit with a more scientific, careful evaluation of the executive coaching process.

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- Note. Asterisked (*) references were included in meta-analysis.



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