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How executive coaches use the results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to develop their coachees

Dave Stachowiak

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

HOW EXECUTIVE COACHES USE THE RESULTS OF THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR TO DEVELOP THEIR COACHEES

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by

Dave Stachowiak

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Mark Allen, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Dave Stachowiak

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Mark Allen, Ph.D., Chairperson

Doug Leigh, Ph.D.

Kent Rhodes, Ed.D.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Harriet and Gene Stachowiak:

To my mother, who insisted that my brother and I max out the number of books we could check out during every one of our constant trips to the public library. You taught me how to love learning. Now, I get to teach others.

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This doctoral degree is as much their achievement as it is mine.

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VITA

EDUCATION

Ed.D., Organizational Leadership
Pepperdine University, Malibu, California 2011
M.A., Organizational Leadership
Chapman University, Orange, California 2004
Graduate Certificate, Human Resources
Chapman University, Orange, California 2004
B.S., Business Administration
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1999

EXPERIENCE

Innovate Learning, LLC 2006–present
Vice President

Dale Carnegie of Southern Los Angeles 2004–present
Senior Vice President

SCORE! Educational Centers 1999–2002
Director

CERTIFICATIONS

International Coach Federation
Associate Certified Coach

Dale Carnegie Training
Senior Instructor

CPP, Inc.
Certified Administrator, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATIONS

Professional Coaches, Mentors, and Advisors
Association for Psychological Type
Coach U Graduate
Global Center for Women and Justice at Vanguard University, Board of Directors
Vanguard University Students in Free Enterprise, Business Advisor

ABSTRACT

This study explored how executive coaches use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to develop coachees. An online survey was administered to screen executive coaches for MBTI certification, coaching hours with executive coachees, percentage of clients with profit and loss responsibilities, and regular use of the MBTI. Of 169 respondents, 31 qualified for the study and 15 executive coaches, primarily from North America, were interviewed to determine what, if any, common practices were used. Interviews were analyzed using a grounded theory methodology to determine if a central phenomenon emerged.

The findings overwhelmingly showed the executive coaches use the MBTI to raise the awareness of their coachees, which is divided into both self-awareness and organizational awareness. Substantial mention of the central phenomenon of raising awareness outweighed all other topics mentioned in interviews by more than 3:1. In addition, executive coaches reported key causal conditions of helping the coach to work more effectively, responding to organizational goals, and supporting type-different clients. Executive coaches also reported using 2 strategies of discussing and planning actions and then implementing action steps in their work with coachees. Contextual areas of defaulting to use the MBTI, administering it by the second meeting, having a preference for the MBTI Step II instrument, and use of a self-discovery process were present. Intervening conditions that influenced strategies included the coach’s knowledge of psychological type, the type preference of the coachee, neutrality of the MBTI, and data from other instruments. Finally, executive coaches reported consequences of MBTI use including giving language to the coachee, the coachee receiving growth, and the client organization receiving either benefit or loss.

Comparisons to the literature substantiated past research on the executive coaching process and the use of psychological type for leadership development. However, differences were found when considering the amount of executive coaching this study showed being done on behavioral issues. Implications for both client organizations and executive coaches are discussed, including recommendations that both executive coaches and organizations recognize a standard process in coaching with the MBTI.

Chapter One: The Problem

Gray (2006) states that executive coaching has become a significant business development tool for executives. It represents the fastest growing creation of new consulting businesses and also the fastest growing approach to training. In addition, many organizations are using executive coaching as a perk for their top performers (Bolch, 2001).

In the past, top leaders utilized executive coaches primarily to address toxic behavior. Today's executive coaches have expanded greatly beyond this practice (Morgan, Harkins, & Goldsmith, 2005). Coutu and Kauffman (2009) report in their survey of 140 leading coaches that 48% of current coaching engagements are initiated to develop high potential leaders or to facilitate effectively a transition. Another 26% of engagements are established to provide a sounding board for the coachee. Only 12% of engagements are started to address derailing behavior. Peters (2009) cites survey research agreeing that the number one reason for hiring an executive coach is to boost performance of high potential leaders. Natale and Diamante (2005) do cite derailing behavior as a top reason for coaching engagements and additionally cite more proactive development reasons, such as developing high potential leaders and ensuring the success of new managers.

Researchers also point to the need for coaching, especially among executives (Sherin & Caiger, 2004). Approximately 50% of senior executives fail in a position during their careers (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994; Jones, Rafferty, & Griffin, 2006). Kilburg (1997) adds that many organizations are not prepared to help executives succeed in their positions and careers. Katz and Miller (2007) state that executives need training and opportunities to practice new skills and that these development activities are essential for their long-term career success. This is an important consideration in today's environment, as Peters (2009) reports recent survey data showing that 56% of employers in American companies are suffering from a leadership shortage that impacts performance. In addition, Fanasheh (2003) has shown both awareness and support for the practice of executive coaching among business leaders.

In addition, executives often struggle with the people side of leadership. For many executives, their extensive training tends to focus on subject matter expertise and the bottom line. When under stress, they tend to turn to these tools in order to produce results. Underhill, McAnally, and Koriath (2007) report that traditional training for executives that is not followed up by some type of coaching is no more effective than if the training had been skipped entirely. This is further complicated by the incorrect assumption that once executives reach the highest levels of leadership, they no longer need development (Kiel, Rimmer, Williams, & Doyle, 1996; Saporito, 1996). In addition, behaviors that no longer work for the executive might have been key factors in their success at a lower level position, making change even more difficult (Kofodimos, 2007).

Background of the Problem

Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) report that coaching has made appearances in the psychological, training and development, and management literature. Despite the substantial growth and popularity of coaching, academic literature and research on the subject is still extremely limited (Bell, 2005; Berman & Bradt, 2006; Bush, 2009; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Gray, 2006; Gregory, Levy, & Jeffers, 2008; Jones et al., 2006; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 1996, 2000, 2001; Lowman, 2005;

MacKie, 2007; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Orenstein, 2002, 2006; Passmore, 2007; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003; Stevens, 2005). In addition, there has been little research on the topic of leadership development through executive coaching (Passmore, 2007). This has led some researchers to suggest that coaching might be nothing more than a passing fad (Axmith, 2004; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001) while others argue against this statement (Joo, 2005). Certainly though, executive coaching remains vaguely defined (Berman & Bradt, 2006).

Kilburg (1996, 2001, 2004a) reports that a majority of research on executive coaching is being done through graduate dissertations, and he comments on an overall lack of empirical studies to support the general claims of executive coaching effectiveness. Lowman (2005) also points out a large number of case studies in the executive coaching literature, but sees this as a limitation since an individual case study might not reflect a typical coachee for the author. Berman and Bradt (2006) theorize that the lack of research is a result of the novelty of the field, the confidentiality promised to coachees and clients, and the lack of a common coaching theory to examine.

Purpose and Importance of the Study

The demand for executive coaching is growing at a high rate each year (Bell, 2005; Berman & Bradt, 2006; Bolch, 2001; Bush, 2009; Olivero, Bane, & Kopelman, 1997; Orenstein, 2006; Sperry, 2008). Underhill et al. (2007) report that the largest companies now list executive coaching as one of the top five learning methods for executives.

Berman and Bradt (2006) cite research showing that 35% to 40% of new managers fail within the first 18 months. Replacing a manager can cost more than

$150,000 and as much as $750,000 for those occupying roles of vice president and higher. Peters (2009) cites more recent studies stating that 50% of executives will quit or be fired within their first three years. Of these failures, 68% can be attributed to lack of interpersonal or leadership skills. Peters further details the four key factors that lead to failure of external executive hires: (a) not understanding the culture or possessing the ability to navigate it, (b) lack of clarity about performance expectations, (c) inability to build effective relationships, and (d) overreliance on what worked in the past. This represents substantial cost to organizations and has driven the demand for coaching and consulting for executives. Coaching and consulting has grown to be more than a $1 billion industry. When an executive isn't performing, an organization can fire the executive, move him or her into a nonessential role, or improve performance through development (Judge & Cowell, 1997).

There is debate in the literature as to primary focus of skill sets for coaches (Joo, 2005; Orenstein, 2002). While some researchers argue that psychological experience and a psychological approach to executive coaching is a necessity to appropriately develop a person, others argue that executive coaching is a distinct skill set and that executive coaches should pull from business experience and approach executive coaching engagements from a business mind-set. Others such as Wasylyshyn (2003) echo strong arguments for both sides throughout the literature and conclude that both frameworks are critical. Executive coaches coming from either background need to educate themselves on the area where they are not as experienced in order to serve best coachees and clients.

In addition to the demand for coaching, the need for the results that coaching has the potential to produce is increasing. Blass and Hackstrom (2008) report study results stating that the personality preferences of managers are not in line with the needs of the business world in the next 10 years. They argue that this provides a strong case for those who would assist managers in developing a strong skill set for tasks and activities that might not come naturally for their personality preference. Type theory shows that individuals can learn to do things very effectively that are otherwise outside of their own personality preferences. In addition, leaders who are aware of their habits and tendencies will be more effective in leading others (Pearman, 1998).

Berr, Church, and Waclawski (2000) identify personality preferences as a significant research topic that has again emerged in social psychology. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) state that personality inventories are a common tool used for data collection during the assessment process with a coachee. Bell (2005) adds such assessment tools are key for the work of executive coaches. Berr et al. (2000) state, “Personality preferences remain a compelling and immediate source of insight into an individual’s behavioral tendencies” (p. 136). Bush (2004) finds that executive coaching is most effective when standardized assessment instruments are a component of the structured process for development of the coachee. Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, and Fernandes (2008) state that knowledge of psychological assessment tools is evidence of expertise in generating change for coachees. Finally, executive coaches already make extensive use of psychological instruments in their work with coachees (O’Neill, 2007).

It is common for executive coaches to utilize the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) during their work with coachees (Bell, 2005; Berr et al., 2000; Effron, 2006; Gray, 2006; Kiel et al., 1996; Kofodimos, 2007; Michael, 2003; O’Neill, 2007; Tobias, 1996; Wasylyshyn, 2003; White, 2010; Witherspoon & White, 1997). Michael (2003) states that the MBTI is the most widely used and studied psychological instrument and that it continues to grow in popularity as the coaching industry expands. Underhill et al. (2007) report that other than 360 instruments, the MBTI is the most widely used instrument by executive coaches.

Statement of the Problem

Bell (2005) conducted a study from the coachee's perspective in utilizing the MBTI. This study found that the most concrete changes stemming from the MBTI for an executive coachee were found early in the process, typically in the first two months. Bell also noted that coachee changes resulting from MBTI feedback were noticeable earlier than changes from coaching. However, Bell's study does not explore the process executive coaches used with MBTI results, only the results of the coachee's development.

Although the literature on personality type and the MBTI is more substantial than the literature on executive coaching, there is still a clear need for research, especially in regard to executive behaviors in business settings (Berr et al., 2000). In additional, there is substantial need to understand more about what happens within the executive coaching engagement, as the actual actions, methods, and conversations used by executive coaches during engagements are generally still unclear (Bayne, 2005; Kilburg, 2004a; Smither et al., 2003). As the following literature review details, research exists that supports that the MBTI is often used in the executive coaching process as well as the results produced by using the instrument, most clearly detailed in Bell's (2005) study. In addition, studies such as Dawdy's (2004) have explored how coachees believed assessments such as the MBTI and others helped them produced desired change and even how different personality types might respond differently to coaching.

While CPP, Inc., the publisher of the MBTI, does provide leadership development paths for leaders in Richmond's (2008) publication, as well as tips for mentors and coaches for development, it's unclear if these guidelines fully represent the process by which executive coaches utilize MBTI results with their coachees. No research to date appears to examine specifically the process for how executive coaches utilize MBTI results for the purpose of coachee development. Despite that we know executive coaches use the instrument extensively and report results from its use, the literature does not provide guidance as to what, if any, process they use. Many resources are available to executive coaches and coachees in understanding and applying psychological type in the workplace, but it is also unclear if these resources and tools are utilized by executive coaches. The purpose of this study is to begin to contribute to this area of the literature by providing both researchers and practitioners with an initial understanding of how executive coaches are utilizing the MBTI to develop their coachees.

Research Question

As stated above and in the literature review that follows, the MBTI is often used as a component of an executive coaching engagement. What is unclear is how the results are used by executive coaches and what, if any, common practices are used. As a result, the single research question of this study is: What is the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop coachees?

Clarification of Terms

There is some debate as to who the client actually is in an executive coaching relationship (Berman & Bradt, 2006; Bolch, 2001; Gray, 2006; Morgan et al., 2005). While the executive coach typically works most closely with the executive receiving development, often the executive coach has been hired to produce results that ultimately benefit the organization. In addition, executive coaches are almost always paid by the organization. Bolch (2001) states that while each party bears responsibility for success of the coaching engagement, 90% of coaching engagements are paid by the employer of the executive receiving coaching. Morgan et al. (2005) place this percentage at near 100% and report that the vast majority of executive coaches recognize that the organization is the ultimate client.

In order to clarify this distinction, the executive who is the focus of development will henceforth be referred to as the coachee in this dissertation, while the sponsoring organization will be referred to as the client. This format will be utilized except in direct quotations from the literature, where researchers may vary terminology. Every effort will be made to clarify this distinction, when appropriate.

Both of the terms executive coach and coach will be seen throughout this dissertation, particularly in the literature review. Since there is no standardized term used in the literature, different terms often refer to the same group of individuals. Sometimes the literature is intentional in making this distinction, but often this is not the case, causing some confusion for the reader. In order to minimize confusion and to avoid altering the original intent of sources, the author is using the original terminology from the sources. The author will attempt to clarify distinctions between the terms, when appropriate. Where the author summarizes information, reports data and results, or draws conclusions, the term executive coach will be used to refer to a practitioner who is working with business executives and the term coach will be used when referencing a more general population of coaches.

The author acknowledges the large contingent of practitioners who utilize the MBTI in varying business and personal coaching engagements outside of executive level leadership. Attempting to understand how coaches utilize the MBTI in these other areas is beyond the scope of this study, yet perhaps the study results may provide value to coaches who utilize the MBTI in these other venues.

Summary

The need for executive coaching continues to grow and the industry has responded with incredible growth rates in recent years. Despite this trend, there is substantial agreement in the literature that coaching-related research is lacking. The importance of coaching research cannot be understated, since some initial research and substantial anecdotal evidence in the literature suggests high returns on investment for coaching. This is especially true for clients who engage coaches for their executive leaders, where the loss and replacement of theses leaders can result in substantial costs for the client.

Lack of interpersonal and leadership skills often contribute to leadership failure, and it is already known that executive coaches utilize psychological instruments and models with coachees, presumably to provide development in these areas. The MBTI is the most popular of these assessments, and its use continues to grow as the coaching industry expands. However, while there is evidence showing substantial use of the instrument and some models that suggest effective techniques for executive coaches, little is known about how executive coaches utilize it. This study may provide some initial data to support further research into the use of the MBTI by executive coaches.

Chapter Two: Review of Relevant Literature

As literature exploring how executive coaches utilize the MBTI does not yet exist, this literature review is divided into three major sections. The first section explores the literature on the history and practices of executive coaching, including the processes that executive coaches are known to use with coachees and the qualifications of successful executive coaches. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, a broad review of the coaching literature is appropriate in order to understand best the implications of the research findings.

The second section explores the history and relevant research into psychological type and the MBTI specifically. Type theory is explored, as well as its application to leaders. Finally, the third section details what is known about the intersection between the first two sections; how executive coaches utilize the MBTI is detailed, particularly with the model presenting by Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) who explore coaching using psychological type.

Executive Coaching

Executive coaching defined. Witherspoon and White (1996b) state that the word coach was first used in the 1500s to describe a carriage used to take people from one place to the other. They argue that this original terminology is still a correct definition for modern coaching.

Bluckert (2005) states that the numerous definitions of executive coaching tend to share the common themes of learning and development, linked to some type of performance improvement. Some definitions are very general, such as the International Coach Federation's definition of coaching as, "An ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses, and organizations" (Natale & Diamante, 2005, p. 372). The focus of the definition often relates to the background of the coach. Those with business and sports backgrounds tend to favor skill development in their definitions, while those with psychological or therapy backgrounds tend to favor behavioral changes.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) define executive coaching as, "A short- to medium-term relationship between an executive and a consultant with the purpose of improving an executive's work effectiveness" (p. 829). Others such as Peters (2009) define coaching by what it provides, including: (a) development that is specific to an individual's needs; (b) clearly-defined, measureable outcomes; and (c) observable behavior change and business impact.

Witherspoon and White (1996a) view coaching as a process rather than a one-time event. In addition, they describe coaching as a confidential learning process, focusing on interpersonal skills. Executive coaching differs from more general forms of coaching in that it aims to develop the executive, while at the same time, produce sustainable business results (Stern, 2004).

Kilburg (1996) provides a definition of executive coaching that is referenced throughout the literature (Gregory et al., 2008; Joo, 2005). Kilburg (1996) defines executive coaching as:

> A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal

satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p. 142)

Gregory et al. (2008) find that the Kilburg (1996) definition contains four common aspects that are true for many executive coaching definitions. These four aspects are: (a) seeing coaching as a one-on-one collaborative relationship, (b) collection of data and information relevant to work and personal behavior, (c) goal-setting guided by the data, and finally (d) the use of feedback.

As evidenced by the varying definitions, there is no single, agreed-upon definition of executive coaching (Brotman, Liberi, & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Bush, 2009; Joo, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; MacKie, 2007). However, as Kilburg's (1996) definition is perhaps the most cited in the literature, it is used as the basis for defining executive coaching in this dissertation.

History and growth. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) describe three phases in the evolution of coaching. They describe an initial phase that started in the 1950s and lasted approximately 30 years, when consultants first started blending psychology with organizational development tools. A second period emerged in about 1980 and lasted approximately 15 years, when consultants began to standardize and increase professionalism. The third stage, 1995 through the present, is when coaching began to build a presence in the literature and establish professional organizations.

Tobias (1996) states that the term coaching first appeared in the business world in the late 1980s because it sounded better than other intervention words. The term coaching implies fine-tuning and was likely more appealing to executives than the traditional counseling or consulting terminology. Both Feldman and Lankau (2005) and Judge and

Cowell (1997) report that executives began to engage coaches in the early 1990s, at a time when half of executives were reported to be failing in their positions. As many of these failures were seen as failures of leadership rather than technical skills, executives began contracting with consultants for individual development.

Originally, executive coaches were primarily brought in after a crisis in order to provide damage control and save individuals in their careers. Coaching has gradually evolved to be more proactive and organizations now seek coaches for high-potential leaders in order to give them every opportunity for success (Joo, 2005; Judge & Cowell, 1997).

Coaching is a $1 billion industry and second only to information technology in overall growth. Coaching is estimated to contribute $1.5 billion to the world's economy (Gladis & Pomerantz, 2008). Joo (2005) reports that the industry is growing rapidly and that estimates at the time expected more than 50,000 executive coaches in the United States by 2007. Peters (2009) cites study data from DBM and the Human Capital Institute showing that coaching is being strongly supporting by the business community and that organizations are seeing substantial results in executive output, quality improvements, cost savings, and reduced turnover.

Coaching versus psychotherapy.

Psychological aspects of coaching. Many psychologists are beginning to add coaching to their menu of services (Richard, 2003). Although clear distinctions are made between coaching and counseling, support exists in the literature for approaching executive coaching from a psychological framework (Bluckert, 2005; Ducharme, 2004; Joo, 2005; Smither et al., 2003). Gray (2006) states that an enduring principle goes back to a Freudian philosophy that individuals tend to protect their egos and sense of self in the short-term, even at the expense of long-term success. In addition, executive coaches rely on a number of humanistic psychotherapy models, including person-centered psychotherapy, gestalt psychotherapy, and neuro-linguistic programming.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) cite evidence that executive coaches are more effective if they have a psychological background, and Hall, Otazo, and Hollenbeck (1999) state that many seasoned coaches often have a psychological or behavioral sciences background. Brotman, Liberi, and Wasylyshyn (1998) argue that training in adult development, understanding of personality, and the appreciation for trust and confidentiality speak to the importance of coaches having psychological background. Filipczak (1998) presents arguments that there might not be much of a distinction between psychology and coaching at all, depending on how the coach approaches the relationship. Tobias (1996) even uses the language interchangeably, describing the assessment process at the beginning of a coaching engagement as a psychological study.

Lee (2003) states that coaches without some psychological training tend to miss critical personal issues and focus too much on skill development. Ducharme (2004) agrees and recognizes that skill development alone can be effective for some coachees, but is probably not sufficient in more complex situations in which an executive might benefit from a sophisticated look at potential causes of his or her behaviors. Coaches who do not understand psychological implications of their work can even do more harm than good (Joo, 2005).

Berman and Bradt (2006) point out that both the coach and the psychologist would have an action or treatment plan for the client. They also warn the coach that transference issues can appear in both places, so the coach needs to have continually good self-awareness to be valuable to his or her clients. Coaches also need to recognize when psychological counseling is necessary, and be ready to make an appropriate referral to a coachee (Joo, 2005).

Distinctions. Gray (2006) makes a distinction between coaching and counseling. In a coaching relationship, the coaching client is ultimately responsible for setting his or her own development path and goals, while, "Counseling, on the other hand, helps people come to terms with the past, and provides support to, first contain, then move out of, a crisis" (p. 477). Coaching works to assist individuals to develop additional capacity and reach goals, while counseling focuses on those who are damaged from the past. Counseling is less defined and listening is perhaps the most important skill, where coaching is far more structured, task-oriented, and listening is just one of many necessary skills. Similar distinctions are echoed throughout the literature (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; Joo, 2005; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Peltier, 2001). In addition, Kilburg (2004b) reminds coaches that coachees are generally high-functioning people who have not engaged a therapist or asked for therapy. Coaching does not involve fixing or healing, but rather a structured process that is focused on helping the executive effectively carry out his or her roles and responsibilities (Stevens, 2005). While some therapy methods might have coaching applications, coaches should make a clear distinction between coaching and therapy, tread cautiously, and have training before employing psychological tools. Coaches bear the responsibility of not crossing the line that no longer serves a coachee in his or her present reality (Kilburg & Levinson, 2008).

Judge and Cowell (1997) detail differences between coaching and psychotherapy. Coaching is a far shorter engagement than therapy and has a more specific area of focus for development. A significant distinction is that coaching provides a more holistic approach to development as well. There would only be one client at a time in therapy, but multiple parties are often present in a coaching engagement, including, but not limited to, management, peers, direct reports, and family members. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) and Ducharme (2004) expand on this distinction by stating that since executive coaching is focused on workplace performance, the scope of work is much broader than traditional counseling. This is especially true since coaching will often involve meetings with other colleagues, observations, and sessions through multiple mediums and time frames. In addition, Levinson (1996) states that a coach might be more willing to offer suggestions and guidance than a traditional psychotherapist would. Berman and Bradt (2006) add that the coach also might interact with the coachee or client in social situations, while still respecting the agreed upon boundaries of confidentiality.

Hodgetts (2002) and Berman and Bradt (2006) state that a significant difference between coaching and psychotherapy is the ultimate alignment with business strategy in coaching, not simply the development of the individual, as is the case in psychotherapy. Garman, Whiston, and Zlatoper (2000) cite a trend of psychology being mentioned substantially less in the executive coaching–related media throughout a 4-year period. They point to this trend as evidence that psychology is not regularly recognized as practical or relevant to executive coaching. Joo (2005) also cites sources stating that coaches should focus on the future only, and limit or eliminate discussion about the past. Coachees and clients do not view psychologists being devoid of business knowledge or favorable experience. Additional media cited in the Garman et al. (2000) study indicate that most executive coaches first focus on coaching experience and personal fit over training, including psychological training.

Coachee situations. There are varying perspectives on what situations and needs are best addressed by executive coaches. Orenstein (2002) identifies several of these situations and states that a majority of the literature details how coaches use behavioral approaches to help the individual adapt to the organization. In addition, some methodologies detail how coaches help coachees develop character and see executive coaching as a methodology for developing the whole person.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) state that coachees typically fall into one of two situations. The first situation is composed of executives who have performed well in the past but are struggling with some aspect of their current roles. The second situation is composed of executives who have been selected for a future role, but still lack a specific skill or skill set that will be required in that new position. Kiel et al. (1996) expands upon this by stating that one quarter of executives are utilizing coaching to move up to a new position. Another half are utilizing coaching to increase their current leadership role and responsibilities, and the final quarter are using coaching to correct problems. Regardless, Hall et al. (1999) state that coaches are most valuable when the need is complex, thus limiting more traditional training solutions. London and Smither (2002) state that coachees are most receptive to coaching when they have a high orientation toward feedback.

Witherspoon and White (1996a) outline four distinct coaching roles that an executive coach might take in order to provide value to the coachee and client. Varying amounts of clarity, time, focus, and challenge are called for in each of these roles detailed below. These roles might change or overlap at times and such adjustments are appropriate, provided that all parties are in agreement on the changing role of the coach. As the Witherspoon and White model received strong support throughout the literature, it is detailed below (Joo, 2005; London & Smither, 2002).

Coaching for skills. Coaching for skills provides short-term development to the coachee on a specific skill set. Typically, this involves a knowledge transfer and learning process for the coachee that meets a just-in-time need. Commitment from a coachee is normally high, the time frame is relatively short, and the success rate is good. Coaching for skills is a clearly defined development process (Witherspoon & White, 1996a). Gray (2006) adds that coaching for skills is ideal in situations in which the coachee is completely unfamiliar with a skill or involved in a short-term transition such as a job redesign or assignment of new roles and responsibilities.

Coaching for performance. Coaching for performance focuses on improvement in current job performance. This coaching role typically attempts to eliminate a problem area for the coachee. Coaching for performance may require time to clarify expectations among the coach, coachee, and client. Without agreement on the problem and the need for change, coaching is unlikely to be successful. The coach will work with the coachee to address attitude or motivational issues. Challenges might ensue in the relationship if coachees perceive the coaching as remedial or unnecessary (Witherspoon & White, 1996a).

Coaching for development. When a client or coachee engages in coaching for development, the focus moves to the future job of the coachee. Witherspoon and White

(1996a) state that executives participating in this coaching situation are focused on development for a future position. Often, there is an emphasis on bringing awareness to the strengths that a coachee will bring to his or her future role and also a focus on the liabilities that a coachee might incorrectly attribute to his or her success. Detailed and specific goals might be lacking in this coaching situation, since the coachee's stakeholders will drive many of the development priorities. Thus, coachees might engage a coach for a year or more. Gray (2006) states that coaching for development can assist coachees in developing awareness on how their beliefs about their success differ from their colleagues, direct reports, and managers.

Coaching for the executive's agenda. Witherspoon and White (1996a) identify the final coaching situation as coaching for the executive's agenda. Per the title, the scope and focus of this coaching varies greatly, depending on the goals of the coachee or the client. Situations that call for this type of coaching include, but are not limited to, "mergers and acquisitions, productivity and quality improvement, executive leadership transitions, turnarounds, and coping with explosive growth" (p. 131). Bolch (2001) and Gray (2006) state that since leadership can be lonely at the top, coaching for an executive's agenda can provide valuable supportive and feedback that the coachee might not otherwise receive.

Axmith (2004) also identifies these four distinct coaching roles, echoing the Witherspoon and White (1996a) model. One slight distinction is a more specific focus on coaching for skills as a development tool for new managers.

Coaching process. There is no single, widely used standard of practice (Bell, 2005; Gregory et al., 2008; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Passmore, 2007; Sperry, 2008). Stern (2004) sees this as a strength of coaching, so varying processes are adaptable to different coachees and clients. As an example, Bell (2005) reports wide variations in the length of coaching sessions, ranging from 1 to 3 hours, with an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Although there is no standard process, it is important for coaches to have a process that they utilize and can articulate clearly to coachees and clients (Goldsmith, 2006; Kofodimos, 2007; Orenstein, 2006; Turner, 2006; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Coutu and Kauffman (2009) advocate strongly for a structured coaching process and encourage organizations not to hire coaches who cannot clearly articulate the process they utilize. Their survey results show that a clear methodology was a critically important factor in hiring a coach, second only to a coach's experience in a similar setting. Richard (2003) adds that the coaching process is not unlike the key steps in the scientific process: stating of the problem, generating options, implementation of options, measurement of results, and follow-up. In fact, Passmore's (2007) description of the GROW model of goal, reality, options, and the way forward echoes the scientific model as well.

Kilburg (1996) details five components of an executive coaching engagement. These include developing an intervention agreement, building a relationship, setting expectations for success, providing behavior mastery and cognitive control, and evaluation.

Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) identify six key phases of the executive coaching process, based on a review of the executive coaching literature. The six phases include relationship building, assessment, feedback, planning, implementation, and evaluation and follow-up. Because of their extensive review of the literature, their model is detailed below.

Relationship building. Bush (2004) states that an essential step in the coaching process is working with a committed coachee, described in her study as a "committed client" (p. 126). The coachee must be open and willing to engage in the coaching process (Gauthier & Giber, 2006; Hodgetts, 2002; Judge & Cowell, 1997; Kappenberg, 2008; Orenstein, 2006; Stevens, 2005). Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) add that executive coaching will not be beneficial unless the executive is developmentally ready for coaching.

Bush (2004) identifies this as one of six critical elements in the overall effectiveness of an executive coaching engagement. In addition, Bush states that coachees should have an opportunity to select their coach and that the client will ideally have a selection process in place that supports a process for coachees to consider the ideal fit in a coach (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009). Gregory et al. (2008) advise coaches to tread carefully during this step in the coaching process, since the methodology used to communicate is often a defining moment in determining the relationship between coach and coachee. The right match between the coach and coachee is a critical component of producing results during the coaching process (Joo, 2005; Kilburg, 2001; McGovern et al., 2001; Morgan et al., 2005; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Peters, 2009; Peterson, 1996, 2007; Peterson & Millier, 2005; Stern, 2004; Ting & Riddle, 2006; Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Feldman and Lankau (2005) identify the relationship building process as the beginning stages in which the coach and the coachee communicate about confidentiality, logistics, and expected outcomes of the relationship. Hodgetts (2002) states that one key aspect of every coaching engagement is setting the expectation up front, and later in practice, that the coach cannot be a substitute for a manager who is unwilling or unable to manage effectively. Without a manager's direct involvement, it is less likely the coachee will take the coaching engagement seriously and make significant, long-term changes.

Witherspoon and White (1996a) describe this step as the process of defining outcomes and determining appropriate levels of confidentiality. O'Neill (2007) defines this phase as contracting and, in addition to the prior topics, details the importance of setting expectations with fees, agendas, accessibility, reporting, and expenses. Berman and Bradt (2006) add that confidentiality agreements and expectations will vary depending on the needs of the coachee and client. Regardless of the agreement, it is essential that all parties are aware of the guidelines, agree to them, and fully understand the coaching process (Diedrich, 1996; Kilburg, 2001; McGovern et al., 2001; Morgan et al., 2005; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Orenstein, 2006; Peltier, 2001; Saporito, 1996; Stevens, 2005; Tobias, 1996).

Although Bush (2004) acknowledges that successful, ongoing coaching relationships with no defined endpoint do exist, her study shows that effective coaching occurs when a clear beginning, middle, and end are defined at the start of the coaching relationship. Coutu and Kauffman (2009) point out that this provides an immediate conflict of interest for the coach, since coaches always have a financial incentive to lengthen the coaching process. However, most coaches also ask for a minimum commitment time frame up front in order to maximize commitment to the process. There is general agreement in the literature on a relatively short-term, time-bounded engagement for coaches (Bush, 2004; Hall et al., 1999; Hodgetts, 2002; Judge & Cowell, 1997; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Stern, 2004; Underhill et al., 2007). Even when coaches provide service over a long period of time, Schnell (2005) advises that coaches need to recontract continually with coachees and clients to ensure that neither party slides into a comfort zone with coaching.

Bush (2004) also reports that the coaching is most effective when peers, management, direct reports, and even customers are enrolled in aspects of the coaching process. Coutu and Kauffman (2009) find that 68% of coaches keep a manager apprised of the coachee’s progress. Bolch (2001) adds that it is essential that the coachee has organizational support during the coaching process (Joo, 2005; Kappenberg, 2008; McGovern et al., 2001; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Stern, 2004).

Axmith (2004) adds that two elements of any successful coaching relationship are development goals that ultimately tie back to organizational performance, and agreement by the coachee that they own the actions that they take during the coaching process. Morgan et al. (2005) advise that the development goals be kept to a limited number, in order to avoid dilution of the development process. The expectation is that the coach provides the roadmap and process for solutions, but does not ultimately provide the solution. Bolch (2001) makes a case that in-person coaching is most effective for success of the client and dismisses virtual solutions and Internet coaching.

Assessment. Underhill et al. (2007) remind coaches of the importance of assessment, citing the popular quote from medicine: “Prescription without diagnosis is malpractice” (p. 63). As with medical professionals, it is imperative that coaches fully understand the current situations with coachees before proceeding to solutions and action steps.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) describe the assessment process as that in which the coach collects data about the coachee and the organization. Examples of data collection methods include assessments, interviews, 360 surveys, and the review of records (Peterson, 1996; Tobias, 1996). Saporito (1996) explains that interviews might include the board of directors, the coachee's direct manager, human resources, and the coachee. Personal reflection, vision statements, and values exercises might also provide data on long-term goals for the client.

Assessments such as the MBTI can help coaches understand the unique characteristics of individuals and potentially provide a roadmap for development for that individual (Peterson, 2007). Three hundred sixty degree surveys are among the most common forms of data collection (Gregory et al., 2008; Judge & Cowell, 1997; Saporito, 1996; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Witherspoon and White (1996a) state that assessment attempts to determine the differences between the coachee's perceptions and actual reality of their affect on others.

Peltier (2001) advises coaches who utilize instruments in their practice to do so only under three conditions. First, he advises that an instrument should only be used if it is reliable and valid, and appropriate for the situation currently facing the coachee. Second, the coach must have appropriate skill and experience in using the instrument. Finally, the coachee should understand the assessment process in advance and the format that data will be presented back to them.

While acknowledging that many coaches utilize 360 and psychological instruments, O'Neill (2007) cautions coaches in the utilization of such instruments and warns that reliance on them for assessment prevents the direct feedback and communication that executives should be having with their superiors, peers, and direct reports. Peterson and Millier (2005) also emphasize the importance of setting direction and goals before the 360 process, so that later actions are not simply driven by external feedback.

Levinson (1996) also mentions the importance of effective question asking and listening and the beginning of the relationship. It is important for the coach to understand the current reality for the coachee and past experiences, in order to seek clues on how the coach might approach the relationship. Passmore (2007) advises, “An experienced coach would begin to explore thought patterns when judging that the coachee was displaying or holding irrational thoughts that inhibit successful performance” (p. 73).

Feedback. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) identify feedback as the next step in the coaching process. This step involves the coach reporting feedback to the coachee, either in a single instance or throughout a period of time. Coaches also need to work with coachees during this process to overcome obstacles to accepting feedback. Gregory et al. (2008) identify this as a hole in the executive coaching literature and add that a coachee must be developmentally ready to accept and utilize feedback for his or her development. Coaches should support coachees during the feedback process by providing an environment that supports whatever the coachee wishes to express at the time. In addition, the coach might be one feedback source for the client, provided a trustworthy and credible relationship has been built and the feedback relates to the coach’s expertise (Orenstein, 2006). Coaches also must remember that many coachees at the executive level are resistant to changing behaviors that have previously helped them to rise to such a level of success in their careers, even if those same behaviors might be holding them back (Snyder, 1995). In addition, the more authority that a coachee has, the less likely he or she has been receiving accurate feedback in his or her daily work (Kofodimos, 2007).

Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor (1979) state that feedback can be sorted into three areas. The first area is feedback from others who have observed an individual. The second area of feedback comes from the task environment, including data from a work task completed or data from feedback mechanisms when a work task isn't practical to measure. Finally, individuals can evaluate their own performance and give themselves feedback. The authors also speak to the importance of credibility in feedback as coming from a source who has particular expertise in a given area, and who is also trustworthy.

Diedrich (1996) recommends three key elements of effective feedback to the coachee. First, he advocates for specificity in feedback and can be tied back to past behaviors. Second, he advises that coaches use empathy when giving feedback, in order to provide learning during the reporting process. This also assists the coach in building trust with the coachee. Finally, Diedrich makes a case for inquiry, in order to gain additional data during the feedback process that might inform the implementation of development.

Wasylyshyn (2003) states that executives trust data and are more likely to trust executive coaching when numerical data are presented to them. Peltier (2001) adds that coaches who utilize terms such as data, benchmarks, instrument, and metrics will make stronger connections with executive coachees. Hall et al. (1999) report that the most effective coaches rely on clear data that is obvious to both the coach and coachee, while the least effective coaches rely on their own perspective. Specific data lead to more specific goals, which have been found to be far more effective than general goals (Ilgen et al., 1979). Peterson and Millier (2005) also advise coaches not to overwhelm the coachee with too much feedback, and yet to be sure not to sugarcoat feedback when given. Finally, Frisch (2007) states that regardless of the specific data collected from assessments, results should be kept confidential. Assuming the feedback is effective, the coach and the coachee are then able to determine an ongoing development plan (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Planning. O'Neill (2007) reports that the planning process helps the executive to move from general feedback to a specific action plan. This is done by helping the coachee align with his or her role, identify what he or she needs to change, and develop language to allow the coachee and coach to communicate clearly. Sherin and Caiger (2004) emphasize the importance of the coach and the coachee defining the problems together. In addition, this phase should assist the coachee in identifying what type of resistance he or she will receive to the changes he or she implements. Natale and Diamante (2005) add that effective action planning determines reminder cues to the coachee so that he or she is able to integrate actions into his or her daily tasks. Richard (2003) also adds that planning should begin with creating as many options as possible, and be narrowed down later. Ideally, the planning process also helps the coach and coachee to determine exactly what type of coaching will be most effective, in consultation with the coachee's manager (Saporito, 1996).

Kilburg (2001) advocates spending time with coachees at the beginning of the relationship asking questions that will uncover potential obstacles to their adherence to the coaching process. This raises awareness of the issues with the coachee and identifies potential obstacles before they become issues. Goodman (2002) introduces a four-step developmental dialogue that assists the coachee in developing effective action plans that lead to results. The first step of this process is to ask for meaning. The stage focuses on the coach asking how and what questions to help clients better understand how they currently approach situations and what assumptions they might be holding of which they are not even aware. This is followed by the second stage of building a new perspective, when the coach assists the client in looking objectively at the situation from a new perspective in order to consider other options. The third stage then explores the risks and threats to the coachee trying a new behavior or implementing change. Finally, the fourth stage helps the coachee to imagine and rehearse the planned change. This leads directly into implementation, described below.

Gauthier and Giber (2006) provide a development framework for coachees that details their current state, their desired future state, and their plan of action for moving between the two. They advocate for simple actions that can be reviewed by the coachee in 30 seconds at the beginning of the day.

Implementation. Solid action items provide executives with important value in the coaching process (Hall et al., 1999). Feldman and Lankau (2005) state that the coaching process continues with structured coaching sessions that reinforce the development plan and determine strategies for overcoming obstacles. Wasylyshyn (2003) states that coaching sessions were the most popular tool used by coaches, as reported by coachee survey results.

Witherspoon and White (1996a) define this as the action stage. They describe this stage as the steps that the coachee will take to effect changes in thinking and performance to meet the stated objectives of the coaching. Saporitio (1996) identifies this stage as the one in which coaching is most concentrated, even though coaching happens at the end step of the coaching process.

O'Neill (2007) terms this stage live-action coaching. This consists of four substages, beginning with behind-the-scenes coaching of the coachee. The coaching then progresses to observation of the coachee in meetings with staff and one-on-ones with direct reports. This then evolves into the third stage of active coaching of the coachee and direct reports in meetings. Finally, the coaching is focused merely on live-action coaching of the coachee in meetings with staff.

Kilburg (1996) identifies a number of coaching methods and techniques that might be used at this stage to work toward coachee and client goals. These include education, training, skills development, simulations, role-playing, brainstorming, crisis management, communication, clarification, confrontations, and a number of other tactics, many focused of setting effective boundaries and raising self-awareness. In addition, Kilburg (2001) and Turner (2006) mention the importance of adherence protocol, and detail specific ways to work with an individual client in order to ensure that he or she is on track for the established goals. Examples of adherence methods include expectations on keeping appointments and completing homework, utilizing tapes and other individual learning that connect with the coachee's learning style, addressing forgetfulness, and teaching self-regulation and behavior modification.

Gregory et al. (2008) point out that progress will often be gradual and that coaches should continually revisit the initial feedback from the assessment process with coachees. In addition, the coach should consistently act as a role model for the coachee on how to communicate effectively and give feedback to colleagues in the workplace.

Evaluation and follow-up. Evaluation and follow-up constitute the final step in the coaching process (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). The coach may collect additional information from the coachee and other members of the organization to determine if the stated objectives have been met. Independent evaluation from a third party such as a human resources department might also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the coaching process.

MacKie (2007) cites the Kirkpatrick evaluation model and suggests it as a framework for evaluating coaching. The first level of evaluation starts with the coachee's reaction to the coaching process. This would be done during the coaching process and immediately after it through self-reporting and the coach's observations. The second level measures increased knowledge or skills to determine how much the coachee has learned. Data can be collected through observations and formal assessments and can occur during and after the coaching process. The third step measures how much of this has transferred into daily work activities. This step would be assessed after the completion of the coaching process through observation and team and peer impact. Finally, level four determines the overall return on investment to the larger organization. This stage might last up to two years after the coaching engagement and would measure sales results, retention, promotion, and other factors via performance data.

Kilburg (2001) presents an extensive model of coaching effectiveness that considers eight factors in the evaluation of a coaching engagement. These factors include (a) the coachee's commitment to the development path, (b) the coach's commitment to the development path, (c) the characteristics of the coachee's problems and issues, (d) the structure of the coaching engagement, (e) the coachee-coach relationship, (f) the quality of coaching interventions, (g) adherence protocol, and (h) the organizational setting of the coachee and coach.

Witherspoon and White (1996a) define the evaluation step as continuous improvement. They state that this phase verifies that the desired results have been met and additionally emphasize having a support process in place for ongoing development. Saporito (1996) reminds coaches that a complete change in executive behavior is unlikely. Rather, a coach and coachee should aim for behavioral changes that are substantial enough to meet the objectives of the coaching and provide the expected value to the organization.

Berman and Bradt (2006) support coaches having targets for change by the end of the coaching process and then collecting data that will demonstrate if those targets have been met for the coachee. Wasylyshyn (2003) adds that a successful coaching engagement should provide (a) sustained behavioral change, (b) increased self-awareness and understanding, and (c) more effective leadership.

O'Neill (2007) defines this stage as debriefing and incorporates a self-assessment process from the coachee, the coach's own assessment of the coachee's progress, feedback on the entire coaching process, and a calculation of return on investment to the client. Gladis and Pomerantz (2008) advocate for coaches to go directly to the primary stakeholder and ask if the coachee has made progress on defined goals for development. Sherin and Caiger (2004) add that an important step is for the coachee to assess his or her own level of success.

Coutu and Kauffman (2009) report that while a majority of coaches provide qualitative progress to stakeholders during the coaching process, less than a third gives behavioral results that are quantitative. Less than a quarter of coaches report quantitative data tied to business results. This suggests that coaches have opportunities to provide more evaluation results that tie back to organizational objectives.

Addressing the question of return of investment to the organization, Anderson (2007) cites a case study from Booz Allen Hamilton that received recognition from the American Society for Training and Development. Anderson cites four key lessons from their use of coaching to drive organizational objectives. The first of these lessons is to understand the current state of coaching in the organization. Since coaching often begins with individuals, it is critical for the organization to understand fully the current use of coaching in order to determine future use. Second, the expectations of senior leaders must be captured and recorded, tying coaching goals to the objectives of the organization. Third, coaching must be shown to meet or exceed those expectations. Even if coaching is effective, it may not be perceived as such by leadership if hard data and numbers are not there to support this effectiveness. Fourth, capability and infrastructure should be built in order to manage coaching strategically, ensuring continued return on investment for the organization. Finally, Turner (2006) states that many executive coaching engagements might have a soft closing, with the expectation that the coach and the coachee might still have short, occasional conversations after the formal coaching process has completed.

Coach qualifications. With the increasing popularity of coaching, debate has increased as to which individuals are most qualified to provide coaching services (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Garman et al. (2000) and Joo (2005) find no universally accepted standards for executive coaches, necessitating a review of general qualifications found in the literature.

Gray (2006) states that executive coaches are not necessarily experts, but work in partnership with clients to help them stay accountable for producing their own results. Instead, they are change agents that help coachees develop confidence and navigate challenging corporate cultures. Demographically, Judge and Cowell (1997) report that 60% of executive coaches are male and 80% are between 35 and 55 years of age. Coutu and Kauffman's (2009) survey supports the view that a psychological background is not necessary to be an effective executive coach, with only 13% of leading coaches reporting that such a background is very necessary, while 46% report that it is not at all necessary. Regardless of the coach's background, Stern (2004) reports that executive coachees tend to be less comfortable with a coach who is theoretical and abstract and more comfortable with a coach who is concrete and practical.

Education. Garman et al. (2000) state that less than a third of reviewed articles in the media mentioned psychological training for executive coaches and only two thirds of those stated that psychologists have unique coaching skills. Of the articles reviewed, 45% stated that psychological training was an asset, 36% described psychological training as helpful or harmful, and the final 19% found psychological training to be potentially harmful.

Wasylyshyn (2003) found that the top credential sought by coachees when selecting a coach was graduate training in psychology. Judge and Cowell (1997) report that 90% of executive coaches hold master's degrees in business and social sciences and 45% have doctorate degrees. Most charged per hour and worked on a contractual basis.

Integrity and trust. Since coaches are often sounding boards for their executive clients, confidentiality and trust are critical elements in the success of the relationship. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) state that the ability of coaches to respect confidentiality and maintain objectivity with coachees is a critical factor for success with executives. Passmore (2007) comments that mutual trust, openness, honesty, and respect are essential before truly effective work can be done in executive coaching. Thus, personal integrity is a substantial attribute that coaches must possess in order to serve executive clients (Bolch, 2001; Brotman et al., 1998; Eggers & Clark, 2000; Gregory et al., 2008; Hall et al., 1999; Hodgetts, 2002; Joo, 2005; Kappenberg, 2008; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Morgan et al., 2005; Orenstein, 2006; Stevens, 2005; Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Self-awareness. Whether coaches have a psychological background, self-awareness is a key competency for an executive coach (Bluckert, 2005; Brotman et al., 1998; Bush, 2004; Orenstein, 2002; Orenstein, 2006). Bluckert states that coaches should be able to notice their own biases and blind spots, account for their own personal history, reflect on their own behavior, reflect on their feelings, and be able to shift their focus to account for multiple explanations for an event. With self-awareness also comes humility. McGonagill (2002) advocates the use of the MBTI as a tool that can assist coaches in developing self-awareness and understanding how their personality type might provide both advantages and obstacles with different clients. Ultimately, a coach must recognize that the coachee ultimately knows the organization and situation best and that the coach only has a limited perspective and is there to provide a process, rather than answers (Kilburg, 2004b).

Kilburg and Levinson (2008) remind coaches that mistakes are very possible when working with a single client. They advise coaches to raise their own awareness of their moral development and how they have created their belief systems. Once this is clear, they warn coaches that moral and ethical situations with coachees and clients will become complex and to seek out mentoring and coaching from other experienced professionals for guidance. Bush (2004) also recommends that coaches proactively work to continue to raise their self-awareness by engaging their own coach. They might also further their own education through conferences, workshops, reading, and connections with others coaches. Bush points out that coachees in her study noticed and appreciated the books and resources that coaches brought from their own development.

Interpersonal skills. Brotman et al. (1998) and Wasylyshyn (2003) detail the importance of interpersonal skills in executive coaching. These skills include the ability of coaches to be approachable so they can build relationships quickly and listen well, have comfort around top management so they can quickly size up issues in the organization, possess compassion for others and their success, and have a drive for customer service in order to meet or exceed their clients' expectations. In addition, political savvy is essential in order to understand best how to be successful with a client and assist coachees in managing the inevitable obstacles in corporate culture (Hodgetts, 2002; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Turner, 2006).

Bush (2004) identifies rapport and the relationship with the coach as essential elements to the success of an executive coaching engagement. While Bush points out that the bond between the coach and coachee is distinct, it goes without saying that the coach must come to the relationship with a healthy set of interpersonal skills in order to provide a foundation for a strong bond with a coachee (Peterson, 2007).

Confidence. Joo (2005) states that confidence is an important characteristic of an executive coach and that with more confidence in coaching comes more effectiveness as a coach. Passmore (2007) adds that coaches need to have positive images of themselves and a belief that they can be resourceful and valuable to a coachee.

Business knowledge. It is essential for an executive coach to have a practical understanding and extensive knowledge of leadership, business disciplines, management principles, and organizational politics (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Levinson, 1996; Morgan et al., 2005; Peters, 2009; Saporito, 1996; Stern, 2004; Stevens, 2005; Underhill et al., 2007; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Berman and Bradt (2006) believe that business knowledge and the appropriate use of business language is critical and that those without this knowledge will find it difficult to be successful with executives. They state that this knowledge must go beyond theories that work with individuals, since the executive is almost always a key player in a larger system. Hodgetts (2002) adds that this knowledge must include a coach's ability to understand when an organizational issue is being masked or blamed as an individual problem.

Morgan et al. (2005) highlight the importance to clients of a coach's business experience, specific area of expertise, and reputation for results. Bolch (2001) and Underhill et al. (2007) state that this is minimally equivalent to at least 10 years in the business world and an advanced degree. Natale and Diamante (2005) agree that business experience in a business setting is extremely important for effectiveness. Joo (2005) also mentions the importance of experience, but is not clear that this experience should be business related.

Orenstein (2002) states that there is a strong link between the coachee and the organization, necessitating a coach who understands the complexity of organizations. Passmore (2007) goes as far as to include the larger cultural context for the coaching process as one of the major components of his coaching model. It is important for coaches to assist the coachee in processing and understanding the larger context in which he or she works. Thus, ongoing development and knowledge of organization behavior theory and practice is also critical for an executive coach's success (Stern, 2004).

Coaches are expected to be knowledgeable about business strategy and be able to connect continually back to it. Diedrich and Kilburg (2001) state that psychologists who provide executive coaching must have a feel for the lives of business people and how to effect change with them. Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) identify this as a potential limitation for coaches with a psychology background. They also comment on the importance of connecting coaching to bottom-line results, rather than simply the coachee's perception of success, as would be the case with traditional counseling. Lee (2003) goes further, arguing that coaches without a business background often turn coaching into therapy.

Intelligence. In addition to possessing the right business knowledge, an executive coach will be most effective if he or she has a high level of intelligence. Since coachees are often individuals who are making decisions at the highest levels of their organizations, it is important for an executive coach to be able to keep up with them and maintain flexibility in an ever-changing business environment (Brotman et al., 1998;

Bush, 2004; Joo, 2005). In addition, executive coaches must be able to understand organizational complexity, while being both involved and detached from the development process.

Language. Fitzgerald (2002) cautions coaches to examine their language with clients. She suggests, "Try to present information in everyday language and avoid jargon and language that may be too 'touchy-feely'" (p. 113). Kilburg (2004b) echoes this sentiment by advising executive coaches that storytelling is a powerful tool for making a connection with a coachee and effecting positive change. He goes as far as to say that executive coaches are doing their best work when utilizing storytelling to communicate with a client.

In addition, it is important for coaches to use language that their coachees can understand and to which they can relate. An effective coach will have familiarity with the working knowledge of the coachee's industry or profession, in order to understand current obstacles and industry trends (Stern, 2004). It's also important that coaches use the language of their clients, so coachees don't inadvertently begin using inappropriate language when trying to effect behavior changes (Turner, 2006).

Questioning. It is critically important for an executive coach to be able to ask tough questions that challenge the client (Axmith, 2004; Berman & Bradt, 2006; Richard, 2003; Turner, 2006). Berman and Bradt (2006) describe effective questioning as Socratic in nature, which facilitates a process for the coachee, but does not provide specific direction. One benefit of effective question asking is gaining clarity around what the coachee and client want to gain from the engagement, a critical component to the coaching process (Jones et al., 2006). Peterson and Millier (2005) echo this and state that coaches should only share their perspective once they have asked effective questions of the coachee and ensured that they have thoroughly considered the problem and come to their own conclusion.

Eggers and Clark (2000) describe this as the new standard for coaching, where the coachee is assumed to have the answers and the coach is there to facilitate the process of helping the coachee gain clarity (Gladis & Pomerantz, 2008; Mobley, 1999; Peterson, 1996; Reeves, 2006; Stevens, 2005). Good questions accelerate the coachee's ability to learn from the process.

Presence. O'Neill (2007) states that presence is the most important tool for an executive coach and defines it as partnering with leaders, meeting them where they are, and then being assertive as their coach. Axmith (2004) adds that executive coaches need self-awareness, impulse control, and patience when working with the executive client.

Bluckert (2005) adds that coaches should be able to suspend judgment about a client, build a history of their client, understand their conscious and unconscious motivators, identify patterns from the past that are repeating, and assist the client in linking different aspects of their experiences, both personally and professionally. Eggers and Clark (2000) state that an effective coach does not judge a client, but shows up and honors them for who they are. Passmore (2007) calls this care and concern for the client the skill of empathy, and one that is essential for coaches. Peterson (2007) states that care and interest in the coachee is among the best tools that a coach can bring to the coaching engagement.

Listening. Excellent listening is a key competency of executive coaching (Berman & Bradt, 2006; Brotman et al., 1998; Coleman, 2002; Eggers & Clark, 2000;

Flaherty, 2005; Hall et al., 1999; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Turner, 2006). Coleman (2002) reminds coaches that effective listening and focus on the client can provide many opportunities for client development. He states, “It probably is not possible to listen too much to your clients, especially in the early stages of the relationship. They will tell you what you need to know” (p. 12). According to Coleman and also Bush (2004), this includes observation about how the client interacts with the coach, as it can often provide clues to how the client might be interacting with others. In addition, he reminds coaches that listening to the examples that clients use in their interactions with the coach and then using their examples later will improve the likelihood of the client taking action, since he or she is ultimately following-up on his or her own ideas.

Feedback. Since people who work closely with executives are often fearful of giving them feedback or confronting them on their behavior, the executive coach is often called upon to provide this necessary type of feedback (Bell, 2005; Ducharme, 2004; Kiel et al., 1996). It is essential for the executive coach to be frank and convey the reality to the coachee, since it can produce some of the best results for the coachee in learning from an executive coaching relationship (Brotman et al., 1998; Bush, 2004; Hall et al., 1999).

Coaches use feedback in a variety of media in order to bring value to their clients. McDowall (2008) states that effective feedback assumes three things: (a) someone has sent a message, (b) the message is valuable, and (c) the message is understood by the recipient.

McDowall (2008) reports that not all senders of feedback have the same influence, which speaks to the importance of a coaches having credibility with their clients. In addition, while individuals generally welcome the giving and receiving of positive feedback, they are more suspect of critical feedback, especially if it is not linked to their development goals. Finally, how individuals perceive feedback will vary, so they must have a motivation to learn from it.

Ilgen et al. (1979) state that increased quantity of feedback can sometimes be counterproductive and even keep an individual from using his or her own independent judgment on making performance shifts. In addition, different individuals can respond to the same feedback in very different ways. Thus, the importance of a coach being skilled and experienced in giving effective feedback would appear to be an essential competency in working with executives.

Adherence. Kilburg (2001) identifies adherence as a necessary skill set in helping coachees focus on their goals. This is a challenge since most often executive clients are under tremendous time pressure and stress, so remembering to take specific actions may be an obstacle. Kilburg describes tools such as visiting a client in the office, or even helping tie larger career goals into the executive coaching engagement in order to assist the executive in taking action. However, he first advocates taking time at the beginning of the relationship to ask questions that will give both parties clarity on obstacles, proactive work that might prevent them, and reminders of tactics that have worked for the coachee in the past.

Peterson (1996) instructs coaches to help their coachees develop skills, make progress on mundane but necessary tasks, manage fear, and break old habits. Passmore (2007) adds that coaches need also to ensure they are always working on the coachee’s agenda, and not their own.

Creativity. Executive coaches should be able to tap into creativity in order to assist the coachee in seeing opportunities that he or she might not otherwise consider. This assists the client in exploring options that might normally be missed in the problem-solving process (Brotman et al., 1998; Flaherty, 2005).

Certification. There is almost no discussion in the literature on coaching certification. One notable exception is research done by Underhill et al. (2007). They found that 63% of coachees did not know if their coaches held a certification. Of the surveyed organizations, 29% reported being more likely to utilize a certified coach, and only 6% required it. They conclude that certification is not an important factor for most organizations when hiring a coach.

Internal versus external coaches. Witherspoon and White (1996a) point out that external coaches have virtually no direct power to force an outcome for a coachee. While this places the emphasis for results on the coachee, it also allows for the coachee to explore and make substantial changes. Frisch (2007) states that external coaches with broad coaching experience and advanced degrees tend to command more respect from a coachee.

Hall et al. (1999) and Schnell (2005) state that external coaches are best when coachee confidentiality is essential, when tough feedback needs to be given, or when varied knowledge and business experience is helpful. Internal coaches are most helpful when knowledge of company practices, politics, and procedures are necessary. Often, an internal coach can provide the experience and shared understanding of an organization to assist best in effecting change. They also pull from a larger range of contacts and knowledge that can be valuable to the coachee as they work toward development goals.

Wasylyshyn (2003) found that coachees echoed virtually all of these benefits and concerns when surveyed.

Coaching on difficult issues. Fitzgerald (2002) provides insights on approaching difficult issues with clients by detailing guidelines to approaching midlife issues. She states that coaches should avoid difficult issues until trust has been established with the client, which could take varying amounts of time and effort, depending on the client.

Fitzgerald (2002) advises coaches who are working on midlife issues with clients to introduce a tougher issue with clients when in the context of a situation they are dealing with personally or professionally. Coleman (2002) adds that helping the client determine his or her own rationale for the change can be effective.

Fitzgerald (2002) suggests that when difficult issues such as midlife situations are involved, coaches can present it to the client as a hypothesis, and gauge the response of the client. Coleman (2002) also sees value in this strategy and suggests that coaches challenge the client to hypothesize about what results he or she expects.

Effectiveness of executive coaching. A first step in identifying the effectiveness of executive coaching is examining the results of coaching in comparison with the expected results. While the goals of coaching vary with each client, Joo (2005) states that executive coaching, “aims to help leaders adapt to new responsibilities, reduce destructive behaviors, enhance teamwork, align individuals to collective goals, and support organizational changes” (p. 482). Kilburg (1996) also identifies typical goals of executive coaching as improved flexibility in behaviors, increased management capacity, additional psychological and social competencies, management of self and an organization in crisis, management of one’s career, more effective work-life balance, and improved team effectiveness. Witherspoon and White (1996b) add clarity around goals and roles and better self-awareness to the list. Natale and Diamante (2005) state that coaching has been effective when the coachee internalizes the motivation for change.

Eggers and Clark (2000) identify several advantages of coaching over traditional training programs. First, because of its nature, coaching is just-in-time development for the needs of the coachee. Second, since the coachee and client set the agenda, it should always be relevant to the coachee and client at any given time. Third, there is the time to work through the inevitable barriers and obstacles to implementing new learning that might be glossed over in a training program. Finally, instant adaptations can be made to a coachee's learning style, something not often possible in a training classroom. In fact, Peterson (2007) sees the individualizing that a coach can provide as an essential part of the coaching process, ensuring that coachees are developed as individuals and not stereotyped into a large cultural context.

McGovern et al. (2001) utilize Donald Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation to determine the return on investment from executive coaches. Their study finds high levels of positive reaction from coachees along with increased learning in leadership, management, personal growth, business agility, and interpersonal skills. Growth rates in their study range from 12% to 35%, depending on the skill measured. The return on investment result from the study is impressive, averaging 5.7 times the original investment. However, many of these results were self-reported by the coachees, leaving uncertainly as to the return on investment for the organization.

Bolch (2001) states that less than 10% of organizations measure the impact of coaching. Additionally, Bolch recommends an assessment such as a 360 in order to quantify better results at the conclusion of the coaching engagement. Bolch also reports survey findings showing improvements in relationships with direct reports, supervisors, peers, and better teamwork and job satisfaction that result from coaching.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) cite research showing that most coaching evaluations are subjective in nature and that coaches sometimes admit to not following up with coachees. Numerous anecdotal evidence is present throughout the literature, such as Hall et al. (1999): “The coaching was seen to produce a specific value-added. Executives acquired new skills, abilities, and perspectives that allowed them to accomplish things after coaching that they could not do before” (p. 48).

With a few exceptions, there is little empirical evidence supporting the results of executive coaching (Jones et al., 2006; Kilburg, 1996, 2001; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Smither et al., 2003; Stevens, 2005; Turner, 2006; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Joo (2005) supports this statement through his literature review and states, “Out of 78 articles on executive coaching, only 11 were research articles, including 6 quantitative studies and 5 qualitative studies. Among 6 quantitative studies, only 1 study was based on correlational study using inferential statistics” (p. 465). Kilburg (2004a) later states that new research shows modest levels of empirical evidence as new studies by graduate students become available.

Empirical evidence that does exist includes Olivero et al. (1997), who found a significant increase in productivity levels from the combined use of training and executive coaching, instead of using training alone. Productivity was measured to increase 22.4% with only training, but 88% after training and executive coaching.

Turner (2006) conducted a study of coachees and found five key benefits to their engagements with executive coaches. These included one-on-one interaction, expanded thinking from an outside source, increased self-awareness, personal accountability for development, and just-in-time learning. In addition, Turner echoes other research stating that coachees had a difficult time relating coaching to quantifiable business results, but also that coachees were not concerned about this direct relationship because of their tremendous confidence in the qualitative results.

Hall et al. (1999) state that a group of 75 executives in *Fortune* 100 companies rated coaching as very satisfactory in their study. Jones et al. (2006) cite evidence from their research showing a significant correlation between a manager's participation in executive coaching and becoming more flexible in the workplace, although they caution that the data come only from self-reporting.

Luthans and Peterson (2003) found a significant performance increase in year-over-year numbers in revenue, quality, and customer-satisfaction ratings after providing 3 months of coaching. Although the results cannot fully be explained by coaching, they show value for coaching in support of quantifiable business results. Results of a qualitative and quantitative empirical study from Kombarakaran et al. (2008) showed that coaching provided change in people management, manager relationships, goal-setting, engagement and productivity, and communication.

Smither et al. (2003) report that coachees were more likely to set specific goals, seek feedback from supervisors, and receive better ratings from direct reports and supervisors after a year of executive coaching. Parker-Wilkins (2006) conducted a study of senior leaders who participated in coaching to determine return on investment to their organization. Impressive findings included an almost 700% return on investment overall, improved teamwork, higher team member satisfaction, and increased retention. However, the results were self-reported by coachees after the coaching process ended.

Hall et al. (1999) state that executives mentioned honesty, challenging feedback, and helpful suggestions as good coaching. Negative coaching was perceived when coaches tried to sell more consulting time, pushed their agenda, or only gave negative feedback or feedback not grounded in data. Garman et al. (2000) state that 85% of reviewed articles in their study evaluated executive coaching as positive.

Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) cite several studies showing limited evidence that coaching increases performance, is viewed favorably by coachees, and results in developmental change. Regardless, Garman et al. (2000) state, “Favorable views of executive coaching far exceed unfavorable views” (p. 201) and cite 88% of reviewed articles as favorable to coaching. Peters (2009) echoes this statement and cites survey data showing that 93% of coachees felt that the experience was successful.

Psychological Type

Development of type theory. Jung (1971) first identified and developed the model for type theory through his research and writings. In his seminal work on psychological types, Jung details his model and provides the foundation for a model that would eventually be incorporated into the MBTI.

In this model, Jung (1971) defines type as, “An habitual attitude in which one mechanism predominates permanently, although the other can never be completely suppressed since it is an integral part of the psychic economy” (p. 6). In other words, Jung argues that individuals all have personality type preferences that affect their attitudes, behaviors, and actions with others and the world.

Jung (1971) initially defines two dichotomies: extraversion and introversion. During his further research, he adds the four functions of sensing, intuition, thinking, and feeling. Jung discusses the relationship between extraversion-introversion and explains that individuals have an innate preference for one side of this dichotomy. Extraversion-introversion indicates an individual's preference for how he or she orients to the outside world.

In addition, Jung (1971) describes each individual as having a preference on either side of two pairs of opposite functions. These functions include sensing-intuition that explains an individual's preference for how he or she takes in information from their environment. Also, the thinking-feeling function describes an individual's preference for decision making. The combination of these three pairs of dichotomies leads to the original eight Jungian functions. Each of these functions will be detailed further during discussion of the MBTI (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 2003).

Jung (1971) further describes the sensing-intuition types as irrational types because they are based on the collection of information without regard to the judgment of that information. On the contrary, the thinking-feeling types are described as rational types since they describe the reasoning and judgment that an individual uses to come to a decision. Jung states that both primary and secondary functions can complement each other, an observation that would further inform the work of Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Briggs.

Myers and Briggs expand type theory through the addition of the fourth dichotomy of judging-perceiving. This addition was designed to recognize better the primary and secondary functions that Jung (1971) describes in his work, and Myers and Briggs explain these as dominant and auxiliary cognitive functions. The addition of this final dichotomy adds additional richness to the theory and results in the 16 personality types that are currently recognized and sorted using the MBTI. In addition, the MBTI provides perspective on an individual's dominant function, either judging or perceiving. For those with a preference for extraversion, it indicates the dominant function. When in individual has an introversion preference, this dichotomy indicates the auxiliary function (Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Myers et al., 2003). Michael (2003) states that this is a departure from Jung's original work, as he made no attempt to determine the dominance of functions.

Current type theory states that while all individuals use both sides of all the dichotomies each day, there tends to be one side that is most interesting and energizing to the individual, typically that individual's type preference (Bayne, 2004, 2005; Carr, Cooke, Harris, & Kendall, 2008; Fitzgerald, 1997a). Kirby (1997) reports that it is extremely unlikely for an individual to have developed equally both dichotomies. Since the type dichotomies are complete opposites, individuals cannot use them at the same time. The preferred dichotomy will be used more often and become more developed throughout the course of time, although individuals have the ability to choose different dichotomies in varying situations (Fitzgerald, 1997a).

The MBTI. The MBTI is an instrument that sorts individuals into 16 personality types. The instrument was designed to be accessible to a wide range of individuals and assumes that individuals have a preference for each of the four dichotomies, that individuals can indicate their preferences, and that all of the personality types are equally valuable to society (Fitzgerald, 1997a). The instrument distinguishes itself from a trait instrument since it does not place any value on the desirability of certain characteristics (Myers et al., 2003; Thompson, 2009). This makes it an ideal instrument for building trust with a coachee, as there is no threat of a wrong answer or bad result from the instrument (Berr et al., 2000). Feedback from the MBTI helps individuals understand themselves better and also helps them understand and value others (Bayne, 2005).

Because of the instrument's strict adherence to type theory, the results indicated by the MBTI only speak to the degree of confidence that the instrument has in its ability to sort the individual into the appropriate personality type. Thus, the preference clarity index reported by the indicator provides the practitioner and participant with only the degree of confidence in the indicator's ability to sort effectively, rather than a measure of strength on each dichotomy. Jungian theory does not consider strength of preferences, but rather clarity of preferences (Fitzgerald, 1997a; Healy, 2000; Kirby, 1997; Myers et al., 2003; O'Roark, 1990; Thompson, 2009). The following details the distinctions among the four dichotomies measured by the MBTI.

Measurements.

The four dichotomies.

Extraversion-introversion. The first dichotomy of extraversion-introversion sorts individuals into two categories: where they tend to focus their attention and where they receive their energy. Those with a preference for extraversion tend to receive their energy from the outside world, have many interests, receive energy from interacting with others, and tend to focus more on people and objects. In contrast, those with a preference for introversion tend to focus on the inner world, spend more time reflecting, have great depth to their interests, are energized by solitary activities, and focus more on concepts and ideas (Bayne, 2005; Berens & Nardi, 2004; Himmerich, 2007; Myers, 1998; Myers et al., 2003).

Berens and Nardi (2004) point out that extraversion and introversion are much more complex than the difference between talkative and shy. Rather, the extraversion-introversion dichotomy provides a reference point for whether an individual extraverts or introverts his or her dominant function of the eight cognitive processes. Extraverts always have an extraverted dominant function, and introverts always have an introverted dominant function.

Sensing-intuition. The second dichotomy of perception sorts individuals into the two categories of sensing-intuition based on how they tend to take in information. Those with a preference for sensing tend to take in information from observable data from the five senses. They give weight to experience, concrete information, and the current reality of each situation. In contrast, those with a preference for intuition tend to take in information through the lens of the abstract. They tend to search for meaning in the data, look for the big picture, and focus more on concepts relating to what could be (Berens & Nardi, 2004; Himmerich, 2007; Myers, 1998; Myers et al., 2003).

Jung (1971) further subdivides each of the dichotomies into extraverted and introverted cognitive processes, depending on an individual's first dichotomy orientation for extraversion or introversion. Sensing can be manifested as either extraverted sensing or introverted sensing. Individuals who utilize extraverted sensing as a cognitive process tend to focus on current reality through doing, while individuals with an introverted sensing process tend to compare and contrast the present data with past information (Berens & Nardi, 2004).

Intuition can also be manifested as either extraverted or introverted. Individuals who utilize extraverted intuition as a cognitive process tend to see possibilities and brainstorming as part of the perception process. Those with the introverted intuition have a preference for envisioning the future and synthesizing information that can determine what the end result will look like (Berens & Nardi, 2004).

Thinking-feeling. The third dichotomy of judgment sorts individuals into the two categories of thinking-feeling based on how they tend to make decisions. Those with a preference for thinking tend to make decisions using logical criteria and objective analysis. They tend to focus on defined standards, realistic consequences of decisions, and careful analysis. In contrast, those with a preference for feeling tend to make decisions that consider both their values and the values of others. They tend to assess the impact of their decisions, show compassion for others, and consider the ethical and moral issues of the decision process (Berens & Nardi, 2004; Myers, 1998; Myers et al., 2003). Himmerich (2007) describes this dichotomy by stating that thinkers tend to take themselves out of a situation in order to make a decision, while feelers tend to put more of themselves into a situation in order to decide.

Jung (1971) also subdivides each of the dichotomies into extraverted and introverted cognitive processes, depending again on an individual's first dichotomy orientation for extraversion or introversion. Thinking can be manifested as either extraverted thinking or introverted thinking. Individuals who prefer extraverted thinking as a cognitive process tend to focus on process and organization of the decision, while individuals with an introverted thinking process tend to explain concisely the distinctions in the decision making process (Berens & Nardi, 2004).

Feeling can also be manifested as either extraverted or introverted. Individuals who prefer extraverted feeling as a cognitive process tend to want to connect with others and affirm them in the decision process. Those who prefer introverted intuition tend to weigh personal beliefs and values and filter down to what is most important to believe. Myers et al. (2003) point out that the dichotomy of feeling does not equate to emotion, just as thinking does not necessarily infer intelligence (Berens & Nardi, 2004).

Judging-perceiving. The fourth and final dichotomy of judging-perceiving sorts individuals into two categories of how they tend to orient themselves to the outside world. Those with a preference for judging tend to schedule their time carefully, such as structure and planning. They work well toward deadlines, and prefer to have decisions made well in advance. In contrast, those with a preference for perceiving tend to prefer living in a more flexible and open-ended way, such as being adaptive to possible changes. They enjoy working up to the last minute on projects, and are more casual and spontaneous with their activities (Berens & Nardi, 2004; Himmerich, 2007; Myers, 1998; Myers et al., 2003).

Myers et al. (2003) state that the term judging does not indicate that individuals are more judgmental than other types. Also, perceiving does not mean that individuals are more perceptive that others. Instead, the judging-perceiving dichotomy indicates the cognitive process that individuals use most with the outside world. For example, individuals with a preference for judging tend to approach the outside world with the third dichotomy: thinking-feeling. In contract, those with a perceiving preference tend to use the second dichotomy of sensing-intuition with the outside world (Berens & Nardi, 2004).

Cognitive functions. As described above, Jung's (1933) original cognitive functions are incorporated into the MBTI through the perception (sensing-intuition) and judgment (thinking-feeling) dichotomies. Depending on an individual's preference for extraversion-introversion and judging-perceiving, these eight functions are ordered differently. The four primary processes are the (a) dominant process or most preferred function, followed in order by (b) auxiliary, (c) tertiary, and (d) inferior processes. Introverts will use their dominant process in the inner world while extraverts will use their dominant process externally. Shadow processes are considered to be the remaining four processes and operate outside of consciousness. The unique interaction of the processes in the varying orders results in the unique and dynamic personalities of the 16 MBTI personality types (Berens & Nardi, 2004; Fitzgerald, 1997a; Michael, 2003; Myers et al., 2003).

Temperament. Although technically separate from type theory, temperament theory's closely related construct has been researched for centuries and provides a framework for discussion about the influence of personality. Moreover, the temperament model can be referenced back to type theory with the dichotomies listed below (Berens, 2006). A brief overview is presented below, as the model is referenced often in combination with type theory when discussing MBTI results and application. Names of temperaments vary by author, although the most common are listed along with the type dichotomies.

Artisans or improvisers (SP). Leaders of the artisans or improvisers temperament tend to be bold and practical about action, comfortable with risk, and adaptable to situations that arise. They tend to resent long-term planning and are not as effective with their commitments (Bayne, 2004).

Guardians or stabilizers (SJ). The guardians or stabilizers temperament tends to include leaders who value stability, routine, and persistence in their actions. In addition, they can also have a difficult time with change, uncertainty, and appreciating colleagues (Bayne, 2004).

Idealists or catalysts (NF). Leaders with an NF temperament appreciate others, bring out the best in people, and have a strong awareness of organizational culture. They also are likely to want to please others and might neglect the needs of the organization (Bayne, 2004).

Rationals or theorists (NT). The NT temperament in leadership is driven by a strong desire for future vision, healthy skepticism, and commitment to principle. However, these individuals might not be effective in a crisis or in maintaining the strength of the status quo (Bayne, 2004).

Reliability. Kirby (1997) reports that reliability coefficients are in excess of +.80 for the MBTI, indicating strong reliability. Gardner and Martinko (1996) report that test-retest reliabilities typically exceed .70 and often exceeds .80. Michael (2003) cites research showing reliability scores between .48 and .73, depending on the dichotomy being measured, and argues that reliability scores fluctuate because of how the instrument is scored. Although Kuipers, Higgs, Tolkacheva, and de Witte (2009) also question a lack of independent verification of some of the reliability measures from the publisher of the instrument, they generally conclude that the MBTI is reliable instrument, given its forced-choice format. Michael (2003) also cites two other studies and one literature review that support the position that the MBTI is generally a reliable instrument. Nevertheless, he urges caution during practical use of the instrument, especially with borderline or slight preferences in results.

Validity. In practical application, approximately 75% of respondents agree with the results of the MBTI instrument. The individual is always the final judge of the results (Fitzgerald, 1997a; Kirby, 1997). Michael (2003) reports that respondents agree with the instrument 60% to 85% of the time, with 80% of disagreements coming when the results between preferences were only slightly different.

While there is general agreement in the literature on the reliability of the MBTI, there appears to be less agreement on its validity (Gardner & Martinko, 1996, Kuipers et al., 2009; Pittenger, 1993). One obstacle to the validity of the MBTI is that the instrument is based upon theory, making construct validity the most relevant when examining validity. Kuipers et al. (2009) report general agreement of the instrument's face validity, but report that there is some evidence to support that other instruments might provide more validity and conclude the instrument is a modest predictor of behavior. They also speak to a focus on more experimental data instead of occupational data. Because of the nature of the instrument, criterion validity studies are difficult to conduct.

Additionally, Gardner and Martinko (1996) state that there is limited research supporting the dichotomous and opposing functions. In addition, they cite research showing that when individuals are asked to verify their best-fit type, 25% to 37% reported a change of preference from the MBTI results. These changes were greatly magnified when the preferences were slight, as reported by the MBTI. Because of results such as these, Pittenger (1993) concludes that the type code might not be a stable personality characteristic. Gardner and Martinko (1996) conclude that support for MBTI validity is mixed overall, and call for further research.

Limitations. The limitations of the MBTI fall into two broad categories. First, as with most instruments, some typical limitations apply. Allworth and Passmore (2008) identify some of these common limitations, including the mind-set of the individual at the time the assessment is administered, the directions from the person who is administering the instrument, and the environment where the instrument is taken. Any of these factors might contribute to results that do not genuinely reflect the individual being assessed. In addition, no psychological assessment with a limited number of questions can completely describe any individual (Fitzgerald, 1997a).

Second, there are limitations to the MBTI specifically. Since the instrument measures clarity of preferences and not strength of preferences, it is inappropriate to use the instrument for job selection or performance reviews (Berr et al., 2000; Kirby, 1997). The MBTI also does not attempt to measure the strength of a characteristic, since Jung's theory states that individuals clearly belong to different groups rather than score along a continuum of the population. The instrument also does not measure how well developed a characteristic is in an individual, since it only indicates preferences for which characteristic a person will most likely use (Kirby, 1997; Myers et al., 2003). Kuipers et al. (2009) point to this a research limitation of the MBTI, since the results are more difficult to measure numerically. Their study also calls into question its effectiveness in team development work, although they point out the value in its use as an instrument for individual development where coaches most often use it. Bayne (2005) points out that the MBTI assumes that everyone has a type preference when, in fact, it might be possible that there are individuals who do not truly have a preference in how they approach the world. Finally, Flaherty (2005) points out that despite a coach's best efforts, type preferences can often result in typecasting, as coachees look at themselves and others through an MBTI lens expecting only the behaviors that an individual should display. Despite its limitations, the MBTI can be a valuable instrument for coaches, assuming that the limitations are taken into consideration (Michael, 2003).

Application of type theory.

Leadership and psychological type. The MBTI is used extensively throughout the world for leadership development (Fitzgerald, 1997a; Michael, 2003). McCaulley (1990) states that knowledge of psychological type through instruments such as the MBTI can be helpful for leaders to gain perspective in a number of situations. Leadership research often distills type down to function pairs and individual preferences. This provides researchers with the advantage of focusing on cognition and decision making, key roles in leadership and management, rather than the entire scope of personality. However, by eliminating the full type, such research does not fully consider the ordering of functions in the cognitive and decision-making processes (Walck, 1997).

However, while a certain type might be extremely effective in one situation, that same individual might struggle in a different situation. Overall, type does not predict success in leadership positions (Walck, 1997). Thompson (2009) adds that personality type does not predict success in leadership and effective leadership is evident in all 16 types. Rather, understanding of type helps a leader to understand better his or her own thoughts and actions, as well as the behaviors of others in the workplace. Understanding of type can also limit common misunderstandings among individuals who have differing preferences. In addition, Bell (2005) reports that regardless of a coachee's personality type, clients see executive coaching as valuable.

The four dichotomies and leadership.

Extraversion-introversion. McCaulley (1990) suggests that individuals with preferences for either extraversion or introversion can be effective leaders. Although McCaulley acknowledges that many leaders and training programs highlight the importance of extraversion in leadership, she states, "Leadership also requires a thoughtful consideration of issues and an understanding of the enduring principles which persist despite changing environments—these come more easily to introverts" (p. 407). While extraverts enjoy interactions with others more than introverts, they also might not spend as much time reflecting on the views of others (Fleenor, 1997). Roush and Atwater (1992) cite results from their study showing no difference in the leadership effectiveness of extraverts and introverts. Extraverts will likely focus more energy on the people, tasks, and organization functions, while introverts are more likely to focus on ideas, values, and beliefs. Extraverts are assertive and active, and tend to handle conflict head on, while introverts are reflective and quiet, and tend to accommodate or avoid conflict (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). This is likely to cause challenges for introverts who need to make decisions quickly, as their preference is to take time to internalize and consider information before acting (Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge, 2002).

Sensing-intuition. McCaulley (1990) states that misunderstandings between individuals who have a preference for the practicality of sensing and those that have a preference for the theoretical nature of intuition explain many common organizational issues. Although a majority of executives have a preference for sensing, both Kirby (1997) and Gardner and Martinko (1996) report that the highest levels of management are divided more equally between sensing and intuition types.

Gardner and Martinko (1996) report that mangers with a preference for sensing process concrete information, while those with an intuition preference may look to abstract information and utilize their perceptions. A sensing preference also indicates higher levels of task performance and slower decision making. However, a manager with a sensing preference is more likely to be confident in a decision, once made, than a manager with an intuition preference. Kirby (1997) states that those with a preference for intuition tend to prefer open-ended problems, which might explain the further prevalence of intuition types at the more senior management levels. Berr et al. (2000) report that leaders with an intuition preference are perceived by direct reports to be more effective at learning, innovation, and strategic thinking. Those with a sensing preference also tend to be more participative decision makers that those with an intuition preference (Walck, 1997). Put another way, sensing managers perform best with routine, detailed activities and intuition managers are best with creative problem solving and activities that are not routine.

Different leadership obstacles will present themselves for both sensing and intuitive leaders. Leaders with a sensing preference might get too focused on the details of decisions and processes. However, leaders with an intuitive preference might spend too much time considering future possibilities, at the expense of current reality (Kroeger et al., 2002). Fitzgerald (1997b) concludes that effective leaders need to be able to tap into sensing and intuitive behaviors, regardless of their type preference.

Thinking-feeling. McCaulley (1990) reports that while those with preferences for both intuition and feeling tend to be the most gifted communicators, they are underrepresented in leadership positions. In addition, those with a preference for thinking are overrepresented at the CEO level. McCaulley states, "In business, government, the military, and even education, leaders are more likely to favor impersonal, logical, analytical, decision making" (p. 408). There is substantial support in the literature showing that the majority of senior leaders have a preference for thinking over feeling (Berr et al., 2000; Gardner & Martinko, 1996; Kroeger et al., 2002; McCaulley, 1990).

These thinkers might fail to consider important human concerns in the decision-making process and use objective rather than subjective information. Leaders have a tendency to be thinkers in many organizations and, as a result, the strengths of feelers might be stifled or ignored (Kirby, 1997). Those with a preference for thinking tend to weigh logic and analysis first and consider personal issues later, while those with a feeling preference tend to use the opposite method. Walck (1997) reports that those with a feeling preference also are more participative decision makers, but also tend to avoid conflict more than thinkers. Leaders with a feeling preference are also rated by direct reports as more skilled in their relationships (Berr et al., 2000). As with the sensing-intuition preference, Fitzgerald (1997b) concludes that effective leaders need to be able to integrate behaviors from both of these dichotomies.

Judging-perceiving. McCaulley (1990) states that those with a preference for judging tend to be most represented in leadership positions where regular decisions are a key part of the role. Most leaders tend to want to make confident decisions and move on. Leaders who have a preference for judging might err by making decisions too quickly. Berr et al. (2000) support this view and add that those with a judging preference get higher marks from direct reports, but not from peers and supervisors. While a leader with a perceiving preference might take longer to make a decision, the eventual solution may be more innovative. In addition, perceivers are more likely to consider and recommend solutions outside of typical mind-set of the organization (Kroeger et al., 2002). Mani (1995) adds that perceivers tend to add new perspective to a conversation or issue. Managers with a preference for perceiving also tend to function better in unstructured and changing situations, as they tend to be more flexible and creative (Gardner & Martinko, 1996).

Sensing-thinking (ST) type. Most prevalent of all managers in the United States, those with the ST type, prefer control, certainty, and structure in their decision making. They also will go into great detail in order to solve problems quickly and tend to focus on data of one type that does not require qualitative interpretation. The ST type sees decisions as definable and quantifiable (Haley, 1997). They tend to perceive high levels of risk and are more risk-averse than the general population (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). They seek and prefer accurate data in order to process the world around them (Brock, 1997).

Intuitive-thinking (NT) type. A close second to the guardians or stabilizers type in prevalence of those in management positions, those of the NT type prefer general information and seek patterns in their decision making. They tend to be more interested in planning than the implementation of a plan. The NT manager will tend to stick to patterns in decision making and might ignore data that would suggest other conclusions (Haley, 1997). In addition, they tend to have a strong focus on competence in daily activities (Brock, 1997).

Sensing-feeling (SF) type. Less prevalent in management positions, those of the SF type tend to seek the thoughts and feelings of others in the decision-making process. They will consider the impact of decisions on relationships and attempt to resolve differences. The SF manager might become more interested in people than ideas, and overweigh the importance of others' opinions and potentially make popular decisions that are not necessarily the best decisions (Haley, 1997). They perceive less risk than other types and are more tolerant of risk (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). Roush and Atwater (1992) found that those with an SF preference were most likely to be transformational leaders and display the most positive reinforcement with followers, although they are quick to point out that this might be a result of the leadership tasks in their study.

Intuitive-feeling (NF) type. Also less prevalent in management roles in the United States, managers of the NF type will tend to use intuition in decision making and are less likely to have formal rules in the process. They tend to focus on the long term and prefer problems that are not defined completely. An NF manager will tend to focus on data that are memorable and might have several false starts in the decision-making process. In addition, they might put too much weight on causality when there is merely a correlation (Haley, 1997). Overall, they tend to focus on a long-term vision, particularly if the vision will provide a substantial outcome for people (Brock, 1997).

Trends. McCaulley (1990) reports:

Although any type can reach the top, executives most likely to do so are

> somewhat more likely to prefer extraversion and intuition, and are highly likely to prefer thinking and judgment. Leaders who inspire by communicating a vision of a better future may come from the intuitives, especially the intuitives with feeling. (p. 411)

Kirby (1997) states that thinking and judging types are overrepresented in management positions in a variety of industries. These trends remain true, even across cultures. Mani (1995) adds that most managers are sensing, thinking, and judging types and concludes that participative management might be a challenge for many of these individuals.

While type does not predict success in an organization, it does predict where an individual will spend his or her time. All types tend to adapt to the management culture, which tends to align most with the functions of sensing, thinking, and judging (Walck, 1997).

Organizational culture and psychological type. Challenges can ensue in organizations in which one type is overrepresented in the employee population. Kirby (1997) states that the dominant type tends to influence the agenda for the group and show a bias for that type. In addition, individuals who do not fit with the dominant type might either develop dissonance with the group or attempt to adapt their style to be more in line with the organization norm, thus sacrificing the benefits the organization might receive from their own type (Himmerich, 2007).

Michael (2003) questions the extent to which psychological type affects the behavior of individuals in organizations. He points attention to research showing no difference in behavior in those having a preference for either extraversion or introversion at business networking events. This tends to speak to the organizational culture and business situation trumping the individual's own type preference.

Adult development and psychological type. McCaulley (1990) states that there are several options for leadership development centering on type, especially for those who do not fit the typical leadership-type profile. These individuals have the option either to (a) learn how to be more like the other type, (b) learn to use the skills of the other type, (c) develop even more strength with their own type, or (d) surround themselves with others who complement their type.

Jung (1933) provides an overview of the four psychological stages of life that an individual exhibits. He spends little time explaining the first and fourth stages of life, since he argues that there is little conscious awareness of life in either childhood or extreme old age. Rather, he focused on the second and third stages of life. Jung's second stage of life is youth. In this stage, which Jung defines as puberty until approximately 35 to 40 years of age, he states that individuals tend to limit themselves to the areas that are valued most by society, rather than embracing a full level of consciousness. He states that in society, the value tends to be placed on achievement and the attainable, thus focusing the mind on these areas. There is little focus on full consciousness, since the individual receives little benefit from such a focus.

Jung (1933) states that the third stage, midlife, provides the individual with the chance to explore the parts of personality that might have been buried or ignored since childhood. He also believes that principles and truths that were once held rigidly begin to be considered in a different light. Instead, individuals become intolerant with previously held beliefs and begin to consider other lenses to use when approaching their view of the world. In effect, individuals gradually make the transition from being specialists to being generalists (Carr et al., 2008; Fitzgerald, 2002; McCaulley, 1990).

Stages of midlife development. Fitzgerald (2002) expands upon Jung's (1933) stage of midlife to explore how individuals might experience these stages and how coaches can support their clients in midlife. Fitzgerald reports that an understanding of psychological type can play an important role when working with coachees at midlife, since many executive clients identify with this life stage (Carr et al., 2008). This process often begins with the coachee getting a sense that he or she is approaching the world in a different way. Fitzgerald describes this first stage as "Getting Inklings" (p. 96), and points out that it often manifests itself through new interests, loss of old interests, complicated reactions to life events, and the need for reflection. Fitzgerald states that these new interests are often related to their less-preferred functions of psychological type.

Fitzgerald's (2002) second stage of "Going Underground" (p. 98) is the phase in which coachees begin to explore interests internally, while not yet sharing many of these interests with the outside world. Coachees tend to be hesitant about their new explorations at this stage, again related to their less-developed functions. Coachees might search for meaning as well as begin to change their relationships with others. They may lose interest in prior relationships and gain interest in relationships in which they perceive others to have similar new interests.

The third and final stage to Fitzgerald's (2002) model is "Bringing the Larger Self into the World" (p. 101). This stage is characterized by increased clarity for the coachee around new interest and goals, along with a desire to take steps to align his or her work with these interests. Coachees want to “(a) be seen for who they are now, (b) have work and lives that fit them, and (c) make a contribution that’s in line with what’s most important to them” (p. 101).

Coaching With Psychological Type

Leadership development strategies. Pearman (1999) states that while psychological type is not a predictor of a coachee’s achievement level, it can be a strong indicator of his or her preference for learning. This can be useful information for both the coachee and coach in assisting the coachee in achieving development objectives more efficiently.

In their seminal work on leadership development using psychological type, Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) outline eight strategies that practitioners can use in order to support executive development. Their model provides the framework for this section, with contributions from the literature that both support and expand upon their model.

Practitioner’s knowledge of self. A coach with an understanding of psychological type can adapt his or her style with different clients in order to support most effectively development. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) suggest several strategies to do this most effectively with the coachee. They advocate that coaches have knowledge of their own type preferences so that they are able to serve best a coachee. Carr et al. (2008) suggest that coaches might be more valuable to the client if they do not share the same psychological type, as the coachee will be more likely to benefit from a perspective that is not his or her own. In addition, coaches will be most effective if they can adapt to the coachee’s type in their coaching interactions (Bayne, 2004).

Coaches can adapt these methodologies based on the individual dichotomies in order to be most effective with the coachee. For example, introverted coachees might prefer more reflection time, be less comfortable with immediate action, and prefer more silence. Extroverted coachees will be more likely to desire action steps immediately, want a more engaged and active coach, and be optimistic about the coaching process (Bayne, 2004; Carr et al., 2008).

Sensing coachees will likely desire lots of details on current reality instead of considering the future right away. They also will prefer a practical, conservative approach, as opposed to newer experimentations. In contrast, a coachee with a preference for intuition will prefer to talk in future tenses, enjoy imagination, and be open to novel concepts and ideas (Bayne, 2004; Carr et al., 2008).

Thinking coachees will be more interested in the details of the coaching process. They will tend to be unemotional, more competitive with others, and want to keep the coach at a distance. They will likely prefer very strong and established goals. Feeling coachees will be more concerned with their relationships, their desire to be effective coachees for the coach, and their need to be recognized and appreciated. They will be concerned with how their goals affect others and contribute to harmony in the organization (Bayne, 2004; Carr et al., 2008).

Coachees with a judging preference will have a preference for structure, achievement, and closure while perceiving coachees will embrace spontaneity and need flexibility from the coach in the coaching process. Coaches of judging coachees will benefit from encouraging them to consider other options, while coaches of perceiving coachees might encourage their coachees to embrace action (Bayne, 2004; Carr et al., 2008).

Approaches effective with particular types. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) detail a number of strategies that coaches can utilize in order to drive the development of their coachees through knowledge of psychological type. Coachees should analyze the different strengths of the individual type dichotomies and the varying ways that individuals approach the world and their relationships with others. In addition, coachees who are able to compare and contrast their styles with peers and management will learn more effective ways to interact with those who exhibit different preferences. Finally, coachees can be encouraged to look at their environments and learn how to use best their strengths, given each situation.

Analyzing, exploring, and contrasting type dynamics. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) suggest that practitioners encourage their coachees to utilize dichotomies that might not be their natural preference. By exploring other dichotomies, coachees begin to understand and communicate more effectively with peers, managers, and direct reports than they might otherwise.

Coachees will benefit most from learning about and recognizing the different psychological types and their contributions to the organization, rather than trying to master effectiveness in each of the types. Coachees should be encouraged to learn about the other types and begin to ask questions that will help them recognize different preferences (Carr et al., 2008). Richmond (2008) advises coachees to practice behaviors that are common to differing types for the purpose of leadership development. She states, “A key concept for leaders of all types is to consciously look for ways to push to make a ‘10 percent stretch’ beyond their comfort zone and into their growth zone” (p. 16).

Carr et al. (2008) state that the psychological type of coachees either tend to match the culture of their organizations or stand in contrast to it. In situations in which the type is not a match for the organization, strategies to help the coachee adapt his or her type to the current culture are essential steps for the coach. An example of this would be encouraging an introvert to take more time for the evaluation of ideas and thoughts in meetings, rather than putting themselves in situations in which they must respond immediately.

Lang (1997) utilizes the term typeflexing to detail a development path for leaders who desire to become more flexible in tapping into the behaviors outside of their preferred preferences. Three stages detail this process, including: (a) developing awareness of one’s own type preferences, (b) building acceptance of other’s preferences, and (c) appreciating of the significance and value of other preferences. Using this process, emphasis is placed on developing behavioral flexibility, rather than attempting to change an individual’s preferences.

Michael (2003) details Jung’s original theory that an individual would have great difficulty in bringing consciousness to his or her least developed functions. This calls into question the efforts of coaches to attempt development of coachees in areas that are not their core preferences. Nevertheless, even in situations in which the coachee’s type matches the culture of the organization, coachees will benefit when the coach encourages them to step outside the comfort zone of how they or the organization would normally respond to a situation. This is especially helpful when coachees are aware of areas where they are not as effective as they need or would like to be (Carr et al., 2008).

Starting points with the coachee. Knowledge of coachee type can provide the coach with a suggested path forward and guide him or her on where to be direct with clients (Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997). Michael (2003) reports that self-awareness can be among the most valuable uses of the MBTI for a coachee, and argues that this process is best facilitated in a one-on-one setting, instead of as a group process or exercise. Roseth-Burrell (2009) agrees that self-assessment is a valuable use of coaching with the MBTI and reports that this opens up important dialogue about development goals with the coachee.

Extraversion versus introversion in management. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) reiterate that there are just as many introverts in leadership positions as extraverts. They offer several examples of how practitioners can provide strategies for development with introverted managers, since they might be more difficult to read. Many of the strategies are designed to help clients make adaptations to their work environment that will support their type preferences. For example, introverted managers can make more time for reflection, ask for agendas in advance of meetings, and determine how they can create environments that will support them in being as productive as possible. Educating others about the benefits of their work preferences can assist them and the organization in being more productive over time.

Explaining leadership style. Coachees who have an understanding of their own type can use it as a tool to teach others about their leadership style. This allows them to shorten the time needed for their staffs to understand the best way to interact with them

(Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997). However, Michael (2003) cites research showing no relationship between psychological type and popular leadership models, such as situational leadership and reminds that reader the psychological type is merely one of many ways to understand potentially and interpret leadership skills and behaviors. Yet, he states that MBTI results can certainly assist a coachee in building self-awareness of his or her own behavior and decision style.

Developing awareness of blind spots. Coachee awareness of psychological type can provide an educated guess as to likely development opportunities for the client. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) suggest that this is often a natural by-product of a conversation about the strengths of the coachee's psychological type. Berr et al. (2000) agree that type preferences can provide a guide for development.

Leadership under stress. Understanding of psychological type assists individuals in understanding how they respond to stress. Practitioners can help coachees become aware of how they tend to respond to stressful situations to help them best control their stress (Fitzgerald & Kirby, 1997). Roseth-Burrell (2009) adds that coaching with psychological type can assist the coachee in indentifying role conflicts before they become business issues. In addition, the framework can assist the coachee in overcoming leadership challenges.

Legitimizing the inner world. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) state that awareness and discussion of psychological type with coachees will give much needed credibility to the inner personalities of coachees. In particular, this legitimizes the introverted preference and helps extraverts understand and appreciate the inner world.

Midlife considerations. In addition to the three stages of type development, Fitzgerald (2002) offers executive coaches suggestions for supporting coachees who are at midlife. The first of these suggestions is supporting coachees in their search for meaning. Coaches can assist coachees by encouraging them to enter into personal reflection to indentify new interests and by encouraging them to look for new patterns in their interests and desires. Providing coachees with additional resources such as relevant books can also provide them with valuable models for understanding their development.

Fitzgerald (2002) advises coaches to help busy executives maintain their performance levels during a period of change. Coaches can add value to coachees by helping them focus on their energy levels and also by encouraging coachees to be open to new and more effective ways to be efficient in their work. As coachees start to embrace midlife development and decision points about the future begin to appear, coaches can work with coachees to determine an effective decision-making process for them. In addition, the coach can challenge the coachee to consider other options that might not otherwise receive attention (Michael, 2003).

Benefits of development with psychological type. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) identify six key benefits to utilizing psychological type for coachee development. First, they state that coachees gain a broader understanding of the own strengths, allowing them to focus their efforts on areas that will be most successful for them. Second, coachees can learn to develop and utilize a secondary style for adaptation in situations where their preferred style is not the most appropriate. Third, they believe that leaders can minimize misunderstandings by learning when to employ extrovert or introvert feelings and communication. Fourth, an understanding of the preferences for judging and perceiving will honor individuals' work styles that might otherwise cause conflict. Fifth, leaders are more likely to understand and appreciate the personality of others. Finally, leaders will better understand and appreciate their limitations.

Summary

Executive coaching is a growing field that finds its roots in psychology and has emerged as a distinct profession. While debate exists surrounding the extent and appropriateness of psychology in coaching, areas of agreement are present in the literature. One of these agreements is the type of roles that coaches can take to serve coachees in varying situations. The most widely referenced of these is Witherspoon and White's (1996a) four distinct coaching roles, which are cited throughout the literature as a framework for how coaches can add value to their coachees and clients.

In addition, there is general agreement that effective coaches should follow a structured process for bringing value to coachees and clients. While there are many variations of these processes described in the literature, Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) identify six distinct phases of the coaching process in their literature review that are referenced extensively in the literature. One of these phases is assessment, in which varying resources and tools such as the MBTI are utilized to collect information about the coachee. In addition, there are many references in the literature on the qualifications necessary to provide effective executive coaching, including education, integrity and trust, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, confidence, business knowledge, intelligence, language, questioning, presence, listening, feedback, adherence, and creativity.

Psychological type finds its roots in the writings of Carl Jung. The desire of practitioners to apply these psychological models resulted in the creation of the MBTI.

Overall agreement exists that the MBTI is widely used among coaches and in the business world. There is less agreement as to the validity of the instrument and evidence exists on both sides, leading to varying conclusions. However, the balance of the literature appears to favor the value of the instrument and the psychological type model.

Numerous applications of psychological type include its use in leadership development, a common activity for executive coaches. Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) detail an eight-step model for how practitioners can utilize psychological type in order to provide leadership development for clients. However, there does not appear to be substantial research exploring how executive coaches utilize the instrument with their coachees or whether they utilize these existing models.

Chapter Three: Methods

This chapter outlines the grounded theory approach to this study, the population of executive coaches that was targeted for study, the development of appropriate interview questions, interview procedures conducted via phone interviews, data collection and analysis, and consent procedures for the research subjects. In addition, the overall concept of the research design is explored, with an explanation for a grounded theory approach.

Research Design and Rationale

As detailed in the literature review, academic literature and research on executive coaching is still extremely limited. Furthermore, only one prior study from Bell (2005) examines MBTI use in executive coaching, and this study examined the results that the coachees received from the use of the instrument. While there are models advising coaches how they might use psychological type with clients, most notably from Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997), no research to date appears to exist that directly examines how executive coaches utilize the MBTI with their coachees. As a result, the single research question of this study is: What is the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees?

A qualitative approach was used to address the research question in this study. There were two driving factors for utilizing a qualitative approach. The first factor is that this study examined a topic for which there was little existing data to support a theory or framework. Second, the study examined interpersonal interactions such as how executive coaches communicate with coachees about the MBTI. In both of these cases, Creswell

(2007) advises that a qualitative approach is more appropriate, since existing measures would not capture individual approaches utilized or be measured effectively.

Because of the lack of prior literature on the subject and the desire to understand how executive coaches utilize the MBTI, a grounded theory approach to the study was used. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe grounded theory as the process of developing a theory that is grounded in the experience of practitioners in the field, rather than the research literature. In addition, they state, "Grounded theory studies are especially helpful when current theories about a phenomenon are either inadequate or nonexistent" (p. 140). Grounded theory studies tend to focus on the process that is utilized by the study population, which was the focus of the research question for this study. Creswell (2007) adds that grounded theory is useful to study a process used by a group. The literature may have models available, but from populations that are of a different focus than the population at hand. In the case of this study, the models from the literature review were prescriptive in nature and did not show extensive evidence of being formed by direct data from practitioners in the field.

Creswell (2007) states that an effective grounded theory includes 20 to 30 interviews that result in data categories that can be used to understand better the process being researched. Constant comparative analysis is typically used during data collection in order to compare data from the study population to emerging categories in the data analysis. Both Creswell and Leedy and Ormrod (2005) suggest the model refined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to analyze data from a grounded theory study to develop a substantive, low-level theory that attempts to answer the research question. The details of this process and its application to this study are detailed in the data collection and data analysis sections.

The researcher first conceived of this study while attending an MBTI certification course. While the researcher acquired vast knowledge about administering the MBTI during this course, little practical information was presented as to how executive coaches utilized the instrument during one-on-one interactions. Instead, many of the supporting materials for the MBTI appeared to the researcher to be directed at group facilitation exercises rather than one-on-one interactions. This study was inspired by the researcher's desire to learn what best practices, if any, exist among executive coaches for using the MBTI effectively.

The researcher attended MBTI certification and is also educationally qualified to administer the instrument, which he has done on a number of occasions. In addition, he provides one-on-one coaching to coachees and has administered the MBTI to executive coachees. As a result, the researcher brought biases to this study. These biases included a belief that some coaches administer too many assessments with coachees and overwhelm them with data or too many theoretical models to make practical value of the instruments, including MBTI. Furthermore, based on personal observation of MBTI workshops and practitioners in the past decade, the researcher also brought the bias that some coaches utilize a test and tell methodology with coachees, meaning that they failed to spend appropriate time verifying that the assessment did indeed produce accurate results.

In order to minimize these biases, the researcher is acknowledging them here and utilized standard methodologies for grounded theory studies that attempt to minimize biases from the researcher. These procedures are described in detail below.

Population, Sampling Method, Sample, and Participants

Since the practical resources were not available with this study to provide true probability sampling, a nonprobabilistic method of sampling was used in the study along with snowball sampling. Since a majority of the potential study participants came from personal connections to the researcher, the entire population of executive coaches was not represented in the sample. This lent itself to a nonprobabilistic method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In addition, potential study participants were asked to recommend other individuals who might meet the study criteria. Creswell (2007) terms this snowball sampling, since research subjects were identified by others who believed they would have knowledge or experience pertinent to the study.

While the literature review cites a number of coaching definitions, almost no guidance exists in the literature as to what separates an executive coach from any other type of coach, or even what qualifies an individual to be considered part of the coaching profession. Peltier (2001) states that executive coaches serve top leaders in client organizations. However, he does not define what it means to be a top leader. O'Neill (2007) defines an executive as someone who is at the top level of his or her organization such as a CEO, senior vice president, plant manager, or executive director. However, her definition does not consider the size of the organization. Thus, it is unclear if a coach who provides services to the top officer a three-person firm should be considered an executive coach. Even a casual review of the literature would show this not to be the intention of most researchers.

Kofodimos (2007) states, "Broadly defined, executive coaching is a one-on-one consulting relationship dedicated to improving the leadership capability and performance of high-level managers" (p. xii). She adds that there are no accepted standard for what qualifies a person as a coach and cites media reports on the lack of standards in coaching from the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Fast Company*, and *Fortune*. In addition, Ellinger, Ellinger, Hamlin, and Beattie (2010) agree that there are few distinctions drawn in the literature among coaching, business coaching, life coaching, and executive coaching.

One constant in the definitions above is that an executive coach is an individual who serves a higher level or upper-level manager (Kofodimos, 2007; O'Neill, 2007; Peltier, 2001). Since it stood to reason that having a higher-level manager in an organization implied the existence of a lower-level manager, it was reasonable to conclude that an executive coach, at a minimum, would typically coach managers of managers. In addition, since it can also be assumed that some coaches may only have minimal experience working with this level of client, it was appropriate to quantify a reasonable amount of coaching time with executives. Since Bell's (2005) study finds that the average length of an executive coaching session is 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes, working with at least two clients per month should yield at least approximately 3 hours of direct coaching, even if coaching meetings are only conducted monthly. As a result, the second stage of the study examined coaches who reported that they had, at a minimum, provided at least 9 hours of one-on-one coaching to managers of managers in the 90 days preceding the study. Coaches who did not report coaching managers of mangers for at least 9 hours in the 90 days preceding the study were excluded from consideration in the study (see Appendix A).

It was necessary to define what an executive was in order to focus this study on a population of executive coaches that can be generalized for future studies. Drucker

(2002) states that executives are individuals whose decisions are expected to have significant results for the larger organization. Peltier (2001) does not specifically define an executive, but states that organizations invest in coaching for executives since they are the individuals who are making critical strategic decisions. Backstrom (2010) concludes that executives are the functional heads of organizational units, understand consequences of decision making and strategy, handle ambiguity, and balance issues that will bring shareholder returns. Kilburg (2000) adds that an executive has managerial authority and responsibility for organizational results.

Since a common theme of the executive definitions above includes authority for decisions leading to organizational results, it was necessary to screen coaches who provided a majority of coaching to these types of individuals. In addition, a simple and clear method for determining if a coachee fell into this category was important, since study participants made this determination during stage-one screening. A common distinction of this type of responsibility made in business is whether an individual has profit and loss responsibility, meaning he or she is in a position to determine and be accountable for the profit earned by a business unit, division, or entire organization. Therefore, study participants were screened to determine what percentage of their coachees had profit and loss responsibility. For the purpose of this study, participants were accepted if at least half of their current clients had profit and loss responsibilities for their organizational units.

The MBTI is a proprietary product of CPP, Inc. In order to ensure that practitioners are using the MBTI appropriately, CPP requires individuals to be either MBTI certified or educationally eligible to purchase the instrument (CPP, Inc., 2010).

MBTI certification requires practitioners to attend a 4-day intensive training course and pass a certification exam in order to purchase the instrument. An additional master practitioner credential is available beyond the MBTI certification level, which also qualifies an individual to utilize the MBTI. Alternatively, holding a master's degree in certain fields of study can also deem a practitioner educationally eligible to purchase and administer the MBTI. In order to be in alignment with the requirements for use of this product, this study screened subjects to ensure that all study participants had completed an MBTI certification program or held a master's degree in one of the fields of study recognized as educationally eligible by CPP. Coaches who did not meet this standard were excluded from consideration in an initial online survey (see Appendix A). Since this study examined how coaches utilize the MBTI, not why they utilize the MBTI over other instruments, it was beyond the scope of the study to examine what percentage of executive coaches use the instrument or why they choose it over other instruments.

Finally, since this study examined how executive coaches utilize the MBTI with their coachees, it was necessary to research executive coaches who also utilized the instrument with some frequency. Peterson (1996) and Tobias (1996) remind us that executive coaches use multiple methods for assessment with coachees, so it is unreasonable to assume that executive coaches would utilize the MBTI in every interaction. As a result, this study examined executive coaches who reported that they had used the MBTI with at least one third of their current clients. Executive coaches who did not report utilizing the MBTI with at least one third of their current clients were excluded from consideration in the initial online survey (see Appendix A).

Pilot Study

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that it is appropriate to conduct a pilot study in order to test procedures, interview questions, and the overall data collection process prior to the start of the study. The researcher conducted a pilot study using cognitive interview techniques with three executive coaches who utilize the MBTI with coachees. Subjects for the pilot study were located through the personal connections of the researcher. Desimone and Le Floch (2004) report that cognitive interviewing assists the researcher in improving the interview questions and uncovering biases and terminology that might unknowingly influence the data collected from research subjects.

The researcher conducted the pilot study using the cognitive interview process described by Desimone and Le Floch (2004). In this process, the pilot study subjects were asked to give a full commentary of their thoughts about the interview questions. Desimone and Le Floch advise that this process should bring awareness to what is being captured accurately by the interview questions, determine what may be ambiguous, and uncover what may be missing. The researcher utilized this feedback to inform and revise the interview procedures proposed below before it was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for consideration. No data or subjects from the pilot study were utilized in the main study.

In order to generate insight into the appropriateness of interview questions, pilot study participants were asked to comment on the use of Creswell's (2007) standard interview questions for a grounded research study. These questions included (a) tell me as much as you can about the process by which you use the results of the MBTI to develop your coachees and (b) what happens at each stage of the process when utilizing the results of the MBTI to develop your coachees? Upon review of the results from the pilot study, all three pilot study participants were in agreement that the word process was too harsh for executive coaches and that study participants might either not recognize they were using a process or make one up on the spot to satisfy the interviewer. All three were also in agreement that more general and casual questions should be asked of study participants that focused on examples of MBTI use and the extent to which the examples represented typical use. Based upon that feedback, Creswell's original recommended questions were altered and expanded to the interview questions listed below.

Data Collection Setting and Procedures

The researcher is a member of several professional organizations, including Professional Coaches, Mentors, and Advisors, the International Coach Federation, and the Association for Psychological Type International. In addition, he has connections with MBTI practitioners in his professional capacity. As a result, the researcher had direct and indirect access to a large number of potential study participants.

Several procedures were utilized in order to recruit participants who might have qualified for inclusion in this study. The researcher sent an e-mail message to his professional contacts asking them to consider participating in the research study (see Appendix B). He also asked their cooperation in distributing announcements about the study to colleagues who matched the demographics of the study population.

Also, the researcher utilized social media announcements to inform his professional connections in the field about the study with a link to the online survey. Social media outlets used included the researcher's personal accounts on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter (see Appendix C). In addition, the researcher posted invitations on

LinkedIn groups pages for coaches, of which the researcher is a member, including Professional Coaches, Mentors, and Advisors and the International Coach Federation (see Appendix B).

Finally, the researcher came into contact with numerous executive coaches in his professional capacity and was able to distribute personally invitations to potential study participants in his daily work. Invitations included a brief overview of the study and a link to complete the initial survey, so they could have made the choice to participate (see Appendix D).

Two methods were used to collect data in this study, and were divided into two stages. The first stage was a brief, online survey, which served the purpose of screening potential study participants. Once potential study participants were screened, stage 2 proceeded with open-ended interviews of executive coaches to collect data, leading to the emergence of a central phenomenon.

Instrumentation

Online survey. The online survey was the screening stage of the data collection process. This survey was hosted on the SurveyMonkey Web site and asked five demographic questions to determine if potential study participants qualified for stage 2 of the study. In addition, the survey asked potential study participants if they were willing to participate in stage 2 of the study, assuming that they qualified for participation (see Appendix B).

Interviews. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that interviews play a major role in grounded theory research since it is critical that the voices of the study participants emerge in the theory that the study ultimately produces. Since a key focus of a grounded theory study is on the process used by the study population, interview questions that generate insight into these processes are most appropriate (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The researcher contacted study participants who qualified for stage 2 of the study and who also agreed to participate in an interview, using the contact information they submitted to the online survey. Study participants were scheduled by the researcher to participate in 30-minute interviews about their experiences using the MBTI in executive coaching to develop coachees (see Appendix E). These interviews were conducted on a telephone bridge line hosted by the FreeConference Web site. All conference calls were securely recorded by the FreeConference Web site and the digital recordings were delivered to the researcher’s online account. The password for the account was stored on the researcher’s computer through 1Password software for maximum data security. The researcher then downloaded the audio files and stored them in a locked file cabinet at the researcher’s residence.

In order to generate insight into MBTI processes utilized by coaches, five questions were asked of study participants during the interviews in stage 2 of the study. These questions were crafted in partnership with the pilot study participants. The researcher asked: (a) How do you use the MBTI with your coachees?; (b) At what point in coaching do you introduce MBTI and why?; (c) Tell me about three times you’ve used MBTI with coachees and how you used it?; (d) How do you determine how you will use the MBTI with coachees?; and (e) To what extent do the examples you’ve discussed represent how you typically use the MBTI? The researcher’s responses to these questions included active listening and neutral encouragements, such as go on and, what do you mean? The researcher asked study participants to clarify unclear points and expand upon areas where the researcher believed additional data would provide greater understanding of the study participants' experiences.

Human Subjects Protections

Only consenting adults participated in this study, in alignment with the Federal Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects. In addition, this study proposal was submitted to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board for approval, prior to the start of the study. The researcher complied with all guidelines of Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board process. Minimal risks of harm were expected for this study's participants.

Study participants were informed of the purpose of the study prior to their participation. In addition, they were asked to give their consent to participate in the study and were informed that they could rescind their voluntary consent at anytime. Research subjects who participated in stage 2 of the study were asked to give consent to record their interviews over the phone. When research subjects did not give consent, no interview was conducted and any data previously collected from them was not utilized in the study. For research subjects who did give consent and did participate in an interview, they were given the opportunity by the researcher to review the transcript of the interview and make any changes they deemed necessary to represent appropriately their views and experiences.

Confidentiality of the research subjects was honored at all times in the study. Interview transcripts were coded by number and a numerical list identifying the research subjects was kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's residence. In addition, the researcher removed any identifying information from the interview transcripts such as names, organizations, geographic locations, or any other content that was deemed by either the researcher or the research subject to potentially identify the research subject.

Analytical Techniques

As stated previously, both Creswell (2007) and Leedy and Ormrod (2005) suggest the model refined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as a widely used approach for a grounded theory study. Their model was utilized for this study in order to analyze the data effectively and create a substantive-level theory that addressed the research question. In a grounded theory study, data analysis begins during the data collection process in order to saturate the categories that develop and determine the central phenomenon.

As interviews were completed in stage 2 of the study, the digital audio files were sent to the Verbalink Web site for full transcription of the recorded interviews. Transcripts were returned to the researcher in three to five business days and then stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's residence.

The first step of data analysis using the Corbin and Strauss (2008) model is open coding. Open coding divides the data into categories or themes to determine commonalities. In this study, the researcher analyzed transcripts from the interviews. The researcher conducted open coding and examined the frequency counts in each category generated through the process to determine if the central phenomenon had emerged from the data. The researcher analyzed the transcripts for open coding after 15 interviews in stage 2 of the study and determined that a central phenomenon had emerged. The researcher then proceeded with axial coding.

As the central phenomenon emerged through open coding analysis, the researcher proceeded to the second step of data analysis, that of axial coding. The process of axial coding determined four categories around the central phenomenon that Creswell (2007) describes as: (a) causal conditions or what caused the central phenomenon in the first place, (b) strategies or actions taken by practitioners in response to the central phenomenon, (c) intervening conditions or factors that have influenced the strategies used by practitioners, and finally (d) consequences or outcomes of using those strategies. Creswell describes saturation as the point in data collection when no new information adds to the researcher's understanding of the category.

Based upon the determination of the central phenomenon, the researcher applied the following four axial coding categories in order to saturate the axial coding process. The researcher asked: "What was central to the process? (the core phenomenon); What influenced or caused this phenomenon to occur? (casual conditions); What strategies were employed during the process? (strategies); What effect occurred? (consequences)" (Creswell, 2007, p. 66). These questions were then posed by the researcher to the existing transcriptions from the stage two interviews.

The final step in the data analysis process was selective coding. In this step, the researcher combined the categories produced through axial coding to determine a story line for the central phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The emerging theory was based solely on the data collected from the study and presented in narrative form by the researcher, including a visual model of the theory. Creswell (2007) states, "The researcher needs to recognize that the primary outcome of this is a theory with specific components: a central phenomenon, causal conditions, strategies, conditions and context, and consequences” (p. 68). The researcher reported these stated outcomes in chapter four.

Assumptions and Limitations

There were several limitations to this study for the reader to consider along with the results. First, since a number of study participants learned about the study through a professional contact of the researcher, many of the study participants were members of the same professional organizations to which the researcher belongs. As a result, the study was not a representative sample of all executive coaches.

Second, although the research subjects were promised confidentiality in their responses, the fact that interviews were audio recorded opened up the possibility that research subjects might not have been as forthcoming as they would have been in interactions not using audio equipment. Although the researcher judged that the importance of accurate interview transcripts outweighed the potential for research subjects to be less forthcoming, it was a limitation of the study. Since some of the research subjects knew the researcher through professional connections, they may not have been as forthcoming in their interviews as they would have been with an unknown third party.

In addition, the study assumed that research subjects were honest and forthright in their responses and provided accurate data in all stages of the study. Whether intended by research subjects, a possibility remains that false data was collected during the study. This was a study limitation, as there was no way to identify any such data and, if it existed, whether it was included in the results of the study.

It was also intentional that the study did not screen executive coaches for the length of time that they provided executive coaching services. Since there is no accepted standard produced in the literature that defines an appropriate length of time for an individual to be qualified as an executive coach, it did not seem reasonable for the researcher to invent one. Rather, it was assumed that any executive coach who met the standards for this study was at least reasonably skilled as an executive coach, as it would have been unlikely than an unskilled executive coach would produce the coachee experiences that were screened for in stage 1 of the study.

Finally, the study did not consider how executive coaches, who were not certified by CPP or educationally qualified to administer the instrument, utilized the MBTI. This exclusion was intentional, as the instrument is proprietary and not authorized for use by those who fall outside either of those two categories. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that there are executive coaches who obtain the instrument and utilize it with coachees, in spite of not meeting either of these qualifications. The researcher has seen nothing in the literature speaking to the size of such a population, but hypothesizes that this population is quite small since MBTI sales are restricted to the two identified groups. However, it was a limitation of this study since the researcher intentionally excluded any best practices or data that this population might have offered.

Summary

As there was little existing research on the use of the MBTI among executive coaches, this study determined a substantive, low-level theory on this process. This addressed the single research question of the study: What is the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees? A grounded theory approach was used to determine best practices that emerged among executive coaches who elected to participate in this study.

There were no clearly defined metrics in the literature for what separated an executive coach from the more common, garden-variety coach. For the purpose of this study, executive coaches provided at least 9 hours of one-on-one coaching to managers of managers in the 90 days prior to their participation in this study. In addition, they met the qualifications detailed in the study population section, which established a reasonable standard of MBTI instrument use with coachees who had profit and loss responsibilities.

Potential participants of the study were sought from several sources. These included the professional connections of the researcher as well as announcements posted online and made in person to professional coaching associations. In addition, the researcher utilized social media to broaden the reach of the study and included executive coaches who were otherwise unknown to the researcher or unaffiliated with coaching associations.

In stage 1 of the study, participants were screened in an online survey to be sure they qualified for the definition of executive coach utilized in this study. In addition, the survey determined if they had met the minimum standard of hours and qualified to administer the MBTI. Those who qualified for stage 2 of the study were invited to participate in a recorded phone interview. The 15 interviews in this stage determined a central phenomenon of MBTI use among executive coaches. The researcher utilized the data gained during the interviews to shape and saturate the axial coding process and developed a substantive, low-level theory for MBTI utilization among executive coaches.

Chapter Four: Results

The goal of this study was to provide an answer to the single research question: What is the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees? This section will provide an overview of the results from interview participants, provide a descriptive story that conceptualizes the theory, and detail a theoretical model on the process executive coaches use with MBTI results.

Survey Respondants and Interview Participants

As described in chapter three, the online survey was hosted by SurveyMonkey's Web site and remained available for responses for approximately 6 months in order to screen interview participants. During this time, 169 individuals responded to the online survey. Of these 169 total participants, 31 qualified for stage 2 of the study, as detailed per the study requirements established in chapter three. Of these participants, 26 agreed to be contacted to participate in stage 2 of the study, and ultimately 15 individuals (13 women and two men) scheduled and completed a recorded phone interview with the researcher. All interviews were conducted during the fourth quarter of 2010 and varied in length from 15 to 45 minutes, with the vast majority of the interviews averaging in the 25- to 30-minute range. Geographically, these 15 interview participants were primarily located in the United States with representation from eight states, although interview participants from Canada and the United Kingdom were also included in the study.

Based upon their survey responses from stage 1 of the study, all 15 participants who were interviewed in stage 2 of the study reported that they were certified by CPP, Inc. to administer the MBTI. In addition, eight of the 15 stage 2 participants also reported that they were educationally qualified to administer the MBTI, although this was not relevant for screening purposes given that all stage 2 participants were MBTI certified.

Additionally, survey responses from the 15 interview participants showed that they reported spending an average of 67.3 hours in the past 90 days providing one-on-one coaching to clients who are managers of managers. This far exceeded the study's screening requirement of 9 hours. All interview participants also individually exceeded this screening requirement.

When asked in the survey to report how many of their current coachees have profit and loss responsibilities with their organization, the 15 interview participants reported on average that 81.3% of their current coachees had profit and loss responsibilities. Again, this exceeded the study's screening requirement of 50%. All interview participants also individually exceeded this screening requirement.

The 15 interview participants reported on average that they used the MBTI with their coachees 87.3% of the time, exceeding the study's screening requirement of 33%. Again, all interview participants also individually exceeded this screening requirement. Table 1 provides a full overview of the demographics of stage 2 study participants.

Table 1

Demographics of Stage 2 Study Participants

Participant	Certified by CPP?	Educationally qualified?	Hours spent in last 90 days coaching managers of managers	Percentage of current coachees with P & L responsibility	Percentage of time using MBTI with coachees
1	YES	YES	15	100%	100%
2	YES	NO	15	100%	70%
3	YES	YES	30	100%	100%

(continued)

Participant	Certified by CPP?	Educationally qualified?	Hours spent in last 90 days coaching managers of managers	Percentage of current coachees with P & L responsibility	Percentage of time using MBTI with coachees
4	YES	YES	15	70%	60%
5	YES	NO	45	100%	100%
6	YES	NO	40	80%	100%
7	YES	NO	10	50%	90%
8	YES	YES	30	50%	100%
9	YES	YES	160	60%	100%
10	YES	NO	200	100%	70%
11	YES	NO	80	70%	90%
12	YES	NO	20	70%	100%
13	YES	YES	250	100%	70%
14	YES	YES	20	80%	60%
15	YES	YES	80	90%	100%
Average	N/A	N/A	67.3	81.3%	87.3%

Corbin and Strauss (2008) state:

> Normally, at the end of a research investigation the products of analysis are presented as a set of findings. There is little or only brief mention of what the researcher went through in the process of arriving at those findings. (p. 230)

Given this direction, the researcher acknowledges that the grounded theory analysis was conducted as stated in chapter three and the balance of this chapter will detail the study findings.

Findings

In reporting findings for a grounded theory study, Corbin and Strauss (2008) advise:

> It all goes back to answering the questions, “What was this research all about?” “What were the main issues and problems that these informants were grappling with?” Then there should be sufficient conceptual detail and descriptive

> quotations to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of these. Participants and professionals familiar with the theoretical area should feel satisfied that the story has been told and understood. (p. 281)

Thus, the following findings are supported extensively with quotes from interview transcriptions and analysis from the researcher intended to be useful to both future researchers and executive coach practitioners.

Findings reported below are classified as either the central phenomenon or as one of the other five areas of classification recommended by Creswell (2007) for grounded theory studies: causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. Corbin and Strauss (2008) also advise researchers, "The important thing is that no item (be it gender, age, power, etc.) should be stated as being relevant to the evolving story unless there are data to support it" (p. 95). As a result, findings from individual interview participants that were not substantiated from several other interview participants were not included in the findings of this study. In addition, unless otherwise noted, no single interview participant is utilized as the source for more than one quote in any given subsection of the findings.

Quotes from interview transcripts have been, in some cases, edited in three ways. Since the Verbalink Web site was instructed by the researcher to transcribe the exact audio captured during interviews, verbal ticks such as umms and ahhs appear throughout many of the interview transcripts. As these verbal ticks are potentially distracting to readers and irrelevant to the content of the interview, the researcher removed them. In addition, as mentioned in chapter one, this entire document utilizes the term coachee to refer to the individual being coached, regardless of whether they are the paying client.

For consistency, the researcher has changed references to clients made by interview participants to coachees where it was clear that the participant was speaking about the individual receiving coaching. In all cases, this substitution is noted with brackets in the text. Finally, a small number of specific references to certain coachee or client industries were removed from quotes to reduce substantially any possibility of identification of the interview participant. Although interview participants were provided the opportunity to remove these references from transcripts prior to inclusion in this document, the researcher has deemed it appropriate to remove some additional references that participants might have missed. Besides these three exceptions, quotes that appear in these findings are the exact text from interview transcripts.

Central Phenomenon: Raise Awareness

Interview participants reported that utilizing the MBTI to raise the awareness level of coachees was central to the process by which they use the results of the MBTI. All 15 interview participants made substantial comments about utilizing the results of the MBTI to raise awareness with coaches, and transcripts reveal that this factor was three times more prevalent than any other factor mentioned during interviews. Two central themes emerged from interview participants that encompass the process of raising awareness with coachees, including raising both self-awareness and organizational awareness of the coachee.

Self-awareness. All interview participants reported that a substantial portion of their process in utilizing the MBTI with coachees is to raise the self-awareness of coachees in two key areas. This process included the recognition of the strengths and blind spots of the coachee’s psychological type preferences. In addition, a majority of interview participants report a strong focus on helping the coachee gain clarity on how their psychological type influences their behavior choices in the workplace. Both of these areas are examined in detail below.

Recognition of strengths and blind spots. The vast majority of interview participants stated a clear benefit to raising self-awareness of their coachees and its importance in the executive development process. Participants stated that the MBTI provided a starting point for self-awareness and stated in such plain terms as participant 2 stating, "I use the MBTI to help people develop their self-awareness," and from participant 4, "I use this as one of the assessments, particularly with people who may not have a lot of self-awareness." Participant 15 states, "So, naturally I use it to help them see where their blind spots might be." A majority of participants also acknowledged this step as a larger process in coachee development, such as participant 15 stating, "Initially how I want to use it is self-discovery and self-understanding and self-management. So that's my focus with someone, either groups or individuals, but when I'm doing it in coaching one-on-one, it's a vehicle for self-discovery."

A majority of interview participants reported good results from using the MBTI for the purposes of recognizing strengths and blind spots. Participant 13 stated, "You find so many things that you can immediately help people get a grip on, and they're often amazed. 'Wow. How come I didn't know that before?'" When recalling a coaching interaction, participant 15 mentioned, "It really helped him see himself in a way he hadn't seen before." Commenting on supporting strengths, participant 2 endorsed the MBTI by stating, "I've found it a very useful thing in terms of affirming some of these core behavior habits," and participant 15 added, "I also find that it's a very powerful instrument to help people understand themselves, to really see themselves."

Raising self-awareness also has practical implications for the coaching process. A majority of interview participants reported that utilizing the MBTI to point out strengths and blind spots helped them to set up the entire coaching process for success. As participant 1 stated, "I want people to be comfortable with who they are to start with." However, beyond simple comfort level, participants pointed to more practical considerations, including this statement from participant 6:

> We use it to help individuals understand what their strengths and weaknesses are. Often at the beginning of the coaching process so we can have that discussion about how this might give them a clue into their innate talents, what might be some of the challenges they innately face.

Participant 6 adds, "It's about using it both from—understanding their central weaknesses and understanding how they innately want to approach the coaching conversation and the coaching process."

Interview participants also suggested that the strengths and weaknesses highlighted by the MBTI provide an essential foundation for coachee development. Participant 14 stated, "I use it to help the person to become more self-reflective because to be good leaders and good managers, if you're not self-reflective, it's hard to really understand other people, in other words, if you don't understand yourself." This was also highlighted by participant 13 stating, "So it becomes pretty straightforward to get—again bring up their insight, bring up their self-knowledge, and if they want to get better, these are critical issues for leadership, for management." Interview participants furthered a case for self-awareness, such a participant 2 stating, “The more my coaching focuses on leadership and on leading in times of great change, the more important it is as a way to understand yourself and other people,” as well as participant 3 reporting, “It’s more useful to me than—certainly more useful to me than most of the 360 instruments that are out there because their problem is usually related to who they are.”

Influences on behavior choices. Although the recognition of strengths and blind spots was acknowledged as a critical starting point in raising self-awareness of coachees, a majority of participants also spoke to the importance of how this new self-awareness influenced the behavior choices of coachees. Interview participants utilized this as the beginning stages for later action items for coachees. Participant 13 advises coachees, “Let’s look at MBTI and see how your personality type may be tying into these behaviors.” The following comments from interview participants indicate a general preference for this direction when working with coachees.

Participant 10 stated, “The MBTI fits into the template of coaching very well because it assists in surfacing behavioral preferences.” A number of interview participants see this type of self-awareness as an opening to having coachees begin considering behavior change. Participant 2 said:

> So it’s both a way to help think about how to manage their own behavior choices in the way they work with others, what choices do they have about how to be, those environments, and do they take those choices, do they make good use of those choices.

Questions during coaching from interview participants such as, “What are the implications of trying to not be you?” from participant 4 might also illuminate these behavior choices.

Use of the MBTI provides the groundwork that a majority of interview participants believe will lead to future actions. Participant 10 described the MBTI as a resource, “For self-knowledge, improving communication skills, and as a tool to assist the leader in influencing and motivating others.” Participant 4 spoke to a past coaching assignment stating:

> I had him do the MBTI Step II and it supported him seeing kinda what his anchor was—you know, what is his baseline at his best preference. He could see where stress might’ve caused him to behave in different ways.

In some cases, behavior change might be influenced immediately. Participant 5 reported:

> One of the ways that we used the instrument was to look at those needs—look at the environment she was in and look at the experience others were having of her and she just—she just started laughing and she leapt out of her chair and she was so surprised. She said that I [the coachee] never made the connection.

Participants 4 shared this experience:

> I think she thought she was going to be a feeler, so to prefer feeling, and the assessment came out that she preferred thinking. And she said, “You know I think it’s really true. I really do prefer thinking. I really do go to a logical place first.”

Participant 11 reported:

> So it really kind of allows them to talk about where their problems are, where they see their growth opportunities. Particularly once they've gone through the tool and then they see the, "Oh that explains why that's harder for me," that type of thing—it's kind of like an ah-ha moment.

The quantity and breadth of these comments provide evidence that executive coaches make extensive use of the MBTI to raise the self-awareness of coachees.

Organizational awareness. While interview participants spoke at length about the importance of utilizing the MBTI to raise self-awareness, raising the organizational awareness of coachees is also highlighted as a key factor in the MBTI process. Organizational awareness emerged as a critical component since, as participant 8 put it, "You want people looking at things differently, especially in a team situation." As was true for raising self-awareness, comments from interview participants divide this process into two areas, including recognition of colleagues' strengths and blind spots and influences on relationships with colleagues.

Recognition of colleagues' strengths and blind spots. The ability for coachees to recognize the strengths and blind spots of others is an important consideration for interview participants. Participant 2 stated, "More often than not, it's about how other people are so flawed" suggesting that coachees may often be unaware of the preferences of their colleagues. A majority of interview participants addressed the importance of raising awareness in this area in order to enhance relationships with colleagues and ultimately support organizational goals.

Recognition of differences in how colleagues approach the world was often cited as a significant step in this process. A majority of interview participants stated that awareness in this area started relationship improvement and cited past coachee interactions in which this occurred. Participant 8 stated, “They had the ah-ha moments of oh, this is you. I can tell right away this is me. This is where there’s issues.” Participant 1 said, “[The coachee] needed to be mindful of developing more of her F preferences towards being a good listener, helping others to become their best as well.”

Understanding and recognizing points of friction between coachees and colleagues was indeed mentioned as a starting point for change. Participant 14 commented, “It [the MBTI] just brings to the surface, ‘Oh, this is why so-and-so makes me nuts.’ They have certain preferences that are different from mine.” Participant 14 also recalled, “[The coachee] is also an introvert, and therefore, people were often seeing what they thought was coldness and an aloofness. And since many of them were very extroverted feelers, this was kind of one of your typical places of misunderstanding.”

Influences on relationships with colleagues. As the strengths and blind spots of colleagues emerge, a majority of interview participants find that these changes began to influence relationships with colleagues. Participant 14 spoke to this by stating, “Now that I had a good understanding of [the coachee’s] type, we starting working on how that was manifesting itself in the workplace.” In some cases, this affected immediate changes in how coachees managed professional relationships. Participant 5 recalled a coachee who previously had poor relationships with direct reports but had utilized MBTI feedback effectively in her relationships. “You know, people can’t get enough of her now, because she’s figured out how to pull the different levels with a little more nuance than before.” Participant 9 noted a similar result:

> They finally saw why they saw her this way, why she was frustrating them, but the value that she brought to the table, and it completely shifted it and not only did they start acknowledging her and looking to her as a resource for the keeper of the details, but they hired two more folks that could fulfill that function in the team.

Participant 14 stated:

> It [the MBTI] really did help them get that handle on why other people tended to behave in a particular way and really understand that it wasn’t just to make them nuts, that they really did look out on a different universe, and it was just as valid a universe as the one they held.

Participant 5 mentioned that this also provides the coach with an opportunity to begin to give feedback to the coachee on where his or her preferences might not line up with the preferences of others. In reference to one of the consistent actions a coachee was taking in the workplace, participant 5 recalled this response: “I said, ‘You know, that’s really kinda discouraging. For you it’s motivating, but even for the other NTs on your team, I think you’re kinda overdoing this.’” Other interview participants provided similar examples of how MBTI opens this door for more in-depth conversations with the coachee.

Raising awareness of coachees is the foremost consideration of the executive coaches who participated in this study. Participant 8 summarized, “It [the MBTI] helps a person understand that there’s a more global piece to how they’re interacting.” The awareness level of the coachee is a critical concern to the interview participants in this study who recognize that a senior leader's awareness level has implications for individuals across the organization. In addition, raising awareness also sets the stage for later strategies and actions in the executive coaching process.

Causal Conditions

Given the central phenomenon of raising the awareness level of coachees during an executive coach's process of utilizing the MBTI, a natural next step is to consider what leads an executive coach to determine that raising awareness is central to the process. Creswell (2007) refers to the factors leading up to the central phenomenon as causal conditions. The causal conditions identify what influences the central phenomenon and what events or incidents lead to it.

While interview participants made mention of many conditions that lead to the importance of raising the awareness level of coachees, three conditions consistently emerged as influential factors. These included helping the coach to work more effectively, responding to organizational goals, and, to a lesser extent, supporting type-different coachees, who have a different personality type than a majority of their colleagues. Interview participants provided insight into each of these three considerations, captured in detail below.

Help the coach work more effectively. At first glance, it might appear self-serving that executive coaches would utilize the MBTI to help them do their work more effectively. On the contrary, substantial evidence from almost all the interview participants indicates that while the MBTI does provide value to the executive coach, this quickly translates into a more effective coaching process for the coachee. Three categories that were mentioned in detail include building rapport with the coachee, getting buy-in from the coachee, and determining how to best work with the coachee.

Build rapport. Since executive coaches often have little if any relationship with a coachee prior to the start of a coaching engagement, it's important for them to build rapport quickly to move the coaching process forward. A majority of interview participants reported that the MBTI allowed them to do this effectively, making statements such as, "It [the MBTI] enables me to connect personally and quickly with people in ways that there would be no good reason for me to be able to do that…" from participant 2 as well as participant 14 stating, "I like to do it up front because I think it's a good way to kind of ease into the interactions" from In addition, participant 15 described the MBTI as, "A springboard for me to bring in a lot of other ways that I work with someone."

Providing further elaboration, participant 8 stated:

> It also is an easy way to start with someone who they [sic] have to build their trust in you and in the relationship that you have with them. And so typically if we start there, it works its way to whatever the problem is. It draws out the problem, if you will, rather than asking them about the problem or why you've even been hired, which you typically know walking in because their boss has told you.

Building rapport appears helpful for the coachee as well, as participant 5 stated, "It was really hard for him, but by talking about temperament a little bit more with him, I think that was a very good starting point for him."

Get buy-in. Participant 6 commented, "For my coaching style, it's to look at, if I want to build credibility with that person, what are they going to need to feel like I'm credible and to enjoy working with me as a coach?" A majority of interview participants report that at least one of the ways to get buy-in quickly with a coachee is through the MBTI. Participant 1 mentioned that MBTI, "Allows me as a coach to probably get a bit more into their land and build empathy more quickly" and participant 5 recalled telling a coachee, "'Wherever you do, this is gonna be in your nature—it's part of who you are' and that really resonated with [the coachee]."

A majority of interview participants also especially pointed out the MBTI's ability to do this well, in comparison to other assessments. Participant 10 stated, "I have used a number of other assessment tools through the years, but decided that they weren't as accepted by people, or they weren't as helpful in their use within the corporate environments where I work." Another participant highlighted the research backing of the instrument to get buy-in from coachees. Participant 8 stated:

> You know there's thousands, over 2,000 reports on this and there's 400 studies on this and I mean I'll get very detailed about what's out there so that they're like, 'Wow. Okay. This has its backings. It has its truths,' because they're the first skeptical types to say, 'Oh, well I don't fit in a box.'"

MBTI appears to be at least one tool that assists the executive coach in getting buy-in with a coachee.

Determine how to work with the coachee. In addition to supporting the beginning of the coaching relationship, the MBTI provides practical direction to executive coaches to understand better their coachees and how they will work with them. Statements such as, "I would say, fundamentally, I use it as a baseline understanding that then gets reflected in many different things that I do with my clients" from participant 13 along with comments such as, “I use it whenever I can, because I find it a very, very helpful framework, and I know it deeply…I’ve known it and used it for so long and have so many examples that I can draw from” from participant 2 suggest that the MBTI also provides a roadmap for interview participants to use with coachees.

Other interview participants further added that the MBTI can provide substantial direction to the coach on interacting with the client and supporting his or her development during the coaching engagement. Participant 15 spoke to the value that the MBTI provides, stating, “I want to know what their home base type is so I can adapt my coaching to them, so I can speak to their listening, so I can speak their language” while participant 1 commented, “I just find it’s easier if I know their type to flex my coaching style…that allows me as a coach to probably get a bit more into their land and build empathy more quickly.” When the framework that the MBTI provides is not available, participant 6 mentioned, “Without that sort of understanding of innate strengths and weaknesses, it can be very difficult for an individual, I think, to set effective goals or even work at how the [coachee] wants me to work with them.”

Participant 13 provided further evidence of the MBTI’s value in this way, stating:

> Specifically with executives, when they are looking to improve in this area, the first thing I do is use the MBTI to understand where they are coming from because, for them and for me, to get on the same page and how to work with them effectively on the range of tasks that I’m normally dealing with.

Other participants made more concise statements such as, “I will introduce type as the tool that we are going to use to be able to have a common framework that we can hook everything back onto” from participant 7. Ultimately, there is agreement from interview participants that the MBTI provides real value to them in determining how best to work with coachees.

Respond to organizational goals. Interview participants acknowledge that the executive coach and the coachee are rarely the only two stakeholders in a coaching engagement. With rare exceptions, the third key stakeholder is the client organization; also the entity that is typically paying for the services of the executive coach. A majority of interview participants state that the goals of the client organization are often a causal condition for utilizing the MBTI to raise the awareness of coachees. Participant 10 stated why organizational goals tend to trigger the use of the MBTI: “I’m working on development goals that have been established for [the coachee] by their board or their manager and they are typically behavioral in nature.” In addition, a majority of interview participants point to examples of behavioral concerns that client organizations see in their executives, such as participant 15 stating, “They all see all of that in her. There’s just an uneasiness that they had around, ‘Does she execute?’” Reflecting the realities of executive performance in organizations, participant 14 added, “We used it [the MBTI] in the coaching with each of the executive team members because, for each of them, there was some real things riding on them being able to work cooperatively” and participant 13 added:

> Specifically in the area of strategy, often the orientation and capability of people that need to be involved in developing it is not well aligned with doing that kind of work or valuing that kind of work. And that presents a significant difficultly for organizations to do strategic work well.

A majority of interview participants further commented that at least two key areas emerged as typical behavioral goals for coachees from client organizations, including general communication skills and conflict management. Typical responses from interview participants included statements such as this from participant 10:

> A lot of what I do in coaching is focusing on communication skills; how someone communicates to their manager, direct reports and peers, and how those people would expect the executive to communicate with them based upon their Type style.

Participant 13 stated, "Probably the biggest [goal] that I find is communication. So one of the things that an executive needs to do is effectively communicate their message." In addition, conflict management was cited as a factor in the consideration of the MBTI, and participants made statements such as, "The reason those typically come is because there's some conflict management" from participant 8 and "We used it because there was a conflict between this one person and another person" from participant 6.

Support type-different coachees. While slightly less than half of interview participants mentioned this final factor as a condition that prompted the MBTI, enough consistency emerged in the interview transcripts for the researcher to determine that it was significant to include as a causal condition. Participant examples of past coaching engagements often included descriptions of client situations in which the coachee was of a significantly different psychological type than the majority of his or her colleagues. Comments such as, "I've got a chief financial officer that is an introvert. That's his preference and yet he's on a highly extroverted executive team" from participant 11 as well as, "It's different for who she is because not only is she a woman, she also has this F vs. T thing that's quite substantially different from the typical executive in the organization" from participant 3 and, "Apparently there was a number of perceivers on the management team and this guy was the only J. So poor guy…" from participant 15 were common themes in participant examples.

Interview participants indicated that in these cases, significant type differences caused frustration for coachees, with comments such as, "It was just so clear to everyone how he was very, very different from all of his partners, and this caused conflict" from participant 12 and, "There was a team member that wasn't really gelling with the team; she was constantly kind of going against the grain. And when we took a look at it…she was the only S in a group of Ns" from participant 9.

While a countless number of conditions undoubtedly prompt any executive coach to utilize the MBTI, interview participants reported that helping the coach to work more effectively, responding to organizational goals, and supporting coachees who have a different type from a majority of their colleagues were key factors that influenced them to consider use of the instrument.

Strategies

Once executive coaches determine to raise the awareness level of their clients, they utilize a number of strategies to effect change. Creswell (2007) states that strategies are what people do to try and influence the situation, make changes, or carry out actions with respect to the central phenomenon. Interview participants cited a number of strategies they have used to raise awareness of clients, and two main strategies emerged as important. These two strategies of discussing and planning action steps followed by implementation of action steps were central to the strategies that interview participants used with their coachees.

Discuss and plan actions. Interview participants reported that this strategy often started by brainstorming how to utilize the awareness gained from MBTI to put it into practical use for the coachee. Often, the executive coach and coachee would work together to determine next steps in the coaching process. Interview participants indicated that this could be an organic process, such as participant 10 saying, “Along the way, we often start discussing their manager, direct reports and peers styles, and the need for modifying their communication.” Participant 3 stated, “So once we get clear about that, then how do we find something that fits this personality, the creative personality, the person that doesn’t like closure, that’s very fact-oriented and extremely intelligent” and, “Really it was about exploring ways to adapt the style of the communication to smooth the communication and reduce any conflict” was added from participant 6.

One obstacle that interview participants discussed with past coachees was the inaccurate perception from coachees that they needed to change their personality in order to be successful in action steps. Participant 10 pointed out, “The intent is not to change them, but simply ‘add tools to their toolbox.’ We discuss the value and need of transparency for the leader.” Other interview participants also noted discussion occurred around this obstacle, such as this recalled direction to a coachee from participant 8:

> If they need something different than your style, let’s break it down to the real task level of they just need more details. You know you’re not changing who you are. You’re going to say more than maybe you usually say. You’re going to give more facts or you’re going to focus on the people aspect if it’s a thinker.

Participant 14 utilized an analogy to counter a coachee's concern:

> "I need to be more of this or more of that." No, you don't. You just need to have well developed ways of gathering data and then making decisions…just like when I go to another country, I try to learn a little bit of the language so that I can communicate with people. So, you kind of learn the language of opposites and use it when you need it."

Discussion progresses into planning as clarity arises on changes that the coachee can make. Participant 14 stated, "It's really about helping them figure out what it is they want to do, what's standing in their way, and helping them figure out to quit standing in their way." This translates into specific action steps, such as, "We talk about how—tools that he could use, how he could be maybe taking a little bit more notes, not having to look so directly at the other executives when they're extroverting" from participant 11. Short-term actions might emerge such as, "Help them understand why it isn't a best fit for them and what they can do to either move roles or develop skills within them to sort of flex their natural preference for the time being" from participant 9. In addition, interview participants are sometimes more directive, as suggested by participant 7 who reported, "I taught him that there was another way of problem solving, which is extroverted feeling, and I was able to help him see that this was a legitimate tool to use…in order to reach people." A majority of participants utilized this dialogue and planning process to determine the best way to make the transition to action steps.

Implement action steps. A majority of interview participants found that the MBTI framework provided guidance as discussion and planning turned into specific action steps. When recalling a coachee engagement, participant 9 noted, "I'm so immersed in MBTI that it's my filter that I coach them through. So I went into that for our relationship so that I could help coach them in their behaviors, with their goals." Participant 14 added, "I found that by working early with MBTI, the goals then can have a little more concreteness to them because, once again, we identify those areas."

Those goals produced action in a number of different ways, including actions that coachees would implement either alone or with the executive coach. Participant 5 provided an example of how this might evolve:

> I told him one week you have to pick one thing and do it to a B minus standard of quality and it nearly killed him. It was like, "You want me to consciously not to aim to be an A plus on everything?" And I was like, "Yeah"…and oh, it was really hard for him.

Interview participants also utilized creative actions in order to adapt to the personalities of coachees. Participant 7 stated:

> He was a runner and on his runs I had him do things like take in the sights and unhook his iPod and take in the sights and smells around him and move more from his introverted thinking…and bring himself more outside in an extraverted way.

Another action item with the executive coach included, "I have him practice with me sort of looking away or looking down where he still looks like he's actively participating but his energy isn't being pulled the wrong way" from participant 11.

In other cases, interview participants helped coachees implement actions to take with their colleagues. Participant 15 reported, "I had interviewed him and encouraged him to have a conversation with [the coachee] and encouraged [the coachee] to have a conversation with him about type and how they could leverage type." Participant 7 provided another example of an action, saying:

> I would start him out by asking him to practice behavior that related to extroverted feelings such as when he wrote an e-mail to somebody he would—instead of giving someone a technical answer right off the bat…he would say, "Hi, how are you? It was nice to see you yesterday."

Despite the type of action steps implemented, interview participants linked these actions to the type preferences of their coachees. A majority of interview participants also made consistent mention of working with coachees to help them develop more flexibility with their preferred style so that they could interact more effectively with and influence their colleagues, where appropriate.

Consequences

Ultimately, raising awareness among coachees and the strategies that follow result in consequences for the coachee and organization. Creswell (2007) suggests that consequences are outcomes or results that emerge from the strategies used and intervening conditions and contexts that influence the use of those strategies. Somewhat less data was collected in this category than the other areas of this study, yet analysis of the comments from interview participants shows that the consequences of raising the awareness level of coachees fall in three general categories. First, coachees are provided with a new language and perspective that they can continue to refer to for future development. Second, coachees receive personal growth from the process. Finally, the client organization may either receive benefit or loss, depending on the coaching engagement.

Gives language to coachee. Almost all interview participants mentioned that a key consequence of raising the awareness of coachees through MBTI was providing them with new language that would provide a foundation for future development. Interview participants commented, “I like that people start with kind of a common language around themselves” from participant 1 as well as, “I find it very helpful to give people a way to think about and talk about how they process information and how they make decisions” from participant 2. Participants reported that they would continue to refer to this language with clients, stating, “It just becomes part of our language to tell you the truth. Every time they see me afterwards they may say something like, ‘Oh, I was really having problems with my P this week’” from participant 11 as well as participant 10 who stated, “There are meetings when we don’t talk about MBTI, but it is rare if at least one reference doesn’t come out of our discussion.” Interview participants agreed that this consequence added value to the coaching process. Participant 14 added, “That’s why I like to put it [the MBTI] in there early, and again, it gives us a framework to start talking about whatever their issues are and around goals.”

Coachee receives growth. Coachees also receive personal and professional growth as a consequence of raising their awareness levels, particularly in the area of self-confidence. A majority of interview participants notice this in their coachee engagements with great consistency, including stories such as, “It was delightful because he really did—he got the comfort, the confidence, the understanding of himself, and we worked through what are the implications of him being this type” from participant 4. Participant 14 noted:

> What I saw in her, over the course of working with her for about a year—was a real shift in her external behavior, just what we were working on, and people noticed it. I mean, everybody began to notice it.

Participants made other strides in self-confidence, such as, “I even invited her to come speak at a local chapter meeting as part of the panel of leaders talking about what it’s like to be me” from participant 5.

General benefits also emerged for coachees such as, “In working with MBTI, it helped her gain a higher comfort level with being direct in dealing with conflict” from participant 12. Interview participants also commented on the personal benefit that coachees receive from additional self-confidence, particularly if their personalities are different than others. Participant 14 captured that benefit this way:

> One of the things that people often find interesting is, if they’re in one of those types where there’s only I think 1.5% of the population, it’s almost always an ah-ha moment because people then say, “Oh, so I’m not nuts. I’m not crazy. There’s just not a lot of other people like me on the planet. Oh, okay.”

Interview participants consistently agree that raising awareness provides benefit to the coachee.

Organization receives benefit or loss. While interview participants also agree that raising the awareness of coachees provides consequences to the client organization, these consequences are not always valuable. There are indeed many instances of interview participants citing substantial benefits for the client organization. Participants reports results such as this from participant 5:

> This guy could recognize his [the coachee's] talent and now this guy is the CEO of a 20,000 plus organization and my coachee, has over 15,000 of those employees and has a vision for the future that is very, very powerful.

Another example from participant 15 stated that the coachee, "Went onto phenomenal sales, like $30-plus million in growth and they'd had zero sales growth for several years." Qualitative benefits were reported as well, such as, "Now everybody wants to work for her. She runs a significantly larger organization. She is right on the cusp of a promotion" from participant 5 as well as participant 10 stating, "For a leader, the MBTI has great value to help his or her team and their organization to become more effective and successful."

However, interview participants also caution that the organization can also experience loss, particularly if organization resources are not in place to support an executive with a new level of awareness. Participant 3 reported, "If he [the coachee] wants to stay, then there's some things he has to do. So right now, he's going to be leaving the company probably within a few weeks." Participant 5 recalled a past coaching engagement and provided advice to client organizations:

> Because the company he worked for wasn't able to provide enough space for his ambition, he left, which I think is somewhat of a cautionary tale for companies when they invest in coaching, because you better be ready to provide the opportunities for people once you develop people and provide them quickly, because these people do not suffer for want of ambition. They've got it in spades and they will pursue it. So you better have it ready.

These responses suggest that the organizational consequences vary depending on other factors—some of which might be outside of the primary context of the executive coaching engagement.

Context

Two additional areas strongly influence the strategies that executive coaches utilized in attempting to raise the awareness of a coachee. One of these areas is the context of events as a coaching engagement progresses. Creswell (2007) describes context as the location of events: the when, where, with whom, and timeline of steps in the process. As with other factors, interview participants cited numerous places where context influences the strategies that they take. Four areas in particular found agreement among a majority of the interview participants, including executive coaches defaulting to use the MBTI, administration of the instrument by the second meeting, preference for the MBTI Step II instrument, and use of a self-discovery process.

Default to MBTI utilization. Unless there were strong objections from the client, interview participants were virtually united in reporting that they plan to (and almost always do) use the MBTI in every coaching engagement. Comments such as, “I automatically use it with everyone” from participant 9 and “The MBTI is the foundation for most of my programs” from participant 7 as well as “It’s a baseline instrument for me” from participant 15 were prevalent. Participant 13 mentioned, “I’m not a fan of the consultant that comes in and says, ‘Well the methodology that we use is this, and so this is what we’ll be doing’” but then also added, “As soon as it’s possible and appropriate to do it, I encourage them to do the MBTI.” Interview participants also suggested strong confidence with the instrument, making statements such as, “They do whatever I tell ’em around that kind of thing” from participant 3 and “Like 95% of the time it just is” from participant 1. Participant 5 stated, “Well, I use it with every [coachee]…almost all of my [coachees] come to me from referrals and so it’s become part of the expectation” and from participant 11, “It’s part of my practice. Every person who works with me goes through the MBTI.”

Interview participants also acknowledged that they would honor any objections raised from coachees to using the instrument. Participant 5 stated, “I would only not use a type instrument if the client had pretty serious reservations about it or discomfort with it. But, by and large, that’s not really an issue.” Participant 4 mentioned, “Just because the MBTI is one of my preferred and favorite instruments doesn’t mean it’s right for everybody.” Other participants agreed with making an exception to MBTI use if there were strong coachee objections, but also reported that, in practice, such objections were extremely rare. Participant 11 stated, “I can honestly say to date I’ve never had someone not say, ‘I’d like to go through that’” and also, “I mean really in my practice honestly I can’t think of less than a handful of people who said, ‘No, I guess I’m not interested in that.’ The mass majority that see me want to take it.” Even interview participants who spoke to the importance of coaching as a uniquely individualized process suggest that use of the MBTI is a constant. Participant 12 stated, “Everything about coaching has got to be driven by the nature of that engagement, the needs and priorities of the individual. The only thing that’s ever the same is that I use the instrument.”

Administration by the second meeting. Although interview participants noted occasional exceptions, an overwhelming majority of their coachees completed the MBTI by the second coaching meeting. Numerous examples of this practice were discussed in interviews, including statements such as, “This is a really practical tool and typically I do it right up front” from participant 1 and, “Really toward the beginning. You know, if there were five steps, it would be in step one” from participant 6. Interview participants cited the second session most often, saying, “For the second meeting, I bring back to MBTI that they’ve done online,” as explained by participant 10 and from also participant 11 who stated, “Usually it’s the second session.” Participant 12 mentioned, “We’ll have a get-acquainted meeting and then we’ll begin getting them completing assessments, and the first one is always MBTI.”

Interview participants also noted that many of their coachees have completed the MBTI previously, such as participant 3 who stated, “Three quarters of the people I work with have already taken the MBTI.” Yet, little evidence emerges that this prevents future use of the instrument. On the contrary, participant 5 reports:

> I always say, if you don’t want to take it again it’s no big deal, just send your results my way…you know, every one of them takes it again. There’s something very compelling about it…and these are seriously busy people but, “Oh, no, no, no, I’ll take it again.”

Participant 9 added, “But most often [coachees] retake it so that we have sort of fresh information to view.” Participant 15 suggested that despite previous administration of the instrument, there is still more work to be done in raising awareness. They commented, “Even if they’ve done it before when they go through it with me it sticks and that’s usually what they’ll say. They’ll say, ‘Gosh, I just never understood this before.’” These findings suggest that executive coaches foresee little, if any, downside to having coachees complete the MBTI and various potential benefits to its inclusion in the coaching process.

Preference for the MBTI Step II. A majority of interview participants commented on the version of the MBTI that they utilized with coachees, and there was almost complete consistency in reported use of the MBTI Step II instrument and report. This instrument is a slightly different version of the more commonly used MBTI and the printed report provides substantially more data to the executive coach and coachee in breaking down the four MBTI dichotomies into specific facets. Myers et al. (2003) state, “Observed patterns of the facet scale scores within each dichotomy provide useful information about some low clarity of preference scores” (p. 121). In reference to this version of the instrument, participants made comments such as, “When I’m working with executives—and many who are not executives—I would actually print out the full Step II report, the biggest, the most full” as stated by participant 4. Additional comments such as, “I always use the Step II in coaching” from participant 12 and also “I have used the Step II in the executive coaching process pretty much since it came out.…I enjoy the level of depth in that particular instrument” from participant 5 were representative thoughts from interview participants.

The interview participants suggest practical reasons for their overwhelming preference of using the Step II instrument. Participant 10 stated:

> When Step II came out, many practitioners said, “That’s too much information for people to absorb in one session” and what I found was quite the opposite. People adapt very quickly to the instrument and find it has tremendous practical applications to the daily interactions.

Participant 12 added, “Our [coachees] tend to be very high level, tend to be, on the whole, more thinkers, many more thinkers than feelers, a lot of intuitive thinkers. They just respond really well to a platform of data." Finally, participant 10 suggests that Step II data may be new information for coachees: "Most executives have been exposed to MBTI…very few have ever taken the Step II before."

Self-discovery process. Although the findings of this study suggest that executive coaches have confidence in the MBTI instrument, they also report taking the additional step of verifying the results with their coachees. Most often, this was done through some version of self-discovery process with the executive coach. A majority of interview participants made comments such as, "I actually believe that an instrument without some sort of self-discovery process or self-assessment isn't terribly accurate" as explained by participant 6. This led to action items such as participant 7 stating, "I always make sure that people select their best-fit type in a session before they get their reported type back" as well as participant 9 explaining, "I interpret or go over the assessment with them, have them self-evaluate and self-assess themselves to see what their best-fit type is." Interview participants reported that effective questions guided this process, such as, "Where do you see yourself? Do you see yourself on both lists somewhere?—And then help them determine why…" from participant 8 and questions such as, "Does that seem like them? Do they feel comfortable with that?" from participant 11. Participant 11 also added that if there were any sense the coachee was unsure of the results, the process would be slowed, stating, "I would postpone setting up our next session until they have some chance to kind of go and try it on, share it with a significant other if they would like, ask other colleagues what they think." Regardless of the specific format, interview participants found that self-discovery was a useful and necessary component of utilizing the MBTI effectively.

Intervening Conditions

In addition to context, intervening conditions influence the strategies that executive coaches utilize in attempting to raise the awareness of a coachee. Creswell (2007) describes intervening conditions as what happens first that shapes, facilitates, or contains the strategies that are utilized. Interview participants made consistent mention of four intervening conditions that influence the strategies identified in this study's findings. These include the executive coach's knowledge of psychological type, type preferences of coachees, neutrality of the MBTI, and data from other instruments.

Coach's knowledge of psychological type. Because the MBTI is an instrument designed to sort individuals by psychological type, it is no surprise that executive coaches report that their knowledge of psychological type is an intervening condition in the strategies they use. Experience was often mentioned as a factor that helped interview participants add value to the MBTI. Comments from participants included, "It's based on a lot of pattern recognition from being over 25 years in this business and using MBTI" from participant 12 as well as participant 14 who said, "Once I got exposed to MBTI and a couple of other things out there that kind of systemized things, it was much easier to have a common framework to start looking at things." Participant 15 commented on the value of experience saying:

> I had a colleague years ago say, "How do you so—you're accurate about identifying someone's type when you have a conversation. How are you doing that?" I'm like, "I don't know, I just feel it." He's like, "What?" Until he asked me that question I had to think for a minute, the process that I went through. It all happens fast but I did go through a process.

Interview participants also revealed examples of how they use the knowledge of psychological type with specific types of coachees. Participant 6 reported:

> Rationals who share preference for intuiting and thinking, you had better be credible otherwise they're not going to want you as a coach and the coaching process is not going to be successful because they're going to spend the time questing your competence…for idealists, it's about building a genuine relationship.

Participant 10 stated, "Another scenario involves leaders who have a very strong introverted preference. This is often manifested by not communicating enough with their people, manager, or peers." Participant 13 commented on the overall value of knowledge of psychological type:

> Having discovered MBTI in these efforts fairly early on, I realized that many of the reasons why could be understood through the lens of personality preference, and so that learning helped me, increasingly as I got better to use that, to understand many of the blockages that come about in creating better strategic practices.

This knowledge clearly influenced a majority of interview participants in the strategies they implemented with coachees.

Type preference of coachee. The type preferences of individual coachees have a strong influence on how executive coaches utilize strategies. In many cases, interview participants noted that strategies might be adapted to match best the style of the coachee. Participant 6 noted, "It's always looking at their type preferences and their current context and their goals for the coaching process and then integrating those three to think about what the best coaching methodology would be.” Participant 14 stated:

> There were a lot of other things to work on, but those things [type preferences] gave us some keys to get at behaviors that were being very misinterpreted, and again, in a lot of cases, it was because of different type preferences.

Type preferences of coachees have influenced past conversations with interview participants, such as from participant 8:

> We dig deeper into what the issues are within their—not only their job, but what they bring to the table because it opens up oh, this happened years ago within their career or within their family unit that impacts their thinking.

Finally, participant 7 added, “When somebody first understands who they are, they have more of a chance to look at their behavior and experience some breakthroughs.”

Neutrality of the MBTI. A majority of interview participants commented that the MBTI allowed them to ease into otherwise difficult conversations with coachees, partially as a result of the neutrality of the instrument. Participant 8 mentioned, “As we go through the areas of preference I think again, because it’s a neutral tool, that that really is what opens people up and they can see clearly stated [sic].” Participant 10 mentioned:

> I discovered early in my coaching that the MBTI was a very useful tool because people were not totally familiar with how they impact others, and MBTI pointed out behaviors in such a nonthreatening way that people found it very useful.

Participant 11 added, “It’s built on a structure that allows people to be okay with it,” as well as participant 15 who added, “To me it’s a safe place to start. It’s like validating the person as to who they are and they really get to see that through an appreciate lens.…It’s like they get to fall in love with themselves." The neutrality of the instrument thus influences strategies that executive coaches use since its foundation makes it easier to have discussions about raising awareness.

Data from other instruments. While the MBTI was popular with the interview participants in this study, few of them utilized the MBTI in isolation. Comments such as, "I use this as one of the assessments," from participant 4 and, "It's very unusual for me not to [use MBTI], but I rarely use it as the only instrument," from participant 12 as well as, "I do have a number of tools that I use, which the MBTI is one" from participant 13. Interview participants mentioned a number of other assessments they use, including several mentions of the FIRO-B assessment and various, unnamed 360 instruments. Several participants mentioned exploring the link between 360 and MBTI reports, with participant 10 stating, "We connect the feedback with the MBTI profile and talk about the intersection of the preferences with the 360 comments. And most times there is a direct correlation." Interview participants also commented that they additionally use their own assessment process, such as participant 5 who stated:

> I still do write up a very detailed assessment of what I see is the leader's strengths and weaknesses and I'll imbed quotes in that from the conversations I've had to help that person understand the connection I'm making between behavior and what I see as a particular strength or weakness.

Many interview participants mentioned that, despite its value, MBTI was only one data point in their assessment process.

Theoretical Model

When presenting results of grounded research, Corbin and Strauss (2008) advise the researcher to integrate the main categories of the findings into a storyline. They state, "Integrating means choosing a core category, then retelling the story around the core category using the other categories and concepts derived during the research" (p. 107). The following theoretical story is advanced from the findings presented in this chapter and presented as an integrative synopsis of the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees.

Integrating story. Adam is a new executive at MLI, Inc., a major marketing firm based in Chicago, Illinois. While he has 15 years of increasing creative responsibilities with other marketing firms, Adam left his prior firm for this executive opportunity. Adam was successful in his old job and enjoyed his previous firm more than anywhere else he had worked, but the advancement opportunity offered was too good to pass. Adam is 9 months into his first officer-level role of a major firm and having fun with more responsibility than he ever had.

Adam's direct reports at MLI initially didn't know what to make of Adam, since his style was so different from the rest of the executive team, but they have grown to love him. While there are times that he drives them nuts by trying to do too many things at once and not planning more in advance, he also has a way of saying the right thing at the right time and pulling off heroic all-nighters with them to keep the team hitting deadlines. Although Adam has had great success with his teams and they've achieved all their goals, Adam hasn't felt like he has been able to fit in with his peers. Unlike previous roles in which his creative energy and passion were always highly rewarded, Adam noticed that his great ideas and flexible energy have been met with silence from a number of his peers. While none of his peers have said anything overtly, Adam gets the distinct impression during the stodgy executive meetings that his input isn't valued and that some of his peers might be thinking that he is not the right fit.

Mike, the chief operating officer and Adam's manager, was aware of Adam's excellent reputation in the industry and energetic personality when the position opened up a year ago and recruited him heavily for this role. Mike thought the company would benefit from having an energetic person such as Adam in a leadership capacity. Adam has reported to Mike since coming on board and although Mike feels like Adam's teams have excelled under his leadership, he's been disappointed that Adam hasn't made a better connection with his peers. Mike had been hopeful that Adam would quickly catch onto the company's distinct culture and do a bit to smooth his larger-than-life personality and adapt to his quieter colleagues. Unfortunately, a few past blunt remarks from Adam along with his passion to work in the moment have some of his peers quietly questioning his value at the executive level. Mike has grown more concerned in recent weeks as Adam and two of his peers are beginning work a major strategic project for the company and already both peers have apparently mentioned that they can't get Adam to nail down meeting times. Mike is still confident Adam is the right person for the role and believes that some more human relations skills on Adam's part will resolve 90% of his peer issues.

In their most recent one-on-one, Mike spoke with Adam about his observations that Adam doesn't seem to be gelling with his peers. They had a brief discussion about what Adam could do to address the issue. The discussion ended with Mike suggesting that Adam might consider working with Maggie, an executive coach that Mike knew had done some good work for one of his buddies who owns a technology firm. Mike had already spoken with Maggie and set up an initial process to work with Adam, if he agreed to coaching. What Adam didn't know was that Mike had also discussed the situation in some detail with Maggie about how Adam's personality was really a different vibe than the executive team was accustomed.

Mike told Adam that the company would support him in building a stronger connection with his peers if he were willing to put in the time and effort. He handed him Maggie's card and said he should think about it. Adam was up for what appeared to be a new challenge and has great respect for Mike's leadership and perspective. After all, Mike had fought hard to get Adam into this role and didn't get in Adam's way very much. He made the call.

A week later, Maggie met briefly with both Mike and Adam and described her coaching process to them in detail and Mike spent the balance of the time painting a picture of what an ideal outcome would look like: collaboration between Adam and his peers and Adam building a stronger level of respect with the executive team. Adam and Maggie met alone for a few minutes afterwards and, while Adam was unsure of what to expect, Maggie's warm nature and positive attitude got Adam talking immediately and quickly sharing stories about the last 9 months. Maggie closed the meeting by suggesting several assessments, including the MBTI. She almost always uses the MBTI with her executive clients to establish a common language, and believed that it would also provide a valuable understanding for Adam, especially given that Adam's personality type may differ from many of this peers. Adam thought he had taken the MBTI before, a suspicion confirmed when Maggie starting asking him if he remembered anything about four-letter codes. While she suggested there was no need to take the assessment again, Adam was not entirely sure of his past results and thought new data would be valuable.

Before the second meeting, Maggie had Adam complete the MBTI Step II assessment, in order to validate some on her initial thoughts about Adam's personality. While she had not worked with the executive team at MLI before, based on Mike's explanation of the team over the phone and again in person, she suspected that Adam was likely type-different from many of the team members. Based on her initial observations of Adam, she suspected that he would have preferences for both F and P, which were likely different preferences from the majority of his peers. In addition to starting a 360 process with Adam, she felt that the Step II would provide a tremendous amount of detail that would help guide her conversation with Adam in the coming weeks and months.

Once Adam completed the instrument, Maggie printed his Step II report and was not surprised to see his reported results as ESFP. Maggie had rarely worked with ESFPs at the executive level, but her extensive experience with psychological type had her seeing how many of Adam's obstacles may be related to different personality preferences than his peers. If indeed the ESFP preference was accurate, it also aligned with some of Mike's earlier comments about Adam's large personality and short-term focus.

When Maggie and Adam met for the second time, Maggie started the meeting by suggesting that they spend some time talking about personality type and what Adam thought his preferences might be. She kept the meeting on track by asking him questions related to the different type dichotomies and wondering where Adam saw himself and which descriptions felt most comfortable to him. After extensive conversation, Maggie confirmed that Adam's self-discovery of his best-fit type (also ESFP) matched the reported results on the Step II report. While Adam wasn't shocked with any of the descriptions of his best-fit personality type, he began to make connections to his actions in the workplace. In particular, he focused in on his preference for perceiving and described to Maggie that it completely explained why he hated sitting through half-day staff meetings and strategic planning sessions. Somehow, realizing that certain personality types didn't tend to love strategic planning gave Adam some comfort that he wasn't a crazy person for not enjoying it more. Adam also enjoyed reading about how a personality type like his can add lots of value to the organization, which he suddenly realized was something he really missed about his old job. Maggie suggested that Adam take some time to read through the materials and also start considering what type preferences he saw in some of his colleagues. She also made a note to adapt her coaching style to Adam, looking for opportunities to recognize his enthusiasm, match his energy level, and also ensure that she supported his future planning efforts and follow-though on actions.

During their next meeting, Adam started off by commenting to Maggie that after considering the model for more than a week, he was really starting to see some significant differences between his style and the styles of others. She asked him to elaborate on his comments and he reported that it might be the case that a majority of the executive team had thinking and judging preferences (Maggie had already suspected this). He said that it completely made sense to him and he could see how their preferences were also valuable to organization. He stated that he really felt like it was all coming together for him, that the few weeks of coaching had already been very valuable for his career, and that he planned to keep the model in mind.

Maggie was both pleased that Adam was taking the type model to heart and concerned that he might veer off and miss the key opportunities for organizational awareness. She decided that a good way to open this discussion was to ask Adam about his experiences at prior firms. As they had some extensive conversation about his past work, it came to light that Adam had never worked for a large firm and was accustomed to the energy and passion of small start-ups, as well as the personality types that populated his past firms. In his last role, Adam guessed that perhaps a third of the senior leadership team had a perceiving preference and that those who could work red-hot projects on deadlines were highly valued and rewarded by the firm.

Maggie asked Adam to compare that team with his current team. He said that the difference was night and day and that his energy and enthusiasm weren't valued here at all. While Adam could see great value in the different personality types, he couldn't understand why his peers wouldn't just accept him and let him be himself so he could do great work for the company. Maggie challenged Adam on this point and asked where his personality might get in the way of that kind of trust with his peers. While it took him awhile to get there, Adam admitted that he missed meetings and spent lots of time throwing out ideas that he intended to follow-up on, but ultimately didn't. Although he admitted these failings, he just didn't see why it was such a big deal. Maggie suggested that to him it wasn't a big deal, but to someone with a preference for judging, missing multiple meetings was a big deal. As their time ended, Adam was somewhat quieter and more reflective that he'd been in past meetings.

At the next meeting, Maggie shared feedback from Adam's completed 360 assessment. Adam's peers acknowledged him meeting goals and his ability to keep his team energized, but they were not impressed that Adam seemed unwilling to engage in strategy at the executive level or unable to keep meeting commitments. Several also commented that his personality wasn't a good fit for the MLI culture and that Adam ignored most everyone on the executive team who didn't share his outward enthusiasm. Based on the last several weeks of conversation with Maggie, the comments were not unexpected, but hurtful just the same. Adam expressed anger with some of the comments and frustration he felt working with the executive team. Yet, he also was beginning to recognize that he was at the center of a personality and culture clash and new action would be necessary to start establishing relationships with peers.

In the coming weeks, Maggie and Adam began discussing and planning actions that Adam could take in order to change his behavior patterns with peers. Initially, Adam had decided that he was going to start an Adam campaign and educate everyone on his personality preferences and attempt to start having conversations about personality over lunch dates with peers. Maggie praised him for this well-intended plan, but was concerned that a lot of talk from Adam might not be the first thing that people wanted from him. Adam struggled with this for a week or so and ultimately decided that it would be too easy for a lunch meeting about personality to go south.

Maggie and Adam started having discussions about how his upcoming actions might speak louder than his words. Adam had also admitted in recent weeks that he rarely referenced his calendar and only thought to look at it for the next deadline. This eventually led Adam to his first action…working off his calendar for a week and attending every meeting. Most people didn't notice, but at least one of his peers was genuinely surprised to see Adam at a planning meeting later that week. However, another peer took the opportunity to take a jab at Adam at another meeting with a snide, "Well, look who actually showed up" comment in front of an entire department. Adam knew enough to keep his mouth shut in the meeting, but was steaming when he told the story to Maggie at the next coaching session, complaining that people weren't even giving him a chance. She responded by gently encouraging him to consider if he would have newfound trust in someone who had blown off 6 months of meetings and suddenly showed up unannounced. While Maggie pointed out that his organizational awareness was substantially higher than before, but that building back trust with peers was going to take time and consistency. He reluctantly agreed to keep to his schedule. Later that week, an inspirational book showed up in the mail from Maggie, who somehow knew it was exactly what he needed. He smiled and consciously thought that she had a gift for being able to read people.

A breakthrough happened 2 weeks later. One of Adam's peers stopped by Adam's office and asked his opinion on a design plan they were preparing for a new client. Adam's creative juices kicked in and before he knew it, the conversation turned into a brief lunch in the cafeteria and a small discussion about how the two might be able to lend each other a hand on some upcoming work. When he got back to his office, he sent Maggie and e-mail message and said that the lunch campaigns had started without him even trying. Maggie's response reminded Adam that he'd been putting forth effort for several weeks, but had shifted his focus to building trust in small ways first, before trying to win over people. Adam was more motivated than ever to keep to schedules and find some additional ways to reach out to the different personality types among his peers.

Several months into the coaching process, conversations with Maggie had gradually made the transition to examining the type preferences of other peers, brainstorming action items, and supporting consistent follow-through of his commitments each week. Adam was making references to Ps, Js, Ts, and Fs in almost every conversation with Maggie. In addition, Adam found himself shocked one particular week to be looking forward to several planning meetings, as his input had become a focus of the discussion. Gradually, a few of Adam's peers simply forgot that they didn't care for Adam and were more interested in his ability to support several of their key objectives. Adam told Maggie that he learned to be careful what he wished for, after being mildly amused one Monday when realizing that he had a one-on-one meeting booked with a peer for several lunches in the coming days.

As the end of the coaching process approached, Maggie continually encouraged Adam to reference the personality types of his peers and determine how he could best engage them in relationships. Gradually, Adam has become the driver of more of his goals and put his creativity to use in peer relationships. Recently, he even brought in a peer to support strategic planning for one of his teams that had inherited Adam's habit of doing its best work in deadline mode.

At least one of Adam's peers still is known to comment that Adam sticks out like a sore thumb at MLI, but most of the rest of them have seen Adam make efforts to think more strategically and involve himself in the long-term planning process. They've become used to him regularly attending meetings, keeping appointments, and several of them have become comfortable enough with Adam's strengths to call on him during a crisis, which averted at least one major customer screwup. The executive involved (who was previously on the fence about Adam) suddenly became a close confidant and insisted that Mike recognize Adam during an executive meeting for his great teamwork. While Mike knows that Adam's development at MLI is a work in progress, he's pleased with the results that Adam has achieved through working with Maggie and is confident that the investment has already paid off for the entire executive team.

Integrative design. Creswell (2007) states that the final stage of reporting grounded theory findings is the presentation of a diagram that assists the reader in visualizing the actual model. An effective diagram, "contains the axial coding categories of causal conditions, the central phenomenon, the context, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences" (p. 191). In addition, Corbin and Strauss (2008) advise, "A diagram need not contain every concept that emerged during the research process, but should focus on those that reach the status of major categories."

Figure 1, an integrative diagram, details the axial coding categories and major categories from the research findings.

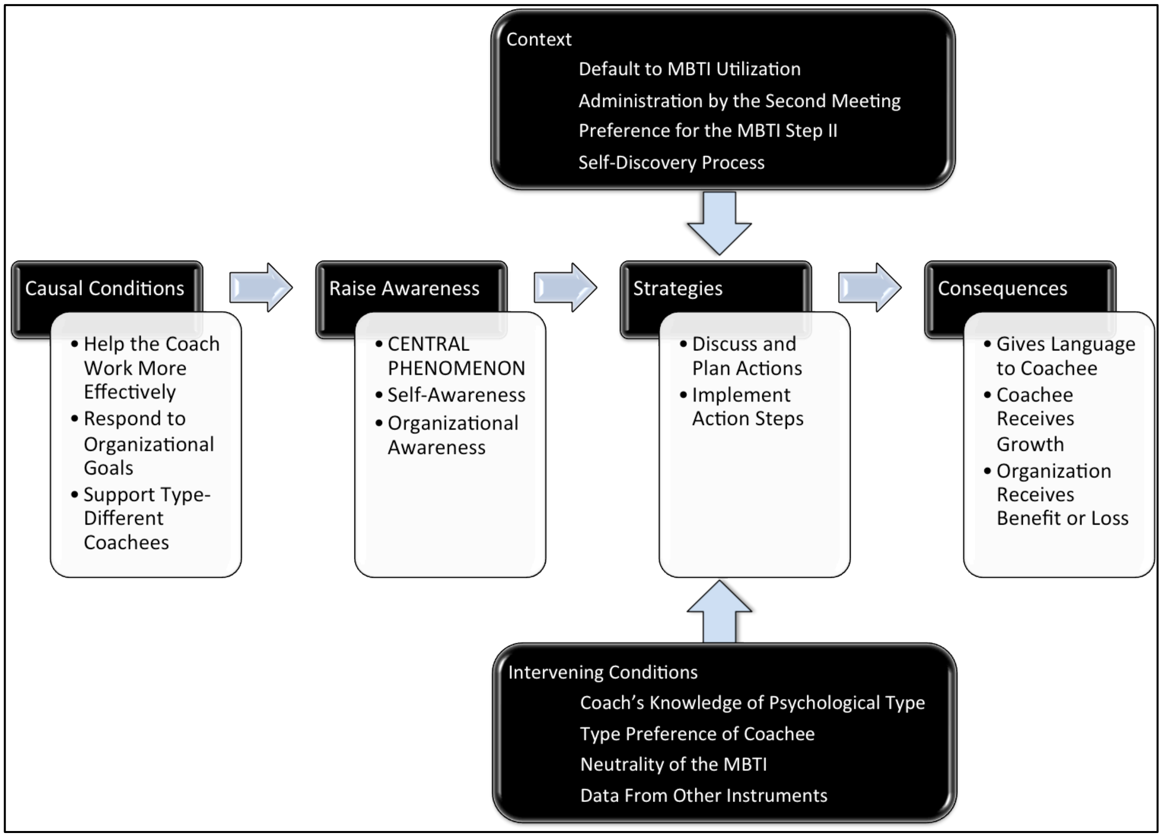

Figure 1. Integrative diagram of how executive coaches use the MBTI to develop their coachees.

The model provides a visual representation of the findings presented in this chapter, along with a clear representation of the how the categories act on each other during the process of MBTI use. In particular, the model indicates how the three causal conditions lead executive coaches to the central phenomenon of raising the awareness levels of their coachees. New awareness among coachees leads the executive coach to two strategy areas: the discussion and planning of action steps and then the implementation of those action steps. Context factors and intervening conditions act upon these strategies and how executive coaches adapt their style to individual coachees. Finally, consequences result for both the coachee and client organization.

Summary

This study finds that executive coaches overwhelmingly focus on raising the awareness levels of their coachees in the process of developing them using the results of the MBTI. Several key factors emerged in raising awareness connected to both self-awareness and organizational awareness. Executive coaches focus on supporting the coachee in recognizing strengths and blinds spots, and then connecting that recognition to understand better how those strength and blind spots influence behavior. Executive coaches worked with coachees to understand better their own personality type and well as how their personality type acted on other relationships in their careers.

Executive coaches were often prompted to raise the awareness level of their coachees by the desire to want to work more effectively and efficiently with the coachee, respond to behavioral goals dictated by the organization, and support coachees who were type-different from their colleagues. Eventually, this leads to discussion, action planning, and the implementation of action steps that will support the executive in his or her development goals. Several contextual factors influence the strategies, including the tendency of executive coaches to use the MBTI with coachees, particularly the Step II instrument. In addition, administering the MBTI early in the coaching process, often by the second meeting, and taking coachees through a self-development process ultimately influences their development actions. Intervening conditions also influenced that discussion, planning, and action implementation of coachees, including the coach's knowledge of type, the type preference of the coachee, the neutrality of the instrument, and data from other instruments.

Ultimately, coachees emerged from the process with a new language that they could continue to utilize for future development as well as personal and professional growth. Client organizations also received benefits from the process, although organizations without support systems to provide opportunities for newly developed executives may be disappointed in the results of coaching if the executive decides that better opportunities to use newly developed skills exist elsewhere.

Findings are followed by an integrating story that details a fictional overview of how the process could appear in practice among the coachee, executive coach, and client organization. Finally, an integrative model provides the practitioner or researcher with a visual overview of the entire development process.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter provides a connection to the findings presented in chapter four in relation to the existing literature on the use of the MBTI in executive coaching. Study findings are examined in the context of the literature, and both support for the findings and departures from the literature are examined in detail. In addition, implications for executive coaches and client organizations are addressed, along with the limitations and assumptions of the study. Finally, recommendations are presented for future researchers who wish to examine further how the MBTI and potentially other assessments can be used effectively in executive coaching.

Study Findings in Relation to Existing Literature

As detailed in chapter one, research on executive coaching remains limited and only Bell's (2005) study previously examined the use of the MBTI in executive coaching, albeit with a very different focus than this study. In addition, the literature shows that the actions, methods, and conversations used by executive coaches during engagements are generally still unclear (Bayne, 2005; Kilburg, 2004a; Smither et al., 2003). Since this study focused extensively on these process-oriented factors, extensive comparison to existing literature is limited. Despite these limitations, several notable comparisons are made with existing literature on executive coaching and MBTI and examined in relation to the study results.

Support in the literature. A six-phase executive coaching process articulated by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) was reviewed extensively in chapter two. The findings of this study correlate extensively with this model and its supporting literature. The first stage of this process details the importance of relationship building as a key step at the beginning of an executive coaching engagement. Study findings indicate that rapport building and getting coachee buy-in were two key components of one of the main causal conditions identified: helping the coach work more effectively. As detailed in the quotes from interviews in chapter four, many participants shared how they used initial discussions about MBTI to open up an appropriate roadmap to difficult topics relatively quickly. In addition, the neutrality of the MBTI was cited as an intervening condition that supported this process.

The second step of assessment in the Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) model also correlated with study findings. Executive coaches administered the MBTI early in their work with coachees, often prior to the second meeting. In addition, as supported in their literature review, interview participants in this study mentioned collecting data from many sources and consistently cited the MBTI as only one data point in their process.

Feedback, the third stage in the coaching process, also showed up in the context category of this study, with executive coaches detailing the self-discovery process utilized to uncover new information with clients. In particular, Peltier (2001) and Wasylyshyn (2003) were cited in the literature review recommending that executive coaches use extensive data and benchmarks with coachees in order to build trust in results and make a stronger connection with personalities at the executive level. Interview participants overwhelmingly supported this advice and mentioned extensively in interviews using the MBTI Step II instrument to provide the detailed data that executives sought.

The fourth and fifth stages of the Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) model, planning and implementation, closely matched the two strategies used by coaches after raising the awareness of their coachees. Advice from Richard (2003), who advocates creating as many action items as possible and gradually narrowing them down, matched closely with the brainstorming process that emerged in this study. In addition, numerous examples from interview participants about role-playing, exercises with the executive coach, individual assignments, and actions with peers matched many of the various methods identified in the literature review. Only stage six, evaluation and follow-up, was not extensively correlated with the findings in this study.

In consideration of the literature review on psychological type, Kirby (1997) found that dominant types tend to set the agenda on workplace teams and that individuals who do not fit the mold will either develop dissonance or attempt to adapt their style to the organization. Himmerich (2007) added that organizations lose the value of the individual's type preferences when this occurs. Indeed, this was a common statement from executive coaches in the study, who often commented that they were working with an individual who did not seem to fit in with the executive team and was discouraged, stressed, or performing poorly as a result. In fact, this was such a common occurrence that the findings identified such type-different executives as one of the three main causal conditions for raising the awareness of coachees.

It is also essential to make comparisons between the seminal work of Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) on leadership development using psychological type, and the results of this study. Fitzgerald and Kirby identify eight strategies that psychological type practitioners should use to support executive development. Four of these strategies correlated strongly with the findings of this study and provide additional evidence to support their model. A fifth strategy correlated slightly.

Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) identified approaches effective with particular types as one of these strategies. This strategy advises practitioners to have their coachees analyze different type dynamics, compare these styles with their own, and learn how best to use their strengths in varying situations. This correlated with the central phenomenon of this study's findings, connecting with both categories of raising awareness of coachees. Interview participants often commented that they utilized the MBTI to help coachees better understand their own behaviors and the behaviors of others in the workplace. In addition, participants reported extensive conversations with coachees about different types and type dynamics. Lang's (1997) typeflexing model also showed up extensively with interview participants, who spoke at length about helping coachees adapt to different styles in order to make more effective connections with colleagues.

Also collaborated was Fitzgerald and Kirby's (1997) strategy of providing starting points with the coachee. As detailed in the study findings, interview participants found that the MBTI framework often provided an effective path and that many of the discussions and planning strategies began with initial conversation about psychological type. This also correlated well with Fitzgerald and Kirby's strategy for using psychological type to approach blind spots with coachees. Indeed, interview participants made note of using the MBTI to broach difficult issues with coachees, often without even having to raise the issues. Several comments from participants suggested that coachees were able to identify independently many of their own blind spots, even before receiving 360 feedback.

Finally, Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) suggested that exposing coachees to psychological type during coaching gives them a tool to teach others about their leadership style. This study found that one of the key consequences of raising coachee awareness with the MBTI was in giving language to the coachee to communicate extensively with the executive coach about his or her development. Numerous examples emerged of coachees beginning to use type language to communicate about development and actions with their executive coach. However, the findings of this study stopped short of any significant evidence that coachees used this language to teach colleagues about their leadership style. It is unclear if such evidence simply does not exist, or if interview participants failed to mention it, as they were not directly asked.

Bell's (2005) study examined the effectiveness of the MBTI in executive coaching from the perspective of the coachee and found that coachees of different psychological types had different perspectives on the value they gained from a coaching process that utilized MBTI. Although this study did not look at the coaching engagement from the perspective of the executive coach, Bell's results suggest that the coachee's psychological type plays a role in the results of coaching. This is in alignment with the results of this study, which showed that the type preference of the coachee was an intervening factor in the model.

Departures from the literature. Some differences were noticed between study results and the literature. In one case, a departure was observed, and in other cases, study findings simply did not support aspects of a previous model despite clear correlations with many other aspects of that same model, as detailed in the previous section.

There are numerous references in the literature that support the conclusion that today's executive coaches are brought in to develop proactively high-potential leaders, facilitate transitions, and provide sounding boards for executives. Executive coaches who are summoned by organizations to address derailing behavior are reported to be a minority of coaching engagements (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009, Morgan et al., 2005; Peters, 2009). In addition, as a member of several coaching organizations, I've observed a professional bias against working with behavioral issues and an observed desire among executive coaches to do higher-level work.

While it was not the focus of this study to examine such a relationship, the findings nevertheless cast doubt that behavioral issues are not still a major motivator for hiring an executive coach. While it is certainly true that executive coaches are called upon for higher-level assignments, study results were more in alignment with Natale and Diamante (2005) who cite derailing behavior as a top reason for coaching engagements. Virtually every coach interviewed described derailing behavior extensively when asked to share examples from past engagements with coachees. As detailed in the findings, executive coaches also cited behavioral issues as one of the key factors when responding to organizational goals. In addition, type-different executives who did not match the personality preferences of other executives were a key causal condition for raising the awareness of coachees. This disconnect with the literature could be explained by the possibility that executive coaches who use MBTI are more likely to work with coachees who have behavioral issues, so additional investigation may be needed in this area.

The sixth step from the executive coaching process articulated by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) of evaluation and follow-up did not show up in any significant way in the study findings. While interview participants were not directly asked about their evaluation and follow-up methods, they were also not directly asked about the other five phases (with the exception of assessment), and yet those did show up strongly in the processes they articulated when using the MBTI. Several factors could explain this result, including the possibility that executive coaches simply do not put as much emphasis on evaluation and follow-up, that they did not think to mention it since they were not being asked about it specifically, that they see evaluation and follow-up as separate from the formal coaching process, or perhaps some other unknown reason. It might bear additional investigation in future studies.

The three remaining components of Fitzgerald and Kirby's (1997) strategies for utilizing psychological type with coachees were not correlated with the findings of this study. Those included practitioners' knowledge of themselves to enhance coaching, exploring extraversion versus introversion in management, and understanding leadership under stress. While a small number of interview participants made a reference to their own psychological type, only one brief mention was made of an interview participant's type in relation to working with a coachee. In addition, while extraversion versus introversion was mentioned generally in interview examples, it was mentioned somewhat less than the other three psychological type dichotomies in relation to development goals. Finally, while stress was generally mentioned as a development goal, interview participants did not specifically cite stress as more important than other leadership areas and more often claimed communication and conflict management as a focus in their coaching.

I'm somewhat hesitant to refer to the above as a departure from the literature, for two reasons. First, Fitzgerald and Kirby (1997) never claim that these eight strategies are the only eight strategies that practitioners should use when developing leaders. Second, although the findings of this study do not correlate with these three strategies, they also do not provide evidence against them. It is possible that executive coaches did not think to speak to these areas since they were being asked to speak to their process for using MBTI with coachees (particularly true with the practitioners' knowledge of themselves). Nevertheless, given that this study is exploratory in nature, it bears mention for future investigation.

General Perspectives on Study Findings

I have spent the vast majority of my career working with organizations to assist people in adjusting and improving their attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Client organizations that I work with often refer to these skills as the touchy-feely stuff. While there is an increasing trend in client organizations to claim at least a focus on these skills, most top leaders still prioritize the development of technical and knowledge-based skills. An engineer at a company we support who was seeking manager approval for a leadership class was told that engineers are not typically approved for leadership courses and that technical courses get priority.

The reality is that in spite of all the lip service that has been given to leadership in the past two decades, a tremendous bias toward the development of technical expertise still exists in organizations. In universities, MBA programs still, by and large, focus on the quantitative skills that are essential to the development of strategic business thinkers, but then offer limited courses on developing students to communicate effectively these ideas (Pepperdine University, to its credit, requires organizational behavioral as one of the first courses for fully employed MBA students).

Even in light of the limitations discussed later in this chapter, the results of this study are a strong rebuke to individuals and client organizations that believe such touchy-feely skills, while nice to have, are simply not priorities in their organizations. I have personally worked with several client organizations for which senior leaders have openly stated that once individuals reach the executive level, they should no longer need development. The results of this study show that this could not be further from the truth.

When these same organizations need to resolve issues with senior executives, they suddenly turn to executive coaches who overwhelmingly report in this study that they spend vast amounts of time with coachees developing their skills in communication and conflict management. The major implication is that client organizations pay for their investment in these skills one way or another, either through proactive development throughout an individual's career, or in crisis mode when it becomes suddenly apparent that communication skills are a necessity for a senior executive to possess.

Implications for client organizations. It is hardly a stretch to make the argument that executive coaching has become successful in recent years because organizations have done a mediocre job at prioritizing employee development in communication and conflict management, particularly among those employees who are high-potential leaders. As a result, executive coaching has become the de facto solution for resolving these problems, once they become issues at senior levels of leadership. Client organizations that take strategic action to be proactive with the communication and conflict management skills of their high-potential leaders will have a clear competitive advantage. Not only will their organizations perform more effectively, they will reduce their future investments in executive coaching, particularly with coaching that addresses behavioral issues. Organizations that continue to marginalize communication and conflict management skills will not tap into the full potential of their employees and will keep executive coaches employed for years to come.

Senior human resource executives, particularly those who are in a position to advise other executives on coaching solutions, will also find these study results helpful. A more robust understanding of how executive coaches approach coaching engagements will provide human resource executives with better tools for building relationships with coaches who are the right fit for their executives. This may be particularly helpful when considering coaches who will address communication and conflict management obstacles with senior leaders. In addition, organizations that call on executive coaches regularly will want to consider how they will evaluate the success of coaching engagements, as executive coaches may or not may provide this as part of their formal process. Finally, organizations are advised to provide resources to support executives in an ongoing development process once formal coaching has ended. The executive coaches in this study cast doubt that coaching is being used for proactive reasons such as leadership development, so organizations will need to seek out other tools and resources that support the ongoing development of senior leaders.

Implications for executive coaches. Since this study focused on the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees, I do not expect that the findings will be surprising information to executive coaches who reference this research. In light of the strong agreement among interview participants in this study, particularly on the core phenomenon of raising awareness in coachees, the findings of this research might be useful in building the confidence level of executive coaches, who may not be aware that other practitioners utilize similar methods.

What will be surprising to many executive coaches, including some who participated in this study, is that the process used by executive coaches who utilize MBTI is very similar. I have been told numerous times by executive coaches during the design and administration of this study that coaching is a unique process to each individual and, in some cases, that nobody does this quite the way I do. Then, that same executive coach would begin to describe their unique process, which sounded virtually the same as everybody else's unique process. While individual relationships with coachees are certainly unique, I call to question to the contention from many executive coaches that their coaching process is unique.

This research will also be valuable to executive coaches who either may not be comfortable with their current MBTI process or who simply want to continue to refine their use of the instrument by seeking out research. In addition, as many examples and interview transcripts are citied in the study, executive coaches will benefit from hearing language and strategies utilized by experienced practitioners in the field.

I have met many talented coaches who are unable to articulate clearly their coaching process to a prospective client organization. Since many client organizations expect coaches to be able to articulate a clear coaching process, practitioners will find the model presented in this study to be helpful for future coaching opportunities. Since the findings of this study show such strong agreement among executive coaches using MBTI, executive coaches using this instrument will want to familiarize themselves with this model. In addition, executive coaches who are seeking clarity on their overall coaching process will benefit from a brief review of chapter two, particularly the section on coaching process.

Finally, this entire study will be valuable for newer practitioners who are beginning to work with coachees at the executive level. The findings will provide an established framework for study, as well as language and insight into the practices of more experienced executive coaches.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

Despite some detailed findings in this study, this research was limited in scope. While the MBTI might appear to be a major driver of the coaching process when reviewing these findings, it is important for the reader to consider that interview participants were being asked specifically about their use of MBTI. This makes it difficult to determine the relative significance of the MBTI when compared to all other executive coaching activities or whether the resulting model would be applicable when using other assessment methods. Interview participants might have unintentionally placed more weight on the instrument than is actually the case in executive coaching engagements, since that was the focus of the questions. Many of the interview participants mentioned utilizing other instruments and assessment practices, so it is likely that other instruments also contributed to the development process described in this study. Since this dissertation cites both literature and findings of executive coaches using multiple assessment methods, it is inappropriate to claim that any of this study's findings are tied only to the MBTI process.

This study intentionally avoided specific questions to participants about the steps in their coaching process in order to limit the chances that any emerging process was driven by my questions, instead of the data. While this methodology provided advantages and stronger support for the process that emerged, it also excluded possible information that could have been valuable to the field, including how executive coaches factor their own type preferences into coaching, what (if any) evaluation methods they use, and more data about specific results that might typically emerge from this process.

It is also a limitation of the study that less data was collected on the consequences section of the model than the other five areas, as mentioned in chapter four. Interview participants were not specifically asked about results they observed for coachees or client organizations as a result of MBTI use. Again, this was an intentional omission in order to avoid prompting interview participants for data that might not exist. As a result, this section of the model may not be as generalizable to other populations as other portions.

A major distinction that was not adequately addressed by this study was the difference between an executive coach's use of MBTI and their use of psychological type. Although interview questions specifically focused on the use of MBTI, it became apparent during the study that some interview participants were responding to interview questions about MBTI with examples of how they broadly use psychological type in coaching. While I am confident that the executive coaches in this study understand the theoretical distinction between these topics, it is unclear whether executive coaches make a distinction between the instrument and the theory in practice. An example of this concern was seen in participant 3 who said, "The MBTI is a good theory about how people behave in the world." The MBTI is, of course, an instrument and not a theory.

Based upon responses such as this, it is difficult to determine to what extent the findings presented by this study are correlated specifically to the MBTI or more broadly to psychological type. Since the interview data support the conclusion that coaches don't use the MBTI without heavy reliance on the knowledge of psychological type, a logical argument could be made to rename this dissertation: *How Executive Coaches Use Psychological Type to Develop Their Coachees*.

An assumption was made that interview participants would share examples about coaching experiences that were fairly typical of their past coaching engagements. This was the reasoning for me asking participants to share three separate coaching examples as well as asking to what extent the examples were fairly typical of how they used the MBTI (all interview participants reported that their examples were consistent with typical use). However, the human mind tends to recall unusual examples and stories first, as evidenced by participant 5 stating, "So that is one of my most fun examples" after sharing a detailed story. This bears mentioning since the examples this study was based on might not always have been the most typical situations. In addition, I acknowledge that the finding that executive coaches default to use the MBTI with coachees is a somewhat obvious conclusion, based on MBTI use being one of the screening factors for interview participants.

Because of the level of involvement needed by the interview participant (an online survey plus a phone interview), it is also a fair criticism of this study that only participants responded to be interviewed who were already very passionate about the use of the MBTI in executive coaching. Indeed, most all the study participants expressed high praise for the instrument and its value in their coaching practices. Several individuals, who otherwise would have qualified for the study, did not agree to be contacted and might have had a different perspective. In addition, I know that there are those in the coaching community who view the MBTI as a flawed instrument (as all instruments are) and do not support its use in coaching. It is worth noting that this perspective was not addressed, as it was beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, it is not my intention to place a value judgment on the use of the MBTI in executive coaching. It bears mentioning that I received two e-mail messages during the course of the study from executive coaches who had learned about this study and expressed strong concerns that a dissertation was being conducted that would support the use of MBTI in executive coaching. Although I am an MBTI practitioner and have used the instrument in coaching, this study is not intended either to support or reject the use of the MBTI with coachees. It is already well established in the literature that MBTI is widely used in coaching, so the focus of this study was to provide data to researchers and practitioners who wish to learn more about how this is happening. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide extensive data to executive coaches who can then make an informed decision as to whether the MBTI is a good fit for them, their coachees, and their clients.

Recommendations for Future Research

Opportunities for coaching research are plentiful and this study raises several questions for researchers to investigate further the use of MBTI in executive coaching. This study was designed to provide an initial data point as to the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees, an intentionally broad research question. Future researchers may wish to examine specific categories of this model to provide detail that may be useful to practitioners who wish to adopt such a model in their coaching practice. Since less data were collected in the category of consequences in the model, as stated previously, additional data in this particular category would be especially helpful to understand further outcomes. Examining the outcomes that emerge from this model may be a valuable study or dissertation topic for future researchers.

The use of other assessments was mentioned often among interview participants and thus included as one of the intervening conditions in the model. It would be valuable to learn more about how other assessments support MBTI feedback and how the MBTI supports the use of other assessments. In particular, interview participants mentioned using the MBTI in tandem with the FIRO-B assessment, so a similar study could be conducted to examine FIRO-B assessment use. Also, a number of participants commented on using the MBTI to assist in explaining 360 results in a less threatening way. This would be an interesting link to explore in more detail. In addition, a broader study of assessment use in a general may be valuable in determining what best practices, if any, are being utilized by practitioners to collect information about their coachees.

To an even greater extent than was intended, this study examined executive coaches with a seemingly large number of contact hours with coachees. This supports a conclusion that the study population was a fairly experienced group of executive coaches, based on the comments in interviews and demographic information collected from the survey. Repeating this study with a more general population of coaches, perhaps who do not even work with executive coachees, would provide a comparison point to learn what practices are unique to executive coaching.

Finally, it would be valuable to repeat a similar study and control for the distinctions in coaching interactions between using the MBTI specifically and using psychological type more broadly. Such clarity would provide data that would not only be valuable to MBTI practitioners, but more broadly to those who use psychological type in their coaching without administering the MBTI.

Conclusion

This study examined the process by which executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop coachees. Grounded theory analysis from interviews with 15 executive coaches found that raising the awareness of coachees was the central phenomenon of this process. As consistency was found in much of the data collected, a model was created to consider how causal conditions, strategies, consequences, context, and intervening conditions play a role in the process of raising awareness.

Although the focus of this executive coaching research was limited to the use of the MBTI, practitioners who use this popular instrument will find value in the experiences and language of practitioners. This may enhance their use of the instrument, their confidence level, or simply provide less experienced practitioners with a framework for their own success. The information presented in this study will add an additional data point of understanding to the field of executive coaching and give practitioners additional tools to develop executive leaders.

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APPENDIX A

Stage One Survey to Screen Potential Research Subjects

Dear Participant:

My name is Dave Stachowiak, and I am a doctoral candidate in organizational leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "How Executive Coaches Use the Results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to Develop Their Coachees." The professor supervising my work is Dr. Mark Allen. The study is designed to investigate what common practices, if any, exist for how executive coaches use the results of the MBTI to develop coachees so I am inviting individuals who have experience using the MBTI in executive coaching to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete the following six survey questions. It should take approximately five minutes to complete the survey you have been asked to complete. Please complete the survey alone in a single setting.

At the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked if you wish to participate in stage two of the study, if you qualify for participation. If you elect to participate in stage two of the study and qualify for participation, I will contact you to arrange a time to interview you over the phone for approximately 30 minutes about your experiences using the MBTI with your coachees. This phone interview will be recorded and the audio will be transcribed into a typed transcript. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript for no less than two weeks prior to its inclusion in the study.

All information collected from you will be kept confidential at all times and aggregated in the final results of the study. In addition, I will remove any identifying information from the transcript including, but not be limited to, names of clients, names of companies, names of the research subject, and names of specific places, to minimize any possibility of data being identified back to you personally.

Although very minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks include the possibility that examples collected from you were identifiable back to you in the results of the study. The procedures described above are designed to minimize this risk. In the event you do experience a situation where you feel your examples and contributions are identifiable back to you, please contact me immediately so I may correct this issue. If I do not resolve this to your satisfaction, you may contact the professor supervising my work, Dr. Mark Allen, at [redacted] or [redacted]. You may also contact Dr. Doug Leigh, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, at [redacted] or [redacted].

The potential benefits to you for participating in the study include providing value to the executive coaching industry from the knowledge of best practices, if any, that are discovered during the study. This information may be useful to you and other executive coaches who plan to utilize the MBTI with future coachees.

If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the survey in its entirely or in completing the phone interview in stage two of the study (should you elect to participate and qualify to do so) you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the survey that you prefer not to answer--just leave such items blank.

If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released. The data will be kept in a secure manner for at least five years at which time the data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr. Mark Allen at [redacted] or [redacted]. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Doug Leigh, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, at [redacted] or [redacted].

By completing this survey, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails, and are consenting to participate in the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, and I hope you decide to complete the survey. You are welcome to a brief summary of the study findings in about 1 year. If you decide you are interested in receiving the summary, please e-mail me at the address below and I will ensure you are provided a copy of the results, when they are available.

Sincerely,

Dave Stachowiak
Principal investigator

BEGIN SURVEY QUESTIONS

1) Have you completed a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator certification program, including passing the exam to administer the MBTI instrument?

YES OR NO

2) Do you hold a masters degree or higher in any of the areas of study listed below?

- State licensed Psychologist
- State licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- State licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)
- State licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- National Certified Counselor (NCC)
- National Certified Career Counselor (NCCC)
- Counseling Psychology
- Clinical Psychology
- Industrial and Organizational Psychology
- Personnel Psychology
- Counseling and Personnel Services
- Counselor Education
- Marriage and Family Counseling
- Organizational Development

YES OR NO

3) In the past 90 days, approximately how many hours have you provided one-on-one coaching to clients who are managers of managers (i.e. at least one person who reports to them has at least one direct report themselves).

RESPONDANT ENTERS HOURS

4) Approximately what percentage of your CURRENT CLENTS have profit and loss responsibilities with their organization?

RESPONDANT SELECTS 0%-100% dropdown

5) Approximately what percentage of the time do you utilize the MBTI with coaching clients?

RESPONDANT SELECTS 0%-100% dropdown

6) If your responses above qualify you to participate in this study, are you willing to participate in one 30-minute recorded phone interview about how you utilize the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with your clients? If you agree to do so, I will contact you to arrange a convenient time conduct a phone interview. The interview will be recorded, but your identify will remain confidential and your responses will be aggregated into the overall results of the study. You will have an opportunity to review the interview

transcript, prior to its use in the study. No one will receive any financial compensation for participation in this study.

Are you willing to participate in an interview, as described above?

YES OR NO

If yes, please list your contact information below:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you for your participation! If you are selected for this study, I will contact you within the next 4-6 weeks to arrange a convenient time to conduct a phone interview.

APPENDIX B

E-Mail to Potential Research Subjects

Dear (Potential Participant):

I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, conducting a study on how executive coaches utilize the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). I will be interviewing executive coaches over the phone to learn about the process that executive coaches use with the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees. You have been identified by (referral source) as someone who may qualify to participate in this study and I am interested in including you in my research.

To determine if you qualify for this study, please follow the link below to answer a brief, six-question, multiple-choice survey about your experiences with the MBTI in coaching. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete:

SURVEY LINK HERE

The information collected in this online survey will be kept confidential. Please be assured that participation in this survey is voluntary. At the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked if you are willing to participate in the interview stage of this study.

Please contact me at [redacted] or [redacted] if I can answer any additional questions about the study. In addition, questions about this study may be directed to Dr. Mark Allen, my faculty advisor, at [redacted] or [redacted]

Kindly distribute this e-mail to other coaches who also utilize MBTI in their coaching.

Warm regards,

Dave Stachowiak
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX C

Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook Announcements

Twitter announcement

Executive coaches using #MBTI – kindly complete this 5 minute survey for a doctoral study PLEASE RT! [LINK HERE]

LinkedIn status update

Executive coaches using MBTI – kindly complete this 5 minute survey for a doctoral study – please forward to other coaches! [LINK HERE]

Facebook announcement

Executive coaches using MBTI – kindly complete this 5 minute survey for a doctoral study – please forward to other coaches! [LINK HERE]

APPENDIX D

Physical Invitation to Potential Research Subjects

I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, conducting a study on how executive coaches utilize the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). I will be interviewing executive coaches over the phone to learn about the process that executive coaches use with the results of the MBTI to develop their coachees.

To determine if you qualify for this study, please follow the link below to answer a brief, six-question, multiple-choice survey about your experiences with the MBTI in coaching. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete:

SURVEY LINK HERE

The information collected in this online survey will be kept confidential. Please be assured that participation in this survey is voluntary. At the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked if you are willing to participate in the interview stage of this study.

Please contact me at [redacted] or [redacted] if I can answer any additional questions about the study. In addition, questions about this study may be directed to Dr. Mark Allen, my faculty advisor, at [redacted] or [redacted]

Kindly distribute this link to other coaches who also utilize MBTI in their coaching.

Warm regards,

Dave Stachowiak
Doctoral Candidate, Pepperdine University

APPENDIX E

Stage Two Interview Protocol

1) Introduction and thank the participant for their time.

2) Remind the participant that this interview will be recorded for accuracy and receive their verbal consent for a recording to be made. If they do not consent, thank them for their time and end the interview.

3) Overview the purpose of the study.

4) Assure the participant that their responses are confidential and that the information shared by them will be aggregated in the study results. Remind the participant that their participation in the study is voluntary and they may withdraw their participation at any time.

5) Remind the participant that they will have the opportunity to review the transcript of the call, prior to their data being included in the study.

6) Explain to the participant that there are no right or wrong answers, as the study is attempting to collect data about an area of coaching that has not been extensively studied.

7) Ask the participant if he or she has any questions on the consent process and if he or she would like a written copy of the consent waiver.

Interview Questions

1) “How do you use the MBTI with your coachees?”

2) “At what point in coaching do you introduce MBTI and why?”

3) “Tell me about three times you’ve used MBTI with coachees and how you used it.”

4) “How do you determine how you will use the MBTI with coachees?”

5) “To what extent do the examples you’ve discussed represent how you typically use the MBTI?”

The researcher’s responses to these questions will include active listening and neutral encouragements, such as “Go on,” and, “What do you mean?”

The researcher may ask study participants to clarify unclear points or expand upon areas where the researcher believes additional data would provide greater understanding of the study participant's experiences.

The researcher will thank the study participant for their time.