

top

the organisational psychologist

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Australia's leadership in applied positive psychology

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And More...

editorial policy

TOP is a regular publication of the College of Organisational Psychologists (COP). As such it is a mouthpiece for communicating the most recent events, developments and issues in organisational psychology and related HR professions in Australia. A copy is available to all COP members and affiliates via the APS website, and in hardcopy to Victorian COP members.

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editorial note

Dear COP members
and colleagues,

Over a century ago, Emile Durkheim, the founder of empirical sociology, predicted the growth in importance of professional associations - which have their ancient origins in the Greek *thiasso* and Roman *collegia* - not only for advancing the professions that they represent but, even more broadly, for the general well being of society. Today professional associations are indeed an integral part of professional life, and in this communication plays a vital role in keeping committees in touch with their members, as well as providing a means of communication between members themselves.

With this in mind we welcome you to the first edition of *The Organisational Psychologist (TOP)*. The editorial team is proud to bring this publication (formerly *The Pipeline*) to COP members across Australia. As a combined initiative of the National Executive and Victorian Branch of COP.

This inaugural issue of *TOP* begins with messages from both the national and the Victorian COP Committee Chairs; Denis Flores outlines a strategic direction for the College and Simon Brown-Greaves, introduces readers to this first issue.

The controversial topic of coaching psychology (the APS's featured unit last April) is covered at some length in this issue. As the use of coaching, as an intervention aimed at optimising organisational and individual performance, is gaining widespread application in this country and internationally, a number of questions have been raised regarding the effectiveness of coaching services, and the need for a coherent set of standards and code of practice in the industry. These issues, and more, are addressed in our feature article by Anthony Grant and Michael Cavanagh, leading researchers and practitioners in the field in Australia, and indeed internationally.

Their article is complemented by a review of a recent Victorian PD Event on the subject, and Chris Platania-Phung's insightful commentary on the field from the viewpoint of developments in applied positive psychology. We also bring you the usual smorgasbord of commentaries, function and book reviews.

While the main objective of *TOP* is to address core issues, practices and activities relating to I-O psychology in Australia, future editions will continue the international focus and commentaries on global issues that were a regular feature of *The Pipeline*. These will include articles on organisational psychology in other countries, as well as address broader issues as they relate to our field. Forthcoming issues of *TOP* will also introduce profiles of companies and organisations engaged in I-O psychology activities in Australia, as well as overviews of emergent research in the area.

Over the remainder of the year we will continue to develop *TOP* in style and content, and to introduce new initiatives along the way. We will also continue our efforts to attract articles from organisational psychologists and related professions across all Australian states to make *TOP* a truly national magazine.

We welcome readers' comments, suggestions and article submissions. Please send these to us at: top_editors@yahoo.com For further information on *TOP* and submission deadlines visit our APS College Website listed above.

The editorial team hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of *TOP*.

Walter Giusti
the editor

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Message from the National Chair implementing a strategic vision for COP



Denis J. Flores

The publication of the first issue of *TOP* provides the College with the opportunity to highlight a number of significant initiatives that have been undertaken by the National COP Executive in conjunction with the State Committees.

Strategic Direction

Soon after coming to office, the National Committee developed a Strategic Direction paper that represents the vision and action plan for the College for the next two years. The paper was developed with input from all Committee members including State Chairs and relates specifically to development and growth at State level. The Committee will continue with its traditional activities such as Course Approvals and Professional Development but will have a particular emphasis on supporting activity at State level.

Alternative Entry Process

All Colleges are required to have an alternative entry process for Membership. COP has now developed this alternative entry process which requires applicants to demonstrate a level of skill and understanding through a detailed evidence competency framework. Our thanks go to Fiona Page from Monash who did a tremendous job of putting this whole package together

APS Annual Conference

Each College has the opportunity to have a theme day(s) at the APS Conference, so specialist papers within a College area can be presented in a block within the conference proper. The theme can be based on papers already submitted or papers will be sought on the theme requested, e.g., motivation and performance, organisational wellbeing, managing conflict in organisations. Whilst we will continue to focus on the biannual specialist I-O conference, the move to themes at the APS Conference will certainly give it more relevance for COP members.

Professional Development

This has been a major area of concentration recently and without going over too much of the angst that was around concerning this issue late last year I can advise that after many discussions at the Board level with Alan Ralph and Hugh Woolford and significant work by Phil Webb at PDAAG, a new approach is being taken in regard to recording of PD. Members will be able to access and eventually update their PD records on the APS website. We have also floated the concept of a bar-coded membership card which when swiped will record attendance at State based PD events.

Denis J Flores
Chair
National COP Committee

Message from the Victorian COP Chair introducing *The Organisational Psychologist*



Simon Brown-Greaves

This is a significant message from the Chair! Not that they all haven't been, however, this one marks a special occasion. As the College both locally and nationally moves forward, much work has been done bringing all into alignment. Part of this process includes the conversion of *The Pipeline* to *The Organisational Psychologist (TOP)*. We are extremely pleased that the National College Committee has seen fit to adopt this publication as the national flagship.

This is a testament to the long-term work of the Editorial Team, Walter Giusti, Jeromy Anglim and James Canty, as well as all those committee members who have contributed over recent years.

It is also important to remember that *Pipeline* was born out of the New Professional Group of the College some five years ago – and the energy and commitment of that group has been instrumental in the success of the magazine.

The Organisational Psychologist as this publication will now be known will be distributed nationally electronically, but a Victorian version will still be available in hard copy. We hope that we are able to reflect both National and local needs in the new format.

In this edition you will also note the excellent work that is being done both in Victoria and nationally around Professional Development. A prime objective of the National Chair is to support the regions in the provision of relevant and stimulating PD activities. We hope you find something to interest you in the choices outlined within.

Simon Brown-Greaves
Chair
COP Committee
(Victorian Branch)

Feature article:

executive coaching: educational and practice issues for psychologists

Anthony M Grant & Michael J Cavanagh
School of Psychology
The University of Sydney



Dr Anthony M Grant is the founder and Director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the School of Psychology in the University of Sydney, Australia. His PhD is in Coaching Psychology and he is a registered psychologist. He is an academic and a coaching practitioner. Tony has extensive experience in personal and executive coaching at senior levels and has worked with many of Australia's leading companies and with global organisations as a coach, a consultant and as a teacher of coaching. He can be contacted at: anthonyg@psych.usyd.edu.au

If one were to ask the learning and development officer of any large business, "what are the key components in staff and organisational development?", most would include coaching as part of the answer. Executive and life coaching are in the ascendant in personal and organisational development. This seems quite consistent with the predictions of coach training companies over the past 5 years. Advertisements for some commercial coaching training promise a highly profitable home-based business, helping others along the road to behavioural change, personal development and self-actualisation. These three areas place coaching largely within the field of the behavioural sciences, and particularly in the area covered by psychology. Indeed, many coaches appear to do work which is very similar to psychologists, yet few have training and qualifications in psychology. The coaching and psychology spaces are not, however, simply contiguous. The most obvious difference being the business and commercial focus offered in coaching compared to traditional psychological practice. What are the implications, for psychologists, of this rapid growth in life and executive coaching? This article examines some key issues in executive and life coaching, and discusses some of the implications for psychologists' practice and training. In this article we draw on the popular press and the peer-reviewed literature, and our experience in the Coaching Psychology Unit, at the School of Psychology, University of Sydney.

What is Life and Executive Coaching?

Executive or life coaching is a helping relationship for "people making important changes in their lives... People come to coaching because they want things to be different. They are looking for change or have an important goal to reach ... (such as) ... to write a book, start a business, have a healthier body, be more satisfied at work, have more order and balance in their lives, less confusion, less stress ... in general, they want a better quality of life ..." (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998; p.1).

The boundaries between executive coaching and life coaching are somewhat blurred. Both frequently address issues such as work-life balance and personal values. Both tend to be highly goal-orientated, and focus on non-clinical populations.



Life coaching is frequently aimed at holistically fine-tuning the client's life, enhancing well-being and actualising unexpressed potential. Executive coaching is focused more on work-place issues. An oft-cited definition of executive coaching posits that it is "... a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a set of mutually defined goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction, to consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client's organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement" (Kilburg, 1996 p. 142).

Executive and life coaching has attracted considerable global media coverage (e.g., Koepper, 2002; Patten, 2001) with many thousands of media items published each year. However, despite its high media profile, academic psychology has yet to take the professional coaching movement seriously. For example, there has been very little published academic research on life coaching, with only 10 citations in PsycInfo as at March 2004. One of the major avenues by which psychologists can begin to claim at least a part of the coaching space is via research. The development of coaching specific theories of practice, and rigorous outcome studies will help to establish psychologists as leaders in both thought and evidence based practice. It is our experience that business and Human Resource leaders frequently ask – "how do we know coaching is worth the investment?" At present, the evidence base, while growing slowly, need the rigour and research skill of psychologists.

Executive coaching can be seen as the application of positive psychology to issues facing leaders, employees and their organisations. To be frank, in Australia the general reputation of psychologists in commercial circles could be improved. We are too often seen as somewhat disconnected, problem focussed and irrelevant. Failure to grasp the opportunity inherent in the rise of coaching as a behavioural intervention is not simply another missed opportunity. If we do not step into, and claim some ownership of at least the positive psychology part of the coaching space, other less qualified people will. While they may ultimately fail, and coaching will be seen as the last fad to hit management, the reputation and relevance of professional psychology will become further negatively entrenched.

Dr Michael Cavanagh is the deputy director of the Coaching Psychology Unit. A coaching and clinical psychologist, Michael has over 17 years experience in facilitating personal, group and organizational change. He has designing and facilitated training and personal development workshops in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. As a coach he has worked with a wide range of individuals, drawn from every level of management and from a diverse range of industries and organizations. His email address is: michaelc@psych.usyd.edu.au

The Coaching Psychology Unit in the School of Psychology, University of Sydney, was founded in 2000. The Unit is a world's first, and offers two Masters programs in the Psychology of Coaching: the Master of Applied Science (Psychology of Coaching) and the Master of Human Resource Management and Coaching. The aim of the Coaching Psychology Unit is to enhance the performance, productivity and quality of life of individuals, organisations and the broader community through excellence in education, research and the practice of coaching psychology. For further information on the Unit email

**Coaching Psychology Unit
School of Psychology,
University of Sydney
Sydney NSW 2006
Australia**

The Popularity of Coaching

Coaching appears to be highly attractive, both as a potential career, and to clients as a means of enhancing personal or professional development and improving performance in a wide range of areas. Public demand for executive or life coaching services appears to be growing significantly (Dick, 2003; Ellingsen, 2003). At least 50% of US, UK, European and Australian organisations employ coaches (Centre for Creative Leadership, 2003). In Australia, at least 1 in 9 senior managers has a coach, and the perception of coaching in organisations is, at present, overwhelmingly positive (Leadership Management Australia, 2003).

To date the press coverage of coaching has been predominately positive. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that, world-wide, there have been very few negative reports or prosecutions of coaches for malpractice or harming their clients.

We would like to think that this is due to the successful self-regulation of the coaching industry, or even a testament to the resilience of the human condition. It more probably reflects a common understanding that behaviour change is a complex and uncertain business, and when it comes to outcomes, few promises can be made. It may also be because those seeking coaching services have not had a clear idea of the services and standards they would be receiving, and therefore no internal standard as to what constitutes unacceptable service or outcome. The fact that, as of March 2004, world-wide there is no governmental regulation of coaching and thus few formal avenues for complaint may well add to the reticence of unhappy clients to seek redress for poor coaching practices.

Clearly, one of the challenges facing coaching is the development of clear standards of practice, and reliable and sensitive outcome measures against which practice can be evaluated.

Most Coaches are not Psychologists

The vast majority of coaches are not psychologists. One recent study, drawing on a large sample of primarily American coaches (N = 2,529) found that less than 5% of respondents had a background in psychology (Grant & Zackon, 2003). Indeed, psychologists are infrequently recognised as having unique coaching competencies (Garman, Whiston, & Zlatoper, 2000). The majority of people identifying themselves as coaches came from consulting, self-employment and management backgrounds. Clearly, it is important to distinguish between the rise of coaching as a development tool and the ability of coaches to effectively service this demand. Working in people's lives for behavioural

change does require significant and sophisticated understanding of behavioural science. We are therefore right to be worried by the movement of non-psychologists into the space occupied by psychology. At the same time, the presence of players from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives also raises a number of important issues and challenges for psychologists who wish to move into the coaching space.

As in other countries, at present there is no regulation of executive and life coaches in Australia, and there are no barriers to practicing as a coach. There is very little research about coaches and coach training. Consequently, exact figures are difficult to obtain. However, monitoring of newspaper advertisements in New South Wales indicates that there are at least 30 commercial organisations offering executive and life coach training operating in Australia. These unregulated commercial training schools frequently promote coaching as an easy-to-start business opportunity – “You too can be an executive or life coach”. One Sydney-based coach training school alone claims to have trained over 1,000 executive and life coaches in Australia. The quality of these proprietary programmes is hard to assess. Most often their key components are held as commercially confidential. Just how much solid behavioural science is taught in them is open to conjecture, though anecdotal evidence suggests the standards are not high.

Coaches as Para-Psychologists

Coaches who are not psychologists tend to place great emphasis on the claim that their work does not constitute an applied psychology, but is rather, a new form of helping relationship focused on well-being enhancement and goal attainment (Fortgang, 1998; Rock, 2001; Williams & Thomas, 2004). The notion of a helping relationship with individuals from a *normal, non-clinical* population is recurrent theme in life and executive coaching (Grant & Cavanagh, in press).

However, despite the frequent claims that coaching does not constitute applied psychology, an increasing number of non-psychologist coaches deal with issues such as executive burn-out, work-related distress, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), relationship problems, stress management and general physical and mental health issues (Hudson, 1999). In addition, like organisational psychologists, coaches frequently use assessment tools, although such tools tend to be unvalidated and psychometrically unsound (Starr, 2003). Clearly, despite claims that coaches do not practice psychology, the above descriptors indicate that

there appears to be a significant overlap between the work of coaches and the work of psychologists.

In the longer term particularly, the number of executive coaches working as para-psychologists may be of some concern to psychologists. By moving into the arena of psychology, those without psychological training effectively undermine professional psychological practice in the market place. Of more concern is the fact that well-meaning, but effectively untrained, people are presenting untested and unverified interventions as solutions to complex mental health issues. Just as the commercially naïve psychologist offering business advice is no more than a well meaning amateur, capable of inflicting much organisational harm, so the psychologically untrained life coach or executive coach risks seriously damaging his or her clients when they seek to offer solutions to critical psychological issues. Such psychologically naïve solutions can result in much wasted effort, organisational confusion, and personal suffering (Berglas, 2002). Indeed, for some clients, the loss of hope that comes with yet another failed attempt to create a better life, may itself be life-threatening.

There is a real role and challenge for psychologists in presenting theoretically informed ethical standards of practice. However, to do so requires engagement with the marketplace of coaching. To be done effectively, it is important that psychologists recognise that they do not own the whole of the coaching space. There is much room for other types of coaches. One of the major points of value offered by psychologists lies in helping organisations distinguish between different types of coaching and who are best suited to provide those services. Knowing the particular strengths and limits of our expertise is the first step in this process.

Psychologists as Coaches

Psychology is the science of human behaviour *per se*, and as such includes goal setting and goal attainment, performance enhancement – in short, the very areas that life and executive coaches work in. Unfortunately, psychology, as a profession, appears to have not effectively positioned itself as provider of executive and life coaching, leaving the way for other, arguably, less qualified individuals to dominate the market. As has been argued above, if psychology is to reclaim the ground in this rapidly developing area, we need to address this issue urgently.

There is considerable interest amongst psychologists regarding incorporating life and executive coaching into their existing psychological practice. In September 2002 the Australian Psychological Society (APS) formed an Interest Group for Coaching Psychology. This group has experienced phenomenal growth, now has over 500 members, and is the fastest growing APS Interest Group to date.

Although we believe that behavioural science is an essential grounding for executive and life coaching, it does not follow that all psychologists will make good coaches, or that all coaches should be psychologists. We do believe that psychology as a profession should be actively involved in executive and life coaching in terms of developing a sub-discipline of coaching psychology, and that state registration board and APS accredited specialised training program in coaching psychology will eventually be seen as a prerequisite for professional coaching psychology practice.

Our Strengths

Organisations want to employ coaches who are effective at enhancing individual and organisational performance and development (Thach, 2002). However, there is some scepticism in organisations about the growing number of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds who are now offering their services as executive coaches. One recent study investigated global best practice in executive coaching in organisations (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003) and reported that the second highest preferred qualification, after prior experience as a senior executive coach, was an advanced degree in behavioural science.

Measurement is another of our strengths. The psychologists' ability to design measures capable of capturing change is an area of expertise that is currently underutilised, despite an increasing cry for such measures in organisations.

Areas for Development

However, in addition to a background in behavioural science, organisations also want a range of other skills and knowledge including comfort around senior management, business acumen, the ability to focus on organisational -related outcomes, a clearly articulated theoretically-grounded philosophy of coaching, a goal-directed approach, evidence-based practice, and outstanding coaching skills. As suggested above, in this arena, psychologists need to lift both their skills and their profile in the market place.

Professional executive coaching requires specific knowledge and competencies that go beyond much of the standard postgraduate psychological educational content. It is becoming clear that, to be a successful professional coach, many psychologists will need to augment their original psychological training with coach-specific education (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003). Organisations and executives commonly call for coaching on a large range of issues, including coaching for enhanced strategic planning; presentation skills; anger and stress management; team building; and leadership development. Each coaching application requires the coach to have a specific skill set. Good coaches tend to have developed a speciality over time.

University-Level Coach Training

In 1999, to the best of our knowledge, world-wide there were no universities that taught coaching. At that time the only coach training was through tele-classes, with a curriculum based on adaptations of personal development programs, and this is still a very common genre and teaching modality.

The lack of evidenced-based teaching in such programs has been a barrier for psychologists seeking coach-specific training. At present (March 2004) world-wide there are only six universities that offer post-graduate course-work degrees in coaching. These are, the University of Sydney; Oxford Brookes University in the UK; Portsmouth University in the UK; Middlesex University in the UK; and, somewhat surprisingly, only Georgetown University and Duke University in the US. Of these only the University of Sydney and Middlesex University offer a program grounded in psychology, the others are from Faculties of Business and Education. Although Australia was the first to teach coaching at university, the UK now leads the way in terms of numbers of programs, and several other UK universities plan to have doctoral level coach training programs in place in the near future.

An emerging trend is for the private providers of coach training to obtain recognition of their programs within the Australian Qualification Framework. To date 2 Australian private providers offer a Certificate VI in Business and Life Coaching. These moves to align coach training within a recognised framework is to be welcomed, and is an important move towards the professionalisation of the coaching industry. However, there are concerns that the content of some of these courses includes very superficial approach to the teaching of cognitive-behavioural therapy and this could be another indication that non-psychologist coaches are moving in the areas traditional seen as being the province of university educated psychologists.

Clearly one of the challenges facing psychology in Australia today, is the need to develop more credible, university level courses in coaching psychology.

Issues in Coach-specific Training for Psychologists

Many experienced psychologists do not want to take out a whole new post-graduate masters degree. Such individuals frequently develop coach-specific competencies through a number of professional development programs.

Coaching training programs vary greatly in quality. At the Coaching Psychology Unit we frequently receive requests for advice from psychologists as to what coach-training program they should undertake, and these are some of the questions that psychologists considering coach-specific training should ask:

Is there a clearly articulated theoretical basis to the program; does the program cover marketing and practice establishment issues; is there a range of evidence-based models and tools; does the program provide supervised coaching skills practice; is the program based on Australian or US cultural mores; is there a well thought-out delineation between coaching and therapy; are there specialised education tracks which align with your own interests and needs; what are the qualifications of the teachers; how is the course taught - over the phone, distance education, or face to face?

It is probable that psychologists seeking coach-specific training will not find any one single coach training school who can provide all of the above. In such cases it will be necessary to enrol in a number of courses.

Conclusion

The rise of coaching as a significant form of behavioural intervention in organisations has largely caught the profession of psychology napping. Coaches are moving into spaces previously thought the domain of psychology. We can chose to see this as a call to arms, a rallying cry to expel the invaders from our hallowed theoretical and applied fortresses. To do so, we believe, would be a mistake. Rather, we suggest that we view this as a timely wake-up call. A call for the profession of psychology to engage with the market place in a way that says clearly that we have something more to give than the remediation of psychopathology. As psychologists, we have much to offer with regard to many of the issues and developmental desires that people are turning to coaches to address. Our best approach to engage with this burgeoning market is to recognise our particular strengths, and be honest about our weakness; bringing the former to people's attention, while developing the breadth of our skills base. For this ongoing education and openness is needed. The rewards, for ourselves personally and for the profession are great. But perhaps more importantly, we will have seized a real opportunity to shape, in more humane and humanistic ways, a large part of our modern world.

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The APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology is pleased to announce
its first national symposium

Coaching Psychology: Advancing Professional Practice

July 22 and 23, 2004

The Symposium

As Australia continues to lead the world in the development of evidence-based coaching practice, this symposium aims to build on the advances made in coaching psychology within the realms of research and theory; it will provide a forum for professional psychologists practicing in the coaching field to present and discuss their practical solutions and applications of this emerging body of knowledge. The symposium is open to all members (and pending members) of the Australian Psychological Society, and to registered psychologists. Non APS members are encouraged to use this opportunity to gain APS membership and continue their professional development through the Society's services and programs.

The AGM

As part of the national event, the Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (IGCP) will hold its first AGM. The IGCP has had phenomenal growth over the past year; with over 520 members it is the second largest interest group in the APS. The AGM is your chance to have a real say in the leadership of the interest group and in the direction for the next year. An opportunity not to be missed!

Venue:
Bayview on the Park,
52 Queens Road, Melbourne

Further Information and Registration details can be obtained @
http://www.psychology.org.au/units/interest_groups/coaching/8.7.30_10.asp

PD event review: models of coaching and coaching psychology

Melinda Rolland

With some intrepidation, the Victorian College of Organisational Psychologist's first Professional Development event for 2004 created what could turn out to be the 'Great Debate' for the year. With newspapers littered with 'Become a Life Coach' adverts, it seemed the time had come to bring together professionals in the field to discuss this popular and controversial topic and to explore different models of high-quality coaching.

Three practising and experienced coaches, Sue Zablud (Lee Hecht Harrison) Kerryn Velleman (Kru Consulting) and Jan Elsner (Psynchrony Coaching) presented their views of coaching to the assembled at Hotel Y on Tuesday 20 April.

While the definitions were consistent as to what constitutes a 'coach', there was some interesting debate surrounding the role of psychology in this emerging field, and the differences between coaching psychologists and other types of coaches such as life and business coaches.

Sue Zablud, the General Manager of Leadership and Coaching -Victoria, of Lee Hecht Harrison (the principal sponsor of the evening), confirmed that coaching was about making a difference with people, providing wise counsel to make individual's better at what they do. Sue's message was that a coach should inspire action.

With a background in career management and organisational change, Sue specialises in the areas of *thought leadership in mentoring and coaching, career, talent and change management*. She discussed the importance of having a wide variety of experience on

which to draw to effectively guide and support coachees.

Defined as a learning process that leads to behavioural change to improve an individual's performance and business results, Sue was very clear on how coaching differs from 'mentoring' and counselling.

Lee Hecht Harrison is an international organisation which specialises in executive coaching, focusing its activities on:

- A cognitive process about enhanced learning, understanding and decision-making;
- Providing a framework for skill performance and leadership development; and
- Utilisation of proven tool

Sue identified three types of coaches: (1) external, which offer an outsiders perspective; (2) internal, generally the HR department which offers the organisational perspective, and; (3) manager/coach, the industry perspective with functional and management responsibility. And she described Lee Hecht Harrison's *Four Phase Model* that transfers a 'coachee' through a cycle of outcomes, information, strategy and results to achieve behavioural change.

Discussion also focused on the importance of building trust between coach and coachee, ethics and the crucial nature of ensuring confidentiality to the coachee, irrespective of who's paying for the coaching.

To continue the theme, Kerryn Velleman discussed the benefits to an individual that coaching can provide – including increased confidence, improved performance and leadership, and a greater ability

to deal with difficult people and achieve personal goals.

With over fourteen years experience in facilitating individual, team and organisational change, Kerryn has worked across industries with companies ranging from local businesses to global corporations. Today, her clients are organisations that have identified high performers ear-marked for greater things, or are keen to motivate and retain their very best people or are looking to maximise leadership development.

'Today organisations are far leaner and looking to do more, so leaders are under incredible stress – organisations are willing to invest in interventions that maximise performance that will lead to significant outcomes' she said.

Consistent with Sue's comments, Kerryn defined coaching as four processes, which resulted in fundamental shifts in behavioural change – self-awareness, performance enhancement, performance breakthrough and personal transformation. Good coaches challenge individual's beliefs and values and equip them with the necessary skills to tackle any situation.

"It is essential to have a contract up front that clearly defines roles of the coach and coachee"

- Kerryn Velleman

When attendees were asked to consider the difference between coaching, mentoring and counselling, an interesting debate ensued on where a coach draws the line between these functions.

Kerryn stressed the importance of factors such as goal and role clarity – ‘it is important to be clear with clients on what the goals are,’ she said, and recommended establishing a contract to ensure that roles are clarified at the beginning of the program and revisited throughout to ensure the integrity of the process.

“Coaching is about behavioural change, but the coachee must be ready to change.”

- Sue Zablud

The final speaker, Jan Elsner, confessed that for many years she swept her clinical psychology training under the carpet. Her career followed the commercial and corporate path to almost Board level when she realised her passion lay in coaching people of high potential.

Jan has since re-registered with the APS, and is now the Director of Psynchony Coaching - a private practice of Coaching Psychologists, Director of a Woman’s Place, and an Associate Executive Coach with Nous Group, Tall Poppies, and the Litmus Group.

“Australia is leading the world in coaching psychology”

- Jan Elsner

Like Sue and Kerryn, Jan agreed that coaching is about behavioural change. However, she believes it goes beyond that to re-establish an individual’s identity

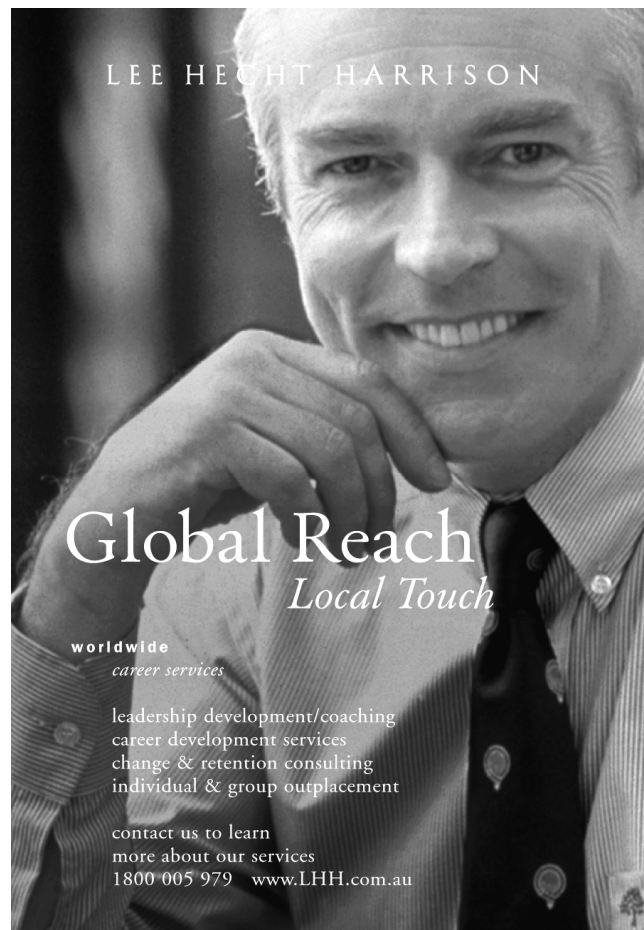
She defines coaching as a goal-focused intervention aimed at equipping clients with the skills that enable them to make positive changes and to maintain them.

Jan is also a member of the newly formed APS special interest group in Coaching that was established to consider and define the area of ‘coaching psychology.’ Given that the industry remains unregulated, she highlighted the importance of developing skills and qualifications in

coaching competencies and the need to have a rigorous process in place for the training and accreditation of coaches, whether they were psychologists or not.

Jan said that Australia leads the world in this new and evolving field, although there was still a lot of ambiguity about boundaries, and encouraged attendees to “get informed” regarding the evidence of coaching psychology via Tony Grants Coaching Psychology Unit at Sydney University, the Corporate Leadership Council and the APS Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (IGCP). Great collaboration within the industry is required to ensure that this field is recognised as significant, she said.

Richard Want, Victorian COP Committee Treasurer, closed the event by highlighting the value of the diversity of perspectives expressed by the speakers and the debate that followed. The event was proudly sponsored by **Lee Hecht Harrison**.



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Australia's leadership in an applied positive psychology

Chris Platania-Phung
Department of Psychology
University of Melbourne



Chris Platania-Phung is a PhD candidate under the supervision of Associate Professor Janice Langan-Fox at The University of Melbourne. His research interests centre around cognitive abilities, adult health behaviour maintenance, and practical applications of theory in this area. Chris has also been a regular contributor of articles and book reviews for *The Pipeline*, and now continues to write for *TOP*.

Australia, like the UK and US, has witnessed a wave of coaches and coach training centres in recent years. As a result, a topical issue for organizations is whether coaching is another brand of 'corporate candy' or an approach that can generate concrete results in work performance, group output and profit.

The purpose of this commentary is to stimulate discussion on coaching research and practice in the Australian context, and in relation to the challenges emerging from the field of positive psychology.

An Applied Positive Psychological

There are a wide range of definitions of coaching. For current purposes, borrowing from Grant (2003, p.254), coaching can be defined as "a collaborative solution-focused, result-oriented and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of life experience and goal attainment in the personal and/or professional life of normal, non clinical clients".

As Grant and Cavanagh (this issue) argue, few people working under the banner of "coach" have a formal background in psychology, which highlights the need for what psychological research and practice can offer to the emerging profession of coaching.

Having looked almost religiously at human failings, limitations and illnesses, general psychology has balanced out through more research attention on normal and exceptional functioning - often referred to as 'positive psychology'. The orientation of this field is best illustrated through the well known

work of Martin Seligman on learned helplessness, which evolved into pioneering research on learned optimism as a protective factor for depression. Readers are recommended to read Lazarus (2003), and replies to this article, for an in-depth and controversial debate about the credentials of positive psychology research.

Applied positive psychology is about enabling people and groups to be more 'agentic' and making the most of their talents, as opposed to the treatment of mental illness (Seligman, 1998). Grant (2003) sees coaching as the realization of an applied positive psychology – and as a means to further our understanding of human striving, change processes, and constructive relationships.

Australia Leading the Way

Practitioners such as Anthony Grant and Susan David epitomise Australia's leadership in the melding of evidence-based coaching practice and positive psychology research. It is the position of both that effective coaching especially requires, among other things, an advanced understanding of change from the perspective of behavioural science.

Anthony Grant's academic and business entrepreneurship is defined by open sharing of research-based knowledge to peers and the public, notably through the establishment of the worlds first university based coaching programme (at Sydney University) and the establishment of the first national evidence-based coaching conference. His article (together with Michael Cavanagh) in this issue of *TOP*, outlines his position on the subject.

Susan David, who is currently completing a PhD on emotional intelligence at the University of Melbourne, applies evidence-based principles arising from organisational, social, and clinical psychology to facilitate the goal pursuit of her business clients. She is particularly interested in the use of emotions as a basic competency of effective coaching, as she considers emotions as central to human experience, development and the process of behavioural change.

Drawing upon the Mayer-Salovey model of emotional intelligence, and the empirical literature, David (in press) provides a framework and guidelines for coaches on how to use emotion-related processes to facilitate coachee change and goal attainment - named RUUM for Recognise, Use, Understand and Manage.

Challenges

As we consider evidence based-coaching, a number of very fundamental (and largely unresolved) challenges for psychological and behavioural sciences resurface. In particular, there seems to be no consensus on how to conceptualise change and how to measure it; this applies to whether change is relating to motivation, progress towards goals or behaviour.

Psychological approaches to coaching often draw on research on goals and how people navigate them in everyday life (self-regulation). While there is no shortage of general theory in this area (eg. see Karoly, 1999; Kuhl, 2000), there is a long road ahead in providing an evidence-based understanding of the dynamic

process of human functioning, especially in the context of human relationships. And, at the methodological level, subcomponents of self-regulation have proven to be elusive to capture.

Then there are issues of establishing intervention effectiveness - are observed improvements in performance due to coach-facilitated learning, the enthusiasm of the coach ('founders effect'), or to the sheer novel experience of having a coach? - as well as generalisability issues, given the multidimensionality of coaching, including type (executive, team, life), medium of communication (in person, over the phone, virtual coaching), and number of coachees and coaches in question.

Value of Research

Psychologists play a critical role in informing the public about the viability of self-development products and services, including coaching (Grant, 2003). The coaching industry is still unregulated; to address this problem, at least in context of psychological practice, the APS Coaching Psychology Interest Group is in the process of developing ethical standards.

Ethical and practice issues in coaching are informed by ongoing research. A key issue in positive psychology is considering boundaries on human change and performance (i.e. not getting too positive!), such as to what extent specific types of behaviour (eg. organisational, health-related) can be changed - an important consideration for coachee-coach goal setting - and for ethical issues, such as the significance of claims

that can be made about what can be achieved with coaching.

Coachees often seek guidance in self-change. A well known tendency is for people to be remarkably persistent at striving for self-change, despite making no objective progress on those goals, with subsequent risk for ill-health (Polivy & Hermann, 2002). One explanation for this persistence is the reinforcement that comes from the affective rush of envisaging vague and highly desirable future circumstances (Gonzales et al., 2001). As Karoly and Ruelhman (1995, p.120) put it: "human goal-directedness, in addition to being guided by rational conceptions of the probable, is fuelled by rose-colored visions of the dimly possible." However, Gonzales et al. (2001) argues that this heightened state leads to overlooking the difficulty of change and having inaccurate expectations of what will be the result of successful change; this sets up the individual for continued unrealistic efforts, repeated disappointment, and subsequent ill-health risks (Polivy & Hermann, 2002).

While not mentioned by these researchers, it is no secret to psychologists that the cognitive-affective mechanism just described is routinely taken advantage of in the commercial world; people will always respond keenly to the 'hot air' floating around the majority of products in the coaching and self-development industries, thereby bypassing informed decision-making and consideration of whether the services or products are actually needed or necessary.

However, a better understanding of this mechanism can inform the development of effective coaching models; coaches may enable

change-seeking adults to question their goals and find and pursue realistic but still courageous strategies, and ensure the coachee does not engage in the type of downward spiral discussed by Polivy and Hermann (2002).

Conclusions

It is clear that the demand for coaching services is on the rise. While we should maintain a healthy scepticism, coaching psychology is worth considering as a unique means to respond to the long-standing needs of individuals and organisations seeking positive change. However, there is a long road ahead in reducing the void between practice and the evidence-base. It is hoped that the field of positive psychology will close this gap and, likewise that evidence-based coaching will provide 'the shot in the arm' for further research in this understudied area of psychology.

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Commentary:

bridging the science-practitioner divide

Simon Moss
Department of Psychology
Monash University

Over the last few decades, psychologists have offered extensive advice and guidance to managers and employees. And sometimes, this advice and guidance has been valid, while at other times it has either been misguided or banal.

All too often psychologists promulgate initiatives that have been discredited empirically. For example, managers are often encouraged to reward employees who propose creative, innovative suggestions. But, these rewards have been demonstrated to stifle innovation, at least in jobs that involve creativity. Likewise, employees are often encouraged to formulate challenging, specific plans to foster inspiration and motivation. Unfortunately, when their workload is elevated, these plans tend to compromise motivation.

A plethora of other recommendations have been invalidated. Employees are frequently encouraged to exhibit a cheerful or relaxed expression when they interact with customers, even when they actually feel angry or stressed. These employees, however, are less likely to be perceived as friendly, warm, and polite. Similarly, employees have been urged to discard their prejudiced beliefs towards minorities. These appeals for tolerance, unfortunately, foster rather than eradicate prejudice.

Of course, some of the recommendations that psychologists offer have been substantiated, but most are banal, as they merely reinforce the beliefs that employees have already formed - they merely highlight the intuitions that individuals have already developed.

In other words, many psychologists present information that individuals already know – but in words they do not. Many popular training programs, such as walking across hot coals, do not teach participants anything - except not to walk across hot coals. Training programs are also beneficial to the 5 or 6 individuals in the southern hemisphere who believe the word “team” should be spelt with an I.

To explore this issue, since 1997, I have analysed and distilled every empirical article that has been published in the fields of social psychology, management, human resources, marketing, and related fields. This analysis of over 11,000 scientific papers has revealed only 650 discoveries that do not seem entirely inevitable. That is, less than 6% of these empirical articles uncovered findings that were unexpected and informative.

Fortunately, these 650 findings do yield some significant – and indeed startling – insights. For example, supervisors who ridicule their employees are more likely to provoke retaliatory behaviours – such as theft or damage of equipment – if they frequently provide appreciable support, advice, and guidance as well. In addition, employees feel more confident and worthy after they write their strengths and achievements on a piece of paper with their preferred hand, especially if they nod their head as well.

These 650 insights have been utilised to institute some unique assessment and training initiatives. For example, these discoveries have been utilised to create the ETHOGRAM, the first instrument

that uncovers all of the personality flaws that individuals attempt to conceal – such as the extent to which they are unethical, dishonest, irresponsible, unreliable, uncooperative, prejudiced, rigid, unstable and so forth. This instrument can unearth these characteristics even when individuals strive vigorously to mask their faults.

In contrast, most personality inventories – and polygraphs – cannot distinguish individuals who are genuinely worthy from participants who overrate their qualities. Indeed, when someone claims they are creative, they usually mean they can operate Microsoft Photoshop. Of course, when someone claims they can operate Microsoft Photoshop, they actually mean they have unwrapped the manual that accompanies the software.

Nevertheless, scientific findings are not infallible. Objective studies are often objectionable. Reliability indices are often unreliable. Validity coefficients are often invalid.

For example, to assess the reliability of some scale, many psychologists will compute Cronbach’s alpha, which roughly represents the average correlation between each pair of items. Contrary to popular belief, elevated levels of Cronbach’s alpha do not indicate the scale is reliable.

To demonstrate, suppose all of the items in some scale appeared to be similar, such as “I feel anxious”, “I feel tense”, and “I feel worried”. Sources of random error – such as the mood of participants or the ambient noise – will therefore

influence responses on all items to the same extent. Each pair of items will thus be highly correlated. Therefore, although the responses are contaminated by random error, Cronbach's alpha will still be elevated. Admittedly, this demonstration depends on the definition of random error, but the basic premise applies regardless.

Indices that measure validity – such as correlation coefficients – are even more tenuous. To illustrate, consider a researcher who needs to establish whether or not extraversion promotes productivity. To investigate this issue, employees complete a scale that measures their level of extraversion, through items such as “During meetings, I often express my opinions”. In addition, supervisors complete a scale that gauges the productivity of these employees using items such as “This employee fulfils his or her responsibilities.”

Whenever the anticipated relationship emerges, the implications are always tenuous. For example, consider some supervisors who assume that extraversion fosters productivity. This assumption will distort the responses of these supervisors. The supervisors could unwittingly assume that, “Jack must fulfil his responsibilities because he often expresses his feelings”. Likewise, supervisors could presume that, “Jill must not fulfil her responsibilities because she seldom expresses her feelings.”

As a consequence of this distortion, extraversion will correlate with productivity. Indeed, a variety of similar mechanisms, such as priming, could manufacture a correlation between these two measures. In other words, this correlation might be as genuine as a sale at Peter Jackson's.

Unfortunately, whenever an unanticipated relationship emerges, the implications remain tentative. Whether or not this relationship will apply to any other context cannot be determined until the moderators of this association are intuited. Furthermore, these moderators cannot be surmised until the mechanisms that mediate this association are uncovered. But, the techniques that are utilised to characterise these mediators are also suspect.

Specifically, suppose the relationship between extraversion and productivity diminishes – but does not vanish altogether – when self-esteem is controlled. This outcome is entirely uninformative. To illustrate, suppose self-esteem is correlated with extraversion but not productivity. When self-esteem is controlled, the variance in extraversion abates. As a consequence, the association between extraversion and productivity will tend to diminish, even if self-esteem does not mediate this relationship.

On the other hand, suppose the relationship between extraversion and productivity vanishes altogether when self-esteem is controlled. Unfortunately, researchers are unable to reveal definitively that two variables are no longer related. Nobody has developed a statistical technique that can discriminate between a bona fide absence of any association and a minute, undetectable relationship.

In short, psychologists need to derive their advice and guidance from scientific findings that contradict prevalent assumptions and beliefs. On the other hand, psychologists should not accept every empirical discovery without caution. Sophisticated techniques often mask oversights rather than promote insights.



Dr Simon Moss is a lecturer at Monash University and published in the fields of attention and cognition, quality management, human resources, and organisational psychology. He is also a director of Zenith Professional Development, a company that provides a unique system of management assessment and training.

Announcement:

An international networking opportunity for I-O Psychologists

Anna Sundt

As *The Organisational Psychologist* moves to achieve Australia wide coverage, it seems fitting to consider how psychologists around the world can work more closely with one another. And as a UK trained psychologist now working in Sydney I have been asking myself how best to continue my professional development. My first dilemma being: which society should I be a member of – the APS or the British Psychological Society (BPS)? Answer: be a member of both. The second dilemma: How to retain links with “home”? Answer: Volunteer to be a committee member of the BPS and represent UK psychologists training overseas. Dilemma number 3: How to communicate and build a community of BPS members abroad? Answer: take a first step and contribute to a regular article in *TOP*.

What will be the aim of these

1. To build a network of BPS members in Australia (and beyond) and keep these people up to date with policies, procedures and professional development guidelines.
2. To regularly communicate and publicise psychological research and innovation developments in the UK to an international audience.
3. To establish a support system for BPS members training to become chartered outside of the UK.

Where to from here?

First of all, if you are a BPS psychologist in training and would be interested in joining an international network, please feel free to contact me. I would also be

keen to receive suggestions, from APS and BPS members alike, on how best to shape this role in order to deliver learning and networking opportunities that promote the continued professional development of I-O psychologists everywhere.

Many thanks! Anna

Anna Sundt
Consultant
Maximus International

Email: anna.sundt@maximus.net.au
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Vic PD event review: psychometric tools in organisational psychology

Walter Giusti

The delivery of psychometric tools for use by organisational psychologists was the topic of the last Victorian COP PD Event for 2003.

The event, held at Melbourne University last October, included presentations by four commercial speakers representing organisations that develop, research or distribute psychometric tests in Australia – **Rebecca Wigg** from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), **Nick Carter** from SHL, **Gavin Didsbury** from Coyne Didsbury PDI and **Margo Costanza** from TestGrid - followed by a panel discussion by four experts with diverse practical experience on the topic.

The event was convened by Bill Moore (COP PD Events Coordinator) who said that “a proper understanding of the use of psychological and psychometric testing in the work environment should be a key competency for I-O psychologists”, and that “our effectiveness, and the opinion of significant leaders of our profession, is dependent on how well we use the tests”.

General Ability Testing

The first speaker was Rebecca Wigg from ACER, a company whose core competency lies in publishing and distributing tests in the area of general ability assessments in education, human resources and psychology. Her presentation focused on two of these tests - *ACER Select* and *People Mapper*.

Rebecca introduced *ACER Select* as a test of verbal and numerical

reasoning that was designed for recruitment and selection for a variety of occupations as well as for use in educational and vocational counselling. The test came in two test forms - *Professional* and *General*. She then highlighted the test's strengths, reliability and validity that were maintained by ACER's ongoing process of item revision and upgrading.

Rebecca then moved on to discuss ACER's *People Mapper*, an occupational personality instrument that provided “an assessment of an individual's most likely behaviour in work situations”, with an emphasis on their conflict mode. Significantly, the test addressed five different conflict handling modes, such as whether people were inclined to repeat, collaborate, compromise, avoid or accommodate.

Clients have found this test to be effective for identifying conflict-handling modes in the workplace, and useful in areas such as sales training, identifying ways of dealing with customers, closing deals, and different ways of meeting customers' needs, she said.

Readers interested in finding out more about these tests can visit ACER online at:
<http://www.acer.edu.au/>

Towards an Integrated Competency Framework

The second speaker was Nick Carter from SHL, an international company that provides occupational assessment and development tools that address the strategic human resource needs of organisations.

Nick highlighted SHL's R&D effort in recent years, pointing out that they were focusing on the integration of their current capacities rather than on the development of new tools.

About three years ago, Professor Dave Bartram, then head of the International Test Commission, and a very significant figure in the world of psychometrics, became SHL's research director, Nick said. At that time SHL had over a hundred psychometric assessment tools that measured ability styles and motivation interest in an occupational setting. So the challenge for SHL, as Bartram saw it, was to develop a standardised, consistent and valid method for mapping these assessment tools to competencies.

As a result, an international R&D team was set up to run the SHL *Competency Project* with the aim of developing a single overarching framework for integrating SHL's diverse product range as well as new and more consistent competency based approaches.

The Project's approach to *competency potential* was comprehensive, Nick said. As well as addressing individual attributes that produce desirable behaviours in the workplace - such as abilities, personality, motivations, interest, style and values - it included aspects of competency, such as *knowledge* and *skill*, that many psychometric assessment tools didn't measure in the workplace.

The result was a “three tiered competency model made up of eight factors, 20 competencies or dimensions, and 112 competency components, where each was

defined in terms of everyday descriptions, positive and negative behavioural indicators and prediction equations that had been empirically validated", he said.

"This is not a perfect model", he cautioned, "because there are no perfect models out there, but this is a very solid model - it's a very clever way of integrating not just the range of established work competencies on the one hand, and competencies potentials on the other, but also well established psychological constructs and the range of tools that we offer". SHL's validity measures for this model involved 29 studies in 15 countries, and a sample of 4861 participants.

Nick concluded his talk by outlining work on the SHL horizon that included better ways to customise and deliver competency based reporting, and the development of an automated generation of standardised modular instruments for the customisation of applications-specific tools. This would enable users to choose the scales or combination of scales that they wanted to measure in their applications, he said.

More information on this subject can be obtained by visiting the SHL website at <http://www.shl.com/shl/au>

Organisational Psychologists as Entrepreneurs

Gavin Didsbury, introduced his talk with an outline of how his company Coyne Didsbury PDI was formed by a merger between an Australian based human resource consultancy and an international developer of psychological tests. His

talk focused on a number of commercial issues relating to test development and test usage, as well as business opportunities for I-O psychologists.

The success of companies such as Microsoft, Nike and Cadbury-Schweppes was used by Gavin to illustrate the power of intellectual property to create wealth. Organisational psychologists were particularly well positioned to assist business harbour, contain, manage and deploy the intellectual property within people to effectively build wealth, and "there was a very large market out there for these skills", he said.

Gavin also used examples of companies that failed because they did not properly address the intellectual capital, knowledge, skills and people side of the business. He then illustrated the value of identifying the personality and cognitive factors that enable individuals to excel in their occupation using the example of sports management; "the capacity to effectively measure these will make a difference to recruiting organisations", he said, "because selection of sports people is basically a risk management idea, with very heavy financial consequences for making a bad decision".

Gavin then went on to talk about online testing, a burgeoning new area that had not yet been fully conceptualised but one that he believed would open the profession of I-O psychology out to an international market. On the question of whether the emphasis was going to be psychologists utilising IT to extend their profession, or the IT profession

using psychologists, "these are two different and equally legitimate models", he said.

Regarding the later, Gavin gave the example of a Microsoft IT employee in the US who developed a psychological test over the internet in only one and a half months - "when you compare that to the 16PF, CPI and the rich tradition of psychological test development, it challenges your ideas about the internet and its impact on our profession", he said.

On the other hand, Peter Saville built a company, Saville Holdsworth Limited (SHL), on his postgraduate research that made the 16 PF a more relevant instrument to applications in specific work applications. And, in the mid-90's that company bought out a web-based company to accelerate development of its tests. "That's a wonderful story in terms of endeavour, and how far you can go as psychologists", Gavin said.

Another promising area of internet testing, Gavin suggested, was "screening for assessment", which was the development of testing procedures capable of providing hard and fast profiles of individual abilities and competencies. This was a practical alternative to developing a test the standard way, which normally required a huge investment in time and resources to achieve a level of accuracy and detail that many organisational clients simply did not need.

Psych Press had recently developed such a test, known as the Emotional Reasoning Questionnaire (ERQ), that sits on the internet, has an international audience, is in the process of being internationally

normed, as well as scored on an expert consensus group of practicing psychologists, he said.

Readers can visit Coyne Didsbury PDI on the web at:
www.coynedidsburypdi.com.au
 or complete Psych Press's recently published ERQ at:
www.careeringahead.com.au/erq

The Challenge of the Information Society

Margot Costanza from TestGrid introduced her talk by suggesting that "faster, cheaper, better" was the challenge of the information society, and then went on to introduce TestGrid, a company that was established in 1998 as a joint venture between Hubhub and ACER to develop online assessment centre, adding that that TestGrid was a significant distributor of psychological tests rather than a developer of such tests.

Margot suggested that the HR market drove the recent surge in interest in psychometric assessments, and that fifty percent of small providers in the last twelve months had tests electronically enabled for online usage. Two thirds of TestGrids clients were psychologists who applied the tests in a supervised environment, she said, although tests were increasingly taken in an unsupervised, or "self-supervised" environment.

She then went on to talk about their online testing facilities, and some of the ethical and legal issues associated with the use of such tests – "when the rubber hits the road, cheating is what everybody asks me about", she said.

She believed the incidence of identity fraud, collaboration, or the use of aids that were disallowed by the testing procedure, such as dictionaries or encyclopaedias, to be low. Although we would be naïve to suggest that no cheating at all occurred, Testgrid's own investigations, as well as the evidence in general, suggested that it was not a significant problem, she said.

Margot also suggested that the power of the internet could be harnessed to better identify or deter fraud and cheating where it was most likely to occur. One way was to provide a richer number of items in order to reduce the likelihood that anyone repeating the tests received the same set of questions.

So what was TestGrid doing in 2004? Margot outlined a number of projects that they were running this year, including the commissioning of an online *Job Set Suite* that looked at simple screening products to help identify relevant skills in the office labour market, as well as the provision of a self reporting emotional intelligence test online.

For more information readers can find TestGrid online at:
www.coynedidsburypdi.com.au

Panel Discussion: Applying Psychometric Tools

The final part of the PD program involved the presentation of two case studies and a panel discussion on applied issues in the use of psychometric tools. This was convened by **Ian Kendall**, of KendallWant Associates, and included: **Martin Boulton**, Senior Consultant with the OSA group; **Damian Cochet**, Head of Assessment at the ANZ group; **Marion Power**, Senior Consulting Psychologist at ACER, and; **Paul Power**, Associate Director of the Hay Group.

Martin Boulton, an accredited emotional intelligence trainer and expert in assessment and development centres, presented a case study on *Explosive Personalities* which looked at the application of psychometric and assessment methodologies for the selection of Victorian Police Bomb Response Officers. And, Damian Cochet drew from his extensive experience in personnel assessment in the banking industry to speak on the subject of *What Makes Good Assessments*.

Careers fair 2003 review: professional commercial development for organisational psychologists

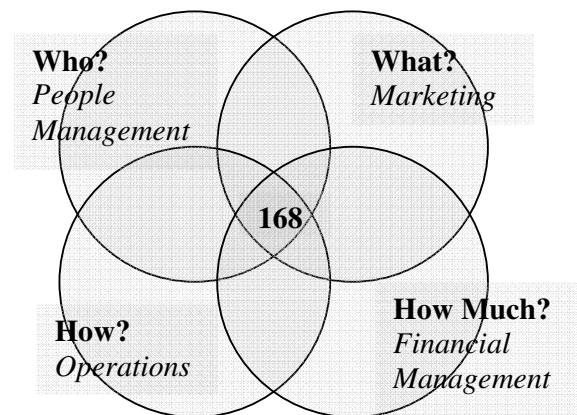
Kirsten Syme

The Annual Victorian COP Career Fair was held in August last year at the Victoria Hotel, Melbourne. The function was attended by organisational psychologists, HR practitioners and postgraduate students contemplating careers in organisational psychology.

As with previous years, information booths were a key component of the COP Careers Fair. Companies in the field of I-O Psychology and HR Consulting provided students with the opportunity to identify their areas of interest, connect their studies to practice and network with colleagues and potential employers. The representing companies and organisations - OSA Group, TMP/Hudson Global Human Resources, Kendall Want Associates, SHL and the Australian Army - highlighted the diverse knowledge and skills I-O Psychologists have to offer.

1. To what extent am I interested? And in what am I interested?
2. To what extent am I interesting? And about what?
3. What do I know? What fascinates me? What value can I add to what I know?
4. What skills do I have and can I demonstrate them?
5. What am I offering? Knowledge, skills?
6. Who will pay me?
7. How will I find someone to pay me (a "customer")?
8. How will the right "customer" find me?
9. What's my sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)? What is *different* not necessarily better than others?
10. How will I know my "customers" are happy with what I do? Am I connecting?
11. What is my attitude towards time and work?
12. What are my ethics?
13. How committed am I towards proper professional practice?
14. How do I handle pressure?
15. How do I handle success?

Setting the scene for effective networking during the second half of the evening, our guest speaker Dr, Denis Kiellerup, CEO of One Plus One International opened the Careers Fair with a presentation on *Professional Commercial Development for Organisational Psychologists*.



Committed to entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity and wealth creation Denis has enabled many individuals and enterprises to make the necessary paradigm shifts to capitalize on their personal and business opportunities. He has held lecturing positions and consults in the areas of management, organisation and enterprise development.

Denis began his talk by presenting a small rock. He then went on to discuss the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Big Brother Winner, Regina Bird. What was the *significance* of such discussion, where was it heading and what was the connection to careers in I-O Psychology?

The rationale behind the discussion, Denis went on to reveal, was to consider the perceived and potential *value* of whatever passes your way. The rock, taken from the site where the Mingary of St Michael's church now resides, while of little value to many, is of value to Denis as a metaphor for a place of 'quiet and peace'. The Sydney Harbour Bridge has value as a commercial venture in the form of the 'Bridge Walk', but only to those who were game enough to see it and then do something about it. And Regina's value? Perhaps it is the value she added to Fish and Chips in Hobart. *They are all of value* – but are you interested in them?

Denis challenged us to consider that a service, item or product's *value* is not always explicit. As Psychologists our ability to be effective and successful in our career requires an interest in searching for the commercial or 'value add' of psychology as a service. It requires analysis of what you as a practitioner of psychology and your services hold of *value* to others. He posed some questions to ask ourselves when considering the Who?, What? How? and How Much? of our business.

In summary, Denis went on to emphasize the importance of psychologists seeing what they do as a commercial business. To be successful, it is not enough to be skilled and knowledgeable in the theory of I-O Psychology but one must analyse the *value* of the services they have to offer. Denis's formula towards business success is:

$$\text{Business} = X \text{ G/S } \$ \rightarrow P$$

(business *equals* the exchange of goods & services for money *leads* to profit)

Success as a Psychologist relies on being able to search for and build 'connections' and maintain a balance between being 'interested' and 'interesting'. Using his code for time and urgency 168 (the number of hours in a week), he encourages those he mentors to always:

TITE	Tune Into The Environment
MOM	Maintain an Open Mind
KSV	Keep Searching for Variables
TBV	Trust But Verify

The COP Chair, Simon-Brown Greaves, thanked Denis for his inspiring and thought provoking presentation and opened the next section of the evening by introducing and welcoming the sponsoring companies and information booth holders.

NSW PD review:

Key Factors in the Selection of Executives

Gina McCredie (NSW COP Chair)

More than fifty people attended the APS's College of Organisational Psychologists presentation held on the 25th of February 2004. What lured them out on a rare cold and wet February evening? Not just the two PD points that the monthly meetings attract, but Dr Bruce Watt and David Tessmann-Keys (DDI International) promise of exploring the key factors involved in the selection of executives.

The speakers shared with the audience their thoughts and experiences on the subtle differences between selection techniques for executives, compared with more junior employees (ie. everyone else in an organisation).

Bruce and David spoke about a wide range of factors that make this selection situation unique, but concentrated our attention on what they call the 'transitional challenges' - the gap between an applicant's past experience and the requirements of the new role.

How this *transitional challenge* is approached by the assessors is one of the key factors; whether consultant or internal assessors are used, the ability to probe into a wider range of issues is even more important when assessing executives.

They made the point that discipline is more, rather than less, necessary with executive selection, so another emphasis is on how the data is collected.

Speaking to a group that included 'some of the best in the business' of recruitment and selection, we heard some of DDI's own language - they take a 'toe to toe' approach to interviewing executives, and heaven help the 'bang-bang questioning' victims! But then, resilience is probably a key competency of most executive roles. They describe their executive interviewing style as unique, provocative, and non-transparent.

The College of Organisational Psychologists (NSW Branch) meet most months at Angel Place, 123 Pitt Street, Sydney with a special guest speaker on a topic of interest to members. The last meeting was on Wednesday 17th March with Fiona Brown of Chandler Macleod who discussed a wide range of issues to do with online assessment. Phone Kylie Harrison on 8267 4924 or kharrison@davtra.com.au for more information on future meetings.

Companies and organisations at the COP (Vic) careers fair 2003



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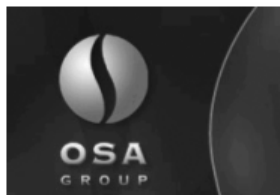
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The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is one of the largest employers of organisational psychologists in this country. However, because military psychology is a microcosm of all psychology disciplines, psychologists in the Australian Army Psychology Corps and the Department of Defence Psychology Organisation develop a broad skills base ranging from training, leadership, human factors, team effectiveness, stress management, personnel selection and classification, clinical counselling services, and research. For further information on ADF psychology contact Robin Whalley on (03)9282 7858.



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Mentoring and networking dinner review: the challenges of staff assessment and selection for a global mining company

Helene Strawbridge

The Victorian COP mentoring dinners aim to provide an interactive forum for discussing a wide range of professional issues in an informal and enjoyable environment. For the last dinner in October of 2003, our speaker was Peter Davidson who presented an informative and entertaining address. Peter is a director of Value Edge with many years experience in the field of selection and recruitment for complex organisations and environments. His presentation focussed on the role of the practising psychologist in meeting the needs of clients in a professional manner.

Peter spoke about and illustrated (with fabulous photos) his current major program, that of staff selection, assessment and development for a global mining company in Indonesia. Peter responded to the initial brief invitation to 'come and speak to our Vice-Presidents' via a 24-hour travel itinerary to a site in Papua at 8,000 metres altitude. Further meetings at other sites at altitudes of 12,000 and 14,000 required a concentration of mind and a determination to build his fitness at the local gym during his time there. Since that first meeting Peter has spent extensive time at the mine, sometimes for four weeks at a time, sometimes for a week a month.

The initial client meeting was a success and Peter quickly proceeded to identify and solve the challenges in the selection program. The first challenge involved the slow turnaround in testing and results (around 21 days), as well as the lack of accurate findings in these results.

Peter was able over time to reduce the turnaround time to two and a half days with the test publishers who had a base in Indonesia, while building local norms for both the Indonesian and local Papuan workforces. Structuring local norms involved the adoption of fairness in both the (translated from English)

language and assessment tasks and also a focus on cultural fairness across the local populations. And, of course, consideration about test performance at those altitudes was also taken into account! Rewriting the tests into the local Bahasa language for Indonesian staff was a subsequent challenge but with the take up of Indonesian psychologists into the team the challenge was met and the translated tests proved effective and reliable.

During the implementation of the new and improved tests and processes, Peter was challenged to ensure that the reasons for testing were relevant for the entire workforce. Talking about the risks of hiring or promoting candidates as predicted by the test results made sense to decision makers. In one case a particularly successful manager was to be promoted but the testing predicted that he would not be successful. Peter recommended that the candidate be put in a strategic role for six months so that his performance in a senior role with no staff could be observed. After that time the Executive Team supported the test findings that the manager would not succeed in more senior roles.

The ability of the psychologist to communicate with his clients

required a respectful yet authoritative approach to achieve the desired outcomes. For Peter, these outcomes comprised the use of selection testing for accurate prediction of how candidates would perform in a complex organisation (over 300 job descriptions) in a very challenging environment.

Peter evoked many questions and observations from the attendees, which resulted in a lively exchange of ideas and solutions. Later many commented positively on the dinner; 'What a fascinating and interesting person Peter is. I could have sat there for quite some time listening to his stories and the challenges he works with. I love hearing about far flung places', one attendee said.

The William Angliss Institute Restaurant dinner began with an appetiser, continued with an excellent choice of three courses from hand made tortellini cases to mouth-watering desserts, including a delicious chocolate tart, and finished with a refreshing fruit taster and pastries to accompany coffee.

More mentoring and networking events for students and other newly qualified psychologists are planned for this year. We look forward to seeing you in 2004.

For information on forthcoming COP mentoring events contact:

Helene Strawbridge
Mentoring Dinner Coordinator
COP (Vic) Committee
Email: hstrawb@au1.ibm.com

Book reviews

Giuliani on leadership

By Chris Platania-Phung

“Those who are careful, fair, and conservative - those of a moderate temperament - are not keen; they lack a certain sort of quick active boldness. The courageous on the other hand are far less just and cautious, but they are excellent at getting things done. A community can never function well ... unless both of these are present and active.” – Plato, The Statesman

Many would consider Rudi Giuliani – the former Republican NY Mayor – as the contemporary version of Plato’s courageous and decisive individual. Before September 11, Giuliani was despised by many for his bullish and rigid style of governing. But could a leader characterised by anything other than Plato’s courageous extreme have lead, so effectively, a city once considered ungovernable? Giuliani puts the remarkable transformation of New York during his two terms as Mayor down to the principles espoused in his best-selling book- *Leadership*. Underlying the entire book is Giuliani’s belief that lack of decisiveness on his part would have equated with continued chaos in New York.

In the preface of *Leadership* Giuliani says that he “tried to run the city like a business”. The book is introduced as his “self-imposed program on how to run an organization”. It is then, with a mixture of autobiography and instruction that Giuliani recounts his time as Associate Attorney General (US Department of Justice), US Attorney (Southern District of New York), and Mayor of New York, as well as his experiences during 9/11.

In many ways Giuliani’s book is typical of the leadership genre, providing principles such as ‘develop and communicate strong beliefs’, followed by anecdotes and illustrations. Drawing on such

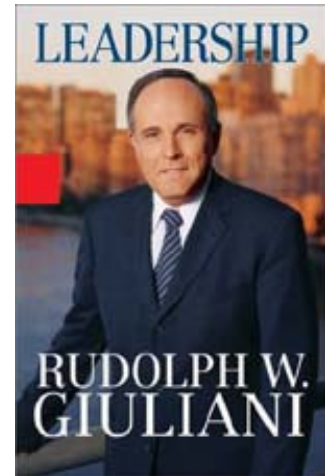
challenges as the excessive bureaucracy in an organisation, unmet child protection needs, or traffic problems in the city, Giuliani describes the range of possible solutions that were considered by his administration, and how the final strategy was carried out.

In terms of instigating change, most notable during Giuliani’s tenure as Mayor was his aggressive move to merge the Transit Police and Housing Police so that they be subsumed under the NYPD. This integration of forces - combined with the implementation of a communication and accountability process called ‘Compstat’ - is Giuliani’s claim to the incredible reduction in overall crime by 57 per cent between 1993 and 2001, including a 75 per cent drop in shootings.

Leadership puts forward various strategies for improving organisational effectiveness, such as ways to balance an organisation’s long-term plans with attention to immediate crises. In particular, the author stresses the effectiveness of daily morning meetings to optimise communication between department heads. Other defining features of *Giulianism* include a focus on accountability, the exhaustive detail he put into preparing and making decisions, and strategies for using media to get a strong message across to the public.

In keeping with Giuliani’s emphasis on accountability, included in the appendices is an outcome-based portfolio of his administration’s achievements, especially successes in crime reduction, but also worthy improvements to the city’s economy and social welfare system.

The principles throughout the book take form in Giuliani’s exemplary response to the events of September 11. It is in these stories that we experience, perhaps, the more authentic side to Giuliani, as well as his rather detailed reflections on his battle with prostate cancer and eventual decision to withdraw



from the senate race against Hilary Clinton. Giuliani also describes his love for learning and debate, and influences on his thinking - including past leaders, such as Winston Churchill.

There are some features to *Leadership* that many Australian readers will not find appealing, particularly his rather exhaustive reference of work colleagues. And, the continual reference to the NY Yankees will be excruciating for readers not interested in American League Football.

Many interpret Giuliani’s heroic and measured response to 9/11 as showing a new side to him - a fresh leadership style - that was basically untapped, while others see it as a complete change in his character towards empathy and warm-heartedness. Giuliani, however, sees his response as the natural outcome of the very same principles he had exercised before that traumatic day, including his prior experience in emergencies and the comprehensive preparation of the city’s emergency services under the Office of Emergency Management. In this way, rather than evoking a change in his leadership style or self make-up, 9/11 simply brought out ‘the best in the man’.

In any case, it is clear that for most people, Giuliani’s value as a leader and role model rose dramatically following September 11. His

attendance to almost 200 wakes, funerals and ceremonies demonstrates Giuliani's great commitment to New Yorkers.

Finally we return to Plato who in *The Statesman* suggests that an effective and healthy community (*vis a vis* organisation) requires diversity, including both the decisive and fair. In *Leadership*, there is a strong sense that Giuliani attempts to conjure both 'types' of individual in himself. Fairness, for Giuliani, was that he insisted that people could approach him directly to have a say on an issue, that he would always be open to new ideas. However, this is at odds with him being generally regarded by many as hard to approach, partly because of his hot-headed temper. Similarly we see a comical contradiction between his reputation as a bully, and his own principle in *Leadership* to 'stand up to bullies' (Moses, 2002). Ultimately Giuliani sees himself as a 'tough gentleman' rather than a bully!

In all, I find *Leadership* is not as engaging for its lessons on the principles of leadership as for its account of the challenges and experiences of governing such a massive city as New York.

Since his term as Mayor, Giuliani has founded a consulting firm (Giuliani Partners), has gone on tours giving talks, and was the subject of a film last year. The more serious matters of where, when and in what capacity he will return to public office, will be a fascinating development to follow in the coming months.

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Anthony Grant's coach yourself

by Maqsood Kruse



"Coaching doesn't really work, it's all about making money out of people!" - this is what some of my colleagues say whenever we talk about what works and what doesn't work in the world of personal development and personal change. Indeed, the market for personal development and change programmes - live seminars, books, audio cassettes and video tapes - reflects a rapid growth in what Starker (1990, 187) calls a "fast food version of psychotherapy"! And despite its growth, it is as, Grant (2001) argues, not without problems.

As someone interested in the field of personal development and change, I wanted to know if there was a coaching approach that could help people reach their personal and professional change goals that was grounded in science. Then I discovered Grant and Greene's inspiring book *Coach Yourself: Make Real Change in Your Life* (2001), an evidence based approach to the practice of coaching.

The book's twelve chapters represent a step by step journey towards the mastery of self-coaching, where the authors seek to empower readers to take the initiative to be in charge of their own life (ie. to be his or her own coach). They begin by discussing the common fear of change, and the how and why of change, a central concept in the practice of coaching.

Topics covered in the book include models of change, the difficulty of change, effective and ineffective techniques for achieving positive change, and the costs and benefits involved in the change process.

The reader is asked - What do you really want? What motivates you to change? In the process of answering these questions, an emphasis is made on constructing solutions rather than deconstructing problems, and providing approaches to "staying on track" towards change. The GROW model is introduced, which is about looking at your Goals, Reality, Options, and Wrap-up. And, in the final chapter, the following principles are given: (1) *make the implicit explicit - examine and question the assumptions we make about our lives and ourselves;* (2) *keep it simple;* (3) *do the least work to make the greatest change;* (4) *focus on solutions not problems;* (5) *don't try to solve the unsolvable; people are functional not dysfunctional;* (6) *people have the abilities to reach tier goals, despite the fact that they may not acknowledge these in themselves.* (Grant and Green, 2001)

While this book is designed to be an easy read, it is firmly grounded in evidence-based coaching - unlike most coaching books, it presents where appropriate, technical demonstrations together with empirical evidence for the techniques and their source. Also, every chapter is followed with tasks that help readers to further develop their understanding of the information presented in a practical and realistic manner.

This is a book for anyone interested in achieving personal development and personal change. But because it represents a valuable evidence based reference to the practice of coaching, it is a book that every "coach" should have.

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