**Reflections from the Field**

# Organizational and executive coaching: Creating a coaching culture in a non-profit

Sheila M. Boysen ✉ (Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois, USA)
Terry Arya (Christian Brothers Services, Romeoville, Illinois, USA)
Lesley Page (Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois, USA)

## Abstract

This paper examines how the field of coaching has grown in organisations and allows them to create a culture based on a coaching approach. The current elements of coaching culture and opportunities for culture enhancement of a specific non-profit organization are examined. Implications for enhancing a coaching culture are also discussed.

## Keywords

Executive coaching, coaching culture, definitions, culture survey, case study

# Introduction

Over the past 10 years, executive coaching has expanded in a variety of sectors to encompass all industries including corporations, government entities, for-profit and non-profit organizations. Studies find that executive coaches are coming from a variety of disciplines with a wide range of techniques and credentials to approach coaching and improve the performance of employees (Orenstien, 2002). Feldman and Lankau (2015) found that the past 10 years saw a rise in coaching as a method of conventional executive and leadership training. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) saw their membership double in 2004 over a two-year period correlating with companies such as IBM and Motorola routinely offering coaching as a component of their executive development resources and programs (Feldman & Lankau, 2015). A growing body of literature has developed on executive coaching from the fields of consulting psychology, management consulting, and training and development. This literature separates executive coaching from other types of assistance relationships by illustrating different types of executive coaching relationships, proposing potential outcomes associated with successful coaching and outlining the steps of coaching interventions.

Fang, Lok, Rhodes, and Yu Yang Hung (2008) state that coaching directly impacts how an organization performs and it should be a strategic objective for the following reasons:

- The role of leaders within organizations is rapidly changing.
- Organizations need to be nimble to survive in today's turbulent business environment.
- Jobs are being constantly restructured to have a wider range of responsibilities.

Coaching within organizations is implemented to achieve the goal of supporting employees to reach high levels of self-efficacy, which in turn support the achievement of the company's strategic objectives. Many coaching initiatives and programs, therefore, are implemented to focus on the professional and developmental needs of leadership. When this occurs, Mello (2015) explains that the initiatives are striving to improve the entire organizations' impact in response to the company's strategies.

## The Difference between Coaching and Other Assistance Interventions

The foundations of the coaching process promote inquiry, challenging thinking patterns, and create alternative ways of thinking, being and acting. Every coaching conversation is based on the client's agenda and requires a partnership of equals while assuming the client is whole and not broken in any way (Boysen, 2018).

Because of the various definitions of coaching, it is important to point out the differences with other, seemingly similar terms. Here is a brief description of these other terms to show that they are, in fact, different from coaching:

### Mentoring

Distinct differences exist between coaching and mentoring. Ting and Scisco (2006) describe a mentor as "someone who has a certain set of knowledge and skills that are passed on to others" (p. 72). The ICF (2020) views mentoring as "guiding another person based upon one's own experience" (para. 3). Often, the mentor is more experienced than their mentee and seen as wiser than the mentee. Elements of advice, guiding, and training are part of most mentoring relationships. Coaching may be used as part of a mentoring engagement, but the role of the mentor extends outside of the coaching process. In the coaching relationship, the coach and the coachee are equals and work together to help the client direct and explore his or her own learning.

### Therapy

Coaching also differs from therapy. For example, Grant (2007) reports that the "key foci in coaching is striving for and attaining goals, along with enhancing one's well-being, whereas in therapy the key foci is on the treatment of psychopathology" (p. 61). Grant points out that only limited empirical research has explored the boundaries between coaching and therapy. When specifically considering executives, one difference between coaching and therapy is that executive coaching tends to be focused on an issue such as job performance and interpersonal skills. It also occurs in the workplace and is intended to improve the executive's performance, (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2010). The settings in which coaching may take place are vast, including in-person meetings with the client's colleagues, observation sessions, and communications via telephone or e-mail. On the other hand, therapy occurs mostly in the counselor's office. Moreover, the length of a coaching session can vary dramatically, whereas a therapy session is often a set amount of time (Kampa- Kokesch & Anderson, 2010).

The confusion between coaching and therapy may be due to the disciplines that both professions draw from a theoretical framework perspective. Examples would be solution-focused theory, cognitive theory and neuro-linguistic programming. In recent years, many clinical therapists have

reinvented themselves as coaching professionals. The distinction between therapy and coaching tends to be the most confusing to the general public. Unlike the history of coaching, the history of therapy spans more than a century. The American Psychological Association (2016) defines psychotherapy as "a partnership between an individual and a professional such as a psychologist who is licensed and trained to help people understand their feelings and assist with changing their behavior" (p. 52).

## Tutoring and Training

Typically, in training or tutoring, the aim is to impart or help someone gain a specific new knowledge or skill set (Kinlaw, 2000). This includes improving specific technical competencies and understanding and becoming knowledgeable in a specific discipline. A central difference between training and coaching is that a trainer defines the learning outcome or the standard to be achieved whereas the process in coaching is negotiated between the coach and client.

## Consulting

Consulting occurs when an organization retains another party for the purpose of accessing specialized expertise to diagnose and, at times, implement solutions. Coaching is different because the client is viewed as being capable of generating his or her own solutions, with the coach acting in a role that prompts self-discovery. The coach views the client with a positive regard, capable of uncovering answers to his or her problems rather than as a person who needs to be fixed (Passmore, 2007). The primary difference between a consultant and a coach is that the main process of a consultant involves giving advice based on expertise and the main process of a coach involves asking based on the coaching process.

## Managing and Supervising

Managing and supervising are two terms that have many meanings and nuances. In the broadest context, a manager or supervisor is someone who oversees work and is very advisory in their role. This is distinctly different from coaching. A coach does not advise and is not responsible for the client's performance or the oversight of their work (Boysen, 2018).

To further define how coaching is different, du Toit (2005) finds that there are key characteristics of coaching for organizations.

1. Coaching is a one-on-one relationship between executive and coach.
2. It is designed to meet the needs of the coachee.
3. It is action oriented.
4. Growth is stimulated in areas of organizational weakness and importance.
5. There is focus on the present and the future.
6. Coaching is given to enhance the coachee's abilities and performance.
7. It is a non-directive form of development.

A simplistic example that most of us can relate to is riding a bike. This example helps to differentiate between coaching and many of these additional professions and interventions designed to help. For example, the counselor would help you discover what is holding you back from riding the bike. They would go back into your past to discover what kind of experience you had at an early age with a bicycle. The consultant would bring you a bicycle manual and tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the workings of a bicycle. The consultant would then depart and return six months later to see how you were doing. The mentor would share their experiences of bike riding and the lessons they learned. The mentor would bestow all the wisdom they had about bicycle riding to you. The coach would help you get on the bicycle and then

encourage, endorse, acknowledge, and support you while running alongside until you felt comfortable enough to do it alone (Boysen, 2018).

## Benefits of Organizational and Executive Coaching

Human Resource Management International Digest (2008) reports a large increase in the confidence levels of employees while Mello (2015) states that coaching is found to be beneficial for the leadership and the organization as a whole. Executive coaching contributes to organizations building and developing skilled employees in the workplace, which is tremendously valuable in our ever-changing workforce. For this reason, investment in coaching usually yields a positive return on investment and leads to more productive and engaged workforce. Organizations stand to have a positive impact from providing executive coaching because it closes critical gaps. For this reason, coaching is not only in the employer's interest but also good for customers, management, and all stakeholders (Weiss, 2005).

Dastmalchian and Ng (2011) reported a study that found after examining 92 Canadian companies, a high number of executives perceived that coaching and training was beneficial for their professional growth. The coaching and training given to employees resulted in increased job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, constant positive performance, and a decrease in business expenses (Jaworski, Karpinski, Ravichandran, & Singh, 2018).

Association has been found between executive coaching and how it engenders commitment, trust, and rapport (Chong & Gan, 2015). Carden and Kovach (2016) identified that the business world is facing new challenges daily and must find new and creative ways to inspire employees to innovate. Encouraging coaching and development initiatives helps open minds to alternative models of implementation and fresh ways of thinking about problems and solutions. Loyalty and commitment will grow in correlation with growth and development (Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski, & Singh, 2018).

Enescu and Popescu (2012) found that coaching can guide change management initiatives and achieve successful large-scale change. To uphold changes in organizations and uphold changes, it is an efficiently used method to inspire organizational leaders to implement and ascertain changes in behavior to the surrounding executives. This encompasses:

- Understanding the coaching concept in the setting of an organization and how it contributes to change. This is important to understand because coaching is a valuable method that respects individuals, their feelings, and how they are perceived. Although the coaching is designed to benefit an employee in their organization and career, it also helps them develop personally.
- Executive coaching and change relate in that executive coaching is a sustainable process in the growth of a company. It is thought of as a relationship between individual and organizational success. This is accomplished by the coach assisting the executive through performance and potential, shaping the employee's own convictions, focusing on the organization and raising awareness and empowerment.
- Coaching inspires intentional change. Intentional change through executive coaching is explained by the important components that encourage the sustainability and desire for growth in the perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of an executive (Enescu and Popescu, 2012).

## What is a Coaching Culture?

A coaching culture exists in an organization when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers and staff develop all their people and engage their stakeholders. The approach involves ways to create increased individual, team and organizational performance and shared

value for all stakeholders. At its roots, a coaching culture is based on the principles of respect, positivity and embeddedness.

### Cornerstones of a Coaching Culture

The cornerstones of coaching are:

- The client is naturally creative, resourceful and whole.
- Coaching addresses the whole person.
- The agenda comes from the client and not from the coach.
- The coach and client are partners and work together as equals based on mutual respect.
- Coaching is about an action that inspires change.

Effective coaching is a transformational process where the coach is the catalyst and the recipient gains awareness around solutions, answers and shifts that will help them achieve goals and reach a state of thriving (Boysen, 2018). We can define a coaching culture in a number of ways. It requires specific behavior and a focused mindset throughout an organization. A coaching culture within an organization also is exemplified through emotional grounding and motivational roots.

**Behaviors.** An engaging coaching style is used in one-to-one and team meetings, as a way of encouraging both problem-solving and continuous team and personal development. There is a focus on the collective endeavor of the team and the organization and its stakeholders (Hawkins, 2012). Some specific behaviors that were identified in engagement survey feedback (Page, Boysen & Arya, 2019) that align with a coaching culture include breaking down silos, exemplary leadership and formal mentoring and development.

**Mindsets.** There is a prevalent belief you get the most out of people, not through telling them what to do, or through advocacy and explanation, but through engaging them with the issues and challenges and helping them think through the choices and options. There is a belief that nobody has all the answers, but through inquiring together, we can arrive at better responses to new challenges than by thinking alone (Hawkins, 2012). Some specific feedback related to mindsets that were identified in engagement survey feedback that align with a coaching culture include asking and listening, valuing opinions, soliciting feedback and less micro-management (Page, Boysen & Arya, 2019).

**Emotional Ground.** The mood of the organization is one of energy, with high levels of personal engagement and responsibility, where every challenge is an opportunity for new learning, and they address problems through engaged relationships. There is high challenge and high support for all employees with a real focus on helping individuals and teams to realize their individual and collective potential (Hawkins, 2012). The appetite for a positive emotional grounding and climate is also noted in the survey feedback about addressing negativity, promoting values and continuing to foster a consistent positive culture (Page, Boysen & Arya, 2019).

**Motivational Roots.** At the center of a coaching culture, there are people who are both committed to their own lifelong learning and development, and who believe in other people and their potential to learn continuously. There is also a belief that collective performance can improve through learning and development. These motivational roots also are fueled by a belief in the power of dialogue and collective exploration. There is a belief that together we can create ways forward better than any of us can do by ourselves (Hawkins, 2012). The engagement survey results solidly highlighted a desire for opportunities for continued growth and development and increased leadership opportunities (Page, Boysen & Arya, 2019).

Coaching is a very powerful tool to use as an organization working toward creating a culture that supports and focuses on respect and empowerment. A coaching approach gives up control over a

conversation and instead empowers others by listening, asking questions, and allowing a degree of freedom for decision-making and demonstrating respect for others, which engenders trust.

## When is Coaching Appropriate?

The Skill vs. Will matrix (Figure 1) is a management tool used to determine what the best management and leadership approach is for a given employee, based on two metrics: their level of skill and their level of will (Landsberg, 2009). The Skill vs. Will method helps to answer two simple yet important questions: How much can that person rely on their skills to complete the task? How much does that person truly want to complete the task?

When a manager is trying to have someone achieve a specific goal, it is crucial to understand where that person stands and what it will take to get the results needed. It is particularly interesting when setting multiple goals for an employee, because their level of skill and will is more than likely to differ from one task to another, and this method will help adapt your management style depending on the task at hand (Landsberg, 2009).

**Figure 1. The Skill Will Matrix adapted from Landsberg (2009).**
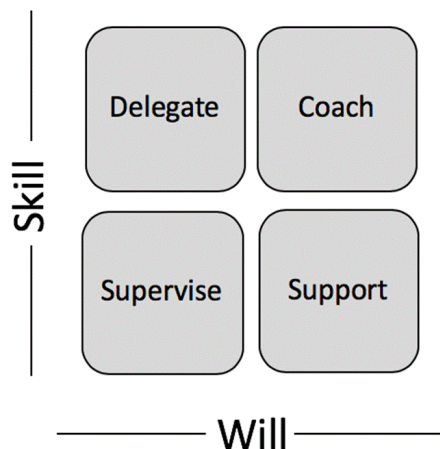


### Supervise and Excite: Low Skill – Low Will

Low skills and low willingness to succeed is a tricky combination. The manager's role is crucial and will consist in both taking charge and inspiring. Supervision implies solid guidelines, control and decision-making. This is time-consuming and should ideally be viewed as only temporary.

### Support: Low Skill – High Will

This situation could, for example, occur with a new hire eager to get off to a good start and make a good impression. The style is mostly aimed at directing and channeling the worker's actions and supporting them in their decisions.

### Delegate: High Skill – High Will

The delegate category can be the easiest to navigate from a management perspective. The manager gives a lot of leeway and responsibilities to his or her employee and gets involved when called upon. It is an opportunity for the employee to develop very autonomously with little support and intervention. For that reason, the manager should still follow closely the evolution of the employee, to set challenging goals and maintain a high level of motivation.

**Coach: High Skill – Low Will**

Coaching is a motivational role where the skills are there, and a manager must now instill confidence and enthusiasm in the employee. The coach approach of supporting the coachee to create and design their own path forward creates buy-in and ownership (Landsberg, 2009).

# Methodology

This paper provides an analysis of one organization's attempt to create a coaching culture. Programs and initiatives at the company are helping to establish a coaching culture based on training, mindfulness about using a coaching style, and continued focus on the benefits of a coaching culture. Specific examples of the company's efforts and qualitative data collected from a culture survey serve as the basis for this analysis. IRB approval was received to conduct an on-site survey and leaders of the organization approved using the company name and information about specific initiatives in this paper.

## About the Company

Founded in 1960 and headquartered in Romeoville, Illinois, Christian Brothers Services (CBS) is a nonprofit, Catholic organization that administers cooperative programs in the areas of health, retirement, property/casualty and technology as well as financial, administrative and Catholic school consulting to church congregations, organizations and dioceses.

The Lasallian family was formed by approximately 4,000 Brothers, who help in running 1,000 education centers in 79 countries with 850,000 students, together with 90,000 teachers and many lay associates. There are La Salle educational institutions in countries ranging from impoverished nations such as Nigeria to post-secondary institutions such as Bethlehem University in Bethlehem, Manhattan College in New York City, and La Salle University in Philadelphia. The central administration of the Brothers operates out of the Generalate in Rome and comprises the Superior General and his councilors.

In terms of its mission, "CBS exemplifies the Lasallian tradition by understanding the needs of their members, protecting the human and financial resources of institutions and guiding member organizations in finding practical solutions to business needs. (https://www.cbservices.org/cbs-history.html, 2020). The term Lasallian stems from Saint John Baptist de La Salle, patron saint of teachers and the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who was known for educating the young, especially the poor (M. Quirk, personal communication, July 24, 2019).
Founded in 1960 by Brother Joel Damian, FSC, Christian Brothers Services began as a mutual cooperative purchasing group for Chicago area high schools conducted by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Under Brother Damian's leadership, the Brothers realized that pooling the financial resources and risk exposures of the schools would allow both the congregation and the individual institutions greater financial strength and leverage to purchase better coverage, with higher limits, at significantly reduced costs; benefits that commercial insurance carriers could not offer nonprofit organizations. Over time, the company has grown to administer and serve seven Trusts, which provide a variety of programs to faith-based organizations in the United States (https://www.cbservices.org/cbs-history.html, 2019). Christian Brothers Services is the administrator for the trust plans: however, each trust is governed by its own board of trustees elected from participating member organizations (https://www.cbservices.org/cbs-history.html, 2020).

# Results

## Survey Results and the Future Evolution of a CBS Coaching Culture

The CBS 2019 work culture survey results highlight many positive elements of a coaching culture such as positive communications and being asked for input rather than being told what to do. The survey findings also reveal opportunities for the organization to continue to grow and enhance its coaching culture. The 24-item survey was issued to employees and allowed participants to rate components of the company's existing work culture, provide feedback about aspects of the work culture and share insights in areas including a coaching approach to leadership. The participants were informed that the survey was confidential. The survey contained both scaled and open-ended questions. The nine qualitative, open-ended questions allowed participants to express their feelings about work culture, onboarding, communications and a coaching culture.

CBS distributed the survey to approximately 250 current employees. Approximately 50 of those employees work remotely with the balance working at the company's headquarters. The participants represent all employment levels, including top management. The survey response rate was 43%, with 108 of 250 employees responding. The survey findings showcased the underpinnings of a coaching culture including most employees: feeling they have open communication with their manager (88%), contributing to work decisions (88%), feeling their manager listens to their viewpoint (98%) and feeling they are asked for their thoughts and ideas (88%). When leadership analyzed the qualitative responses to the survey, several themes emerged to help further cultivate a strong and positive coaching culture at CBS. The open-ended responses were read, analyzed and coded by topic. The frequency of each topic was calculated and those with the greatest frequency are reported.

Many of the suggestions summarized in the survey responses indicate an opportunity to formalize a coaching culture. These suggestions were in the form of comments about how managers can assist with career goals such as, "inviting a little 'stretch' into doing new things," "having conversations about what I like and do not like and where those interests can take me," and "further coaching and training on how to develop my skills." Much of the qualitative feedback relates to communication and opportunities for personal and professional development, again supporting the value of a coaching style. Examples of this feedback include, "multiple media sources (communication channels) have been developed to provide information on all topics at all levels," and "I feel as a whole, the company is good at communicating."

This feedback reflects the overarching theme of value and benefit in a companywide coaching style. Specifically, the comments support the desire for robust communications, including mindful feedback allowing for employees to help identify solutions focusing on opportunities to help employees and one's team grow, and supporting employees so they learn new skills and become greater assets to the company, thus creating a more engaged and energized workforce. These characteristics align directly with the qualities associated with a coaching culture and would extend to organizations worldwide.

## Employees Feel They Can Do Their Best Work

Table 1 features the responses broken down between the headquarter office and the remote offices. The Difference column uses the headquarter office as the baseline to show the percentage difference between the remote offices and headquarter office responses. In this figure, employees were asked to what extent they are in a position to do their best at work in relation to the overall work environment. Roughly two-thirds of all respondents feel they are able to do their best at work to a large extent. Headquarter employees, by percentage, have a slightly higher number of

employees that feel they are able to do their best at work to a large extent as compared to remote employees.

## Employees Feel They Have Open Communication with their Manager

Table 2 features the responses broken down between the headquarter office and the remote offices. The Difference column uses the headquarter office as the baseline to show the percentage difference between the remote offices and headquarter office responses. In this figure, employees were asked to what extent they feel they have open communication with their managers. A large majority of employees at both the headquarter and remote offices feel they have open communication with managers to a large extent (78% and 74%, respectively). Headquarter employees, by percentage, again have a slightly higher percentage of employees that feel they have open communication.

**Table 1. Categorized responses about the extent employees feel they are able to do their best work from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

| | HQ Office | | Remote Office | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent do you feel you are able to do your best at work? | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | Difference |
| To no extent | 1 | 1.60% | 0 | 0.00% | 1.60% |
| To some extent | 19 | 32.20% | 12 | 37.50% | -5.30% |
| To a large extent | 39 | 66.10% | 20 | 62.50% | 3.60% |
| Total | 59 | 100% | 32 | 100% | |

**Table 2. Categorized responses about the extent employees feel they have open communication with their manager from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

| | HQ Office | | Remote Office | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent do you feel you have open communication with your manager? | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | Difference |
| To no extent | 2 | 3.30% | 1 | 3.20% | 0.10% |
| To some extent | 12 | 20.00% | 7 | 22.50% | -2.50% |
| To a large extent | 47 | 78.30% | 23 | 74.10% | 4.20% |
| Total | 60 | 100% | 31 | 100% | |

## Employees Feel Managers Listen to their Viewpoint

Table 3 features the responses broken down between the headquarter office and the remote offices. The Difference column uses the headquarter office as the baseline to show the percentage difference between the remote offices and headquarter office responses. In this figure, employees were asked to what extent they feel their manager listens to their viewpoints. Percentages between headquarter and remote offices were nearly the same across the board for this question. A large majority of employees at both the headquarter and remote offices feel their managers listen to their viewpoints (63% for both populations).

**Table 3. Categorized responses about the extent employees feel their manager listens to their viewpoint from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

| | HQ Office | | Remote Office | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent do you feel your manager listens to your viewpoint? | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | Difference |
| To no extent | 2 | 3.30% | 1 | 3.10% | 0.20% |
| To some extent | 21 | 35.50% | 11 | 34.30% | 1.20% |
| To a large extent | 37 | 62.70% | 20 | 62.50% | 0.20% |
| Total | 59 | 100% | 32 | 100% | |

## Employees Feel they Contribute to Work Decisions

Table 4 features the responses broken down between the headquarter office and the remote offices. The Difference column uses the headquarter office as the baseline to show the percentage difference between the remote offices and headquarter office responses. In this figure, employees were asked to what extent they feel they can contribute to work decisions. In this instance, 53% of remote employees reported an ability to contribute to work decisions to a large extent whereas 45% of HQ employees responded the same. Overall, 91% of remote employees feel they contribute to at least some extent, while headquarter employees are at 88%.

**Table 4. Categorized responses about the extent employees feel they can contribute to work decisions from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

| To what extent can you contribute to work decisions? | HQ Office | | Remote Office | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | # Response(s) | Response Ratio | Difference |
| To no extent | 7 | 11.60% | 4 | 12.50% | -0.90% |
| To some extent | 26 | 43.30% | 12 | 37.50% | 5.80% |
| To a large extent | 27 | 45.00% | 17 | 53.10% | -8.10% |
| Total | 60 | 100% | 32 | 100% | |

## Employees Can Provide Input

Table 5 features the responses broken down between the headquarter office and the remote offices. The Difference column uses the headquarter office as the baseline to show the percentage difference between the remote offices and headquarter office responses. In this figure, employees were asked for thoughts and ideas for task completion. For this question, the remote response rate was a greater percentage for both those responding "to some extent" and those responding "to a large extent." Just over half of headquarter employees feel they are involved in task completion autonomy "to a large extent," and nearly 60% of remote employees responded as such. Company leadership notes that the autonomous nature of the remote office employees contributes to both Tables 4 and 5 having higher percentages than the headquarter office.

**Table 5. Categorized responses about the extent employees feel their manager asks for their thoughts and ideas rather than being told how they feel they should complete tasks from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

| To what extent does your manager ask for your thoughts and ideas instead of telling you how they feel tasks should be accomplished? | HQ Office | | Remote Office | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Response(s) | Response Ratio | Number of Response(s) | Response Ratio | Difference |
| To no extent | 7 | 11.60% | 2 | 6.20% | 5.40% |
| To some extent | 22 | 36.60% | 12 | 37.50% | -0.90% |
| To a large extent | 31 | 51.60% | 19 | 59.30% | -7.70% |
| Total | 60 | 100% | 32 | 100% | |

## Open-Ended Comment Summary and Qualitative Results

The survey featured nine open-ended questions. First, "What aspects of your new-hire onboarding were most helpful for you to do your job (see Figure 1). Training and mentorship were the top two themes mentioned in responses. Both concepts of training and mentorship are in keeping with a coaching culture. Continuous training is at the core of an effective work culture to maintain skills and accuracy. Mentorship often goes hand-in-hand with coaching, as mentors often lead by example in developing coaching skills with their mentees.

Second, "What additional information would you have found helpful when starting with CBS?" The two themes most often mentioned in responses were company information and information about

the divisions within the company (see Figure 2). Both themes connect with a coaching culture since information sharing is a cornerstone of a coaching culture.

**Figure 1. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about what aspects of the on-boarding process were most helpful from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey**
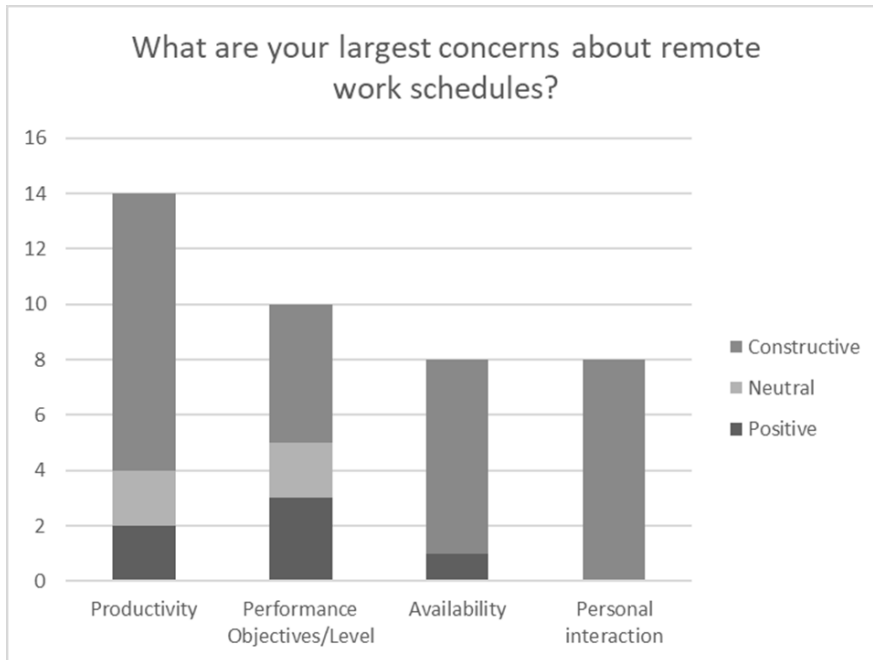


**Figure 2. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about what additional information would employees have found helpful when starting on the job from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**
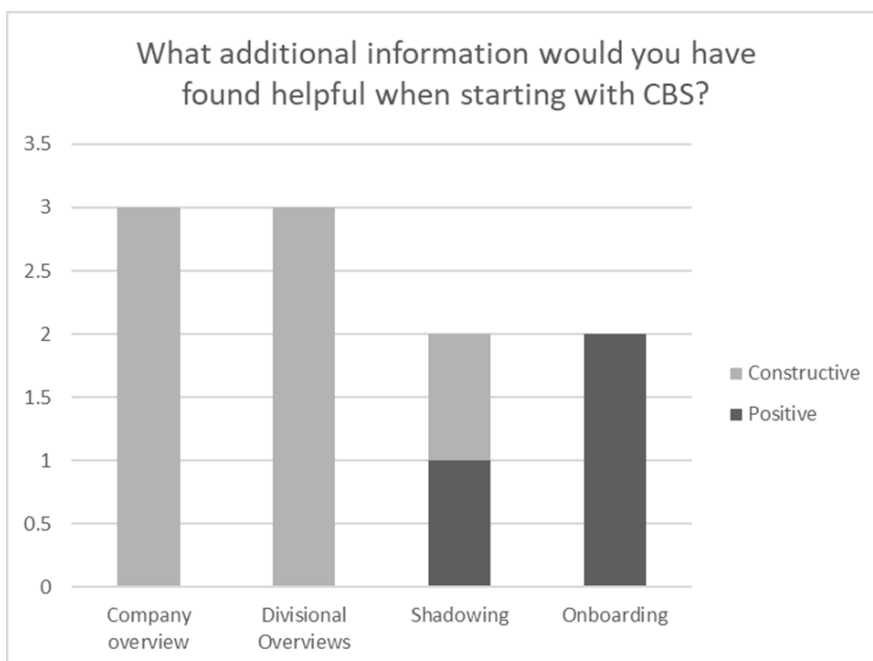
Third, "What are your largest concerns about remote work schedules?" The theme most often mentioned in the responses was productivity (see Figure 3). A coaching culture is a work setting in which employees are coached to perform their best. Concerns about productivity can be effectively addressed within a company that has a coaching culture.

**Figure 3. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about concerns with working remotely from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**



**Figure 4. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about the benefits of working remotely on the employee's division from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**
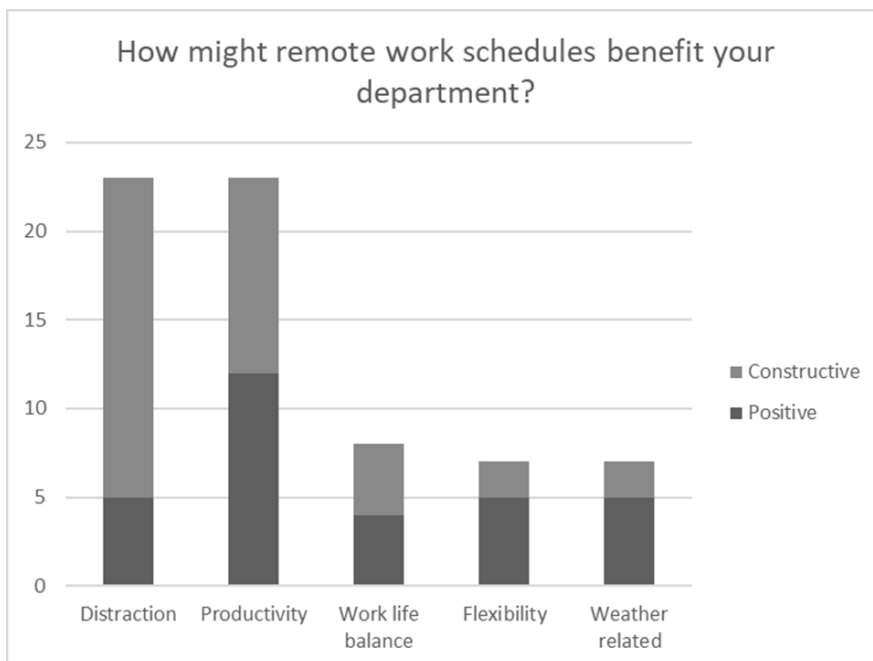
Fourth, "How might remote work schedules benefit your department?" The themes most often mentioned in responses include productivity, distractions and flexibility (see Figure 4). Employees believe work outcomes could be greater with an enhanced remote work schedule because productivity could increase as workplace distractions are eliminated and more flexibility would better allow for job demands to be met. A coaching culture is designed to generate maximum work outcomes which is reinforced by the responses in the question.

Fifth, "In what ways do you feel the company does a good job with communications?" The theme most often mentioned was the employee newsletter titled The Weekly Bulletin (see Figure 5). Communications is a primary characteristic in a coaching culture. The survey responses supporting the value of the employee communications vehicle aligns with what it takes to operate an effective coaching culture.
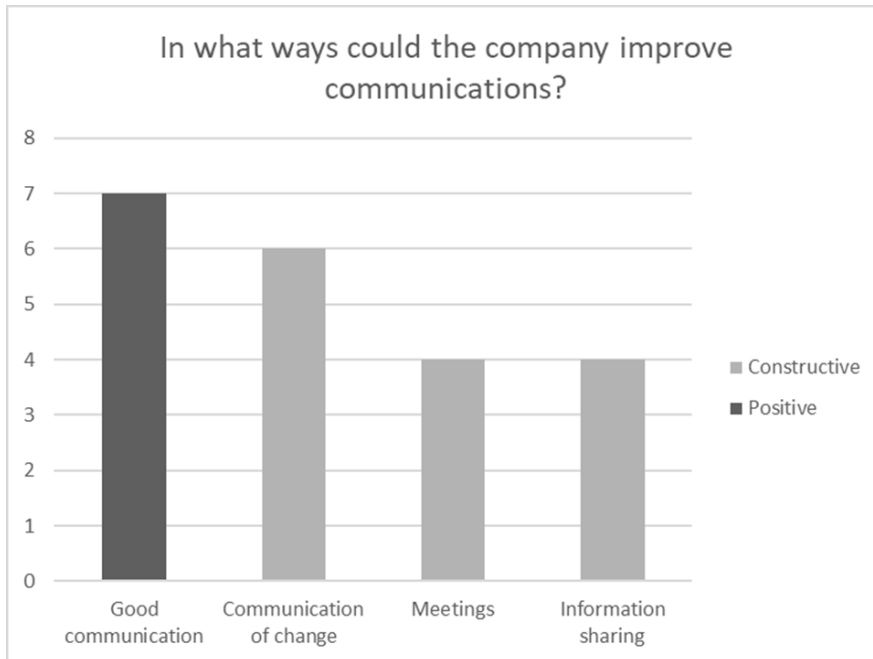
**Figure 5. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about ways the company does well with communications from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**
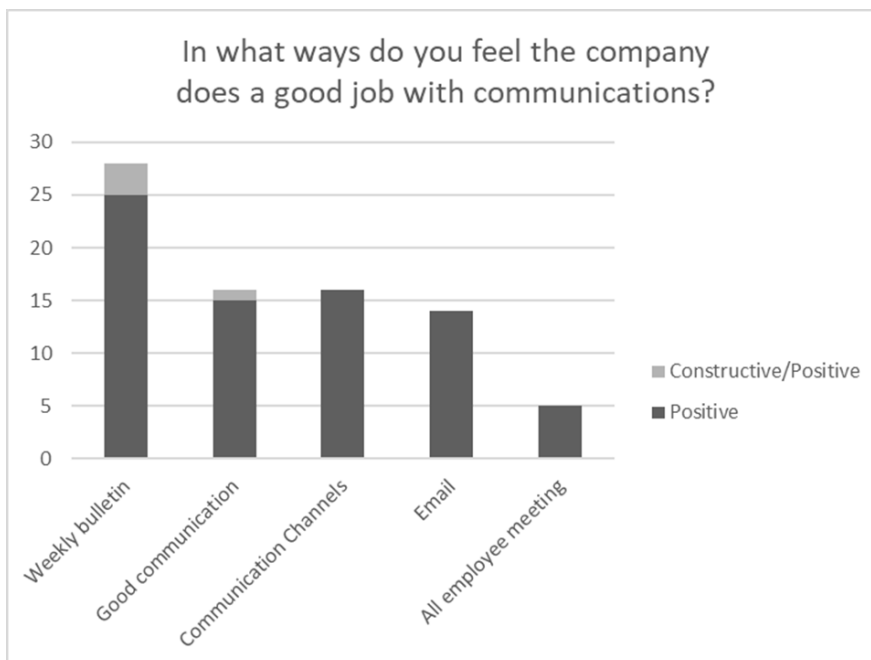


Sixth, "In what ways could the company improve communications?" The theme most often mentioned in the remarks was good communication (see Figure 6). The survey responses are representative of a coaching culture since communication is a fundamental element within a coaching culture.

Seventh, "What check points or requirements should be included as part of the approval to work remotely?" The themes most often mentioned were performance and productivity (see Figure 7). Employees acknowledge that measurements are needed to gauge the success of remote workers. This awareness in an important underpinning in a coaching culture. For a coaching culture to thrive, employees must demonstrate a willingness to do their part, including having their work assessed.

**Figure 6. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in a question about how the company can improve communications from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**
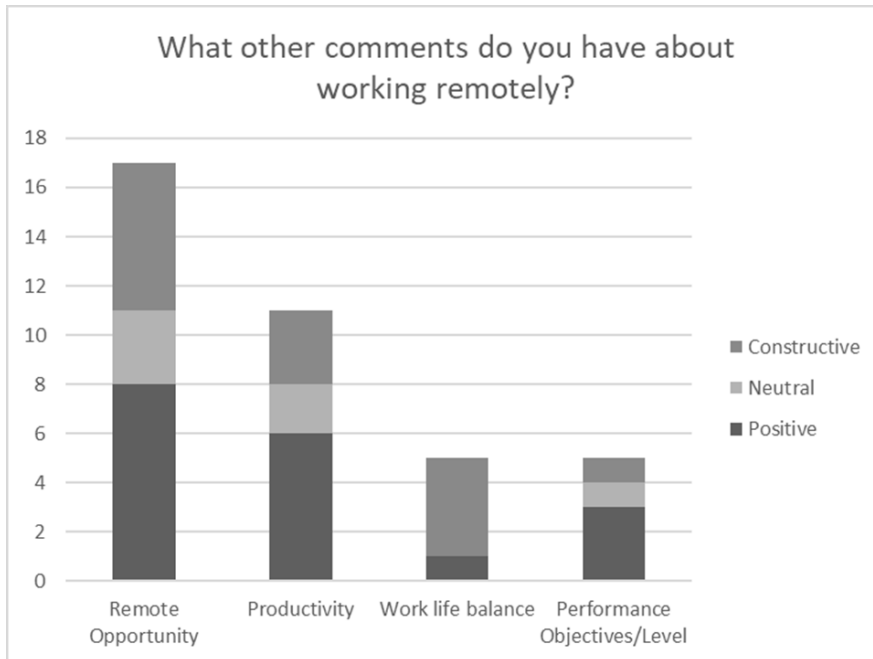


**Figure 7. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about what requirement should be part of working remotely from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**
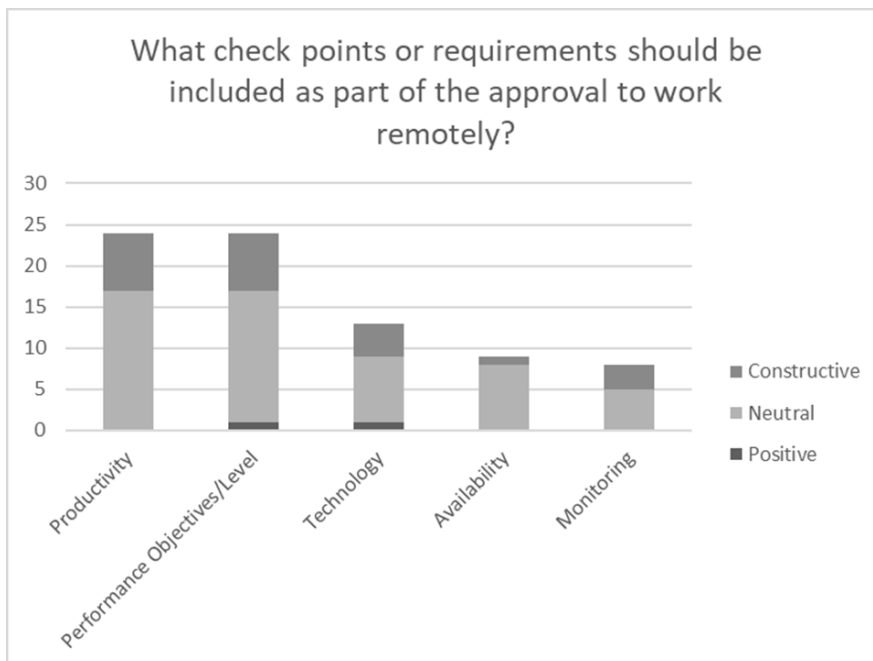


Eighth, "What other comments do you have about working remotely?" The theme most often mentioned was the opportunity to work remotely (see Figure 8). Employees' interest in working remotely plays an interesting part in a coaching culture. With effective coaching, working from anywhere can be effective.

**Figure 8. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question asking for other comments from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**



The ninth and final question was, "How can your manager assist you with your career goals?" The themes most often mentioned were advancement opportunities and performance objectives (see Figure 9). Seeking advancement is part of a coaching culture because coaches work in the spirit of helping their coaches excel. The expressed value of having performance objectives also aligns well with the goal-orientation of a coaching culture.

**Figure 9. Categorized sample of the themes surfaced in the question about how managers can help with career goals from the 2019 Christian Brothers Services' culture survey.**

# Discussion and Conclusion

Results from the culture survey highlight the foundational aspects of a coaching culture in place at Christian Brothers Services. The culture, in alignment with the description of a coaching culture, fosters employees feeling they can do their best work. Additionally, related to positive communication practices, employees feel listened to, like their input is valued and understand their role in supporting the organization. Coaching and mentoring are crucial to the effective leader-employee relations which help to build trust, support and partnership. Findings align with Landsberg's (2009) notion of the Skill-Will Matrix as leaders can coach both skill and will development. This is especially important for remote employees who may need additional clarity and frequency of communication on the job in order to feel most connected with the organization and its values.

## Implications and Best Practices

The initiatives at CBS point to global best practices for building and sustaining a coaching culture. A coaching culture is achieved when developmental conversation is taking place at all levels of an organization and when an organization prioritizes active listening and supporting individuals to realize their full potential. Organizations looking to evolve to a coaching leadership style can integrate the following practices:

- Stop-shift-coach. Most everyone agrees with coaching principles and buys into this leadership style. Be ready for the challenge of putting a coaching style into practice. This requires stopping upon giving feedback and shifting into a coaching mindset rather than automatically falling back on old habits such as telling someone what to do, then, applying the coaching style of leadership.
- Better integrate coaching into a leader's resources toolbox. Equip managers with the necessary resources to maintain and grow into a coaching style. Provide opportunities to practice coaching, provide materials highlighting what coaching language sounds like, offer coaching continuing education, and spotlight coaching success stories.
- Help managers know when to coach versus mentor. Coaching is not always the best leadership practice. Sometimes mentoring may be more appropriate. For example, mentoring is generally more effective when developing an employee's career or preparing for future roles. Continually provide reminders and examples of when to using a coaching leadership style and when to consider alternative performance management techniques, such as mentoring.
- Focus on agility in the workplace. It requires nimble leadership to support a coaching culture. Managers need to be able to pivot into coaching mode and know when coaching may not be the best performance management tool. Agility requires taking the extra time to see the big picture, which is developing a coaching style for maximum results. Agility also entails avoiding pitfalls, including falling into old patterns. Being self-aware is key. For example, a manager with a stress trigger that leads to slipping back on former comfortable leadership behaviors can draw upon positivity and mindfulness in demanding times to help build and maintain a coaching style.

## Future Directions

The creation of a coaching culture within an organization requires the recognition of the importance of coaching in its key strategy and mission. Coaching must become a key competency and capability for all leaders and managers as well as employees at all levels of the organization. Future research can expand on the tools and processes that can promote a coaching culture that is embedded at all levels of the organization.

In its nearly 60-year history, CBS has created a culture driven by its core values, which contribute to a positive work culture. These lessons learned can be applied to other organizations as well. Future research can expand on approaches that result in overall creation and enhancement of a coaching culture.

# References

Armstrong, M. B., & Landers, R. N. (2018). Gamification of employee training and development. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 22(2), 162-169. DOI: 10.1111/ijtd.12124.

American Psychological Association. (2016). *How to find Help Through Psychotherapy*. Available at: http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/.

Baron, L., Morin, L., & Morin, D. (2011). Executive coaching. *Journal of Management Development*, 30(9), 847-864. DOI: 10.1108/02621711111164330.

Boysen, S. (2018) *Introduction to Professional and Executive Coaching*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Campone, F. (2015). Executive coaching practices in the adult workplace. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2015(148), 59-67. DOI: 10.1002/ace.20152.

du Toit, A. (2005). A guide to executive coaching: Advice to managers and their organizations. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 19(2). DOI: 10.1108/14777280510580672.

Fernandez, S., & Moldogaziev, T. (2013). Employee empowerment, employee attitudes, and performance: Testing a causal model. *Public Administration Review*, 73(3), 490-506. DOI: 10.1111/puar.12049.

Grant, A. M. (2007). A languishing-flourishing model of goal striving and mental health for coaching populations. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 2(3), 250–264.

Hardy, L. (1990). *The fabric of this world: inquiries into calling career choice and the design of human work*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Hawkins, P. (2012). *Creating a Coaching Culture*. Boston, MA: Open University Press.

International Coach Federation. (2020). *How is coaching distinct from other service professions?*. Available at: http://www.coachfederation.org/ICF/For+coaching+Clients/What+is+a+Coach/FAQs/.

Jaworski, C., Ravichandran, S., Karpinski, A. C., & Singh, S. (2018). The effects of training satisfaction, employee benefits, and incentives on part-time employees' commitment. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 74, 1-12. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.02.011.

Kampa-Kokesch, S., & Anderson, M. Z. (2010). Executive coaching: A comprehensive review of literature. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 53(4), 205–228.

Kinlaw, D. C. (2000). Encourage superior performance from people and teams through coaching. *Women in Business*, 52(1), 38–41.

Kombarakaran, F. A., Yang, J. A., Baker, M. N., & Fernandes, P. B. (2008). Executive coaching: It works! *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(1), 78-90. DOI: 10.1037/1065-9293.60.1.78.

Landsberg, M. (2009). *The Tao Of Coaching: Boost Your Effectiveness At Work By Inspiring And Developing Those Around You*. London, UK: Profile Books.

Ng, I., & Dastmalchian, A. (2011). Perceived training benefits and training bundles: A Canadian study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(4), 829-842. DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2011.555126.

Page, L., Boysen, S., & Arya, T. (2019). Creating a culture that thrives. *Organization Development Review*, 51(1), 28-35.

Pak, A., Carden, L. L., & Kovach, J. V. (2016). Integration of project management, human resource development, and business teams: A partnership, planning model for organizational training and development initiatives. *Human Resource Development International*, 19(3), 245-260. DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2016.1141606.

Passmore, J. (2007). An integrative model for executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59(1), 68–78. DOI: 10.1037/1065-9293.59.1.68.

Rhodes, J., Lok, P., Yu-Yuan Hung, R., & Fang, S. (2008). An integrative model of organizational learning and social capital on effective knowledge transfer and perceived organizational performance. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 20(4), 245-258. DOI: 10.1108/13665620810871105.

Soumehsaraei, M. G., & Gilaninia, S. (2016). The effects of marketing trainings on employees' empowerment and efficiency by applicability of learning in real organizational environment: A case study of branches of melli bank in guilan province. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Oman Chapter)*, 5(7), 35. Available at: https://www.arabianjbmr.com/pdfs/OM_VOL_5_(7)/4.pdf.

Ting, S., & Scisco, P. (2006). *The CCL handbook of coaching: A guide for the leader coach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Van Vianen, E. M, Dalhoeven, A. G. W, & Pater, I. E. d. (2011). Aging and training and development willingness: Employee and supervisor mindsets. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32(2), 226-247. DOI: 10.1002/job.685.

Underhill, B. O., McAnally, K., & Koriath, J. J. (2007). *Executive coaching for results: The definitive guide to developing organizational leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Whitbread gets the right blend for training: E-learning combined with classroom teaching benefits company and employees. (2008). *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 16(7), 18-20. DOI: 10.1108/09670730810911350.

Whitmore, J. (2010). The evolution of coaching: an Interview with Sir John Whitmore. *Coaching. An International Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice*. 1(1), 11–15. DOI: 10.1080/17521880801945196.

# About the authors

**Dr Sheila Boysen** is a Master Certified executive leadership coach, professor, TEDx speaker, and author specializing in leadership development and coaching. Sheila brings extensive senior HR experience to her coaching, training, and teaching having served as a human resources leader in organizations that spanned a diverse industries in both public and private sectors of industry.

**Terry Arya** has approximately 30 years of award-winning experience in the fields of leadership, entrepreneurship, marketing, communications, business development and fundraising. Terry is currently the chief marketing and business development officer for Christian Brothers Services.

**Dr. Lesley Page** is currently a Professor of Organizational Leadership at Lewis University. In addition to having a passion for education, Lesley has more than 25 years of field experience focused on employee and customer satisfaction measures, and leadership development.