WABC White Papers—Best Fit Business Coaching Series

Team Coaching: Why, Where, When & How

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CONTENTS

SITUATION:

Organizations worldwide have relied for years on team-based personnel structures to better solve complex issues and complete complex projects/tasks and achieve specific outcomes within and across organizations and business units.

Organizations, business leaders and personnel must learn to work effectively in today's fast paced, highly volatile, complex and globalized business environment. Rapidly changing collaborative technologies, the shift from routine work to non-routine knowledge economies, the need to consider multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches, along with the need for more nimble and adaptive business structures, have changed how we do business, our working environments and the way we work. In response, organizations worldwide have relied for years on team-based work structures to better solve complex issues and complete projects/tasks and achieve specific outcomes within and across organizations and business units.

This white paper uses a comprehensive and considered literature review to explore the concept of team coaching as it relates to supporting organizational teamwork in today's complex and volatile business environment. The goals of this paper are to provide organizational leaders and business-coaching practitioners with an evidence-based guide to how and why team (business) coaching is important and to show how this model of practice can be used to support organizational team-oriented problem solving, complex-project/task completion and better achievement of organizational goals and outcomes.

PROBLEM:

Business organizations and business units often fail to realize the full potential of their teams because they apply outdated business management concepts and practices to evolving collective leadership processes and multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary issues.

Traditional business practices and problem solving, whether at the individual, work group or team level, is often hampered by personal, disciplinary and/or organizational culture boundaries that inhibit us from looking beyond our confines for new or better solutions. Many of the business issues we face today involve *wicked problems* that defy traditional solutions and can only be ameliorated or solved by collaborating with people who bring a diverse set of knowledge, skills and perspectives to the issue. Thus, we can no longer always rely on the wisdom of the people within one organization, let alone one discipline, to solve some of our more complex business issues.

Additionally, our traditional views of what teams are, what they need to operate and what supports them are no longer fit for purpose when considered against current business realities. Without knowing what the key drivers or essential and enabling elements for team successes are or how and when to apply them, business leaders will continue to make costly mistakes in terms of time, money, effort and the achievement of organizational goals and outcomes.

SOLUTION:

Research evidence has shown that successful teamwork within our complex and volatile global organizational environments depends on proper team design and structure, team launch and ongoing team coaching by qualified and competent team coaches—at the right points in time.

Academics and practitioners within fields such as, but not limited to, business, business coaching and organizational development have examined the successes and failures of teams within the business context for many years and have identified (1) team design and structure, (2) team launch and (3) ongoing team coaching as being the key drivers for improved team performance. Providing the foundation for this improved team performance are three essential and three enabling conditions respectively:

- Creating a "real" team
- Having a compelling purpose
- Ensuring that the right people are on the team
- Providing a solid team structure
- Creating a supportive context
- Providing team coaching at the right points in time

Lastly, *qualified* **and** *competent* team coaches have been shown to positively influence the success of team-based personnel systems and processes, and therefore play key roles within each of the business-team design, structure and support elements. Within this business context, the team coach has a dual focus: one that focuses on individual team members and allows them to discover how their personal characteristics, behaviors and perspectives impact the team and business processes;

and one that focuses on the larger objectives and successes of the organization. It is this dual focus and discovery process that differentiates business coaching from other types of coaching. Thus, private and public organizations wishing to achieve successful team-based outcomes must consider incorporating qualified and competent team business coaches into all of their team-oriented work structures and processes.

RESULT:

***Qualified* and *competent* team coaches positively influence the success of team-based personnel systems and processes, and therefore play keys roles in supporting team-based personnel structures.**

Chapter 1:
SITUATION

> Many of the business issues that we face today...can no longer be solved by a single field of endeavor, let alone a single business leader, manager or employee.

We live and work in an increasingly dynamic, complex and interrelated world. Constantly changing economics, politics, laws, regulations and technologies, and the shift from traditional (routine) work to non-routine knowledge economies have created problems within business and society that are so complicated they are often referred to as "wicked problems" (Rittel & Webber, 1973) due to their persistence and resistance to conventional thinking, strategies, policies or solutions. Therefore, many of the business issues that we face today within our globalized environment can no longer be solved by a single field of endeavor, let alone a single business leader, manager or employee (Gibbs, 2015). It is for these reasons that business organizations have been forced to adapt by changing their organizational structures, processes and strategies. This has included the increased use of *team-based* personnel structures (Belbin, 2012; Hawkins, 2014; Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005). Organizations have chosen to adopt these structures to improve organizational flexibility and competiveness (Kozlowski & Bell, 2001), to improve individual and organizational learning (Holbeche, 2012) and to access the broader and deeper knowledge base and unique perspectives that multi- or trans-disciplinary teams can afford (Collins & Fillery-Travis, 2015).

It is within this environment that the "team coach" plays a pivotal role not only in supporting and guiding team members through innumerable structure, process and strategy pitfalls but also in aiding with the targeting and achievement of organizational goals and outcomes (Wildman & Griffith, 2014). However, before the concept of team coaching can be more fully explored, opportunities for improvement identified and recommendations for action made, we must first provide some additional insight into the larger context in which organizations and their employees work and some of the problems they face today.
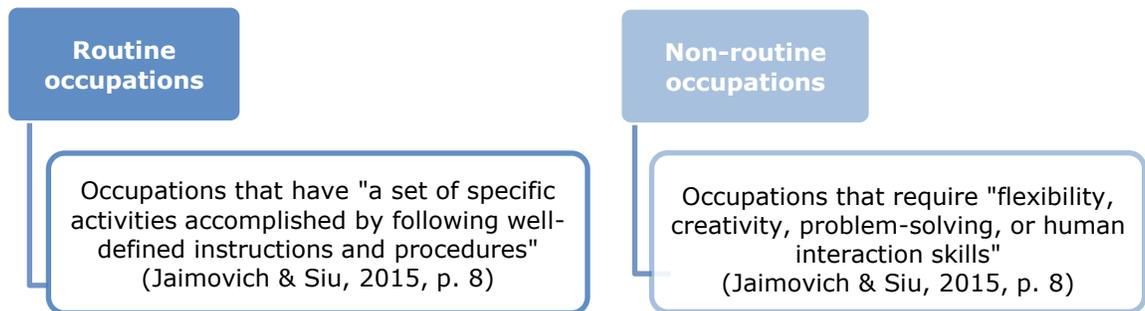
Global Shifts

The term "globalization" conjures up different meanings for different people. Whether praised or vilified, globalization is often viewed or discussed in terms of the global economy, capitalism or the diffusion of technology, but it may also be viewed in terms of politics or multinational companies. For the purposes of this paper, we view globalization as the increased flow of and access to capital, goods and services, and more importantly, the diffusion of information, knowledge, skills and expertise (Freeman, 2013), along with greater worker mobility—physical and/or virtual. While it is often said that changes in technology have been the primary cause of globalization, we choose to view many of our recent technological advances as being merely facilitators of change, while fully acknowledging the interplay of "technology, knowledge and mobility" (Wilson, Kellerman, &Corey, 2013, p. 67) and the increasingly networked aspect of people, power, cultures, economies, organizations and institutions globally (Castells, 2011). Simply put, we are all now bound by a global digital, economic and social fabric that has woven people, organizations, products, services and issues together—for better and for worse.

In combination, these digital, economic and social factors have had a significant impact on our global occupational and working landscapes. So much so that a worldwide shift from routine to non-routine types of jobs has occurred (Aedo, Hentschel, Luque, & Moreno, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2015). Not that long ago, employers and employees worked within an employment system where the employment or occupational roles, functions, hours, location and working conditions were quite stable if not predictable; in other words, routine. This is no longer the case for much of the global workforce. We now see a workforce that is moving quickly towards non-routine knowledge-based occupations and roles, which allow for much greater flexibility in terms of occupational roles, functions, hours, locations and working conditions. Concise definitions of routine and non-routine occupations, as provided by Jaimovich and Siu (2015), are found in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1
Routine Versus Non-Routine Occupations

Routine occupations	Non-routine occupations
Occupations that have "a set of specific activities accomplished by following well-defined instructions and procedures" (Jaimovich & Siu, 2015, p. 8)	Occupations that require "flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, or human interaction skills" (Jaimovich & Siu, 2015, p. 8)

Examples of routine occupations include office workers, retail sales people and factory workers, whereas examples of non-routine occupations include computer programmers, business leaders, financial analysts, home health-care workers and police officers. These latter occupations involve tasks that are more often than not abstract in nature, require increased levels of personal and professional discretion along with situational, interpersonal and environmental adaptability. These skills are critically important since many of the problems we face today transcend traditional geographical, occupational and/or disciplinary boundaries and cannot be solved by traditional thinking, processes or organizational structures.

This shift from routine to non-routine working occupations, along with advancements in technology, has also made a significant impact on how employers and employees structure their work and how they conduct business on a day-to-day basis. On the plus side, this shift towards high- and low-skill non-routine occupations and working environments has allowed for greater flexibility and adaptability in structure and process for both organizations and employees. Organizations can create personnel structures and processes that are nimble and meet the immediate contextual needs within a global economy while personnel, as employees or as individual contractors, can pick and choose employment opportunities, roles, hours and locations to suit their personal, professional and/or family needs.

The shadow side of this flexibility is that individual employees and leaders, particularly star employees and leaders who are moved quite often, are often plagued with a number of technical, professional and organizational issues that are difficult to remedy

without additional support, guidance or assistance. Examples of issues faced by employees and business leaders alike include:

- *Unfamiliar business policies, practices and processes*
- *Shifting employment positions, roles and locations*
- *Conflicting business philosophies, perspectives and options*
- *Changing or unfamiliar business cultures*
- *Information overload*
- *Issue/problem-solving inertia*

Considering the pace and complexity of change within the current business landscape, how can we possibly expect an individual business leader or manager to have all the answers to the myriad situations and questions they face on a day-to-day basis? Though we as individual leaders, managers and employees may be talented, we often do not have the requisite depth and breadth of knowledge and skills to problem solve, complete complex projects or tasks, or achieve the desired organizational outcomes on our own when compared with **team-based** personnel structures (Salas, Cooke, & Rosen, 2008; Tjosvold, West, & Smith, 2003; Wageman, 2013). As well, our knowledge of what may have worked in the past may no longer be relevant or even appropriate within the current business and organizational contexts (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rousseau, 2012).

It is for these reasons that team-based management, problem-solving and collective leadership structures have been increasingly integrated into business practices worldwide (Decuyper, Dochy, & Van den Bossche, 2010; Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Donsbach, & Alliger, 2014).

Teams, Teamwork & Teaming

In business, as volatility and complexity have increased, so has the need for bringing people together to solve complex problems and enhance innovation in a very competitive global arena (Hawkins, 2014; Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2008; Wildman et al., 2012). When people are brought together within the public or private sector, they can perform a wide variety of functions and roles including those in work groups or teams. This latter statement makes us ask an obvious question: Work group or team, aren't they the same thing? The answer to this question has been complicated by the fact that the terms "group" and "team" have been and continue to be used interchangeably within both the common and academic literature. The *primary* differentiator between a group and a team is the level of interdependence, which is defined as

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"the extent to which team members cooperate and work interactively to complete tasks" (Stewart & Barrick, 2000, p. 137). The following two diagrams, Figures 2 and 3, illustrate some of the salient differences between work groups and teams.

FIGURE 2
Group Diagram
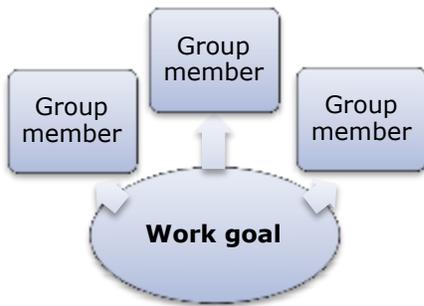
- Any number of members
- Designated leader
- Individual and/or minimal mutual accountability
- Meetings for the purpose of sharing information
- Members working primarily independently
- Individual goals and work products

FIGURE 3
Team Diagram
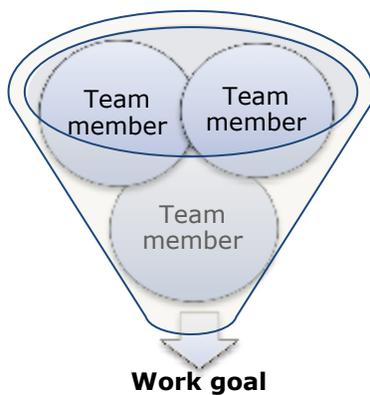
- Smaller number of members (3 to 12)
- Shared leadership
- Individual and collective accountability
- Meetings for the purpose of sharing information, discussion and problem solving
- Members working independently and interdependently
- Individual and collective goals and work products

Private and public sector organizations bring personnel together to form a broad number of different team types to deal with specific areas of need or context. Organizations have chosen to adopt team-based personnel structures because of the constant need for improving organizational flexibility and competitiveness (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2005), enhancing individual employee and organizational learning (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011) and accessing the broader and deeper knowledge base and unique perspectives that multi- and trans-disciplinary teams afford (Collins & Fillery-Travis, 2015).

With respect to context, we see myriad situations in which teams are employed within both the private and public sectors. Examples include:

- Leadership teams, in which an individual has "personal responsibility for leading some part of a system but who is also interdependent for the purpose of providing overall leadership to a larger enterprise" (Wageman, 2013, p. 122)
- Executive teams, in which individual success "is much more linked—not just in outcomes but often in compensation—to the overall success of the business, not just the executive's area of responsibility" (Meisinger, 2013, p. 183)
- Virtual teams, which consist of individuals whose work is "geographically dispersed and that engages them across time, location and organizational boundaries" (Cohen & Alonso, 2013, p. 240)

Additional examples include management teams, task forces, project teams and transition teams.

As knowledge specialization has increased, so has the dispersion of knowledge— both in the organizational and the geographic sense.

As just noted, organizations develop relatively stable teams of people to collaboratively deal with specific areas of need and context. However, what happens when you need to bring people together "on the fly...coordinating and collaborating without the benefit of stable team structures" (Edmondson, 2012, p. 13)? Many fields of endeavor have moved beyond traditional bounded and static forms of teams and now rely on a diverse team of specialists who are brought together for brief periods of time to deal with complicated, interdependent and time-sensitive issues (Edmonson, 2013). Examples of this "teaming" action may be found in occupational fields that involve patient care, product development or environmental catastrophes. At the core of this teaming process is the recognition that "as knowledge specialization has increased, so has the dispersion of

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knowledge —both in the organizational and the geographic sense" (Ancona & Bresman, 2007, p. 52). Knowledge that is critical to solving very complicated and interdependent human and organizational issues is no longer always at our fingertips; it is often just out of reach and requires greater personal recognition that we cannot solve our larger or more complicated issues via an individual or mono-disciplinary approach. Thus, high-performing teams and collaboration will play even greater roles in the success of our human and organizational endeavors in the future.

Recent research on teams within the organizational context highlights the fact that organizational teams are not only dynamic, adaptive, emergent and dependent (Ilgen et al., 2005), but are also embedded in a multi-level system that consists of "individual, team and organizational-level aspects" (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, p. 80). Therefore, this supposedly simple act of bringing people together for the purpose of solving complex problems and completing tasks or projects within organizations is far more complex than most people think and presents a number of opportunities and challenges. These team-based personnel structures provide opportunities for the development and sharing of mental models, team learning, and increased creativity and innovation but challenge business leaders and organizations to question how best to compose, lead, develop and support these teams.

Thus, the issues of team composition, leadership, development and support are of critical importance to the topic of team coaching since all these decisions are inextricably linked to the larger issue and goal of team performance.

Employees today face personal and professional challenges that were never imagined by the working generations of the past.

Outdated Concepts & Practices

Current research on team-based practice, within the context of organizations, suggests that our fundamental understanding of the nature of teams, the environments in which they operate and the supports required for effective team-based practice needs to be updated and adapted to fit our new current realities (Carr & Peters, 2012; Hawkins, 2014; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cohen, 2012). Our traditional concept of business teams that have relatively stable memberships, where members tend to belong to a single team at a time in one location, with well-defined roles and tasks and a shared common goal has changed. Additionally, many business leaders and organizations still subscribe to worldview and management perspectives where policies, practices and processes are geared towards the individual employee. Employees are hired as individuals, trained as individuals, supported as individuals and rewarded as individuals (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). In contrast to this individual-centric perspective, workers within our global economy are increasingly asked to work within highly fluid, heterogeneous, interdependent, trans-disciplinary, geographically dispersed and technology-supported team environments. Teams are formed, reformed and disbanded as quickly as the needs of the organization or organizational unit change (e.g. teaming).

It is for these reasons that business leaders and organizations must recognize that employees today face personal and professional challenges that were never imagined by the working generations of the past. While this issue of using outdated concepts and practices has been presented largely as a broad leadership and organizational issue, it is equally applicable to business coaches, organizational development specialists and mentors who work

with or for business organizations. To fully illustrate this point Hawkins and Smith (2013) make the following comment:

> *The leadership development industry (in which we include executive coaching, team coaching, mentoring and organizational development consulting) is not developing itself fast enough to keep pace with the changing needs and demands of our time. (p. 4)*

The era of stable, consistent and predictable roles, functions, tasks and competencies within business has faded quickly before this faster, more technologically advanced, interconnected and inclusive global economy. Adding to the challenges noted above, those individuals who are asked to join teams today must also face the challenge of leadership—their own leadership within a collective leadership and team environment.

Over-reliance on Individual Forms of Leadership

Organizations must now recognize that a generalized leadership role that focuses on "the identification of a general set of [leadership] behaviors that are broadly applicable across a wide variety of situations, tasks and teams" (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, p. 109) is not always the most effective form of leadership within today's dynamic and complex business environment. Specifically, organizations must move from a *singular leader development* model to a *collective leadership development* model that is much more holistic in scope and design (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Thus, the charismatic and heroic leader of the past has had to move aside to accommodate the complex and dynamic mix of formal, informal, distributed, emergent and collective leadership styles where members "serve multiple collective functions or roles" (Contractor, DeChurch, Carson, Carter, & Keegan, 2012, p. 995) within mono-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and/or trans-disciplinary team environments.

How do *individual* team members, who have worked within this single leadership style or mono-disciplinary system for most of their careers adapt to these new teams and *collective* forms of knowledge sharing and leadership? Do they know how to find their voice in this new team environment? Do they receive the

> Organizations must move from a singular "leader development" model to a "collective leadership development" model.

types of support that will help them achieve the organization's goals? These are very important issues that must be considered and addressed within our new team-based global work environment. A whole new set of processes, structures and skills are required to support these constantly changing collective knowledge and leadership roles and functions.

Lack of Collective Processes and Structures

We have already noted that many organizations and leaders continue to rely on a style of leadership that favors the individual in practice, process and structure. Though understandable, this over-identification with and reliance on individual-centric processes, structures, skills and knowledge within a highly dynamic collective leadership environment is problematic. Unlike traditional forms of leadership, distributed or collective forms of leadership "offer a systematic perspective on leadership" (Bolden, 2011, p. 257). By *systematic*, we mean that business leaders must understand and consider the larger collective context in which the team works and resides and how the actions of individual team members and the team as a whole *affect* and *are impacted by* the organizational systems. Specifically, business leaders must consider how best to mobilize the team within a dynamic system of interrelationships, interdependencies and networks well beyond the individual process and structure level. These interrelationships and interdependencies include those within the organization (e.g., other business leaders, other business units) *and* outside the organization (e.g., stakeholders, regulators, other disciplines, community). Process, structure and skill questions that are often forgotten include:

- *How many people should be on the team?*
- *Who needs to be on the team (re: skills, knowledge, expertise, perspective)?*
- *Do we need to look outside our own discipline for answers (re: multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary approach)?*
- *How do we know if everyone is committed to what we want to achieve?*
- *What role does each team member play?*
- *Are we focusing on the right thing(s)?*
- *How do we ensure that each team member has a voice throughout the process?*

> Business leaders must understand and consider the larger collective context in which the team works and resides and how the actions of individual team members and the team as a whole **affect and are impacted by** the organizational systems.

- *What types of supports are needed and when should they be offered?*
- *How do we measure our success?*

While these larger organizational and team processes and structures are critical to the success of the team and the achievement of organizational goals and outcomes, organizations often fail to address the collaboration and interdependency skills and knowledge that individual team members require.

Lack of Collective Skills and Knowledge

When individuals first move into a team environment they must shift their individual needs, wants and goals to a collective "we" that involves working within and through multiple relationships while influencing others (e.g., peers, laterally, upward and/or downward) in the achievement of team and organizational goals (Bolden, 2011; Contractor et al., 2012; Pearce & Conger, 2002). Additionally, shared leadership involves empowering and developing individual team members not only to trust themselves but also to rely on patterns of reciprocal influence (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007) and the leadership capabilities of their teammates (Katz & Kahn, 1978). We must remember that we are all bounded by conscious and unconscious personal, professional and organizational levels of willingness and ability to adapt, innovate, collaborate and change. As a consequence, there is always the danger that either the individual and/or the organization will fail to see the need for change, fail to see that change is already happening, fail to make the appropriate investments in change, or fail to make an active decision that would break the status quo (Boje, Burnes, & Hassard, 2012). These personal, professional and/or organizational shortcomings represent significant barriers to organizational or team success.

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within a single discipline" (Collins & Fillery-Travis, 2015, p. 44), many of the issues that organizations face today require multi-disciplinary or even trans-disciplinary approaches. By *multi-disciplinary* we mean that organizations need to look at issues and solutions from multiple perspectives (i.e., multiple disciplines) where "each member is to contribute a professional perspective on the issue" (Stock & Burton, 2011) while maintaining discipline boundaries but contributing to the larger solution. Trans-disciplinary approaches, however, are often reserved for the most complex of issues since:

- the factors involved cannot be easily described, predicted or understood (Page, 2015)
- the factors impacting the problems/issues are non-linear and are highly interconnected (Collins & Fillery-Travis, 2015)
- the problems/issues cannot be easily broken down into discrete disciplinary pieces of work
- each discipline must give up "sovereignty over knowledge, the generation of new insight and knowledge by collaboration, and the capacity to consider the know-
- how of professionals and laypeople" (Harris, Brown, & Russell, 2010, p. 19)

The problem, however, with any or all of these approaches is that while organizations continue to bring people together to solve complex issues, tasks and projects, they often fail to recognize that each team is also unique and each will require different levels of intervention and support, depending on the complexity of the issues being examined and the tasks that need to be accomplished. Leading teams or being a team member within contemporary business environments presents new and evolving challenges as teams learn to build trust across these ever-diminishing organizational, disciplinary and cultural boundaries (Wildman & Griffith, 2014).

> Organizations... often fail to recognize that each team is unique and requires different levels of intervention and support depending on the complexity of the issues being examined and the tasks that need to be accomplished.

> The "team coaching" intervention focuses both on internal and external pieces of the team process (re: task, process, stakeholder, organization and system) and requires a high level of training, competency and skill on the part of the team coach.

Team Facilitation versus Team Coaching

An example of how organizations can create problems for themselves is that they often have a limited repertoire of team interventions and supporting skills. For instance,

while team "facilitation" is a useful team support intervention, it is but one of a number of possible interventions that organizations and business leaders can employ. Peters and Carr (2013a), having adapted the work of Hawkins (2011), describe these team interventions and supports as following along a continuum that begins with traditional internally focused team facilitation interventions (re: process) on the low end of the complexity scale to the "more current, complex and multidimensional systems of team coaching" (p. 2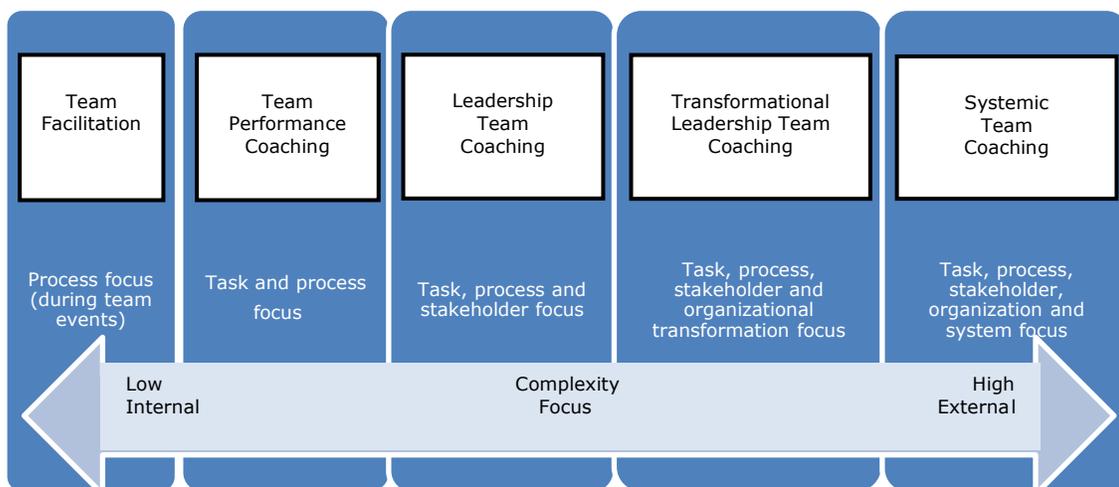6) on the high end of the complexity scale. This latter "team coaching" intervention focuses on both internal and external pieces of the team process (re: task, process, stakeholder, organization and system) and requires a high level of training, competency and skill on the part of the team coach who works with the team.

FIGURE 4
Continuum of Team Interventions

Team Facilitation	Team Performance Coaching	Leadership Team Coaching	Transformational Leadership Team Coaching	Systemic Team Coaching
Process focus (during team events)	Task and process focus	Task, process and stakeholder focus	Task, process, stakeholder and organizational transformation focus	Task, process, stakeholder, organization and system focus

Low
Internal

Complexity
Focus

High
External

Working within a team-based work environment within one's own organization and culture can sometimes be difficult enough, let alone introducing additional organizational policies, practices, structures, processes, cultures and values. How does a business leader or team member who has been trained and worked primarily as an independent worker effectively transition to a team-based function where the working environment is laden

with ample opportunities to breach new policies, practices, structures and processes, let alone offending another organization's culture or values? When was the last time you and/or your peers were trained, mentored or guided in how to work effectively within a team generally or a globalized business team specifically?

Lack of Compelling Purpose

Lastly, it has long been recognized that without a sufficiently compelling reason to make a change, businesses, their leaders and employees prefer to maintain the status quo—consciously or unconsciously (Fullan, 2014; Senge, 1999). Unless the need for change is significant, it is always easier for individuals to rely on tried and true practices—even if they don't work. In other words, individuals want to take the path of least resistance—a path that does not disrupt or challenge current individual or organizational beliefs, practices or theoretical underpinnings. It is within this environment of personal and organizational homeostasis that people with the right skills and knowledge are needed.

Team coaches provide the foundation for the proper design and development of team context, conditions and processes.

Team Coaching

Of all the enablers that foster effective team-based work within a business environment, research has shown us that creating the proper context, conditions and processes are critical to team success. Specifically, creating the proper context, conditions and processes "set the climate for how teamwork is perceived, for how it is reinforced and for how it is valued" (Salas & Rosen, 2013, p. 370). This statement is supported by the fact that many teams fail to achieve the goals or outcomes they were commissioned to complete due to lack of proper team charter, processes and/or team composition (Belbin, 2011; Brown, Hyer, & Ettenson, 2013; Edmondson, 2011; Salas, Tannenbaum, Cohen, & Latham, 2013). Therefore, the overall goal of the organization and their business leaders is to:

> …*create structural and organizational conditions that increase the likelihood that a group will naturally operate in ways that foster the achievement of group purposes, the viability of the group as a social system and the learning of individual members.* (Hackman, 2012, p. 438)

While many organizations, leaders and consultants believe that team-building exercises and focusing on interpersonal relationships is important to the development of business teams and team performance, research has shown that this is not the case (Clutterbuck, 2011; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Hawkins, 2014). As Hawkins has suggested, *team coaching* is the key to sustained team performance:

> …*team-bonding and team-building exercises do not deliver sustainable and lasting improvement to team performance, but a sustained team coaching approach, whether delivered from within the team by the team leader or by an external coach, can create sustained performance improvement.* (2014, p. 4)

Unlike individual coaching, which focuses on the needs and goals of the individual client via a one-on-one dialogue between a coach and client (i.e., the coachee) team coaching focuses on the team as a whole where "collective performance is the goal" (Peters & Carr, 2013b, p. 117).

Team coaches provide the foundation for the proper design and development of team context, conditions and processes since the role they play, by definition, is to directly interact with the team for the purpose of helping team members make "coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work" (Hackman & Wageman, 2005, p. 269). Thus, a team coach's role is not only to provide guidance and support during the team design, team launch and ongoing team coaching phases of the project but to help team members and the team to competently manage themselves as they change and grow (Hawkins, 2011; Wageman, 2001). It is for this very reason that team coaching plays an important role in a variety of changing business team scenarios that include, but are not limited to:

- *When a new team is being created and needs to hit the ground running*
- *When an existing group of leaders needs to evolve into a team*
- *When an existing team is not performing as well as it could*
- *When a team wants to reinvent itself to meet challenges in its environment*
- *When the team acquires a new leader or changes membership significantly*
- *When a team is currently highly effective and successful and wants to keep ahead of the game* (Clutterbuck, 2013, p. 20)

How important is this team-coaching guidance and support to each of the team design, team launch and ongoing team coaching processes and team performance? Recent research has suggested that the condition-setting pre-work (team design and structure) accounts for 60% of team performance, initial team launch accounts for 30% of team performance and the work that the team leader/coach does after team launch accounts for 10% of team performance (Hackman, 2012). Of primary importance is that team coaching is provided at the *right times,* in the *right circumstances,* and by a *competent team coach* (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). The team coach modifier "competent" has been added by researchers over the last decade for very specific reasons. As David Clutterbuck has noted, coaching business teams is not a simple process and one that requires additional skills:

Of primary importance is that team coaching is provided at the right times, in the right circumstances and by a **competent team coach**.

Team coaches need to have a good understanding not just of coaching basics, but of team dynamics and team psychology, of collective decision making, of systems theory and a variety of other topics not needed in one-to-one coaching. (2013, p. 21)

Often there are circumstances where business team leaders who are not competently trained in team coaching take on team leadership roles that are beyond their skill level or become difficult due to the blurring of roles within a collective leadership process. This point is highlighted by the following statement and recommendation: "Providing coaching and being a participant in the discussion at the same time is often too hard—consider an external coach" (Wageman, Nunes, Burruss, & Hackman, 2008, p. 28).

A high performance team-coaching model was recently proposed by Carr and Peters (2013) after they conducted a robust analysis of their own research findings and the relevant team-coaching literature. Specifically, Carr and Peters found consistencies within the dominant themes that allowed them to propose "a new, six stage High Performance Team Coaching Model that can be used by leaders and team coaches alike" (2013, p. 90) thus building upon and extending the research and findings of individuals such as David Clutterbuck, Amy Edmondson, Richard Hackman, Peter Hawkins and Ruth Wageman. This evidence-based team-coaching model includes components that are clearly aligned with the currently known drivers for improved team performance, the most effective timing of team coaching interventions and the three essential and three enabling conditions for team coaching as outlined below.

The three key drivers for improved team performance (Hackman, 2012)
1. *Team design and structure*
2. *Team launch*
3. *Ongoing team coaching*

The most effective timing of team-coaching interventions (Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Peters & Carr, 2013b; Wageman, Fisher, & Hackman, 2009)
1. *Beginnings (motivation)*
2. *Midpoints (consultation)*
3. *Ends (reflection/learning)*

The three essential and three enabling conditions for team coaching (Wageman et al., 2008)

Essential conditions	*Enabling conditions*
1. *Real team*	1. *Solid structure*
2. *Compelling purpose*	2. *Supportive context*
3. *The right people*	3. *Expert/competent team coaching*

Carr and Peters' (2013) high performance team-coaching model has been provided for reference (Figure 5) since it succinctly consolidates our current knowledge of team-coaching success factors and highlights the three team-coaching stages (team beginning, midpoint and end) and the three overarching team-coaching functions (define and initiate, review and realign, and reassess and integrate).

FIGURE 5
High Performance Team-Coaching Model

From "The experience of team coaching: A dual case study," by C. Carr and J. Peters, 2013, International Coaching Psychology Review, 8(1), p.91. Copyright 2013 by International Coaching Review. Reprinted with permission.

We will now explore why each of these stages and coaching functions are important to team success within today's business environment.

Team Beginnings:
Define & Initiate

Unlike the formal team structures and processes found within the military or airline cockpit crews, most business teams do not have team structures or onboarding processes in place when they are first brought together (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Therefore, team coaching at the beginning of the team cycle is critical since this is the time to ensure that the team has an organizational "value-added" purpose; that the objectives of the team are clear; that the right people with the right attitudes, skills and roles are on the team; and that sufficient and appropriate structures and processes are in place to support the team's purpose (West, 2012).

The team-coaching function at this team beginnings stage is motivational in nature and its primary purpose is to enhance team effort and shared commitment by minimizing process losses (e.g., social loafing, the undermining of team efforts or functioning) and maximizing process gains (e.g., ensuring that individual talent is appropriately tapped, innovative problem solving and the team environment are supported) (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Associated with this beginning team cycle is team launch, which we have already identified as accounting for approximately 30% of successful team development and successful outcomes. Why is the team launch so critical? It is at the team launch phase that:

- *Team members become oriented with each other and the task(s) at hand*
- *Boundaries are established between team members and non-members*
- *Individual and collective roles are established*
- *Team norms are articulated* (Wageman et al., 2009, p. 195)

Additionally, it is within this beginning stage that the team goals, team charter and working agreements are put into place (Fillery-Travis, 2015). Once the work is underway, there will always be a need to ensure that the team is on track, review progress against goals and realign where necessary.

Team Mid-Point:
Review & Realign

As Hackman and Wageman (2005; Wageman et al., 2009) have suggested teams, are most amenable to reviewing, reflecting upon and being coached on work strategies somewhere near the mid-point of the team cycle. The reason for this is that teams usually have a natural transition point where they are reorganizing themselves at a major turning point in their team development (Gersick, 1989; Woolley, 1998). It is within this mid-point time period that team members have had some time working together and have experienced first hand what has and has not worked as they work towards their goals. This team mid-point thus becomes an appropriate time for a team coach to provide strategy-focused coaching to both individual team members and the team as a whole. These strategy-focused coaching interventions are needed to reduce process losses such as "patterns of interaction that invite social loafing, the use of inappropriate performance strategies and/or under-utilization of member talent" (Hackman & Wageman, 2004, p. 41). Further, team coaching at this point serves to "realign" resources and efforts in the service of reaching the team goals and outcomes and foster better innovation (V. Rousseau, Aubé, & Tremblay, 2013). Once the team has had time to adjust and complete its goals, it is time for the team members to reflect upon their successes and failures.

Team End Point:
Reassess & Integrate

There are important lessons to be learned at the individual, team and organizational level when the team project has been concluded. Having a competent team coach who can facilitate that learning is of great value to not only the team members but the organization as well. What did we do right? What did we miss or do wrong? Could we have done something even better? These are all important questions that can help guide individual and group learning. Just as important, these questions help to support the future achievement of strategic goals and outcomes and remind us not to make the same mistakes in the future. To illustrate the importance of team coaching at the final phase of the team cycle we provide the following:

We found very few teams that were able to decode their successes and failures and learn from them without intervention from a leader or another team coach. (Wageman et al., 2008, p. 161)

As Eduardo Salas and his colleagues have suggested "Learning is a process; knowledge is an outcome" (Salas, Fiore, & Letsky, 2013, p. 20). Within this team environment the change in knowledge *capability* may start with each individual team member but that knowledge is fashioned, shaped and strengthened by each team member's interaction with other team members over the entire team cycle, even at the end of the project.

It is at the team cycle endpoint that team coaches can also help team members reassess the teamwork process from beginning to end and help facilitate and integrate what has been learned by working with team members and key stakeholders and examining the achievement of outcomes.

Chapter 4: CONCLUSION

...leaders wishing to take full advantage of their team-based structures…must consider employing an internal or external team coach—at the right times, in the right circumstances and only when the coach is both *competent* **and** *qualified*.

This white paper has provided organizational leaders and business coaching practitioners with an evidence-based guide as to why, where, when and how team coaching is critical to contemporary business practices within our highly volatile and complex global business environment. More importantly, we have provided a solution to a number of issues that organizations face when implementing team-based personnel structures today—the proper application of team coaching.

In **Chapter 1** we provided an overview of the context in which organizations currently operate. Specifically, we identified that business complexity and volatility have become our new baseline due to (1) globalization, (2) the shift from routine to non-routine work and (3) the changing nature of teams and teamwork. Within **Chapter 2** we outlined some of the common conceptual, structural and procedural problems that organization leaders face in relation to our new global business and service environment. Included in these problems were the application of outdated business concepts and practices; an over-reliance on individual forms of leadership; the lack of collective leadership processes and structures; team leaders and members lacking specific collective team-based skills, knowledge or supports; the use of less complex team facilitation interventions when more complex *team coaching* is required; and the lack of a compelling purpose when change is needed. **Chapter 3** tied the previous two chapters together by providing an evidence-based "How" solution to the primary problems associated with the implementation of team-based personnel structures within today's complex and volatile business context. The solution comes in the form of *competent* **and** *qualified* internal or external team coaches and team coaching. We showed how team coaches have assisted organizations by effectively guiding and supporting the three essential (creation of a real team, creation of a compelling purpose and having the right people on the team) and the three

enabling conditions (solid team structure, supportive team context and competent team-focused coaching) for successful team-based personnel structures.

Chapter 4 concludes by reinforcing the messages that organizations and their leaders are struggling to effectively implement business teams within a global business environment that is constantly changing and that organizational leaders and their employees face personal and professional challenges that were never imagined by past working generations. While evidence-based research has shown that team coaching can help ameliorate some of the issues that organizations face while implementing team-based problem solving and complex project work structures, research has also identified three critical success factors to team coaching. Team coaching must be implemented:

1. At the right times
2. In the right circumstances
3. By a **competent team coach**

The right times for team coaching include the beginning (motivation), middle (consultation) and endpoint (learning) of the team project cycle. The right timing also includes a variety of organizational scenarios where teams are vulnerable, ineffective or wish to elevate their game:

1. When a new team is being created and needs to hit the ground running
2. When an existing group of leaders needs to evolve into a team
3. When an existing team is not performing as well as it could
4. When a team wants to reinvent itself to meet challenges in its environment
5. When the team acquires a new leader or changes membership significantly
6. When a team is currently highly effective and successful and wants to keep ahead of the game *(Clutterbuck, 2013, p. 20)*

Wageman et al. (2008) remind us that the right circumstances include ensuring that three team coaching essential and three enabling conditions are present:

Essential conditions	*Enabling conditions*
1. Real team	*1. Solid structure*
2. Compelling purpose	*2. Supportive context*
3. The right people	*3. Expert/competent team coaching*

The right circumstances include proper team design/structure, effective team launch, ongoing team coaching and appropriate and sufficient contextual supports, as well as ensuring that the team is focused on minimizing process losses (e.g., social loafing) and maximizing process gains (e.g., group effort, appropriate performance strategies and making full use of each team member's skills and knowledge).

David Clutterbuck (2013) also reminded us that a competent team coach must have knowledge of and be practiced in areas that include, but are not necessarily limited to, basic coaching, team dynamics, team psychology, collective decision making, systems thinking, and knowing when and how to apply appropriate coaching interventions.

As Hackman and Wageman have suggested, even the most competent team coach cannot guide or coach a business team if the team lacks "a compelling direction, an enabling structure and a supportive organizational context" (2004, p. 64). Therefore, organizations and leaders wishing to take full advantage of their team-based structures within our turbulent and ever-changing business environment must consider employing an internal or external team coach—at the right times, in the right circumstances and only when the coach is both *competent* **and** *qualified*.

It is this last statement that has particular relevance to professional coaching organizations and their members. First, it is imperative that coaching organizations create a supportive context in which their members can find business-focused and business-appropriate coaching definitions, standards, code of ethics and integrity, competencies and training. For example, the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC) focuses solely on "business coaching," which they define as:

> …*an inclusive term that refers to all types of business and organizational coaching. It is practiced by internal and external coaches who may identify as corporate coaches, executive coaches, leadership coaches, organizational development coaches or other types of business coaches. Regardless of the practitioner's title, business coaching is defined by its dual focus on the client and the client's organization.* (WABC, 2011, par. 5)

Within the larger explanation of the business coaching definition, WABC explicitly identifies the business coaching process as including both individual *and* team coaching processes. Supporting this business coaching focus, WABC provides its members, service providers and the general public with clear and

accountable professional business coaching standards, a code of ethics and integrity, a statement of competencies and training options. Thus, it is incumbent on any and all coaches who wish to remain or become "*competent **and** qualified*" in providing individual and/or team coaching to organizations (for profit or non-profit) to support their professional coaching association of choice and commit to professional standards that truly support the needs, interests and goals of the individual team member *and* the organization.

Lastly, while professional (business) coaching associations such as WABC have laid and continue to lay the foundations for professional business coaching practices worldwide, there will always be a need for ongoing robust reviews of current business coach training and standards to ensure that they incorporate up-to-date knowledge of what works in business coaching and within businesses today. This is one of the key reasons why business leaders today cannot rely on the ubiquitous superficial examinations of the (popular) literature and must take full advantage of white papers that utilize comprehensive and considered literature review and analysis techniques.

This evidence-based white paper has been provided to help meet this ongoing need and as part of WABC's commitment to enhancing and supporting professional standards for business coaches worldwide (WABC, 2013).

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A Selection of Recent Publications
Abrahamson, D. E. , & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2014). Impediments to information and knowledge sharing within policing. SAGE Open 4(1): 2158244013519363.

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WABC BEST FIT BUSINESS COACHING SERIES

Our Best Fit Business Coaching Series is a collection of evidence-based white papers on leading-edge topics of interest to professional business coaches, those thinking about a career in business coaching and other key stakeholders around the world when they screen, hire, train and evaluate business coaches.

The series is based on the premise that no single, universal approach to business coaching can serve the needs of all organizations and individuals. Instead, the series advocates the "best fit" approach. This equips readers with information to help them tailor strategies to their individual, organizational or corporate needs, while maintaining and promoting the utmost professional and academic rigor in their individual approaches.

What sets our evidence-based papers apart is that each paper involves a **comprehensive literature review** of the best international research available on any given topic. Furthermore, each paper is **written and reviewed by leading** academics, experienced business coach practitioners, senior researchers or recognized experts in related fields with the purpose of contributing to the ongoing professionalization of the business coaching field.

WABC

The Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC) is the first global professional association to exclusively represent the business coaching industry. Since its inception in 1997, WABC has dedicated itself to raising the profile of business coaching—still an emerging profession—and to differentiating it from coaching in general. By engaging in disciplined self-regulatory activities to increase public trust in our industry worldwide, WABC has done more than any other organization to identify the tasks, qualities and skills of the business coach.

We've built our reputation as a leading global authority on business coaching by insisting on the best: the highest membership standards, the most rigorous evidence-based programs, the most advanced business coaching credentials. Our activities set the gold standard for business coaching and help decision-makers around the world when they screen, hire, train and evaluate business coaches. Our membership—now spanning over 40 countries and steadily growing—includes internal and external business coaches who work with entrepreneurs, managers, CEOs, presidents and professionals from all industries in the public, private and non-profit sectors—from start-ups to Fortune 100 companies.

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