Practitioner-based Research

The experience of team coaching: A dual case study

Catherine Carr & Jacqueline Peters

Objective: This paper presents a dual case study of leadership team coaching with one government and one corporate team. The authors discuss the findings and propose a new high performance team coaching model.

Design: In this study, the researchers documented and compared the experience of team coaching between their two leadership teams using a qualitative case study methodology that tracked the participants' experiences.

Methods: The case study data were collected through three triangulated methods: semi-structured team member interviews; case study notes and observations; and a collaborative journal.

Results: The analysis of the separate case studies resulted in a rich description of the team coaching experience for two teams. The findings revealed valuable coaching elements that were common between the cases and linked to the literature, including the importance of: (i) a team charter and working agreements; (ii) full participation; (iii) coach manner and actions; (iv) a team launch; and, (v) coaching structure and follow-up. Six changes that participants identified included improvements in: (i) collaboration and productivity; (ii) relationships; (iii) personal learning; (iv) communication and participation; (v) impact beyond the team; and (vi) peer coaching.

Conclusions: These participant's descriptions of team coaching offer insight into valuable aspects of team coaching that informed the proposed evidence-based high performance team coaching model. The model can be used and studied by team coaching practitioners and researchers alike.

Keywords: Coaching; team coaching; qualitative research; practitioner research; high performance.

TEAM COACHING is a growing trend in the coaching field as evidenced by the increase in team coaching publications over the past 10 years (Adkins, 2010; Dolny, 2009; Mitsch & Mitsch, 2010; Niemala & Lewis, 2001; Thorton, 2010). Although many of these publications offer suggestions for practice, most team coaching approaches are not comprehensive or research-based.

Our objective as practitioners was to do evidence-based team coaching research that was based on our own team coaching practices and a review of the team effectiveness and team coaching literature. As Fillery-Travis and Tyrrell state, 'practitioner research has a specific role to play in the development of the coherent and robust body of knowledge required to underpin coaching as a professional practice' (2012, p.1).

Clutterbuck (2007) and Hawkins (2011) have written some of the more comprehensive team coaching books that are informed by team effectiveness research. Clutterbuck (2010) says that building team relationships is not useful on its own and recommends interventions that 'improve performance when aimed at specific team processes or objectives' (Clutterbuck, 2010, p.273). Hawkins (2011) emphasises that team coaching must expand beyond one-day, internally-focused events. He points out that team coaching has been loosely defined and used as an umbrella term that includes facilitation, team building, and other group process interventions.

For this study, we proposed a definition that was adapted from Hawkins (2011) and Hackman and Wageman's (2005) definitions

of team coaching. We propose that team coaching is a comprehensive and systemic approach to support a team to maximise their collective talent and resources to effectively accomplish the work of the team.

The academic literature on team coaching has not caught up to the growing practitioner interest in offering team coaching, and there is even less research about coaching leadership teams. One of the few studies was completed by Wageman et al. (2008) who assessed the performance of 120 leadership teams worldwide on three key areas of effectiveness. These included: (i) the ability to create outputs and perform at a level that met or exceeded stakeholder standards and expectations; (ii) the ability to work together effectively and build capacity to work together interdependently in the future; and (iii) whether the team experience contributed positively to team members' learning and development (2008, pp.9–13).

Wageman et al. (2008) categorised the 120 teams into high, mediocre and poor performance and analysed the differentiating factors between groups. They created a model that outlined three essential and three enabling conditions for team effectiveness. The essential conditions included: (i) a real team with clear membership and boundaries; (ii) a compelling purpose to guide the team's work; and (iii) the right people with the knowledge, skill and experience to perform the team's requisite work. The enabling conditions were: (i) a solid team structure of less than 10 members who have a clear set of norms/agreements to guide how they work together; (ii) a supportive organisational context that provides the information, time, and resources to do their work; and (iii) competent team coaching from an internal or external coach, aimed at helping team members grow individually and as a team.

There are many studies that support one of more of Wageman and Hackman's six conditions of team effectiveness. Wageman (2001) studied self-managing teams at Xerox

and concluded that team structure was more important for team performance than coaching from the team leader. She noted that well designed teams benefited from coaching, whereas poorly designed teams did not benefit, or even fared worse, if the coaching was unskilful or focused on giving advice.

Additional studies by Hackman and Wageman (2005) and Wageman et al. (2008) reported that 50 to 70 per cent of team performance variation could be attributed to creating well designed teams from the start. Other researchers have concluded that without adequate team design and structures in place, a team cannot succeed (Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001). Hackman and Wageman indicated that 'Coaching interventions that focus specifically on team effort, strategy, and knowledge and skill facilitate team effectiveness more than do interventions that focus on members' interpersonal relationships' (2005, p.274).

As a result, Hackman and Wageman (2005) proposed a theory of team coaching, stating that when the enabling structural and contextual conditions are appropriately in place, competent team coaching that is provided: (i) at the right time; and that (ii) focuses on the task, can effect team performance.

Other researchers have studied Hackman and Wageman's team effectiveness and team coaching models and concluded that team coaching does have a positive impact on a team's outputs, including writing products (Heimbecker, 2006), team effectiveness (Liu, et al., 2009), and innovation and safety (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012). Team processes that improved were effort, skills, knowledge (Liu et al., 2009), and learning (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012).

Practitioners have contributed to the team coaching literature by providing a number of case studies (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011), and models for

facilitating team coaching conversations (Brown & Grant, 2010; Clutterbuck, 2007; Hawkins, 2011). The case studies document the benefits and outcomes that team coaching participants themselves identified, including increased learning, decision making, information sharing, communication, and participation. Although each study described coaching outcomes, only one study (Anderson et al., 2008) reported an objective business result that was connected to the team coaching; increased employee engagement results.

Overall, our review of the team coaching literature revealed that minimal research has been completed to date, especially on coaching senior leadership teams. As practitioner-researchers, we saw value in doing qualitative case study research with intact leadership teams: (a) to understand what the leadership team coaching experience is like for the participants; and (b) to identify which aspects of team coaching participants identify as most and least valuable.

Methodology
To study the participants' experience of team coaching, each researcher/coach conducted a team coaching programme over a period of six to 11 months with an intact leadership team. The two researchers tracked and analysed their case studies individually and then analysed each other's case studies before conducting a cross-case comparison. This qualitative case study focused on the rich descriptions from the participants' experience of team coaching. Because this was a qualitative analysis and comparison of only two case studies, the results have limited generalisability.

Research aim and questions
The research aim of this qualitative study was to explore the experience of team coaching from the participants' perspectives so we proposed the following questions:
1. What are the participant's significant meaningful experiences or turning points during the team coaching?

2. What changes do the participants feel they made in:
   a. the business; and
   b. their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching?
3. What are the implications for practice from what participants identify as most and least valuable to them in our leadership team coaching process?

Research participants
The participants of this study were two Canadian leadership teams. The first team, coached by Catherine Carr (CC), was an Employee Engagement Leadership team from the British Columbia government that had four male and two female employees between the ages of 30 and 58. One member worked virtually from other locations. Four members had been on the team for over five years while two had joined in the last year. The team initiated team coaching because they saw it as an innovative new government service that would help their high performing team excel even more.

The second team, coached by Jacqueline Peters (JP), started as an eight-person leadership team for a small corporate finance department in a large, Alberta-based, multi-national corporation. Six team members were leaders of leaders, and two were technical leaders. There were four male and four female seasoned professionals between 34 and 55 years of age. Although they were forming together in a new leadership structure, they had all worked together for two years or more, except for the team's new leader. She wanted team coaching to support greater departmental alignment and effectiveness. Although this team started with eight members, one male and one female team member left the organisation during the coaching, leaving six team members who participated in the last two coaching sessions and the final research interviews.

Overview of the team coaching process
Prior to commencing coaching, we invited our team leaders to consider Wageman

et al.'s (2008) six conditions for team effectiveness to ensure the team was ready for coaching. The subsequent team coaching approach was based on methods and frameworks previously used in the researchers' team coaching practices, including solution-focused coaching techniques such as focusing on possibilities and signs of change (Meier, 2005). We included a pre-coaching assessment, a two-day team offsite, and follow-up sessions, similar to aspects of Guttman's (2008) and Hawkins' (2011) team coaching approaches. In the offsite and follow-up sessions, we drew upon Hawkins' (2011) team coaching framework and posed questions to help the team focus on their internal team functioning, and the needs and expectations of their various stakeholders.

We chose to coach both of our team leaders since Wageman et al. (2008) highlighted team leader coaching as a useful adjunct to team coaching, and several practitioners included individual coaching in their approaches (Anderson et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011). We also included individual coaching sessions for two corporate leaders which began before the team coaching started and continued after the team coaching was completed. Individual coaching sessions for one government team member were requested for issues unrelated to the team coaching.

We incorporated peer coaching in our team coaching interventions since Hackman and O'Connor (2005) found that peer coaching had the most impact on team effectiveness compared to all other team interventions in their study of team leader and team member coaching behaviours. The government coach (CC) formally taught her team to coach each other at the team launch session, and encouraged them to coach each other between team sessions. The corporate team coach (JP) modelled peer coaching techniques and encouraged her team members to engage in peer coaching, especially for ensuring accountability to their working agreements.
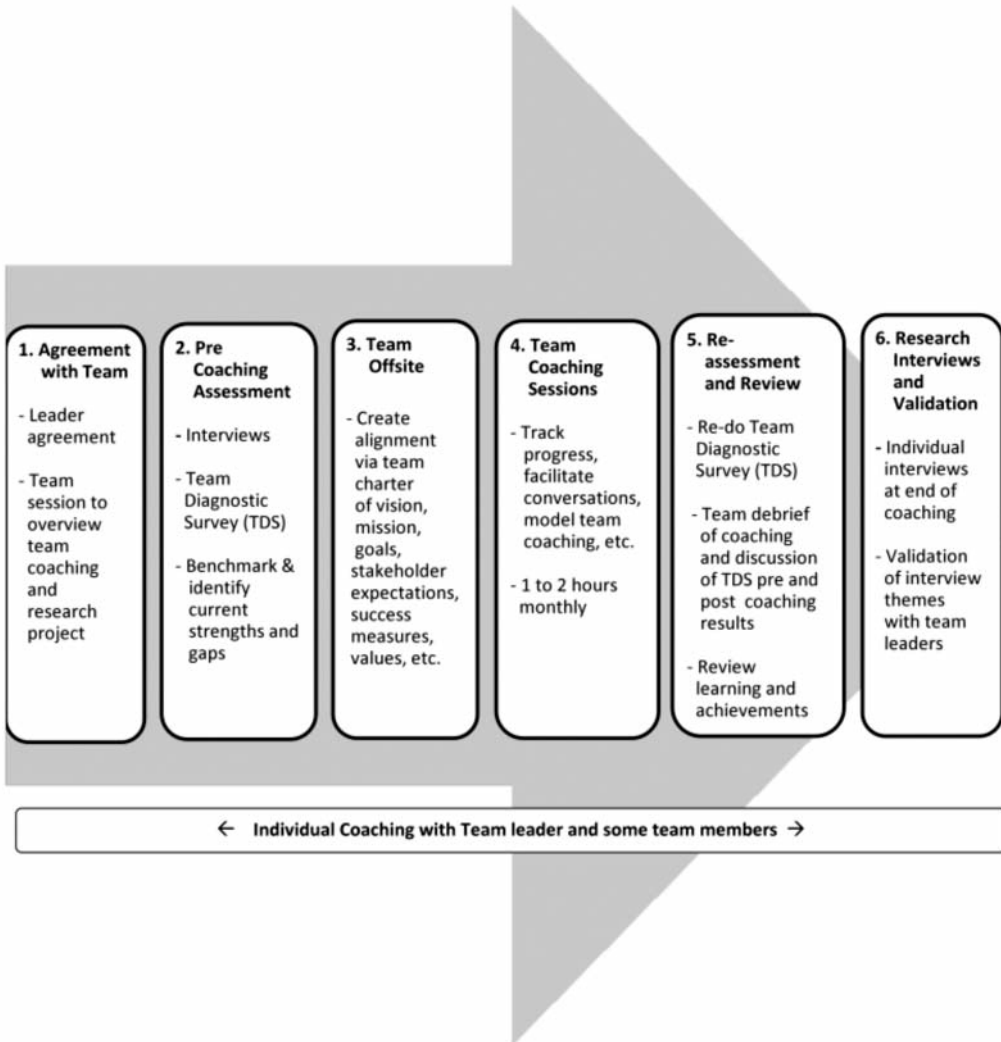
A summary of the steps in the team coaching and research process is provided in Figure 1 (overleaf).

The parallel team coaching process included having all team members complete semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the team's coach to assess team strengths and gaps. Each team member also completed the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS; Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005) at the start of the coaching. The TDS is a 38-question online survey that assesses a team's effectiveness and provides an anonymous, composite report based on the average of each team member's answers. The questions are based upon Hackman and his colleague's team effectiveness model of enabling conditions, team task processes, work relationships, and individual motivation and satisfaction (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). The instrument has some initial normative data and the TDS authors indicate that it has adequate reliability and validity, although it would benefit from further testing across a variety of teams (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

For our purposes, the TDS was used as a pre- and post-coaching discussion tool but it was not used as a quantitative measure of team effectiveness for the research. Each coach reviewed both the interview themes and the TDS pre-assessment results with her respective team, allowing them to assess and draw their own conclusions about their strengths, gaps, and goals for the coaching. A two-day team launch session followed approximately two weeks later, with a focus on defining a team charter highlighting the team's vision, mission, purpose, values, goals, roles and responsibilities, working agreements, and success measures.

Each coach held four (JP) or six (CC) team coaching sessions, one to two hours in length, over a period of six (JP) to 11 (CC) months to help the teams achieve their coaching goals and hold themselves accountable to the team charter and working agree-

Figure 1: Team coaching sequence for both case studies.

1. Agreement with Team	2. Pre Coaching Assessment	3. Team Offsite	4. Team Coaching Sessions	5. Re-assessment and Review	6. Research Interviews and Validation
- Leader agreement - Team session to overview team coaching and research project	- Interviews - Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS) - Benchmark & identify current strengths and gaps	- Create alignment via team charter of vision, mission, goals, stakeholder expectations, success measures, values, etc.	- Track progress, facilitate conversations, model team coaching, etc. - 1 to 2 hours monthly	- Re-do Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS) - Team debrief of coaching and discussion of TDS pre and post coaching results - Review learning and achievements	- Individual interviews at end of coaching - Validation of interview themes with team leaders

← Individual Coaching with Team leader and some team members →

ments defined during the team launch. The two teams had dissimilar coaching durations because of the different lengths of time it took for each team to meet their coaching goals. At the last coaching session, each team compared their pre- and post-coaching TDS results and explored how they would sustain the positive changes they had made. Both teams held all coaching sessions in person except for two government team sessions in which one team member joined via audio-visual conferencing.

Data collection methods
The primary data source was the individual, semi-structured research interviews with each other's team coaching participants at the end of their coaching intervention. The government team interviews were conducted in person while the corporate team inter-views were conducted by telephone because of business and timing constraints between the interviewees and the interviewing coach (CC), who was in another geographic loca-tion. Although the 12 hours of transcribed

interviews served as the richest and most important data point in this study of the team members' experience, several data collection methods were used to triangulate the findings, including: (i) 14 hours of pre coaching interviews; (ii) 100+ pages of individual researcher journals that documented each team's coaching notes and observations; and (iii) a 400+ page collaborative journal in which we discussed our learning about team coaching, the literature, and conversations with advisors.

We coded interview themes for both teams separately, looking for major themes among participants and unique comments. Next, we discussed results with one another, checking for appropriateness and frequency of themes. Then we compared the two studies for common and unique themes between the two cases. Finally, each researcher validated the individual case study themes with her respective team leader, ensuring that all individual comments remained anonymous in the summary. No changes were suggested by either team leader.

Dual case study results by research question

Research Question 1:
Meaningful Experiences or Turning Points

The first research question explored the participants' meaningful experiences and turning points during the team coaching, as identified in Table 1. One meaningful experience that both teams identified was establishing working agreements for their respective teams, summarised by one of the government team members:

> We had to actively practice the things we said we wanted, which exposed us to 'walking the talk.' It was a great learning experience for everyone in the team, and the changes have taken hold in how we are together.

A second common meaningful experience was that coaching encouraged full participation from all team members which enhanced their team performance. In the government team, this occurred when one less vocal team member offered a contrary opinion that significantly changed the team direction. This balanced participation carried forward to future team meetings, as this government team member highlighted:

> I think the team coaching really helped to have [our] voices fully become an equal part of our team. Even the members who had been around a little bit longer… experimented with stepping back and allowing a bit more time and space for the less vocal members.

In the corporate team, this participation turning point occurred at the two-day offsite when coaching supported team members to come forward and speak more openly and honestly than before, as noted below:

> A lot of honesty was shared there that without it, we would not have moved forward.

The government team identified two unique turning points; learning about each others' different styles and approaches, and full collaboration on a newly-defined team project:

> We talked at the beginning to have those two goals: integration and to get this tool done. We were focused on results. We wanted to create… the best tool possible. The integration part of it – how do we work together better? We weren't paying attention to that at our regular meetings. So then we started [during the coaching].

There were two unique turning points for the corporate team that were related to team design: organisational structure changes that occurred at the beginning of the coaching, and the unexpected departures of two team members from the company during the team coaching period. The following comment highlights the corporate participants' awareness that the structural changes and coaching success were highly interdependent.

> I think it was that the coaching was used in conjunction with the roll out of a new team structure… The change in our department structure, and clarification of roles, that without that, the coaching would not have done any real good.

Table 1: Identification of cross-case themes in interviews for research questions 1 and 2.
(Bolded themes indicates similarities in both case studies)

1. What are the participant's significant meaningful experiences or turning points during the team coaching?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	Corporate Team (JP) Themes	Cross Case Themes
● **Working agreements and participation (6/6)**	● **Team charter and working agreements (6/6)**	1. Team charter and working agreements (12/12)
● **Team member participation (6/6)**	● Honesty and disclosure (6/6)	2. Full participation (12/12)
● Learning about team member differences (6/6)	● Team member departures (5/6)	
● Collaborative project (3/6)	● Structural changes (6/6)	
2. What changes do the participants feel they made in (a) the business; and (b) their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	Corporate Team (JP) Themes	Cross Case Themes
● **Collaborative business products (5/6)**	● **Productivity and collaboration (6/6)**	3. Collaboration and productivity (11/12)
● **Authentic relationships (6/6)**	● Work environment and relationships (6/6)	4. Improved relationships (12/12)
● **Personal learning and change (6/6)**	● **Personal learning and change (6/6)**	5. Personal learning and change (12/12)
● **Participation and dialogue (6/6)**	● **Communication improved (4/6)**	6. Communication and participation (10/12)
● **Impact outside of the team (6/6)**	● **Reputation and impact beyond the team (3/6)**	7. Impact beyond the team (9/12)
● Peer coaching (4/6)		

Research Question 2:
Changes as a Result of Team Coaching

The second research question explored the changes that participants felt that they made in: (a) the business; and (b) their effectiveness as a team as a result of the team coaching. There were a number of similarities in the changes each team identified as a result of the team coaching, once again identified in Table 1. There were five cross-case change themes that included improvements in: (i) collaboration and productivity; (ii) relationships; (iii) personal learning and change; (iv) communication and participation; and (v) impact beyond the team.

(i) Improved collaboration and productivity

Collaboration and productivity improved for both teams, and a representative comment about general productivity improvements was provided by a corporate team member:

> *I see people doing more… [with] a focus on going forward versus wasting time worrying about emotions and dealing with people's feelings and how they will react… and more time looking to the benefit of the company, and how we can achieve what we need to achieve.*

(ii) Improved relationships

Both teams indicated that relationships improved during the team coaching. One of the government team members said:

> *We've talked about some heartfelt things that typically wouldn't come up. We let others into who we are as people.*

A corporate team member described the improved relationships as follows:

> *People became friends. The baggage was gone, the honesty was there, the trust was building – people were friends. And they had to find out that they liked each other.*

(iii) Personal learning and change

Learning for individuals on both teams occurred over time through new insights, feedback, and experimenting with new behaviours, as this government team member's quote illustrates:

> *I'm learning to change the way I view things. It's not overnight.*

(iv) Communication and participation improvements

Coaching supported team members to come forward and speak more openly and honestly, and participate more fully in team dialogues, as described by this corporate team member:

> *I do see better relationships and communication amongst people… An example I would say [is that] people are more willing to ask questions or ask for help.*

(v) Impact beyond the team

Although both teams talked about impact beyond their own team, the government team members focused on cascading collaboration and integration among the broader teams in the organisation.

> *It feels like people are getting drawn in and that there is more integration happening from the visioning part of the project through to completion.*

The corporate team also discussed impact beyond their own team, but focused more on an improved team reputation within their department and with the senior leadership team.

> *The team coaching addressed the issues that were the same issues addressed by the employee satisfaction survey done independently… Our [executive] vice president was extremely impressed with what we had accomplished with the team coaching.*

Research Question 3:
Most and Least Valuable Aspects of Coaching

We identified six common themes between the two teams related to what the team members found to be most valuable in the coaching process, as noted in Table 2. These six themes were: (i) specific coaching activities and components; (ii) coach's manner and actions; (iii) team launch; (iv) coaching structure and follow-up; (v) team leader modelling and support; and (vi) sustainability.

Table 2: Identification of cross-case themes in interviews for research question 3.
(Bolded themes indicates similarities in both case studies)

3. What are the implications for practice from what participants identify as most and least valuable to them in our leadership team coaching process?		
Government Team (CC) Themes	**Corporate Team (JP) Themes**	**Cross Case Themes**
● **Valuable coaching skills and components (5/6)** ● **Style assessment facilitated insight and change (5/6)** ● Check ins were valuable (3/6)	● **Coaching activities and components facilitated insight (6/6)** ● **Assessments provided insight and marked progress (3/6)** ● All of the team coaching was valuable (unspecific) (4/6) ● Nothing was 'least valuable' (5/6)	8. Specific coaching activities and components (12/12)
● **Appreciation for coach's manner and actions (5/6)**	● **The coach's manner and actions matter (6/6)** ● Safety was critical (3/6)	9. Coach's manners and actions (11/12)
● **Offsite days were valuable (4/6)**	● **Two day offsite valuable = Turning point theme above (6/6)**	10. Team Launch (10/12)
● Just in time coaching supported goals and teamwork (3/6)	● Structure was valuable (6/6) ● Follow-up facilitated progress and accountability (3/6)	11. Coaching structure and follow-up (9/12)
● **Team leader modelling (5/6)**	● **Team leader support was valuable (4/6)**	12. Team leader modelling and support (9/12)
● **Thoughts about the future (3/6)**	● **Hopes and concerns for the future (4/6)**	13. Sustainability hopes and concerns (7/12)
	● Individual coaching is beneficial (4/6)	

(i) Coaching activities and components
The coaching activities and components that were mentioned most frequently in the two teams were the TDS, specific games, and structured coaching activities. One corporate team member provided a representative summary of the impact as follows:

> *People got engaged… doing the team charter and those activities. I thought that type of activity, whether it was a game or not… helps you see things differently.*

(ii) Coach's manner and actions
Most team members made comments about the coach's manner and/or actions. They appreciated the coach's ability to create safety, ask questions, guide the team, and follow up on the actions and outcomes the team had set out to achieve, as described by this corporate team member:

> *She asked questions that are more open, they are not leading, and they are from a different perspective. She is not in [our field]; she doesn't have a clue what we do. But she is able to pull herself out of the detail and see the bigger picture.*

(iii) Team launch
The teams spoke about the value of setting aside time away from their regular offices to focus on their team, their goals and relationships as this government team member describes:

> *The two days were absolutely fundamental. It developed the foundation upon which everything else was built.*

(iv) Coaching structure and follow-up
Having some structure to the coaching meetings was valuable to both teams. The government team particularly appreciated dedicated time to personally check in and discuss how they were working together at every team coaching session;

> *It's about checking in with one another, what's working and what's not… We always made sure we checked in on how folks were doing and what we struggled with and what the learning was.*

Similarly, the corporate team talked about the value of having an agenda and a check in on working agreements and commitments/ actions as a regular part of their team coaching sessions.

(v) Team leader modelling and support
Participants of both teams described the active and important role of the team leader in supporting their team's changes. The government team focused on the team leader's positive modelling of behaviours and personal disclosure within the team meetings. The corporate team focused more on the team leader's active role in initiating and sustaining support for the team coaching generally, as quoted below:

> *Team coaching without a leader supporting it won't go anywhere.*

(vi) Sustainability
Both teams discussed sustainability in their post coaching interviews. The government team committed to peer coaching and continued use of their working agreements as keys to sustaining their new interdependent approach. They felt that their new ways of working together were becoming more natural, and they were not overly concerned about regression. The corporate team committed to continue to follow their working agreements, which included talking positively and directly to each other about issues. Further, they decided to roll out a modified form of the working agreements to their whole department as a cultural initiative.

There was a mix of individuals on each case study team who felt hopeful and at least one team member on each team who expressed concern about the team's ability to self-coach and continue their progress, as represented in this corporate team member's comment:

> *The question for me now is what happens now that the coaching experience is gone? Does the team continue to ask these questions? And if they don't and no one else is asking those questions, do we start to slide backwards?*

Hopefully not, but you can see that there would be potential for that.

Least valuable elements

When asked to describe what was least valuable, most of the corporate team members said that nothing about the team coaching was least valuable. Two government participants found some of the games to be less valuable, as one participant indicated:

Being a pragmatic, results-focused individual, I probably didn't get as much value from the ritual/symbolic activities like the tower activity.

Overall, participants indicated they received great value through the team coaching, as summarised by this corporate team member:

Coaching is really important if you are going to roll out… a new direction. And that new direction goes hand in hand with coaching, and gets people working together and making changes. [It] makes it more focused and strategic.

Discussion

High Performance Team Coaching: A new model

As we reviewed the dominant themes of our case study findings, we noted consistencies between the findings and our literature review. Thus, we saw an opportunity to propose a new, six stage High Performance Team Coaching Model that can be used by leaders and team coaches alike. We not only included ongoing team coaching sessions, but also the structure and design elements necessary for team effectiveness, as indicated in Hackman's (2011) summary of his 40+ years of research:

'Our research suggests that condition-creating accounts for about 60 per cent of the variation in how well a team eventually performs; that the quality of the team launch accounts for another 30 per cent; and that real-time coaching accounts for only about 10 per cent.' (Hackman, 2011, p.1)

Although these percentages may not be exact, our data suggests this is likely to be directionally correct so we accounted for these three important team performance factors in the team coaching model.

The components of the High Performance Team Coaching Model are identified in Table 3 (overleaf) and are represented visually in Figure 2. In Table 3, we match the key components of the model with the most relevant case study themes, acknowledging that several of the themes also match other components of the model. We also indicate the key literature that supports the inclusion of that component in our model.

Three team stages

On the outside of the circle, we aligned the three main coaching functions with the natural beginning, mid-point and ending team stages that Gersick (1988) identified in her punctuated-equilibrium model. This model states that a team hits the ground running early in their work together and only comes up for air around the midpoint of their work to consult with others and shift how they are working together. The team goes through a second reorganising point when they move towards finishing their project. Any coaching interventions that focus on strategy or shifting how a team works together don't have much impact between when the team initially begins their work and their reflective midpoint (Gersick, 1988), which aligns with our team coaching experiences.

Three coaching functions

The three coaching functions as matched to the team's stage are: (i) define and initiate at the beginning; (ii) review and realign at the mid-point; and (iii) integrate at the end of a team's cycle. The arrows indicate the natural progression of the team's stages.

This coaching model has a strong focus on coaching teams at the beginning of a new team cycle since there is great leverage in setting up the team conditions and doing the team launch at this stage (Hackman, 2011). We also found our case study teams needed and wanted a greater frequency and intensity with the initial coaching sessions.

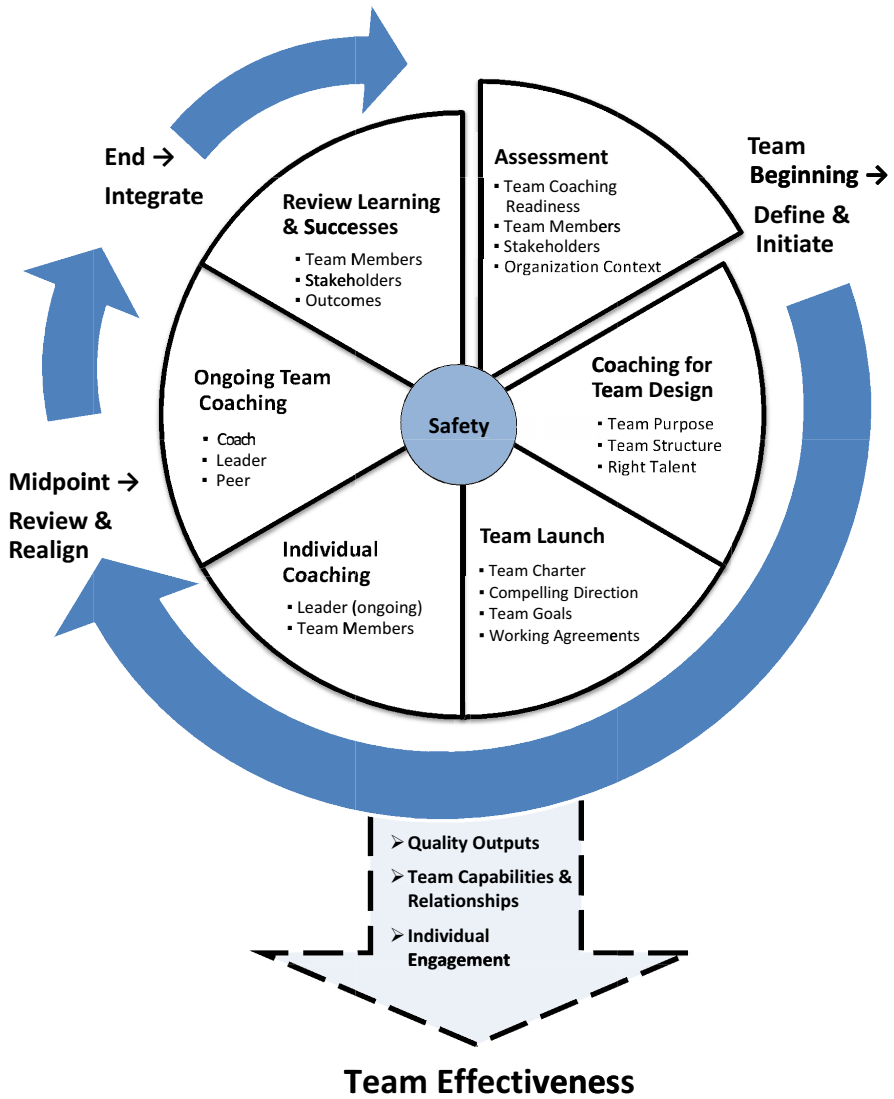Figure 2: High Performance Team Coaching Model.

End → Integrate

Team Beginning → Define & Initiate

Midpoint → Review & Realign

Review Learning & Successes
▪ Team Members
▪ **Stakeho**lders
▪ Outcomes

Assessment
▪ Team Coaching Readiness
▪ Team Mem**b**ers
▪ Stakeholders
▪ Organization Context

Ongoing Team Coaching
▪ Coach
▪ Leader
▪ Peer

Safety

Coaching for Team Design
▪ Team Purpose
▪ Team Structure
▪ Right Talent

Individual Coaching
▪ Leader (ongoing)
▪ Team Members

Team Launch
▪ Team Charter
▪ Compelling Direction
▪ Team Goals
▪ Working Agreements

➢ **Quality Outputs**
➢ **Team Capabilities & Relationships**
➢ **Individual Engagement**

Team Effectiveness

**Table 3: Dual case study research themes and parallel
High Performance Team Coaching Model components.**

Team Stage and Coaching Function	Team Coaching Components	Dual Case Study Research Themes	Literature Review
Team Beginning → Define and Initiate	1. Assessment	● Specific coaching activities and components (e.g. Team Diagnostic Survey)	● Six conditions for team effectiveness (Wageman et al., 2008) ● Team Diagnostic Survey (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005)
	2. Coaching for Team Design	● Structural changes (Corporate team) ● Team charter and working agreements	● Six conditions for team effectiveness (Wageman et al., 2008) ● Team design links to team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001)
	3. Team Launch	● Team launch ● Team charter and working agreements ● Full participation/ Communication and Participation ● Collaboration and Productivity/Collaborative Project (government team) ● Team leader modelling and support	● Team offsite included in team coaching (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Guttman, 2008; Hackman, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009)
	4. Individual Coaching	● Individual coaching is beneficial ● Personal learning and change	● Team leader coaching beneficial (Hawkins, 2011; Wageman et al., 2008) ● Individual coaching included (Anderson et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011)

Table 3 continued...

Team Stage and Coaching Function	Team Coaching Components	Dual Case Study Research Themes	Literature Review
Mid-point ➙ Review and Realign	5. Ongoing Team Coaching	● Coaching structure and follow-up ● Full participation ● Collaboration and Productivity ● Team leader modelling and support ● Peer coaching	● Follow-up sessions included (Guttman, 2008; Hawkins, 2011) ● Structured team coaching session format called GROUP and RE-GROUP (Brown & Grant, 2010)
End ➙ Integrate	6. Review Learning and Successes	● Full participation ● Coaching structure and follow-up ● Sustainability hopes and concerns	● Reflection and learning facilitated team safety and innovation (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012) ● Team reflection and learning is important in coaching (Clutterbuck, 2007; Hackman, 2003; Kegan & Lahey, 2009).
Central to model (throughout coaching)	Safety	● Coach's manner and actions ● Team charter and agreements ● Full participation	● Team safety is linked to enhanced performance (Edmondson, 1999) and innovation (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012)
Outcomes	Team Effectiveness	● Collaboration and productivity ● Improved relationships ● Personal learning and change ● Communication and participation ● Impact beyond the team	● Three measure of team effectiveness as outlined by Wageman et al., 2008

This first 'define and initiate' coaching function includes four components: (i) assessment; (ii) coaching for team design; (iii) team launch; and (iv) individual coaching. However, the model is not just for brand new teams; even our case study teams were not completely new. Certain events can trigger a new beginning for established teams, such as team member changes, or the implementation of a new strategy, vision, or project.

When a team is in the middle of a task or team cycle, the coach focuses on inviting the team to review current processes and performance, reflect on learning, and refine their strategy to achieve their goals going forward. We interacted less frequently during this middle cycle with our teams through the (v) ongoing team coaching sessions. We note that (iv) individual coaching, especially of the team leader, can (and did in our cases) continues during this period.

The primary focus of coaching at the end of a task or team cycle is to support a team to individually and collectively review and integrate learning and successes, the sixth coaching component. The coach may also assist the team to develop a maintenance and follow-up plan, as we did with our teams.

Six team coaching components
1. Assessment
Our participants indicated that the pre-coaching interviews and TDS were valuable team coaching elements that supported them to identify and discuss team strengths, challenges, gaps, and opportunities. Further, we found it beneficial for the coach to meet with the team leader as the sponsor of the coaching to identify the initial team coaching goals and expected outcomes. Team assessment is also supported in the literature (Hawkins, 2011; Wageman et al., 2008; Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

2. Coaching for team design
If the initial team assessments reveal that key team effectiveness conditions are not in place, team coaches could support the leader to get clear about the team's membership, function, structures, and direction before launching a full team coaching initiative. In the corporate case study, coaching sessions with the team leader resulted in a re-structure before the team coaching started. Participants later reported that this re-structuring was essential to the success of the team coaching. The literature has also reinforced the importance of team design and structure in team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Hackman, 2011, Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Kaplan, 1979; Wageman, 2001).

3. Team launch
All our research participants said that the initial two-day team launch session provided them with a more reflective and participatory forum than they were able to create in shorter meetings in the workplace. Hackman (2011) indicated that an effective team launch can impact up to 30 per cent of team performance and other practitioner-researchers have identified a team offsite as a component of their team coaching approach (Anderson, Anderson & Mayo, 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Guttman, 2008; Hackman, 2011; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). We include a team launch in our model, with a focus on learning more about each other, and developing a team charter that emphasises working agreements.

4. Individual coaching
In interviews, team members commented about the value of adjunct individual coaching, whether they received it or not, as a support for people's effectiveness on the team. Other team coaching case studies have also identified individual coaching as part of their process (Anderson, et al., 2008; Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Clutterbuck, 2007; Haug, 2011; Mulec & Roth, 2005; Woodhead, 2011). Wageman et al. (2008) and Hawkins (2011) identified that coaching the team leader in particular may be beneficial as leaders develop their skills and capacity to

coach the team. Thus, we include individual coaching in our team coaching model.

5. Ongoing team coaching

Ongoing team coaching occurred through coach and/or leader led team sessions in addition to team members coaching each other between sessions. Participants reported that the team sessions helped the team stay on track while peer coaching helped individual members do the same.

We note that few practitioners or researchers have explicitly included peer coaching as a standard team coaching component, except for a few studies (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Hackman & O'Connor, 2005). Hackman and O'Connor (2005) emphasised the high impact of peer coaching on team effectiveness, so we have included peer coaching in our model.

6. Review learning and successes

The re-assessment on the TDS and final interviews provided an opportunity for team members to reflect on their learning and successes individually, as a team, and beyond their own team to external stakeholders. Team members in both case studies expressed concerns about how they would maintain and extend the improvements they had made during the final coaching session and in the interviews. Facilitated reflection has been identified as an important part of team coaching (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012; Clutterbuck, 2007), especially since this is not something teams tend to consistently do on their own (Hackman, 2003).

Safety

While team design and structure appears to be crucial to team coaching success, psychological or emotional safety is the factor we believe underpins all coaching, and is highlighted in the centre of the model. In these two case studies, feeling safe to participate, be honest, and disclose were identified as significant turning points. This aligns with other researchers' findings that team members often focus on interpersonal factors, not structure and design, when they consider what most influences team effectiveness (Beckhard, 1972; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Martin, 2006). Furthermore, Edmondson (1999) and Buljac-Samardžić (2012) emphasised the importance of psychological safety in team performance.

The two teams in this study explicitly identified that the relationship with the team coach, and the coach's manner in particular, helped create a safe learning environment. Further, there is a growing body of research in coaching and an extensive body of research in counselling that attests to the link between a positive working alliance with the coach/counsellor and positive client outcomes (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Marshall, 2006).

Team effectiveness

We included team effectiveness in this model as the key outcome of team coaching. This research lent support to the ability of team coaching to improve team effectiveness as indicated by team members' subjective assessment of the: (i) quality of outcomes; (ii) ability to work together effectively; and (iii) degree of individual engagement. These outcomes are similar to Wageman et al.'s (2008) three measures of team effectiveness and align with other researchers who have identified that team coaching can effect improvements in team outputs and/or processes (Buljac-Samardžić, 2012; Heimbecker, 2006; Liu et al., 2009).

Summary

The six-phase High Performing Team Coaching Model was developed based on these case study results and a literature review of methods and strategies that were found to promote team performance. We recognise that in real workplace practice, coaches may draw upon only one or several of these six components based upon a real business team's natural rhythm and performance requirements, which often vary.

Limitations

As in any research, there were limitations in this qualitative, dual case study research. Most significantly, this study relied on participant self-reports through semi-structured interviews for identifying outcomes and benefits. These interviews may have been subject to recall flaws and bias in what participants reported particularly since participants were asked to reflect back over the previous six to 12 months.

Suggestions for practice

Many recommendations for practitioners were embedded in the High Performance Team Coaching Model, and two of these suggestions are highlighted below.
1. Team coaching has the potential to be greater than just what a coach does in a team coaching session. The team effectiveness literature suggests strong team design and structure are critical and this study also supports the importance of team design and working agreements. Thus, team coaches could provide a fuller service by supporting teams and leaders to assess the effectiveness of their team structure and design when beginning coaching.
2. Coaches may propose and include individual coaching, peer coaching, and team leader coaching in addition to whole team coaching. These practitioner-researchers found that participants valued all three components.

Suggestions for future research

The field of team coaching is still new and exploratory. We propose two areas that researchers could consider as they further examine team coaching.
1. This was an exploratory qualitative study and while our participants described enhanced team performance as a result of team coaching, further research is required to link team coaching to quantitative measures of team effectiveness.

2. The High Performance Team Coaching Model proposed here requires further research to test the model. For example, are some phases more important than others? Is this model more effective than currently existing models, such as those proposed by Brown and Grant (2005) or Hawkins (2011)?

Conclusion

As practitioner-researchers, we discovered that not enough of the team effectiveness literature has been applied to team coaching in organisations. We sought to begin addressing this gap between research and practice and carried out a dual case study to explore team coaching with two intact leadership teams working within their complex business settings. As a result of the consistencies between our dual case study and literature review, we developed an evidence-based High Performing Team Coaching Model that incorporates components identified as likely to increase team performance and foster team effectiveness. We believe that this multi-stage approach to team coaching is a useful full team cycle model and system that can be applied and studied further by practitioners and researchers.

The Authors
Dr Catherine Carr,
BSc, MEd, DProf, PCC, RCC
and
Dr Jacqueline Peters,
BSc, MEd, DProf, PCC, CHRP

Correspondence
Dr Catherine Carr
2345 Estevan Avenue,
Victoria, British Columbia,
Canada, V8R 2S4.
Email: Catcarr63@gmail.com

Dr Jacqueline Peters
83 Sienna Park Terrace S.W.,
Calgary, Alberta,
Canada, T3H 3L4.
Email: Jacqueline.Peters@InnerActive.ca

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