What are the challenges of introducing internal coaching in a VUCA context?

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Abstract

This paper explores the perceived challenges an organisation may face when planning to introduce internal coaching into a fast-paced, volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Using a case study methodology, the research is based on 14 semi-structured interviews and interrogation of company documents. The study revealed some surprising insights with possible implications for theory and practice and that the scope, role and format of coaching may need to be thought of differently to fit this environment.

Key Words: VUCA; internal coaching; case study; spot coaching; managers as coaches.

Introduction

The term VUCA context was used by the Military from the late 1990s to describe the new, unorthodox and unpredictable nature of warfare following the end of the Cold War (Whiteman, 1998) and the start of new wars in the Middle East. The old style of command and control leadership was proving to be too slow and ineffective to work at the frontline. Rapid assessment and responses were required by frontline leaders who were confronted with improvised weapons, adaptive technology in warfare and the difficulty in distinguishing friends from foes (Kinsinger and Walch, 2012).

The terminology was adopted by the business world to describe the similar unfamiliar territory presented by globalisation, breaking down of trade barriers, the exponential rise of disruptive technology and new competitors. The global recession of 2008 caused old models of business and leadership to become obsolete and impracticable in the VUCA business environment.

This case study began with me sharing my insights into positive psychology with a senior leader and explaining an innovative approach to developing people by focusing on their strengths instead of trying to fix their weaknesses. The leader subsequently devised a staff development plan encompassing 5 key strengths essential for our business to continue to flourish, one of which was coaching. He planned to implement our own strengths-based coaching programme with the support of an external trainer and initially train a small cohort of first-time internal coaches. In practice, the lack of time due to the fast-moving and constantly changing business environment presented a considerable challenge to implementing the programme because it was continuously delayed or interrupted. Environmental factors such as unexpected, sudden changes took priority over the programme despite the willingness and high level of commitment of all stakeholders involved.

I understood that time constraints were likely to be a challenge to plans for introducing internal coaching in a VUCA context but I had no understanding of what other barriers might exist. The purpose

of this study was to find out participants' perceived challenges to the proposed plans. The objectives for the study were to surface the perceptions of:

- how the VUCA context could impact on the proposed plans
- why the internal coaching programme was being introduced
- what get in the way of introducing internal coaching
- surface other unknown challenges

The VUCA context

The study took place in a medium-sized data and telecommunications organisation which is experiencing rapid, largely organic growth. The organisation has a market reputation for exceptional customer service, agility, rapid innovation and quality of its products and services. The unit of study was in a specific division involving 10 participants (5 managers and 5 team members) in contact centres based at two sites and 4 other internal stakeholders. Participants from the two contact centres respond to complex telephone calls from customers often requiring resolution of highly technical problems and enquiries.

The organisational structure is flat with no escalation hierarchy and employees are empowered to 'bend out of shape' (Stakeholder 1, Manager 2) to serve customers' needs. Bureaucracy is strenuously resisted as is any move towards becoming 'too corporate' so as to retain the agility needed to respond to the VUCA context. While agility contributes to competitive advantage, the flat structure presents a challenge as to how can employees grow and develop their skills to fill the many new jobs being created or to advance their careers. This could ultimately affect the retention of staff for whom it has taken two to three years to train: replacing them with new employees would take too long to upskill them.

Methodology

My philosophical world view aligns with Silverman (2015) who argues there is not a unique reality of our world 'out there' (p. 13) and that we each have our own socially constructed world. As the participants are immersed in the 'social action' (Bryman, 2012, p. 30) of the VUCA context, surfacing their perceptions of the challenges of introducing internal coaching in this environment appealed to my constructivist positioning

Consequently, a qualitative case study approach was considered suitable for exploring a phenomenon about which little is known (Yin, 2014) and because other than availability of time, I had no understanding of which other variables to investigate (Cresswell, 2014). The case study was carefully designed and each step documented to reduce criticism of this methodology for its potential lack rigour (Rowley, 2002), replicability, objectivity or validity (Bryman, 2012).

Data Collection

The data collection strategy was underpinned by four key principles offered by Yin (2014):
- Principle 1 – Using multiple sources to cross-check data which aligns with the two data types in Table 1.
- Principle 2 – Creating two separate databases using Excel and OneNote
- Principle 3 – Documenting a chain of evidence in my Data Collection and Accounting Log
- Principle 4 – Careful use of online sources including electronic communications such as E-mail and Lync messaging, e-interviews and referencing.

For triangulation purposes and to strengthen the study's credibility (Yin, 2014), I adopted a two-pronged approach posited by Silverman (2015) comprising researcher-provoked and naturally occurring data (Table 1). Emergent new data acted as a trigger for me to corroborate information from alternative sources (Bryman, 2012).

Naturally Occurring Data		Researcher Provoked Data	
Data from Documents	**Observer/ Researcher**	**Sponsor only**	**Participants**
Employee survey Annual Report and Accounts. Staff Briefing notes Intranet	Attendance at two staff briefings about the proposed internal coaching programme	3 short unstructured telephone and 2 face-to-face interviews. 1 in-depth electronic interview	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews involving: 3 managers 3 Stakeholders 1 team member Telephone interviews with: 2 managers 4 team members
January-June 16	**March 2016**	**January-May 16**	**May-July 16**

Table 1 – Sources of Data Collection - Adapted from Silverman (2015)

Data Analysis

An inductive, thematic analysis approach was used because of its simplicity and flexibility (Braun and Clark, 2013). According to Thomas (2013), thematic analysis is conducive with an interpretivist positionality and would allow the meaning-making to emerge as 'constructed by the participants in the situation' (p.235). Miles *et al* (2014) argue that our brains intuitively look for patterns and I found that when transcribing the interviews, similar phrases and patterns seemed to emerge during this 10 step process (Table 2).
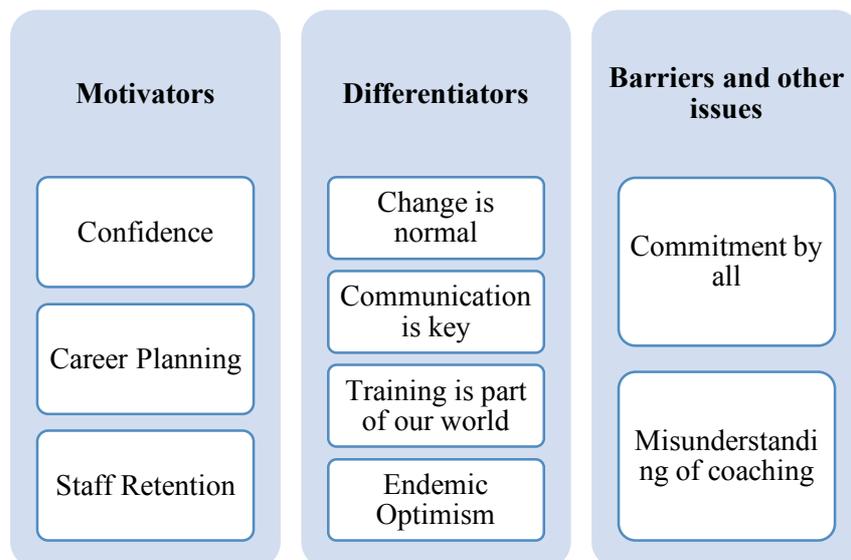
Step	10 Steps in Thematic Data Analysis Process
1	Emerging patterns and common phrases used during interview were recorded on a Field Data Collection Form (FDCF).
2	Immediate post-interview reflections recorded on the FDCF.
3	Post-interview recording was replayed before transcribing.
4	Verbatim transcription of voice recordings.

5	Steps 3 and 4 were repeated for all interviews
6	Interview recordings were replayed twice during my daily commute as part of the familiarisation process and search for emergent themes.
7	Transcripts were re-read. Recurring metaphors, words, phrases and emerging themes were noted.
8	Data from Step 7 were recorded in Excel spreadsheet
9	All transcripts were incorporated into one document allowing the use of the search facility in Word to count the number of times a word, phrase or metaphor had been used.
10	Results from Step 9 recorded in Excel spreadsheet.

Table 2 – 10 steps to thematic data analysis

Findings

The findings fell into three overarching themes (Table 3) revealing (i) why participants thought the company wanted to introduce internal coaching; (ii) how the VUCA context is different and (iii) perceptions of barriers and other issues which might get in the way of introducing internal coaching in this environment.

Motivators	**Differentiators**	**Barriers and other issues**
Confidence	Change is normal	Commitment by all
Career Planning	Communication is key	Misunderstanding of coaching
Staff Retention	Training is part of our world	
	Endemic Optimism	

Table 3 - Three key overarching themes to the findings

Motivators

A common theme from participants was that employees often lacked the self-confidence to apply for the many new job roles being created as a result of rapid organisational change or that staff did not recognise their own capability for more senior positions. Internal coaching was perceived to be able to unlock this problem and contribute towards building a talent pipeline because '*keeping hold of good staff is massively important*' (Stakeholder 1). Staff retention was perceived to be a future challenge but

participants generally felt the organisation was supportive of career and skills development. Manager 3 explained:

> *One thing that people love about the company and why we want to work here and why we have a great retention rate is the fact that we can open up a lot of opportunities for people to progress within the business.*

Some participants reported that they had come into telecoms by chance and not because they harboured a desire '*to be a telecoms engineer*' (Team Member 1). Participants reported an expectation that help would be needed for staff to 'plot a career path' (Stakeholder 1) or to find out '*what people's interests are, where they feel their strengths are, what career path they might like to pursue in the company*' (Team Member 5). Participants were keen to develop their own careers but recognised that there were some employees who were not so career minded. Manager 5 perceived there may be a potential challenge if '*some people in the team don't buy into it . . . [and are] totally dismissive of it they are not going to gain anything from it*'. Internal coaching still was considered to have a role to ensure these employees skill had the necessary new skills to match changing business requirements and this was seen as another challenge, as illustrated by a comment from Manager 1:

> *So how do we coach these guys ... to make sure they are still optimising their role, that we're keeping their interest? . . . [That] we are basically getting the most out of them and making them feel valued and know that actually it's fine if you want to stay in your role?*

All participants reported wanting to develop their own careers but some were not sure in which direction to go. Team member 1 explained how: '*there's an ambiguity over it. I would like to advance but I'm not quite sure what so I will try things until I think of something to do. To ... improvise in a career you were not necessarily prepared for*'.

It was curious that most participants reported staff possessing a willingness to experiment despite a perceived lack of self-confidence. Manager 4 agreed that staff adopt a '*trial and error*' approach at work but with line management support. Manager 5 suggested that while staff '*might not know how to do [a new job] . . . they'll have a good bash at it*'. These comment link with assertions by Bennett and Lemoine (2014) and Wilson and Lawton-Smith (2016) that a key attribute of people working in a VUCA context is the willingness to experiment and to try things out.

Manager 5 encourages her to '*build an individual career path*' but believed each person not only needed to take ownership of their career and skills development but also to drive it themselves. Hall (1996) describes such an approach as a protean career where people need to 'reinvent' (p. 8) their career periodically and develop characteristics such as self-awareness and self-determination to guide their future working lives.

These findings are consistent with assertions by Briscoe and Hall (2005) that some people will need help with developing a self-determined career as they may feel 'lost or trapped' (p. 10) and uncertain how to find direction in their career. With constant change within the Organisation's VUCA environment, skills, knowledge and job roles could quickly become out of date.

The findings clearly suggest two distinct roles for the internal coaching in the VUCA context. The first is to help those who want to progress to assess their key strengths and define future career paths. The second is to help demonstrate investment in staff who do not want to progress in order to maintain their levels of motivation. This motivational role may help support engagement and help staff deal with the ever-changing needs of the business that require innovation and experimentation.

The Differentiators

There were four principle differentiators which related to change, communication, the scope, role and format of coaching and optimism being endemic within the organisation.

Change is normal

It became evident that participants regarded the constant change and unpredictability as a natural manifestation of the working environment. Manager 4 reported that '*it always changes . . we don't get any steady periods'* whereas Manager 1 considered '*people are in the mind-set that they're always used to change. There's never any uneasiness about it'*. This concurred with feedback from other participants. Team member 3 agreed there were '*constantly small changes and every now and then, large ones'*.

There appeared to be a level of comfort with change and tolerance of uncertainty when things do not go according to plan or when something new is brought in. This mind-set could be useful when planning to introduce internal coaching as it implies people have a certain openness to try new things and deal with unexpected emergent issues during coaching. The comments also infer that if a new internal coaching programme was planned, it would be just another scheduled change to normal work and they may embrace it in the same way as any other organised change.

Communication is key

Interrogating company documents and feedback from participants suggested they are used to comprehensive communication prior to a planned change. Multiple forms of media such a face-to-face briefings, webinars, email, recordings, briefing notes, are used so that those staff who '*can't get off the phones'* (Manager 5) can catch up. Personal communications appeared to be preferred and several sessions of staff briefings are run at different locations, at varying times and dates to take account of the unpredictability of the environment which can impact of people's availability to attend. Manager 4 provided an insight into the value of personal communication on the proposed internal coaching programme, explaining it was the way the Sponsor '*did a face-to-face with everyone: it wasn't just an email and good luck. He sold it!*

Any uncertainty around the detail of the coaching programme did not appear to trouble the participants at this stage and feedback from participants suggest that the Sponsor has built a high level of trust with staff. In contrast, the literature suggests that providing information is vital to minimising uncertainty in the VUCA context (Bennet and Lemoine, 2014; Wilson and Lawton-Smith, 2016). The significance of this suggests that keeping people informed and briefed in advance of the introduction of the coaching programme may be important to allay any concerns about something new.

Training is part of our world

In the unstable VUCA environment, providing a sense of control and stability may help prepare people for uncertain times. Keeping people informed and providing training may contribute to this. Participants explained they received training on planned changes to systems and new products prior to their introduction. Team member 3 concurred, explaining that '*we have people trained on new systems before they come into place so everyone is well versed on beforehand and ... everything is planned in advance'*.

This comment infers there might be the same expectation of receiving comprehensive training before the plan for the coaching programme was implemented.

Participants appeared to recognise, regardless of the depth and thoroughness of the training received, people's learning needs varied. Manager 3 explained that '*I can organise basic training for product and . . . everyone learns differently and picks up differently. They may not understand the same as the person next to them*'. Team Member 2 noted that after training sometimes '*you could see that one particular person may be struggling and that's he's too embarrassed to ask for help*'.

There may be an expectation that internal coaching could supplement and build upon traditional training in this dynamic business environment by offering a flexible, tailored approach to individual learning especially as training may be disrupted or if a trainee is having '*having a bad day*' (Team member 2). According to Stakeholder 2 '*people don't just want textbook support, they appreciate the personal touch*'. These comments align with findings by Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) coaching helps employees learn and adapt quickly to changes.

Participants referred to the challenges of taking part in formal training sessions in this reactive environment. Training sessions may be postponed and rescheduled or delegates can miss planned training sessions because of high levels of customer contact. This may have implications for planning the training of coaches prior to the introduction of the internal coaching programme. A further consequence of this context is that either the coach or client could unexpectedly miss a session or coaching may have to be postponed at short notice. This is counter to best practice in coaching and it is not clear what changes may need to be made to be acceptable practice in a VUCA world.

Some thought that even if people do manage to attend training, they may not get the most out of it if their concentration levels have degraded after a lengthy, pressurised calls or an intensive period of high customer contact. These circumstances may present a challenge for both the internal coach and coachee in that they might find it difficult to adjust to the coaching space and get into the right mind-set. Incorporating appropriate techniques into the training plan for internal coaches may help to equip them in these circumstances.

The role, scope and format of coaching

There was an expectation by participants that internal coaching could extend beyond work-related topics into personal issues which may be affecting an employee's wellbeing and resilience. This links with assertions by Sherlock-Storey *et al.* (2013) that developing resilience during periods of considerable change is important to maintain wellbeing and sustain high performance and that coaching can assist with this.

Some concern was expressed that if a person was experiencing difficult circumstances both at home and at work, had their coaching session interrupted, what impact this might have on them regardless of their usual comfort with interruptions? Manager 2 reported that staff in this environment are used to the monthly one-to-one meetings with their line manager being interrupted but usually '*it's just a case of planning and moving them out to the next working day*'. Team member 2 speculated that it was possible that this practice could '*be disheartening really*' for some.

It may be a dilemma in this environment to have to cease coaching an individual at a potentially critical moment such as '*lots of calls [coming] into the helpdesks everywhere and . . .obviously, the coaching would have to be dropped* (Team member 2) but how to address this in plans for an internal coaching programme is not clear. Outside of this scenario, participants seemed to accept circumstances would interrupt coaching sessions but there appeared a genuine desire to make sure coaching still happened. Manager 2 reported that '*the **only** thing that would stop me doing it is if . . . I just can't take them off the phones*'.

These remarks infer that there is an acceptance that coaching would have to take second place to responding to unexpected spikes in the level of customer calls. This means that coaching may have to be postponed until a quieter time. Some participants suggested that a way of overcoming interruptions to coaching was to ensure that teams were adequately resourced.

Despite the challenges of this environment, participants thought that some level of coaching would still be able to take place despite the 'high contact' levels and differing levels of resourcing across teams. Team member 4 agreed that 'a*s long as we have the staff in place to cover those calls ... then coaching shouldn't be a problem'.*

During data collection, the lack of time, time pressures and time constraints were mentioned 95 times during interviews. The busyness of people's roles and scarcity of time may not suit traditional methods of delivering coaching in the VUCA environment. This could impact on plans as there may be uncertainty on which approach could reasonably work in this environment.

Perceptions of when coaching would take place differed but there seemed to be a common consensus that coaching would be done by line managers. Managers would be expected to coach in addition to their normal duties because the Sponsor sees coaching *'as very much part of the individual's day job'.* Stakeholder 3 already thought that *'people see their team manager as a coach anyway'.* People may not need convincing of the line manager as a coach as being appropriate. Some participants thought coaching would be added into their usual, monthly one-to-one meetings with line managers. Others thought coaching would be a separate activity but still undertaken by the line manager. Typically, one-to-one sessions were reported as lasting between 10, 20 and 30 minutes each month but there was uncertainty on how long coaching sessions would last. Stakeholder 1 thought that *'specifying hours might be counterproductive given the needs of individuals in teams will vary'.*

Participants were uncertain as to whether coaching sessions would be spontaneous or pre-arranged. In this environment, rescheduled or even opportunistic meetings are a frequent occurrence. Team member 2 thought that coaching sessions would need *'to be pre-arranged'* but reiterated the point that if '*I am coaching I would . . . [have] to stop that if I was having a busy day'.*

Feedback suggests a lack of clarity at this stage on how coaching could work in this environment and whether it would be within or outside of existing structures such as one-to-one meetings with line managers. This lack of knowledge is consistent with the gap in the literature on how to introduce coaching in a VUCA context. The literature describes short, ad hoc coaching methods such as popcorn coaching' (Hicks and McCracken, 2013); corridor coaching' (Grant, 2010); anytime coaching (Kloster and Swire, 2010) or spot coaching (Wilson and Lawton-Smith, 2016). It is possible that these approaches could work in the VUCA context but the Sponsor wants something more structured. It is uncertain how a structured approach could be implemented in this environment.

Optimism is endemic

Participants had a common belief that, despite the challenges of the context, these could be overcome and that the internal coaching programme would be successful. They thought the proposal to introduce internal coaching was *'amazing'* (Manager 1), *'exciting and should have been before'* (Manager 2), *'it's very positive'* (Stakeholder 2), *'I think it's brilliant'* (Team member 2). There appeared to be absolute confidence in the Sponsor because he would make the internal coaching happen whatever the obstacles.

My experience during the research was that the majority of participants were very positive and optimistic. I wondered if it is necessary to recruit people with that perspective, with a 'can-do' attitude so they are able to deal with all the change. This could be a distinctive issue in the VUCA context and

there may be a risk that by recruiting people who have that optimistic, 'can-do' mind-set that they do not anticipate potential issues. This might be an area for future research, the attitude of people working in this industry. It would be valuable to understand if the coaching population in such VUCA organisations actually represent a very specific profile as a result of recruitment practices. If this is the case it may have implications for how coaching operates with such groups.

Barriers and other issues

Two predominant barriers and other issues related to commitment and a misunderstanding of coaching by those within the organisation.

Commitment by all

Participants reported the need for making internal coaching a priority but it was not clear on how this could be done in the reactive environment. Commitment by all was considered essential without which this would present barriers to the plan if higher business priorities emerged to stop or delay the programme. Commitment was needed by senior management for the time involved and for the *'financial investment'* (Stakeholder 4); by line managers and team members *'really wanting to do it'* (Stakeholder 2).

Team member 1 thought that in this fast-changing environment, some employees might just prefer to be told how to do something as it is quicker: *'people might thing, just get on with it'* rather than *'trying to coach it out of them'* (Manager 5). This infers that coaching may not suit all learning styles because some employees may perceive coaching as being too slow or impracticable in this environment: they just want to be told the answer quickly.

Misunderstanding of Coaching

While not unique to the VUCA environment, research in the Organisation suggested there was a clear misunderstanding of what coaching was and what it was intended to achieve. Feedback varied from coaching being a form of *'additional training'* (Team member 3); *'a form of helping . . . trying to manoeuvre'* (Team Member 4) coachees in a particular direction*;* *'sharing knowledge and experience you have gained'* (Stakeholder 1). Some managers who had previously trained as coaches thought that not *'understanding the difference between coaching and teaching or training: that could be a challenge'* (Manager 1) whereas Manager 5 thought there was *'a blurred line between coaching and teaching'* but was clear that *'coaching is about trying to get the coachee to sort of open up and to almost find their own conclusions'*.

A clearer understanding of how coaching is different to other development activities in the Organisation may be needed. According to Mukherjee (2012) it does not matter how an organisation chooses to define coaching as long as everyone understands it. This may be an especially important point in the VUCA context where an adapted version and understanding of coaching may be needed to better fit the context.

Findings suggested that the lack of clarity on the Organisation's definition of coaching and people's lack of understanding of coaching could get in the way of plans for introducing the programme. Team member 1 thought *'that argument can be won or lost within day one from what the coaching actually entails'*. Team member 5 believed that internal coaching was already happening as it is *'mentioned on a monthly basis'* in their one-to-one meetings with line managers. In some teams, coaching was occurring but Manager 1 challenged this view commenting that *'as managers and leaders we will all be very guilty of saying we do coaching. But do we do coaching? [Employees] think they are being coached but they're just chatted to in their one-to-ones'*. Manager 1 thought that if staff

believed coaching was already happening, then plans to introduce a new coaching programme might be seen as '*pointless'*,

Discussion and conclusion

This study suggests that people in the VUCA environment are used to constant change and do not see anything unusual about it. In the literature, coaching if often spoken about in terms of being there to help bring about change in people. There is considerable theory on how to help people change (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011) but this may not be a problem in this VUCA world. From a theoretical perspective, coaching in the VUCA world does not need to deal with change or, if it does, it may need to be done in a different way. If change does need addressing, this may have implications for how people think about the coaching process in the VUCA context, the type of models used and how people are trained in these models. If the existing coaching processes and models are used and they do not fit, this may present a barrier. Attitudes to change appear to be slightly different and it may be that coaching theory in this context needs to be thought about differently and trained differently.

The scope and format of coaching in this environment may need to be delivered differently too. Existing theories and models of coaching may not fit the VUCA world where the nature of people's roles can be highly reactive. The scope and format of coaching may need to be shorter and have a different formulation to that often depicted in the literature if regular interruptions or delays may occur. Brief coaching solutions-focused models may be more appropriate. If this is not done, trying to make traditional coaching models fit may present a barrier. The reactive nature of the VUCA environment may also mean that the coaching relationship in this context is likely be a very different one to that depicted in the literature. The relationship between internal coach and client is less likely to be damaged if one of them had to leave mid-session as this is just the normal modus operandi. Participants expected interruptions and rescheduling meetings. The implication for coaching theory is we have learned much about the coaching relationships and how to coach, yet it appears to be different in the VUCA world so may be an area for future research. This may mean that if the scope and format of coaching does not fit, it could become a barrier.

In both academic and practitioner literature, there is no agreed definition of coaching and sometimes the terms coaching and mentoring are used interchangeably. Findings suggest there were considerable issues around how coaching is defined in this fast-paced context which could present a challenge that it is a form of training, teaching, instructing or mentoring. Some people, who had trained as coaches in other industries, had their own definitions of coaching. If coaching is not well-defined in an organisation, this could be a potential barrier that people have identified because they do not understand coaching and are therefore deterred from taking part. From a theoretical perspective, having an agreed definition of coaching may not be sufficient and an appropriate definition is needed for this fast-moving sector where coaching needs to have a rapid turnaround and where it is acceptable to be interrupted during coaching. A future area of research could be how coaching is defined, formulated and delivered in the VUCA world.

As in other contexts, organisations wanting to introduce a coaching programme may need to have a communications strategy. My findings imply that this would need to be done through a variety of mediums and it was perceived that face-to-face communication is an important part of that strategy. In the VUCA context, additional mediums such as using email and video recordings may be necessary to inform those people unable to attend the face-to-face sessions. If the strategy, objectives, what to expect from the programme or training plans are not communicated effectively it will present a barrier. There appears to be a strong culture of rapid and extensive communication in this VUCA organisation with

multiple mediums and a strong use of technology. These approaches would need to be mirrored in any communication strategy for the planned coaching programme.

Training might also need to be adapted to fit the VUCA context so people can engage with it and avoid creating a potential barrier to engagement. Delegates will expect the training content to be fast-paced, very responsive, interactive, upbeat, and highly optimistic in order to engage with the training and trainer. Trainers may need to be aware of the endemic optimism and train coaches how to address this sort of profile in their clients. The coaches themselves may demonstrate over-optimism believing they can fit missed training sessions in whenever it is possible and still know how to coach effectively. From a trainer's perspective, this may not be acceptable especially if people are likely to be called away from training. The course schedule will need to be adapted to accommodate interruptions and, as with the points on communication, supplementary online material and extra sessions may be necessary to help delegates catch up on what they missed. Trainers will need to be briefed on the likelihood of delegates getting called away from training and that they should not take offence at this. Trainers should be aware that dropping out of coaching sessions is not due to a lack of commitment but a factor of the VUCA context so need to convey this message to potential coaches. The findings suggest that delegates want training, they are used to training but will expect the training to fit their world and consequently the training needs to be bespoke. Such customised training will require financial investment and needs the commitment of senior management, but if other business priorities take over, the lack of funding may present a barrier.

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