

The Practice of Internal Coaching by Human Resources Managers: Ethical Considerations

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Abstract: Organizations recognize the benefits of relying on internal coaches to maximize leadership development. As the practice of internal coaching evolves, corporate leadership considers Human Resources (“HR”) managers natural candidates for the role. Internal coaching undertaken by HR managers is expected to strike the balance between: 1) maintaining the content of the coaching sessions confidential and, 2) allowing for the reporting of employee development issues. A failure to adhere to these two responsibilities could enable potential ethical conflicts.

Keywords: Internal coaching, Human Resources management, Ethics, Confidentiality, Conflict of interest, Trust, Contracting.

Introduction

I read *What’s the Big Deal About Coaching Contracts?* (Fielder and Starr, 2008) as part of the pre-work material provided for the 2013 Columbia Intensive Coaching program (“ICI”). Among other topics, the authors identify and elaborate on three potential ethical issues at the heart of the coaching relationship: conflict of interest, confidentiality and harm to clients (ps. 19 to 23). As an HR manager aspiring to become an internal coach, it seemed that the strict confidentiality obligations imposed to the coach could be directly at odds with critical aspects of the role HR professionals are expected to play in the work place.

The concept of potential ethical conflicts puzzled me, and my interest increased after David Matthew Prior facilitated the topics of *Ethics as a Core Competency and Taking an Ethical Stand* in the evening of Day Two of the ICI. I wanted to know to what extent HR professionals needed to limit their interaction during regular talent management, career progression, compensation and benefits or any other human resources related decision-making processes involving a coach-coachee relationship. I needed to

figure out how to honor the trust granted by my internal client, remain accountable and loyal to the stakeholders of the corporation, all whilst adhering to the International Coach Federation (ICF) Code of Ethics. In short, how does an HR manager intentionally participating in an internal coaching engagement balance the expectation of those directly affected by the coach-coachee relationship?

The target audience for the results of this research is Human Resources managers who also seek to become internal coaches.

Review of Selected Literature

I started researching by going back to the notes I took during the ICI training, which included book titles and articles recommended by the Columbia faculty members. Then I referred to the literature those authors used as sources.

Google, Google Scholar and the Columbia Library substantially expanded the scope of my research. I either typed the title of specific journal articles and essays, or entered combinations of words such as *Internal Coaching*, *Organizational Coaching*, *Coaching Ethics* or *Human Resources Coaching*. From an extensive list, I focused on material related to internal or organizational coaching (i.e. *The Emerging Role of Internal Coach* by Michael H. Frish); coaching ethics (i.e. *Defining Ethics: The Role of an Executive Coach* by Rushworth M. Kidder, Ph.D.), or associated with the human resources function (i.e. *Business Ethics and the HR Role: Past, Present and Future*, by Mark R. Vickers).

The research also lead me to consult material published by specialized journals, organizations and institutions such as the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), Human Resource Planning, Consulting Psychology Journal, Ethically Speaking, The Career Development Quarterly and The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, among others.

Finally, I referred to books about related topics such as trust, and coaching ethics, namely *The Speed of Trust* by Stephen M. R. Covey, *Law and Ethics in Coaching* by Patrick Williams and Sharon K. Anderson and *Human Resources in the 21st Century* by Marc Effron, Robert Gandosy and Marshall Goldsmith.

Definitions.

Client: The person being coached (ICF)

Coaching: Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (ICF).

Contracting: Bennett (2008) defines it as the process of developing a shared understanding between the coach and client about what will happen in the coaching process and how that interaction will take place (p.7).

Ethics: An area of study that deals with ideas about what is good and bad behavior: a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Human Resources Manager: Individual within an organization responsible for the attraction, selection, training, assessment, rewarding, development and retention of employees, while also overseeing organizational leadership and culture and ensuring compliance with employment and labor laws.

Internal Coaching: Michael Frisch (2000) defines it as "...a one-on-one developmental intervention... a relationship supported by the organization and provided by a colleague of those coached who is trusted to shape and deliver a program yielding individual professional growth" (p.242).

Sponsor: The entity (including its representatives) paying for and / or arranging for the coaching services provided (ICF).

Trust: Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Origins, History and Related Concepts.

How did Human Resources management and Internal Coaching originate and where do they converge?

The evolution of HR

Sandy Reed and Myrna L. Gusdorf (2010) trace the evolution of HR as a profession to the history of labor. They state that “when work was done by slaves, indentured servants and the impoverished lower classes, workers had little or no human rights. There was little concern for workers and no defined employment rights”. As a result of industrialization, managers needed to oversee the factors of production, including labor, and as workers won the right to unionize, the industrial relations professional position was created to manage the negotiation process and administer union contracts. Modern HR management began during, and particularly after, World War II, as the balance in workforce demographics shifted, first, with the incorporation of women to production lines (need for daycare, flexible scheduling and family benefits) and, second, when the war ended and military personnel returned to the workplace. It was the beginning of the personnel administrator.

In the 1960s, civil rights legislation and the erosion of the employment-at-will principle resulted in the consolidation of the personnel administrator job as compliance became a big issue. As responsibilities grew and the profession changed, the personnel administrator evolved into today’s contemporary HR manager.

Dave Ulrich (2012, p.19) summarizes the evolution of the HR function in four “waves”:

- *HR Administration* – Emphasis on the administrative and transactional work by HR.
- *HR Practices* – Innovation in specialized areas of HR (i.e., compensation, recruitment and training).
- *HR Strategy* – Integration of HR and business practices.
- *HR Outside-In* – HR moves beyond strategy to align its work with business context and stakeholders.

Coaching Evolution

Patrick Williams and Sharon K. Anderson (2006) state that Socrates could be considered the earliest recorded model of life and business coaching through his process of inquiry. It is, however, the many psychological theorists and practitioners from the early 1900s who have significantly influenced the development of the business-coaching field (p.5). Nonetheless, the first academic article about organizational coaching did not appear until 1937 and it is unclear when coaching services were first offered. Between 1950 and 1990, the idea of executive coaching took hold. In the 1970s coaching often focused on performance improvement and corrective action. During the 1980s, coach training programs proliferated, particularly in Europe. In the mid-90's, business magazines and the media put coaching into the mainstream press, and professional organizations formed, including the ICF. Between 1996 and 2002 Newsweek and The Wall Street Journal estimated the number of professional coaches to be 1,000 and 25,000, respectively. Journals devoted to organizational coaching, like The International Journal of Coaching in Organizations (IJCO), International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring, and the Coaching Psychologist emerged at the turn of the century (Bennett and Bush, 2009 p. 4)

As described in Table 1, HR management and organizational coaching practices evolved and converged to respond to business needs and demands that require new and different capabilities, and by providing just-in-time customized development to meet the unique needs of individuals (Peterson and Hicks, 1998 p. 42).

Table 1.

Integrating Coaching and HR Systems

Organizational Need	HR System	Type of Coaching
1. Ensure talent current needs	Staffing	Transition Coaching: Get people in new roles up to speed as quickly as possible
2. Learn new skills	Training	Targeted Coaching: Acquire new skills to address changing job demands
3. Meet job requirements	Performance Management	Performance Coaching: Improve performance to ensure that it meets standard
4. Ensure future talent	Succession Planning	Developmental Coaching: Develop capabilities needed for future roles
5. Retain talent	Career Development	Career Coaching: Enhance personal satisfaction and long-term career opportunities
6. Build an effective organization	Organizational Development	Executive Coaching: Ensure executive breadth and depth for building and leading the organization

Summary of Major Findings

Key ethical challenges are centered in three concepts: conflict of interest, confidentiality and harm to clients

As described in Table 2, when it comes to ethical obligations, HR managers coaching internally are abided by a variety of ethical norms that regulate the HR profession (i.e., SHRM's *Code of Ethics and Professional Standard in Human Resource Management*, 2007); their coaching practice (i.e., The International Federation of Coaching's *Code of Ethics*, 2008) and the organization they are part of (the organization's Code of Ethics).

These ethical norms are mostly concerned with rules of behavior and, as such, they are designed to prevent harms that can arise in our relationship with others. Along these lines, Fielder and Starr (2008) identified three critical interests at risk when it comes to coaching relationships:

Conflict of Interest, which arises when an individual's obligations are challenged by other interests, usually, but not always, financial (i.e., gifts from the client or any other stakeholder in a contractual relationship)

Confidentiality, defined as the harm to the client by the release of private information shared with the coach with the stipulation not to be disclosed to anyone, other than those authorized.

Harm to Clients: Damages clients may suffer as a result of being coached (ps. 19 to 22)

Given the complex reporting relationships with multiple stakeholders and the specific expectations organizations have on HR managers to advice on individual employment related issues, I consider confidentiality and conflict of interest the most critical ethical challenges an internal HR coach is exposed to. The HR internal coach may ultimately be required, formally or informally, to report coaching and assessment information to upper management, which poses confidentiality concerns (2003, Chung, Coleman and Froerer, 2003, p.148).

Strictly speaking, complete confidentiality in any type of coaching is impossible. The issue, therefore, is to clearly identify what is confidential and what will be shared (Note: legal precedent

supports breaching confidentiality if physical harm to anyone is perceived by the coach to be a threat) (Frisch, 2001, p. 246). However, clarity about confidentiality throughout the coaching process is essential to creating trust in the coach. Without trust there is no real disclosure or cooperation, only self-protection (John H. Fielder, 2008, p.22).

Garlo and Prior (2007) refer to the Standards of Ethical Conduct in the ICF which addresses confidentiality in the coaching relationship this way: “I will respect the confidentiality of my client’s information, except as otherwise authorized by my client, or as required by law” (Standard 11), and I will obtain agreement with the person being coached before releasing information to another person compensating me” (Standard 13). In coaching, the boundary of the private discussion promotes needed trust development and sharing with the coach. In internal coaching, as the coach interrelates with different stakeholders in the organization, he/she will be required to maintain confidentiality and refrain from disclosing, directly or indirectly, the information shared during coaching conversations (p. 109).

Internal coaching evolved from the practice of external organizational coaching

The role of executive coach has evolved from its roots as the organization’s agent on performance remediation to the present focus on the upside of an individual’s potential (Frisch, 2001, p.240).

Until recently, executive coaches were mostly external to the organization. This fact made sense given the original requirements of the role: counseling skills focused on behavior change, knowledge of organizational functioning, confidentiality and, to varying degrees, an overarching professional identity that elevated the coach credibility (p. 241). Over time, and with the increasing focus on people development as a key area in most organizations, managers were expected to foster the development of their staff as well as to be the prime movers of their own. Along with the normalizing of coaching and development planning, it was inevitable that internal coaching resources would be matched with managers interested in their professional growth and development. Internal coaching, as a role, is derived

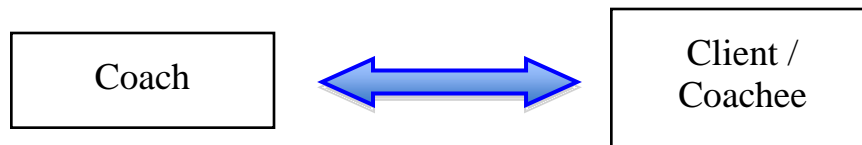
from the longer history of external executive coaching with one important difference: the internal coach is a fellow employee of the same organization as those he or she coaches. The contractual-employment nature of the relationship between the sponsor organization and the internal coaches shapes and defines the characteristics of a rather complex web of relationships.

Coach Human Resources managers operate in highly complex reporting/ organizational structures

Some external coaching relationships are relatively simple and exist between the coach and the person being coached, as shown in Figure 1. (Bennett, 2008, p. 8).

Figure 1.

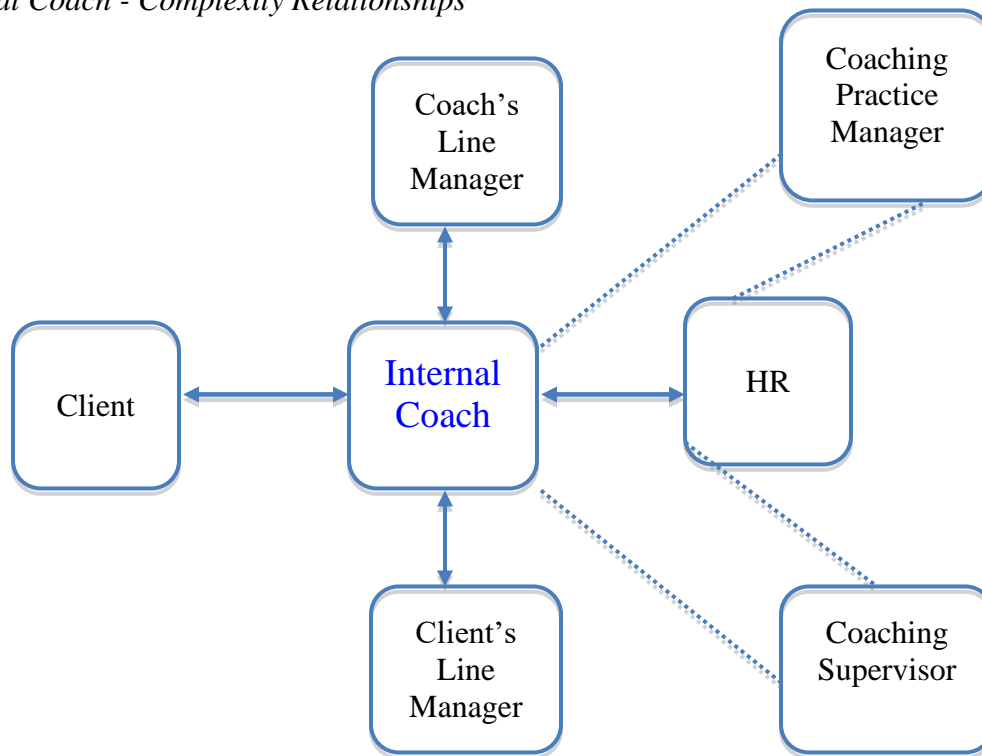
Generic Coaching Relationship



At the other end of the spectrum, external coaching engagements in large organizations, where the coach is also part of a larger coaching organization, involve a multiple relationships and can become rather complex, as shown in Figure 2. (Alison Maxwell).

Figure 2.

Internal Coach - Complexity Relationships



Organizational coaching literature has mostly addressed the role of Human Resources managers as stakeholders in the coaching relationship, rather than as internal coaches

Traditionally, HR managers are expected to *coach* fellow employees as part of their roles. However, organizations and employees generally misunderstand coaching for advice, teaching, mentorship or sponsorship. Though many HR generalists would consider coaching to be included in the job description, the consideration can be said to have been mostly implicit rather than explicit. The general advisory role often provided by HR professionals and other internal consultants should not be considered as internal coaching. Advising on topics such as recruiting, compensation, morale and so forth leverages an HR professional's technical expertise in those fields in the best interest of the organization,

whereas internal coaching is focused at the individual level, aiming to maximize a specific employee's effectiveness (Frisch, 2001, p. 243).

Organizations expect Human Resources managers to advise on employee-specific talent management issues and processes

As a member of the organization, the internal HR coach has direct and indirect or “dotted” lines of reporting obligations often to ensure that information is adequately shared and to maintain an internal system of authority and accountability (Fielder and Starr, 2008, ps. 23 and 24). In addition, HR managers are not only expected to advise the organization's leadership on issues related to professional growth potential, career development, succession, performance improvement, compensation and other related topics of individual employees. Therefore, HR managers must continuously and consciously balance the needs of the organization and its stockholders with the needs of other stakeholders including employees, customers and the larger community. HR managers must also balance their personal needs and desires against those of the organization (Vickers, p.27).

Coach Human Resources managers face HR-role specific ethical challenges

All of these complex relationships, when combined with professional and internal coaching obligations, increase HR managers exposure to ethical issues. SHRM's 2008 *Human Resource Institute Major Issues Survey* reported that the most commonly cited source of pressure to compromise ethics standards by HR professionals was the “need to follow boss's directive” (49% of respondents), whereas the survey conducted in the year 2000 by the Ethics Officer Association found that the most widely mentioned reason for contacting the ethics office was conflicts of interest -74% of respondents- (Mark R. Vickers, p. 27).

An Agency relationship explains the confidential nature of the coach-client-sponsor interaction

When it comes to the nature of the obligations and duties coaches have to their clients and supporting organizations, Hannafey and Vitulano (2013) argue that such relationships are most accurately understood as an agency relation on, at least, two levels: first, the coach in relationship with the receiving coaching and second, the particular relation to the organization sponsoring the coaching. The authors postulate that, out of this multiple relation context, the most fundamental and primary agency relation is the one shared by the coach and the executive client. An agency relationship is based on high levels of trust and strict confidentiality (p. 600).

As in all principal/agent rapports, the agent (coach) has important obligations to serve the interests of the principal (client and secondarily the organization) in all matters of his/her agency.

There are two major kinds of agency theory. The first one emerges from economic thought (i.e. shareholder and management relations) and the second is based on legal tradition which emphasizes the role of the agent negotiating on behalf of principals and/or serving their interests. The second form of agency theory is broader and may often involve contracted agreements, as in the case of coaching engagements.

A deal breaking problem for executive coaches is that if they fail to serve in a complete and trustworthy way the interests of their client, a real risk is the complete breakdown of the fundamental relationship. The authors conclude that a kind of agency trust in an internal coaching relationship is essential to professionally execute coaching at its core (p.601).

Successful contracting is critically important to minimize ethical dilemmas

Given the high complexity level of operating in a multi-layer reporting relationship; the specific expectations organizations have to advise on individual employment related issues; the multiple sources of ethical standards, laws and regulations, as well as the very confidential nature of the coaching relationship, it is critical for the internal Human Resources coach to anticipate and prevent potential ethical issues by ensuring proper contracting exists with key stakeholders early in the process. On this regard, it is necessary to distinguish between the client and the sponsor: Client is the person(s) being coached and Sponsor is the entity (including its representatives) paying for and / or arranging for coaching services to be provided. In all cases, coaching engagement contracts or agreements should clearly establish the rights and responsibilities for both the client and sponsor (ICF Code of Ethics).

Citing David Dotlich and Peter Cairo (Action Coaching Model, 1999), Bennett (2008) lists three steps a coach should follow to reach agreement: (1) determine what needs to happen and in what context, (2) establish trust and set mutual expectations, and (3) contract for results. Successful contracting is also critical for establishing common understanding and alignment when it comes to confidentiality between the coach and the different stakeholders he/she serves, and ultimately, for ensuring that information collected from individuals be kept confidential. In the context of a coaching engagement, individuals should own their own data, whereas organizations own non-confidential and non-anonymous information (p. 7).

A four-step process and a set of decision-making principles for coaches to confront ethical dilemmas

Seeing as ethics is a critical foundation of any coaching relationship, having a clear understanding of shared, core values is important to any coach, but more importantly to organizational coaches interacting with multiple stakeholders. By having clarity on what the shared values are, coaches are better

prepared to understand that ethical issues have their genesis in one of only two conditions: they arise either 1) because of a departure from our values or 2) because of a conflict between two values. Ethical issues, in other words, can be reduced to either right-versus-wrong or right-versus-right situations (Kidder, 2004, p. 29).

Addressing right-versus-wrong situations almost always involves compliance, so the answers tend to be more or less straight forward; the coach must obey the law, regulations and company policy. A more challenging situation emerges when coaches need to reason through with right-versus-right issues. In these situations, the drivers of our toughest dilemmas can be reduced to four paradigms or patterns, which, once recognized, they help bring clarity to the situations:

1. Truth versus loyalty,
2. Individual versus Community,
3. Short-term versus long-term,
4. Justice versus mercy.

Even though there are no fixed formulas for reasoning these dilemmas, Doctor Kidder identifies a set of decision-making principles that coaches can use when facing ethical challenges:

1. The ends-based principle of utilitarian thinking, which can be summarized as “*Do the greatest good to the greatest number*”,
2. The rule-based principle of Emmanuel Kant’s “Categorical Imperative” or, in other words, the idea that ethics happens when you do only what you would want *everyone else in the world to do in similar circumstances*,
3. The case-based principle of the Golden Rule, in which we *do to others only what we would want them to do to us*.

These principles offer no clean and obvious solutions, so they should be considered tools for coaches to use, not magic answer systems (ps. 30 and 31).

Application and Implication for Coaching Practice

The key learning points of this research validated and confirmed the critical importance of the coaching guiding principles of ethics, client focus, motivation and permission. At first, the guiding principle of ethical conduct seemed to be the area towards which the research was naturally going to lead me, being ethics in the practice of internal coaching by HR professionals the theme of this work. However, and as I progressed on researching the subject, I clearly realized that understanding the nature and characteristics of potential ethical dilemmas, as important as it was, fell short from offering the answers I was looking for to the question of to what extent do HR professionals need to limit/modify their interaction in talent management decision-making processes involving the coachee, in order not to violate applicable ethical norms regulating the coaching practice/process.

Understanding and adhering to high standards of ethics, is no doubt, the cornerstone to any successful coaching relationship, particularly in the case of complex internal coaching interactions involving multiple stakeholders, reporting structures and professional requirements. The values, principles and overall framework that emerge from having clear ethical norms and expectations, set not only the boundaries of the coaching interaction, but constitute the paradigms through which the behaviors, actions and decisions emerging from the coaching process will be filter through (Table 2).

By incorporating the remaining guiding principles of client focus, motivation and permission, internal HR manager-coaches ensure proper understanding of: (1) what is important to the client, the sponsor and key stakeholders as well as what their true motivations, goals and objectives are; (2) how to identify and prevent stepping into potential ethical landmines, through multi-level listening and powerful

question asking (Build Commitment Through Involvement), and (3) how to ensure proper buy-in and commitment from all critical stakeholders as the coaching process progresses.

Internal HR manager coaches are also required to demonstrate competency and dexterity in applying the core coaching competencies of co-create the relationships, make meaning with others and help others succeed under highly challenging conditions. Given the nature of the HR function, organizations expect HR managers to consistently demonstrate proficiency in the entire list of nine core coaching competencies. The main difference, though, is that when used during a coaching relationship, the competencies are primarily utilized to serve the client's agenda first and the interests of the organization second. Therefore, subordinating the interests of the client to those of other key stakeholders, including those of the sponsoring organization creates the conditions for seriously damaging trust and credibility in the coaching relationship. There are circumstances, however, when the interests of other stakeholders, including those of the sponsoring organization, may take precedence to the personal interest of the coachee (i.e. when the coachee informs the coach that he/she is planning to resign to join a competitor). The highly complex nature of the multiple roles an HR manager coach has to play in an internal coaching relationship elevates the importance of contracting as a critical success factor of the coaching process. When it comes to either preventing or addressing potential ethical dilemmas in an internal coaching relationship, HR managers must strive to ensure clear and solid contracting terms with all stakeholders involved. Given the multiple interests, expectations and goals of the stakeholders involved, it will not suffice to successfully address the contracting needs of the coachee, but it will be necessary to establish sound contractual terms with different stakeholders, as well.

On this regard, I recommend developing a simple, yet comprehensive, single internal coaching contract for the sponsor, the coachee, the coach and other relevant stakeholders in the organization, such as HR managers, to agree upon and to be abided by. Amongst other important aspects of the coaching relationship, the single contract should address potential critical ethical issues such as:

- Confidentiality, i.e., what information could or will be shared, under what circumstances, to whom and by whom. The confidentiality clause will need to address not only the needs and expectations of the coachee, but also those arising from the roles, interests and expectations of the sponsor and other critical stakeholders, and
- Conflicts of interest, i.e., those emerging from privileged information the internal coach may have access to and that could negatively impact the coachee (the potential termination of employment of the employee being coached).

Establishing general principles or rules-of-thumb applicable across the organization may also help minimizing ethical dilemmas for internal HR manager coaches, for example, refraining from coaching employees either within their chain of command or those who belong to the business, regions or staff groups served by the HR professional.

Finally, the tools internal HR manager coaches can use to tackle ethical dilemmas are no different than those external coaches have at their disposal. From this research, the most simple and practical tool I found were Doctor Kidder's three decision-making principles:

1. The ends-based principle of utilitarian thinking, which can be summarized as "Do the greatest good to the greatest number"
2. The rule-based principle of Emmanuel Kant's "Categorical Imperative" or, in other words, the idea that ethics happens when you do only what you would want *everyone else in the world* to do in similar circumstances.
3. The case-based principle of the Golden Rule, in which we do to others only what we would want them to do to us.

Table 2.

Correlations among CCCP Guiding Principles, ICF Core Competencies & SHRM Code of Ethics and Professional Standards in Human Resource Management

CCCP Guiding Principles	Related ICF Competencies and/or Code of Conduct Content	Related SHRM Code of Ethics and Professional Standards in HR Management
Adhere to High Ethical Conduct	<p>Core Competencies 1 (Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards)</p> <p>Standards of Ethical Conduct As an ICF Professional Coach, I acknowledge and agree to honor my ethical and legal obligations to my coaching clients and sponsors, colleagues and to the public at large. I pledge to comply with the ICF Code of Ethics, and to practice these standards with those I coach (Pledge of Ethics).</p>	<p>As HR Professionals, we are responsible for adding value to the organizations we serve and contributing to the ethical success of those organizations...</p> <p>Adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional success (Guideline 1)</p> <p>HR Professionals are expected to exhibit individual leadership as a role model for maintaining the highest standards of Ethical conduct (Core Principle)</p>
Focus on the Client's Agenda	<p>Core Competencies 2 (Establishing the Coaching Agreement)</p> <p>Standards of Ethical Conduct 4, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25</p>	<p>Through teaching and mentoring, champion the development of others as ethical leaders in the profession and in organizations (Guideline 4)</p> <p>Ensure only appropriate information is used in decisions affecting the employment relationship (Guideline 2)</p>
Build Commitment Through Involvement	<p>Core Competencies 3 Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client), 4 (Coaching Presence), 5 (Active Listening), 6 (Powerful Questioning) and 7 (Direct, Clear and Effective Communication)</p> <p>Standards of Ethical Conduct 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18</p>	<p>HR professionals consider and protect the rights of individuals, especially in the acquisition and dissemination of information while ensuring truthful communications and facilitating informed decision-making (Use of Information)</p> <p>Safeguard restricted or confidential information (Guideline 5)</p>
Earn the Right to Advance at Each Stage of the Coaching Process	<p>Core Competencies 2 (Establishing the Coaching Agreement), 8 (Creating Awareness), 9 (Designing Actions), 10 (Planning and Goal Setting), 11 (Managing Progress and Accountability)</p> <p>Standards of Ethical Conduct 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17</p>	<p>"As HR professionals... we must protect the interests of our stakeholders... and should not engage in activities that create actual, apparent or potential conflict of interests..." (Core Principle)</p> <p>Regardless of personal interests, support decisions made by our organizations that are both ethical and legal (Guideline 6)</p>

Conclusions

The key learning points of this research lead me to conclude that:

1. The interest of organizations in internal coaching will continue to grow;
2. The role of HR managers will continue to be associated with coaching and mentoring employees and, as result, the number of internal HR managers coaching in organizations is likely to increase;
3. HR managers will continue to be expected to advise top management in employee-specific talent management areas, such as career progression, succession planning or compensation and benefits;
4. Internal HR manager coaches are, and will continue to be, abided by ethical norms emerging from multiple sources, including those applied to the coaching practice;
5. As the number of HR managers engaging in internal coaching roles increases, the likelihood of them to be exposed to ethical dilemmas will rise;
6. It's in everybody's best interest, sponsor organizations, internal HR coaches and clients alike, that coaching processes are conducted within strict ethical norms and that written, multi-stakeholder contracting agreements are in place prior to coaching engagements;
7. Most of the literature researched for this paper addressed coaching ethical issues in general terms and its primary focus was on external coaching and
8. There is a need for a more comprehensive research and analysis on the particularities of internal coaching ethics, especially when the internal coaching practitioners are immersed in a highly complex relationship model, as HR managers are.

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