

# ON THE 'EXECUTIVES AS SCIENTISTS' MOVEMENT



Dear readers,

You are holding a very special issue of the journal 'Executives in Science, Business and Society'. Over the past few years, we have witnessed countless discussions about the need to bridge business and science. Various academic institutions have come up with their own interpretations of how to do this. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's School of Business and Economics has also developed several approaches. Engaging with executives in scientific research has proved to be one of the most rewarding methods.

Consequently, in 2014, the Amsterdam Business Research Institute (ABRI) at the School of Business and Economics launched the Executive PhD programme: a 4-year, structured PhD training programme geared to facilitating professionals and executives in conducting high-impact academic research. Although the programme is aimed at an executive audience, it is not practically oriented, like a DBA or an MBA programme; it has the same rigour and objectives as ABRI's renowned fulltime PhD programme. The only difference being that the classroom consists of executives, and that training is offered on a part-time schedule with more structure and guidance.

The results of this programme have been reliably surprising. For this reason, we have decided to share our discoveries with our readers by dedicating this journal issue to the research conducted by executives.

For this same reason, we have chosen to rename our research journal, previously known as 'Amsterdam in Science, Business and Society', as 'Executives in Science, Business and Society.'

Our first discovery was that executives work on highly innovative, novel, and societally relevant topics. Executives' many years of work experience allow them to identify unique and novel topics that drive their scholarly investigations. Compared with junior PhD candidates, who may initially be more methodological, the executive PhDs seem better positioned to make theoretical contributions. Furthermore, our experience shows that experienced executives are often prolific writers, which may be explained by their passion and commitment to their topics.

Our next discovery was that executives' scientific research helps them professionalise and advance their areas of work as well as innovating within their organisations. Indeed, some of the executive PhD candidates have become influential speakers in their areas of expertise. Others have changed careers and become academics. What is common is their ability to ask highly relevant questions and approach issues from a complex perspective. We strongly believe that this adventurous mindset is exactly what propels business and society forward.

We have also learned that thanks to our Executive PhD programme, engaging 'Executives as Scientists' is becoming an important movement in Amsterdam Zuidas. Zuidas not only functions as the hub for many multinational headquarters in the Netherlands, but it is also a growing learning community. Changing how multinationals do business, and how they serve society, is not simple. It requires a multidisciplinary perspective, complex thinking, and scientific rigour

to consider all relevant evidence and account for all relevant stakeholders. This is already happening at Zuidas. We are very proud of what the 'executives as scientists' community has shown they can accomplish.

We hope you will enjoy reading this special issue of the journal, and that you too will be inspired to join our 'executives as scientists' movement!

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**SHOOTING FOR GOALS  
IN COACHING:  
ARE WE MISSING THE GOAL?**

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EXECUTIVE COACHES**

# COACHING



# SHOOTING TO SCORE IN COACHING: ARE WE MISSING THE GOAL?

At its core, coaching is a goal-directed change intervention. The over-arching goal is to narrow the gap between clients' current situations and their desired end states. Therefore, we know coaching has been successful when clients have reached their goals. This global understanding is based primarily on outcome research that focuses on linear explorations, as well as explanations of goal attainment with only two measurement points: one at the outset of coaching and one upon completion of the coaching engagement.

What we would like to further understand is:

- a) To what extent are goals self-directed rather than 'should' goals. Or in other words, are the goals self-concordant and in alignment with clients' true personality.
- b) The mechanisms by which clients attain self-directed goals during the coaching process.

So, we chose to explore clients' authentic self-development as the over-arching goal of the coaching enterprise. Authentic self-development is important, as it expresses how well we actualise our sense of self, without which we fail to meet our three basic human needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness as expressed forms of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In coaching, the result is that clients experience a relapse once the coaching engagement is over. We see this phenomenon unfold in

other areas of life as well—earning multiple academic degrees or top salaries or finding fame and fortune through significant achievements often leave individuals with a sense of yearning for more or a sense of void.

Therefore, our study explored how clients' personalities (based on the Big Five personality model) predicted their capacity to attain goals that are aligned with their intrinsic interests, needs, values and motivations.

We also explored how clients' capacity to regulate positive and negative affect (i.e., mood) influenced the relationship between personality and authentic self-development from session to session and beyond the full coaching engagement.

The longitudinal quantitative process study was conducted from November 2018 to August 2019. The research population was 176 pairs of professional coaches and real clients who engaged in up to 10 coaching sessions. Sessions lasted a minimum of

60 minutes, as is standard in coaching. Coaches were recruited from 31 countries, which reflects participants' culturally diverse backgrounds, from which we can draw solid generalisable conclusions. Clients completed one pre-coaching questionnaire, post-session questionnaires after each session, and one post-coaching questionnaire three months after completing the coaching engagement.

The study revealed the following:

- a) The Big Five trait levels of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, and Openness, as well as the psychological components of these traits (i.e., ABCDs: Affect, Behaviour, Cognition and Desire), both predicted three out of four aspects of authentic self-development: higher levels of perceived competence, goal commitment and goal self-concordance. They did not predict the fourth, goal stability;
- b) The overall affect balance over sessions

rather than the change in affect balance explained the direct relationship between personality and two aspects of authentic self-development: perceived competence and goal commitment, but not self-concordance and goal stability.

These findings imply that:

- a) While clients' affect balance increases across sessions over time, coaching as a change intervention in and of itself has a self-regulatory influence on clients. Each coaching session forms more than the sum of its individual parts. What seems to be important for clients' authentic self-development is 'how well' rather than 'how much more or less' they arrive at regulating their emotions across sessions and over time. This may explain why a change in affect balance is not found to explain the relationship between personality and authentic self-development.

For instance, if you have a conscientious



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personality, your change in mood does not explain why you stay committed to a goal. Instead, your average increased capacity to balance your moods may determine how well you can stay committed to goals over time.

- b) From a humanistic perspective, goal stability is a X) way of developing continuity and coherence across potentially contradictory behaviours and the Y) capacity to integrate our inconsistent behaviours into a coherent self-concept. Contradictory behaviours may imply that goals are malleable depending on complex situational factors (i.e., clients feel safe in the coach-client relationship). They may also depend on the extent to which our aspirations, motivations and intentions evolve over the course time. So, clients' capacity to develop authentically may be about maintaining their stability of goal-directed functioning rather than the stability of a goal per se.
- c) Coaching functions as a complex self-regulatory engagement. It serves as the key contextual factor in which clients show up as self-determined individuals to adjust goals in concordance with their true selves. Repeated goal-orientation and task-setting are likely to foster clients' 'continued adjustability' in how they pursue their goals. Therefore, clients' continued adjustability rather than goal-stability will support their 'becoming one' in line with their personality during a

coaching engagement.

- d) Clients experience coaching as a learning process in which they can attain goals with minimal pressure and compulsion (i.e., they feel more 'self-concordant' in their goal pursuits) when coaching is in line with their personalities. For instance, clients whose goals match their implicit personalities will feel a strong conviction and will be interested in pursuing their goals in line with their true self, which implies that self-concordance does not require any self-regulatory resources through affect balance in coaching.

Based on these findings, authentic self-development is formulated during the process of becoming a continuously congruent self with contradictory behaviours, most probably against someone else's taste in a social context. Coaching, as a social context, illustrates a unique self-regulatory intervention that supports clients in their process of 'becoming one'.

For leadership, which requires key coaching competencies, the findings imply that leaders need to:

- a) foster authentic self-development among their staff as the ultimate means to sustained outcomes,  
b) engage with their staff's self-perception of competence, goal commitment and goal self-concordance towards 'becoming one' at work,

- c) adopt a leadership style that sustains their staff's balanced affective, cognitive, behavioural and motivational aspects of their personalities while on their paths to goal attainment,  
d) integrate coaching competencies that support staff's self-regulatory resources (i.e., affect balance) to support their attainment of self-congruent goals,  
e) apply leadership as a contextual factor that has the potential to influence staff's capacity to self-regulate beyond their own self-regulatory resources.

Ultimately, leadership as a coaching capability is a contextual factor that influences how staff can attain goals in congruence with their true self, which ultimately impacts how organisations reach their own goal of sustained success and organisational development.

# RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY EXECUTIVES

Gorbatov, S., Khapova, S. N., Oostrom, J. K., & Lysova, E. I. (Accepted/In press). Personal brand equity: Scale development and validation. *Personnel Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12412>

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# MANAGEMENT BOOKS



## DOET MARKETING ERTOE?

Ruud Frambach

Is marketing misleading and a waste of money? This impression can certainly arise if marketing is used incorrectly. A price is always paid for this, in the long term also by marketing itself. This undermines confidence in the profession and limits the important and especially valuable role that marketing can play. When used properly, marketing can create value for customers and at the same time realize value for companies, shareholders and society. There is still much to be gained, both for experienced marketers and for organizations where marketing hardly plays a role. From a strong focus on practice and based on the latest scientific insights, this book shows how marketing can offer demonstrable value for organizations and their stakeholders. Dutch | EAN: 9789024418725



## HOW TO SURVIVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL REVOLUTION: A GUIDE TO AGILE CONTEMPORARY OPERATING MODELS, PLATFORMS AND ECOSYSTEMS

Ard-Pieter de Man, Pieter Koene and Martijn Ars

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guide, showing when managers may use them and when to avoid them. In addition it discusses implementation strategies, governance issues and the dark side of new organizational forms. Many practical cases illustrate the ideas.

English | ISBN13: 9789063695217



## RIDING THE WAVES OF CULTURE, FOURTH EDITION: UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY IN GLOBAL BUSINESS 4TH EDITION

Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner

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English | EAN: 9781260468649



**FAIR TALK: THREE STEPS TO POWERFUL FEEDBACK**

**Sergey Gorbatov,  
Angela Lane**

Employees around the world are deprived of honest objective feedback, and the higher you go in the organisation, the less feedback you are going to get.

Researchers confirmed that the less facetime employees have with their managers, the more impact seeking and receiving feedback will have on their performance. Gorbatov and Lane propose a simple, systematic approach to giving fair and honest feedback, in ways that improve performance and prove that, if done properly, feedback simultaneously improves performance while engaging and developing employees.

English | ISBN13: 978-1912555093



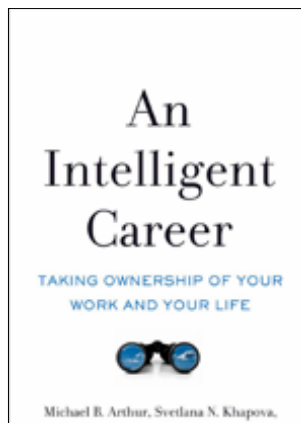
**S.L.I.M. MANAGEN VAN AI IN DE PRAKTIJK: HOE ORGANISATIES SLIMME TECHNOLOGIE IMPLEMENTEREN**

**Lauren Waardenburg,  
Marleen Huysman,  
Marlou Agterberg**

The authors describe how eight organizations deal with the implementation and use of artificial intelligence (AI). They identify the following four key challenges of implementing AI: organizing for data, testing and validating AI, creating bridges between AI

design and use, and changes in work. Using a combination of existing literature and thorough practical examples they make four recommendations for WISE management of AI. This means that managing AI requires Work-related insights, Interdisciplinary knowledge, Socio-technical change processes, and Ethical awareness. These recommendations for managing AI provide the reader a unique insight into the roles and responsibilities of management in this process and provides clear guidance on how to shape this process in your own organization.

Dutch | EAN 9789490463809



**AN INTELLIGENT CAREER: TAKING OWNERSHIP OF YOUR WORK AND YOUR LIFE**

**Michael Arthur,  
Svetlana Khapova,  
Julia Richardson**

Using examples and insights from around the globe, the authors explain how you can take stock of your career; combine assets such as your commitment, experience and relationships;

determine future action; and earn greater career success. If you are a manager, consultant, or counselor the authors show how you can support other people's careers, enabling them to define and meet their career goals and aspirations.

The book unfolds in two parts, first encouraging reflection and then turning to action. In Part One, you will come to grips with your own intelligent career experience to date. In Part Two, you will learn how to create and leverage new opportunities offered by the contemporary work environment.

English | EAN: 9780190866310

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AMSTERDAM  
IN SCIENCE,  
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# AMSTERDAM BUSINESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Amsterdam Business Research Institute (ABRI), established in 2009 by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, is one of the largest institutes of business and management research in Europe. Located in the midst of the business and financial district of Amsterdam – the Amsterdam Zuidas – the distinct expertise of ABRI lays in the business performance and management of professional and financial services. With a specific focus on this sector, ABRI's researchers conduct research and offer doctoral (PhD) education in six areas:

1. Accounting & Financial Management
2. Information & Innovation Management
3. Logistics & Operations Research
4. Marketing
5. Organisational Behaviour & HRM
6. Strategy & Organisation

Dozens of public and private organisations, among which are ABN AMRO, Deloitte, and KPMG, collaborate with ABRI in research and business intelligence and in addressing today's business and management challenges. These business-science partnerships are aimed at delivering rigorous and relevant contributions not only to better business practices and processes within organisations in the Netherlands, but also to contribute to a stronger European economy.

*Visit our web-site [www.abri.vu.nl](http://www.abri.vu.nl) to learn about recent research findings concerned with business and management, and to initiate a new collaboration to benefit your organisation!*