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Exploring the Value a Psychological Assessment
brings to Workplace Coaching for the Purpose of
Stress Reduction and Increased Job Satisfaction

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
Psychology

at Massey University, Albany,
New Zealand

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2015

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the people who have helped and supported me through the process of completing my thesis. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Richard Fletcher for his guidance, support and encouragement throughout the research and thesis writing process. I would also like to thank Anne Gardner for her friendship and support.

To my family and friends, every one of you who have helped and supported me along the way, I would like to thank for your tolerance, encouragement, and advice. I would also sincerely like to thank those of you who helped with computer functions as required. I could not have completed this process without your assistance.

Yes, it is now okay to ask if I have finished my thesis.

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Abstract

This research explored the impact of using a psychological assessment in workplace coaching to reduce stress, and increase job satisfaction and work engagement. Organisations that recognise employees as valuable assets are seeking ways to address stress in the workplace, and increase work engagement, and one of the tools often used is workplace coaching. While it is recognised that coaching is an effective tool for stress management, the aim of this research was to explore if there is any value in adding a psychological assessment to the coaching process. The study sample consisted of 42 individuals from a variety of occupations, genders, ethnicities and age groups, who were all reporting some level of perceived stress. The participants were randomly allocated into two groups, and both groups received four coaching sessions using positive psychology coaching tools, and one group also received a psychological assessment (MBTI) to enable greater data gathering on individual preferences and strengths. The research explored quantitative data from the Perceived Stress Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, collected at three time points; Time 1 was collected prior to the start of the coaching programme; Time 2 was collected at the conclusion of the coaching programme; Time 3 was collected two months after the coaching had concluded. Although both groups reported continued reduction in stress levels as a result of the coaching, there was no significant difference between the experimental group (MBTI) and the control group. Work engagement scales showed no significant difference either within or between groups. An unexpected finding was that although ten of the original participants failed to complete the research, all ten were from the control group and the entire experimental group completed the coaching programme. The research has implications for both coaching practitioners and organisations, as both seek to identify tools to address workplace stress, job satisfaction and work engagement that have empirical evidence of effectiveness. Limitations and recommendations for future research are also considered.