CHAPTER THREE THE LEARNING CHALLENGES OF THE DIFFERENT PRACTICE DISCIPLINES

Chapter Outline

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a discussion of the different practice disciplines relevant to this study. It is argued that support practitioners need the knowledge, skills and competencies of these practice disciplines to enable them to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses effectively to meet the various venture life cycle challenges. Support practitioners should thus be able to determine when a specific discipline is required and appropriate as an intervention methodology. These practices normally take place on a one-on-one basis (Hill & Neeley, 1991:17; Berry & Sweeting, 2006:33; Bennett & Robson, 1999:155; Vaughan & Kavelle, 2004:3).

The focus to date appears to have been mainly on business management criteria in the education and training of practitioners. This study is not overly concerned with what label the practitioner is called by but recognises that, in addition to knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship and business management, practitioners will also need to possess some or all of the different practice discipline skills. A distinction is made in this study between the practice categories and practice disciplines. This study defines the practice categories as *the labels by which practitioners are commonly known.* Five practice categories are mentioned in the literature in the context of entrepreneur and small business support, namely, Business Advisor, Business Coach, Business Counsellor, Business Consultant and Business Mentor. The study defines practice disciplines as *the intervention approaches used by practitioners in the provision of entrepreneurial and small business support.* Five practice disciplines are also discussed in the literature, namely, Business Advising, Business Counselling, Business Coaching, Business Consulting and Business Mentoring. This study proposes that the distinction between practice categories and practice disciplines is important as it appears from the exploratory research phase as well as the field research that the practice category label of a practitioner does not provide clarity as to what approach or approaches are followed by a particular practitioner.

Each of the different practice disciplines requires different knowledge, skills and competencies. This study recognises that it is possible for one practitioner to possess all of the different practice discipline skills and that such a practitioner will be a valuable resource to an entrepreneur or small business. Thus it is proposed that although a practitioner might possess the required business management knowledge and skills, he or she needs also to possess entrepreneurial knowledge, that is, knowing what is required for successful venture development and growth as well as how to transfer and develop the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (through one or all of the practice disciplines).

This chapter uses the literature to define and discuss the different practice disciplines, especially with regard to their role in support provision and the knowledge, skill and competence requirements of each practice discipline. A discussion is also offered on the use of models as intervention tools, benefits of the practice disciplines to entrepreneurs and small business owners, the similarities and differences between the practice disciplines and the suitability of each practice discipline for the different venture life cycle stages.

3.2 BUSINESS ADVISING AND INFORMATION

Hisrich and Peters (2002:73) state that an entrepreneur benefits from a strong support and advisory system in every phase of the new venture. This support system is perhaps most crucial during the start-up phase, as it provides information, advice, and guidance (Moran & Sear, 1998:5; Chaston, Badger & Sadler-Smith, 1999:191). Problems and needs also vary widely, depending upon whether the venture is just starting up or is an existing business that has to deal with one or other venture life cycle challenge (Timmons, 1999:330; Duggan & Blayden, 2001:2; Hisrich & Peters, 2002:498). There are essentially three information types that are needed at the business planning stage, namely, market information, operations information needs and financial information needs (Hisrich & Peters, 2002:227; Caniëls & Ramjn, 2005:591). However, as the venture develops, the complexity of the information needed and the advice offered will change.

The South African Government recognises the importance and value of information provision to entrepreneurs and small business owners as the provision of advice was made to be a key function of the Local Business Service centres (LBSCs) (White Paper, 1995) and also of the newly created SEDA Centres.

3.2.1 Defining the Nature of Business Advice and Information

Business advice is "the provision of independent, impartial and confidential information and guidance to potential and established businesses, based upon substantial business experience and current knowledge of related factors, so that clients may learn and benefit from that advice in their subsequent actions" (Dunsby, 1997:5). Business advice is also related to a specific area or issue within the business on which the advisor has made a judgement as to how best to resolve the situation and can suggest or recommend a course of action (Sen, 2005:1).

Business advice is recognised as a very varied field (Patterson & Spreng, 1997:177; Bratton, Bennett & Robson, 2003:730; Mole, 2004:114; Ramsden & Bennett, 2005:227; Berry & Sweeting, 2006:33). Business advice is delivered by a wide range of different suppliers each of which involves different types of exchange processes with their clients, within different market environments, very varied client-supplier cultures of interrelations, different regulatory environments, and varied service domains (Ramsden & Bennett, 2005:229). The provision of information to entrepreneurs is extremely useful. It can include technical publications on specific aspects of production; source books and guides on assessing viability; viable business opportunities; manuals or guides on market research and business planning; and contact information of local enterprise development agencies (Hisrich & Peters, 2002:171; Leighton & Schaper, 2003:136).

From a small business perspective, Timmons (1999) states that start-ups usually require help with critical one-time tasks and decisions that will have lasting impact on the business (Timmons, 1999:330). Advice might also be required on such matters as organisational structure, obtaining needed financial resources, marketing, and market segments (Hisrich & Peters, 2002:73). Typical business advice services that are rendered to entrepreneurs and small businesses include legislative and regulatory issues, business forms, human resource and labour relation issues, funding requirements and funding sources, acquisitions and partnerships, general management, accountancy services, planning and control issues, and cost control (Berry & Sweeting, 2006:2).

In summary, business advice involves giving access to information and insights but leaving the decision-making to the decision-maker.

3.2.2 The Role of Business Advice and Information

Ramsden and Bennett (2005:227) state that advice is usually targeted towards filling a specific need, overcoming a bottleneck, or providing a strategic view of market or organisational potential for future development. Business advice is often a combination of task interaction, where the client and advisor exchange information on problems to be solved and the means to accomplish them, and personal interaction, where the client's well-being is directly improved – by affecting changes in the ability of owner or manager, increasing the knowledge base of the manager, and improving his/her ability to cope (Ramsden & Bennett, 2005:228). It appears, despite there usually being more immediate objectives, that task interaction focuses more on cost reduction or increases in profit or turnover. Personal interaction, however, is inherently soft, subjective and cognitive, involving change in the business owner's outlook, or the approach of its managers or staff (Ramsden & Bennett, 2005:227). Hill and Neeley (1991:17) and Clark (1995:10) are in agreement that the main motives for an SME to use advisors are to gain specialist knowledge, fill gaps, or obtain intense temporary help to overcome specific problems.

3.2.3 Knowledge and Skills Requirements for Business Advisors

Business advice, it would appear, requires specialist knowledge and competency in one or other professional business management area, such as accounting, law or management (Timmons, 1999:216; Dunsby, 1997:11; Bennett, Bratton & Robson, 2000:813; Hisrich & Peters, 2002:498; Bennett & Robson, 2005:5; Ramsden & Bennett, 2005:227), but practitioners can also possess generalist business knowledge and skills (Berry & Sweeting, 2006:33).

Chaston and Baker (1998:249) identified through their research thirteen factors that influence the perception of whether the advisor input had the outcome of contributing to the client's business being more successful. These factors are:

- *the advisor's personal attributes;*
- *the advisor's business skills;*
- *the regularity of contact;*
- *the advisor's personal sharing;*
- *the client's personal sharing;*
- *the closeness of relationship;*
- *the advisor's availability;*
- *the advisor's competence;*
- *the advisor's consistency;*
- *the advisor's openness;*
- *the advisor's trust;*
- *the advisor's commitment;*

- *the advisor's listening skills.*

These factors, as can be observed, include both task interaction and personal interaction criteria, which implies that an advisor, although technically competent, must also have the ability to relate to the client.

In a South African context, Nieman (2004:6) identified the specific requirements of business advisors as follows:

Table 3.1 Specific experience required by business advisors (Adapted from Nieman, 2004:6)

• Had identified markets and done market research • Had devised and implemented market strategies • Had recognised and followed up on sales or income opportunities • Had negotiated with customers and secured orders • Had located suppliers and negotiated prices and terms • Had organised production, distribution and services • Had devised and implemented quality control procedures • Had recruited, trained, supervised and dismissed staff • Had dealt with income tax, VAT and training levies • Had investigated and organised imports and/or exports	• Had exposure to health, safety and environmental requirements • Had understood financial statements (income, balance sheet and cash flow) • Had raised finance through overdrafts, loans, equity, etc. • Had analysed costs, set prices and checked margins • Had controlled cash flow and implemented credit control • Had faced threats to the business and overcome them • Had implemented strategic planning and managed growth • Had assisted potential entrepreneurs in business plans and start-ups • Had bought or leased property and met legal requirements

Table 3.1 appears to emphasise more specific task or technical requirements. Business advisors should also possess certain characteristics and Agar and Witzel (1997:5) identified twenty characteristics of excellent business advisors that are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of excellent Business Advisors (Adapted from Agar & Witzel, 1997:5)

Practitioners should reveal the ability to: • develop strong relationships • network • communicate and build relationships • read signs and read people • develop rapport • demonstrate empathy through asking the right questions • be reliable and provide a speedy response • be credible • assess the client's growth potential • involve clients in problem-solving	• get results • dedicate and commit to the success of the client • analyse the situation • make use of third parties • move clients from the operational to strategic level • impart learning to clients • provide deep commitment to their work and the businesses they serve • provide strong commitment to learning • provide strong people orientation • demonstrate value

From Tables 3.1 and 3.2, it can be deduced that the knowledge, skills and competency requirements of business advisors imply that they should receive education and training in business management issues as well as education and training in how to deal with people.

3.3 BUSINESS CONSULTING

3.3.1 Definitions

Business consulting appears from the literature (Tann & Laforet, 1997:7; Gilbert, 1998:340; McLachlin, 1999:394; Schein, 1990:57; Schaffer, 1997:5; De Jong & Van Eekelen, 1999:181; Stephen, 1999:392; Simon & Kumar, 2001:362; McLarty & Robinson, 1998:256) to be an outflow from general consulting to businesses and organisations, which later became more commonly known as management consulting.

Management consulting is defined by De Jong and Van Eekelen (1999:181) as "an advisory service contracted for and provided to organisations by specifically trained and qualified persons who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organisation to identify management problems, analyse such problems, recommend solutions to these problems and help when requested in the implementation of solutions." From this definition it can be deduced that consultants, like other support practitioners, are external to the business and provide mainly advisory support services. McLarty and Robinson (1998:261) also describe management consultancy practice as complex, which relies on intuition as well as analysis, on methods as well as solutions. Stephen (1999:392) also identifies five elements that characterise consulting, namely:

- consultants bring expertise and insight;
- their ideas have impact;
- they often help to create shared visions;
- they show that they care;
- they can provide new energy to a client organisation.

Schein (1990:57) distinguishes between three models of consulting, namely:

- providing expert information;
- playing doctor;
- process consultation.

In discussing Schein's models of consulting, McLachlin (1999:399) criticises conventional consulting for ignoring psychological and cultural issues, thus dooming many consulting projects to failure. McLachlin (1999) distinguishes between two types of management consulting:

- Organisational development consulting is a top down planned process of change in an organisation's culture meant to increase organisational effectiveness through planned interventions, utilising behavioural-science knowledge and grounded in a number of distinct theories.
- Other management consulting may be described as the application of needed expertise in the form of unique knowledge, skills, insights,

methods, or technology to help managers get better results, often including implementation.

According to McLachlin (1999:399), organisational development uses Schein's process consultation model whereas other types of management consulting typically follow an expert or doctor model which focuses on content. Schaffer (1997) also suggests that consultancy effectiveness requires a blend of content consulting and process consulting.

3.3.2 The Role of Business Consulting

Quoting from a previous study, Timmons (1999:330) states that consultants are employed by start-ups for the following reasons:

- to compensate for a lower level of professional experience;
- to target a wide market segment (possibly to do market research for a consumer goods firm);
- to undertake projects which require a large start-up investment in equipment.

Tasks and decisions of consultants might include assessing business sites, evaluating lease and rental agreements, setting up record- and bookkeeping systems, finding business partners, obtaining start-up capital, and formulating initial marketing plans (Timmons, 2002:330).

Gilbert (1998:340) views the idea of the consultant as doctor or therapist as central to the understanding of what a consultant does. Gilbert (1998) states that consultants are called in to investigate a case in an ailing business or organisation; they carry out a diagnosis and prescribe a course of treatment, which may be more or less painful depending on the severity of the complaint (Gilbert, 1998:340).

Consultancy services are also rendered on growth issues and specialised issues, for example, market research, computerising business tasks, equipment lease decisions, and changing of inventory valuation methods (Timmons, 2002:331).

McLarty and Robinson (1998:261) view the role of consultants as facilitating change and bringing an objective view to an organisation or business. According to them, management consultants provide the relevant expertise when problems and opportunities arise which are outside the skill and experience parameters required by the organisation concerned. The work undertaken can cover almost any area of operations, from market analysis to manufacturing processes, from marketing strategy to organising the launch of a new product into a new market place (McLarty & Robinson, 1998:287). In another research project, Simon and Kumar (2001:367) identified five main reasons why businesses and organisations engage consultants, namely, insufficient in-house expertise; the need for independent/objective advice; gaining additional help/resources; insufficient manpower in-house; and the need for a quick resolution to issues.

3.3.3 Consultant Requirements

Consultants according to Ram (1999:875) and Timmons (1999:331) tend to have specialties, such as a short-sleeve approach to problems, an understanding attitude toward the feelings of managers and their subordinates, a modest and truthful offer of services and an ability to produce results. Consultants also have a reasonable and realistic charge for services and a willingness to maintain a continuous relationship (Timmons, 2002:331).

Simon and Kumar (2001:171) state that management consultants need to be multi-skilled and technically competent and should have excellent people skills. From their research they found ten strategic capabilities that consultants should possess to ensure success and also identified five performance indicators for consultancy evaluation. These strategic capabilities and performance indicators are listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Strategic capabilities and performance indicators for Consultants (Adapted from Simon & Kumar, 2001:317)

Strategic capabilities	Performance indicators
• ability to listen and comprehend the client • quality of service • client-consultant communication • integrity and honesty • technical knowledge • credibility • going the extra mile • identifying problems /opportunities • innovation/creativity • solving problems	• achieving objectives agreed upon • customer/client satisfaction • timeliness of service delivery • recommendations actually implemented • achieving measurable results

The strategic and performance indicators for consultants outlined in Table 3.3 appear to emphasise both business and people issues.

3.4 BUSINESS COUNSELLING

3.4.1 Counselling Definitions

Counselling, it appears, has developed out of the therapeutic and psychological disciplines (MacRae, 2002:1; Laabs, 2000:1; Mentor Assistance Program for Non Profits, 2004:1). Confirming the therapeutic nature of counselling, other authors also view counselling as focusing on dysfunction, conflict and problem solving (Stone, 1999:82; Whitmore, 1997:3; Parsloe & Wray, 2000:12; Carroll, 2003:5). Dunsby (1997:5) defines business counselling as a process “by which business problems are diagnosed and resolved in such a way that the clients learn not only how to overcome their current difficulties, or exploit their opportunities, but also how to tackle similar situations in future.” This definition of Dunsby is supported by Adams (2003:167).

3.4.2 The Role of Business Counselling

According to Adams (2003:168) the aim of counselling is to boost individual and firm performance, and this is an ongoing process for development that takes place through one-on-one meetings.

From a business intervention perspective the counselling objectives are seen as outlined below:

- to identify problems and their source;
- to evaluate actual performance against expected performance; and
- to develop action plans to bring performance up to minimum expectations (Adams, 2003:168).

The role of business counselling is also highlighted by Dunsby (1997) who states:

> Business counselling is a process in which a business advisor works "through and with", rather than "for" a client. As a result, clients come to own both problem and solution and they are motivated to set objectives and take action. Business counselling is also viewed as a means to an end – that end is a profitable business, more effectively managed.
>
> (Dunsby, 1997:5).

Adams (2003:168) also sees the need for business counselling to provide expert help in the start-up and growth process as well as providing a guiding hand and an anchor to hold onto in crises. Business counselling also serves to address skills deficiency gaps and to avoid crisis management (Adams, 2003:168).

3.4.3 Business Counselling Requirements

A summary of the business counselling requirements is provided in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Business counselling requirements (Nieman, 2004:7)

• Trust and confidentiality • Relationship management • Managing the process • Client ownership • Appropriate application of knowledge/experience • Analysis/diagnosis with the client • Development of alternative solution • Insight into the world of SMME's • Empathy with and awareness of commercial pressures • Commitment to client • Humility and objectivity

The business counselling requirements show similarities with the business advising and business consulting requirements. However, issues such as analyses and diagnoses are shown to be important in counselling and this implies a particular competency requirement.

3.5 BUSINESS MENTORING

> Running a growing firm can be a lonely business. One of the toughest aspects of setting up a company is the feeling that there is no one to turn to for help and advice. Many budding entrepreneurs find that the answer is a mentor. Mentoring, formal or informal, is common in larger companies where younger employees form a relationship with a more senior person who offers guidance and career advice. The concept is catching on in growing firms, where business experts believe it can make a difference to an owner-manager's peace of mind.
> (Finn, 2004:1)

Small businesses have tended not to use mentoring services due to lack of confidence in their own ability and anticipated lack of benefit from mentoring: "It depends where the mentor actually comes from and whether he has experience that is relevant to what you are doing … the mentor needs to operate at the same level as the person he is mentoring" (Kent & Tanton, 2003:442).

3.5.1 Mentoring Definitions

Traditionally mentoring might have been described as the activities conducted by a person (the mentor) for another person (the mentee) in order to help that other person to do a job more effectively and/or to progress in their career. The mentor was probably someone who had "been there, done that" before (Kram, 1983:608; Gibbons, 2004c:2; Van Emmerik, Baugh & Euwema, 2005:310).

A more general definition of mentoring states that mentoring is about downloading the expert version to another person who needs it also in a personal relationship dynamic. It is about the mentor who is an expert in his/her field, thinking out aloud in the protégé's presence so that the latter can obtain the wisdom and insight from the mentor in order to become better in that particular discipline or area of work (Garvey, 1994:18; Rigsby, Siegel & Spiceland, 1998:107; Siegel, Smith & Mosca, 2001:362; Price, 2005:2). There appears to be agreement that mentors need to be experienced and experts in their field. In this regard Management-Mentors Inc. (2000) also defines mentoring as "a professional relationship in which a more experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the 'mentoree') in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less experienced person's professional and personal growth" (Management-Mentors Inc., 2000:7).

Within the business environment, business mentoring is described as relating to any situation for the person being mentored that has an implication for the business. Mentoring is an approach that uses the skills and expertise of the mentor to get the mentees to think about the possible options available and consider the consequences and implications of those actions. The focus of mentoring is on developing the capability and potential of mentees (Ragins & Cotton, 1999:529; Gibbons, 2004a; Gibbons, 2004c; Sen, 2005:1).

3.5.2 The Role of Business Mentoring

Business mentoring is also seen as an ongoing, long-term business counselling relationship between an experienced business advisor (or corporate executive) and a client, which covers a diverse range of topics as a business develops over time towards an agreed set of objectives (Garvey, 1995:12; Clawson, 1996:6; Adams, 2003:168; Van Emmerik, *et al*., 2005:310). In summarising the literature, and referring to organisational development, Carter (1991:18) argues that

- individuals will often seek mentor support from more than one other;
- mentors ideally fulfil both career development and psychosocial functions;
- mentors can be divided into those who fulfil both functions (primary) or purely career development functions (secondary);
- mentor relationships can either arise naturally or be assigned by an organisation;
- there are major problems with assigned mentor relationships and not much evidence that they can be effective;
- organisational support is critical to mentor success and should be fostered by organisational change interventions.

Management-Mentors Inc. identifies the following functions that are performed by mentors, namely, that mentors teach a mentee about a specific issue, coach a mentee on a particular skill, facilitate a mentee's growth by providing resources/networks, challenge a mentee to move beyond his or her comfort zone, create a safe learning environment for taking risks and focus on a mentee's total development (Management-Mentors Inc., 2000:7).

3.5.3 Mentoring Experience Required

> A mentor is likely to have had a successful personal track record in a role similar to that of the client. Thus the nature of this relationship may tend to contain relatively more content than process. Reputation and trust towards the mentor are powerful determinants in making the chemistry work. A good mentor simply needs to be a good coach.
>
> (Lyons, 2004:3)

Other personal mentor qualities as summarised by Gibbons (2004b) are depicted in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Mentor qualities (adapted from Gibbons, 2004b:1)

• Good listener • Give advice but still expect the mentees to make their own decisions • Always find time to help • Always question thoroughly to find the real issues • Always give honest opinions • Have a good range of networks and contacts that can be utilised appropriately • Are not intimidating – easy to approach • Know what they are talking about – are good at their own job • Look for the reality within which the mentees work • Always focus on mentees' needs during a mentoring session • Do not get irritated by mentees who do not get the point quickly • Are optimists • Are encouraging • Are always well prepared • Are positive role models in terms of own achievements • Can help mentees believe in their own potential • Are open to new ideas • Know when to introduce options • Can challenge assumptions skilfully • Are positive persons • Possess great patience • Are interested in people • Are active listeners • Are non-judgemental • Feel comfortable about developmental issues • Are enthusiastic about mentoring • Are very knowledgeable about developmental issues	• Are tolerant • Do not expect mentees to be like them • Are prepared to learn with mentees • Can give feedback skilfully • Allow the mentees the freedom and confidence to make mistakes • See mentees as equals • Have sound judgement • Are able to distance themselves, and maintain objectivity • Are keen to allow mentees to make their own decisions • Keep in regular contact with mentees • Take an interest in the individual mentees – value their views and what they say • Are able to probe beyond the superficial • Can provide the space for mentees to express their feelings • Can draw out mentees' ideas and are willing to use them • Have a true passion for developing others and really believe in the value of development • Avoid temptation to direct conversation back to themselves and their issues and experiences • Can challenge constructively and directly to get to the heart of the matter • Would not just tell mentees what they want to hear • Never appear keen to get the mentoring meeting over with and move on to the next meeting • Do not talk about own achievements too much • Have a genuine desire to empower • Are responsive to mentees

Business mentors also require "business management experience" which is defined as meaning personal involvement in a range of activities in various business functions in a positive and successful manner including, for example, having "been there and done that" (Dunsby, 1997:7; Mead, Cambell & Milan, 1999:283; Finn, 2004:1; Goldsmith, 2004:1). The business management experience required by mentors is summarised in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Business management skills and experience requirements for Business Mentors (Dunsby, 1997:7)

• Developed and implemented strategic business plans • Identified markets and undertaken market research • Devised and implemented marketing strategies and plans • Recognised and followed up sales opportunities • Negotiated with potential customers and securing orders • Located suppliers and negotiated prices and payment terms • Organised production, distribution and supporting services • Devised and implemented quality control procedures • Investigated and organised imports and/or exports	• Recruited, trained, supervised and dismissed employees • Dealt with Income Tax, National Insurance and VAT procedures • Met health and safety at work and environmental requirements • Understood Profit and Loss Accounts and Balance sheets • Raised finance through overdrafts, loans, equity, etc. • Analysed costs, set prices and checked profit margins • Controlled cash flow and implemented credit control • Dealt with the legal aspects of running a business • Faced threats to the business, and overcame them successfully • Managed growth and implemented strategic planning

Dunsby (1997) is of the view that business mentors with business management experience have definite benefits for both the entrepreneur and the enterprise. A summary of the benefits of business mentor management experience is summarised in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Benefits of business mentor management experience (Dunsby, 1997:8)

Experienced business mentors • relate to the Client's situation and show empathy • quote relevant real-life examples to illustrate solutions • recognise strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats • apply a balanced judgement of business risks • diagnose underlying problems and resolve them through the client • help clients to overcome their current difficulty • recommend the involvement of specialists at the right stage • prioritise alternative options and courses of action • motivate clients to set objectives and take action • show clients how to tackle future problems themselves

The benefits of business management experience highlighted in Table 3.7 indicate that the business mentor is able to utilise his/her personal experiences either to assist the clients themselves or direct them to an appropriate source of assistance. The value of the mentor's experience in enhancing a positive mentoring relationship is also supported by Ragins (1997), Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999), Alred, Garvey and Smith (2001) as well as Nielson and Eisenbach (2003).

3.6 BUSINESS COACHING

3.6.1 Coaching Definitions

Coaching as a technique for fostering self-development is rooted in antiquity (Bagshaw & Bagshaw, 2002:194). The main categories of coaching discussed in the literature are Professional and Life Coaching (International Coach Federation, 2004:1), Executive Coaching (Koonce, 1994:34; McDermott, 1996:67; Wright, 1998:176; Thach & Heinselman, 1999; Levinski, 2000:1; McDermott, 2001:15; Thach, 2002:205; Hillary, 2003:10; Blackman-Sheppard, 2004:5; Braddick, 2004:1; Clutterbuck, 2004:1; The Coaching and Mentoring

Network, 2004a:1) and Business Coaching (Burdett, 1998:142; Porter, 2000:241; Wild, 2000:162; Duigan, 2004:1; Sen, 2005:1). Coaching then influences different professions and the coach also plays various roles, which is borne out by the following definition which states that "a coach is part consultant, part motivator and an objective alter ego, who works with executives, managers, businessmen/women, and just plain folks to help them to define and achieve their goals" (Rogers, 2001:1). These goals might be career-orientated or personal and often they entail both (Rogers, 2001:1).

Other authors define coaching as drawing out latent potential and expanding/building on an employee's sense of flow (Burdett, 1998:10), empowering individuals (Wright, 1998:176; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992:15), goal setting (Norvell, 1998:14; Barber, 2002:2), potential development (Bivens, 1996:50; Koonce, 1994:34; Ford, 1992:21), professional development and performance improvement (Popper & Lipshitz, 1992:15; Rider, 2002:233; Pasloe, 2004:1; Braddick, 2004:1; Price, 2005:2; O'Shaughnessey, 2001:194; Rabey, 2001:198; Borkowski, 2001:1; King & Eaton, 1999:145; Warren-Brown & Robinson, 2002:41).

In the business environment, coaching serves to review and challenge old values, attitudes, styles of dealing with people, and strategies for getting things done, so that managers work more effectively, maintain peak performance for longer in dealing with their current particular situation and in dealing with their specific colleagues at a given point in time. In the broadest sense, the aim of the coach is to empower the client by increasing his/her understanding, sense of direction and purpose so that he/she can maximise his/her contribution to the business (Ford, 1992:21; Flaherty, 2004:1; Weiss, 2004:1). Business coaching is also related to a specific area or issue within the business. However, the approach is to use the skills and expertise of the coach to facilitate the coachee "discovering" the most appropriate option or solution to take. Coaching focuses on developing skills and performance (Sen, 2005:1), as well as assisting the individual to focus on objectives, develop resiliency, and build interpersonal savvy (Giglio, Diamante & Urban, 1998:93; Burdett, 1999:10).

3.6.2 Coaching Roles

The literature identifies the following as roles of coaching:

- adopting a goal-orientated process (Rabey, 2001:198; Rider, 2002:233);
- focusing on specific causes (King & Eaton, 1999:146; Redshaw, 2000:107; Rogers, 2001:1);
- focusing on the behaviours and actions of clients (Ram, 1999:875; Thach & Heinselman, 1999:34; Bacon, 2003:73; Brocato, 2003:17; Hillary, 2003:10; Porche & Niederer, 2004:41);
- developing abilities and experiences (Phillips, 1994:19; Buckley & Caple, 1996:4; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992:15; Filpczak, 1998:1; Bowerman & Collins, 1999:291; Rider, 2002: 233; Hutton, 2003:21);
- implementing a partnership approach when dealing with client problems (Barry, 1994:24; Norvell, 1998:14; Bivens, 1996:50; Rosen, 1998:32);
- assisting clients with action planning, solving problems and facing issues (Guest, 1999:1; Baker, 2002:38);
- acting as catalyst (Burdett, 1999:10; Coleman, 2000:54; Hyatt, 2003:22);
- aligning professional objectives (Rosen, 1998:32; Burdett, 1999:10);
- changing post-training behaviours (Levinski, 2000:1; Wright & Tao, 2001:218);
- developing mastery through self-efficacy (Popper & Lipshitz, 1992:15).

The coaching roles indicate the strong focus of the coaching practice on behavioural and personal development issues. This focus forms a very distinct difference between coaching and the other intervention practices.

3.6.3 Coaching Process

On a general level, Burdett (1998:144) states that any durable coaching process must contain three elements, namely, managing expectations (the game plan), monitoring performance (watching the play), and giving feedback (time out). With regard to coaching executives, MacRae (2002:3) also describes a three-step process which consists of a review of the executive's career, strengths and shortcomings – the goal being to pinpoint skills that could use some honing; creating a comprehensive action plan and an executive and coach test as well as implementing the executive's action plan.

On a more interventionist level, Rider (2002:233) states that coaches use one or more processes including:

- **Reflection,** where the coach helps the clients step back, think through different perspectives and discover new connections;
- **Feedback,** through which the coach acts as a mirror to allow the clients to see that which resides in their blind-spots;
- **Confronting,** through which the coach helps the clients face up to those things they dislike, are uncomfortable with, and that they secretly fear;
- **Re-framing,** whereby the coach helps his/her client connect what was before unconnected and which is usually encountered as the "AHA" experience;
- **Questioning,** through which the coach probes or prompts to get the clients to scan their thoughts and feelings and focus on the critical variables and contexts.

The International Coach Federation identifies four sequential coaching steps, namely, observation of an individual or a group need, analysis of the circumstances which created the situation, diagnosis of the situation to determine the appropriate response or stimulus to meet the demonstrated need, and helping the person or the group to recognise the problem and the solution, to accept ownership of it, to plan a course of action and act to achieve a nominated result (Rabey, 2001:198).

3.6.4 Coaching Requirements

To be successful a coach requires a knowledge and understanding of the process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place (Pasloe, 2004:1). This does not, however, mean that the coach has to be an exceptional achiever in his/her field as indicated by O'Shaughnessy (2001:194), who states that coaches do not need to be better at being executives than executives themselves, any more than a top tennis player's coach will not necessarily be a better tennis player than the one being coached. Indeed, what is required is a coach whose expertise lies not in the activity itself, but in coaching that activity (O'Shaughnessy, 2001:195; Jones, Armour & Potrac, 2002:34). It can thus be accepted that support practitioners, although not required to be the greatest or most successful entrepreneurs, must however still possess the ability to coach in a particular entrepreneurial and small business activity.

In South Africa there is no generally accepted credentialing organisation for coaches. The criterion that is used by the Institute for Business Advisors appears to focus on experience in business rather than on any of the practice categories. Internationally, a number of institutions and professional organisations are concerned with ensuring the development of competent practitioners. These organisations include the International Coach Federation, Action International, National Association of Business Coaches, Oxford School of Coaching and

Mentoring, Professional Coaches and Mentors Association, Coach University, Peer Resources Network. Although not all of these organisations are in agreement with the value of credentialing, those that do, appear to be following the International Coach Federation's (ICF) guidelines. The ICF credential is awarded to professional coaches and coach training agencies that validate that they meet or exceed the minimum standards. The results of the evaluation process will weigh heavily upon the depth of documentation submitted to validate that

1. formal coach training aligned with the ICF definition of professional coaching was attended;
2. there is proof of successful application of learning and skill with clients (ICF, 2004).

The ICF also identified eleven core competencies for coaches. These competencies were used as the foundation for the ICF Credentialing process examination. The core competencies are grouped into four clusters according to those that fit together logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group. The groupings and competencies are not weighted – they do not represent any kind of priority in that they are all core or critical for any competent coach to demonstrate. Also, the eleven core competencies were developed to support greater understanding of the skills and approaches used within today's coaching profession as defined by the ICF (2004) and are depicted in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Coaching Core Competencies (ICF, 2004)

A. Setting the foundation:

1. Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards: Understanding of coaching ethics and standards and ability to apply them appropriately in all coaching situations.
2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement: Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship.

B. Co-creating the relationship:

3. Establishing trust and intimacy with the client: Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust.
4. Coaching presence: Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationships with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.

C. Communicating effectively:

5. Active listening: Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support the client's self-expression.
6. Powerful questioning: Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client.
7. Direct communication: Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.

D. Facilitating learning and results:

8. Creating awareness: Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information, and make interpretations that help the client to gain awareness and thereby achieve agreed-upon results.
9. Designing actions: Ability to create with the client opportunities for ongoing learning during coaching and work/life situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results.
10. Planning and goal setting: Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client.

E. Managing progress and accountability:

11. Ability to sustain attention on what is important to the client, and to leave accountability with the client to take action.

3.7 THE USE OF MODELS AS INTERVENTION TOOLS

Models appear to be more widely used in coaching interventions than any of the other practice interventions. Business Advisors and Consultants generally do not appear to make use of intervention models, while the Egan 3 Stage model is proposed for counselling (Wright, 1998) and mentoring (Garvey & Alred, 2000:216). Libri (2004:1) states that what unites effective coaches are the models they use to elicit the best results for their clients. According to him, coaching models exist to provide coaches with a valid and effective framework for coaching**.** Dembkowski and Eldridge (2004:1) reported that effective coaches are those who foster trust and transparency in the processes they use. Such processes or models are indeed the essential tools for the building of a successful coaching relationship. What is apparent, however, is that along with the growth of coaching domains has come the growth of coaching models, seeking to best define and optimize the coaching relationship (Libri, 2004:1; Weiss, 2004:1).

The major coaching models discussed in the literature are the GROW-model (Libri, 2004:1; MacIntosch, 2004:5), the Coaching Arrow (Libri, 2004:2), the Positive Coaching model (Libri, 2004:2), the Outcomes coaching model, and the 7-step Achieve model (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2004). The main characteristics of the different intervention models are highlighted in the Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Practice intervention models

Counselling	**Mentoring**	**Coaching**				
Egan 3 Stage model: Stage 1: Exploring and focusing with the client. This stage is critical and is about establishing rapport, trust, building empathy and developing a working relationship. Stage 2: Clients are helped to see the patterns, themes and broader issues around their situation or problem. Stage 3: Emphasis is placed on agreeing and implementing action.	Egan 3 Stage Model	GROW Model	Coaching ARROW	POSITIVE Coaching model	OUTCOMES Coaching model	7-step ACHIEVE model
		Goal Reality Options What next/ Way forward	Aims Reality Reflection Options Way forward	Purpose Observation Strategy Insight Team Initiate Value Encourage	Objectives Understanding the reasons. Take stock. Clarify gaps. Options. Motivation. Enthusiasm and encouragement. Support.	Step1: Assess current situation. Step 2: Creative brainstorming of alternative options to a client's current situation. Step 3: Hone goals. Step 4: Initiate options for goal achievement. Step 5: Evaluate options Step 6: Valid action plan design. Step 7: Encourage momentum. The final step in the process is ongoing.

3.8 BENEFITS OF THE PRACTICE DISCIPLINES TO ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESSES

This study recognises that each of the practice disciplines have benefits for entrepreneurs and small businesses. These benefits can be deduced from the discussion on each practice discipline. The literature also indicates that business advice can offer general business management information to clients (Timmons, 1999:330; Hisrich & Peters, 2002:498). Counselling offers the opportunity to diagnose the nature of the problem (Dunsby, 1997:7; Hakim, 2003:1); consulting offers expert advice (Gilbert, 1998:340); coaching focuses on goal achievement and behaviour development (Downey, 1999:5; Rosen, 1998:32; Levinski, 2000:1; Megginson, 2005:219); and mentoring offers the opportunity to benefit from the mentor's personal experience and networks (Guest, 1996:2; Dunsby, 1997:7; Mead, *et al*., 1999:283; The Coaching and Mentoring Network, 2004b:1).

This study argues that practitioners should be able to move between roles and thus be able to apply a specific discipline, as the situation requires. A summary of the benefits of the different practice disciplines to entrepreneurs and small businesses is provided in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Benefits of each practice discipline to entrepreneurs and small businesses (Own compilation)

Business Advice	Business Consulting	Business Counselling	Business Coaching	Business Mentoring
• Provision of objective general and professional information on various business management and entrepreneurial issues that fills a specific need, overcomes bottlenecks, or provides a strategic view of the organisation and/or its environment	• Detailed diagnoses of business problems	• Access to higher level professional skills to deal with business management challenges • Quick resolution to issues	• Personal development focus • Performance management focus • Behaviour change/ influence focus • Goal development and achievement	• Sharing the personal experience, expertise and networks of the mentor to achieve development goals

Table 3.10 indicates that each practice category has a role to play in resolving business challenges. The effective resolution of these challenges will depend on the practitioner's ability to determine the suitability of a particular practice for a particular situation. The practitioner's ability to determine the suitability of a specific practice will be greatly enhanced if he/she is also able to distinguish between the similarities and differences of the different practices.

3.9 THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRACTICE DISCIPLINES

The previous section suggested that support practitioners must be able to determine the suitability of a specific discipline for a particular situation. This ability also implies that the practitioner should be able to know the differences and similarities between the different practice disciplines. So, for example, it is important to know that coaching is exclusively a process focusing on enhanced performance and that coaching should not be confused with counselling or mentoring (Burdett, 1999:4). Referring to the employment relationship, Burdett (1999) states that the former (counselling) addresses the emotional state. The latter (mentoring) is a means whereby a seasoned colleague – often at a more senior level – shares his/her experience with a view to “fast track” the career growth of a high performance employee (Burdett, 1999:4).

In distinguishing coaching from the other practices, Steyn (2006), states the following:

> Consultants are experts hired to come in and give their opinion. Coaches do not need to be experts in any specific type of business but rather aspire to be experts in human behaviour and behavioural change. Mentors need to be experts in business. They are more concerned with the content. A coach focuses on the personal development, which makes growth possible. Therapy/counselling imply (sic) something is wrong. Coaches work with people to achieve objectives.
>
> (Steyn, 2006:22).

Table 3.11 provides a summary of the similarities and differences between the different practices that are discussed in the literature and that are relevant to entrepreneur and small business support practitioners (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1995; Whitmore, 1997; Burdett, 1998; Rosen, 1998; Guest, 1999; Stone, 1999; Garvey & Alred, 2000; Laabs, 2000; Levinski, 2000; Beam, 2001; Borkowski, 2001; Rogers, 2001; Baker, 2002; Haserot, 2002; MacRae, 2002; Bachkirova & Cox, 2004; Porche & Niederer, 2004).

Table 3.11 A summary of similarities and differences between the practice disciplines (Own compilation)

Business Advice	**Business Consulting**	**Business Counselling**	**Business Mentoring**	**Business Coaching**
Nature of Intervention				
• Once off • General business information or sign-posting	• Once off • Expert or specialist information provision normally on a specific business management issue • Intervention comprises an investigation with recommendation	• Once off to short term • Focus on a business management problem • Intervention comprises a diagnosis and recommendation • May involve some hand-holding with implementation	• Short to long term • Focus is on sharing the experience and expertise of mentor with mentee	• Short to long term • Focus is on performance management and behavioural change • The intervention involves following a specific intervention model and process Emphasis is on client involvement and co-ownership of learning
Lends itself to business information sharing?				
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Lends itself to entrepreneur knowledge sharing?				
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Suited for skill and competency development?				
NO	NO	NO	YES	YES

Table 3.11 shows that the approaches differ mainly in the nature of intervention and whether an approach is suited for developing competencies. All approaches appear to be useful for sharing business management knowledge. The requirement, however, is that practitioners must possess adequate business management knowledge in order to transfer such knowledge to their clients. All

approaches appear not to be equally suited to the development of skills and competencies.

To operate and develop sustainable ventures, certain behaviours, characteristics, skills and competencies are required from both the entrepreneur-manager and individuals employed within the venture. Coaching and Mentoring both appear to be more able than the other practice disciplines to focus on the development of skills and competencies. Mentors are generally appointed for their experience and knowledge within a specific business sector (Dunsby, 1997:7). Such a mentor should be well equipped to share his/her experience and knowledge of that sector, which might include both entrepreneurial and business management knowledge and skills. It is argued that the ability of the practitioner to share his/her business management knowledge and experience would not be enough to ensure the development of sustainable ventures.

Certain behaviours are required from individuals as the venture moves through the different life cycle stages, which imply personal development actions. Coaching, due to its stronger focus (in relation to the other practice categories) on goal achievement, performance management, personal development and behavioural change, appears to be better suited for the development of skills and competencies (Bachkirova & Cox, 2004:1; Weiss, 2004). Practitioners with coaching skills must, however, also possess the required business management and entrepreneurial knowledge to be able to perform adequately the development role. Practitioners who are skilled in all the practices are able to play a meaningful role not only in the transfer of knowledge, but also with the development of the required entrepreneurial and business management skills and competencies, as they will possess the ability to adopt the appropriate practice methodology, as the situation requires. It is thus also important for practitioners to be able to make a judgement on which practice methodology is suitable for intervention within a specific venture life cycle stage.

3.10 THE SUITABILITY OF THE PRACTICE DISCIPLINES FOR THE DIFFERENT VENTURE LIFE CYCLE STAGES

Not all the practice disciplines are equally suited for dealing with the nature of the challenges that entrepreneurs and small businesses experience at various stages of the venture life cycle. The literature (Scott & Bruce, 1987; Deakins, Graham, Sullivan & Witton, 1998; Timmons, 1999; Hisrich & Peters, 2002; Wickham, 2001; Nieman & Pretorius, 2003) discusses the various challenges that entrepreneur and small businesses have to deal with as the venture develops and grows. These necessitate different approaches depending on the particular business problem. The type of information that is required at the pre-start-up phase might be more once-off information sharing in nature while the intervention required for a venture experiencing problems would be more intense and longer-term. Also if individuals require development within any stage a coaching approach might be more suitable. Table 3.12 provides an indication of the suitability of the individual practice disciplines for each venture life cycle stage.

Table 3.12 Suitability of the different practice disciplines for each venture life cycle stage (Own compilation)

Practice disciplines	**Venture Life cycle stages**				
	Pre-start-up	Start-up	Growth	Mature	Decline/ Rejuvenation
Business Advice	*	*	*	*	*
Business Counselling	*	*			*
Business Consulting		*	*		*
Business Coaching	*	*	*	*	*
Business Mentoring		*	*	*	

Table 3.12 indicates the venture life cycle stage each practice category is most appropriate for. As can be seen, business advice can be offered during all stages of the venture life cycle. This will, however, mainly consist of either information

provision or signposting. Business counselling, due to its problem-solving and reactive focus, is best suited during the pre-start-up, start-up and decline/rejuvenation stages. Consulting has a more once-off expert service provision focus and thus is best suited for the start-up, growth and decline/rejuvenation stages. Mentoring is best suited for the start-up, growth and maturity stages as the mentor allows the mentee to learn from the mentor's experience. As each venture life cycle stage requires different behaviours from the entrepreneur and the business, coaching appears to be suited for all stages of the venture life cycle due to its developmental focus, provided that the coach has an understanding of the challenges that each venture life cycle poses.

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the non-training practice disciplines for entrepreneur and small business support. It was argued that practitioners should have knowledge of entrepreneurship, small business management as well as the different practice disciplines if they are to provide relevant and meaningful support to entrepreneurs and small businesses. It is argued that knowledge, skills and competencies of each of the three knowledge categories (entrepreneurship, small business management and non-training intervention practices) are essential to ensure sustainable venture development. The Van Vuuren and Nieman (1998) Entrepreneurial Performance Model (E/P = M x f (a) E/S x (b) B/S) implies that personal characteristics as well as entrepreneurship knowledge and competencies together with business management knowledge and competencies, are required for achieving entrepreneurial performance. It is argued that if these knowledge and competencies are important for entrepreneur-managers then they should also be important to support practitioners, especially as successive South African GEM Reports (Driver, *et al.*, 2001; Foxcroft, *et al.*, 2002; Orford, *et al.*, 2003; Orford, *et al.*, 2004) pointed out the low education levels that contribute to the low TEI rating of the country.

It is also argued that support practitioners who are competent in all three knowledge categories referred to above would be able to make a positive contribution to government, entrepreneurship and small business support, and promotion initiatives. The major entrepreneur and small business practitioner knowledge, skills and competency requirements as discussed in this chapter are provided in Table 3.13. This table can form the basis for support practitioner education and training programmes as well as serving as a performance management tool.

Table 3.13 Knowledge, skills and competency requirements of support practitioner (Own compilation)

Entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competencies	Business management skills, knowledge and competencies	Required knowledge, skills and competencies for each practice discipline				
		Business Advice	**Business Consulting**	**Business Counselling**	**Business Coaching**	**Business Mentoring**
• Entrepreneur characteristics and behaviour • Venture life cycle stages and challenges • Growth requirements • Failure prevention • Turnaround strategies	• Business planning • Marketing • Strategy development • Finance • Cash flow • Human resource management • Legislation • Product • development	• Business management knowledge • Entrepreneurial knowledge • Information sharing • Communication and feedback	• Business management knowledge • Entrepreneurial knowledge • Information sharing • Communication and feedback • Investigative knowledge and skills • Expert and specialist	• Business management knowledge • Entrepreneurial knowledge • Information sharing • Communication and feedback • Investigative knowledge and skills • Diagnoses • Problem-solving	• Business management knowledge • Entrepreneurial knowledge • Information sharing • Communication and feedback • Performance management • Personal development • Behaviour change • Goal setting	• Business management knowledge • Entrepreneurial knowledge • Information sharing • Communication and feedback • Personal development • Share personal experience