An overview of the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa

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Declaration

I, Willem van Huyssteen, declare that the entire body of work contained in this research assignment is my own, original work; that I am the sole author thereof, that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

The coaching profession is thriving and the future looks bright. The coaching industry has reached this advantageous position as a result of a number of interdependent drivers. Firstly, there is more complexity, uncertainty and volatility in the personal and business environments of people. In the second instance, the accumulated coaching experience on a global scale as seen in increased and “better” awareness, more focused training of coaches, and evidence-based research on the benefits of coaching makes coaching an attractive intervention.

This optimistic picture is somewhat tarnished by another driver that is associated with any area that experiences unprecedented growth, namely the ever-increasing entry of people into coaching with diverse backgrounds, training and qualifications. This influx of newcomers to coaching leads to two distinct and real disadvantages: firstly, not all of the entrants into coaching are suitably qualified or experienced to be a coach and secondly, it is becoming more difficult for coaches to differentiate themselves and to earn a decent living from coaching.

This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge around coaching in general by investigating and describing the marketing practices of coaches in South Africa. A survey was conducted among the members of COMENSA by means of a self-completing questionnaire. The study found that coaches in South Africa are generally well qualified and experience the same opportunities and obstacles as their global counterparts. They have a clear sense of what they wish to achieve with their coaching approaches and have used a variety of different marketing channels to convey this to their target markets. However, the study also found that most of their activities were disorganised and that they were unsure about the success of these activities. It is clear from this study that the importance of marketing needs to be emphasised in the training of coaches as well as in support from professional bodies such as COMENSA in South Africa.

Recommendations of this study include the noted need for a more informed view around the value of marketing for coaches. Recommendations furthermore include a number of future research areas such as studies aimed at the use of social media, competition within the coaching environment and general perceptions around coaching within different demographical cohorts of the South African population.

Key words

Marketing

Marketing planning

Positioning

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

4Ps	Four Ps of marketing also known as the marketing mix referring to product, place, promotion and price
7Ps	Seven P's of services marketing also known as the services marketing mix referring to product, place, promotion, price, people, processes and physical evidence.
ANC	African National Congress
CD	compact disc
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
COMENSA	Coaches and Mentors of South Africa
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DESC	Departmental Ethics Screening Committee
DVD	digital versatile disc
ECG	electrocardiogram
ESOMAR	European Society for Opinion and Market Research
FAIS	Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services
FSB	Financial Services Board
GCC	Global Convention on Coaching
GDP	gross domestic product
HR	Human resources
HRD	human resource development
ICF	International Coaching Federation
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
NHS	National Health Service
OCP	Office of Consumer Protection
PLC	product life cycle
ROI	return on investment
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a service economy and in this respect we are not unlike the rest of the world. The size of the services sector is increasing around the world and this trend applies equally to both developed and developing countries. The value of the service economy in South Africa accounts for about 50 percent of our total gross domestic product (GDP), and like the rest of the world this contribution is steadily increasing (CIA, 2014).

I agree with Lovelock and Wirtz (2007: 10) that the size and growth of the services sector are influenced by a number of forces, such as government policies, business trends, advances in information technology, globalisation and social change. In this respect, manufacturers of goods have realised that to sell their products they need to add value by offering additional services as demonstrated by Microsoft© and Hewlett-Packard©, amongst others. Microsoft© manufactures products in the form of software that can be purchased on compact disks and installed onto personal computers. The software comes with easy-to-follow installation instructions, but they also provide users with a number to their call-centre where technicians are available to assist users with installation or other problems. Hewlett-Packard© manufactures a range of office equipment. When a customer buys a printer from them it comes with complete instructions regarding installation and the use of the printer. However, just as in the case of Microsoft©, customers can call a service centre that will assist them with any problems that they may encounter with their printer. In both of these examples you buy more than just a manufactured product, you also buy access to support services. These two companies are by no means the exception – today the majority of companies offer support to their customers in the form of a call centre. This trend is also driven by the fact that many companies operate on a global scale.

In response to this ever-increasing growth in complex service offerings (service offerings that usually need some input from the user – activation of a SIM-card - or even expect the user to monitor the status of their service – how much data used in a certain time), most governments are implementing regulations to protect customers, employees and the environment. A local example is the Consumer Protection Act, No 68 of 2008. This act came into effect in 2010 and one of its aims is to promote a fair, accessible and sustainable marketplace for consumer products and services. It also describes consumer rights and makes provision for consumers to lodge complaints with the Office of Consumer Protection (OCP).

In many cases, these very same regulations have given rise to new organisations and job opportunities. In South Africa, the financial services sector is a good example with the establishment of the Financial Services Board (FSB) and various ombudsmen that can be approached by customers who are unhappy with the service or lack thereof, of banks, brokers and financial advisors. One example of the opportunities created by legislation and regulations in this respect is the Office of the Ombud for Financial Services Providers (FAIS Ombud) that was established in terms of the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, 37 of 2000 (FAIS Act). The FAIS Ombud's role is to resolve disputes between financial services providers and their clients in a procedurally fair, informal, economical and expeditious manner. The FAIS Act also describes various requirements that financial service providers must adhere to and amongst these are the training and qualifications of financial advisers. In the life insurance industry this is known as being "fit and proper" and has given rise to numerous training institutions and thus job opportunities for trainers.

Due to the accessibility of information on the internet as well as the educational efforts of regulatory organisations such as the FSB, customers have become more informed and subsequently have higher expectations.

All of the above apply to the South Africa economy, as noted in the World Factbook (CIA, 2014). However, in the case of South Africa, social change is probably the most prevalent driver of the growth in the demand for services. Since 1994, South Africa has experienced major socio-economic changes. The then newly elected African National Congress (ANC)-dominated government implemented far-reaching programmes that included major structural changes to education, housing and delivery of basic amenities. These programmes changed the lives of millions of people. It provided them with access to services that were previously not available to them and through education also empowered them to potentially earn more money.

The implementation of affirmative action in the workplace is, even in 2015, one of the changes that has the deepest impact on society. It has empowered millions of previously disadvantaged people to be appointed to jobs, and thus, earn an income that was unheard of before 1994 – in fact, it has created a new middle class, the so-called Black Diamonds. At the same time it has also had a negative impact on an important demographic cohort, the white male (predominantly Afrikaans and middle-aged), for which they were not financially or emotionally prepared.

All South Africans, no matter who or what they are, have been affected in one way or another by the socio-economic changes of the past 20 years. We all have to deal with these changes, as well as with the reality of global economics, diminishing resources and a very high crime rate. In a nutshell, South Africans are exposed to major change and in some communities, trauma as well, and if you mixed this with access to increased income for one group and a decrease in income and opportunities for another, you have a society that can safely be described as traumatised and hence in need of coaching.

South Africans, like their counterparts in the rest of the world, have to cope with more and more complexity and uncertainty in society. I concur with Seth Godin's view that there is no more normal and that "we need a different way of organising work" (Godin, 2002: 90–94). By implication, I extend this view to include a different way of personal coping and thus a bigger need of coaching. Petersen (cited in Stober *et al.*, 2006: 51–52) supports this view in his assumptions that people are complex and the world is messy.

In this sense, social change is the force that plays the greatest role in the increased demand for coaching. I am of the opinion that coaching is seen as more acceptable and accessible than therapy by the general public. This obviously contributes to the acceptance of coaching as a tool for personal development and thus the increase in the demand for coaching services and the training of coaches.

It is interesting to note that, despite growth in the demand for services (coaching included) and the proliferation of service providers, most marketing programmes still have a predominantly manufacturing approach (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). This applies even more in the case of the formal curricula offered by universities and other training institutions aimed at professionals such as doctors, lawyers, architects and also coaches. The aim of any training programme is obviously to equip the students with the knowledge and skills to perform the duties and tasks expected from them in their respective professions. Although these programmes do that admirably, in most cases they leave the students with little or no knowledge or skills to open and run a practice sustainably.

A casual observation of the course content of medical and law schools at universities in South Africa confirms the previous statement, as not one of the major universities offers a subject or programme for their law and medicine students on how to start and manage a practice. This leaves most professionals ill-equipped to deal with the realities of setting up, managing and marketing their businesses in a sustainable way.

This leaves coaches vulnerable. Grodzki and Allen (2005) and Dunbar (2010) argued that although there are in excess of 30 000 coaches worldwide, the majority find their activities not financially viable. According to Grodzki and Allen (2005: 1), 70 percent of coaches reported in an International Coaching Federation (ICF) survey that they are making less than a living wage. Dunbar (2010: 153) mirrored this view by saying, "Very few coaches I meet seem confident about their marketing skills. For many coaches, the idea of encouraging people to buy from them is somehow untasteful". This sentiment was also recently expressed by Scheepers (2013) on Coaching Leaders in LinkedIn, "I found a presentation on marketing a Coaching Practice off-putting. It felt insincere to perceive clients, friends as Prospects/Advocates rather than real people or is this too conservative a view?"

In my opinion the view expressed by Scheepers (2013) is an indication of the lack of understanding amongst coaches of the true meaning and intent of marketing. When executed correctly, no marketing process will dehumanise the intended target market and clients will in any case express an opinion irrespective of the wishes of their coach. This is called word of mouth and is something that happens to all professions and most of the time largely without them having any control over it.

When it comes to marketing their services, coaches suffer from a number of myths (Dunbar, 2010: 153–155), such as (i) I need extra time to do marketing in addition to running my business; (ii) marketing is too difficult for me to do well; (iii) I will get business through word of mouth; (iv) marketing is expensive; and (v) marketing is forcing people to buy.

In reality, few entrepreneurs and professionals understand the concepts of branding and positioning and confuse marketing with advertising. Although most people do not understand branding and positioning, they find themselves increasingly in a position where individuals are seen as brands. The one billion users on Facebook and the 58 million daily tweets evince this. If you have a Facebook page or use Twitter to voice your opinion you have crossed into the realm of marketing. This view is shared by Pavlina (cited in Dunbar, 2010) and Rampersad (2009) and accurately stated by Montoya (2002: xiii), "Personal Branding is an organic, unavoidable part of today's world”.

I am in complete agreement. Personal branding (creating and guiding your reputation) has never been more important. Social media and globalisation have not only made the world smaller, but also infinitely more competitive. Competition for clients and jobs may be anywhere in the world, hence the importance of differentiating yourself from the rest.

Any study or discussion about services and services marketing will be flawed without a clear definition to act as a guideline. Initially, textbooks suggest a distinction between production and consumption as the basis for any definition. More recent definitions added the aspect of perishability, but most scholars agree that the major difference between services and manufactured products lies in the concept of ownership and for the purposes of this study the following definition by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007: 15) will apply.

> “Services are **economic activities** offered by one party to another, most commonly applying **time-based performances** to bring about **desired results** in recipients themselves or in objects or other assets for which purchasers have responsibility. In exchange for their money, time and effort, service customers expect to obtain value from access to goods, labour, professional skills, facilities, networks and systems; but they do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved”.

I have used this definition because it describes a service as an economic activity and this is important for service providers as many of them tend to think of themselves as providing a service to help others and do not see them as an economic entity that needs to be profitable. In this sense it also informed me to focus my research on those aspects that will provide coaches in South Africa with tools that will enable them to be more economically productive.

This is a unique study with a fresh approach to research around management coaching. It will unquestionably makes a contribution to the body of knowledge pertaining to the most relevant marketing concepts and procedures applicable to the marketing of coaching services in South Africa.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Coaches are not trained in the basic principles involved in starting and managing a practice and unless they have a business background they usually do not have enough knowledge, skills or training to promote their services. This places them at risk as many coaching students embark on their studies with the specific view of starting their own business, leaving them exposed to possible failure as they do not enjoy the benefit of “walk-in” business that some other professions (with the same initial dilemma) have, such as medical doctors and attorneys.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Research aim

To investigate the marketing practices of coaches in South Africa.

1.3.2. Research objectives

The key question underlying this research was: *what do coaches in South Africa do to market their services?* To be able to answer this question the following objectives had to be achieved.

i. Develop a theoretical overview of marketing concepts applicable to professional practices, including coaching practices.
ii. Describe the marketing practices of coaches in South Africa.
iii. Develop a process for the marketing of a coaching practice in South Africa based on the findings of the previous two objectives.

1.4. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.4.1. Advertising

Any paid form of non-personal communication to inform, educate or persuade members of a target audience by an identified sponsor. This definition refers to non-personal communication in an effort to convey the essence of the fact that the communication is between a company (usually) and a defined mass market using images or text in a newspaper, magazine, radio or television. It is thus non-personal not impersonal, as individuals can communicate directly with each other in an impersonal way.

1.4.2. Brand

A name, phrase, design, symbol or some combination of these elements that identifies an organisation’s services and differentiates it from competitors.

1.4.3. Competitive advantage

An organisation’s ability to perform in ways that competitors cannot or will not match.

1.4.4. Core competency

A capability or offering that is the source of competitive advantage.

1.4.5. Desired service

The “wished for” level of service that a customer believes can and should be delivered.

1.4.6. Image

A set of beliefs, ideas and perceptions held regarding an organisation or person.

1.4.7. Market coverage

The extent to which an organisation serves a few or many markets.

1.4.8. Market segmentation

The process of dividing a market into distinct groups within in each of which all the customers share relevant characteristics that distinguish them from customers in other segments.

1.4.9. Personal branding

The combination of image, identity and reputation that over time combine to create a clear perception about a person by others.

1.4.10. Price elasticity

The extent to which a change in price leads to a corresponding change in demand in the opposite direction.

1.4.11. Target market

A part of the market with common needs or characteristics that an organisation decides to serve.

1.4.12. Variability

A lack of consistency in inputs and outputs during the service production process.

1.4.13. Word of mouth

This refers to positive or negative comments about a service made by one individual (usually a current or former customer) to another.

1.4.14. Zone of tolerance

The range within which customers are willing to accept variations in service delivery.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

My consultancy specialises in marketing and customer service solutions for companies and public service enterprises such as municipalities, the provincial governments of the Northern Cape and Western Cape as well as the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). Over the years I have experienced a number of misconceptions regarding marketing based on the instructions from clients as well as marketing research on behalf of my clients. I briefly discuss some them below.

- Marketing is confused with advertising and/or sales. Companies have expressed a need for better marketing practices and are usually surprised (and sometimes disappointed) when they realise that a marketing plan only addresses advertising as part of a cohesive strategy to improve the company's image and recognition and that a new advert will not rectify a problem with product deficiencies or service delivery.
- Companies are seen to be guilty of creating needs and thus tricking people into buying unnecessary or expensive products. This perception was identified on a number of occasions where we did marketing research, either as part on the initial SWOT-analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or after new services have been introduced.
- Few people really understand the concepts of branding and positioning.
- Most individuals cling naively to the idea that only companies need to market themselves.

It is especially the last two aspects that warrant emphasis. Although most people do not understand branding and positioning we all find ourselves increasingly in a position where we are seen as brands and this is especially true for coaches, as the majority of them operate as individuals in the marketplace.

As noted by Bresser and Wilson (2010: 9), coaching is one of the fastest-growing professions in most countries around the world. As a profession it developed since the 1960s from a sporting orientation into many diversifications and is today accepted as a popular and respected tool for personal development. This rapid growth translated into a substantial supply of training and academic programmes aimed at equipping prospective coaches with the right skills set for meeting the demand for coaches.

The focus of these programmes unfortunately overlook the crucial aspect of starting and running a business and as a large percentage of businesses fail within their first three years of trading. This leaves prospective coaches vulnerable and ill equipped for the hard realities of a competitive business environment (Szabo, 2010: 66).

The marketing of coaching services on an individual as well as an industry level has not been researched in South Africa. No specific process to follow has been developed and it seems as if coaches seldom address the issue of personal branding in their practices. It is hoped that this study will make a contribution to the knowledge base, in a unique way, by identifying the concepts applicable to the successful marketing of coaching services in South Africa and present them in a way that can be used by all coaches.

This study will be beneficial to individual coaches as well as the coaching community at large. Individual coaches will benefit from a set of concepts that can be used to position and market their individual practices and in doing so increase their client base and income. The coaching community can expect to benefit indirectly from these activities in the sense that coaches will present themselves in a more professional manner to the public and in the process educate the public on the benefits of coaching. This, in turn, will enhance the image of coaching as a profession and will also contribute to a more transparent presentation of the coaching community.

1.6. CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the report. The problem statement, research objectives and significance of the study are stated and key concepts are clarified.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the position of marketing amongst professionals. The chapter will start by addressing services marketing and then narrow its focus to the marketing of professional services and more specifically the marketing of coaching services.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis and summarises the findings of the research.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion and a process that can be used by coaches to promote their services in South Africa. It also offers some recommendations for future research.

1.7. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the problem statement and research objectives of this study were stated together with key concepts. The following chapter (Chapter 2) presents a review of literature regarding the marketing of services, professional services and coaching practices where applicable, as well as a discussion on the unique opportunities and obstacles experienced by coaches worldwide.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is concentrated around two questions about the marketing of coaching services in South Africa. These questions are (a) is there a specific process or marketing mix that applies uniquely to coaching services, and (b) what marketing practices do coaches in South Africa currently use in their practices?

The literature available on the marketing of coaching services is not extensive although it is referred to in a number of textbooks and articles. Unfortunately these referrals are usually either in the form of a self-help format that suggests how a coach can build a practice in a number of steps or superficially as a solution to some of the obstacles that coaches may face in their businesses. No studies have been found to focus exclusively on the marketing of coaching services but links can be found in literature when current trends in coaching are studied in conjunction with the global proliferation of services in general.

The problem that is addressed based on literature, and my experience as a marketing consultant, is to describe the marketing process and tools needed to successfully market a coaching practice in South Africa. In the process of getting a better understanding of this problem, this study focuses on three core elements, namely a literature study around the latest trends in the coaching industry that apply to the commercial aspect of coaching (objective 1) as discussed in this chapter. An overview of the current marketing practices of coaches in South Africa (objective 2) that is discussed in Chapter 4 as the results of the survey amongst coaches in South Africa, and the description of a process that can be used by coaches to market their services based on the outcomes of the previous two objectives (objective 3), as discussed in Chapter 5.

I will give a brief introduction to the history of coaching, including a preferred definition in Section 2.2. This will be followed in Section 2.3 by a discussion of the latest trends in the coaching industry. In Section 2.4 the opportunities and obstacles to coaching on a global scale will be discussed and in Section 2.5 I will discuss the role that marketing can play in a successful coaching practice. Then I will conclude with a discussion of specific marketing aspects that apply to services marketing which will form the basis of the questionnaire that was used to determine the actual marketing activities of coaches in South Africa.

2.2. COACHING: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

2.2.1. Background

Coaching has probably existed as long as people have inhabited the earth. For centuries, the world's athletes, artists, kings and generals have employed personal coaches to develop and enhance their performance. Coaching in sports is familiar to us all and business and life coaching initially derive some principles from sports psychology. Stout-Rostron (2012:16–19) argued that Socrates is considered to be the first coach, and furthermore noted that in the early 1970s, the work of Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Tennis*, paved the way for coaches adopting a mental approach to coaching for excellence. Since 1970, coaching has undergone further evolvement, as learning and development have become critical features of businesses and organisations, necessitated by the rapid changes experienced globally in the market place (ICF, 2013: 6).

The emergence of coaching has been a gradual but dynamic process. It is however, from various sources, fairly obvious that the pace of the development of coaching has increased over the past decade. Clegg, Rhodes, Kornberger and Stilin (2005: 218) described business coaching as a growth industry in its infancy and this opinion is mirrored in the words of Grant and Stober (2006: 1), "Coaching is still in the process of establishing its credibility as an effective means for change and development". A mere six years later, coaching in the United Kingdom is described as a respected and recognised organisational intervention (Jenkins, Passmore, Palmer & Short, 2012: 132).

The increased pace of development referred to in the previous paragraph is in my opinion the result of an increasingly complex environment that people must deal with on a daily basis. This is concisely stated by Peter Drucker (2000), "In a few hundred years, when the history of our time will be written from a long-term perspective, it is likely that the most important event historians will see is not technology, not the internet, not e-commerce. It is the unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time – literally – substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it" (Drucker, 2000: 8).

Today coaching is transforming people of all walks of life in a variety of situations even though the industry is still growing (Pace, 2012: 19). There is more than enough evidence to support its claim as a recognised organisational and personal intervention and the focus of the rest of this chapter will be on the challenges and obstacles experienced by coaches all over the world as seen in some global trends.

2.2.2. Definition

Obviously a wide variety of definitions of coaching and the coaching process exists — a claim which is supported by Grant and Stober (2006: 2). Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie (2008: 291) collated a number of lists of coaching definitions and ended up with 37 definitions which they grouped into four categories of coaching.

There are two definitions that resonate with my own view and influenced my own definition of coaching and these are the definitions of the ICF and Anthony Grant and Michael Cavanagh.

The ICF defines coaching as a partnership with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential (ICF, 2013). Grant and Cavanagh (2004) defined professional coaching as a theoretically grounded, systematic and goal-directed process that is designed to facilitate sustained change and to foster on-going and self-directed learning and personal growth.

Based on literature as well as my own reflections, I define coaching as a conversation between a coach and client based on a collaborative effort to unlock the potential of the client and to provide him with solutions to become more responsible for his own life design, choices and relationships, using his own life- and learning experiences. This conversation is egalitarian, open and honest and follows a mutually agreed upon systematic process that includes goals, measurements of success and a termination point (Van Huyssteen, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, I wish to emphasise a common element in most definitions, including my own, that is so obvious that is seems somewhat provocative even to focus on it, yet it is very relevant from a marketing perspective, and that is for coaching to take place, a client needs to be present. A coach will only be commercially successful, i.e. earning enough to maintain a reasonable standard of living from coaching as their primary source of income, if they can establish a sustained and profitable coaching practice. For that to happen, they need a steady stream of new clients and referrals to follow up.

2.3. COACHING: TRENDS

Coaching has experienced some extraordinary growth over the past two decades. Its popularity is reflected in the constantly growing number of training programmes, coaching conferences and emergent professional bodies for coaches (Lane, Stelter & Stout-Rostron, 2011: 357). Grodzki and Allen (2005: 9–23) agree with this statement and claimed that the profession of coaching has been on a fast track since the 1980s, but they also note that the initial publicity around coaching has decreased and that coaches are starting to experience some difficulty in keeping their practices economically viable. In 2007, the ICF published the findings of their first membership survey and

70 percent of the coaches surveyed, reported that they are making less than a living wage (ICF, 2014).

The fact that the majority of coaches find it difficult to make a living from their coaching practices is easy to understand from an academic perspective. Over the past 25 years the focus of research and training around coaching has been on the operational part of coaching, i.e. how to coach. In this respect there is no shortage of literature and thus knowledge about coaching models and coaching processes. However, when you explore the commercial side of coaching you end up with little academic literature and some tentative articles about the profession and its status in the business environment and even these articles focus predominantly on the issues around the professionalisation of coaching.

It is obvious to any observer in management and consultancy that the coaching market has experienced a veritable explosion on a global scale and more specifically in South Africa in recent years. This expansion in the coaching environment has brought a new set of dynamics with it and this study has identified a number of trends that seem to dominate the coaching community at this time.

The trends are all inter-dependent and it will be foolhardy to discuss any of these trends in isolation. However, there are some central themes to all of them and the trends are clustered around (a) growth, (b) accreditation and professional bodies, (c) growing disenchantment with the influx of new entries, and (d) a movement towards the customer.

These trends are listed below and each of them will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

- Extraordinary growth and its implications
- Profile of coaches and growing disenchantment with low entry barriers to coaching
- Standards, accreditation and fragmentation of associations
- Movement beyond coach to the consumer.

2.3.1. Extraordinary growth and its implications

The extraordinary growth that the coaching industry has experienced in recent years is clear from statistics obtained from the ICF and from Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA). In 2007, the ICF concluded that there are about 30 000 active coaches around the world. This number increased to 48 000 after the results of their membership survey in 2012 were published (ICF, 2012). This is an increase of 60 percent in just five years and is echoed in the South African context. In 2008, COMENSA had about 600 members and this number increased with more than 100 percent to about 1 400 in 2014 (COMENSA, 2014).

Goldsmith (2013: xvi) put this very aptly when he noted that coaching for leaders has spread like wildfire around the world, and Passmore and Law (2013: 1) claimed that due to development in mobile communication and transportation, the world has shrunk and that people are increasingly exposed to exchanges with more and more people having to deal with complex situations. McMahon, Palmer and Wilding (2006) mirror this sentiment, “Over the past 30 years or so, life choices have proliferated. While increased options are helpful in many ways, they have also resulted in individuals becoming more uncertain about their own personnel *best way forward* and how they can achieve what they want without making a catalogue of mistakes along the way” (McMahon *et al.*, 2006: ix). They argued that coaching seems to offer some solution to this dilemma faced by many people around the world. Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2010: 1) support this view and they stated that the popularity of coaching is indisputable. They went on to say, “Across all economic sectors an increasing number of organisations are commissioning coaches to support their staff at different stages in their careers. Coaching is therefore recognised as a powerful vehicle for increasing performance, achieving results and optimising personal effectiveness”.

There can be no argument that we have experienced an increased awareness of the benefits of coaching and that coaching has become a recognised personal intervention, not only in the world of business but also on a more personal level with a proliferation of courses, books and self-help websites that claim to promote life coaching.

Growth is usually seen in a positive light and this is also the case with the coaching community. However, with a growing population seeking a better lifestyle to be delivered from a planet with finite resources, is the coaching community equipped to deliver? What individuals, organisations and society expect is constantly changing due to the changes in their environment. With better and faster access to more information, there is a greater risk of exposure and a bigger demand for accountability. The coaching community and their clients wish coaching to succeed, but not at any cost. Good growth is in everyone's interest and in the new measure of success; however, how do you determine what good looks like?

Some of the implications of the growth experienced in coaching over the recent years are discussed in terms of supply and demand in the following sections.

2.3.1.1. Supply

Any industry that experiences unbridled growth will attract newcomers with a wide variety of skills and from different backgrounds. This is simply a function of the economic model practised in most free countries around the world. This means that the coaching industry will (a) attract new coaches from almost any background due to the fact that no real barriers exist to those who want to call themselves a coach; and (b) there is a clear danger of over-supply at the bottom end of the market (Bluckert, 2004: 53–56).

The inevitable reality is simply that many of the new entries into the coaching community will find it very difficult to survive unless they have access to strong networks and a modicum of entrepreneurial flair. Hawkins (2008: 28–31) noted this trend by referring to an article written by Sherman and Freas (2004) in the Harvard Business Review in which they describe the fast expansion of coaching in the United States and compare it to the Wild West of old with a wide variety of weird and wonderful practices at the frontier. He continued to suggest that the coaching context in the United Kingdom seems to be slightly more controlled and offers some ways in which the coaching community can improve this situation. In this case he focused on three areas, namely:

- greater clarity in defining coaching;
- better quality control of coaching provided to organisations; and
- less fragmentation in the coaching community with respect to "governing bodies".

Since the publication of this article by Hawkins (2008), some of the aspects that he referred to have changed. Coaching is better defined, not only in academic terms but also in the public domain. Organisations have awakened to the benefits of coaching and have implemented policies and measures to ensure that the level of coaching provided to them is acceptable and according to acknowledged codes of conduct both nationally and internationally.

There is less fragmentation in the coaching industry in South Africa if compared to the United States of America where coaches and their customers are faced with a wide variety of professional bodies and credentialing organisations. Since 2013, COMENSA has embarked on an ambitious project to "standardise" definitions of coaching. In the process they have also defined different levels of coaching (based on qualifications and experience) and initiated a process of evaluation to implement it. The president of COMENSA, Linda de Vries, informed me in an interview that COMENSA as a body is now also given professional status by the South African Qualifications Authority and unilaterally acknowledges registration with the International Coaching Federation (De Vries, 2015).

In summary, the growth experienced by the global coaching community has the following implications for the supply of coaching services:

i. An increasing number of new entries into the coaching market for the foreseeable future.

ii. Little or no entry barriers.

iii. A trend that many coaches (new and established) will find it increasingly difficult to earn a living from coaching.

iv. Some fragmentation of coaching associations.

v. An increased focus within the coaching community on calls for professional status.

2.3.1.2. Demand

The implications of the growth discussed in this section with reference to the demand for coaching services are somewhat clearer and thus easier to address.

One of the biggest drivers of the growth in the demand for coaching services has undoubtedly come from organisations responding to change in their environments and in this regard, Bluckert (2004: 53–56) noted that "client organisations" are far more discerning about their use of coaching services than they used to be a few years ago. This translates into questions that the coaching community needs to be able to answer regarding the returns that organisations can expect on the money spent on coaching.

These questions address issues such as the following:

- Clarity about the different offerings presented to them, i.e. what is the difference between executive and leadership coaching?
- What are the measures for determining whether a coach is competent?
- A clear and undisputed professional body that can be approached for advice, benchmarking and complaints when needed.

Peter Hawkins (2008: 28–38) echoed some of the aspects listed above in an article he wrote for Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, titled "*The coaching profession: some key challenges*".

He clustered the challenges around a few themes:

Creating value. In this respect there is a growing requirement to demonstrate a return on investment and coaches must ensure that they satisfy the needs of their customers – organisations and individuals alike.

Ensuring quality. There is a need to ensure that coaching will adhere to agreed professional standards and effective supervision.

Establishment of a coaching profession. In this case he specifically referred to the discussion around professionalisation as well as theoretical thinking and research within coaching that is distinct from psychology, psychotherapy and counselling.

The aspects from the growth in the demand of coaching can thus clearly be summarised as a call for (a) clear and universal standards, as well as (b) some demonstrative and meaningful return on investment.

2.3.1.3. Relevancy to marketing

The results of the extraordinary growth discussed above, leave the coaching community with the following issues of concern from a marketing point of view:

i. Coaches, newcomers and established, will have to accept that they need to differentiate themselves if they wish to survive, i.e. they must be seen to offer a unique solution that sets them apart from other coaches.

ii. The coaching community will have to accept that for growth to continue, the users of their services must be able to have easy access to generally accepted standards and guidelines from a central professional organisation.

2.3.2. Growing disenchantment with low entry barriers to coaching

The increasing need for coaching within organisations as well as on a personal level has, as discussed in the previous section, attracted a large number of people with a wide variety of skills, knowledge and qualifications. Bluckert (2004: 53–56) noted that new entrants to the coaching community include retiring executives, HR directors, academics, management trainers, engineers, senior police officers, teachers, clinical and occupational psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists and even sports coaches.

This situation prompted Sherman and Freas (2004: 82–90) to describe the coaching context in the United States as “chaotic, largely unexplored and fraught with risk, yet immensely promising”. They continued in this vain and claimed that it is an arduous task to select a coach, as many of the coaching certifications on offer by self-appointed bodies are difficult to assess. Hamlin *et al.* (2008: 287–288) are equally pessimistic about the situation in the United Kingdom and they described the providers of coaching services as “self-styled learning facilitation specialists who come from very different professional backgrounds and regard themselves as professional coaches”.

Grant and Cavanagh (2004: 1–16) argued that the coaching industry has reached a key stage in its maturation and that one of the drivers behind this is the growing disenchantment with perceived pseudo-credentialing mills by management and human resource professionals due to their increased sophistication regarding the role of coaching in organisations. This is a universally relevant concern for all potential users of coaching. At this stage, there is literally nothing that prevents anyone from calling himself a coach and even as recent as 2013 anybody could register with COMENSA without providing any proof of relevant training, qualifications or experience.

Despite the indisputable concerns raised by academics, researchers and management professionals, some role-players in the coaching industry still seem to be in denial about the gravity of this trend. The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) in the United Kingdom did a coaching survey in 2010/2011 and Jenkins *et al*. (2012) discussed the findings of this survey in an article published in 2012 in Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice. They noted that 322 coaches responded and when the breakdown of qualifications is discussed they mentioned that "only 22 respondents have no coaching qualifications whatsoever" (Jenkins *et al*., 2012: 132–150). They come to the conclusion that coaches in the United Kingdom are highly qualified despite the fact that seven percent of coaches have no qualification whatsoever, and they do not express any concern about the possible damage that unqualified coaches can potentially cause to individuals and the coaching community at large.

2.3.2.1. Relevancy to marketing

The coaching community has attracted scores of new entrants and due to the lack of entry barriers and the relatively unregulated nature of coaching, many of them have little or no relevant skills, knowledge and qualifications. This situation is further exacerbated by a influx of training- and credentialing bodies that are also largely unregulated. The results are:

i. an industry in danger of not being taken seriously by major organisations

ii. the dilution of the credentials of bona fide coaches in a sea of unqualified competitors.

2.3.3. Standards, accreditation and fragmentation of associations

It is easy to suggest that the over-supply of coaches at the bottom end of the market, as noted by Bluckert (2004: 53–56), will be addressed by the simple mechanism of market forces, i.e. the strongest will survive. Unfortunately it also means that for the foreseeable future we will find incompetent (in the widest sense) coaches in our midst and they may cause some damage to the image of the coaching community at large and possibly harm their clients as well. This aspect leads logically to the issue of accreditation and the relevancy and need for a governing body in coaching.

Although it seems logic that the solution to low entry barriers lies in accreditation of coaches by a respectable governing body, the situation regarding such a body is similar to that of the influx of new entries to the industry. Gray (2011: 4–19) noted that there are many self-proclaimed accrediting organisations and he is supported in this view by the Global Coaching Community (GCC, 2008), which notes the great diversity of training programmes around the world.

This situation is in response to the growing trend that organisations increasingly demand that executive coaches need to be properly trained (Hawkins, 2008: 28–38). Grant and Cavanagh (2004: 1–16) also noted that there is an increasing awareness amongst coaches of a need to ground their practice in a solid understanding of theories and empirically tested models, thus the demand (and subsequent supply) for training and accreditation bodies.

In reality this situation gave rise to what Gray (2011: 4–19) called the fragmentation of the coaching profession into rival coaching associations. This sentiment is echoed by Hawkins (2008: 28–38) and he added to that the fact that buyers of coaching are often confused by terminology and definitions.

2.3.3.1. Relevancy to marketing

There can be no doubt that this is very confusing to coaches who would like to have an acknowledged and recognised accreditation as well as to prospective clients who wish to understand what to look for in a coach. The implications are:

i. little control over standards
ii. no enforcement of an acceptable code of conduct.

2.3.4. Movement beyond coach to the consumer

At first glance, it would seem to the reader that I have a very critical stance towards some coaches and the coaching profession in general. There is however always a flipside to any argument and all of the discussions about standards, accreditation and low entry barriers indicate that the coaching community is starting to address issues that impact on the commercial side of their businesses, and that they are starting to think of the clients as more than just “people or teams that need coaching”.

One of the positive aspects that emerged from this trend is the shift towards a customer driven mind-set. Hawkins (2008: 28–38) noted that professional firms realised that they cannot compete successfully by trying to continue differentiating themselves purely on product and product quality. This realisation is obviously a result of the influx of newcomers into coaching and the diverse (if not always sensible) variety of solutions on offer to prospective clients. To be blunt: to the average buyer of coaching services in South Africa, there are few differentiating criteria on offer to assist in selecting a coach.

Hawkins (2008: 28–38) claimed that professional service organisations realised that in order to be seen to be different they need to focus on the client and the ways in which they relate to their clients. In this case the coaching industry lags far behind other professions such as financial services providers, brokers and some legal companies. Jenkins *et al.* (2012: 132–150) found that coaches in general wait for business to come to them as is evident from the following, "According to the United Kingdom (UK) survey, coaches are two and a half times as likely to be contacted directly by a client (56.3%) than they are to contact a client following a referral from someone other than the client's employer (23.2%)".

This attitude is fine if coaches have an established network of corporate clients that will ensure a fairly constant stream of clients. However, we know that 70 percent of these very same coaches claim that they do not earn a living wage. It is thus obvious that the awareness of how we relate to the customer/client needs to become more acute and part of the everyday vocabulary of coaches. Any professional who responds to only one out of every five referrals by clients, not only act in an unprofessional manner, but will unfortunately run out of clients in the long run.

2.3.4.1. Relevancy to marketing

Coaching has come of age and as a recognised and respected intervention should not be embarrassed or reluctant to venture into the marketplace with differentiated product offerings as long as it adheres to acceptable standards and the client's needs are addressed in a professional manner.

2.4. COACHING: CHALLENGES

In the previous section a number of current trends in respect of coaching have been discussed and although a variety of challenges has been identified, there is one over-arching impression and that is simply that coaching is a global phenomenon and the major role players involved are aware of the growing pains and are working on solutions. This is partly evident from the findings of the Global Coaching Study commissioned by the ICF in 2012.

This study identified a number of key issues which are summarised in Table 2.1 below. The percentage refers to the number of respondents in the survey.

Table 2.1: Key issues facing the coaching industry in future

Obstacles		Opportunities	
Untrained individuals	43%	Increased awareness	36%
Marketplace confusion	30%	Credible data on return on investment (ROI)	28%
Market saturation	9%	Improved general perception	14%
Under-pricing	5%	Increased demand	11%
Over-regulation	3%	Positive media	8%
Competing services	3%	Other	2%
Other	7%		

Source: Pace, 2012: 19.

In the next two sections, the key issues in Table 2.1 will be combined with the challenges identified in Section 2.3 and briefly discussed.

2.4.1. Obstacles

This issue of **untrained individuals/low entry barriers** will remain the single biggest challenge and obstacle for the coaching community for the foreseeable future. As previously mentioned, the increased popularity of coaching will continue to attract newcomers and without proper credentialing and regulatory bodies in place, untrained individuals will be able to call themselves coaches and apply untested models, effectively unrestricted. In doing so, they will cause irreparable damage to the image of coaching at large as well as the reputation of well-trained coaches and possibly harm their clients in the process. This issue is put in stark focus by Anthony Cavanagh, "Most coaches do not have a background in behavioural science and, most commercial coach training programmes are short courses based on proprietary models of coaching with little or no theoretical grounding, and finish with the granting of some kind of coaching "certification". Not surprisingly, there have been concerns expressed that inappropriately trained coaches tend to conduct a theoretical one-size-fits-all coaching interventions and may cause harm to clients, especially those who have unrecognised mental health problems" (2006: 12-22).

This is the inevitable result of the influx of new entrants and the lack of entry barriers. Unfortunately this confusion is further exacerbated by the fragmentation of governing bodies and the resulting lack of a clear and unambiguous marketing and educational message. Any **marketplace confusion and market saturation** is simply to be blamed on the coaching community at large. Clegg *et al.* (2005: 218–223) confirmed this in their claim that a more coherent and well-understood perception of the nature and benefits of business coaching is needed.

This issue of **under-pricing** is a clear indicator that the majority of coaches have very little business acumen and respond to an increase in competition by lowering their fees instead of applying marketing tools and looking at diversification strategies. Another aspect in this case that needs some attention is the source of **competing services**. Hamlin *et al.* (2008: 287–305) suggested that professional coaching is to a large degree the same as contemporary human resource development practices and they literally see the emergence of coaching as a wake-up call to human resource development (HRD) professionals to improve their “game”.

This confirms (a) the confusion in the marketplace, and (b) the fact that coaching is not only practised by untrained individuals, but also by well-trained individuals from other disciplines. These two issues will obviously cause widespread confusion, blurring of perceptions and differentiation based on price, which simply translates into using the cheapest alternative.

The issue of under-pricing can possibly be seen as one of the reasons why most coaches do not earn a living wage as reported earlier. This in turn gives rise to coaches having to perform non-coaching activities to earn a living that in turn results in marketplace confusion. Clegg *et al.* (2005: 218–223) found that more than 50 percent of coaching firms in Australia were working out of home offices and that only 12 percent of them focus exclusively on providing coaching services. They found that in many cases the phones were answered by kids who were unaware or uninformed that a home office is really a business and should be conducted as such. This aspect is obviously very difficult to control, but the fact remains that if this is the general perception of coaches, then the coaching community has nobody but themselves to blame if they are not taken seriously.

2.4.2. Opportunities

In any environment that experiences growth, a variety of opportunities obviously also exists and coaching is no exception.

The most obvious opportunity is the **increased awareness** about the benefits of coaching. This aspect has been discussed in detail in the previous section and it is suffice to claim that ample opportunities exist for coaches who wish to expand the practices and increase their income. This trend is largely supported by the **availability of data on the return on investment** of coaching interventions.

Despite the influx of untrained individuals and the confusion that exists as a result of the fragmentation in the coaching community, there is an **improvement in the general perception** of coaching. This is most probably the result of the fact that businesses have become more sophisticated in their search criteria for coaches and the response of the coaching community to this demand. The role of credible training institutions in this aspect is also invaluable.

The inevitable result of the increased awareness, availability of ROI data and a better perception is an **increase in the demand for coaching**. In this case the demand has also shifted from a pure business focus to a more individualised focus. Employees of companies that use coaches start to see the possibility of using a coach for non-business related aspects of their lives and as previously mentioned, the increased demands of everyday life is most definitely a driver of the demand for coaching.

2.5. THE MARKETING OF COACHING SERVICES

The obstacles as well as the opportunities discussed in the previous section are realities that need addressing and despite the fact that there is no direct mention of marketing or a concerted marketing effort, it nonetheless makes a compelling case for the application of the basic principles of marketing management. This applies to individual coaches as well as the coaching industry. In this section the need for marketing as well as some concepts will be discussed briefly.

2.5.1. Marketing defined

I wish to introduce the concept of marketing very briefly. What *is* marketing? Popularly it is associated with advertising and selling and no wonder – we are bombarded with television commercials, unsolicited offers by e-mail, sales calls and internet pitches. However, selling and advertising is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

In the 21st century, marketing must be understood in the sense of satisfying customer needs and in this scenario there is very little room for “telling and selling”. If the marketer understands the consumer needs, develops relevant solutions that provides superior value and promotes and distributes it effectively, these solutions will sell easily. The aim of marketing is thus to make selling unnecessary.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008: 5), marketing can broadly be defined as a social and managerial process by which organisations and individuals obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. It is thus about building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and the following definitions will apply in this study:

Marketing is defined as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.

In the previous chapter, I indicated that the definition of services as put forward by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007: 15) will apply, “Services are **economic activities** offered by one party to another, most commonly applying **time-based performances** to bring about **desired results** in recipients themselves or in objects or other assets for which purchasers have responsibility. In exchange for their money, time and effort, service customers expect to obtain value from access to goods, labour, professional skills, facilities, networks and systems; **but they do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved**”.

2.5.2. Categories of service and their distinct marketing challenges

From a services perspective, people, data and physical objects can be treated and the nature of these actions can be tangible or intangible. Tangible actions are performed on either the bodies or the physical possessions (i.e. automobiles or houses) of people and intangible actions are directed at the minds or intangible assets (i.e. education or life insurance) of people. Although services do not usually involve a change in ownership, some differences still exist amongst services based on what is processed and this gives rise to four broad categories of services.

These categories are (i) people-processing, (ii) possession-processing, (iii) mental stimulus processing, and (iv) information processing, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. It may seem at first that the businesses within each of these categories are very dissimilar, but on closer inspection you will find that they share important *process-related* characteristics. In addition, it is important to note the distinctive marketing implications of the different types of processes and more specifically those that apply to the mental stimulus process, as this is the process that relates to coaching.

	Who or what is the direct recipient of service	
Nature of service	People	Possessions
Tangible action	**People-processing** - transporation - lodging	**Possession-processing** - repair and maintenance - laundry
Intangible action	**Mental stimulus processing** - education - coaching	**Information processing** - accounting - Legal services

Figure 2.1: Four categories of service

Source: Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007: 41.

The four categories are briefly discussed to highlight the marketing implications of each.

People have a never-ending need for services that are directed at themselves such as being transported or restored to health. To receive these services the individual customer must physically become part of the service delivery system, hence the category, **people-processing**. In this case the customer needs to cooperate actively with the service supplier. For example, if a patient wishes to lose weight, she must be prepared to undergo some tests, follow a diet and exercise regularly. She may also have to give feedback to the experts and be fully cooperative in all aspects.

The output of these services (after a varying period of time: a few minutes to a few months) is a customer who has reached their destination or is now physically in better health. Service providers in this category need almost always to think about the process from the viewpoint of what happens to the customer.

In the case of **possession-processing**, the customer will request some tangible treatment for a physical possession – a house that needs to be painted or a car that is due for an annual service. Customers are less physically involved with this type of service and they usually only have to request the service and pay the bill. Unlike the previous category, the production and consumption of the service are in the most cases separate.

Information-processing has been irreversibly transformed by information technology, but not all information can be processed by computers. Professionals in a wide variety of fields also use their mental abilities, knowledge and skills to perform information processing. Financial advisors and medical specialists are two examples of experts who depend on their own abilities and knowledge of information to provide a service supported by technology.

The service output in this category is almost always an intangible form of information although it can be packaged in a more enduring shape such as a report, plan or even a DVD. It is important to note that the line between this category and mental stimulus processing may be blurred from time to time as a cardiologist may interpret a patient's electrocardiogram (ECG) results to recommend changes in their lifestyle.

Education, news, entertainment and professional advice (including psychotherapy) are all examples of services included in the category of **mental stimulus processing**. It is important to note the following two characteristics of this category. Firstly, the core content of these services is information based, and in some cases it can be converted to digital or analogue formats and thus be recorded and packaged into a manufactured product, such as a compact disc (CD) or digital versatile disc (DVD), to be "consumed" at a later stage – music, films and even lectures come to mind. Secondly, if a customer wishes to obtain the full benefit of these services they must commit an "investment" of some of their time and mental effort to the process. The difference between this category and the people-processing category is plain to see – a passenger can sleep on a flight to Shanghai and still arrive safely and on time, but if that person falls asleep during a class or a news broadcast they will end up none the wiser!

An extremely important aspect from a coaching point of view is noted as follows by Lovelock and Wirtz (2007: 42), “Anything touching people minds has the power to shape attitudes and influence behaviour. So, when customers are in a position of dependency or potential for manipulation exists, strong ethical standards and careful oversight is required”.

In this case, it is thus very important that coaches should heed this aspect and adhere to codes of conduct, do proper contracting and submit themselves to supervision.

2.5.3. Typical marketing challenges associated with services

The marketing concepts that are usually associated with manufactured (tangible) products cannot be transferred directly to services (mostly intangible) and applied to the marketing thereof. There are a number of common differences between services and goods and although not all of these aspects apply at all times to all services, it is important to be aware of these when marketing a service such as a coaching practice.

The most common differences will be briefly discussed with special reference to the coaching service where it applies.

Intangible element dominates value

<table>
<tr><td>Implications</td><td>Customers cannot touch or smell these elements and may not even be able to see or hear them.
Difficult to evaluate service and distinguish it from competition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Challenge</td><td>Create tangibility through physical clues.
Use concrete metaphors and vivid images in branding.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">This aspect seems so obvious but like many of the concepts discussed in this chapter, it is important to take it into consideration with the marketing of coaching services. Coaching is still a relatively unknown service in South Africa and from a customer viewpoint there are few cues to follow when “buying” these services and little differentiation between different coaches.</td></tr>
</table>

Services are difficult to visualise and understand

<table>
<tr><td>Implications</td><td>Customers perceive greater risk and uncertainty.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Challenge</td><td>Educate customers and help in making choices.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">This aspect goes hand in hand with the previous and emphasises the need for standards as well as education about coaching from a governing body such as COMENSA. In this case membership and registration with COMENSA must be seen as (a) an advantage to any coach, and (b) a precondition for any user of coaching services.</td></tr>
</table>

Customers may be involved in production

Implications	Customers interact with service providers' systems and staff. Poor inputs from customers have an impact on quality of service.
Challenge	Make it easy for customers to interact with user-friendly systems. Provide customer support to ensure effective performance from them.
This aspect plays a relatively important role in coaching, as the client must agree to the agenda and thus the contract between him and the coach. It is thus important for any coach to have a proper and transparent contracting process in place and to maintain it at all times.	

People form part of the service experience

Implications	Behaviour, attitude and appearance of staff and other customers can affect the experience.
Challenge	Employ the right people and train and equip them to do their job. Target the right customers and shape their expectations and behaviour.
From a coaching point of view this aspect is less important as coaching usually takes place in a private one-on-one situation. There is little involvement from other staff or clients and when this is the case, the coach must manage the contact between staff and clients judiciously.	

Operational inputs and outputs may vary

Implications	Difficult to maintain consistency. Difficult to hide service failures.
Challenge	Set standards based on customer expectations. Be prepared for service recovery when needed.
This aspect is fairly unique to services, directly as a result of the previous aspect. Services are being "manufactured" by people and people cannot act as consistently as machines. Service delivery may thus vary from day to day and from person to person and coaches will not be exempted from this scenario. However, proper contracting can help to keep delivery on track.	

Time becomes important

Implications	Customers see their time as a scarce resource.
Challenge	Compete on speedy delivery and eliminate time-wasting activities. Flexible service hours.
People do not like to wait and are increasingly aware of the value of their time. Many service delivery processes are aimed at speedy delivery of a desired outcome such as a "drive-thru" McDonalds restaurant and overnight courier services and customers come to expect this all of the time. In the case of coaching this aspect can be used as a differentiating factor where the sessions can be "sold" as quiet time that is at the same time professionally conducted according to the terms of the contract.	

Most service products cannot be stored

Implications	Customers must wait or may even be turned away.
Challenge	Manage demand through promotion and reservations. Adjust capacity (if possible) through operations.
Coaching services can most definitely not be stored for later use, however, it may be possible to record some generic sessions around a specific topic that can be "consumed" by customers at a more convenient time.	

Distribution may take the form of non-physical channels

Implications	Information-based services can be delivered through electronic channels.
Challenge	Create user-friendly websites and easy and free access by telephone. Ensure that service elements can be downloaded.
As with the previous aspect, this one is also not completely relevant for coaching services. However, coaching is an activity well suited to technological channels such as Skype and FaceTime and coaches can go a long way to differentiate themselves with well-designed and informative websites and blogs.	

2.5.4. The marketing mix applied to services marketing (7Ps of service)

The term "marketing mix" became popular after Neil Borden published his 1964 article, *The Concept of the Marketing Mix*. He began using this term after a marketing manager had been likened to a "mixer of ingredients". The ingredients in Borden's marketing mix included product planning, pricing, branding, distribution channels, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact-finding and analysis. These ingredients were later grouped into the four categories that today are known as the 4Ps, product, price, promotion and place.

Marketing is a continually evolving discipline and just as we once used the 4Ps to explain the marketing mix, it is today commonly accepted that a more enhanced mix is needed. Hence the mix now comprises the 7Ps that add a much needed layer of depth to the marketing mix, especially in the case of services organisations where the traditional 4Ps make no allowance for the unique characteristics of services as discussed earlier in this chapter. This is supported by Akroush (2011:116) in his statement, "For services businesses, the traditional marketing mix framework should be expanded to include the other 3Ps (people, processes and physical evidence)".

The 7Ps of services marketing, jointly represent the ingredients required to create feasible strategies for meeting the needs of their customers in the ever-increasing competitive business environment in the 21st century. The 7Ps of services marketing consist of the traditional 4Ps, namely **product, price, promotion** and **place**, as well as the additional 3Ps, **people, processes** and **physical evidence** that are universally accepted by academics and practitioners as the additional layer of ingredients applicable in services marketing. Each of the 7Ps are briefly discussed next.

i) Service **products** are the crux of an organisation's marketing strategy and this aspect usually makes or breaks a company as a poorly designed or executed service can seldom be supported by the rest of the marketing mix, irrespective of how good it may be executed. It is defined as the extent to which a company develops a comprehensive service offer to meet the needs of its customers (Akroush, 2011: 124).

According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2007: 44), a service product usually consists of a core product that focuses on the primary need of the customer as well as various supplementary elements that assist the customer to use the service more effectively. In the case of coaching services this can be seen as the actual coaching sessions (core) supported by test results (supplementary) that enable the client to better understand his own behaviour.

ii) **Pricing** is usually seen by the service providers as the means by which they generate an income for the services offered and by the customer as the essential part of the costs they need to incur to obtain the results of the service product. In this case it is very important to note that the costs for the customer go beyond an amount of money and will in most cases include aspects such as time and effort.

From a coaching perspective this means that a client will judge the value of coaching on more than just the actual fee per session. The client may take certain aspects into consideration, such as the availability of the coach, whether travelling to an office is required, finding parking and getting involved in unwanted or negative sensory experiences.

Another aspect that also plays a role is the fact that coaching services cannot be stored and although the coach and their office may be ready to create a service, if there is no demand for the service the unused capacity goes to waste. Coaches must thus use pricing strategies as dynamic means to try and smooth out the demand for their services to ensure that they (a) can meet demand at all times, (b) have a secure flow of income, and (c) that prospective clients are seldom sent away.

iii) Traditionally **promotion** is associated with advertising or at most a one-sided form of communication, but marketers have come to realise that services marketing cannot succeed without effective communication that also allows the customer to interact with the service provider. This is evidenced by elements such as call centres that provide customers with help in making the most of a service.

Akroush (2011: 124–130) identified six elements that include not only advertising by also personal selling, public relations, sales promotions (discounts) and direct marketing such as telemarketing. The aim of these elements is to provide an integrated message that fulfils three roles, namely (a) provide information and advice, (b) persuade customers about the merits of a specific, service and (c) encourage them to take action at a specific time (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007: 44).

In the case of coaching services, this aspect is extremely important as the intangibility of the knowledge and expertise of the coach often create the most value in the service product. Seeing that they cannot see or touch the benefits of coaching the typical customer must find alternative means of judging a service and these are most often provided by the promotional strategy.

iv) As indicated in Figure 2.1, service distribution can involve physical or electronic channels and this translates to convenience for the customer, i.e. the service must preferably be offered where and when the customer needs it. *Amazon* is a good example of a service organisation that uses both – the client buys a book on-line and then it is physically delivered by an intermediary such as a courier company. **Place** is thus associated with different distribution channels used and it is usually in this part of the marketing mix that time plays an important role.

With coaching services the delivery will be physical in most cases as coaching tends to be a personal and one-on-one activity with the overriding prerequisite that the coach needs to be physically available when the client has a need for coaching. However, some coaching takes place by electronic means such as the telephone or increasingly by *Skype* and the aspect of availability stresses the importance of proper contracting to ensure that expectations will be met all times.

v) **People** usually refer to the actual service providers and therefore it is a vital component of any service. It is obvious that staff must at all times be properly trained and equipped to fulfil the needs of the customer. From a coaching perspective this is where the skills, knowledge and experience of the individual coach will be a differentiating factor and where coaches will have to give attention to their personal brand. It is, however, important to note that in many services the customer is actively involved in the process and as such it is important that the coach “manages” the client to ensure that agreed upon outcomes can be achieved.

vi) **Processes** simply refer to how a service organisation delivers its product. In this case the focus is not on what they do, but on operational inputs and outputs (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007:

47). As mentioned earlier, laborious or ill-designed processes can hamper a good product, for example call centres where customers who need assistance have to wait for operators to become available.

In the case of coaching services this aspect seems relatively unimportant, but individual coaches must constantly evaluate how easy it is for their clients to get hold of them or how difficult it may be for a prospective client to understand the services offered by a coach.

vii) **Physical evidence** of a service will include aspects such as offices, uniforms of staff and printed material as the service as such is usually intangible. In this case it is interesting to note that the offices of financial and legal service providers are usually very lavishly equipped in comparison with organisations that manufacture a physical good for the simple reason that it provides the customer with clues as to what he or she can expect.

In the case of coaching services, care needs to be given to the environment in which coaching sessions take place, and to supporting clues such as printed material, look and feel of website and ease of contracting.

2.5.5. Product life cycle

For the purpose of this study a comprehensive overview of marketing management is not needed. However, it will be incomplete without some reference to the product life cycle (PLC) that is deceptively simple, but provides elegant and clear indicators to any marketer who needs to develop marketing strategies.

Products, just like people, go through life cycles. New products are launched on a daily basis and many of the products that were well known a decade ago have disappeared from the shelves and our lives. New products create new markets but, as is so aptly illustrated by the growth in the coaching industry, competitors are quick to follow and are always developing and copying new ideas and products. This results in product life cycles getting shorter – literally getting out of date quicker.

The product life cycle describes the typical stages that a revolutionary new product or idea goes through from start to finish. It is divided into four major stages, (a) market introduction, (b) market growth, (c) market maturity, and (d) sales decline. A typical product life cycle is illustrated below in Figure 2.2.

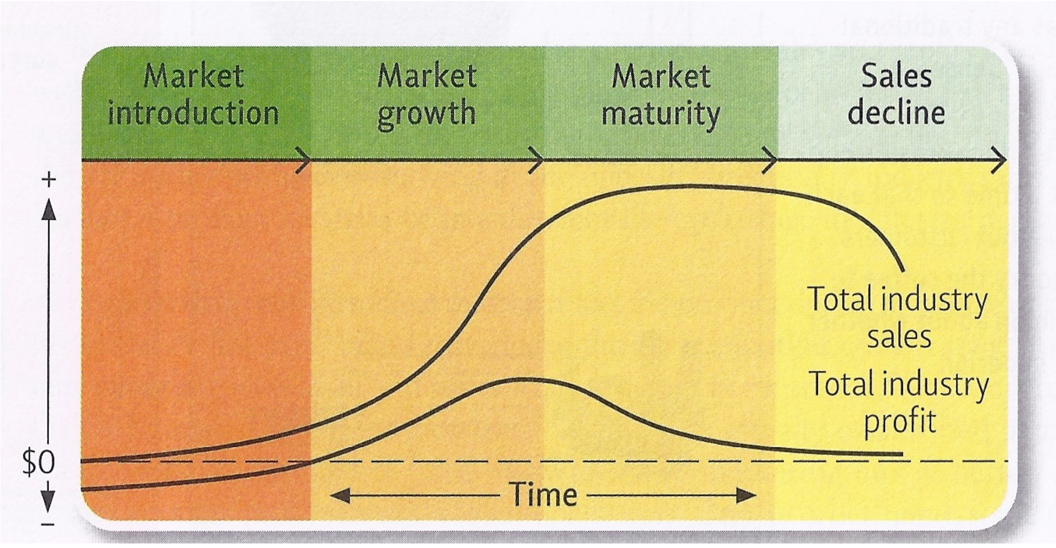

Figure 2.2: Product life cycle

Source: Cannon, Perrealt & McCarthy, 2008: 265.

The typical life cycle as described by the curve, Total industry sales, in Figure 2.2, has the following characteristics. **Market introduction** is a period of slow sales growth as the product is unknown. As a result, there is very little profit during this phase and also very little competition for obvious reasons.

The next phase, **market growth**, is simply that a period of strong growth as the product is being accepted by the majority of the market. Profitability increases but so is competition. In **market maturity** there is a slowdown of sales as most of the potential buyers of the product have accepted it. Profits start to decline as a result of the fact that marketing cost increases to defend the product against competitors. **Sales decline** usually happens when the product is being replaced by newer products and in this phase profits drop and a decision regarding the continuance of the product is needed.

The elegance of the PLC lies in the fact that there are certain strategies that apply to the different stages. This is also a point of critique against the PLC as no product or service can be managed according to generic strategies, but knowing this, the marketer can tailor the strategies to suit their specific product and target market. In terms of the traditional marketing mix the following strategic guidelines can be taken into consideration (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008: 269–274).

From the discussion in Section 2.4 it is clear that the coaching industry finds itself in the market growth-phase and this is confirmed by the key issues summarised in Table 2.1 and listed below:

- Untrained individuals can be seen as increased competition
- Competing services
- Increased awareness

- Increased demand can be translated as acceptance by the market.

In terms of the traditional marketing mix, the following marketing activities are logically associated with the market growth-phase of the product life cycle.

Product: At this stage the basic product, idea or solution will have to be revisited to keep it competitive and different from these offered by the competition. This usually means that product lines are extended to include different models, i.e. iPhone 6 in different sizes, or to include extra services and warranties.

In coaching terms this explains the variety of different genres as well as the proliferation of training programmes. All marketing activities must be aimed at acquiring and defending market share and this entails being seen as different from the competition.

Price: Pricing is aimed at market penetration, i.e. as low as possible to attract as many potential buyers as possible. This is reflected in the obstacle identified by the ICF with under-pricing.

From a coaching point of view the industry and individual coaches will have to find a balance between the strategy of penetration-pricing and an all-out pricing war. At this stage it seems as if coaches are inclined to use price as a differentiator and not product, promotion or distribution.

Distribution: This usually refers to the place where a customer can actually buy the product and it is very important in the case of physical goods. Coaching is a service and as such is not only intangible, but also takes place in the presence and with the cooperation of the customer and as such ‘distribution’ is less important. However, coaches must still consider the convenience of their customers and this translates into aspects such as ease of access to information and education about benefits.

Promotion: In this case all marketing communication is aimed at creating awareness for your product and is aimed at the mass-market. As is the case with distribution, this applies more to physical products, but coaching services need to be promoted. This does not always happen at this stage as was evident from the surveys done in the UK where coaches were reluctant to follow-up on referrals (Jenkins *et al.*, 2012: 132–150).

It is also important to note that promotion at this stage is about creating awareness of individual coaching services as the initial awareness of the benefits of coaching as a service have already been (partially) achieved, resulting in the opportunities described by the ICF, namely increased demand and improved perceptions.

In summary, the over-arching marketing objective of the market growth-phase is to maximise individual market share.

2.5.6. Application of principles of marketing to coaching services

In this section I am going to refer to the challenges and opportunities as discussed in Section 2.4 and bring these into context by discussing the product life cycle as well as the marketing mix. This discussion will lead logically to the aspects that will be addressed in the fieldwork and thus the structure of the questionnaire.

Stephen Willcocks explored the application of marketing in the healthcare industry (National Health Service (NHS)) in the UK and came to a number of interesting conclusions. Firstly he stated that marketing and more specifically the marketing mix (7Ps) offers a framework and a set of tools which can be used to improve the organisational performance of a services company as it ensures a focus on quality as well as the needs of the customer (Willcocks, 2008: 158–167). Willcocks concluded his study with the following statement, "Marketing, with due recognition of its limitations and private sector origins, may be of value when applied to the health services context (Willcocks, 2008: 166). He argued that marketing enables a focus on core aspects of organisational performance and listed these as follows:

- The centrality of quality and standards in building for success
- Understanding the relationship between customer and service supplier
- Identifying the attributes of core services
- The importance of user involvement
- The need to embrace a market philosophy and customer orientation
- Developing market-led strategies by means of the marketing mix
- Analysing the nature of the market and the needs of customers.

The opinion of Willcocks is supported by the research of Manoun Akroush who feels very strongly that any services company that fails to adopt and use the marketing mix, is heading for disaster (Akroush, 2011: 118). In a related study about service marketing for healthcare professionals in the United States of America (USA), Christopher Corbin, Scott Kelley and Richard Schwartz came to the conclusion that "the dynamics of the competitive healthcare marketplace have required that profound changes be made by physicians and healthcare organisations in order that they remain financially and operationally viable" (Corbin, Kelley & Schwartz, 2001: 7). Corbin *et al.* (2001: 7) further concluded that physicians must change the way that they attract and retain customers and further stated very bluntly that all business entities require income to stay in business and that patients initiate income, hence a need for the effective implementation of services marketing by healthcare professionals.

The need for the application of the marketing mix in service organisations is fairly obvious from the studies in the healthcare industries of the UK and USA and for a lack of similar studies amongst coaches, the findings can safely be transferred and applied equally to the coaching industry, not only in the UK and the USA, but also in South Africa.

The importance of the application of marketing and the utilisation of the tools of the marketing mix is illustrated by the research of Neil Morgan, Rebecca Slotegraaf and Douglas Vorhies in 2009 in which they studied the link between a company's profit growth and its marketing capabilities. For the sake of their research they developed a theoretical framework (based on resource-based and dynamic capabilities theories) that defines marketing capabilities as (a) market-sensing capability, (b) customer relationship management (CRM) capability, and (c) brand management capability.

Market-sensing capability reflects an organisation's systematic and anticipatory ability to learn about customers and competitors and in doing so develop the ability to continuously act on events and trends in a pro-active manner. Secondly, *CRM capability* refers to the organisation's ability to create and maintain close and strong customer relations and lastly, *brand management capability* concerns the processes and activities that enable an organisation to develop and maintain a strong brand.

The aspect of branding is somewhat of a novel idea amongst coaches but with the increased demand for customer satisfaction, this concept needs to be embraced and applied if an individual coach wishes to remain in business as branding has become pervasive throughout the marketplace. Customers in the 21st century buy brands and not generic products or services and the popularity of global brands such as FaceBook, MacDonalds and Apple is proof that a brand serves as a symbol of consistency and provides the customer with a sense of control of their service experience (Corbin *et al*., 2001: 4).

Morgan *et al.* (2009: 289) found that *market sensing capabilities* and *brand management capabilities* have a significant, positive effect on the revenue growth rate of an organisation, which means that organisations that continually scan their environment for opportunities and threats have a much better chance to sustain their profitability. In terms of *CRM capabilities,* Morgan *et al.* (2009: 290) proved that it has a positive effect on margin growth rate that translates into the ability to ask higher prices.

The significance of the link between marketing capabilities and profitability is simply summarised by Morgan *et al.* (2009: 290), "Overall, our results provide evidence that marketing capabilities are connected with firm growth rates".

The results of the three studies discussed above point clearly to two conclusions, namely that any services organisation needs (a) to apply the marketing mix in developing market-led strategies, and (b) to develop some capabilities in terms of environmental scanning, customer relations and branding. This obviously applies especially to individual coaches as these capabilities will enable them to deal more effectively with the obstacles and opportunities that apply uniquely to them as outlined in Section 2.4 and illustrated below.

i) The *influx of untrained individuals as well as the market saturation* are threats that can be identified by environmental scanning and dealt with by following the principles of the product life cycle of the growth phase.

ii) The *confusion in the market place* can be addressed by comprehensive promotion that includes educational material as well as clear branding from individual coaches.

iii) The threat of *under-pricing* can be addressed by following a market-led strategy in pricing.

iv) The threat of *competing services* can be addressed by environmental scanning and application of the marketing mix, especially in terms of product, promotion and processes.

v) The opportunities presented by *an increased awareness of coaching services, increase in the demand for coaching services and the improved perception* of coaches can be used by coaches to their advantage by applying the product life cycle as well as the marketing mix to develop a unique product and position as a coach in the marketplace.

The application of the marketing mix for services marketing by coaches is a foregone conclusion based on the discussion so far in this section. To simplify the argument and put it into a perspective that can act as guide to the development of a questionnaire, I wish to refer to two concepts that were introduced respectively by Simon Sinek and Tony Manning.

In 2009, Simon Sinek introduced the concept of the Golden Circle in his book, Start with Why. His discussion around this concept has become the topic of a popular video on TED and is illustrated in Figure 2.3 below.

According to Sinek (2009: 37–51), the Golden Circle is based on a simple mathematical relationship that is at the basis of the success of companies or individuals that apply it. In practice it simply means that an organisation must work from the inside of the circle towards the outside. To be successful you must first establish **why** you exist and only then can you determine **how** you wish to do **what** you do.

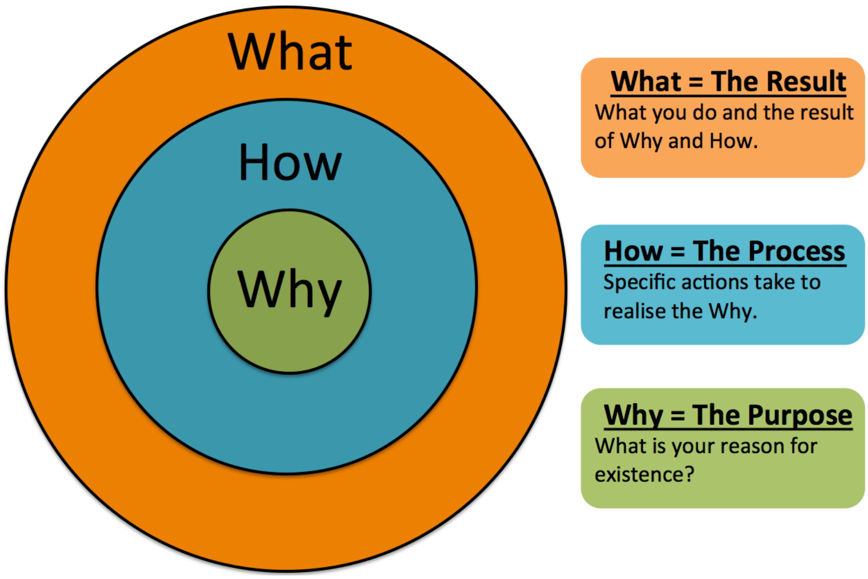

Figure 2.3: Golden Circle

Source: Sinek, 2009: 37.

The elegance of this concept lies in the fact that it forces an organisation to determine why it exists and then guides the organisation to determine how they will do things and what they will offer to the market, which is the opposite of what many organisations actually do. In most cases, companies will start by telling customers what they do and maybe how they do it but never why they do it.

In 2000, Tony Manning published an article in which he discussed a framework for the design of business models for the future. He called it the 7Ps, but it differs slightly from the marketing mix for services organisations and it is illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

In the framework proposed by Manning he clearly distinguished between **what** an organisation does and **how** they do it. Each of these areas consists of a number of building blocks and everything is focused on the purpose of the organisation, i.e. before attention can be given to the **what** and the **how**, an organisation must have a purpose. In his own words, “You have to examine your current situation from numerous perspectives” and “The 7Ps framework provides this discipline and ensures that you consider all possibilities”.

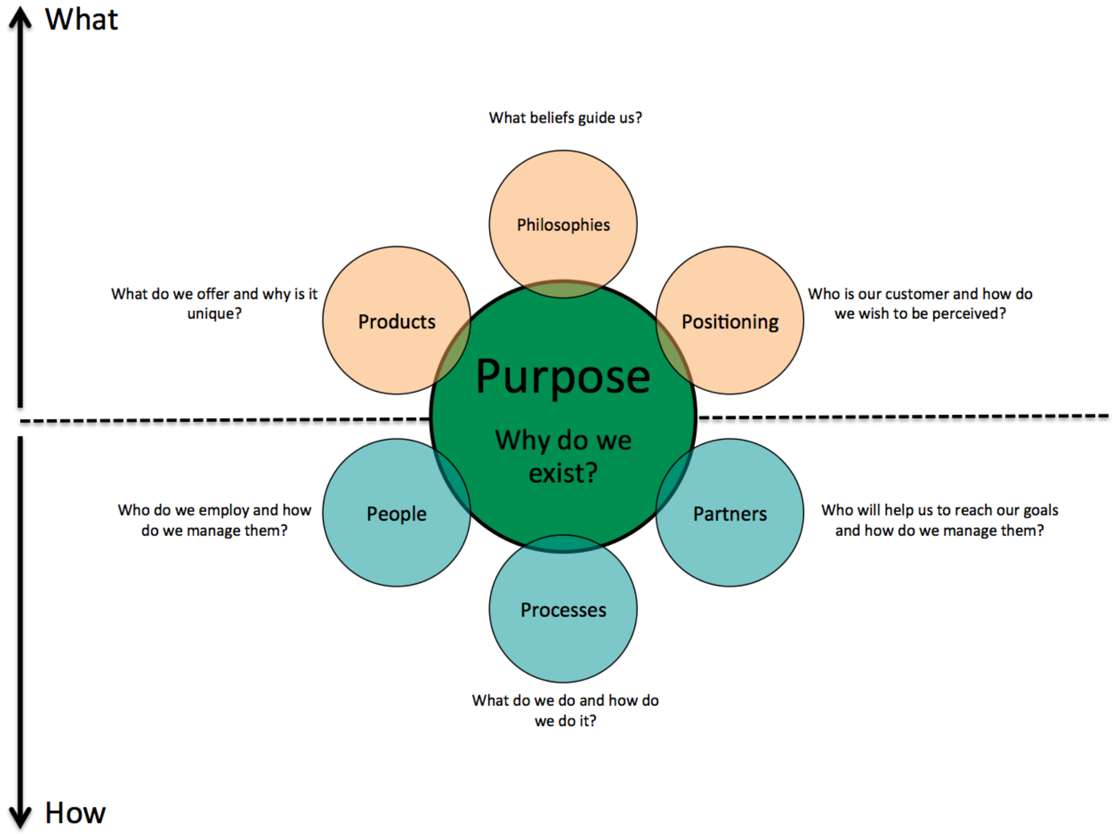

Figure 2.4: The building blocks of a framework for the design of business models

Source: Manning, 2000: 2.

The similarity with the marketing mix for services organisations is obvious. In this case, the **what** of the framework will consists of the **product** of a company as well as its **price** and the **promotion** around it as indicated by the building block named positioning. The **how** part of the framework refers to the aspects of **people, processes, place** and **physical evidence**.

In Figure 2.5 below, the concepts of Simon Sinek and Tony Manning are compared and the similarities are obvious and indicated by the red lines.

For the purpose of this research, it is clear from the discussion in this section that the questionnaire needed to address the following aspects in order to get a clear picture of the current marketing activities of coaches in South Africa:

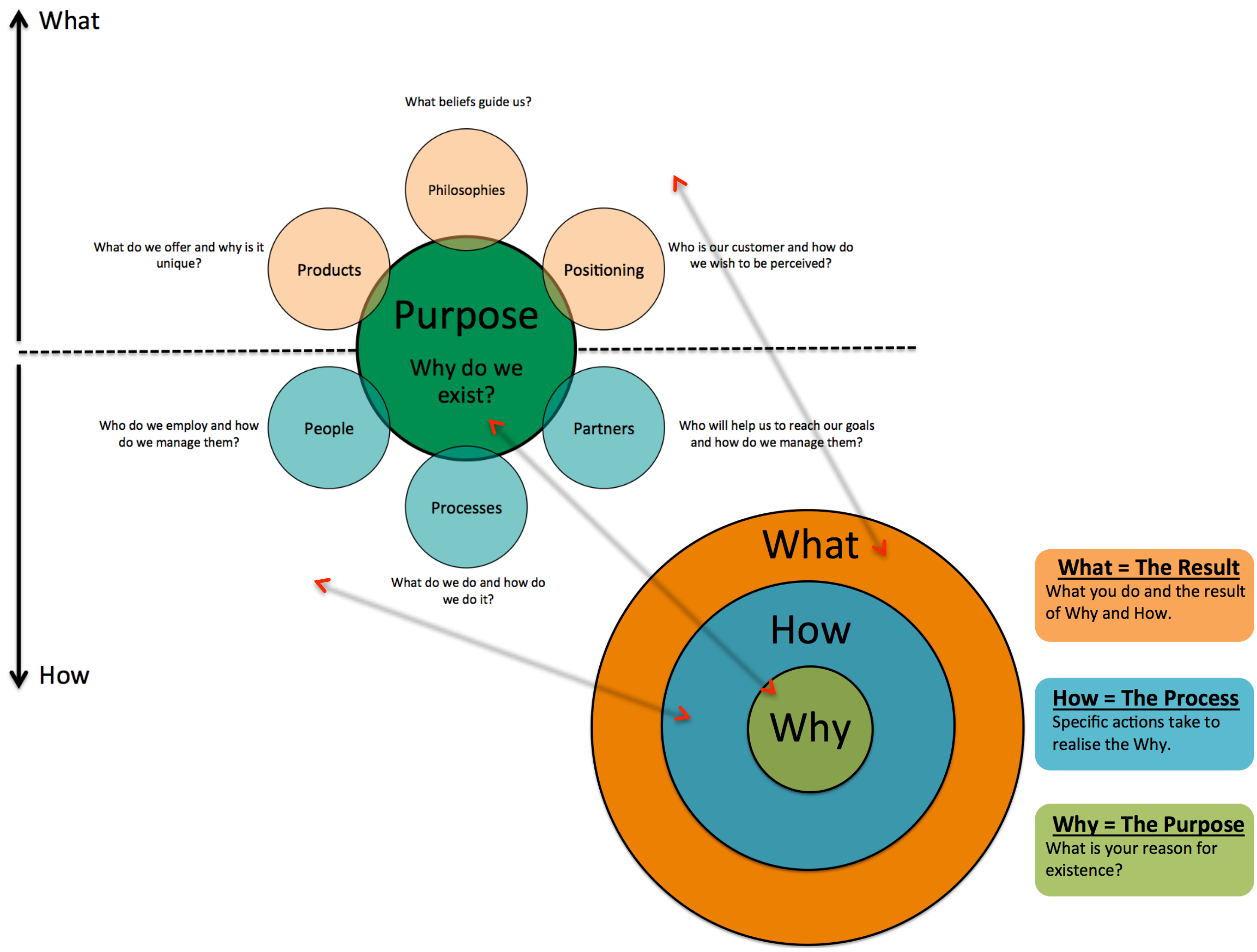

Figure 2.5: Golden Circle and 7Ps Framework

Their **purpose** to ascertain that they actually have a *raisin d'être* in their business model. This aspect is central to the position that they wish to adopt in the marketplace.

Aspects concerning **how** they do business. This addresses the aspects of people, processes, place and physical evidence and refers to qualifications, membership of professional bodies, contracting, marketing material, and offices and staff where applicable.

Lastly, all aspects of the **what** of their business are attended to. In this case it refers to the product, price and promotion. The product includes the different service offerings of the coach, i.e. the types of coaching solutions on offer and in the case of pricing attention is given to actual fee as well as the way in which the coach determines their fee.

2.6. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research problem as outlined in Chapter 1 was more comprehensively discussed and specific reference was made to the opportunities and threats faced by coaches worldwide. Attention was also given to the unique characteristics of services marketing as well as the specific marketing mix that applies in the case of services. The chapter concluded with a discussion around the need for marketing as well as the aspects that were addressed in the questionnaire and fieldwork.

In the following chapter (Chapter 3) the research approach, as well as the methodology followed for this research study, are discussed in more detail.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the subject of this study, the marketing of coaching services in South Africa, was discussed in terms of available literature, characteristics of services marketing, and the global trends in coaching. This chapter discusses the research approach and instruments used to collect and analyse the data. The sampling method and the steps taken to ensure validity and reliability are explained, and the aspects considered in the design of the questionnaire are discussed. The chapter concludes with a review of the ethical considerations that were taken into account.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study can be seen as part of the social studies discipline and its focus is the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa. The research included two distinct elements as described by the research aims. One element comprised of a comprehensive literature study of current concepts and processes involved in the marketing of professional services, such as coaching. The other element which took place after this study was a survey of practitioner coaches in South Africa, by means of using a self-completion, web-based questionnaire (see Appendix A). The questionnaire addressed the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa and my aim was to develop a realistic and accurate understanding of the different marketing activities that couches in South Africa employ to create an awareness of themselves and their services.

One of the most challenging aspects of writing this chapter was the description of the underlying meta-theories that informed me. In this regard I have found the “research onion” in Figure 3.1 (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007: 132) to be very informative as it graphically illustrates the relationship between research philosophies and approaches with practical aspects such as techniques and procedures. With reference to the “research onion”, this research study followed the philosophy of positivism that supports the idea that research in the social sciences should model itself on the logic of the natural sciences. In particular, I believe in the practice of Emile Durkheim (cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 23) according to which the reality of social facts, such as the marketing activities of coaches, is equal to that of physical and biological facts, as this reality impacts the individual externally and independently.

The “research onion” also informed the approach followed, namely deductive, and confirmed the selection of a survey as the research strategy. This research used a deductive approach in the sense that my reasoning works from the general (principles of services marketing) to the more specific (marketing activities of coaches in South Africa) and that I have come to certain conclusions based on the facts that was obtained with the survey. The deductive nature of this research is further supported by the fact that I used quantitative data which is usually associated with deductive reasoning.

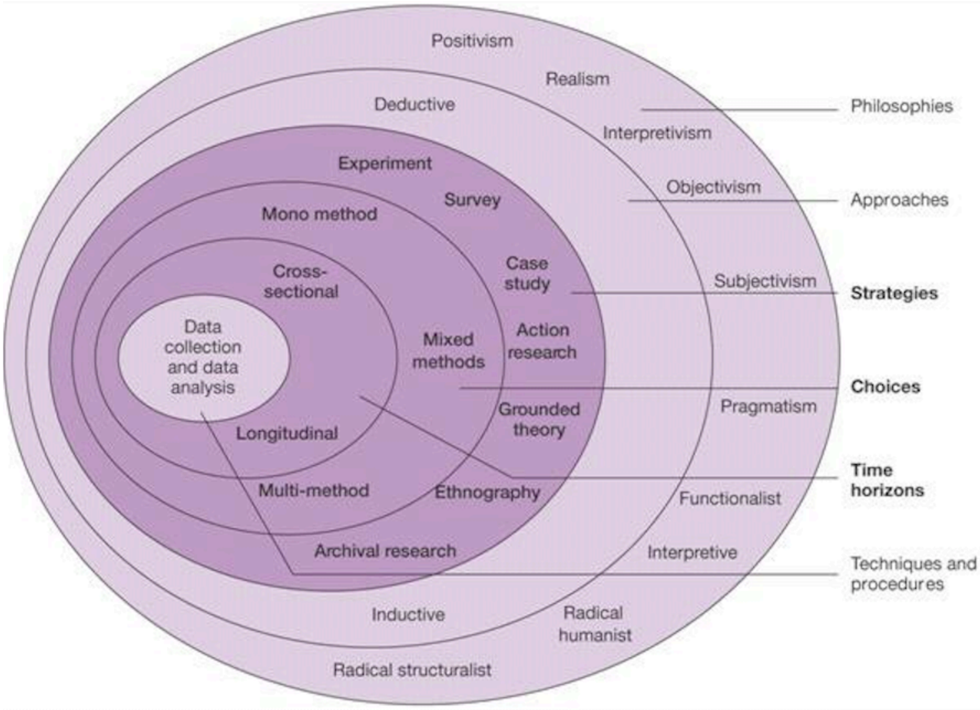

Figure 3.1: The research "onion"

The positivists' philosophy of research tends to be more quantitative than qualitative, as noted by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 49). Historians of the social scientists have shown how quantitative studies, namely surveys and statistical analysis, were used as early as the 19th century and given the predominance of positivism in the early part of the 20th century. This link between positivism and quantification of data seems to be well entrenched. This aspect is confirmed by the method of a survey, as I believe that the best way of measuring the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa is through quantitative measurement, i.e. assigning numbers to responses.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2007: 134–135), the object of descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of actions, persons or events. This is precisely what this survey's intention was, namely to obtain an accurate idea of which marketing activities coaches in South Africa prefer to use.

This research was thus designed in the positivist tradition as I treated the observed marketing activities of coaches as being equal to any other physical element that has an external impact on the individual. To better understand this impact, a quantitative approach was followed, as it is my belief that the best way to understand and describe the marketing activities of coaches is to assign numbers to the perceived quality of these activities.

The conclusions of the study can be generalised and will be used to develop a better understanding of the methods that coaches can use to market their services and hopefully develop a process that can be universally applied by all coaches in South Africa.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

Research data may be categorised as primary and secondary data. Primary data is data generated by the researcher using a variety of data gathering techniques – in this case a survey using an online, self-completion questionnaire. Secondary data is that which has been generated by others and is included in data-sets, case materials, computer or manual databases or published by various private (e.g. Annual Reports of companies) and public organisations or government departments (official statistics by the Statistics South Africa). In terms of the latter, I conducted a comprehensive literary review as discussed in Chapter 2.

3.3.1. Sampling

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 164), sampling is the process of selecting observations and it can be done according to two types of sampling techniques – probability or representative sampling and non-probability or judgemental sampling (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 207). Regardless of the techniques used for sampling, the steps in sampling are essentially the same and consist of the identification of the population, the determination of the sample size and the actual selection of the sample. These elements are discussed and described in more detail in the following sections.

3.3.1.1. Population and sampling frame

Coaching as an acknowledged intervention for improved performance within organisations and on a personal level, is globally on the rise. As a result of this development there are many entrants into the profession all of which are not necessarily suitably trained or qualified. This lack of entry barriers is to some extent countered by membership of organisations such as the ICF, and in South Africa, COMENSA. Membership, however, is voluntary and this means that no official register (in the legal sense of the word) of coaches in South Africa exists, as is the case with legal and health professionals.

As a result, the survey was conducted amongst practitioner members of COMENSA as this was the sampling frame that provided me, the researcher, with the highest probability of getting valid and reliable responses to be used to develop a process applicable to the marketing of coaching services in South Africa. This approach is accepted, as noted by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 185), “Studies of organisations are often the simplest from a sampling standpoint because organisations typically have membership lists. In such cases, the list of members constitutes an excellent sampling frame. If a random sample is selected from a membership list, the data collected from the sample may be taken as representative of all members – if all members are included in the list".

The methods used can be described as a mix of judgement sampling and simple random sampling. In judgement sampling the sampling elements are selected subjectively and deliberately to be representative of the population (Wiid & Diggines, 2013: 190–192). In this case all practitioner members of COMENSA were included in the sample and invited to take part in the survey, and this was judgemental and deliberate. However, as participation was voluntary, each member of the sample had an equal opportunity to take part, and hence the mention of simple random sampling as a second component. In this case each unit had the same probability as any other unit in the population of being "selected" (Wiid & Diggines, 2013: 190–192) and this can be seen as simple random sampling.

3.3.1.2. Size and response rate

Due to the fact that the survey was conducted amongst practitioner members of COMENSA, less attention was given to the technical calculation of the sample size. However, I took a number of factors as noted by Saunders *et al.* (2007: 212–214) and Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 70–72) into consideration in this process, as described below.

i) The larger the sample size, the lower the likelihood is of an error when generalising about the population.

ii) If the population is fairly homogeneous, a smaller sample size may be sufficient.

iii) It is advisable to draw a larger sample than needed to compensate for a lower than expected response rate.

iv) I wished to achieve a confidence level of 95 percent with a margin of error of five percent.

Based on the factors above, I calculated that a sample of 265 respondents would be needed (see Appendix B), assuming that a response rate of 100 percent was achieved. This is an unlikely scenario and therefore all the practitioner coaches registered with COMENSA (the population of 850) were approached and invited to participate in the survey. There were 212 respondents who completed the survey.

The validity of this survey is confirmed by two measures. Firstly, the confidence level is high enough with 90 percent and although 95 percent would have been preferable, the fact that all of the respondents are coaches increases this measure on a subjective basis. This is supported by the "tolerable error" which refers to the difference between the sample and the population which in this case is insignificant as shown in Table 3.1 where two comparable statistics between the population and the sample are illustrated. Table 3.1 illustrates conclusively that the sample is representative of the population and that the findings of this survey can be used without any doubt.

Table 3.1: Comparison between population and sample: Age and gender

Age category		
	Sample	Population
25 to 34 years	5%	7%
35 to 49 years	36%	43%
50 to 64 years	51%	46%
Older than 64 years	8%	5%
Gender		
	Sample	Population
Male	36%	31%
Female	63%	69%

3.3.2. Questionnaire

The research was done by means of a self-completion, online questionnaire. This method was used for a variety of reasons. Brace (2013: 23) is of the opinion that this removes a major source of potential bias in responses and makes it easier for respondents to be honest about sensitive subjects. This method is a simple and cost-efficient way of reaching the most respondents, and with the prevalence of high-speed internet connections and easy-to-use open software such as *SurveyMonkey*, the actual survey and data collection become relatively easy.

One of the biggest advantages of this approach is the fact that studies have found that respondents complete online questionnaires quicker than telephone or face-to-face versions. An added benefit is that there is less stress on both the researcher and respondents in the process and it also leads to higher response rates (Brace, 2013: 26).

For the development of the questionnaire, I considered a wide variety of factors. Lietz (2010: 265) found in research on questionnaire design that questions should be clear, simple and specific and that it is preferable to focus on current attitudes and recent behaviour. Apart from these aspects, I also tried to balance open-ended questions with closed questions and with pre-coded responses as both of these types have advantages and disadvantages (Welman *et al.*, 2005: 174–176).

When constructing the questions, I also avoided using technical marketing terms, as the respondents may not necessarily have had the right background to understand technical terms.

Questions, as far as possible, were brief and to the point. This principle is supported by Lietz (2010: 250) who feels that no more than 16 words should be used and Welman *et al.* (2005: 177) who support the idea that questions must be focused.

In general, care was taken to compile questions that are easy to understand and answer and that would not offend respondents. The sequence of questions started with general questions followed by specific questions.

Clear instructions were used throughout the questionnaire, and routing instructions were kept to a minimum but when used they were clear and unambiguous, as recommended by Brace (2013: 143). A flowchart for the questionnaire was developed to ensure that the sequence and flow of the questions would result in a high response rate (see Appendix C).

The questionnaire consists of 36 questions and took about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It was important to compile the questionnaire in such a way that (a) it is easy to complete and (b) that all of the pertinent marketing aspects discussed in Chapter 2, are covered. In terms of the marketing aspects discussed in Chapter 2 the questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Invitation and ethical considerations — Question 1
- General demographical information — Questions 02–11
- Product, target market and positioning — Questions 12–16
- Communication — Questions 17–24
- Fees and income — Questions 25–28
- Competition and competitive environment — Questions 29–36

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The survey was conducted with SurveyMonkey, a leading provider of web-based survey solutions. Using this service provider makes it relatively easy to compile questionnaires and analyse the results.

The questions was compiled on the website of SurveyMonkey and the individual options for each question was automatically coded. Where a response leads to another specific question, the respondent are taken to that question without him even knowing of any “skips”.

The results are presented in a simple table format which was suffice for the needs of this research. The researcher or user have, however, the option to filter any question with any other and it is thus possible extract more specific data if needed.

3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research had to adhere to the guidelines of the University of Stellenbosch for scholarly and scientific research. In this regard, ethical clearance was obtained from the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) and the survey was conducted according to the conditions of this approval (see Appendix D).

I agree with the sentiment expressed by Brace (2013: 200) that the public level of goodwill and cooperation with market research has declined over the past 30 years in most countries. In this regard, South Africa is no exception and the public is more aware of their rights when sharing information and also more wary of doing so. For this reason, I personally complied with the following overarching principles as described by the World Association for Social, Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR, 2010):

i) Treat the respondent with respect – In this study, respondents were fully informed of the purpose of the research and were given the choice to not participate in the study at all or to withdraw from it at any stage.

ii) Be sensitive to consumer concerns and be mindful that the success of the research depends on the confidence of the public in the researcher and process – The researcher is aware of the fact that participants have limited time and therefore designed the questionnaire to be completed with minimum effort. Controls were also in place to ensure that responses could not be traced to participants. This was achieved by means of COMENSA administering the list of participants and only guiding them to a website where the questionnaire was available, with no identifying data required from them.

iii) Be diligent in maintaining a distance between research and commercial activities such as direct marketing – In this case the research was of an academic nature and due to the ethical considerations regarding anonymity, the researcher cannot use the results to approach any respondent with a commercial intent.

As researcher, my role was to ensure that the study was conducted in full compliance with the guidelines above as well as with the conditions of DESC.

3.5.1. Informed consent

This aspect is one of the pillars on which the approval of DESC is based. Any participant involved in this research had to be able to make an informed decision about the desirability of participating in the survey as well as the implication of their participation.

The 2014 Research Guide of the University of Stellenbosch makes it very clear on page 35 that informed consent implies that the participant has adequate information to enable such a decision. For this reason I ensured that the respondents of the survey were able to make an informed decision by presenting them with a comprehensive preamble to the questionnaire. This preamble addressed the following aspects:

i) The purpose of the study.

ii) The sampling method, i.e. stating that the respondent was selected based on their membership status of COMENSA with approval of COMENSA (see Appendix E).

iii) All aspects pertaining to voluntary participation were communicated, specifically that the respondent was (a) under no obligation to participate in the survey, and (b) could terminate the completion of the questionnaire at any time.

iv) The nature of data collection, which in this case meant that the respondent could not be identified and that the findings of the study will be shared with COMENSA and all its members.

The preamble to the questionnaire was presented to all participants on more than one occasion to ensure that the general ethical issues of privacy, voluntary nature, consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, objectivity and the quality of research would be applicable at all stages of the research from formulating and clarifying the research topic to analysing the data and reporting the findings.

The respondents had access to the preamble:

i) in the covering letter from COMENSA (see Appendix F),

ii) in a separate document on the particular SurveyMonkey website, and

iii) at the start of the questionnaire.

3.5.2. Standard elements of ethical research

Apart from the important aspect of informed consent, there are some standard elements that need to be present in any form of research for that research to be executed in an ethical manner.

The respondents must obviously have a very good idea of who is conducting the research and why the research is being conducted (Brace, 2013: 201–208). The respondents need to know that participation is voluntary and must also have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

The researcher must also assure them that they will not be harmed in the research process (Brace, 2013: 201–209; Babbie *et al*., 2001: 521–527).

In the case of the first two aspects noted above, the preamble, as noted before ensured that participants could make an informed decision. This research did not involve any personal intervention between me and the participants and as such there was no risk of personal harm being done.

The aspect of confidentiality is also an obvious element that must be addressed. In this case I had to ensure that respondents could not be identified and if they could be identified the confidentiality of their data had to be guaranteed. Confidentiality also applies to the actual reporting of the findings of the research and care must be taken to keep the results anonymous (Babbie *et al*., 2001: 521–527; ESOMAR, 2010: 2–4; ESOMAR Guideline on the Mutual Rights and Responsibilities of Researchers and Clients). These aspects are reiterated by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007: 181), “The avoidance of harm (non-maleficence) can be seen as the cornerstone of the ethical issues that confront those who undertake research”.

Confidentiality was guaranteed by the nature of the sampling and survey methods. COMENSA sent an e-mail to all of their practitioner members that directed them to a web link with the questionnaire. At no time during this process was any personal information divulged to me and the questionnaire was completed online and thus also anonymously. This was also explained to the respondents in the preamble.

In the preamble to the questionnaire, the respondents and the University of Stellenbosch were informed about the technical nature of the research, specifically who was conducting it, what the aim of the research was and why it was being conducted.

The preamble also stated clearly how the respondents had been selected and that they did not have to participate in the survey. Furthermore, respondents were informed that they had the right to terminate the survey at any time and that their responses would not be recorded.

This research was conducted completely according to accepted ethical standards and procedures as well as in compliance with the requirements of the University of Stellenbosch.

3.6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design and the instruments used to collect and analyse the data have been discussed. The steps taken to ensure scientific validity and reliability were explained and all aspects around ethical issues and requirements were discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research approach and the specific method used for this study were discussed. This study was based on a survey of the members of COMENSA and the various steps taken to ensure that all ethical considerations were adhered to, were also reviewed. The survey took place during May and June 2015 and in this chapter the results of this survey are discussed.

The results are analysed along the following broad principles:

i) A summary of the sample.

ii) An in-depth discussion of the findings according to the critical marketing aspects that were outlined in Chapter 2.

iii) Concluding remarks with specific reference to the research problem, namely to describe the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa.

4.2. SAMPLING, SAMPLE AND POPULATION

The population consisted of 850 individuals and 212 respondents completed the questionnaire. Their basic demographic characteristics are summarised below in a number of tables. The first 12 questions referred to simple demographic characteristics. This included aspects such as age, gender, qualifications and work status. This data provided valuable insight into the profile of a typical coach in South Africa and could be used as a basis for cross tabulations if needed as well as be competitive with similar types of studies.

The basic characteristics summarised in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 confirm that in many cases the profile of coaches in South Africa reflects that of the membership of the ICF, specifically with regard to qualifications and training. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents have a master's degree or a doctorate and 90 percent of the respondents have received some form of training in a coaching discipline. This an important measure as it shows that coaches in South Africa are highly qualified (more than 50% have a master's degree or a doctorate) and that they have received specific training in coaching with only one out of ten who did not receive specific training. It is an indisputable indication of a high level of training and intellectual ability.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of sample: work status, qualification and training

Characteristic	Percentage
Work status	
Coach on a full-time basis	33%
Coach on a part-time basis	67%
Highest qualification	
Matric or equivalent	1%
Certificate	4%
Diploma	13%
Bachelor's degree	14%
Honours degree	14%
Master's degree	36%
Doctorate	11%
Received specific training in coaching	
Yes	90%
No	10%

It is also interesting to note that coaches in South Africa tend to be older. Fifty-nine percent of all respondents are 50 years or older and there was no respondent younger than 25 years of age. This confirms the trend that current coaches migrated from other disciplines into coaching and this demographic may change over time as younger persons select coaching as a career. At this stage the coaching industry in South Africa is dominated by women with two out of every three coaches.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of sample: Age and gender

Age category	
Younger than 25 years	
25 to 34 years	5%
35 to 49 years	36%
50 to 64 years	51%
Older than 64 years	8%
Gender	
Male	36%
Female	63%

It is significant to note that two-thirds of practising coaches in South Africa coach on a part-time basis. This measure was included in this survey with the findings of a recent survey of the ICF in mind. The South African landscape is consistent with the findings of the ICF and this can be attributed to (a) the fact that many coaches migrated from other disciplines, and more likely (b) they cannot earn a decent living from coaching alone.

Another indication of the high level of professionalism amongst coaches in South Africa is the fact that 44 percent of the respondents are registered with other professional bodies as shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Registration with professional bodies

Body	Percentage
HPCSA (Health Professional Council of South Africa)	16%
ICF (International Coaching federation)	27%
SABPP (South African Board for People Practices)	5%

The respondents who indicated that they are full-time coaches were asked for how long they have been in practice. Their responses are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

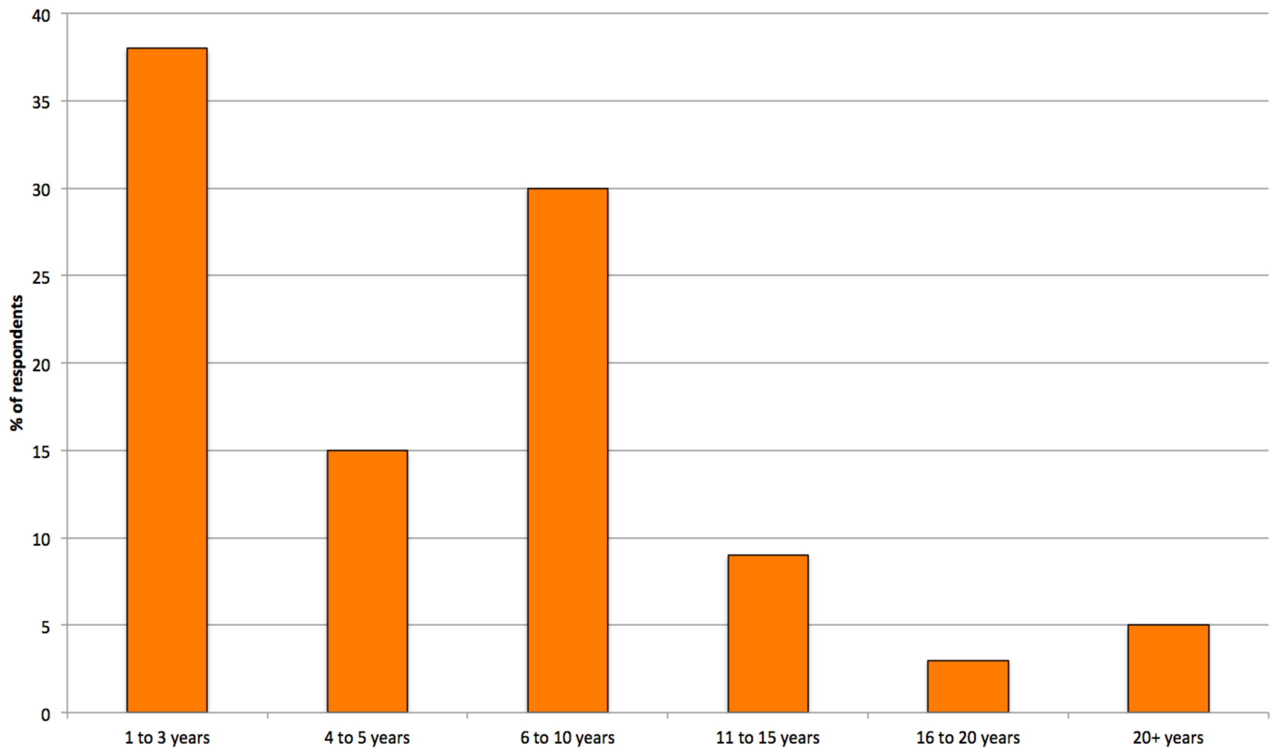

Figure 4.1: The years that full-time coaches have been in their own practice.

From Figure 4.1, it is clear that more than 50 percent of all full-time coaches have only been in their own practices for ten years or less. This correlates with the trend that coaching is a fairly new career choice and also confirms the fact that only a minority of coaches in South Africa can currently make a full-time living from coaching alone.

The respondents who indicated that they only act as part-time coaches were asked which additional services they offer. Figure 4.2 below illustrates their responses.

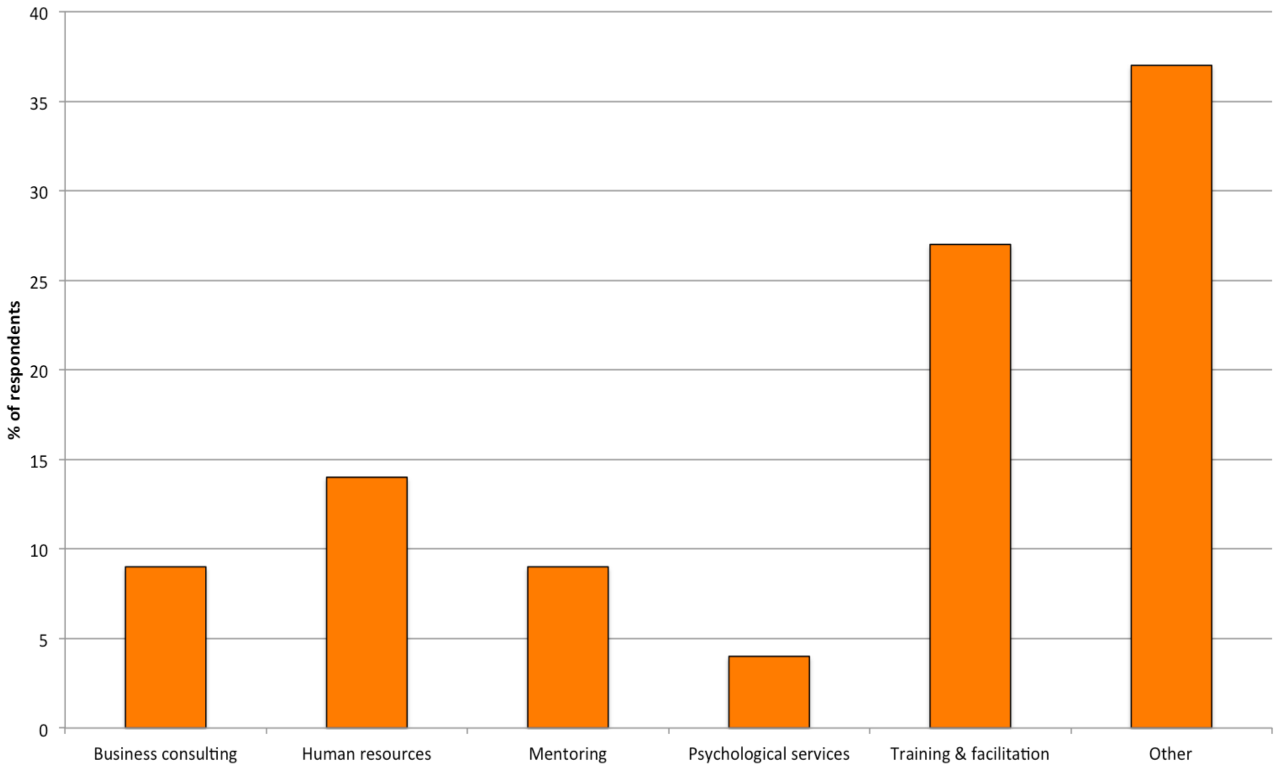

Figure 4.2: Additional services offered by part-time coaches

As to be expected, the vast majority of the services on offer can be categorised under training and facilitation as this is an area where a need for coaching can be identified. This category is followed by "typical" human resource management. In this case it refers to all related aspects such as recruitment, psychological testing, payroll administration and compliance management.

Business consulting and mentoring are also two areas that dominate their activities and this is not surprising as in the case of training, consultants and mentors are in an ideal position to identify coaching needs.

Psychological services feature specifically and this can possibly be attributed to the blurring of clear boundaries between therapy and coaching in the case of some clients. Due to the migration of persons with a wide variety of backgrounds, the category containing other services is the largest and in this case the responses are simply too varied to be statistically significant.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this section the results of the survey are discussed in terms of the different aspects of service marketing activities noted in Chapter 2. The questionnaire was specifically designed to group certain aspects of which the following are discussed next:

- Target marketing and positioning		Questions 12–16
- Communication		Questions 17–24
- Competitive environment		Questions 29–36

See addendum F for the comprehensive results of the survey.

4.3.1. Target marketing and positioning

The respondents were asked if they have a specific target market in mind with their various marketing activities and their responses are shown in Figure 4.3 below.

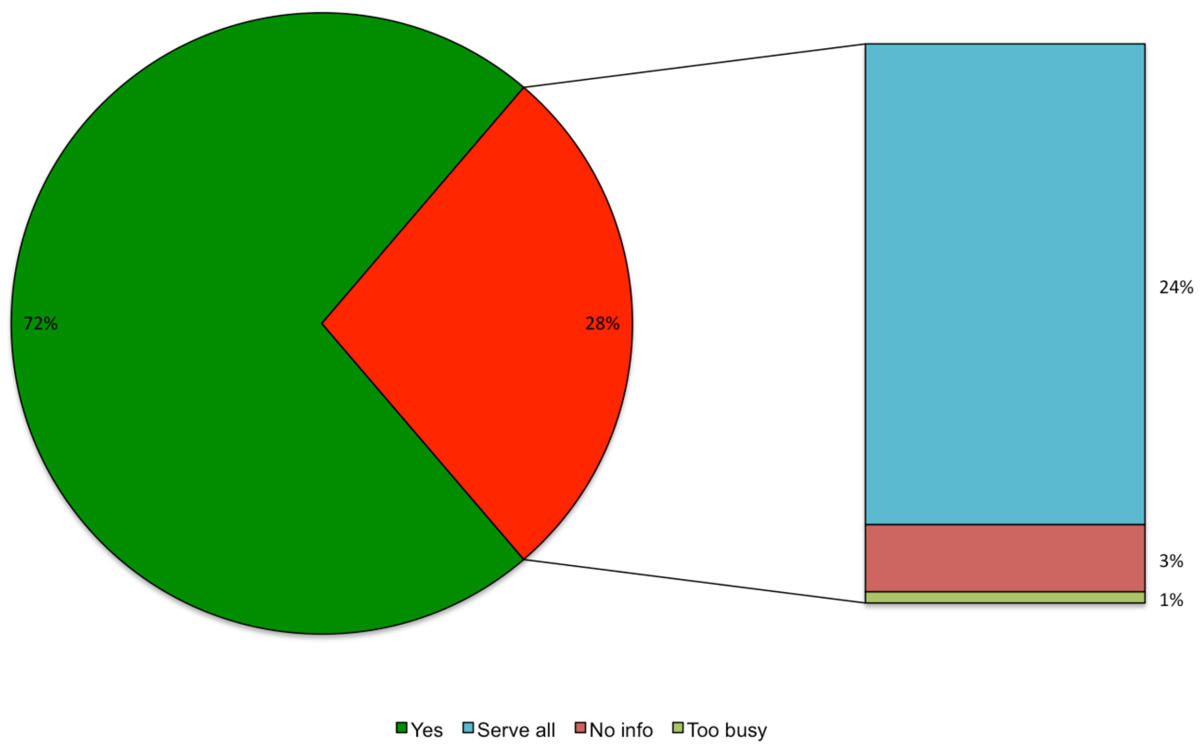

Figure 4.3: Do you focus on a specific target market?
(Questions 12 & 14)

The majority of the respondents (72%) indicated that they focus on a specific target market. The following are reasons why some respondents do not focus on a specific target market:

Twenty-four percent of the respondents claimed that they serve all types of clients, three percent have either no information about the market or do not have the knowledge to do target marketing, and one percent are simply too busy to do any target marketing.

This is a significant finding for two reasons. Firstly, the fact that the majority of the coaches have a particular target market in mind, implies that they have a product to offer and this is obviously very good. Of even more importance is the second reason, namely that in a service such as coaching, the product forms the core of an organisation's marketing strategy, as seen in the discussion of the 7P's of service in Section 2.5.4 of Chapter 2 and this means that most coaches have something to work with when they develop their marketing strategy.

The respondents who indicated that they focus on a specific target market were asked to describe the target market. Their responses are summarised in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Summary of selected target markets (Question 13)

Description	**Percentage**
Management related	**65%**
Business	11%
Entrepreneurs	15%
Leadership and executive	13%
Management	15%
Sales	2%
Supervisors/first line management	9%
Life stage related	**17%**
Children	8%
Retirement	2%
Young professionals/young adults	7%
Other	**18%**
Life coaching that includes a wide variety of approaches	9%
Team coaching – not restricted to companies	2%
Women	7%

From Table 4.4, it is clear that two out of three coaches focus on the business market with a bias towards management and leadership. It is interesting to note an emphasis on coaching for entrepreneurs, which makes sense in the South African context.

There is also a fairly heavy emphasis on coaching for children and young adults. In both cases the aim of these coaching interventions is mainly career-orientated, i.e. selecting appropriate subjects, courses and an eventual career.

Life coaching features with a wide variety of needs in mind – from weight-loss and trauma/bereavement to changing of habits.

The variety of different target markets addressed by the respondents is proof that they adhere to the principle of adding value to their clients which is aligned with one of the challenges facing coaches which was pointed out in by Peter Hawkins and noted in Section 2.3.1.2 of Chapter 2.

The two target markets that I found the most interesting are coaching aimed at women and preparing people for retirement. In both cases the need seems to be obvious and with the ever-changing workplace in South Africa I expect that more coaches will specialise in these two fields in the future.

The respondents were asked what they regard as their existing clients' primary source of information about their services (Question 15). This follows on the previous question and serves as an indicator of the type of marketing activities the respondents may engage in. Their answers are shown in Figure 4.4 below.

It is not surprising that the vast majority of their current clients have come to know about their services by means of word of mouth, as this is a trend that is not confined to South Africa alone. Referrals by existing clients account for 43 percent and referrals from employers for another 27 percent. The internet is also an important source, with printed advertising and COMENSA seen as less effective.

The importance of this information cannot be emphasised enough. Referrals will only follow if the coach meets the expectations of their clients and in this case it will entail all aspects of service marketing which includes the reputation of the coach, the quality of their coaching, their skills and knowledge as coaches as well as aspects such as contracting and the delivery of measurable results.

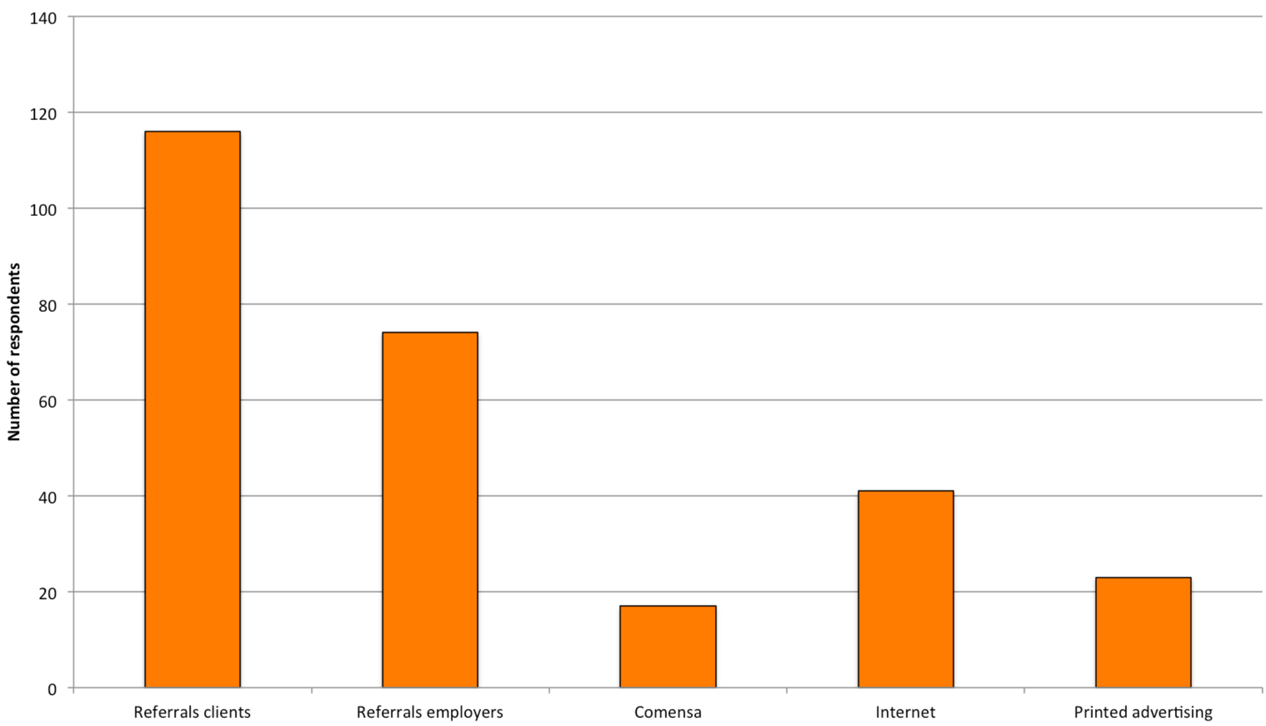

Figure 4.4: Existing clients' primary source of information about services (Question 15)

This information also places coaches in South Africa in a favourable light in view of the fact that coaches in the United Kingdom only follow up on about 20% of referrals by their existing clients as noted by Jenkins *et al* in 2012 and discussed in Section 2.3.4 of Chapter 2

The important role that referrals play in the generation of new business is confirmed in the respondents' answers to the question: why would NEW clients want to use your services? (Question 16), as illustrated in Figure 4.5 below. Positive feedback from existing clients is seen as the most important reason. It is interesting to note that coaches are of the opinion that their field of speciality (expertise) carries a heavier weight than their qualifications and that membership of a professional body is significantly less important for new clients. Despite the heavy focus on positive feedback, it must be noted that qualifications and membership of professional bodies are still important as these factors play an important role when a coach wishes to position himself. Unlike a referral from a client, qualifications and membership can be objectively and publicly verified and this enables a coach to be seen by their target market as an expert.

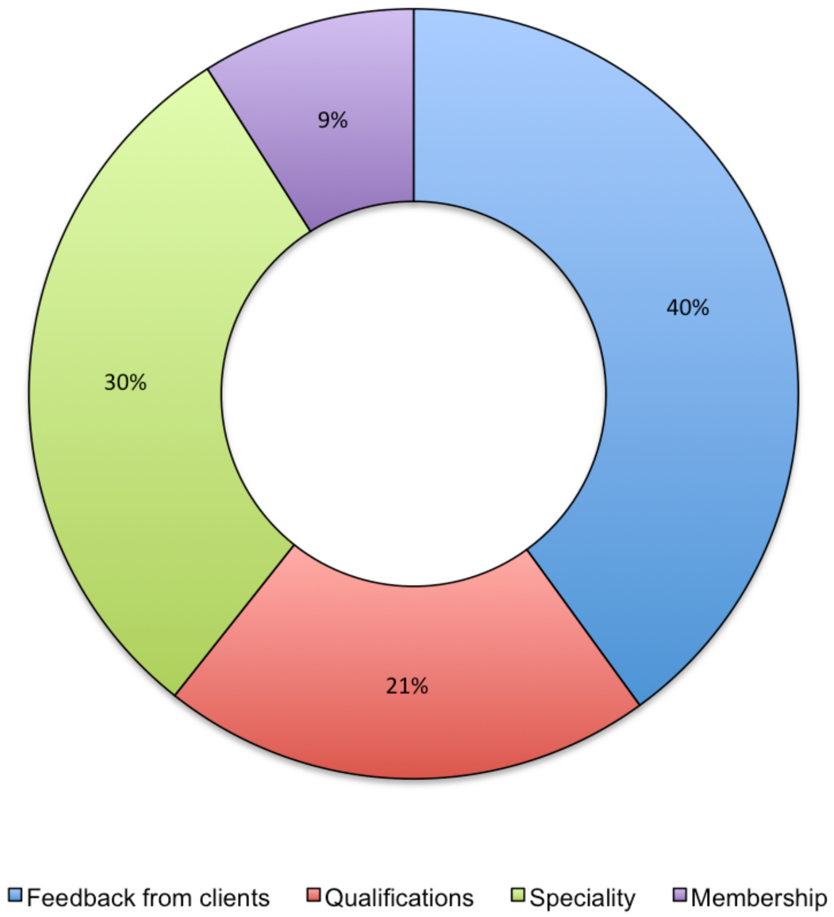

Figure 4.5: New clients' primary source of information about services (Question 16)

4.3.2. Communication

In this section the discussion focuses on the message that coaches wish to convey to their target markets. This aspect is extremely important in light of the global trends in coaching that was discussed in Section 2.4 of Chapter 2. The pertinent aspects in this case are noted in Table 2.1 and are referred to as the obstacles and opportunities for the coaching industry. I wish to emphasise two specific trends namely (a) increased awareness of coaching (opportunity) and (b) confusion in the marketplace (obstacle) as both of these are directly linked to good or bad communication.

Respondents were asked how the public and potential clients could get more information about their services (Question 17). This is not to be confused with the information asked in the previous two questions, where their perceptions were probed. In this case I wanted their factual answers which are illustrated in Figure 4.6 below.

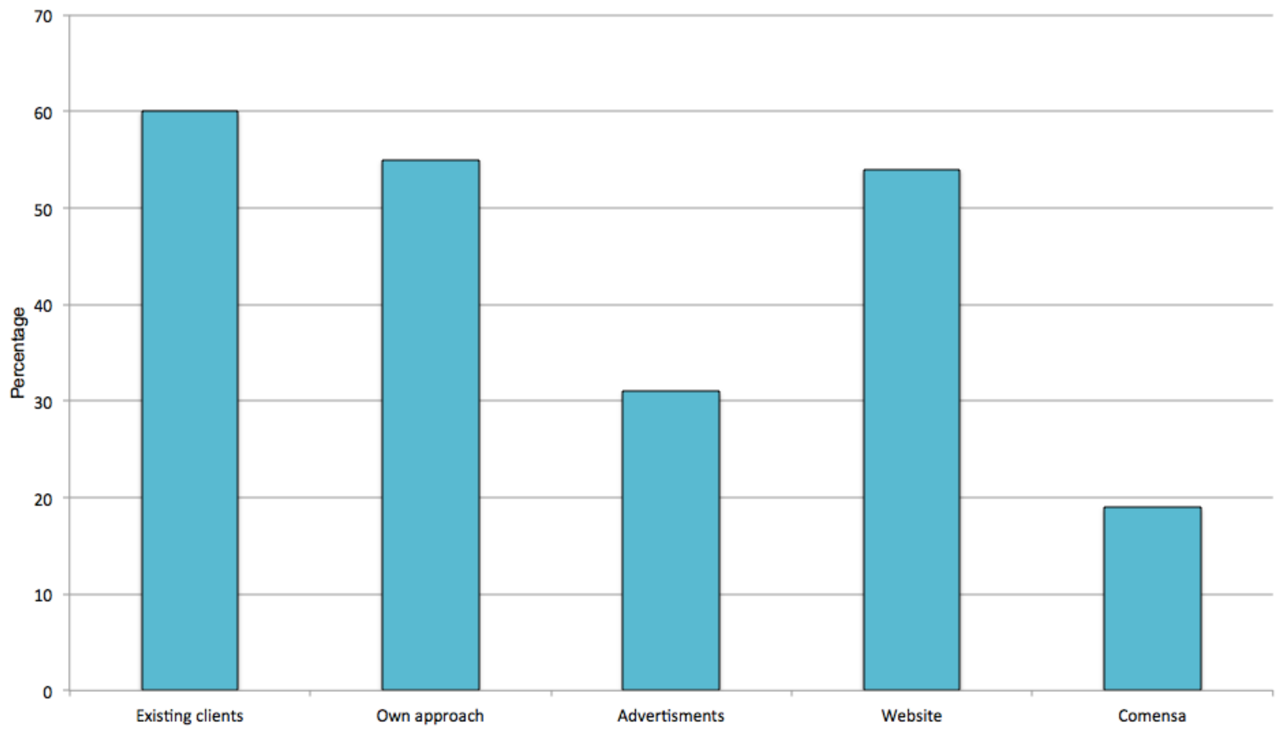

Figure 4.6: How can the public and potential clients learn about your services? (Question 17)

The importance of word of mouth as a top source of information is once again confirmed. This is closely followed by "pro-active" efforts from the coaches themselves where they indicated that they publish information about their services on the internet (website) and approach potential clients with, presumably, presentations about their services. Advertising is also noted with less importance as well as their membership of COMENSA. In the case of COMENSA, it is important to note that COMENSA only lists their registered members on their website and they do not claim to be a source of potential business for any of their members.

The fact that pro-active efforts from coaches is in second place is a positive signal. The increased awareness about coaching obviously translates into an increase in available coaching services. As such coaches cannot only rely on word-of-mouth for new business, but will have to start communicating themselves if they wish to be seen and heard by their target markets and ultimately considered as a provider of coaching services.

The respondents were asked to summarise the message that they wish to convey to their selected target markets in 25 words or less (Question 18) and the keywords from a 149 respondents to this question are shown in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: What is the most important message you currently communicate? (Question 18)

It is clear that coaches try to bring two types of messages across. On the one hand you find numerous messages that emphasise the characteristics of the coach. In this case the experience of the coach is obvious and further aspects include professionalism, thinking partner, qualifications, values, beliefs and ethics. Another type of message focuses on the advantages of the coaching process. In this case coaches link it to their fields of expertise and it includes development, achievement, growth, awareness, behaviour, transition and compassion, amongst other things.

It is interesting to note that when coaches have the opportunity to "talk about themselves" they do not put a lot of value on aspects such as their qualifications and professional membership. This confirms some of the results previously discussed where they indicated that new clients would be attracted by word of mouth that in this context can be seen as experience. It also contradicts the fact that they claimed that new clients would be attracted based on their qualifications.

Communication for the sake of communication, however, is not good enough in this case. The challenge in the case of communicating about a service is that the product is largely intangible, as discussed in Section 2.5.3 of Chapter 2. The proliferation of coaching services as such must not be confused with a diversity of coaching services (despite the labels that coaches and the coaching community use for the different types of coaching on offer). On the contrary, as the number of services within a category increase, the differences between them start to become increasingly small and difficult to identify. This means that the message as well as the medium used to convey it, is even more important than in the case of tangible goods and calls for extra-ordinary communication skills and knowledge.

Although it is clear that most of the respondents have a fairly good idea of what they wish to convey about their services, skills and experience, they are not as confident about the success of their efforts as shown in Figure 4.8.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they are not convinced that their message reaches its intended target audience. The majority of these respondents indicated that they do not know where to communicate, followed closely by respondents who feel that they do not know what to communicate. It is also significant that a fairly substantial number of respondents indicated that they are not comfortable with the idea of self-promotion. The minority of respondents indicated that they are either too busy to attend to communication or have enough work and deem it unnecessary.

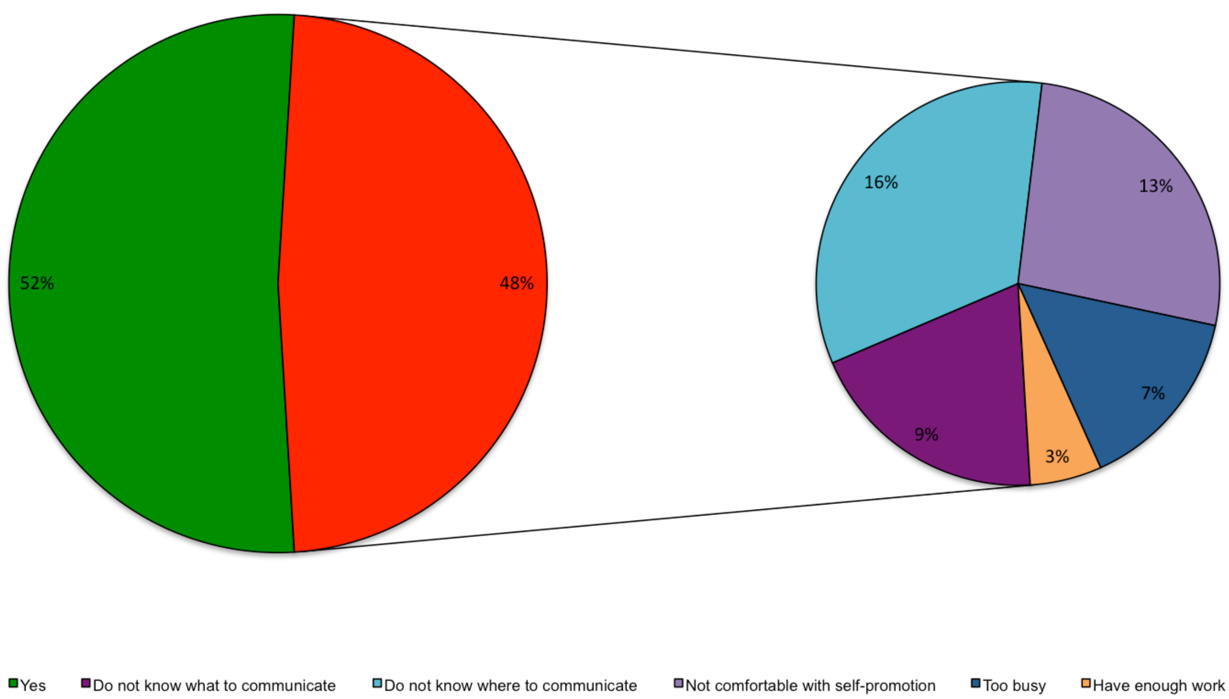

Figure 4.8: Do you think your message reaches potential clients? (Questions 19 & 20)

It is obvious from Figure 4.8 that communication about services, skills and experience is a major stumbling block to a significant number of coaches in South Africa; however, it is not for a lack of trying. Respondents were asked to indicate which of a list of marketing channels they have used in the past and the question was answered by 135 of the respondents (Question 21).

From the data shown in Figure 4.9, it is clear that the respondents have been involved in a wide variety of activities. Seventy percent of them indicated that they have delivered a talk about coaching in the past, followed by 50 percent who have used an e-mail campaign and 40 percent who have written a non-academic article. The prevalence of these three marketing channels confirm the high level of academic qualifications of coaches in South Africa. However, it must be noted that the scope of this research did not include in-depth testing of these approaches. Many did not use traditional advertising, irrespective of the medium, and this was expected as the costs involved are usually beyond the budget of a small company or sole proprietor.

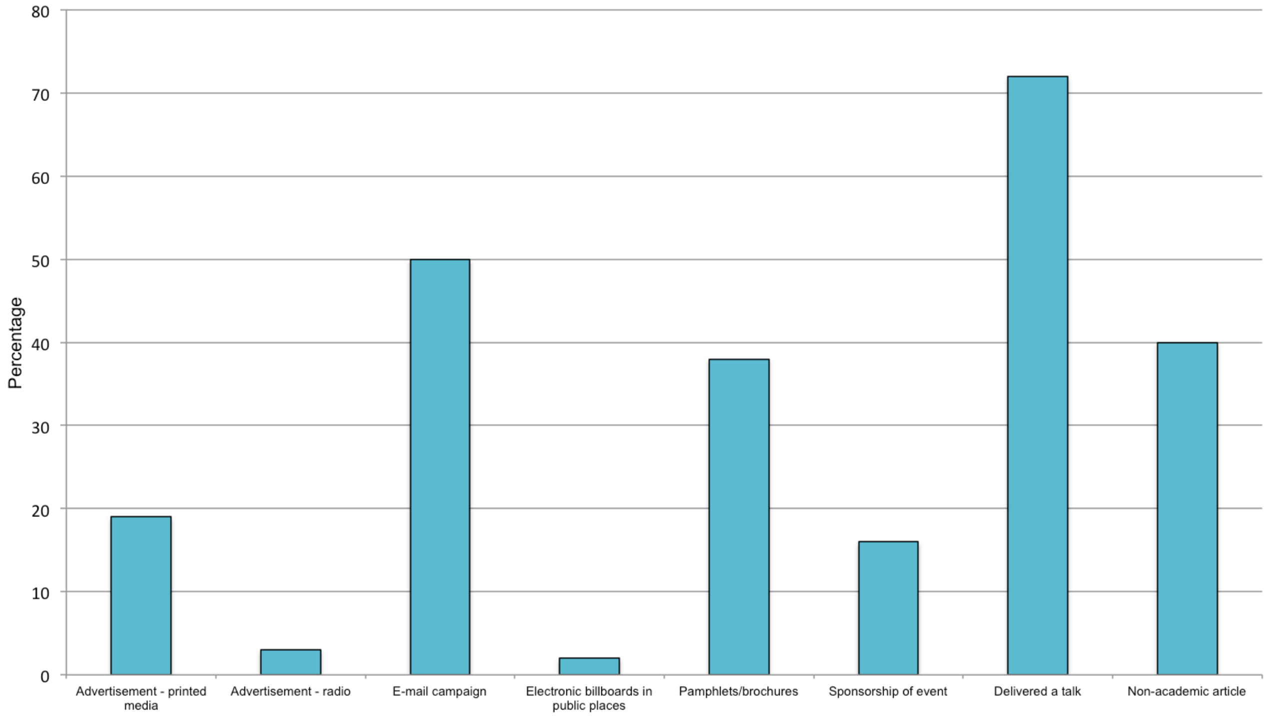

Figure 4.9: Marketing channels used in the past in your practice? (Question 21)

The respondent's attitude towards electronic communication was tested and in this respect they were asked if they use or intend to use any of the currently accepted and popular social media platforms, in particular Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn as well as a dedicated website and blog.

The question was answered by 158 respondents and offered some very interesting insights into their social media activities. Eighty-one percent of the respondents claimed to have a LinkedIn profile and 56 percent indicated that that they have a branded website for their coaching practice. Nearly four out of every ten coaches have a Facebook page. Results are shown in Figure 4.10.

As in the case of the previous question, the scope of this study did not include in-depth testing of these claims, but the importance of communication is once again stressed.

In this case, the future intention of the respondents was also probed and it is important to note that there is still a significant number of coaches in South Africa who have no intention to communicate electronically in the near future. Regarding a Facebook page, 25percent of respondents have indicated that they will not use it in the near future and nearly the same number (26%) have the same opinion regarding a blog. Forty-six percent of respondents will not use a Twitter account in the near future and eight percent will not establish their own website.

The reluctance to use some of these platforms, such as a Twitter account or a blog, is understandable as these media are only effective if you have something to say and you do it consistently enough to attract an audience. Despite the fact that I can understand their reluctance, I must also note that I assume that these coaches will not consider coaching a client in any other setting as face-to-face and this is worrying. If coaches wish to stay relevant and be able to appeal to as broad a target market as possible they will have to adapt to the possibilities offered by technology and adopt e-coaching (coaching by means of Skype, FaceTime, phone or e-mail) as an approach to be used with some clients.

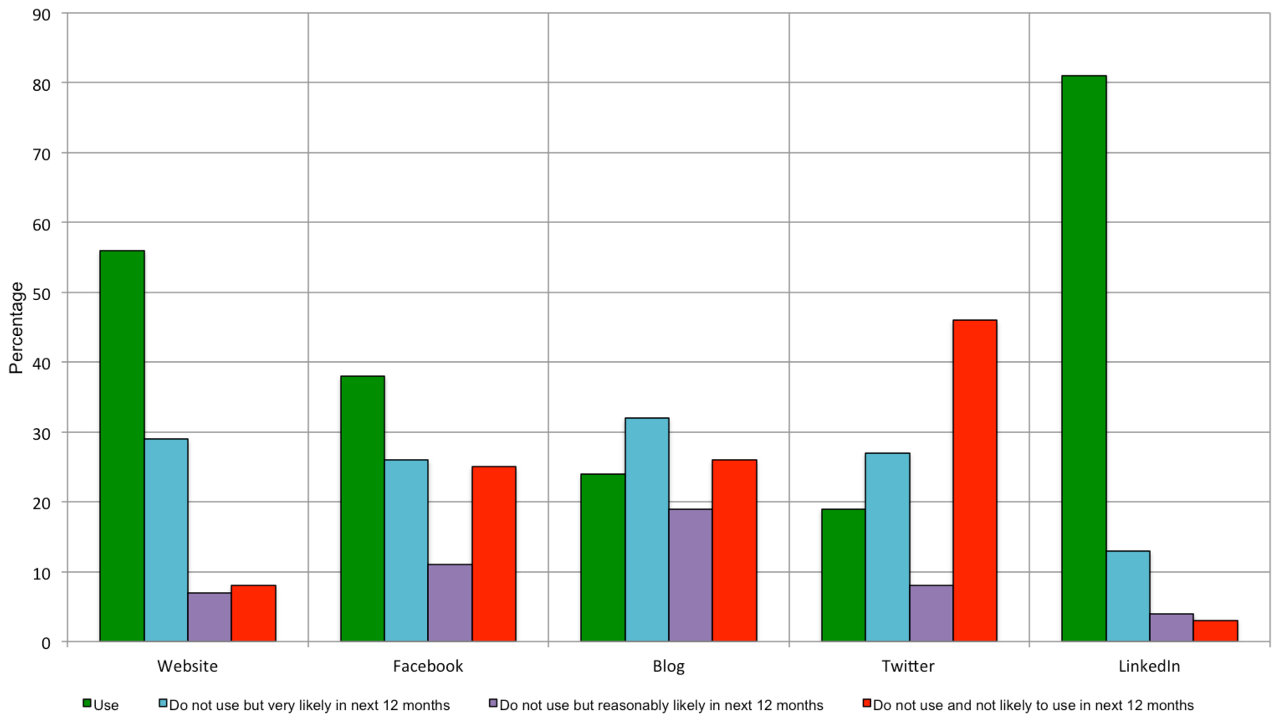

Figure 4.10: Utilisation of electronic media (current and intended in future) (Question 22)

Reasons for the attitude towards a website or Facebook page are unfortunately unclear but I believe that it is an indication that coaches in general do not feel comfortable with the extent of their marketing knowledge and skills and therefore do not really plan their marketing/communication efforts. They would rather do it in a random way, which was confirmed when coaches were asked whether they have a written marketing plan for their practice.

Only one out of every three coaches answered in the affirmative in this case – 67 percent of coaches in South Africa have no written marketing plan for their practice. This means that whatever media they use or have used in the past and any message that they wish to convey to the public is done purely on "impulse" – they follow the latest trends and thus the herd. This finding lies at the heart of this study and I wish to emphasise the gravity of it by referring to the concepts of Simon Sinek and Tony Manning as discussed in Chapter 2 and graphically summarised in Figure 2.5. By not doing any marketing planning the majority of the coaches in South Africa does not progress further than having a purpose (WHY) and expect the public and their target markets to assume the rest of the components of their service offering.

The fact that marketing planning is not seen as very important is further supported by the fact that even the majority of those respondents with a written marketing plan do not revise their marketing actions on an annual basis. Sixty-two percent indicated that they revise their marketing plans on an ad-hoc basis and another four percent have written the plan and since then never revised it.

4.3.3. Competitive environment

One of the aspects needed for the successful marketing of a services organisation, as mentioned in above, is *market-sensing abilities*, and this refers to a process and the ability to understand the competitive environment of your organisation. In this section the results of the survey touch on this ability are discussed.

In light of the global phenomenon of the over-supply of coaching services, the respondents were asked if they have experienced an increase in the supply of coaching services over the past 12 months (Question 28). The results were somewhat ambiguous, as noted in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Summary of results for question 28
(Have you experienced an increase in the supply of coaching services in your selected target market over the past 12 months?)

Answer choices	Percentage
Yes	38%
No	25%
Can't say	37%

Four out of every ten coaches in South Africa indicated that they do experience an increase in coaching services and thus also an increase in competition and 25 percent of the respondents reported the opposite experience. Seeing that the respondents were asked to answer this question with their specific target market in mind, this result makes sense as the coaching interventions covered in this survey are not equally "popular", but at the same time it does confirm the findings of the ICF mentioned in Chapter 2.

The fact that 37 percent of coaches were unsure is worrying from a *market-sensing ability* point of view. In section 2.5.6 of Chapter 2 the importance of this aspect has been discussed and without it a coach is figuratively blind in the marketplace as she does not have the capability to learn about competitors and potential clients in order to develop pro-active strategies to deal with them. This confirms earlier findings that a large percentage of coaches in South Africa simply do not view their activities from a marketing perspective and this can be detrimental to the sustainability of their practices.

The topic was further probed by asking the respondents a more specific question regarding potential competitors. They were asked to rank different types of competitors in terms of their perceived threat to their own practices (Question 29). The types of competitors were selected based on the findings of the ICF as well as other literature mentioned in Chapter 2. The results are shown in Figure 4.11.

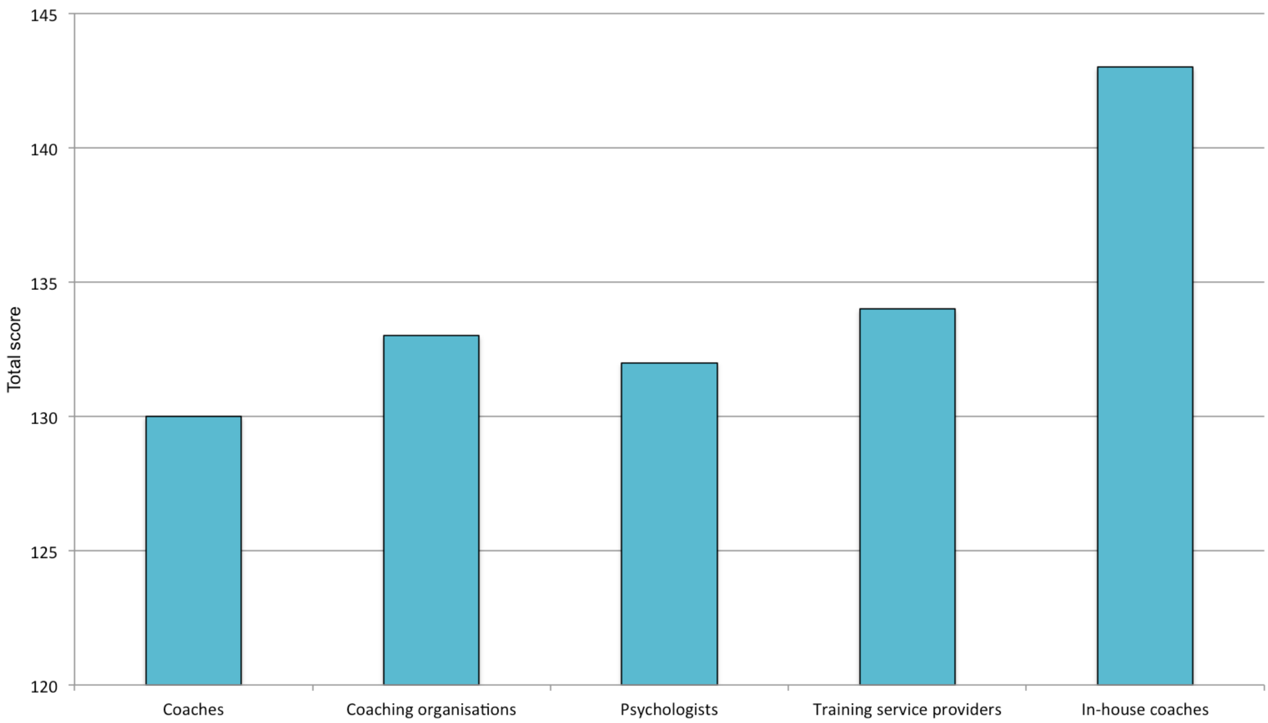

Figure 4.11: Ranking of competitors based on perceived threat (Question 29)

In view of the fact that 65 percent of the respondents described their activities as business/management-related, it is no surprise that in-house coaches are ranked as the biggest threat followed by training service providers. In the latter case it is probably more by virtue of their unique position to identify coaching needs than by their ability to provide it.

The type of competitor with the lowest perceived threat is other coaches and this is interesting from two opposite points of view. Firstly, it is an indication that the respondents have an instinctive feel for competition as not all competitors are necessarily direct in nature (i.e. looking like your own organisation). The second viewpoint is more negative as this ranking can also be seen as an indication of overconfidence which is evinced by the results shown in Figure 4.12 where the respondents ranked the uniqueness of their offering compared to that of their competitors (Question 30).

The majority of the respondents are of the opinion that their offering is completely unique in terms of qualifications, area of speciality and reputation and they also claimed that in terms of price and professional membership they are to an extent different. This means that coaches in South Africa are of the opinion that their competitors do not offer anything unique to the public. The results of this section are worrying when the impact of it is compared to the discussion of the Product Life Cycle (PLC) in Section 2.5.5 of Chapter 2. From that discussion it was clear that the coaching industry finds itself in growth-phase of the PLC and in this phase everybody will experience increased competition and all communication must be focused on increasing individual market share.

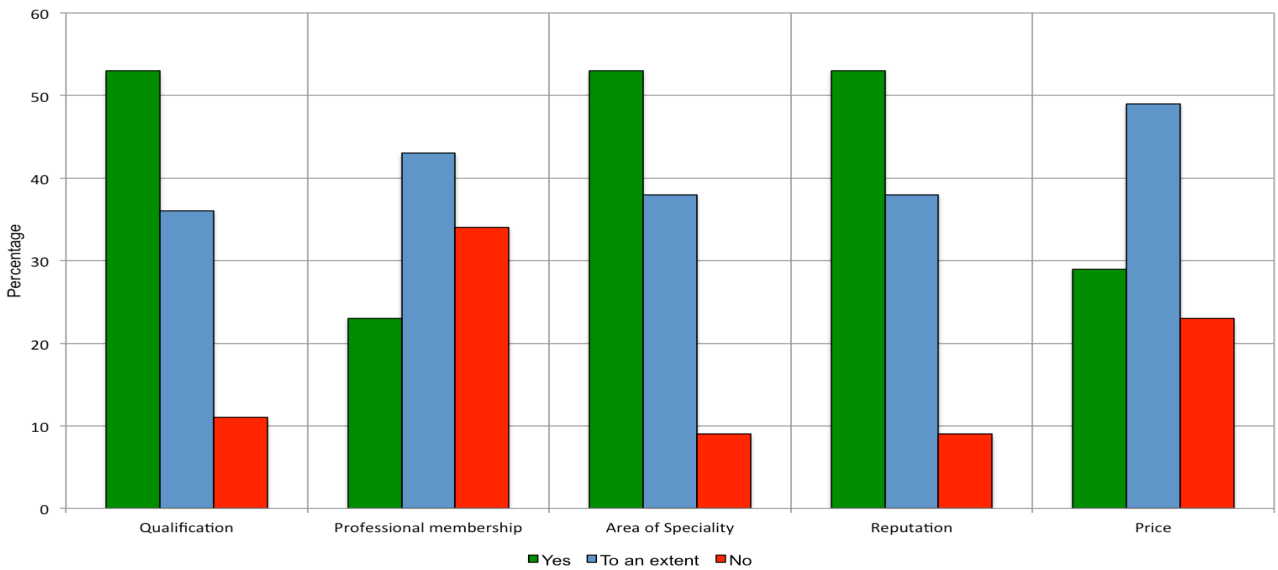

Figure 4.12: Uniqueness of service offering in comparison to main competitors (Question 30)

Although there may be some validity in the concept of an undifferentiated coaching solution, it still indicates a risky level of complacency, especially in view of the respondents' answers to the next question: In your opinion, is the difference between your offering and that of your main competitors clear to your potential clients? (Question 31). From the summary in Table 4.6 below, it is obvious that the majority of the respondents are not convinced that the difference between their offering and that of their competition is clear. Only one out of every three coaches feels that the difference between themselves and their main competitors is clear to the public.

Table 4.6: Summary of results for question 31
(In your opinion, is the difference between your offering and that of your main competitors clear to your potential clients?)

Answer choices	**Percentage**
Yes, the difference is clear	32%
No, the difference is not clear	24%
Unsure whether the difference is clear	44%

When the respondents were asked to consider whether it was more difficult for them personally to get new clients over the past 12 months (Question 32), forty-four percent answered in the affirmative. Their response was not probed in depth, but from the findings discussed in this chapter it is fairly obvious that the single biggest reason for their experience is the fact that they have more competition. At the same time, the fact that 56 percent of coaches did not have the same experience cannot be ignored. They may operate in a different target market with less competition, but it is probably due to the fact that word of mouth is currently the biggest source of new business for all coaches and as such they have not been exposed to "real" competition.

The last three questions of the survey measured the respondent's "feel" for the marketplace in terms of opportunities and obstacles as well as their own optimism about their practice over the next 12 months.

The respondents were asked to give their opinion about any factors that may be to the advantage and disadvantage (Questions 33 & 34) of coaching in general in South Africa. In Chapter 2 the findings of the Global Coaching Study commissioned by the ICF in 2012 were discussed and these aspects were referred to as *key issues facing the industry*. In the following two tables the findings of this study are compared to findings of the study by the ICF.

Table 4.7: Summary of results for question 33
(Which factors, if any, are currently in favour of coaching in general?)

Opportunities			
COMENSA		**ICF**	
Increased awareness	36%	Increased demand	51%
Credible data on ROI	28%	Increased awareness	27%
Improved general perception	14%	Improved general perception	10%
Increased demand	11%	Credible data on ROI	9%
Positive media	8%	Other	3%
Other	2%		

The coaches in South Africa have experienced the same opportunities as their counterparts in the rest of the world although the order of importance is different. In South Africa coaches see an increase in awareness as well as credible data on ROI as the two biggest opportunities for coaching. This is followed by an improved general perception about coaching which obviously results in an increased demand (11%). However, notice needs to be taken about the global perception where increased demand overshadows all the other aspects with 51 percent.

In Table 4.8 below the obstacles to coaching in general are outlined and the same pattern as with opportunities can be seen. South African coaches experience the same obstacles, but in a different order. In South Africa, marketplace confusion and under-pricing are seen as the two biggest obstacles at 26 and 23 percent respectively. Untrained individuals only account as an obstacle for 17 percent of coaches in South Africa, compared to 43 percent in the rest of the world. The uniqueness of the South African context is clear from the aspects of a weak economy, a lack of professionalism that is reflected in the marketplace confusion, and the over-supply of coaches.

Table 4.8: Summary of results for question 34
(Which factors, if any, are currently to the disadvantage of coaching in general?)

Obstacles			
COMENSA		**ICF**	
Marketplace confusion	26%	Untrained individuals	43%
Under-pricing	23%	Marketplace confusion	30%
Untrained individuals	17%	Market saturation	9%
Economic factors	13%	Under-pricing	5%
Market saturation	11%	Over-regulation	3%
Lack of professionalism	6%	Market saturation	3%
		Other	7%

In question 35, the respondents were asked to consider an increase in their coaching activities over the next 12 months with regards to clients, sessions and income. The results are shown in Figure 4.13.

Only five percent of the respondents are of the opinion that they will not be able to increase their activities in any of the three categories, whilst 68 percent indicated that they will definitely increase all of their activities. This response is slightly out of line with their general perceptions of the marketplace, but at the same confirms the over-confidence indicated by their perceptions about competition.

The aspect for which the respondents indicated the biggest confidence is an increase in the number of clients, and logically the second aspect will be an increase in income.

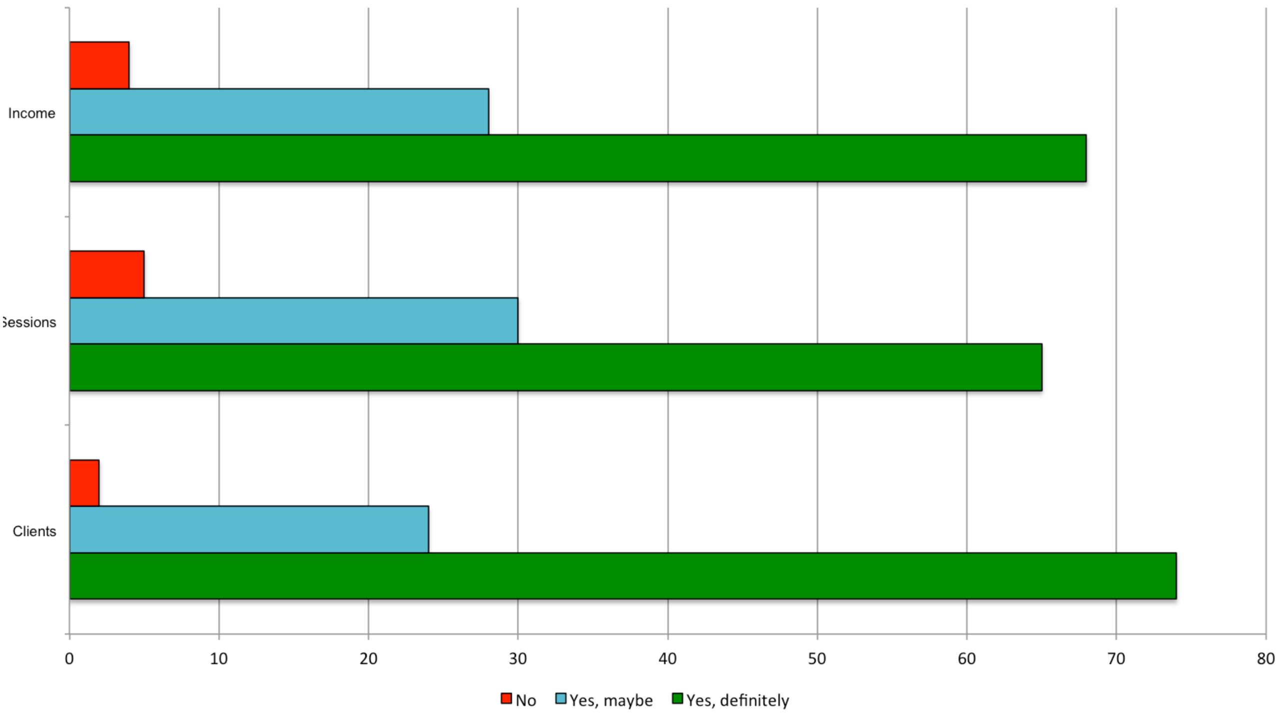

Figure 4.13: In your opinion, do you think it is possible to increase your coaching activities over the next 12 months when it comes to…? (Question 35)

4.4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study have given me a lot of insight into the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa. The different questions have been discussed comprehensively in the previous section and I wish to answer the question of this study by referring to the Golden Circle as discussed in Section 2.5.6 in Chapter 2.

4.4.1. Why?

This concept refers to the purpose of a coaching practice and in marketing terms this will include target marketing. In this respect it is clear that the majority of coaches in South Africa have a clear purpose in mind as evinced by the fact that they have a specific target market.

4.4.2. How?

This usually includes all processes used to realise the purpose of a coaching practice. It includes the product and in the case of this study, the coach forms part of the product. The study has shown that coaches in South Africa, like their international counterparts, are well qualified and have a high level of professionalism as measured by their membership of professional bodies. We have seen that South African coaches also tend to be older which translates into valuable experience. The fact that two-thirds of South African coaches are doing coaching on a part-time basis also means that they offer additional services to their clients.

4.4.3. What?

In this case, “what” literally means what you do in your practice with your purpose and processes in mind. In the case of this study it refers to the different ways that coaches use to market their practices and services. In this area it is clear that coaches in South Africa suffer from a number of shortcomings. They communicate with their intended target market but are not sure that the right people receive the message. Although the majority of coaches use electronic media in some form, there is still a significant percentage that has no intention to use this media in the foreseeable future.

The most telling measure of their shortcomings in this area is the fact that 67 percent of coaches have no marketing plan, i.e. all of the marketing activities of the majority of coaches have been done in a disorganised way. This is further magnified by their grasp of the competitive environment in which they function. The majority of the coaches in South Africa are of the opinion that they have a unique market offering but at the same time 70 percent of them believe that this difference is not clear to the market. Sixty percent of coaches are not sure that they experience an increase in coaching services but indicate marketplace confusion, under-pricing and untrained individuals as obstacles to coaching in general in South Africa.

4.4.4. Summary

Coaches in South Africa have a clear grasp of their purpose. They are also qualified to offer the services that they do. From a marketing perspective, it is clear that coaches in South Africa wish to market themselves and do so in a fashion. However, in the case of the vast majority of coaches there is a dire need for more insight into the process of services marketing as the execution of their efforts is not very successful. The following chapter offers some conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a conclusion to the research that has been described in the preceding chapters. The key question underlying this research was: what do coaches in South Africa do to market their services? To be able to answer this question two objectives had to be achieved.

In Chapter 2 the theory of services marketing was discussed in detail and based on this theory, a questionnaire was compiled that was used to do a survey among coaches in South Africa. The findings of this survey were discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter summarises the main contribution of the research towards the body of knowledge that will assist with the research problem statement. In addition, this chapter makes recommendations for coaches. Finally, the chapter offers suggestions for further research in this area.

5.2. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

As stated above, the purpose of this study was to be able to describe the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa. There is no research available on the marketing of coaching services and as mentioned in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework used in this study is based on general theories of services marketing. This was supported by research into the marketing of related services such as the health sector.

A questionnaire was specifically developed for the purpose of this study and was used to do a survey among practitioner members of COMENSA. All of the respondents in the study are coaches and in this regard the findings of the study are statistically above any question. The findings have been discussed in the previous chapter but can be summarised as follows:

- Coaches in South Africa are well qualified and trained, with 47 percent of them having a master's degree or a doctorate and 90 percent who have indicated that they have received some form of specific training.
- More than half of the coaches in South Africa are older than 50 years and only one out of every three is a man.
- Only a third of coaches in South Africa do it on a full-time basis and this is aligned with international trends.
- Seventy-two percent of coaches claim to have a specific target market and of these, 65 percent have a focus on business/management coaching.

- The majority of their current clients came to know about their services through word of mouth (referrals of existing clients) and they are of the opinion that new clients will use their services based on positive referrals (word of mouth) by existing clients as well as their field of expertise.
- Communication with the market consists of two types of messages. One focuses on the abilities of the coach and the other emphasises the advantages of the type of service offered.
- Nearly half of the coaches (48%) are not convinced that their communication reaches the intended target market.
- Sixty-seven percent of the coaches have no marketing plan.
- The vast majority of the coaches feel that they have a unique offering but only 32 percent believe that their uniqueness is clear to the market.
- Coaches in South Africa experience the same obstacles and opportunities as their international counterparts.
- The majority of coaches have a positive outlook for the future as indicated by the fact that they feel that they will be able to increase their activities with regard to clients, sessions and income.

The research and the insights gained from it confirmed the motivation behind the research problem, namely that coaches do not understand the value of marketing and marketing planning for the sustainable success of their practices. This is especially pertinent with regards to their grasp of the competitive environment and their own branding and positioning as well as the fact that their marketing activities are disorganised due to the lack of a marketing plan.

This is an important finding and I wish to put it in perspective by citing Jay Conrad Levinson, “Coaching roared into existence in the middle of the last century and helped many people for many years. At the same time, it attracted people who were remarkably talented coaches. But as the industry has grown, so have the number of competitors. The level of complexity has risen noticeably. It’s tougher now to earn a comfortable living through coaching than it has been in a long, long time. Want more bad news? It’s only going to get tougher” (Levinson & Neitlich, 2012: xix).

The truth of Levinson’s claim is indisputable and is part of the preface to a book which he co-authored with Andrew Neitlich. In this book, Guerrilla Marketing for Coaches, they proceed to describe six steps that coaches can follow to establish a profitable practice. The first step refers to the establishment of a solid foundation and includes aspects such as selection of a profitable target market, understanding the needs of the target market and developing a robust coaching solution for that target market.

These aspects are confirmed by Ari Kaplan, “A well-respected education, industry experience, and a book of contacts are no longer enough. There is a renewed focus on practical innovation” (Kaplan, 2011: xii). In addition, he noted that clients increasingly select experts whose work can be validated publicly, based on their activities in the professional community. He elaborated by noting that experts are required to convey basic knowledge in a way that tailors their understanding to the issues that their existing and future clients are struggling with (Kaplan, 2011: 1–6).

It is thus obvious that although the members of the coaching community in South Africa have been busy with marketing activities and even experiencing some success with it, it needs to be structured in terms of the 7Ps associated with services marketing, as discussed in Chapter 2. This can be relatively easily achieved by the development of a basic marketing plan, as the components of such a plan forces the writer to consider a number of aspects before doing any marketing activities.

The lack of marketing planning that is shown in this study can be understood in view of the following claim by Josh Miles, “My second theory is that the professionals who run these firms – as well as most marketers who try to serve them – don’t even know where to begin” (Miles, 2012: 18). It is difficult to develop a unique brand for a professional practice as it is usually categorised by a high degree of intellectual capacity and this may be the reason why most professional practices seem to be a collection of undifferentiated brands (Miles, 2012: 18–19).

The fact that the majority of coaches in South Africa embrace electronic communication channels is a positive finding. However, despite this measure, there is still a significant percentage of coaches that indicated that they have no interest in using social media in the future. This is obviously a fatal mistake as the key to innovating in a digital market is to adapt to new technologies and to reengage with your target market in a way in which they are increasingly comfortable with (Kaplan, 2011: 31). This aspect will become even more important as young adults and school children become users of coaching services and as such the realities of virtual coaching will have to become part of the services offered by coaches.

The fact that the respondents (all members of COMENSA) experience the same opportunities and obstacles as their counterparts in the rest of the world is a positive insight. Increased awareness about coaching as well as credible data on ROI can be attributed to (a) the excellent work done by the majority of coaches, and (b) the position of COMENSA as a professional body.

In terms of the limitations of the study, it is noted that in some cases more information on some of the responses is required. In this case I refer specifically to the marketing channels used by coaches as well as the way in which they use them. More information regarding fees is also needed as under-pricing is seen as an obstacle to coaching.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations have arisen from this study that are relevant to those involved in the training of coaches as well as those who work at a supervisor level with coaches.

5.3.1. Training institutions

It is has been noted in Chapters 1 and 2 that the training of coaches emphasises the skills needed to be a coach. However, in view of the findings of this study, the inclusion of some marketing skills and knowledge in curricula for coaches needs to be seriously considered.

This component does not have to be very comprehensive but can address the 7Ps of services marketing as well as the different components of a typical marketing plan. It can be presented in the form in which USB currently encourages its M.Phil students to develop a coaching model.

5.3.2. Supervision

The findings of this study have shown that (a) the marketing of a coaching practice is important, and (b) coaches do not have the required skills and knowledge or inclination to address this issue.

It might have some value to consider including the marketing of a coaching practice in supervision and in this regard COMENSA can play a valuable role by providing its members with resources that will enable them to develop a basic marketing plan.

5.4. FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on the basic marketing activities of coaches in South Africa and a number of areas for future research arose during the research process.

Recommendations include the following:

A study with a narrow focus on the usage of social media as a means of engaging with clients. In this instance, each of the accepted channels can be individually measured and respondents' actual usage as well as their resistance to it can be analysed in more detail.

A study with a similar narrow focus on perceptions of competitiveness. More detail can be obtained on reasons why coaches may feel confident that they are sufficiently different from their main competitors as well as the processes used to develop a differentiating market offer.

Exploring the marketing plans of coaches who actually have one. This will provide valuable insight into how they have developed these plans and if these coaches have a typical background that enabled them to develop a marketing plan. The plan can also be compared to the actual marketing activities of the coaches and its success can thus be measured.

The general perceptions around coaching in various target markets can be investigated. In this instance each target market will provide valuable insights into how that specific market can be approached and examples of such groups can be based on geographical area, demographics, specific industries or different levels of employment.

5.5. CONCLUSION

This study has provided valuable insights into what is expected from a marketing perspective around coaching in South Africa as well as the marketing activities of individual coaches.

During the course of this research, I was challenged to investigate processes and models that can be applied to the marketing of a coaching practice. The insight gained from various related industries has been valuable and the findings of the actual survey are at this stage unique in South Africa and even globally as the bulk of research on coaching focuses on coaching-specific issues.

It has been stated many times in this study that the coaching environment has evolved and is an increasingly competitive environment. This study as well as studies by the ICF indicate that coaches experience an influx of newcomers into the industry and to survive in this environment coaches will have to address the needs of the market with solutions that offer tangible results. They must also be in a position where the market is actually aware of these solutions and they will only attain this position if they spend time, money and energy on the development and execution of a marketing plan based on the basic principles of services marketing.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction will consist of approved preamble and letters from USB and COMENSA that forms part of the e-mail written by COMENSA to its members that also contains a link to this questionnaire's website on SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire starts with the following statement and question.

This survey is completely anonymous and your responses can in no way be linked to you. Please do not provide your name or any other information in your responses that will make it possible to identify you. By completing and submitting this survey, you agree that you are satisfied with the conditions of this survey and that you give your consent to Willem van Huyssteen to use your responses in his research.

1.	Having read the above, please indicate whether you want to take part in this survey.	
	Yes, I agree to participate under the terms and conditions set out in the invitation from COMENSA as well as the explanation above	Directed to Q2
	No, I do not want to participate in this survey	Directed to Thank You/Exit page

Part 1: General

2.	Do you coach on a full-time or part-time basis?	
	Full-time	Directed to Q3
	Part-time	Directed to Q5

3.	How many years have you been a full-time coach?
	1–3
	4–5
	6–10
	11–15
	16–20
	20+

4.	Please indicate your work status Full time in my own coaching practice Full time in employment of a coaching company as a coach Full time in employment of a non-coaching company as a coach

5.	Which other services do you offer (please specify)?

6.	Apart from your membership of COMENSA, are you registered with any other professional body? Yes Direct to Q7 No Direct to Q8

7.	Please specify the professional bodies that you are registered with.

8.	Please indicate your highest qualification Matric or equivalent Certificate Diploma B degree Honours degree Masters degree Doctorate

9.	Have you received specific training in coaching by a recognised training institution? Yes No

10.	Into which category does your age fall?
	Younger than 25 years
	25–34 years
	35–49 years
	50–64 years
	Older than 64 years

11.	What is your gender?
	Male
	Female

Part 2: Product, target market and positioning

12	As a coach, do you focus on a specific target market?
	Yes please go to Q13
	No please go to Q14

13	Please give a brief description of your target market (25 words or less).

14	Please select the most appropriate reason(s) why you do not focus on a specific target market (you can select more than one option).
	I serve all types of clients
	I do not have enough information about the market
	I do not know how to do market segmentation
	Never occurred to me to do it
	I am too busy
	Other (specify)

15	In your opinion, what would you regard as your EXISTING clients' primary source of information about your services? Please rank the sources below from 5 = most likely to 1 = least likely. Please note that you will not be able to use a number more than once.
	Referrals from existing clients
	Referrals from employers
	COMENSA
	Internet
	Printed advertising that I pay for

16	In your opinion, why would NEW clients want to use your services? Please rank the reasons below from 4 = most likely to 1 = least likely. Please note that you will not be able to use a number more than once.
	Positive feedback from an existing client (word of mouth)
	My qualifications
	My field of specialty
	Membership of professional body

Part 3: Communication

17	How do the public and potential clients learn about your services?
	I ask existing clients to tell others about their experience
	I identify and approach potential clients
	I advertise my services
	I have a website
	COMENSA
	Other (specify)

18	What is the most important message you currently communicate or wish to communicate to potential clients about yourself and your services? (25 words or less).

19	Do you think that this message reaches potential clients?	
	Yes	
	I am unsure	please go to Q20

20	Why are you not sure that this message does not reach potential clients?
	I do not know what to communicate
	I do not know where to communicate this message
	I do not feel comfortable with the idea of self-promoting
	I am too busy to give attention to this aspect
	I have enough work and think it is unnecessary to give attention to this aspect
	Other (specify)

21	Which of the following marketing channels have you made use of in your practice? Please tick the channels you have already used.
	Advertising in newspapers or magazines
	Radio advertising
	E-mail campaign

	Screens or televisions in public places
	Pamphlets/brochures
	Sponsored an event
	Delivered a talk
	Wrote a non-academic article

22	Do you use or intend using any of the following services?
	Own branded website
	Facebook page for your coaching practice
	A dedicated blog for your practice
	A Twitter account for your coaching practice
	A professional LinkedIn profile

Options are: Currently use

Do not currently use, but very likely to use in the next 12 months

Do not currently use, but reasonably likely to use in the next 12 months

Do not currently use and also not likely to use in the next 12 months

23	Do you have a written marketing plan for your practice?	
	Yes	go to Q24
	No	go to Q25

24	How often do you revise this plan?
	Once a year
	On an ad-hoc basis
	Never

Part 4: Fees and income

25	How can potential clients learn more about your fees before they consider your services?
	Brochure/pamphlets
	Published on COMENSA website
	Word of mouth by existing clients
	I do not make my fee publicly available

26	How often do you revise your fees?
	Bi-annually
	Annually
	When my income drops below a certain level
	I have never revised my fees

27	Which factors do you take into consideration when determining a fee?

Part 5: Competition and business environment

28	Have you experienced an increase in the supply of coaching services in your selected target market over the past 12 months? Yes No Can't say

29	Please rank the competitors below in terms of the perceived threat to your practice. 5 = biggest threat and 1 = weakest threat. Please note that you will not be allowed to use the same number more than once. Other individual coaches Coaching organisations Psychologists Training service providers Services offered in-house by companies

30	Is your offering unique or different from those of your MAIN competitor(s) offering when it comes to the following aspects? Qualifications Professional membership Area of specialty Reputation Price

Options are: Yes, definitely

Yes, to an extent

No, not at all

31	In your opinion, is the difference between your offering and that of your MAIN competitor(s) clear to your potential clients? Yes, the difference is clear No, the difference is not clear Unsure whether the difference is clear

32	If you consider the past 12 months, has it become more difficult for you PERSONALLY to get new clients? Yes No

33	Which factors, if any, are currently in favour of coaching in general?

34	Which factors, if any, are currently to the disadvantage of coaching in general?

35	In your opinion, do you think it is possible to increase your coaching activities over the next 12 months when it comes to… Number of clients Number of sessions per client Income from coaching

Options are: Yes, definitely

Yes, maybe

No

APPENDIX B:
SAMPLE SIZE

Raosoft®

Sample size calculator

What margin of error can you accept? 5% is a common choice	5 %	The margin of error is the amount of error that you can tolerate. If 90% of respondents answer *yes*, while 10% answer *no*, you may be able to tolerate a larger amount of error than if the respondents are split 50-50 or 45-55. Lower margin of error requires a larger sample size.
What confidence level do you need? Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%	95 %	The confidence level is the amount of uncertainty you can tolerate. Suppose that you have 20 yes-no questions in your survey. With a confidence level of 95%, you would expect that for one of the questions (1 in 20), the percentage of people who answer *yes* would be more than the margin of error away from the true answer. The true answer is the percentage you would get if you exhaustively interviewed everyone. Higher confidence level requires a larger sample size.
What is the population size? If you don't know, use 20000	850	How many people are there to choose your random sample from? The sample size doesn't change much for populations larger than 20,000.
What is the response distribution? Leave this as 50%	50 %	For each question, what do you expect the results will be? If the sample is skewed highly one way or the other,the population probably is, too. If you don't know, use 50%, which gives the largest sample size. See below under **More information** if this is confusing.
Your recommended sample size is	**265**	This is the minimum recommended size of your survey. If you create a sample of this many people and get responses from everyone, you're more likely to get a correct answer than you would from a large sample where only a small percentage of the sample responds to your survey.

Alternate scenarios

With a sample size of	100	200	300	With a confidence level of	90	95	99
Your margin of error would be	**9.21%**	**6.06%**	**4.55%**	Your sample size would need to be	**206**	**265**	**373**

APPENDIX C:
FLOWCHART

Comprehensive flowchart of questionnaire

On the following pages is a comprehensive flowchart of the questionnaire used in the marketing survey that is the focus of this report. The purpose of this flowchart is to indicate the logical flow of the questionnaire. See Appendix XX for the questionnaire.

The following shapes and colours are used to indicate different options and the flow of the questionnaire:

Yellow is used to indicate the questions that form the main outline of the questionnaire

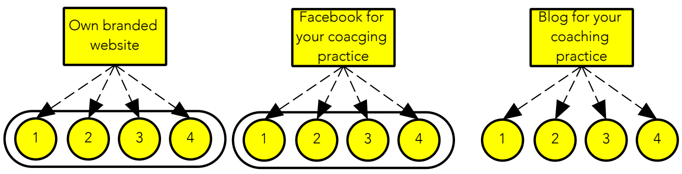
Green is used to indicate a positive respons and its consequential line of questioning

Red is used to indicate a negative respons and its consequential line of questioning

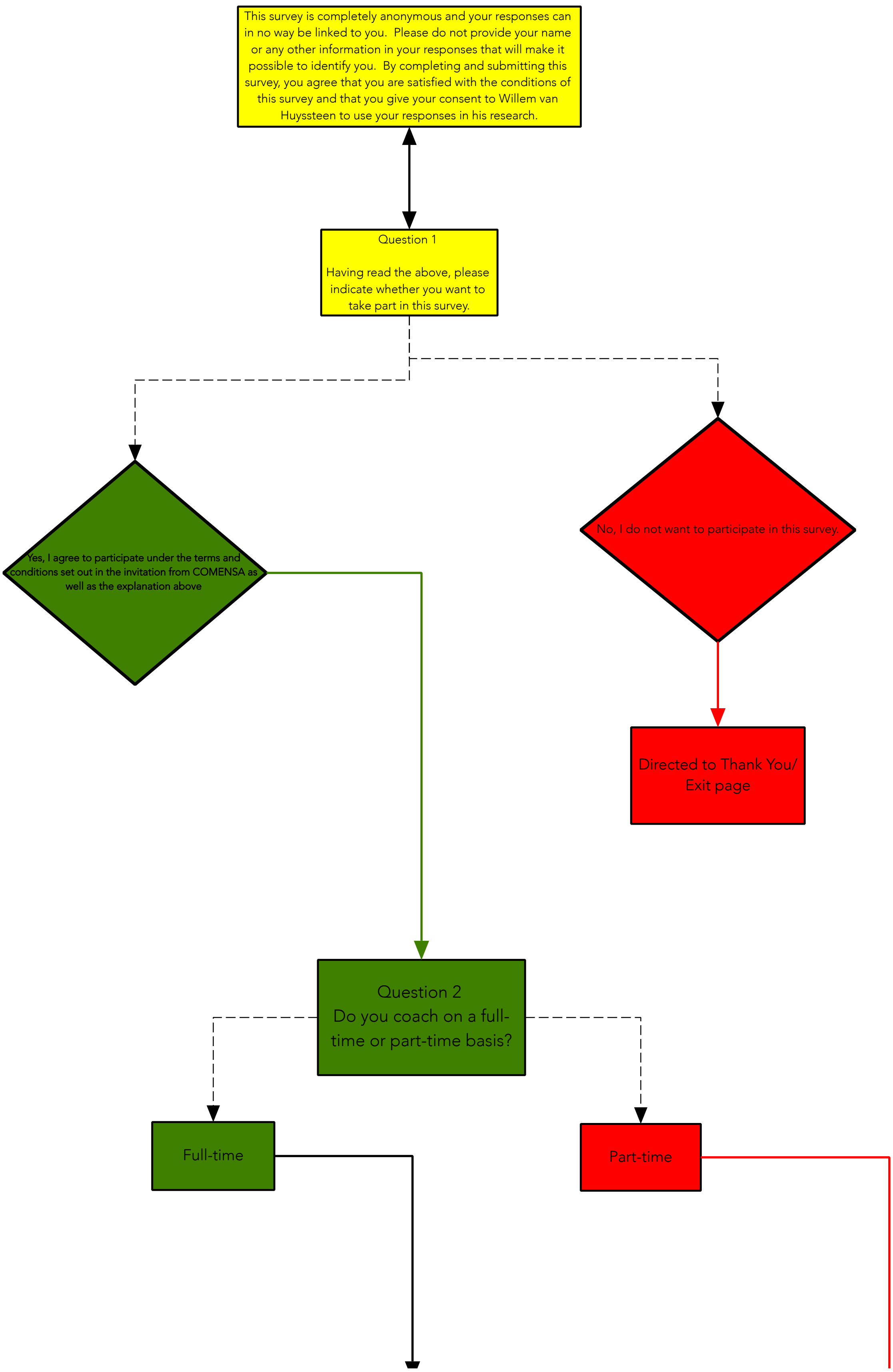
A solid line indicates the next question that the respondent will be directed to.

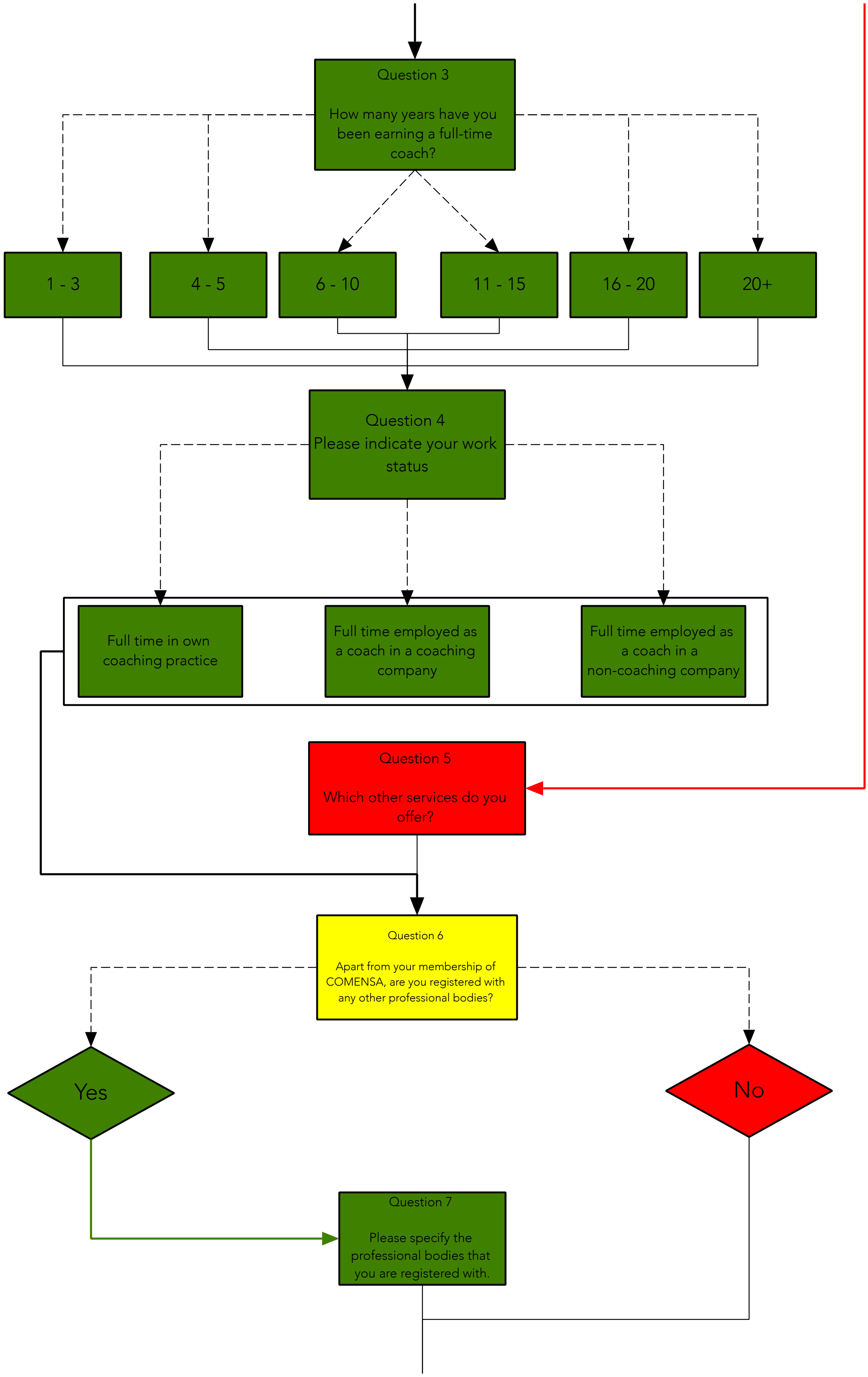
A dashed line is an indication of the different options available for selection.

In the case where the level of available options is to deep to practically indicate in the flowchart, options are grouped and explained as indicated below.

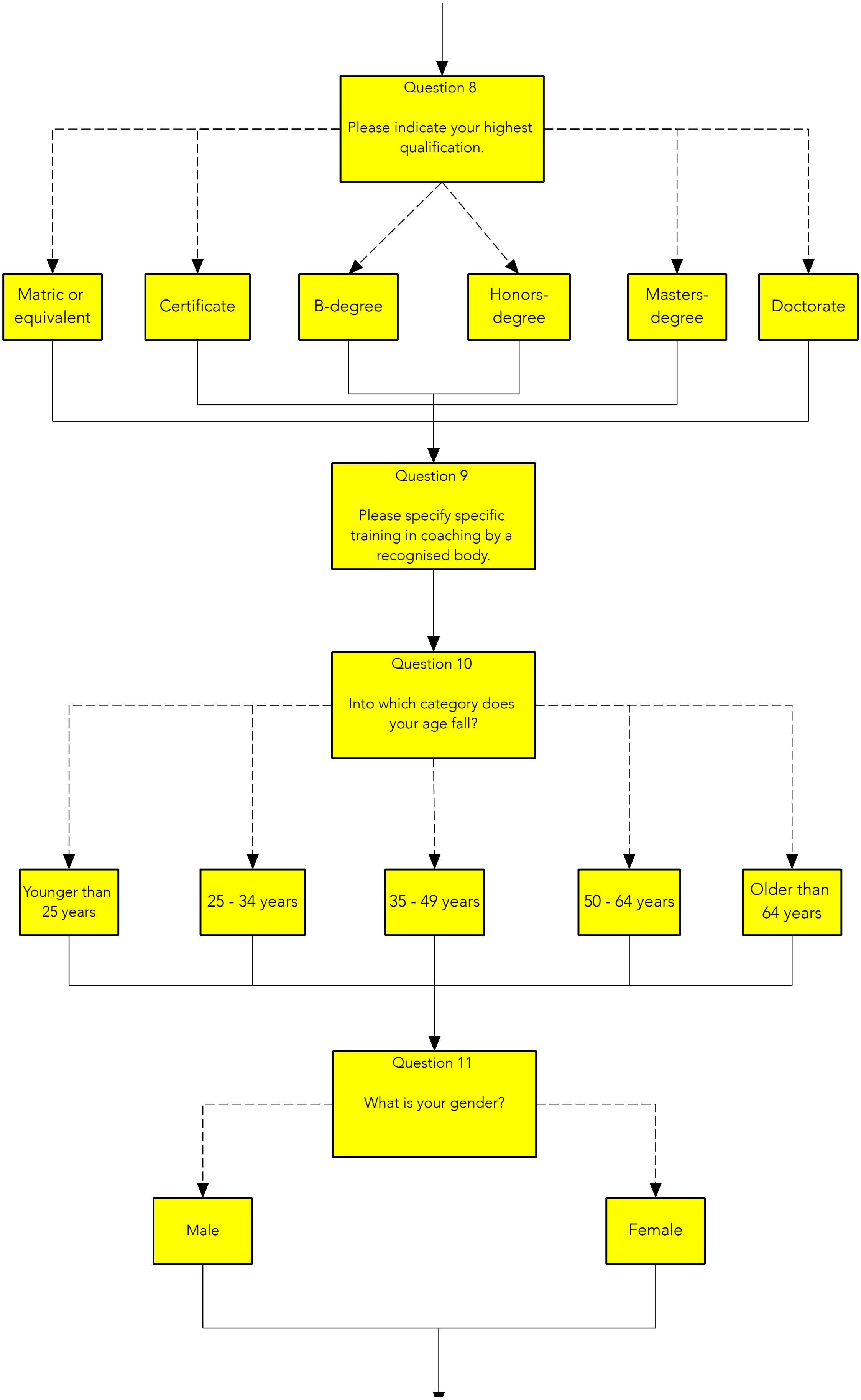


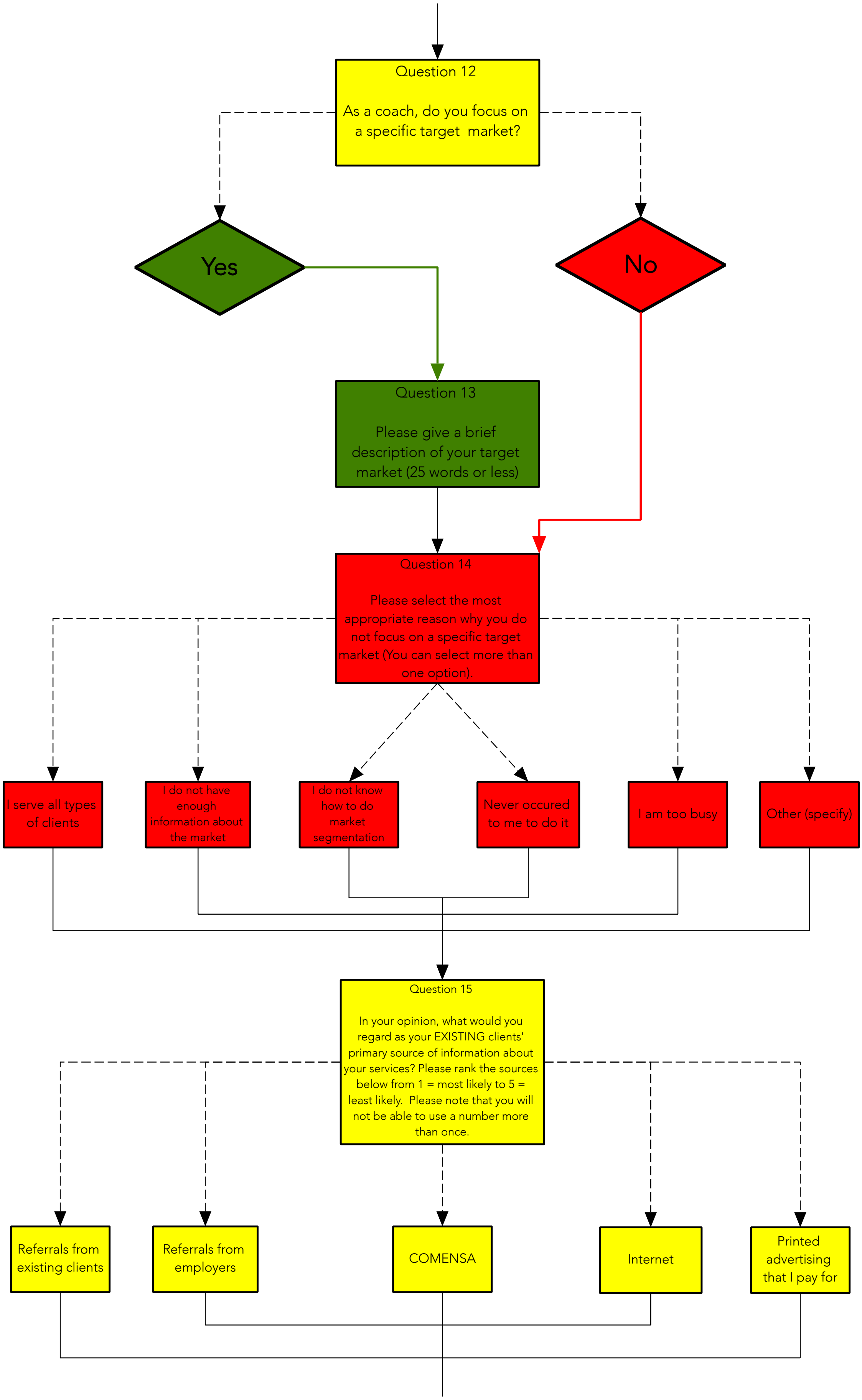
Options are:
1 = Currently use
2 = Do not currently use, but very likely to use in next 12 months
3 = Do not currently use, but reasonably likely to use in next 12 months
4 = Do not currently use and also not likely to use in the next 12 months

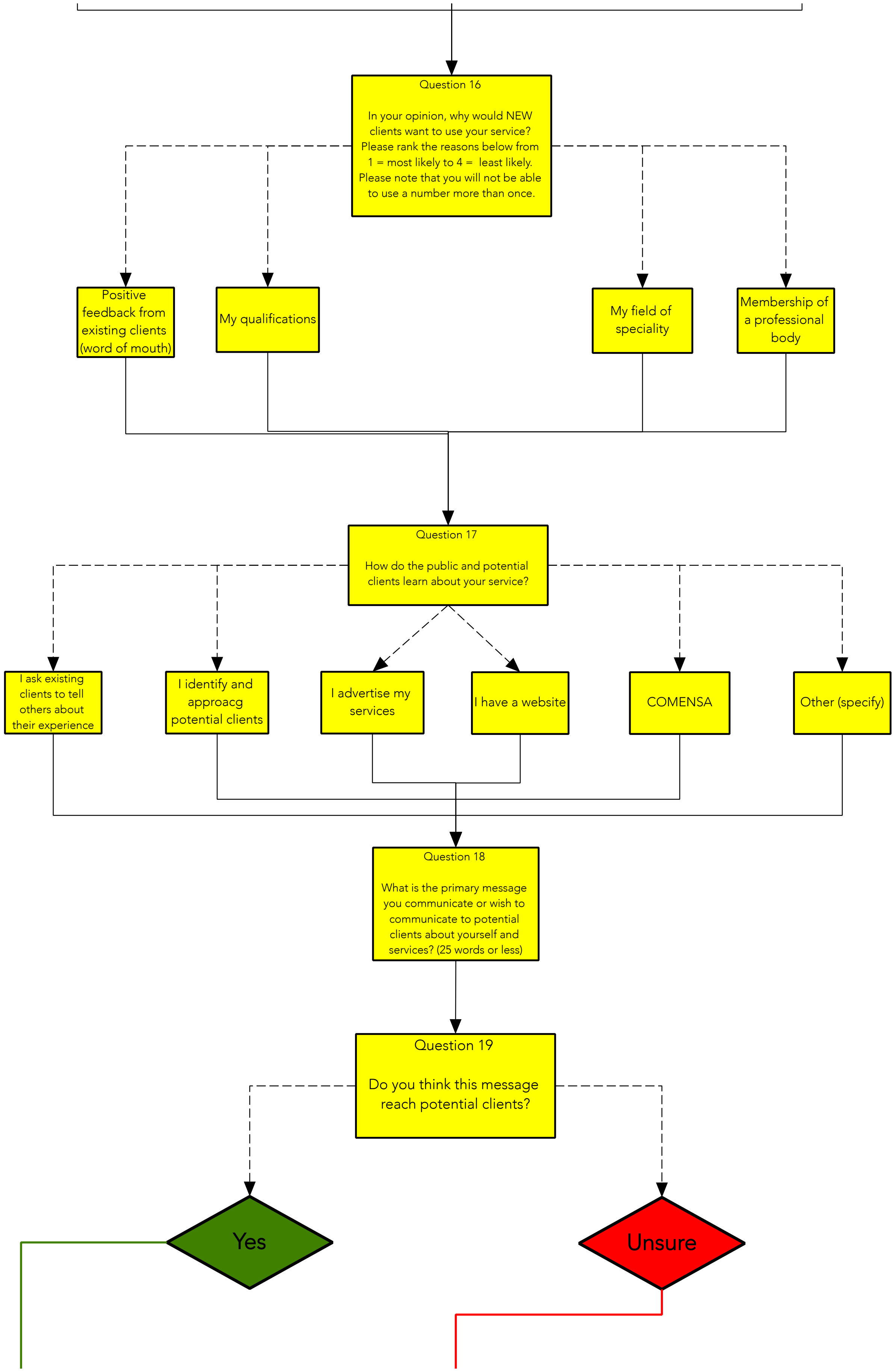

This survey is completely anonymous and your responses can in no way be linked to you. Please do not provide your name or any other information in your responses that will make it possible to identify you. By completing and submitting this survey, you agree that you are satisfied with the conditions of this survey and that you give your consent to Willem van Huyssteen to use your responses in his research.
Question 1
Having read the above, please indicate whether you want to take part in this survey.
Yes, I agree to participate under the terms and conditions set out in the invitation from COMENSA as well as the explanation above
No, I do not want to participate in this survey.
Directed to Thank You/ Exit page
Question 2
Do you coach on a full-time or part-time basis?
Full-time
Part-time

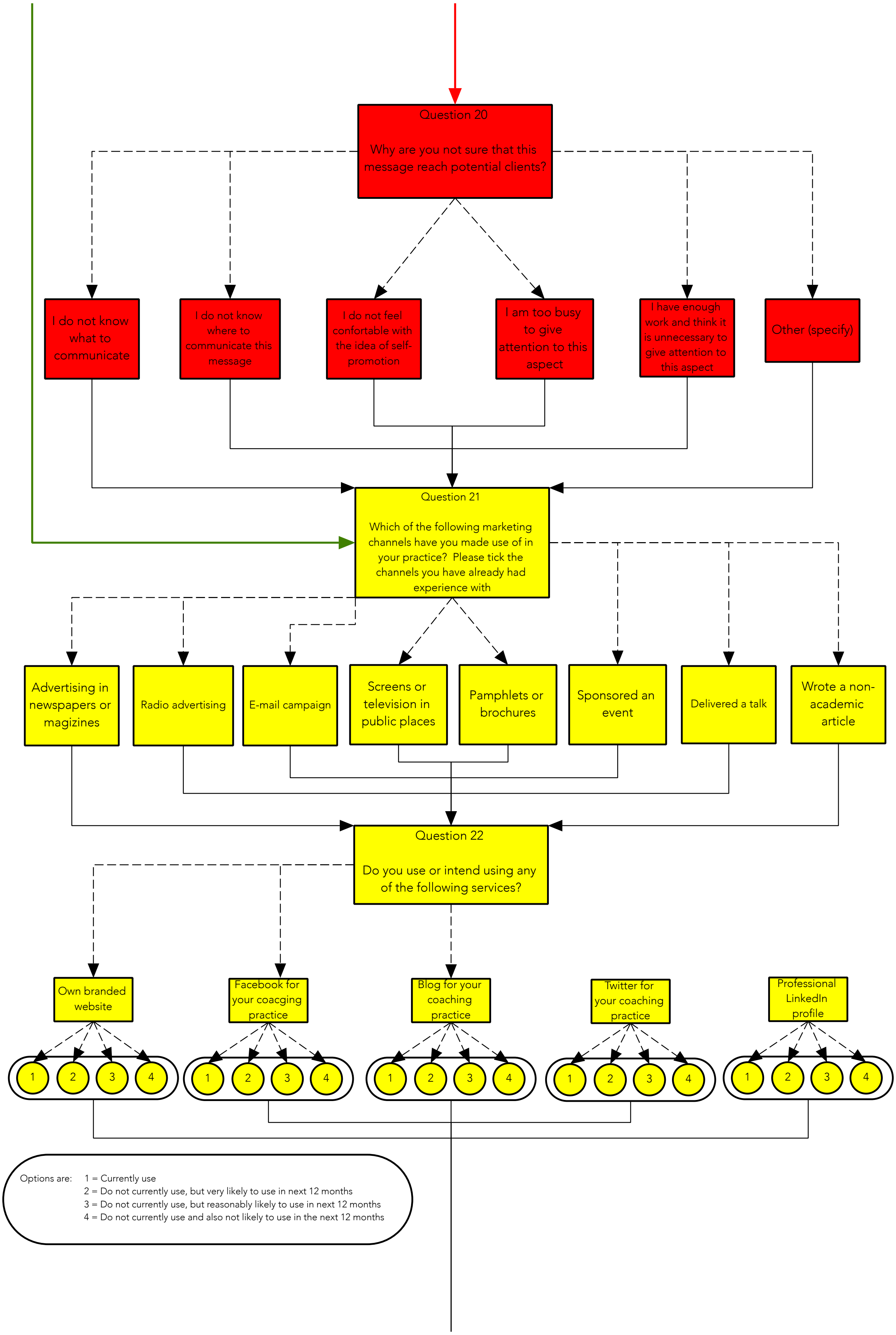


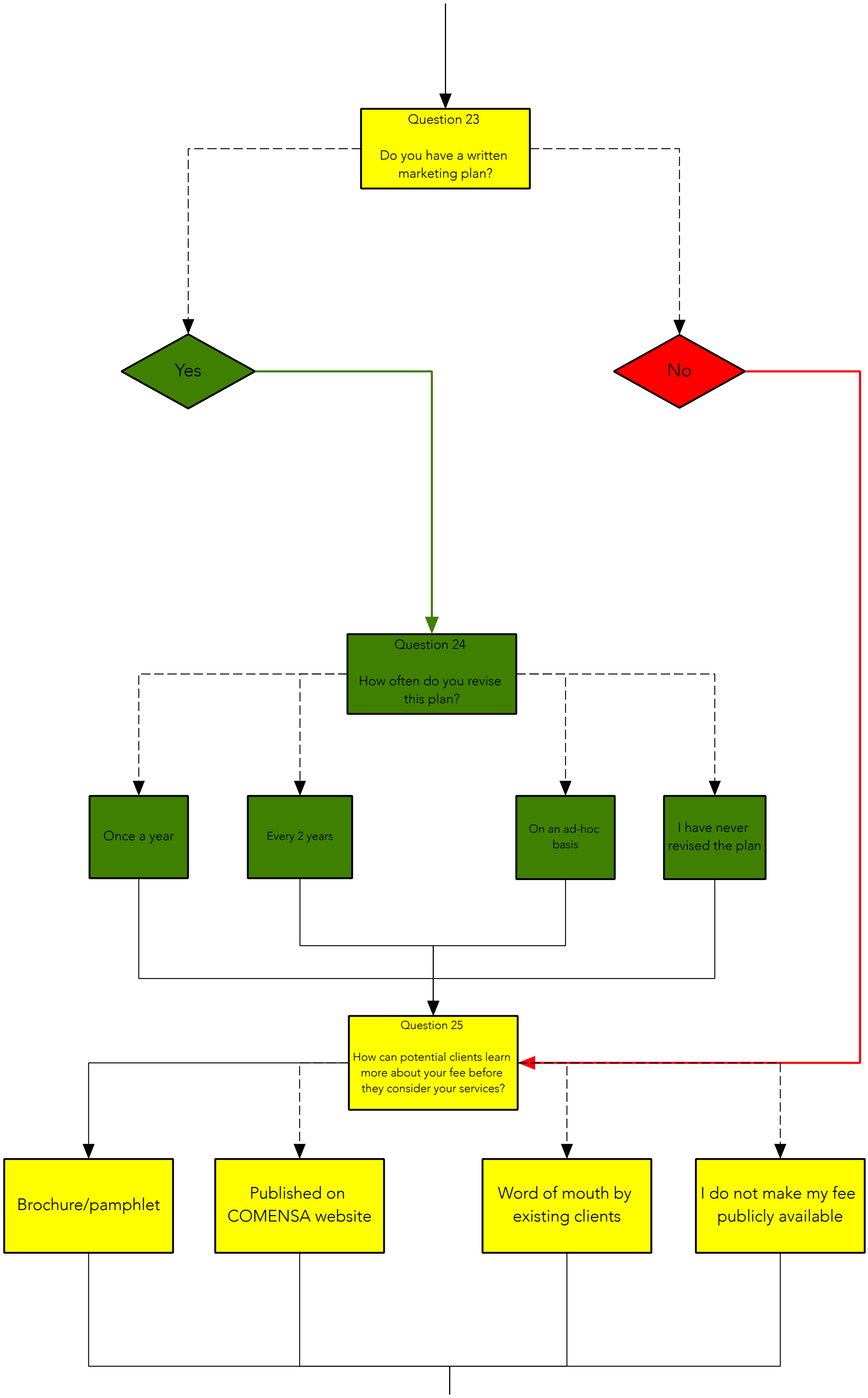
Question 3
How many years have you been earning a full-time coach?
1 - 3
4 - 5
6 - 10
11 - 15
16 - 20
20+
Question 4
Please indicate your work status
Full time in own coaching practice
Full time employed as a coach in a coaching company
Full time employed as a coach in a non-coaching company
Question 5
Which other services do you offer?
Question 6
Apart from your membership of COMENSA, are you registered with any other professional bodies?
Yes
No
Question 7
Please specify the professional bodies that you are registered with.

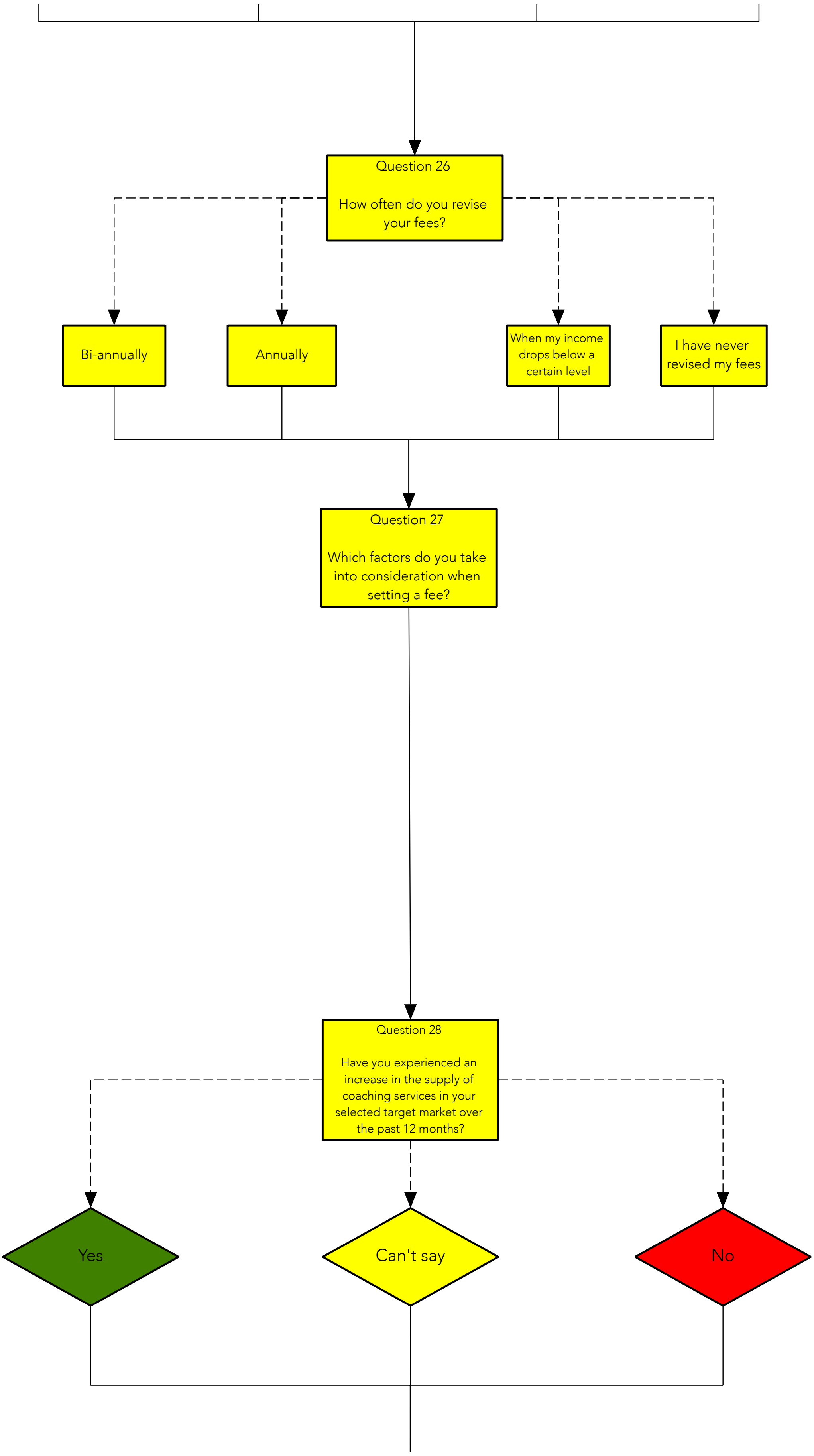

Question 8
Please indicate your highest qualification.
Matric or equivalent
Certificate
B-degree
Honors-degree
Masters-degree
Doctorate
Question 9
Please specify specific training in coaching by a recognised body.
Question 10
Into which category does your age fall?
Younger than 25 years
25 - 34 years
35 - 49 years
50 - 64 years
Older than 64 years
Question 11
What is your gender?
Male
Female

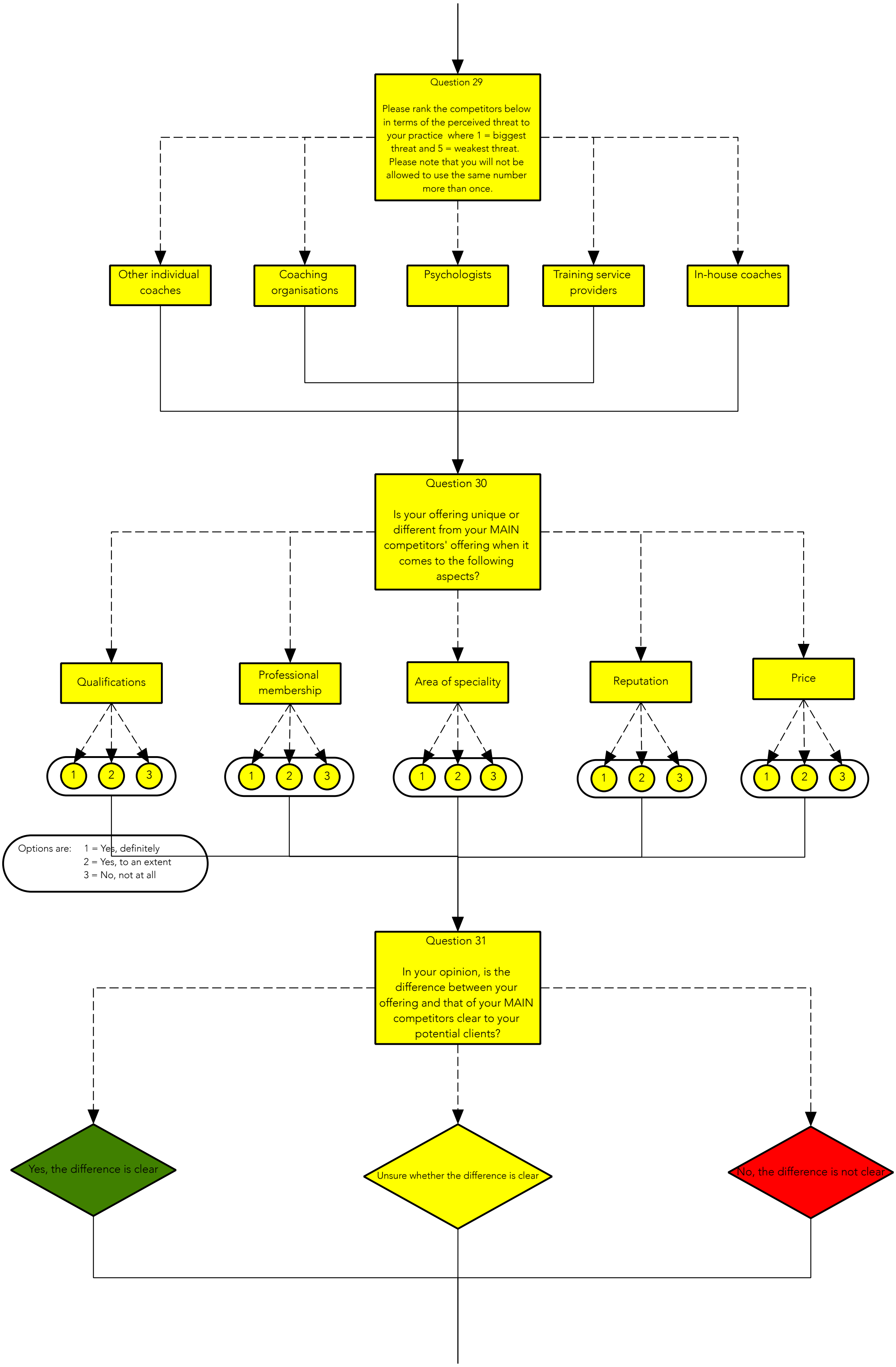

Question 12
As a coach, do you focus on a specific target market?
Yes
No
Question 13
Please give a brief description of your target market (25 words or less)
Question 14
Please select the most appropriate reason why you do not focus on a specific target market (You can select more than one option).
I serve all types of clients
I do not have enough information about the market
I do not know how to do market segmentation
Never occured to me to do it
I am too busy
Other (specify)
Question 15
In your opinion, what would you regard as your EXISTING clients' primary source of information about your services? Please rank the sources below from 1 = most likely to 5 = least likely. Please note that you will not be able to use a number more than once.
Referrals from existing clients
Referrals from employers
COMENSA
Internet
Printed advertising that I pay for

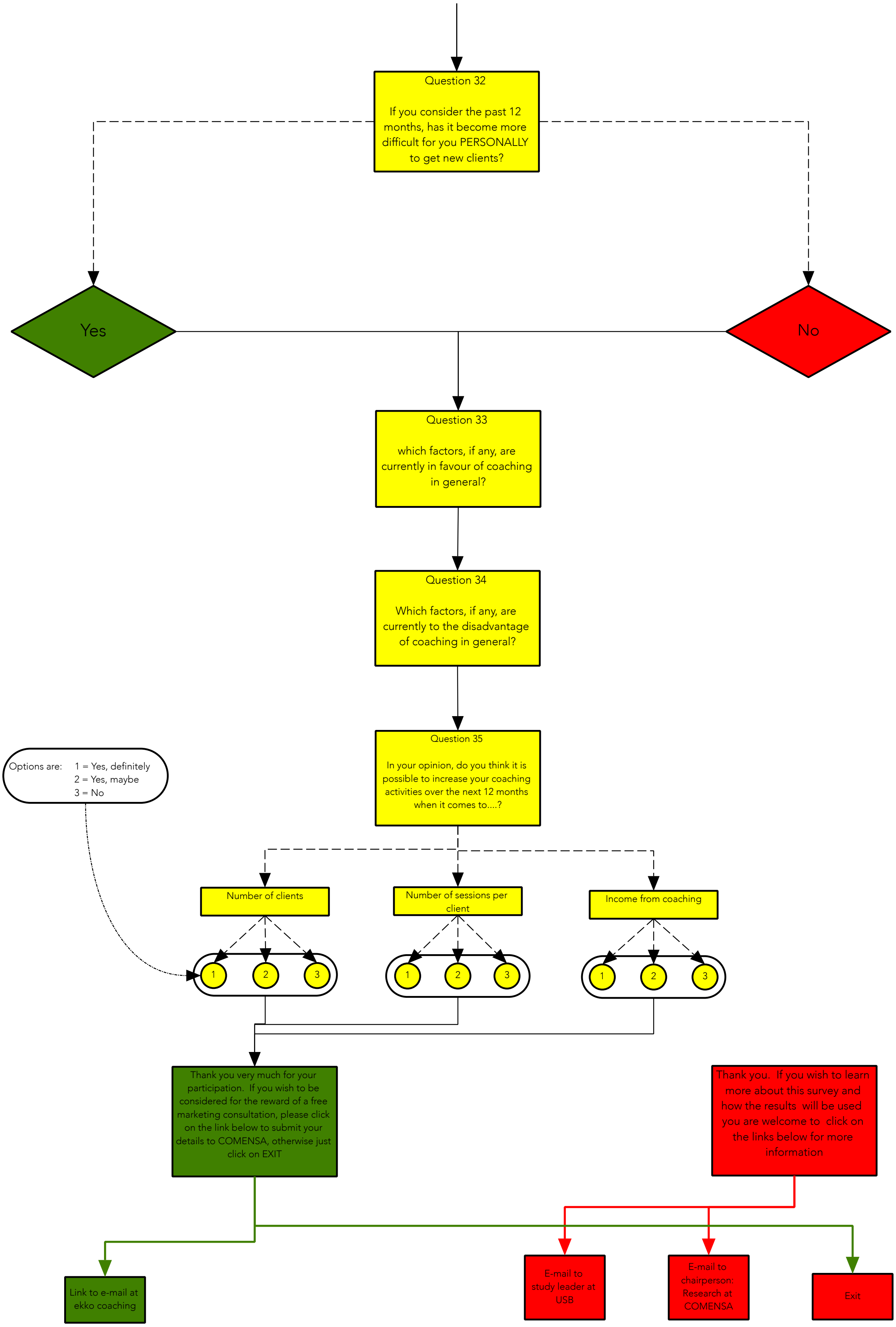

Question 16
In your opinion, why would NEW clients want to use your service? Please rank the reasons below from 1 = most likely to 4 = least likely. Please note that you will not be able to use a number more than once.
Positive feedback from existing clients (word of mouth)
My qualifications
My field of speciality
Membership of a professional body
Question 17
How do the public and potential clients learn about your service?
I ask existing clients to tell others about their experience
I identify and approacg potential clients
I advertise my services
I have a website
COMENSA
Other (specify)
Question 18
What is the primary message you communicate or wish to communicate to potential clients about yourself and services? (25 words or less)
Question 19
Do you think this message reach potential clients?
Yes
Unsure


Question 20
Why are you not sure that this message reach potential clients?
I do not know what to communicate
I do not know where to communicate this message
I do not feel confortable with the idea of self-promotion
I am too busy to give attention to this aspect
I have enough work and think it is unnecessary to give attention to this aspect
Other (specify)
Question 21
Which of the following marketing channels have you made use of in your practice? Please tick the channels you have already had experience with
Advertising in newspapers or magizines
Radio advertising
E-mail campaign
Screens or television in public places
Pamphlets or brochures
Sponsored an event
Delivered a talk
Wrote a non-academic article
Question 22
Do you use or intend using any of the following services?
Own branded website
Facebook for your coacging practice
Blog for your coaching practice
Twitter for your coaching practice
Professional LinkedIn profile
1
2
3
4
Options are: 1 = Currently use
2 = Do not currently use, but very likely to use in next 12 months
3 = Do not currently use, but reasonably likely to use in next 12 months
4 = Do not currently use and also not likely to use in the next 12 months


Question 23
Do you have a written marketing plan?
Yes
No
Question 24
How often do you revise this plan?
Once a year
Every 2 years
On an ad-hoc basis
I have never revised the plan
Question 25
How can potential clients learn more about your fee before they consider your services?
Brochure/pamphlet
Published on COMENSA website
Word of mouth by existing clients
I do not make my fee publicly available


Question 26
How often do you revise your fees?
Bi-annually
Annually
When my income drops below a certain level
I have never revised my fees
Question 27
Which factors do you take into consideration when setting a fee?
Question 28
Have you experienced an increase in the supply of coaching services in your selected target market over the past 12 months?
Yes
Can't say
No


Question 29
Please rank the competitors below in terms of the perceived threat to your practice where 1 = biggest threat and 5 = weakest threat. Please note that you will not be allowed to use the same number more than once.
Other individual coaches
Coaching organisations
Psychologists
Training service providers
In-house coaches
Question 30
Is your offering unique or different from your MAIN competitors' offering when it comes to the following aspects?
Qualifications
Professional membership
Area of speciality
Reputation
Price
1
2
3
Options are: 1 = Yes, definitely
2 = Yes, to an extent
3 = No, not at all
Question 31
In your opinion, is the difference between your offering and that of your MAIN competitors clear to your potential clients?
Yes, the difference is clear
Unsure whether the difference is clear
No, the difference is not clear


Question 32
If you consider the past 12 months, has it become more difficult for you PERSONALLY to get new clients?
Yes
No
Question 33
which factors, if any, are currently in favour of coaching in general?
Question 34
Which factors, if any, are currently to the disadvantage of coaching in general?
Question 35
In your opinion, do you think it is possible to increase your coaching activities over the next 12 months when it comes to....?
Options are: 1 = Yes, definitely 2 = Yes, maybe 3 = No
Number of clients
Number of sessions per client
Income from coaching
1
2
3
Thank you very much for your participation. If you wish to be considered for the reward of a free marketing consultation, please click on the link below to submit your details to COMENSA, otherwise just click on EXIT
Thank you. If you wish to learn more about this survey and how the results will be used you are welcome to click on the links below for more information
Link to e-mail at ekko coaching
E-mail to study leader at USB
E-mail to chairperson: Research at COMENSA
Exit

APPENDIX D:
LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM USB

USB University of Stellenbosch Business School

22 April 2014

Dear Willem

Re: Application for ethical screening: *(BD026/Approved)*

Student: **Willem van Huyssteen; Student No. 14948958**

Research title: **An Overview of the Marketing Activities of Coaches in South Africa**

Supervisor: **Dr Salome Van Coller**

The Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB DESC) reviewed your application for the above-mentioned research. The research has been approved subject to the following conditions:

- Research is low risk, not minimal as indicated in application. Please treat research accordingly.
- Please provide us with the instructions which will form part of the pre-amble to the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire administration must make provision for a) informed consent; b) voluntary participation and voluntary response to any particular question; c) keeping individual response data confidential. Consult with your supervisor and USB statistical person before questionnaire is administered.

We would like to point out that you, as researcher, are obliged to maintain the ethical integrity of your research, adhere to the ethical guidelines of Stellenbosch University, and remain within the scope of your research proposal and supporting evidence as submitted to the USB DESC. Should any aspect of your research change from the information as presented to the USB DESC, which could have an effect on the possibility of harm to any

University of Stellenbosch Business School
Address: PO Box 610 Bellville 7535 Carl Cronjé Drive Bellville 7530
Tel: +27 (0)21 918 4111 **Fax:** +27 (0)21 918 4468
Email: usbcom@usb.ac.za **Website:** www.usb.ac.za

research subject, you are under the obligation to report it immediately to your supervisor. Should there be any uncertainty in this regard, you have to consult with the USB DESC.

We wish you success with your research, and trust that it will make a positive contribution to the quest for knowledge at the USB and Stellenbosch University.

Kind regards

Prof Basil C. Leonard
Chair: USB Departmental Ethics Screening Committee
021 918 4250

Please note: Should any research subject, participating organisation, or person affected by this research have any query about the research, they should feel free to contact any of the following:

Researcher	:	willem@ekko.co.za; 083 284 8670
Supervisor	:	Salome.VanColler@usb.ac.za; 021-918 4278
USB DESC Chair	:	Basil.Leonard@usb.ac.za

APPENDIX E:
LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM COMENSA

Coaches and Mentors of South Africa
PostNet Suite 532
Private Bag X4
SUNVALLEY 7985
Western Cape

Tel: 021 781 0812
Fax: 086 669 0131
E-mail: administrator@comensa.org.za

Reg. No. 2005/017895/08

14 March 2014

Dr Salome van Coller
Programme Manager: MPhil in Management Coaching
University of Stellenbosch Business School

Dear Dr Van Coller

ACCESS TO COMENSA DATABASE: RESEARCH OF WJ VAN HUYSSTEEN

We have received a request from WJ van Huyssteen to gain access to our membership database for the express purpose of doing research about the marketing activities of coaches in South Africa.

On the February meeting of the Excecutive Committee of COMENSA we have decided to assist Mr WJ van Huyssteen in his research by sending out a questionnaire or link to a questionnaire to our members on condition that this questionnaire is approved by USB and we also had insight in it.

Mr Van Huyssteen has also agreed to share the findings of his research with us and we look forward to assist him with his studies.

Kind regards

John Paisley

PRESIDENT

APPENDIX F:
COVERING LETTER FROM COMENSA

Dear member

As a practitioner member of COMENSA you are invited to take part in this survey that is administered by Willem van Huyssteen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.Phil in Management Coaching at the University of Stellenbosch.

The purpose of the survey is to investigate the marketing practices of coaches in South Africa. Information gathered during this survey will be written up as a research report. What we learn from this survey will help us understand how coaches in South Africa market their services and identify aspects of marketing that can be used by coaches to improve their own marketing activities.

It is important to note the following:

1. This survey is part of a study that has been reviewed and approved by the University of Stellenbosch (see attached letter of approval).
2. This survey is conducted with the consent and support of COMENSA (see attached letter of approval).
3. You are not requested to provide any identification or personal details and this information is not shared with the administrator of the survey.
4. The administrator, COMENSA and the University of Stellenbosch has taken all reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the survey.

This survey should take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

You are under no obligation to take part in this survey and are free to complete it or not. If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted, please contact:

> Dr Salome van Coller
> Programme Manager: M.Phil in Management Coaching
> University of Stellenbosch Business School
> Salome.vanColler@usb.ac.za

As a gesture of his appreciation, Willem van Huyssteen has agreed to share the results of this survey with all participants. If you wish to receive your copy of the results please send a mail with the heading, *Results*, to survey@ekko.co.za. Please note that your name and contact information will remain completely confidential and cannot be linked with any of your survey answers.