

## COACHING IN MANAGERIAL WORK

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**Summary:** Most of people want to change certain aspects of their personal lives or professional careers. However, these needs are not always easy to be met since they are often challenged by fear of changes and reluctance to change. Coaching is a method which, with the help of an expert, allows for realization of problems and working through all that prevents a person from changes, and, based on our own resources, plan and take actions that allow for achievement of the set goal. Coaching can be also used in the work of a manager. Managers using coaching style for management develop some beliefs and behaviours that help them evaluate and stimulate others to think independently, act and encourage them to take responsibility for the effects of work. Therefore, a manager can be relieved from the pressure of constant supervision, leading and worrying about results and can focus on creation of conditions which ensure that his or her employees are able to present knowledge, experience and ability to create their own solutions.

**Keywords:** change, coaching, resources, manager, coaching style for management

### 1. Introduction

The need for changes is rarely accompanied by making actual changes in life. Our thinking about changes is often associated with apprehension of the unknown and the related reluctance to abandon what is known and entering the new unpredictable reality. This causes that people prefer to choose the known reality they have got accustomed to living in, despite the inconveniences they might sometimes experience. S. R. Covey (2014) wrote that „*Each of us guard a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside*”. One of the methods to help "open the internal gate" and to cause the demanded changes in personal and/or professional life is the use of coaching. Similar to the world, a dynamic development of coaching has been observed in Poland, with its professionalization and specialization (e.g. executive coaching, managerial coaching, career coaching, team coaching, sports coaching, life coaching). As noted by R. Williams (2013), „*coaching is the second fastest growing profession in the world*”.

The paper characterizes the concept of coaching and its basic principles. It also discusses manager's abilities that help them use coaching style in management to increase the potential of their teams.

### 2. The concept and basic principles of coaching

Coaching is a discipline that is being constantly developed. A great number of its definitions have been coined, followed by constant attempts to create the adequate conceptual apparatus and to define its own boundaries and care for distinction from other disciplines (such as consulting, psychotherapy, mentoring, counselling) (Marciniak 2009).

The concept of coaching stems from the world of sport, where outstanding coaches do not necessarily have to be outstanding athletes in order to coach others successfully. However, they are characterized by an ability to bring out the maximum abilities from the athletes in

order for them to show top performance. The concept of coach can also be referred to the field of transport since the buses that transport passengers are also termed coaches. With this approach, coaching services can be also understood as services where customers are "transported" by means of their "coach" from one place (where they are now) to the other (where they chose to get to) (Bobrowska - Drozda 2009).

B. Wujec (2013) analysed the literature concerning coaching which has been present in the world since the last 40 years and identified the components to be dominant in an intervention in order for it to be termed coaching. These include: attitude towards developing the potential of the person and environment they develop in, striving for achievement of the goals, finding the solutions, improvement in efficiency; support for development of customers that is consistent with the values they believe in; partnership relations between a coach and customers; emphasizing that this is a process of support; being based on the conversation with feedback to customers, caring for the customers to find solutions by themselves; supporting customers in overcoming internal limitations, emphasis on short-term interventions.

Coaching is based on the following principles:

- each customer has the resources to be used when solving their own problems,
- with coaching, customers have opportunities for using the resources they have and they might not realize and customers can build new resources;
- customer is the wholeness, also with respect to time (their past, present and future are equally important),
- topic of the session is always chosen by the customer,
- customer and coach are partners, their cooperation is based on mutual respect,
- coach helps customers to take actions that allow for making a change, which is the goal of coaching (Rogers 2013).

The above principles can be supplemented by coaching principles used in Erickson's approach, which were formulated in the following manner:

- people are okay as they are. nobody is wrong and nobody is "broken", nobody needs repairing,
- people always make the best choice they can at the time,
- every behavior has a positive intention,
- change is inevitable (in: Wilczyńska et al. 2013).

According to C. Wilson (2010), coaching helps customers develop their self-awareness, their choices and decisions; deepen the self-confidence since they are encouraged to exercise, make mistakes, experience; focus on finding solutions rather than on problems; search and discover new prospects that encourage them to act and change.

In conclusion, coaching can be viewed as partnership relation based on mutual trust between a properly prepared coach and a customer where, through conversation, asking questions by the coach, receiving the feedback and helping remove internal barriers, customers are motivated for determination of the goal they aim to achieve and to achieve the goal based on their own values and resources.

### **3. Coaching as a management style**

Managers' work can be also based on the assumptions of coaching through implementation of coaching-oriented management style. In her book *Brilliant Coaching. How To Be A Brilliant Coach In Your Workplace*, J. Starr (2011) described what this management style is and compared it with the directive style. Although the directive management style might be sometimes efficient and necessary, it might soon become a real trap for the manager. It is connected with the pressure, incessant feeling of responsibility for the team; searching for

solutions, making decision, control over the team and caring for the outcomes. The manager who acts according to: „*I know the best what to do*”, „*I'm telling you*”, „*Do what I told you*” will sooner or later cause that:

- the employees will lack creativity, drive for work and commitment,
- the employees will feel boredom,
- the manager will expect more from themselves, which substantially limits his or her time for performing other tasks,
- will make employees dependent on him or her.

The manager who uses coaching as a management style creates the conditions where it is possible for the employees to act independently and be successful. This manager encourages employees to make decisions and solve problems they face, which translates into the enhanced involvement, self-confidence, feeling of empowerment and taking responsibility for the effects of activities.

Starr (2011) argued that the most important skills of a manager who wants to use and develop coaching-oriented management style are:

- building a good contact with another person (creation of relations, feeling of ties, climate of trust, ability to find similarities between interlocutors),
- taking conscious effort to listen carefully and perceptively (concentration, focus of attention, being present here and now, helping interlocutors to express themselves, awareness of various obstacles to communication),
- asking questions to help other people rethink and understand the situation, encouraging them to think independently, make decisions and act (simple questions with clearly formulated goals with open character, using "strong questions"),
- constructive feedback (positive intention, caring that the other person should actually benefit on what he or she hears; commenting on the behaviour rather than on the whole person; care for being objective; balance between positives and negatives; ensuring that the interlocutor understands the message and is involved in the conversation; helping when making decisions).

According to Szmids (2009), coaching, oriented at development of employees, can be used in the enterprise as one of the most important tools to support human resource management. This author used a model proposed by P. Hawkins to identify the stages in the process of building coaching culture in an organization. These include:

1. analysis and determination of the goal of implementation of coaching culture,
2. creation of relationships between the strategy for building coaching culture and general strategy and the strategy for human resource management,
3. objective analysis of current and future company culture,
4. initiation of the process of project consultations and cooperation with previous leaders,
5. selection and development of the group of external coaches,
6. using coaching among both selected individuals and teams or organizational units,
7. building of internal coaching potential,
8. implementation of training for the whole managerial staffs concerning fundamentals of coaching,
9. linking coaching processes with all other activities in the area of human resource management with evaluation of the effectiveness,
10. analysis of opportunities for the use of coaching to build relationships with other groups of stakeholders,
11. regular evaluation of the coaching process and its participants.

## 4. Conclusion

Coaching is becoming a tool which can be successfully utilized for both development of individuals and organizations. Individuals are supported in planning and carrying the demanded changes. Organizations can utilize coaching for implementation of the company strategy. A manager that uses the coaching-oriented management style in an organization that builds the coaching culture stimulates development of competencies and independence in employees, which can be translated into the enhanced competitiveness of the enterprise in the market.

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