Coaching as a Modern Form of Company Management and Development Tool to Increase the Business Competitiveness

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Abstract—This paper deals with coaching as a modern form of company management and development tool to increase the business competitiveness. It’s a method or approach to management and development suitable in all industries including wood production and processing, paper, automotive, plastic, energy production and others, as well as retail and services. The fundament of coaching is to discover the possibility of achieving goals and overcoming obstacles that may occur while approaching the goals. The (coach) manager not only informs the employees about their tasks, but also actively helps them with solving problems in individual or team fashion using team performance and dynamics. Coaching helps improve skills, develop self-confidence, take responsibility for decisions and justify actions, including decisions about solutions. During coaching, emphasis is placed on active listening and asking appropriate open ended questions. In the case study methods as job shadowing, team coaching, individual coaching, self-evaluation were used, described in core of this paper. Managers consider learning activities from a variety of aspects, such as the degree of use of acquired skills, the level of received information, satisfaction with the benefits. The results show that leadership training, coaching mangers, as well as team coaching and team building provide great benefits for managers. The other benefits are described in conclusion.

Keywords—coaching, team leader, competence, management of enterprises

I. INTRODUCTION

Coaching as an approach to management and individual development has a lot of benefits. In fact, it’s considered to be the way how to handle all new generations of employees with completely different understanding of work environment and management itself. Managers who already learned the basic coaching skills report changes as increased employee responsibility, initiative, independence. In managing themselves there is a stress relief and more trust on their people, more time for strategic and important tasks instead of being fed up with daily operation duties. Managers don’t always have time to perform a complete hour-long session, and do so called micro coaching sessions instead. However, there are opportunities to do the thorough coaching e. a. on evaluation and development conversations, team meetings and so on. The micro sessions can be done while walking to the meeting, in the office kitchen area or directly in the production area. They comprise of one or several questions, active listening with backtracking and other details that matter. In this paper we provide a description of use of coaching approach in developing top managers in given company. May it be an inspiration for wood processing companies and other production and services industry. For effective management, it is currently necessary to create balanced and powerful independent teams. The presumption of fulfilling the correct function of the team is a quality leader whose role is to motivate and coordinate. Members should be willing to follow their leader, respect and trust him. If the leader uses the principles of coaching and will apply his authority adequately, the team will be more effective. By coaching, it is possible to support the creative atmosphere and team consciousness of "we". Using the coaching method, the team leader (master) can co-create a challenging atmosphere for pleasant and challenging tasks. He supports elimination of weaknesses, leads more impulsive members to self-reflection, builds a balanced team structure based on three basic team roles: target, analytical, and cohesive. The role of a coach is also to keep a team in a period of increased burdens and crises. Creating and maintaining a team is a longer-term process in which psychosocial energy still needs to be invested while maintaining high-quality efficiency is more demanding than short-term success. The team leader can better cope with the destructive stages of the team by coaching, and they must also implement unpopular measures (for example discarding the bearer of a psychological infection of team negativity). The manager cannot be satisfied until he is confident that the coached workers will understand the philosophy of change and are able and willing to support and further develop it. Gradually, they learn to take responsibility for measurable goals, strengthen cohesion, and gain more confidence and competence. In this way, the team adapts itself to constantly changing organizational structure, strengthens the corporate strategy and becomes autonomous. Moving from a fixed line to a self-governing team is not easy and many pitfalls need to be overcome. In the beginning, the team members are passive, they expect leadership and structuring from management. They do not have an opinion because they are accustomed to that all decision are made by the leader. If a team leader is using the coaching method, he/she must resist the dissatisfaction of the team members and not be pressured to take responsibility. The team leader must constantly encourage coaches to come up with solutions and think about implementation, adjusting their solutions and looking
for new alternatives. The coach neutralizes the insecurity of the entrusted people and strengthens their self-confidence that they are solving their own problems. Team members must experience their own autonomy and gain experience that their independence is worthwhile (not only in the material but above all psychological level, as survival of their own importance and ability to influence business processes). In the next stages of understanding the meaning of coaching in optimal case, the responsibility of workers from external stimuli (intentions) moves towards internal motivation, which further strengthens the individual and team autonomy and improves the skill level of the team members. It is important for the coach to test this team by surviving an error or failure while the manager remains as if he is ready to intervene if the risk of negative consequences is high or irreversible. The experience of a managed crisis or a lesson from one's own mistakes is more important for the development of team autonomy than the direct intervention of the leader at the first indication of a mistaken decision. The analytic-control role must be managed by itself from internal sources. Coaching is a creative method that stimulates personal change, examines behavior and attitudes, invites to explore the thought processes and personal view of the individual in the world. In other words, it is about re-examining mental habits to make everyone aware of the extent of their capabilities and limitations, which then will be easier to exceed and thus increase their effectiveness [1].

Fischer-Epe [2] understands coaching as a combination of individual counseling, personal feedback and practically oriented training. In coaching, there are issues that the manager places on the employee in order to develop and use his strengths and help the employee to design a solution. Coaching is a form of process counseling that helps solve the problems of achieving goals without the manager as an expert providing solutions. Coaching is, in this sense, professional help focused on reflection and development in professional practice. Its goal is to develop more alternatives of behavior and to allow him to move in his environment as a sovereign creator. Coaching can be used to actively solve problems while working or checking it. Whitmore [3] sees a wide use of this method in the following areas (Fig. 1.).

![Fig. 1. Features of team coaching in order to create coaching culture. (source: authors)](image)

Coaching brings positive results mainly because it creates a relationship of mutual support between the coach (manager, teacher) and the coached (employee, student) and uses specific means and style of communication. The coach does not get the facts from the coach, but with the help of the coach he finds himself. The manager should strive for his employees to be able to decide independently and deal with different situations. The basis of coaching is to discover the possibility of achieving the set goals and overcoming the obstacles that may occur. The manager (coach) not only informs the employee, but also tries to help him / her with solving any problems, in real work performance. In coaching and employee development, we help them to improve their skills to get self-confidence to take responsibility for their decisions and to be able to justify their actions, including why they choose to do so. During coaching, emphasis is placed on listening to and asking appropriate open questions. The coach does not play the role of a teacher, but rather acts as a counselor or assistant. During the coaching process, questions are very important. If the questions are closed, the coachee does not have to consider very much, but the open and critical questions require him to think and think about the possible change, the solution. The questions are focused on four areas that are briefly explained by GROW model, the author is John Whitmore:

- G (Goal setting) - Long-term and short-term goals: What is your goal? What would you like to address? What do you expect from coaching / today's meeting / development? What will happen when you reach your goal? What will people talk about you? What would you like people to talk about? How do you know you’ve reached your goal?
- R (Reality) - Actual state; What is the current state? What are its possible causes? What are its possible consequences? How would your co-workers describe your current situation? What did you do to improve the situation?
- O (Options) - alternatives, options, strategies: What are your options? What else can you do? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the options? Which solutions / path do you get most satisfied with? What is most important to you in this situation? What prevents you from doing this?
- W (Will) - Will do something: What do you do? What will be the first step? Do you smash up to 24/48 hours? How do you know you're making a progress? How would you decide on your 10-point scale to begin your commitment? [14].

In the coaching process, self-reflection occurs when an employee is aware of the context, evaluates and comes in with solutions [4]–[6]. Coaching is currently considered to be a very effective method of learning and developing individuals and is becoming part of not only organizational behavior but also good functioning in interpersonal interactions [7]. Reflective methods such as critical thinking, feedback and coaching are recommended to be used in the learning process to ensure employee growth, strengthen their ability to independently analyze the situation, and then decide on a suitable solution [8]. These methods contain a high degree of reflection, largely based on evaluated information and processes, on appropriate questioning, comparison and evaluation of alternative solutions [9]. This paper is structured in the form of six main sections, where demonstrated is the case study that focuses on development activities in selected company in order to create coaching culture in the future. Introduction establishes the scope, context and summarizes current understanding about the team coaching, etc. In section 2 a literature survey is presented supporting the analysis of competences for team members. In section 3 a detailed explanation of the methodology is given. The core is formed by case study (section 4) and results (section 5). The case
study examines a subject of analysis of the current status and determination of objectives of team coaching. Finally, a short summary and an outlook are given in the conclusion (section 6).

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The optimal function of the team as a result of the coaching process has the following characteristics:

- power (members share power and respect agreed rules of division of powers),
- leadership (is secure and flexible when leader’s position alternates in a team based on competencies),
- the way of participation (members invest in a team product, identify with goals, support each other and maintain a level of rivalry according to the principle of internal competition),
- communication (members co-operate permanently and have equal access to information),
- the identity (members are loyal, have a strong sense of belonging to the team and share values [10]).

Authors Richard Hackman and Ruth Wageman [11] focus on the effectiveness of team coaching when they perceive a team as a higher unit than individual members or team leaders. They propose a new coaching model with three distinctive features:

- Focusing on a feature where coaching brings benefits to the entire team, rather than focusing on the behavioral and leadership style of the team leader.
- Identifying specific moments during the task-solving process, when coaching interventions are most likely to produce a positive effect.
- Explaining certain conditions in which team coaching brings or does not produce the desired result.

For effective management is important to the creation of balanced and performing teams [12]–[14]. The basic assumption is the clarification of a common goal, which is acceptable and which shall be subject to all the activities of the team [15].

Fig. 2. Features of team coaching in order to create coaching culture.
(source: authors)

The implementation of autonomous teams required a lot of patience from the team leader in the persuasion of the people to change their thinking in the integration with the business culture and vision, to overcome their resistance to changes in the system of the organization. Differences of features of team coaching in order to create coaching culture are shown in Fig. 2.

The information and promotion phase is an essential basis for the effective functioning of the team and it is not possible to order or succumb to the illusion of rapid consent. The more often used form of team coaching is an external approach when a coach works with a team as a separate unit, so he does not understand it as a sum of individuals. As an external independent factor, the coach can then better perceive the hidden potential of the entire team, he facilitates better the phases of teamwork and he want to help solve the natural developmental crises of team cohesion [16]. Competences (behavioral competency, soft skills) for team members:

- Interpersonal understanding - accurate explanation of the concerns, motives and feelings of other people and knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Influence – using appropriate interpersonal styles and logical arguments to convince others to accept ideas or pleas.
- Customer service orientation – demonstrating concern for meeting the needs of internal and external customers.
- Adaptability – adapting easily to change.
- Teamwork and cooperation – demonstrating concern for meeting the needs of internal and external customers and developing collaborative work that delivers acceptable solutions.
- Oral communication – expressing ideas in group situations.
- Achievement orientation – setting and meeting challenging objectives.
- Organizational commitment – performing work with broader organizational goals in mind [17].

Individual team members can affect team performance in three ways:

- the actual work that they perform and their skills, abilities and behaviors that they apply in work.
- the work they perform as team members,
- teamwork performs as a unit [18]–[20].

A. Balance of Team Competencies

Next balance of team competencies is divided into six factors (Table 1). This balance is not achieved at all points in one hundred percent perfect, but it's another form, how to plan their own development. Some of these competencies are dominant for some team leaders (coaches) and team members. These are the pillars that managers can rely on teamwork. Some of them will evaluate competencies as necessary in relation to their personal and team goals. These are a priority and there is a possibility to look for space to develop. The attitude of the managers greatly affects their behavior. Evaluation alone can help you find the strengths and places where you need to focus your attention within team competencies.
TABLE I. TEAM COMPETENCIES - FACTORS

| Team competencies - factors | Goals | Decision making |
|-----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Team work | Work with resources | | |
| Productivity | Time management | Active search for external resources |
| Activity and proactivity | Conflict solving | Financial management |
| Sincerity and openness in the team | Support and cohesion | Staffing of the team |
| Specialization | Team rules | Communication |
| Respect for team rules | Listening and active speech |
| Learning teams | Interpersonal skills |
| Exploiting the potential of an individual | Oral communication |

III. METHODOLOGY

The methods that were used for meetings in the company are:

A. Job Shadowing

Job Shadowing allows employees to observe more experienced staff members during their workday, their skills, decision making methods and leadership. Job Shadowing is designed to share best practices, new things, or observe a new way to do things.

B. Team Coaching

The aim of team coaching is to improve interpersonal relationships and to deal with the main topics that are addressed, for example, motivation, cooperation, customer satisfaction. The most important benefit of coaching is the systematic approach and collaboration with the client while supporting them. The coach roll ensures that existing teams understand the purpose and goals of the team. Clarifying the main outputs of the team, values, principles, common visions, goals, and, in particular, teamwork allows you to achieve your goals. The team strategy focuses on developing team action plans that map the basic steps needed to achieve their success as well as the success of the organization. The strategy contributes to a better:

- review of the team and its structure, role and purpose,
- creating measures for team success, defining key short-term priorities and long-term priorities,
- clarifying the team process policy and the way it works, creating action plans. By team coaching was used the appreciative inquiry, Walt Disney and college coaching. The

C. Individual Coaching

In the individual coaching, the coach during the process deals with individual coaching and teaches coachee to work with emotions and negative thoughts that block him from making proper steps forward. The whole process is based on coach – coachee person conversation. The coach and the manager assessed what had happened and set up the tasks on which the manager could work separately until the next meeting with the coach. One meeting takes 1 hour.

D. Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation offers the answer to find out where we are right now. However, if we coach ourselves systematically in the coaching process, the benefit will be much more effective. The team coaching process and its associated questionnaire illustrate a moment in time.

We can integrate coaching into strategy, processes, with an emphasis on improving employee performance. Coaching then becomes a natural part of how you do what you do, part of how you do your business. Being coached (or mentored) is not a punishment, but a daily routine. The result of such a process is that employees are willing to share their experience and knowledge, take responsibility for themselves and their teams, give and receive feedback, and ultimately grow personally. Coaching success factors framework is shown in Fig. 4.

IV. CASE STUDY

The selected organization focuses on the manufacture of parts and accessories for motor vehicles namely: Exhaust Gas
During this stage participants reflect on and discuss:

- time management, managing time of the subordinates, assigning tasks to subordinates.

These themes were specified by the CEO of this organization. The target group was top management in a number of 5 persons. The process was applied subsequently: individual coaching meetings at approximately one-hour long – one coach with one manager, manager shadowing, team coaching, feedback and closing of the program.

A. Implementation of Team Coaching

Timeline of team and individual coaching process is shown in Fig. 5.

First meeting: The managers constructed a chart where they identified eight priorities (Table 2).

| TABLE II. PRIORITIES AND THEIR SPECIFICATION |
|------------------------------------------------|
| **Clear project / plan – overall goal of companies and departments** |
| - clear monitoring and formulation cell, |
| - overcoming obstacles, |
| - keeping to the topic, |
| - persistence and consistency in achieving the goal, |
| - building principle self of self-discipline. |
| **Clear priority – they have time, address the challenges, develop:** |
| - willingly, clear and understandable information shared, |
| - clarification of the understanding, |
| - natural respect and authority, persuasiveness. |
| **Decision - Stop-Time – importance / urgency:** |
| - the speed and adequacy of decision - job scheduling, |
| - knowledge of their “thieves of time” and their elimination, |
| - prioritization, |
| - ability to work under pressure, in stressed conditions. |
| **Definition of time – Freedom - efficiency, clean head, the will** |
| - ability to work intently until the outcome, |
| - efficiency, clarity and intelligibility in communication, |
| - subordinated active listening, empathy rate, |
| - the perception of the consequences of their behavior. |
| **Designated details - Time fund of tasks** |
| - prioritization, |
| - | **Clear project / plan – overall goal of companies and departments** |
| - clear monitoring and formulation cell, |
| - overcoming obstacles, |
| - keeping to the topic, |
| - persistence and consistency in achieving the goal, |
| - building principle self of self-discipline. |
| - a clear timetable of tasks. |
| **Formulation and presentation of work tasks to subordinate, objectives and plan** |
| - the ability to formulate and present the objectives of the company to subordinates. |
| **Transfer of competencies – delegation, passing on the tasks without increasing the workload for yourself** |
| - ability to attract and draw in subordinates to the objectives and tasks of the company, |
| - the ability to assess the capacity of your team, |
| - the ability to use different methods to motivate subordinates. |
| **The involvement of subordinates – acceptance tasks, motivation, facilitation, visualization** |
| - their ability to pass on taking a subordinate, |
| - the ability to inspire subordinates and pull the thing, |
| - the ability to give and receive feedback. |

The Appreciative Inquiry method was used to generate eight priorities and their specification. In Fig. 6. is shown a process of this method.

**1. DISCOVERY AND SHARING**
**What is already working? The best of what is**
During this stage participants reflect on and discuss the best of what is concerning the object of inquiry.

**APPRECIATING**

**2. DREAM**
**What might be? What is the world calling for? Overall vision**
During this stage participants are asked to imagine their group, organization or community at its best and an attempt is made to identify the common aspirations of system members and to symbolize this in some way.

**ENVISIONING IMPACT**

**3. DESIGN**
**What should be the ideal? Option to make it happen**
With a common dream in place, participants are asked to develop concrete proposals for the new organizational state.

**CO-CONSTRUCTING**

**Fig. 6. The appreciative Inquiry method. (source: authors)**

B. Implementation of Individual Manager Shadowing and Individual Coaching

From the second to ninth meetings, individual manager shadowing and individual coaching took place. The Walt Disney method (Fig.7) was used at the sixth meeting. By using this three roles (the dreamer, the realist and the critic), employees created their internal vision of their future team, realist role helped them find ways to act in the favor of goals. By standing in the critic role, participants discovered risks and obstacles on the way towards goals.
C. Realisation of Individual Manager Shadowing and Feedback

The method of Colleague coaching was used at the ninth meeting. It is a process in which two or more colleagues work together to think about existing practices. Colleague coaching is an effective way to increase feedback through an educational strategy and to discuss results between colleagues. The process of colleague coaching was realized as follows:

- Each manager has created timeline throughout the coaching process based on three basic themes. The timeline included what the manager has achieved, what changes have occurred and what steps they will do in the future. Finally, this whole process of development was presented to colleagues in the team.
- The colleagues gave explanatory and verifying questions for example whether they correctly understood the course of coaching from the timeline. In this step, colleagues appreciated and evaluated the will to develop of the manager.
- Managers had the opportunity to get the different practices and ideas that their colleague applied in their personal strategy. Colleagues inspired each other and gained new useful practices.
- The final step was about the manager who presented the progress from the timeline. The role of the manager was to express what was inspiring and useful to him.

The ninth meeting was also focused on feedback from managers who evaluated the coaching process. Managers were asked to fill out a self-evaluation form, which consisted of two stages:

- team coaching,
- individual coaching.

The form also includes tasks that the manager committed to at the start of the coaching process and the value on which it was based, the target values for September 2017 and the value it reached in November 2017.

V. RESULTS

A. Results of the Self-evaluation Performed by the Managers

This sub-section aims to select the best activities according to specific questions. Managers consider learning activities from a variety of aspects, such as:

- the degree of use of acquired skills,
- the level of received information,
- satisfaction with the benefits.

The Table 3 and the Fig. 8 show which manager rated the activity as the best, based on the identified questions. We can also assess what activities have been the most beneficial for managers. These are activities: coaching, leadership training, and shop floor management meeting.

| Selection of the best activity by department managers | Soft-skills - feedback | Soft-skills - teambuilding | Teambuilding | Coaching | Leadership training | Lean production | Shop floor management meeting |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| The activity that most increased the efficiency at work | PRO | PRO | LO | MT | Q |
| The activity that best met your expectations | LO | Q | PRO | MT | |
| The activity that has the greatest use of the acquired skills at work | PRO | MT | PO | Q | LO |
| The activity that had the highest level of information | LO | Q | PO | MT | PRO |
| The activity that had the greatest satisfaction with the benefits | PO | MT | LO | PRO | Q |
| The activity that left the biggest impact on your position | LO | PRO | PO | Q | MT |
| The activity that had the greatest impact on your team | LO | PRO | Q | MT | |

Source: Authors
Where:
- PRO – Department manager - Production
- PO – Department manager - Optimization process
- MT – Department Manager - Maintenance
- LO – Department Manager - Logistics
- Q – Department Manager - Quality and Control

Fig. 8. Most prosperous activity. (source: authors)

It is clear from the answers that the managers gained the most usable and knowledge of coaching for managers, leadership training and shop floor management. Managers did not bring any knowledge gained in teambuilding and lean production. Satisfaction with coaching (Fig. 9.) under points 1 to 5 was about expressing satisfaction with the coaching process in the company. Its job was to find out if the managers were satisfied and received sufficient information to benefit from their work in the company. Satisfaction was expressed by all business managers on Scale 1 to 5, where 1 was the worst value and the 5 best. Three managers marked the value of 5, and the two managers rated 4. It shows that the managers were very satisfied with the activity (coaching).

Fig. 9. Satisfaction with the coaching process. (source: authors)

B. Comparison of Results Self-Evaluation Performed by the Managers

The following Table 4 illustrates the comparison of state before coaching (March 2017) and current state (April 2018) performed by the managers who participated in the development activities. At the beginning of the coaching process, managers committed themselves to the tasks and then evaluated them at a certain stage of the process on a scale they identified as being subjectively aware of the respective topic in their own development. The values on the scale are numbers 1-10, where 10 means the highest value, the highest satisfaction. In the fourth column in the table 8, managers filled the values in April 2018.

The managers in the self-evaluation reported values for April 2018 mostly the same as in November 2017. It followed that the managers are trying to maintain the same value and use all the knowledge that they have acquired in the process of coaching. In some cases, managers rated their role one step higher than in November 2017, indicating continuous improvement and progress.

TABLE IV. COMPARISON OF RESULTS: SELF-EVALUATION PERFORMED BY THE MANAGERS IN APRIL 2018

| Tasks of the manager | Previous value – March 2017 | Target value – September 2017 | Value - November 2017 | Value - April 2018 | Progress - April 2018 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| PRO – DEPARTMENT MANAGER - PRODUCTION |
| Assigning tasks to subordinates: |
| Mentoring | 4 | 7 | 9 | 9 | +5 |
| Delegation of competences | 2 | 5 | 8 | 9 | +7 |
| Involvement | 3 | 7 | 8 | 8 | +5 |
| PO – DEPARTMENT MANAGER - OPTIMIZATION PROCESS |
| Managing time of the subordinates: |
| Goal - plan | 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | +4 |
| Increasing demands | 4 | 9 | 8 | 8 | +4 |
| Managing time of the subordinates: |
| Team interviews | 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | +4 |
| MT – DEPARTMENT MANAGER - MAINTENANCE |
| Time management: |
| Degrade unimportant things | 3 | 7 | 8 | 8 | +5 |
| Assigning tasks to subordinates: |
| Degrade unimportant things | 5 | 8 | 8 | 9 | +4 |
| LO – DEPARTMENT MANAGER - LOGISTICS |
| Time management: |
| Self-management | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | +1 |
| Time management – clear priority: |
can presume that the shift in values in the Table 5 shows how long-term education program on manager development. We managers are trying to use the methods and knowledge gained from the entire coaching process to improve selected areas - Time management, managing time of the subordinates and its impact on the competitiveness of enterprises in the knowledge based society. Finally, coaching for managers had a greater impact on manager’s skills than other development activities.

The third presumption has also been confirmed. There is the second presumption that coaching had greater impact on manager’s skills than other development activities. Coaching for managers is one of the most productive activities. The case study results show that managers use the methods and knowledge gained by coaching. Finally, coaching for managers had a greater impact on manager’s skills than other development activities.

This presumption has been confirmed. There is the third presumption that coaching for managers has caused permanent changes in managers' practices. Managers were encouraged during the entire coaching process to fill out a self-evaluation questionnaire.

These previous values and new values that the manager filled in April 2018 helped us to make permanent changes to managers' habits through the coaching process. All managers have sustained values achieved in November 2017 and even some of the priority tasks have even increased by one degree. The third presumption has also been confirmed.

Coaching for managers has caused permanent changes in managers' practices. Coaching for managers is an effective way to assist leaders and managers to succeed at and exceed their goals and helps individuals grow as professionals and contribute fully to the success of an organization. Done well, it can turn performance management into a collaborative process that benefits everyone.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper is an output of the science project VEGA 1/0518/19 Research of the digital economy development and its impact on the competitiveness of enterprises in the knowledge based society.

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