

## LEVEL UP! "FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions", on coaching problems and examples of solutions



**AIM OF ACTIVITY:** Exchange of best practices on coaching problems and examples of solutions in ACV, PES, SIC LEVEL UP! Project partner organization

This Level UP! project is focused on conceptualizing the idea of coaching and analyzing its practical dimension - describing the role that this process plays in partner organizations and how it looks in their everyday activities. For this purpose, the etymology and semantics of coaching and the current trends in individual countries will be described at the beginning. Then, a critical review of the coaching activities in our organizations is made, indicating the areas requiring intervention

## DEFINITION

The term coaching comes directly from the world of sport, where it means individual training supported by the great knowledge and experience of the trainer. A closer look at these features of sports coaching and their excellent results has led to a search for links between the essence of training athletes and the improvement of employees' skills. In this way, the method of improving managerial staff, called coaching, was created, defined as "a two-sided process of development of the company's personnel using the knowledge and experience of employees combined with systematic evaluation ensuring feedback [Parsloe 1998, p. 10.], [Popper, Lipshitz 1992, p. 15 .] In other words, it is helping and managing the development of a person's skills and competences in a specific field, carried out individually by the trainer.

## THE ESSENCE OF COACHING

- Deepening the knowledge and skills of employees in the implementation of entrusted tasks - this element refers to expanding the competences of the trained employee.
- Motivational influence on the mental conditions of employee development - this element is related to strengthening the belief in development, which improves its effectiveness. An element that supports the belief about development and achieving success in the implementation of tasks is the ongoing evaluation of the development of competences in the areas of performed tasks, i.e. feedback, which occurs in the coaching process. It also allows making corrections, corrections or avoiding mistakes by the trained person.

## BOUNDARY CONDITIONS:

1. The client is treated as a whole, i.e. both his professional and private spheres are taken into account, both of which are understood as inseparable whole.
2. The client is treated as having resources and possibilities, as a creative and complete unit able to find the best for himself
3. Solutions and methods of action, coaching is not "fixing" the client at any level of his functioning. Coaching is based on a partnership relationship between the coach and the client, the basic principle is the mutual involvement of both parties.
4. The client is 100% responsible for his commitment, decisions, actions and the result, in this sense he is the "owner" of the effects.
5. A coach is 100% responsible for his commitment, methodological purity, the impact of his interventions on the client, creating safe conditions for creativity and experimenting, as well as for his own development and the level of his coaching skills.

6. Coaching combines the learning process with stimulation to take action. Customer development takes place, among others, through personal discovery, expanding self-awareness, gaining knowledge and understanding your strategies. Taking actions is stimulated, among others, by encouraging decision-making, making commitments, creating action plans, carrying out tasks that change useless action patterns.

7. The coach works, among others, by listening, asking questions, and sharing non-judgmental observations.

## MAIN TYPES OF COACHING

The concept of coaching is always the same, but there are many specializations:

- life coaching - challenges related to personal life,
- executive coaching - supporting the development and achieving goals for managerial staff,
- business coaching - goals related to running your own business,
- team coaching - work with the entire team using coaching tools.

Other niche types of coaching that are actually specializations are, for example, diet coaching, soul coaching.

This concept can be broken down into various categories:

- Due to the target group and the area of work of employees
- Due the person of coach
- Due to the number of participants

## COACHING CURRENT TRENDS:

1.1. Coaching is a profession that is just taking shape.

1.2. Coaching draws from many disciplines on the basis of which it creates its own base of knowledge and professional practice. These disciplines include theories of learning, adult development, social sciences, management and leadership sciences, and communication techniques.

1.3. Coaching in the broadest sense of the word is also a process or set of techniques increasingly used by various people, in many environments, often without the use of the term coaching

## FAQ

The following FAQ or a set of frequently asked questions faced by the partners of the Level UP project in the context of their work should allow the reader to understand the subject of coaching and its possible implementation in three organizations: PES, ACV, SIC. This part teaches answers to the most important questions about coaching. They show the perspective, possibilities, and experiences of the LEVEL UP partnership in the field and are intended to complement the widely available theoretical knowledge on the subject.

## 1. WHAT TYPE OF QUALIFICATIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR AN EMPLOYEE TO QUALIFY AS A COACH / MENTOR?

**(SIC)** The answer to this question depends mostly on the type of coaching or mentoring the organization is willing to provide. In many cases for mentor positions there is no necessity for certification, because in such a role mentoring means sharing one's experience and knowledge with the mentees to advance their personal or professional growth.

On the other hand, if the organization is willing to offer coaching services that revolve around personal lives and life choices of the target audience then professional coaching certification and education is absolutely necessary. Mostly, because the coach has a powerful position over their mentees, and not being fully aware of all the psychological effects on them, as well as methods for conveying the necessary message, might do permanent harm. One might stretch parallels between this and one's business - if unaware of full picture, the coach might inflict some permanent damage to the business of the mentee.

A good place to start researching options for getting certified in your country is looking up information in website of organizations like the International Coaching Association: <https://coachingfederation.org/>.

## 2. WOULD YOU DEFINE YOURSELF AS A COACHING ORGANIZATION?

**(PES):** For sure not in the full sense of the definition our organization cannot be defined as a coaching organization, although some elements related to coaching may be of interest to our organization (mainly in the area of educational activities that can be offered to our beneficiaries) main in terms of enriching the training offer.

The coaching method can be useful at every stage of the implementation of non-statutory activities in our organization by our staff. An international project manager may need such support on a wide variety of issues.

**(SIC):** Social Innovation Centre in no terms can be called a coaching organization, because there is no intellectual capacity in this field (no employees trained in this field), and the scope of work currently does not foresee any coaching necessity or opportunities, because there is no constant contact with the local audiences.

**(ACV):** As such, ACV is not an organization dedicated to coaching itself. However, one of the activities carried out once a week during the incubation program is to provide coaching to the entrepreneurs so that they can face their emotional challenges in the development of their projects.

**(BAROOTS):** No. Baroots as an organization does not yet have enough organizational capacity or experience to be able to offer coaching services. Nonetheless, coaching is considered as one of the potential fields of development in the future.

## 2. WHICH BOUNDARY CONDITIONS OF COACHING DEFINITION DO YOU FULFILL AS A ORGANIZATION?

**(PES):** In fact, none of these assumptions mentioned in the definition can be fully fulfilled by PES and our employees or in most cases by hired staff. In our daily activities, PES focuses mainly on one zone of the professional life of a given entity or client, which is the educational zone. The remaining elements do not correspond within the scope of activities carried out by the institution.

**(ACV):** There is a prejudice that it is useless. Many people complain but are not willing to make the effort that coaching really requires.

## 2. ACCORDING TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE HOW WOULD YOU DIFFERENTIATE COACHING FROM OTHER FORMS SUCH AS MENTORING, COUNSELING, TRAINING, PSYCHOTHERAPY?

**(PES)** Among the basic features of coaching which differ it from other weel knwon to us and used in daily basis concepts can be pointed:

- High level of partnership and support
- High personalization
- The balance between achieving tangible results and development
- Extensive use of inner wisdom

## 3. CAN THE TRAINING OFFERED BY YOUR ENTITY BE CONSIDERED A FORM OF COACHING?

**(PES and SIC):** In the case of PES and SIC organizations, we focus more on training than coaching. These are two different forms of supporting the development of an individual, often misidentified by our beneficiaries. Coaching in its essence is a completely different type of activity than training. The main difference is that training is designed to provide knowledge and skills with some space for self-discovery. In coaching, awareness-raising is almost the essence of meetings. The effect of coaching is to achieve specific goals. The coach accompanies the client in the transition from planning to action. The client is an expert in his life and takes personal responsibility for his commitment.

**(ACV):** On the one hand, ACV works with situational Coaching: having the ability and agility to converse with people no matter the situation. On the other hand, we also use coaching with emotional intelligence. Coaching helps to enhance emotional intelligence. We understand emotional intelligence as the art of understanding and managing emotions, feelings, and relationships. Something that can be learned at any age and that coaching tools help to make it happen.

**(BARROOTS):** Organization has not yet provided a training in form of an event, but within the formed collaborations in small-scale partnership project Baroots has significantly more experience than the project partners. And through all implemented activities and project design, the partners receive a form of training in the process that overlaps with some coaching due to personal sessions of support from Baroots. With that said, it is possible to say that such collaboration has elements of coaching, but can not be considered coaching as itself.

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD COACH - PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALITY WISE?**

**(ACV):** A good coach is one who has the ability to accompany and listen. They have a holistic vision and are empathetic. He/she knows how to transmit tranquility and security. In addition, he/she is able to lead the client towards his/her objectives while adapting to his/her personal circumstances.

**(PES):** Certification of coaches plays a significant role for such organizations like ours focused mainly on professional education. It allows to confirm theoretical knowledge possessed by future employees and it's helpful to build a brand on the market. But in practical terms most important thing is practice and experience of those the coaches. Only well-developed skills and constant use of personal experience are more valued than obtained title or certificate. During professional coaching courses, employees can only learn about the work tools, but they have to be tested in practice.

**(BARROOTS):** Collaboration with coach is likely successful only when the coach has some knowledge / skills / qualities that the coachee does not possess itself. Meaning, there is a possibility for growth with the support of coach.

#### **5. HOW LONG DOES THE COACHING PROCESS TAKE? IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE INTRODUCED IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

**(PES):** The time frame can vary greatly and depends on a wide range of factors: beneficiary goal(s), its commitment and openness to change, capacity for introspection, circumstances, how quickly and thoughtfully clients complete homework assignments, and other unique factors.

We have individuals who come in for a very brief engagement (e.g., one mock interview coaching session). We have others who come in focused on one goal, achieve that goal, and begin work on another goal and then another. Those individuals who partner with us in multiple capacities and for multiple goals work, are still in contact with us. It is possible in our organization, but from the point of view of profitability, it could not be the only source of income

#### **6. HOW CAN AN NGO BENEFIT FROM COACHING SERVICES THEMSELVES? WILL YOU AGREE THAT COACHING AND MENTORING CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT ON ORGANIZATION WORKPLACE?**

**(PES):** Definitely, it can affect not only our staff but the functioning of the entire organization in a variety of ways as a stronger team, provide more support for talented employees, it could improve the ability to align to the organization's culture and ethos or help us to create a more inclusive culture at the same time improving employee satisfaction scores,

## **7. HOW TO STRUCTURE A SUSTAINABLE COACHING SYSTEM IN AN ORGANIZATION THAT AIMS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT?**

**(ACV):** Incorporating to the team some profile prepared to provide coaching and to make dynamics every week to establish and achieve the objectives of the entity, that is to say, including coaching in the weekly work dynamics as another activity.

Regarding the planning, the ideal would be to do these activities every week, focusing on different objectives such as improving communication, achievement of objectives...

When recruiting new employees, it is important to get to know the people, to see that they are suitable for the position.

## **8. HOW CAN AN ORGANIZATION REACH AUDIENCES THAT MIGHT BENEFIT FROM COACHING?**

**(ACV):** In the case of ACV, we reach the public that could benefit from coaching from our normal activity, from the business itself. As a result of what we do on a daily basis, the people we incubate have the option of getting in contact with a coach to facilitate their entrepreneurship.

## **9. IN WHAT SITUATIONS WOULD AN NGO NEED TO CONSIDER OFFERING COACHING SERVICES TO A BROADER AUDIENCE?**

**(SIC):** The most prominent situation that highlights the necessity of introducing coaching as a service, is the portrayed need of the target audiences. Namely, if an NGO defines that such services might create social impact in the field or audience of their work. Another reason might be the necessity to diversify the offered services, and capitalize on the existing resources, e.g. the knowledge and expertise of current employees. In both cases after identifying such need, the NGO might educate or train their employees to become coaches or mentors.

## **10. WHAT CONDITIONS AND ACTIONS MUST BE TAKEN BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO FIT IN WITH THE IDEA OF COACHING AND THE CURRENT TRENDS RELATED TO IT?**

**(PES):** in order to adapt our organization's capabilities to be able to provide coaching services we should increase not only the team's competencies but make organizational changes regarding

- Initiate appropriate diagnosis and adaptation to external trends

- Build an appropriate long-term strategy by PES Board;
- Development of employees' skills in this area be dedicated courses;

**(ACV):** Coaching is here to stay, so it will establish itself as an essential part of a company as it helps to see things from the outside, and helps to define and achieve objectives.

**(SIC):** Coaching has not been highlighted as a priority for the strategy of upcoming years within SIC. Nonetheless, if that was to change, then SIC would need to:

- do research of target audience about the necessary/beneficial coaching areas that fit with the expertise of SIC
- create a sustainable communication strategy/campaign to attract the potential beneficiaries
- ensure the necessary training to the employees
- find financing to ensure the additional workload for the existing employees is covered.

**(BARROOTS):** As of current situation, coaching is not a feasible type of method that Barroots could consider. In order to change this, Barroots would need to define the need among the target audience, gain knowledge on the methodology and increase the amount of resources within the organization.

## 11. DO YOU KNOW OR HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COOPERATE WITH COACHING ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUR REGION / COUNTRY / INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

**(PES):** We know local actors and we had the opportunity to cooperate with the staff which the coaching offer. Among them can be distinguished Pomeranian Coaching Chamber and Banking College in Gdańsk, which runs a coaching academy with a program accredited by the Chamber of Coaching.

We have not undertaken cooperation in this field at the national or international level

**(ACV):** In the case of ACV, we are in the process of collaborating with the Spanish coaching association - ADESCO, to provide more specialized coaching to our entrepreneurs.

## 12. HOW DO YOU HIRE A COACH IN YOUR ORGANISATION? WHAT ARE THE FURTHER STEPS?

**(PES):** By going to the International Coaching Community database and searching for a coach in our area. We also often employ a coach on the recommendation of other organizations. After signing the contract you should decide together with the coach how often the sessions will be, what form they will take (for example by telephone and/or face to face), and the duration of the coaching arrangement (for example, three or six months). Different coaches will suggest different arrangements.

## 13. IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE THE FUTURE TRENDS OF COACHING AND HOW YOUR ORGANISATION CAN RESPOND TO THEM?



**(PES):** The demand for coaching will continue to grow, which will cause the so-called "coaching business" to grow and will have to change its structure. At present, the coaching market consists mainly of coaches operating on their own or loosely related groups of people operating as part of their own business. The direction of development is certified professionals who will be members of larger associations, usually consulting groups or coaching agencies. PES should think about becoming a part of an association integrating different types of coaches or establish closer cooperation with coaching agencies

#### **14. SOMETIMES THERE ARE PREJUDICES ABOUT COACHING, SUCH AS THINKING THAT IT IS USELESS BEFORE USING IT, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THIS?**

**(SIC):** Even if sometimes such prejudice exists, coaching is a very effective tool to increase the efficiency and success rate of small and big teams. It is an individual approach to organization's shortcomings and work together with the employees towards improved processes in a sustainable manner. Such prejudices mostly would emerge in teams where change and improvements are not very welcome, or the management/employees are not well acquainted with the aspects and process of coaching. One of the suggestions to change this notion is first, to learn more about coaching for organizations/teams, and then have a consultation with a certified coach to see their insight in the potential areas of improvements that might be suitable for the particular case.

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