

Coaching and Other Practices in Facilitating Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to present the results of the study on identification of commonality and delineation between coaching and other facilitating activities in the context on organizational change. Online expert interviews were conducted to obtain the data. The qualitative analysis of the data was carried out. The findings were compared with academic literature.

The obtained results provide the proof that coaching can be used together with mentoring supporting the whole process of change in the organization. Under coaching program, coaching can be combined with consultancy. However, a clear delineation has to be between coaching and counseling/ therapy.

Keywords: Coaching, facilitating practices, organizational change

1. INTRODUCTION

Coaching is still a relatively new professional field in Latvia and Lithuania. Under the Global Coaching Survey 2008/2009 that define the life-cycle stage of coaching for each European country, coaching in Latvia is in the pre-introduction phase while coaching in Lithuania is in the transition between introduction and growth stages. While awareness of coaching is growing, people in Latvia and Lithuania do not fully understand the essence of coaching and tend to confuse coaching with other facilitating activities, such as mentoring, consultancy, counseling, mediation, etc.

In previous study, the authors examined definitions of coaching presented in the literature as well as the key words to define coaching that were extracted from the experts' survey. The study also investigated the current state of affairs in the field of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania with special emphasis on the use of coaching for organisational purposes. Two types of analysis give opportunity to define the essence of coaching and its role for organizational development and change. The analysis of 41 selected definitions showed that there is no unified approach to the definition of coaching. Content analysis of the experts' answers about the key words what can be used to define the sense of coaching identified that the word

development is used more frequently to characterize coaching.

The results of this study suggest that coaching is a regular, synergic, learning and development, goal-oriented process. Facilitation is defined as a primary aim of coaching. Definitions of coaching presented in the literature and experts' answers demonstrated a basic agreement in the implementation of coaching. Both sources considered that coaching is beneficial for an individual and organisation. Achieved results and personal growth was considered as the key expected coaching outcomes. Experts highlighted a lot of advantages of the coaching use for individual and organisational development, among them the opportunity to develop self-awareness. Coaching also can stimulate the ability to organize individual's thinking process more clearly and more structural. In respect to organisations, coaching provides a greater goal clarity, better alignment with the role in organisation that facilitates change in the style of management. At the same time experts mentioned that it is difficult to predict how effective coaching can be because coaching is not homogeneous and it is difficult to measure the results of coaching.

Coaching is not the only facilitating activity that is used in organizational context. Besides coaching, other facilitating practices are used in organization, mentoring, consultancy, counseling, mediation are among them. The analysis and comparison between coaching and other practices give possibility to apply the holistic approach to organizational development by means of implementation of the beneficial features of all these practices.

Thus, the aim of the present study is to find out the commonality and delineation between coaching and other facilitating activities as well as to investigate the possibility to combine the activities in the organizational context. For these purposes literature review and qualitative methods to obtain and analyze the data were implemented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Coaching is referred to as the activity that enables individuals and teams to achieve results (Evered and Selman, 1989) as well as facilitates discovering opportunities and creating 'a culture of development'

(Popper and Lipshitz, 1992) to enhance performance and efficiency (Orth, Wilkinson, and Benfari, 1987, Burdett, 1998). Implemented in organisations, coaching is beneficial for people and organisations (Kilburg, 2000). Coaching generates individual's sustainable behavioural change in working and personal life (Zeus and Skiffington, 2000). This positive change may result in enhancing the entire organisation (Peltier, 2001).

To identify its distinctive features, coaching is compared with other facilitating practices such as mentoring, consulting, counseling and mediation. The particular individual's needs lead to different supporting approaches that facilitates people work with their needs (Salter, 2014).

Comparing coaching and mentoring, scholars (Garvey, 2011) note that mentoring has a longer-standing history than coaching, however both practices use similar methodology and tools. McCarthy (2014) claims that adult learning is a common theory that underpins both coaching and mentoring. Despite some common features, coaching and mentoring have enough differences. Haan, et al. (2011) state that the purpose of executive coaching is not so much to offer instant, ready-made solutions, but rather to foster learning and change. As it has been stated by Kempster and Iszatt-White (2013), a mentor acts as a trusted guide guiding a person based on the mentor's own wisdom, experience and position. The relationship between more experienced mentor and less experienced individual emphasize experience as a key point in mentoring (Baron, Morin, 2010). In contrast, in coaching the emphasis is made on providing space and resources to help people consider their own issues and arrive at their own solutions. Trenner (2013) argues that coaching is not about 'telling' or 'advising'. By contrast, a mentor will provide advice and guidance based on their own experience. Expertise is a central distinctive feature of mentoring and coaching. It is assumed that mentor is proficient in a relevant field, while it is not necessary to require coach's expertise in a relevant industry or field, the reason for this is in the main goal of coaching to learn and develop (Wycherley, Cox, 2008).

Even though coaching and consultancy frequently operate in the same environment, they have different background. Consultancy aims to analyze some problem situations and provide with ready-made solutions or recommendations. In contact to coaching, consultancy does not necessarily aim to provide learning (Audet, Couteret, 2012).

Counseling and psychotherapy are remedial interventions. The focus of counseling and psychotherapy is on talking and unravelling the past, whereas coaching is action-based, future-facing and result-orientated (Trenner 2013). Differing from therapy, coaching relationships are characterized as

equal, coach does not have direct power over the individual (Bozeret, al, 2013). Moreover, Grand (2004) highlights that coaching cannot be considered as a replacement for medical and psychological therapy. Price (2009) investigated coaching/therapy boundary in organizational coaching. The research produced some interesting findings about two possible ways of development of coaching. Under the first way, coaching is developing as a practice that is distinct from therapy, in this case, the context of coaching as well as its purpose and process has to be clearly defined and the therapeutic situations must be excluded. The second way "accepts that coaching significantly overlaps therapy" (Price, 2009), therefore, there is no need to establish a boundary between coaching and therapy. It was argued that coaches need to practice within the boundaries and narrow the context to eliminate the therapeutic issues; otherwise coaches should get therapeutic training.

However, there are some features that unify these practices into facilitating activities. Dialogue is a common feature for all facilitating activities. However, the nature of dialogue is different. The aim of coaching dialogue is to generate client's talk with him/herself (Cox, 2013). There is no coach's attempt to use therapeutic model and to switch client's thinking in other direction (Cox, 2013).

Listening is used by all facilitating activities. However, the aim of listening differs. In coaching, listening helps achieve client's trust and openness (Cox, 2013).

Coaching is frequently used to complement other interventions to enhance their effect and achieve sustainable result. Thus, for instance, coaching attempts to overcome the gap between skills and knowledge acquisition and re-integration back to work (Bright, Crockett, 2012).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this study is to explore the views of experts in coaching about differences and similarities between coaching and other helping activities in organisational context, based on their personal opinion and professional experience.

Online interviews were conducted from September to December, 2013. For the purposes of the research it was decided to focus on the key informants, i.e. experienced practitioners in coaching, to generate primary data for qualitative analysis. The selection of practitioners was based on the following criteria: participation in the training programme for coaches, work with organisations, and experience in the field of coaching for more than 3 years as well as a genuine desire to contribute to the research. Based on the established criteria, four coaches from Latvia, three coaches from Lithuania, one coach from Poland and

one coach from Germany took part in the interview. The experts from Poland and Germany were invited with the aim to trace the tendency of development of the subject matter in the countries that might have influence on the Baltic countries.

All most all respondents have graduated from accredited coach training programmes; among them one interviewee has gained Master's degree in coaching and another one is working to get this degree. All respondents identified that they work at organisational level defining their professional background as an executive coach, organisation leader, HR and training specialist, consultant. The practitioners indicated that their average experience in coaching is 3-5 years.

The qualitative analysis of the data was carried out by the use of data reduction and analysis. The data were systematized under the categories and presented in the tables. The findings were compared with academic literature to establish an agreement.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The questions were devoted to the comparison of coaching with other facilitating activities to identify how the experts perceive distinguishing features of coaching. The coaches were asked to compare coaching with mentoring, consulting, training, counseling, therapy, mediation. It was coaches' choice to compare coaching with all above mentioned activities or to choose any. As a result,

- mentoring was compared by all coaches;
- consultancy was compared by 2/3 of coaches;

- therapy and counseling were compared by 1/3 of coaches;
- mediation were compared by four coaches.

There is opinion among coaches that the delineation of coaching and mentoring is an artificial stress, mentor and coach can be still the same person (E1), both coaching and mentoring use questioning (E2). Nevertheless all coaches mostly focused on the differences between coaching and mentoring. The point of distinction is experience and knowledge. A coach is not giving his own experience of the situation to the coachee (E5). Coachee finds the way how to solve the problem by himself (E5, E6). Coaching is more non-directive (E6) and is more about clients' view of life (E3). Mentor is more senior (E1) and more experienced in some area (E2, E3, E4, E 8), he is giving his experience (E5, E7) and has more hierarchical relationship with mentee (E8). The other point of distinction is process. In coaching, client sets the agenda (E6, E7) and with coach's support finds the solution by him/herself (E5). Coach follows the client (E2) because coaching is more about clients' view of life (E3). In mentoring, the process is directed by mentor, the client follows the mentor (E2) because mentor is more senior in his experience and skills (E9). Mentor expresses his/her opinion about the best way to perform the task (E10) and about the ways that should be avoided (E3, E5). The experts highlighted that the main difference is in the essence of relationship. In mentoring, the mentor and the client are partners but they still have hierarchical relationships (E9), while coaching is more non-directive style (E7). The comparison between coaching and mentoring based on the experts' opinion is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison between coaching and mentoring (based on experts' opinion)

	Coaching		Mentoring	
	Coach	Client	Mentor	Client
Expertise	not defined by experts		senior more experienced	
Process	follows the client does not share his/her experience; helps client find his/her solution	sets the agenda; finds the way by him/herself;	shows the path; shares experience and knowledge; tells what is the best way to do; expresses his/her opinion	follows the mentor
Relationship	non-directive		more hierarchical	
Commonality	The delineation of coaching and mentoring is an artificial stress. Mentor and coach can be the same person. Coaching and mentoring use questioning.			

(source: compiled by authors)

Comparing coaching with consultancy, experts mentioned that exploring problem and giving solution is the distinction point. Consultants are usually engaged as experts to explore the problem in organisation and provide the solution. (E2, E3, E4). Consultants are experts (E2), they are professionals in

their sphere (E4). A coach, as a rule, doesn't provide solutions, he/she uses questioning and other techniques to open individual's potential to facilitate them finding solutions by themselves (E2, E3). By expert's opinion (E6), nobody can provide efficient advice in the exact situation because nobody knows "environment or the

obstacles of individual person's life or business situation". Getting knowledge or reflection on knowledge distinguishes consultancy from coaching (E7, E8). The question about knowledge holder distinguishes coaching from consultancy. Whereas consultant is the knowledge holder, the coachee in coaching holds the knowledge and thinks about that knowledge and experience (E8).

However, the mixture of coaching and consultancy is possible under certain circumstances (E7). Coaching

program may be offered at an early stage, and then some lack of knowledge may be uncovered. The client is sent to seek expert consultation or training and finally he/she gets coaching again to reflect on the new knowledge. Two experts (E5, E10) consider that consulting is similar to mentoring, since the consultant as well as the mentor knows what to do in the certain situation and provides recommendations. The comparison between coaching and consultancy, based on the experts' opinion, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Comparison between coaching and consultancy (based on experts' opinion)

	Coaching		Consulting
	Coach	Client	Consultant
Expertise	not defined by experts		expert; professional in his/her sphere; knowledge holder.
Process	doesn't give solutions or advice; does not pass the knowledge; asks questions to open people potential; reflects on the knowledge that coachee has already had.	holds the knowledge; thinks about knowledge, experience and about a new concept; finds solutions themselves.	gives some solutions; explores the problem in organisation and provides the solution; knows the tools and what to do and tells what to do; passes the knowledge.
Relationship	not defined by experts		
Commonality	Sometimes you have to mix consulting and coaching (C7)		

(source: compiled by authors)

Opposite to coaching, mentoring and consultancy where the mixture of these activities is possible (E7) and coaching methods can be used in mentoring and consulting (E3), it needs to be a great delineation between coaching and counseling (E1). Counseling is going to the psychotherapy (E1). It is not the competence of coaches "to go inside a person so deep, because we actually do not have this knowledge how to get out of it. "We can use some techniques, or specific strategies to let person the mind be more opened, but it is not as deep as in therapy" (E6). While listening is a common point of coaching and counseling, the aim of listening is different. As it was mentioned by expert (E1), in counseling "there might be a lot of listening to be done only, and only empathy to be displayed. There might be no talk about what could be different, where

to be go with it". Psychotherapist is an expert in this field (E3). In coaching the expert of his/her life or business is the client. Coach is the expert to explore, promote the process, he is responsible for environment (E3). The experts highlighted that while in coaching the emphasis on the present and future, the talk about past can be. However, the aim of this talk is different. Coach talks about client past to help the client use the positive past experience as a recourse for the present or future actions. Past also can be used as a point for discussion and understanding about what should be done differently (E3). The comparison between coaching and counseling / therapy, based on the experts' opinion, is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison between coaching and counseling / therapy (based on experts' opinion)

	Coaching		Counseling / therapy
	Coach	Client	Specialist
Expertise	is the expert to support, explore, and promote the process; is responsible for environment;	is the expert of his/her life, business or question; is responsible for result	expert in this field
Process	tends to be forward to future orientation; some techniques can be used to let person be more open, but they are not as deep as in therapy; past positive experience is used to understand what had worked in the past and what should be done differently.	within a coaching contract there is a component of expectation, then an action based on it;	may have only emotional support role often looks backwards, what happened and what problems might be in the past;
Relationship	coach and client are equal in their status, but they have completely different		form of psychological

	roles.	consultation is responsible for what he/she is doing with the client
Commonality	Common is listening. The aim of listening is different. Behaviour therapy is quite similar to coaching	
Delineation	It needs to be a great delineation between coaching and counseling	

(source: compiled by authors)

Similarities of coaching and mediation are in questioning, mediators usually ask a lot of questions to find out the reasons, and they also use a lot of coaching techniques. However, mediator is not a developer (E2). The main difference is in the purpose of the activities. The purpose of mediation is to get the agreement between two parties who are in conflict (E5, E10). Coaching can also deal with conflicts, but this is not a preliminary requirement to initiate interaction. Coaching helps employer and employees see the conflict situation from the outside to decide by themselves what is the best solution (E6).

Therefore, coaching is a process of partnering someone in his / her thinking and learning without giving advice. This statement may consider as a distinctive point between coaching and other facilitating activities. It is not the aim of coaching to say what the right way is. Coaching is an alliance where client is an expert of the matter while coach is responsible for the process. A coach is not giving his own experience of the situation to coachee; coachee finds the way to achieve the goal by himself.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of experts' answers shows the agreement between the literature and experts' opinion about commonality and delineation between coaching and other helping activities. The facilitating activities are compared under four main categories: expertise, process, relationship, and commonality/delineation. The use of a common approach to the comparison enabled to conduct not only two-sided comparison but throughout comparison as well.

Concerning to expertise category, coaching is positioned as an activity where client is an expert in the issue and he/she is a knowledge holder. Coach has to be competent in the techniques and tools to create the environment and promote the process. This finding aligns with Cox (2013) statement that the coach's role is to reflect on client's experience. Mentoring, consultancy, counseling and therapy as opposed to coaching, demand the expertise and even qualification for the specialists.

The process that lies in the core of all these activities is quite similar; it comprises such components as questioning and listening. However, experts highlighted that the aim of these components is different. The primary aim of listening and questioning

in coaching is to support the person and help him work with his/her thoughts, knowledge and experience. The same idea is proposed by the scholars (Cox, 2013, Trenner, 2013).

Relationships between coach and client are equal and non-directive. Mentoring implies hierarchical relationships between senior and more experienced mentor and less experienced individual. Moreover, in counseling and therapy a specialist is responsible for all interaction with the client. This conclusion is verified by Grand (2004) research in coaching and therapy.

Analyzing commonality and delineation between coaching and other helping activities, it was concluded that coaching can be used together with mentoring supporting the whole process of change in the organization. Under coaching program, coaching can be combined with consultancy. However, a clear delineation has to be between coaching and counseling/therapy. The reason of this delineation is a deep psychological intervention which is beyond the boundaries of coaching.

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