

excel together with team coaching

First part

The relational and experimental process between members of team promote the growth and the development of performances, individuals and collectives, therefore the company. In this first part the author analyses the nature, the function, the objectives and possible dysfunctions of team coaching, an advantageous approach for everybody.

There are some teams that work hard, they enjoy themselves, do their duty and reach results like dysfunctional and ineffective teams although the members work harder. Why this difference? In greater part of cases to make difference is the Team coaching, a relational and experimental process between members of team that promote the growth and the development of performances, individuals and group.

This dynamic is generally run by a professional figure called Team coach, always more requested in

the field of both entrepreneurial and sport, whose abilities can be turned out very useful for achieving desired results. The Team coach supports the team in its course of development until the achievement of the objectives for what it has been created (if it concerns a planned team) or in the course of all his activities (if it concerns a permanent team). He supports and stands beside the team without substituting any member of it, included the team leader: a group's formal leader takes part of the sessions and the growth of his potentials ,is promoted as a decisive element for the improvement of group performance.

Before continuing it is worth deepening the meaning of words "team" and "coaching" in order to understand what they represent. Among different definitions of "team" offered by literature It's useful to remember John Katzenbach's version, that besides being most cited it seems to me the most detailed and completed: "a group is a limited number of people with complementary competences and abilities that work for common aim, with objectives of services and shared approaches, which are all responsible for one towards the other".

For "coaching" also has been given



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numerous definitions that I won't cite for obvious reasons, that helps to identify some common and distinguishing elements from which it is clear that the term deals with a relatively formal relation that concerns:

- the development of intuition on personal or group level;
- the measurement of performances according to specific objectives;
- support and encouragement,
- experimentation of new strategies;
- effective use of techniques to make specific questions in specific moments.

Using the metaphor of the course, coach can be considered as a vehicle that facilitates and accelerates the course of an individual or a group in the way that they have already decided.

Uniting the two terms, so returning to our contest ,team coaching we can notice the existence of different types of team coaching: team coach leaders; manager coaches and external team coaches.

The figure to which I refer in this article is the external team coach. And in this case a question arises: which coach is better for the organization external or internal one? The answer is not simple and absolute, but I want to focus your attention on the fact that the latter works at a level of separation superior towards the members of the team in comparison to the other two typologies. He doesn't have interest in technical processes if not when these influence the nature and the degree of interdependence among the members of team. He has a very ample view that stimulates group to consider also more radical options that allows to investigate deeply the relationships cause-effect on the level of both processes and behaviors. As a manager, the coach stimulates and advises but with greater emphasis in suggesting elements of reflection that brings autonomously to the beginning. A team coach is



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a facilitator of process and an accelerator of experiences that is more used from who works already inside a group of people with a role of responsibilities (executives, head-project, trainers) and he desires to bring his own team to a higher level. He intervenes inside the organization through a relational approach oriented to facilitate and to accompany the passage from an individual vision of single members, centered on his own competences and ways of thinking, to a group vision.

The objective is to improve the group performance through great productivity and effectiveness, the development of useful competences of group (for instance the ability of mutual listening) the creation of interpersonal satisfactory relationships and the definition of clear rules and well-defined roles.

the process of team coaching

The process of coaching aims at stimulating in Team hidden or latent potentialities, developing creativeness and, in general , the process of learning, growth and great awareness of personal and professional characteristics besides organizational dynamics. The team coach in fact becomes responsible for maximum use of competences that are present for the purpose of

results, he facilitates the process and resolution of conflicts among members, he contributes to build trust and mutual collaboration, he supports and develops the self-esteem of the team towards the achievement of goals.

The sessions of team coaching follow five phases of "cycle of life":

- Formation
- Development
- Normalization
- Performance
- Update

The five phases of "cycle of life" of a team

In each phase it is necessary to adopt the type of coaching more efficient for the development of the team.

There are different styles of coaching and different approaches of coaching as we can see in figure 1 (following page). In Order to choose what model to adopt it is fundamental to take into consideration the starting situation of the team. It starts with saying what to do (giving instructions, observing and giving feedback) so it passes to sell an idea (showing an ability or behavior observing and giving feedback) to suggest an action line (guiding the team while it is experimenting and he

The type of coaching more effective in different phase of team development

| MOMENT | TYPE OF INTERVENTION |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Start | Motivation |
| Intermediate phase | Consulting |
| End | Formation |

Figura 2

observes with a system of auto-feedback) up to stimulate and to ask questions encouraging the team to manage autonomously the phase of experimentation and observation.

Wageman and Hackman define in this way the functions developed by coaching for the team: “the interventions that inhibit the losses and favor the earnings at the level of process in any of three process elements of performance: the persons’ effort (motivation) the strategies of performance (consultation) and the level of knowledge and competences (formation)”.

In the first phase of formation and development of a team, the coaching is especially useful if it is centered on the following activities: to clarify tasks, to pick up members’ adhesion and involvement to establish norms and rules of common work, to define roles, borders and responsibilities. In the first phase of formation and development of a team, the coaching is especially useful if it is centered on the following activities: to clarify tasks, to pick up members’ adhesion and involvement to establish norms and rules of common work, to define roles, borders and responsibilities. All these for building a high-level of initial motivation, fundamental to get off to a good start. To face strategic matters in these phases could result a failed attempt because of the lack of specific experiences in the execution of tasks.

In the intermediate phase of team’s evolution, that of normalization, there are excellent conditions to discuss strategic matters. This phase is often born in a permanent

team as some need to make the point of the situation, the vortex of daily working activities tends to delay this moment and at the same time it makes more impelling. The last phase of performance and updating, at the end or nearly at the end of completion of the task to be developed-they require with the process of coaching to help the members to interiorize and to practice what they have learned during the execution of the task. And this is the right moment to take the conscience of the contribution furnished by each member and by the growth both as a team and a single component of it.

As you can see in figure 2 to every phase it corresponds precise style of coaching, in agreement with the concepts of situational leadership (that we won’t deepen now).

The 5 dysfunctions of a team

Returning to the question with which this article starts: why are

there teams that work hard and do their tasks and get results and the others that are dysfunctional and ineffective although the members work twice than normal? How do we explain this difference? As a coach and advisor I usually come across with teams that can hardly reach common objectives. Among the models that I use in this case it is shown in the figure, the pyramid of the five dysfunctions of a team codified by Patrick Lencioni in his The five dysfunctions of a team translated also in Italian and entitled La Guerra nel team (The war inside a team).

It deals with a book that faces this subject in the form of leadership history that I consider involving and very instructive. I suggest it, as its use allows me to get excellent results.

The five dysfunctions of a team:

- Lack of trust
- Fear of conflict
- Lack of involvement
- Escape of responsibilities
- Carelessness towards results

Each of these dysfunctions is characterized by a symptom that can reveal the existence of it (see figure 3). I consider it very important to deal with these dysfunctions because without a united Team it takes a risk not to draw the benefits hoped by own

Figura 1

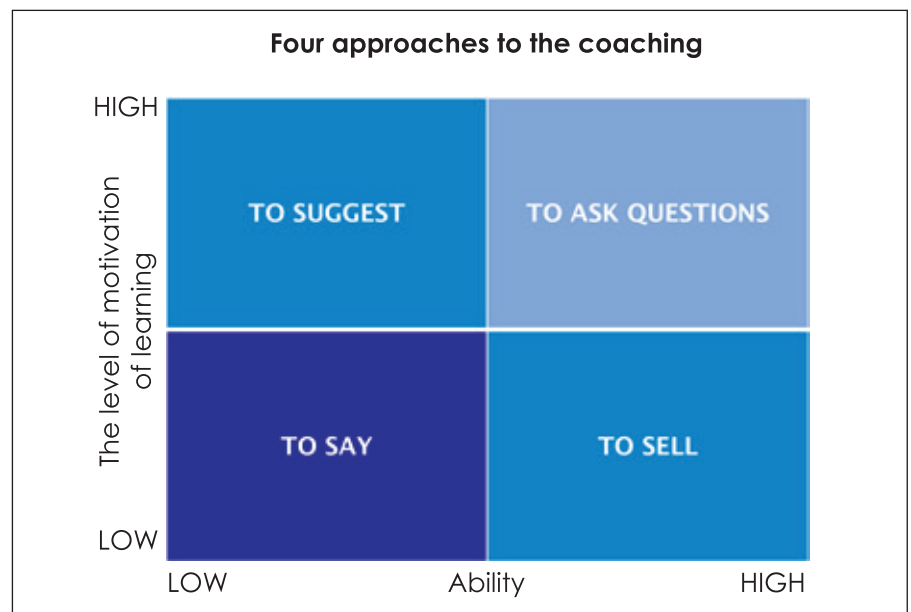




Figura 3

actions even if the best marketing is applied and the most acute strategies are used.

The potentialities expressed from people that stay in the same position are often underestimated and are put on the second plan in comparison with other priorities. It is up to the leader to understand the importance and to carry out the process of team development that avoids the inherit danger in a divided team and often in a conflicting team, if not even in war. So we shall analyze the five dysfunctions of a team the relative symptoms that characterize them.

behaviors and defensive attitudes do that the members don't ask help, they don't support each other and don't exchange experiences.

Through the sharing of own points of strength and own weaknesses, the members of team can confront to understand that there is nothing bad and negative to appear vulnerable. In the case of the lack of trust there can't be any confront and accordingly the superior levels of the pyramid will result real dysfunctions of a team. Team's job is build starting with an atmosphere of trust inside it.

■ Fear of conflict

When the trust is missing people don't confront for the incapability to oversee the conflict positively. In the teams that try to avoid conflicts it reigns the atmosphere of artificial harmony in which everybody tends to hold back own opinions and doubts rather than to express themselves in the favor of searching best solutions for the group. Open dialogues, debates and sharing opinions must be integral part of the work of a team, without the fear to be criticized and without necessarily always saying yes.

It is necessary to clarify that the confrontation is for the behaviors and not for the identity: often we don't even realize that when we judge people and label them, how they will struggle later to get rid of them. The members of a team can develop the ability to face the conflicts and to resolve them positively. The conflicts inside a team can be useful if they are organized correctly.

It is exactly what happens in the relationship with clients at the moment when the complaints turn into a praise for a company. The constructive confront must be seen as an opportunity of growth.

■ Lack of trust

The first dysfunction of a team is the lack of trust, situated at the base of the team's pyramid that is in a perennial war, whose components don't succeed in working together effectively. The first reason for which the trust is missing is the lack of knowledge among members, particularly the way of proper and others vulnerability. Often in teams there is a diffused desire of invulnerability from which the constant attempt springs to appear competent, strong and possibly perfect. A similar attitude brings to the closing towards the others in order to protect own space. The





■ Lack of involvement

There can't be any engagement in case of the lack of involvement, the lack of conflicts bring to less listening of opinions and making of decisions that can be "done" from other members. People don't want things that aren't included in their mind and ideas, hence in order to ensure, to get their involvement, it is necessary to ask for their contribution and to listen them. Otherwise they will feel excluded and not considered.

This kind of approach makes the members of a team, even if not completely agree with coach's ideas, understand and go into action completing the taken task and respecting the expirations. The lack of involvement is often provoked by ambiguity: productive teams make decisions and clear plan of actions and they are certain to have the support of each member of the team. There is an involvement when the rules of the game are clear, shared and fruit of everybody's individual contribution.

■ Escape of responsibilities

Without an involvement there can be no responsibility: people aren't responsible if they don't become integral part of the definition of process plan and if they don't know clearly what the others expect from

them. It's important to develop the sense of mutual responsibility according to which each member feels responsible for the whole team. In this way every member won't leave alone any more the other component in difficulty, on the contrary he will help him to be punctual and to reach goals that have been set before. Every member must respond for other people's responsibility and must accept that the others should make sure of the fulfillment of his responsibilities. When this doesn't happen, the standards of quality are low because they tend to shift the blame to the others and nobody worries how the others behave themselves. This kind of situation favors not aligned behaviors.

A fantastic example of team coaching, particularly the inclination to shift the blame to the others and to create alibi, we find in the video on YouTube entitled Julio Velasco "the crushers Don't speak of raising, they resolve it". The plan of action should be clear: what must be done, by whom and when.

■ Carelessness towards results

If all members aren't responsible for what the Team does, everyone will prefer his personal interests to team's one. This selfish attitude reduces the ability to reach

common goals and accordingly everybody losses. In this case every individual protects his own status and ego preventing all the others to express their own maximum potential.

In a united Team, where there is trust, constructive comparison, constant engagement, mutual responsibility, everybody has the results of the Team as first objective, he is directed to common results and gets them. Each member must contribute to the success of the Team and must prefer it.

Organizing the five dysfunctions discussed before, we can get a cohesive and united team, that is ready to achieve great results. In the second part of this article we shall discuss what the team coach should do to make his team cohesive and to make it express at most his own potential, using very useful means -that we shall analyze deeply- as "round table", "the wheel of the team", "the library of the team" and "the card of the team". The latter is a model that contains everything that is important for the Team: organizational vision, the purpose, values and rules, team initiatives(goals and roles), team practices (communication, decisive processes, responsibility) and resources (internal and external).

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