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1. Introduction

Coaching in Organisational contexts first originated during the 1970s in the United States. Tim Gallwey (1974), a sport psychologist seems to have been the first Coach to transfer his competencies from sports to Organisational contexts, quickly followed by others such as John Whitmore, David Hemery and David Witaker.

Thus Psychology has given its contribution to Organisational Coaching right from the beginning. This is testified by the many publications of the Psycholite on line archive, which contains abstracts related to specific enquiries and researches, and articles published in two journals supported by APA's (American Psychological Association) division 13. Division 13, and APA in particular, publishes "Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research".

In the early 1980s, along with leadership development programmes popular mainly in the United States, a true mixture of the two worlds (sport and business) consolidates (P. Zeus and S. Skiffington, 2005). During these years Coaching programmes spread widely in the United States and also started to proliferate around the world. The constant increase of the diffusion of Coaching, testified by longitudinal researches, is mainly due to its success in Organisational contexts: in fact, companies have acknowledged that Coaching is effective for improving their managers' results. Consequently Coaching, albeit not having started off as a methodology for Organisational development, was soon used by Organisations to favour individual and team change processes, due to its performances and achievements.

In the 1990s in Italy, Coaching programmes have been developed by professionals with different disciplinary backgrounds, including psychology. One of the main assumptions of the Guidelines is that psychologists' core training (the Organisational psychologist in particular) allows to offer a distinctive professional contribution if integrated with an adequate training on Organisational processes, business and Coaching methodologies. For this reason, when we talk about psychology in the present document, we specifically refer to Work and Organisational Psychology, which aims at favouring the empowerment of individuals and groups within Organisational contexts and their role efficacy, in relation to specific objectives and Organisational strategies.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST IN THE PRACTICE OF ORGANISATIONAL COACHING

Definitions

The guidelines explore the specifics of Coaching in Organisational contexts. Individual Organisational Coaching is defined as a programme for training, development and change, aimed at empowering people in Organisations and reinforcing their role effectiveness.

In Organisational contexts, Coaching processes may assume different names and meanings, related to: specific needs of Organisational clients, different targets and goals (i.e. leadership development, performance improvement, development of specific competencies etc.):

- ✓ *Executive Coaching*: programmes aimed at reinforcing top management and executives (CEO, General Director, Directors etc.);
- ✓ *Corporate Coaching*: programmes aimed at reinforcing pre-identified targets on the basis of Organisation's criteria of investment (middle management, key people, talents etc.);
- ✓ *Business Coaching*: programmes aimed at reinforcing targets more directly implicated with business results (General Management, Managers of Business Unit, Sales and Marketing departments etc.);
- ✓ *Career Coaching*: programmi finalizzati ad accelerare lo sviluppo di carriera;
- ✓ *Performance Coaching*: programmi finalizzati al miglioramento delle prestazioni;
- ✓ *Targeted Coaching*: programmi finalizzati allo sviluppo di competenze specifiche e comportamenti ad esse coerenti.

Objectives

This document addresses Psychologists that practice Coaching in Organisational contexts, Organisations who intend to train internal Coaches or choose external professional Coaches and the psychologist who chooses to become a Coach and to grow professionally in this field.

The goal of the Guidelines is to offer the community of psychologists a contribution aimed at:

- ✓ defining values and competencies for Coaches that work in Organisational contexts
- ✓ qualifying the demand and supply of Coaching Services in Italy

- ✓ defining training programmes for psychologists who desire to be effective in Organisational contexts.

The Guidelines for the Work and Organisational Psychologist in the practice of Organisational Coaching have been written in continuity and coherence with the principles declared in the Code of Conduct of the Italian Psychological Association.

Document structure

The present document is articulated in three parts. The first defines values, namely the base principles that guide and inspire the Work and Organisational Psychologist in the practice of Coaching; the second defines the distinctive competencies of the Organisational Coach, by offering a description of skills and distinctive know-how; the third guides the reader through the process of Coaching and offers suggestions related to the methods used in professional practices.

Skills and know-how are clustered in three areas:

- ✓ *Business and Organisation*: understanding business dynamics and Organisational strategies of the specific context in which Coaches give their contribution.
- ✓ *Psychology (General & Work and Organisational)*: the typical contribution of the psychologist in terms of understanding the mechanisms that regulate the integration and development of individuals within their Organisational contexts and related relational dynamics.
- ✓ *Coaching*: specific capabilities and knowledge of Coaching processes and methods.

2. Values

Values are the principles on which the motivation to develop specific competencies and reinforce them in time is based. This definition of values characterizes them as personal guides, the North Stars of actions, which orientate and direct Coaches' growth and personal/professional choices.

The value profile here defined articulated in 5 values: Responsibility, Care for Competence, Uniqueness of the Person, Self-Improvement and Quality of Relations.

Responsibility

Organisational Coaches act with methodological rigor and discipline, are aware of their system of beliefs, values and needs; acknowledge their limits and the impact they could have during a Coaching process.

Coaches accept assignments for which they possess the right competencies; recognize situations in which there is a need for consultancy and/or supervision and propose alternative and more focused solutions, in order to guarantee the most effective contribution possible. As a value, Responsibility brings the Coach to establish rules of co-responsibility with the parties involved in the Coaching programme; these rules are put into practice during the exploration of both Coachees' and Organisational clients' needs, with respect to the way Coaching programmes should be developed and how results should be measured. The Coach establishes, in advance, in accordance with the parties involved, all the rules that are to be followed and commits to respect them. In case of a request to disclose information to third parties, the Coach is always compliant with the existing norms regarding the collection, protection and diffusion of personal data and the code of conduct of the Italian Psychologists' professional Association, also with respect to professional confidentiality duties (article 11 of the Italian Psychologists' code of conduct).

The value of Responsibility also has personal and social implications. Coaching is a practice aimed at improving Coachees' personal and professional life and contributes to generating an improvement in individuals', groups' and communities' well being within the Organisation.

This awareness on behalf of the Coach reinforces a sense of responsibility, transparency and clarity towards all the parties involved in the Coaching process.

Care for Competence: quality of service

Organisational Coaches care for and develop their own professional training constantly in order to offer a qualified performance, coherently with clients' requests and with high quality standards at all times. Coaches invest in professional updating by keeping up with state of the art developments of Coaching in terms of research, best practices, knowledge and techniques. Coaches consider the understanding of Organisational scenarios and the characteristics of the contexts they work in as part of their sphere of interest and competencies. They are always attentive to cost/benefit ratios and to the overall quality of the service proposed and implemented. Coaches make use of supervision, seek and value colleagues' feedbacks and any valid opportunity to appraise their own work (i.e. feedback from Coachees, Organisational clients, analysis of Coaching results etc.).

For psychologists who practice Coaching in Organisations, the Care for Competence is naturally anchored to the process of acquiring self-awareness, functional to a distinctive professional contribution and efficacy of results.

Uniqueness of the person: understanding others and respecting them

This value is to be interpreted as a Coach's constant attention to the Coachee; it favours Coachees' greater self-understanding and an attitude of increased understanding of others.

It is what allows the Coach to progressively reinforce competence and efficacy while exploring different alternative actions, avoiding to "control results" and to be excessively focused on Coachees' solutions. This value also means respect for others and for their uniqueness, and it represents a guide which allows the Coach to develop listening skills with the deep conviction that Coachees are the only ones to bear the best knowledge, make the best interpretations, choices and decisions regarding themselves.

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Furthermore, the Respect for others is closely tied with confidence in the Uniqueness of individuals, which reinforces and naturally brings Coaches to: explicit, with transparency and clarity, all the characteristics, possibilities and limits of Coaching; highlight the distinctive contribution of Coaching in comparison with other types of interventions (i.e. consultancies, training, mentoring, counselling, psychotherapy etc.); and recognize critical situations and manage them respectfully and professionally. These actions allow new potential Coachees to decide if it is worth starting a programme and a trustworthy relationship with a Coach.

Self-Improvement: continuous improvement

The success of Coaching, as a practice, is due to the increasing demand for self-reinforcement, an enabler that allows to face challenges set by Organisational contexts.

As a value, the improvement of the self is to be interpreted as acting and transmitting a positive attitude towards self-improvement processes in the relationship with the Coachee and the Organisational client. It includes the deep conviction that all individuals can activate processes of self-awareness, elaboration, change, acquisition of skills and behaviours, so as to contribute at first hand to reinforcing efficacy in the context they are a part of.

This value characterizes the Coaching process as an intervention for boosting confidence rather than filling gaps and solving problems. This same value also guides the Coach in the process through which the Coachee identifies actions for improvement and personal strategies for self-valorisation. In Coaching, the trust in the possibility to improve oneself nurtures the constant challenge to “raise the bar”, step out of one’s own comfort zone and, following a sport metaphor, perform a continuous goal repositioning during Coaching sessions, as in athletic “work outs”.

Quality of relationships: establishing trust

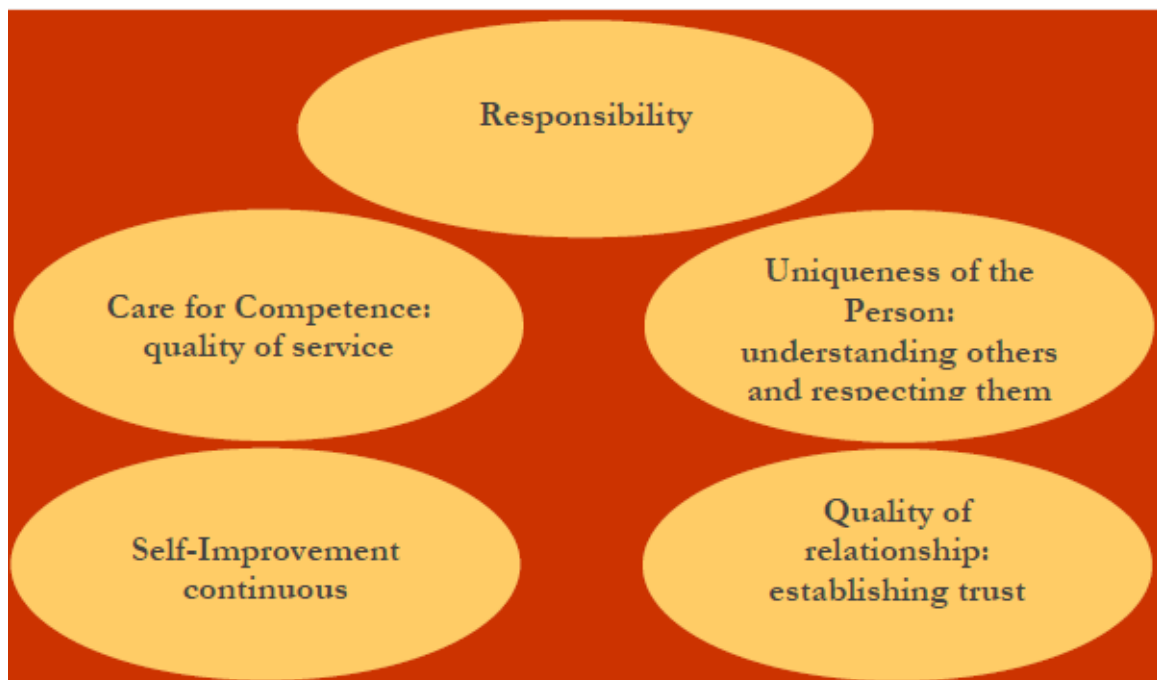
For Coaches who operate in Organisations, Quality of Relationships reinforces and nurtures itself session after session. This happens due to the energy that Coaches transmit and receive during development of relationships with Coachees, and to the use of the relationship itself,

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which can be considered as a “gym” frequently used for “work outs” during Coaching processes.

This value stimulates the desire to: be authentic in all relationships and with the Coachee in particular, bring all oneself into relationships, guarantee a cognitive and emotional presence, be strictly professional and at the same time empathetic in living relationships with others and, in short, develop a solid partnership with Coachees.

Coaching is certainly sustained by trust in the possibility to reciprocally improve quality of relationships in a specific context and is the foundation on which the ability to give and receive feedback develops among all the actors involved in the Coaching process (Coachee, Coachee’s manager, Organisational client etc.). In the process, this allows Coaches to reinforce the ability of giving and receiving positive and negative feedbacks constructively, gradually consolidate a network based on trust, construct and gain confidence in one’s own and other’s resources. In this manner, the Coachee can also acknowledge, session after session, the force and the power of the exchange of giving and taking, knowing how to provide help and support to others, be they colleagues, managers or clients.



3. Competencies

In this second part of the Guidelines we will refer to competencies as the entire set of abilities, knowledge and experiences observable in Coachees' behaviour, correlated with the efficacy of their performance.

A description of the Competence profile of the Organisational Coaching Psychologist will follow, articulated in the areas: Business & Organisation, Psychology (General and Work & Organisational) and Coaching

Competence area: Business & Organisation

Coaches who operate in Organisations must possess the tools and know-how to understand business, the complexity of Organisational structures and models and the strategies within which Coachees perform. They are able to understand the functional mechanisms of Organisations, the dynamics of power and Organisational processes of Coachees' workplace. They sense and catch the changes and challenges the Organisation is facing, namely the context of opportunities and threats in which Coachees develop competencies and advance in their career. The competencies of Coaches in this area give them the necessary credibility towards Coachees, their managers, the HR department, and the client in general, in order to establish a true partnership.

Skills

- ✓ **Strategic Vision** – Coaches identify the impacts and the interdependencies between Clients' different Organisational processes and Coaching programmes, with specific attention given to Human Resources management and development, promoting a coherency among all actors involved in the Coaching process. Strategic Vision facilitates the understanding of clients' businesses, their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

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- ✓ **Attention to Quality and Costs** – Assurance of high standards of professional quality towards: each interlocutor involved in the process, expected outputs, integration with Organisational processes and respect for agreed timing. Proposal of sustainable solutions for the Organisation through the safeguarding of correct costs & benefits ratio.
- ✓ **Evaluation of results** – Proposal, design, agreement and implementation of the most effective systems to evaluate results, in relation to the context and the specifics of the Coaching programme. Evaluation of existing processes and indicators of the Organisation, which can contribute to the evaluation of Coaching results. Support to the Organisational client in identifying the parameters for the evaluation of the economic Return On Investment.
- ✓ **Partnership** – Establishes a solid partnership with the Organisation, operating as a catalyst for the expected results of the parties involved in the Coaching process (Coachee, Client, Sponsor). Facilitates the formalization of challenging goals, assures a continuous control of the process previously defined with transparent agreements based on reciprocal trust and confidentiality. Grasps and anticipates opportunities for change (professional, Organisational, procedural etc.) and encourages and stimulates Coachees to do likewise. Pragmatically, the ability to construct partnerships is expressed through Coaches' behaviours, such as:
 - explication of the peculiarities of a Coaching intervention to Client/Coachee/Sponsor ;
 - verification, with the Client, of the realism of proposed Coaching programmes in the specific Organisational context;
 - design of Coaching programmes valuing the best and most distinctive characteristics of the context and the target population;
 - during the design phase, care for the criteria and modes with which Coachees will accept the Coaching proposal;
 - make a Coachability check with all potential Coachees;
 - agree on work methods (i.e. frequency, length and place of encounters);
 - openly and flexibly manage Organisational and/or Coachees' role changes that may occur during the programme;
 - manage circumstances tied to double client (company/sponsor goals, Coachees' needs) issues with transparency and efficacy.

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Know-How

ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL AREA

- Economic/financial fundamentals

ORGANISATIONAL AREA

- Criteria for Organisational positioning in market/markets
- Criteria for Mergers and Acquisitions
- Governance processes (relations with Group/Headquarters etc.)
- Organisational values, cultures and subcultures
- Re-engineering processes
- Re-structuring and rightsizing processes
- Management principles and processes
- Professional systems and competence models in relation to Organisations' mission and structure
- Role and processes managed by the Human Resources Department

STRATEGIC PLANNING AREA

- Process for Strategic Planning and subsequent goal setting (i.e. Balanced Score Card)
- Methods for problem analysis and decision making (i.e. Fishbone method)

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AREA

- Best Practices and change management theories
- Principles and practices of Improvement Management (i.e. Key Performance Indicators)
- Learning Organisation Processes (best practice sharing, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, knowledge management etc.)

QUALITY AREA

- Principles of Customer Satisfaction measurement
- Models for measuring training programs (i.e. Kirkpatrick model)



Competence Area: Psychology (General and Work & Organisational)

Working as a Coach in Organisations means aiming at reinforcing Coachees' efficacy in their role or in future roles. One of the most important success factors for a Coach is the knowledge and management of the dimensions which regulate the integration and development of individuals in their own context.

The psychological competence allows Coaches to support Coachees during the process of discovering and becoming self-aware of dimensions which are crucial for personal success in the Organisation they are a part of, favours and catalyzes development, learning and change processes, helps them identify their own resources, in order to recognize strengths and weaknesses, relative to the goal to be achieved.

Skills

- ✓ **Valuing self-knowledge** – The Coaching Psychologist has a competitive advantage over Coaches with a different kind of training, with respect to the ability to value processes of self-knowledge. They know how to start exploration paths that facilitate Coachees in acquiring awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, even when crucial elements are involved such as emotions or career. If the Organisation does not already use them, Coaches propose the use of standardized tools and methods (i.e. tests, questionnaires, Assessment Centres, 360 Feedback, Leadership Profiles) integrating them with the use of qualitative tools and

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methods (i.e. interviews, conversations, collection of Organisational material) and guaranteeing coherence between these instruments and Coaching programmes.

- ✓ **Recognizing and managing critical situations** – Coaching Psychologists are able to manage critical situations. They facilitate dialogue between Client/Sponsor/Coachee to transparently conciliate different viewpoints and needs, in order to reach results desired and expected by all the parties involved. They are also able to identify situations that can be defined as critical: personality disorders (narcissistic, paranoid, borderline, schizoid etc.), abuse of drugs, alcohol or other pharmaceuticals. Coaches can consider a situation as critical when Coachees show a strong discomfort which does not allow them to carry out normal activities or has heavy consequences for colleagues or co-workers. In addition, Coaches also detect mobbing cases. This skill expresses itself when Coaches openly discuss issues with Coachees, agreeing on the best line of action to be taken and the specific professional help to be obtained. evaluate
- ✓ **Valuing individual strategies for development** – Coaching is a programme carried out with and for the individual within Organisations, which brings Coachees to work on processes of responsabilization and awareness, by experimenting with new behaviours that generate a new perception of the self. The programme originates from what people perceive as needs, desires, goals in the context and role they operate; they value different ways to learn, “feel”, try and risk. The Coaching Psychologist can more easily and quickly understand Coachees’ characteristics and their motivations to activate development processes and value individual strategies to design development programmes. They are able to support Coachees that have challenging action plans, which impact highly on Organisational strategies.
- ✓ **Systemic Vision** – Coaching Psychologists who operate in Organisational contexts possess the right tools to understand Coachees’ Organisational role at a multi-dimensional level. They consider all the dynamics involved (individual, interpersonal, Organisational) in the relationship with the project client (HR, line etc.) and Coachee; they know how to collect, use, manage information, connecting pieces to understand the person in the workplace. They propose targeted solutions during the design of the Coaching programme and support Coachees in change processes and in managing the impact on all parties involved (co-workers, managers, peers, internal and external clients and suppliers etc.)

Know-how

- Leadership models
- Methods for surveying organisational climate and employee satisfaction
- Systems and processes to evaluate performances and identify potential (i.e. Performance Management, Assessment/Development Centre)
- Negotiation theory and techniques (conflict management in Organisational relationships)
- Social factors and their impact on individual and group behaviour
- Well-being and stress factors in Organisations (Burn out, Mobbing etc.)
- Models of group dynamics
- Team working models and Team work development models
- General Psychology Fundamentals
- Main personality theories
- Motivational models
- Theories of adult learning
- Motivation and resistance towards change
- Models and theories of multiple intelligence
- Creativity techniques
- Stress management techniques
- Principles of personality disorders

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Competence Area: Coaching

This area of competence regards aspects that distinctively connote Organisational Coaching and includes skills and know-how which define it as a specific practice compared to others to which it can be related (counselling, mentoring, tutoring, training, consultancy etc.). At the root of Organisational Coaching we find, mainly, a strong ability to construct and develop a partnership with Organisational clients and with Coachees, give and receive feedback, make Coachees' best energies and resources converge towards results, facilitate competence development and role efficacy. Coaching is not a methodology to transfer competencies and abilities, but to empower, train and discover. Coaches can thus be defined as professionals who empower individuals within Organisations.

The relationship which develops between Client/Sponsor, Coach and Coachee is based on reciprocal respect and trust built from the initial phase during which the Coaching contract is defined. Coaches will integrate business/Organisational and psychological competencies

both by their way of being and remaining in the relationship with Coachees, and with Coaching competencies, processes and techniques.

Skills

- ✓ **Goal Orientation** – it is considered as the ability of the Coach to activate and make Coachees' energies converge towards results/goals they themselves have defined at the beginning of the process. This ability is primarily expressed by keeping Coachees at the centre of the Coaching process at all times, progressively expanding their awareness of the leading role they have in making choices and finding solutions, contemporaneously keeping a high attention on expected results. Coaches safeguard the process, support Coachees to correctly pinpoint goals, define challenging action plans that impact more directly on business results, to define time schedules, available resources, appropriate actuation methods and measurement criteria.
- ✓ **Facilitate development and change** – Coaches do not fill gaps, but reinforce and strengthen characteristics, detect and value talents. From this viewpoint, Coaching processes aim at facilitating Coachees to discover competencies they possess and those that are yet to be developed, confident that they are the best experts of themselves and able to find the most effective way to reach their goals. In short, the ability to facilitate development and change is expressed through Coaches' behaviours such as:
 - encourage exploration of different viewpoints and alternative keys of interpretation
 - facilitate the identification, trial and reflection of behaviour
 - stimulate the challenge and change of consolidated schemes
 - support the search for innovative and realistic solutions
 - support the process of transforming ideas into actions
 - favour a continuous monitoring of improvement and analysis of encountered obstacles
 - help to capitalise success and errors
 - stimulate identification of strategies to be changed
 - sustain flexible change of action along the way, if required by the situation

In the final phase of the Coaching process, Coaches express this skill by favouring a new autonomous and independent process that Coachees set off and maintain even after the end

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of the Coaching programme, continuously identifying new opportunities for change, reinforcing their desire to progressively increase performance standards.

- ✓ **Develop relationships** – Coaches authentically acknowledge the uniqueness of each Coachee. They establish relationships with Coachees characterized by a high level of trust at all times, which allows them to use empathy, listening skills, congruence and a non-judgemental attitude, giving the necessary space in which Coachees can express themselves, feel understood, be trustful and release themselves. Coaches do not use the relationship to put themselves in a dominant or “I’m the expert” position, but maintain a peer to peer level.
- ✓ **Giving and receiving feedback** – One of the most powerful abilities for a Coach is to give positive and constructive negative feedbacks, even in the most challenging situations which can emerge depending on the object of feedback (i.e. situations that have an impact on Coachees’ careers) and the characteristics of the Coachee (i.e. difficulty in managing emotions). The ability to give and receive feedback is expressed with a punctual description and mirroring of Coachees’ behaviours, attitudes and observed/perceived emotional status, aiming at starting off a process of self awareness, exploration, experimentation and consolidation of new behaviours and facilitating the identification of behaviours which are effective for reaching goals. An effective feedback considers, acknowledges and explicates all the emotions involved, is associated with a clear, transparent and authentic communication style free from interpretations and judgements. It respects and follows Coachees’ time for elaboration and always guarantees a constructive and trustworthy climate.

Know-how

- The evolution of Coaching and main models, theories, research
- Organisational Coaching and its impact/role in Organisations
- Differences with other activities developed in Organisations (counselling, mentoring, tutoring etc.)
- Techniques and tools for analysis of development needs of individuals in Organisations
- Theories and models of Self-Development and Empowerment
- The Coaching process, phases and success factors

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- Communication processes and techniques (Active Listening, Empathic Communication, Giving and Receiving Feedback, Negotiation, Networking etc.)
- Methods for evaluating Coaching results
- Tools for development and change



4. The Coaching process

A Coaching processes may vary according to the context in which Coaches practice (i.e. size of Organisation, Industrial sector, Organisational culture etc.), the specific Coaching project the client designs (valuing of talents, career development, creation of a common Organisational culture, improvement of target skills etc.) and also according to different kinds of approaches to Coaching, in relation to cultural background and training.

However, there are transversal elements that characterize all Coaching programmes, namely the main phases of the process, a few assumptions and methods. In fact, as declared earlier, in every Coaching programme efforts are aimed at defining and reaching goals and Coaches do not focus on problems. Coachees' emotions and feedbacks are valued, considered as important motivational resources. Newly acquired tools facilitate acting of new behaviours. Coaches offer a "consultancy without suggestions", give their contribution in formulating powerful questions, allowing Coachees to restructure the way they understand and read the contexts they belong to. In fact, as declared previously, Coaching is not a methodology for competency ad ability transfer, but for discovery and training of one's own potential, abilities and talent. Coaches can be defined as experts of empowering people in Organisational contexts.

A simplified scheme will follow representing the main phases of a Coaching process.

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Client decides to design and implement a Coaching



Client identifies Coach and Coachee



Client aligns Coachee and Coach on expected results



Coaching process starts



Coaching process roll out



End of process

The Organizational client identifies the need and opportunity to draw on the empowerment of individuals and groups to improve business performances and results and decides to design and implement a Coaching programme.

When choosing a Coach/Coaches the client can turn to internal or external Coaches.

Coachee/s involved in the programme are identified on the basis of the specifics of the programme (i.e. managerial career development, change management project, talent programme)

Client promotes sharing of macro objectives, expected results, schedules, reports and modes of programme roll out. (i.e. promotes: first encounter between Coach, Coachee and Client, encounter with lines, project kick-off meetings)

Process can be considered as started only when Coach and Coachee stipulate, during the first session, a Coaching contract. Coaches, during first sessions, establish trust, share clients' expectations with Coachees and support them during definition of specific objectives/results of the Coaching programme.

During the Coaching programme, Coaches use their competencies to favour and catalyse Coachees' development, learning and change processes helping them to:

- Reinforce self-awareness as a result of high quality feedbacks
- Identify resources, strengths and improvement areas
- Explore alternative cognitive or behavioural solutions, functional to specific targets.
- Construct and monitor action plans (actions, deadlines, available resources, supports, KPIs)
- Identify resistance towards change
- Acknowledge and manage emotions
- Define one's own motivational profile
- Promote an effective relationship style

In the final phase and during established moments of the programme, Coach and Coachee evaluate, as agreed on at the beginning of the process, which results have been achieved. If the client requires it, Coach and Coachee prepare a descriptive summary of achieved results.

During the conclusion phase, Coaches facilitate Coachees to consolidate accomplishments, identify new improvement area, maintain and manage a process of continuous improvement more consciously.

5. Methods

We believe it is useful to underline how, like a tailored suit, every Coaching programme is influenced by Coach and Coachee's personality and culture. The Coach's specific professional skills bring him/her to evaluate, at every moment, with sensitivity and competence, which approach, method or technique is more suitable and adequate, considering both Coachee's peculiarities and the nature of the goals to be achieved.

With the purpose of giving a practical view of the process, a description of the methods, techniques and tools most frequently used and regarded as effective will follow below.

- ✓ **Create a positive atmosphere** – In the initial phases of every session, Coaches create a positive atmosphere, a “state”, which regards both their own and Coachees' emotional status. Coaches use attitudes and question making which underline their authentic interest towards Coachees' situation at the time the Coaching sessions take place, so called ice-breaking questions, at times informal, aimed at establishing an atmosphere which inspires trust, openness and constructive exchange.
- ✓ **Empathic Listening** – This is the essential condition of every Coaching programme. The Coach is highly present with respect to everything the Coachee says or does: every word, gesture and signal are sources of important information to the Coach, who uses these elements to activate an empathetic, trustworthy and supportive understanding. Silence, data and information collection, showing approval and attention, underlining, highlighting, summarizing and reformulating contents that are gradually elaborated by the Coachee, are positive reinforcement techniques that Coaches use consciously during Coaching sessions.
- ✓ **Formulate powerful questions** – This is the basic technique of the session. It consists in asking open questions (how, what, when, where, who) by following a maieutical method which avoids asking “why”, perceived as too inquisitive. This way of formulating questions is a powerful way of stimulating the Coachee to be self aware, open and reflective. Creative and unusual questions are called “powerful” due to the power they gain when trying to provoke new possibilities of analysis, keys of interpretation and change of perspective.
- ✓ **Reflection and Synthesis** – This technique points to stimulating Coachees' cognitive-emotional awareness and is functional to their progress in the Coaching programme to

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achieve goals. The Coach may assume a posture similar the Coachee's, verbally return and synthesise Coachee's contents, underlining expressions and words used by him/her.

- ✓ **Role Playing** – This technique aims at training Coachees to “put themselves in someone else's shoes” and is useful when the goal of the empowerment is tied to Coachee's greater self-awareness of the impact his/her actions have on others (colleague, subordinate, manager, client etc.) and vice versa. The Coach may in fact favour a role exchange, asking the Coachee to play the part of the interlocutor and inviting him/her to imagine that position (“if you were in his shoes”), and “reconstruct” and re-play a specific real life situation.
- ✓ **Assessment Centre and Personality Questionnaires** – These methodologies and tools (Disc, Myers Briggs, OPQ Questionnaire etc.) are sometimes used to support Client, Coach and Coachee in identifying the areas in which the Coachee will be busy working during the Coaching programme. Generally, Coaches write a report on Coachee's personality profile or potential and use it as a base for discussion and confrontation facilitating choice of behaviours and attitudes to empower.
- ✓ **Action Plan** – The action plan has the role of logbook of the session. To facilitate the construction and monitoring of an action plan, the Coach borrows Project Management methodologies frequently used in Organisational contexts. In it we generally find goals, actions, timing and deadlines the Coachee commits to, available resources, support (people, tools, information sources etc.) and last, indicators for measuring results.
- ✓ **Problem Solving** – The Coach facilitates the Coachee to set problems, break them down and find solutions in a creative and flexible manner. Some techniques that may be used are: Force Field Analysis, cost and benefit ratio and the cause and effect diagram (helps to identify real causes, and real problems to solve).
- ✓ **Creativity Techniques** – Creativity techniques are often used in Coaching sessions because by nature they help break patterns of consolidated interpretations and free energy to explore solutions from a new viewpoint. Among these we find: Brainstorming, Mind Maps, Visioning or Backward Actions.
- ✓ **Measuring Results** – At the beginning of the Coaching programme, the Coach agrees with Coachee and Client on the most practicable and effective way to evaluate results. The dimensions of the object to be measured may be: Coachee satisfaction, development of

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competencies, improvement of Organisational Unit's business performances and results. The parameters through which results can be measured are both qualitative (i.e. interviews or feedback sessions) and/or quantitative (i.e. 360° Feedback, questionnaires, tests etc.). The Change in behaviour perceived by the Coachee and/or his/her managers, colleagues and subordinates can be measured through interviews or feedback or more structured tools such as 360° Feedback, questionnaires, climate surveys. Business results or Coachees' performances can be measured with organisational KPIs (i.e. sales results, customer satisfaction indexes, cost efficiencies, return on investment etc.).