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What is this fashionable coaching about?

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*Be the change that
you wish to see in the world
(M. Gandhi)*

ABSTRACT

Thanks to its amazing effectiveness, coaching gains on interest of a growing number of persons and institutions, thus the demand for educational services in the scope of coaching is on the increase as well. A coach in Poland is a relatively new profession, but the need to standardize the professional proceedings in terms of ethics has been noticed from the very beginning. It is important to stress the need for reflexion over the professionalization of the coach profession in Poland and introduction of some specific legal regulations in that scope.

Keywords: professional ethics, coach, coaching

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is developing, one has to adapt - also must. Where, then, is the "fashion" for coaching? Certainly because it is very easy to become a coach today. There are many courses and trainings preparing for this profession. In addition, attractive salaries of this profession are attractive. However, there are also dark sides of this "fashion" for coaching. Often, people

who are not predisposed to this profession decide to be a coach, or they are people who need months or even years of work on themselves before they are able to take up a coach.

However, the fashion for coaching also has a good side. Thanks to it, there is growing awareness of the benefits of using this method of personal development, especially in the sphere of mutual communication between people.

The popularity of coaching is certainly partly a fashion in Poland, but also has a socio-cultural background. The interest in coaching is the result of phenomena related to the transformation of the old way of life based on common standards and traditions. It all began to fade, and the emergence of a "global village" caused cognitive dissonance, blurred values and norms of life, but also greater than before the need for self-awareness and self-fulfillment of man. And so currently, coaching is on its staggering career path. Large freedom in interpreting a coach profession allows flexibility in adjusting to the needs of the coached individuals, however it gives a raise to some enormous doubts as to the professionalism and reliability of the whole coaching process. A coach is a reliable new profession, but the need to standardize the professional proceedings in terms of ethics has been noticed for a long time. This paper is intended to stress the need for some thought over the professionalization of the coach profession in Poland and introduction of some specific legal regulations in that scope.

2. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE DEFINITION

Thanks to its amazing effectiveness, coaching gains on interest of a growing number of persons and institutions, thus the demand for educational services in the scope of coaching is on the increase as well. Where did the fashion for coaching come from? What is coaching after all?

There are plenty of definitions and approaches that could be listed. The short review presented below is intended to picture the complexity of this phenomenon and the difficulties regarding its definitions encountered by this new emerging method of impact. Variability of the coaching trends results partially from variability of "paradigms" that are foundations of the coaching practice [13] as well as multidimensionality of the client-coach relations [16]. Currently, the database with original concepts and results of empirical studies on coaching, despite the dynamic growth, is still relatively small [12]. Numerous researchers believe that the source of the term "coaching" comes from a name of the Hungarian town, where some comfortable wheeled vehicles were manufactured, that is "kocsi", and coaching referred to the service of transporting the passengers itself.

The beginnings of business coaching, on the other hand, were the 1930s, and concern various methods for growth in the individual employee effectiveness introduced by supervisors in sales departments [2]. The exchange of experiences in the supervisor - employee relation, inspiring for achievement of high results, contributed to crystallization of coaching that we know today [4]. D. Clutterbuck [5] sees the origin of the word coach from coax, which means persuading someone to do something. On the other hand, S. Kampa-Kokesch and M. Z Anderson [14] see the beginnings of coaching in the first interventions of psychological counseling (in the 1960s this was often referred to as confidential psychological help for the manager). Yet another version of this concept is given by P. Smolka for whom coaching is a method of "supporting development and self-fulfillment, creating oneself and one's own life in accordance with the values, predispositions and goals adhered to and which

we deeply identify ourselves with". The best-known definition is probably that of S. Thorpe and J. Clifford: "coaching as helping an individual to strengthen and improve their actions by thinking on how they employ a given skill or knowledge".

It is also worth distinguishing coaching from mentoring, training or therapy. A therapy is a process when a licensed therapist uses the psycho-therapeutic methods in order to solve the work-related problems or their symptoms (but also with the coaching methods, e.g. multi-level listening, questions about permission to use particular techniques, application of linguistic techniques, clarification of conditions, emotions and client values, and others) [21].

Several most common neurotic symptoms are listed, which qualify a client for a psycho-therapy intervention:

- excessive need of power,
- the need for prestige and appreciation,
- perfectionism,
- excessive need for independence and personal achievement or subordination and conformism.

In turn, a training is related to aid in development of cognitive skills and abilities corresponding to a given learning domain, and a trainer's role is transferring their knowledge and supporting the advancement of new skills. The main objective here is to prepare the participants to more effective work after the training is completed [6]. This is the trainer who usually determines the training plan, and the participants' task is to adopt to the training process and structure [6].

Mentoring is voluntary aid independent from the professional hierarchy, provided by one man to another, allowing them to make some significant progress in knowledge, professional work or thinking [5]. The first type of mentoring is sponsorship mentoring, representing the American school, where a person of high authority and position takes the professional care over an ambitious colleague of shorter tenure. The second approach, the European one, is the development mentoring, which assumes a less hierarchical relationship, more like a partnership providing broader space for experiments. The essence of mentoring in both cases is the fact that it consists in transferring the expertise. While a coach is just an expert in the field of supporting and developing the human potential, and they do not necessarily need to be specialized in any professional domain of their clients. [5]

Coaching enters new areas of human activity (professional work, personal life, family relationships, health behaviors, etc.), supporting the clients in their self-fulfillment, at the same time remaining at the beginning stage of professionalization what means that we have just started to use the potential of this method [3]. Today, the second generation of coaching is more and more broadly discussed, which is already more of an evidence-based science, including, first of all, the adaptation of knowledge and results of scientific research in the scope of psychology [9]. The clients differ not only when it comes to goals that they want to achieve, but also in their predispositions, values, preferences and circumstances that they are currently in. All of these characteristics are important for the manner of support, which will be optimum for a given person [1, 15]. Even a competent coach must face varied problems and barriers related to the surroundings (the sessions should be carried out in an appropriate environment) or beliefs. Thus, a coach should:

- be aware of their behaviors and thoughts that prevent from reaching a goal,

- conduct a conversation skillfully,
- know that the emotional condition is important, so they should be relaxed, focused and distanced,
- respond reasonably to any difficulties which emerge during a session,
- be able to distinguish between compassion and empathy,
- not be focused on looking good in a conversation, to show themselves in a positive manner,
- be able to cope with barrier - a coach should be aware of traps and develop a skill for intuitive feeling of their own emotions.

3. COACH - WHO IS THAT?

A coach does not need to be an expert in the sector of their client, but they should hold some extensive knowledge in the field of humanist and social sciences. As a discipline, coaching refers to numerous fields of science: psychology, sociology, anthropology, management sciences, organizational development and leadership as well as plenty of theoretical inspirations, among others: learning theories, adults development, andragogy, change theories, cognitive-behavioral psychology, emotional intelligence theory, social and spiritual intelligence, work with a process, hypnosis. There is no necessity for the coach to be a professional in a given field to support their client - it is not significant for the success of the coaching support. Thanks to coaching, an employee is to become aware of the resources they will be possible to use for example in a workplace, as plenty of resources that are at our disposal are stored in our unconsciousness [11].

A coach cannot give any advice and they do not share their experience, but they ask questions and listen to the answers. They also do not provide any knowledge, but rather inspire the client to search and explore all necessary resources within themselves. The coach employs methods that they inform their clients beforehand, e.g. experiments, provocative techniques, questions, exercises, meditation techniques. The coach's work consists in inspiring and pointing to areas of responsibility. The results should be determined with indicators that allow to recognize the progress and parameters of the achieved objective. It is the client who is responsible for the result.

In order to ensure the highest quality of the coaching process, the standards set by the International Coach Federation, the International Coach Community and the Chamber of Coaching should be borne in mind. They are based on the most important coaching competences, which include: setting rules, co-creating relations, effective communication and supporting the process of learning and achieving results.

The entire process should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the coaching code of ethics, the most important elements of which are professional conduct towards the client, confidentiality, privacy and concern for confidence building.

4. ABOUT THE COACHING ETHICS

Coaching is becoming a popular method of supporting human potential development in Poland. After several years of functioning in Poland, the profession of coach was officially

registered and was included in the classification of professions and specializations by decision of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy. However, the lack of rules governing the profession means that almost everyone can now call themselves a coach and promote their services in this field, therefore there are still works in progress to ensure that coaching is defined in national laws and regulations. There have been various coaching associations for years now, intended to create an expert environment for exchange of experiences and create some professional standards of provided services and maintenance of their high quality.

There are 4 criteria for coaching professionalization [16]:

- existence of formal barriers for accessing the profession;
- development of scientific grounds for practicing the activity;
- development of formal educational paths on an academic level along with an examination system and formalization of the procedure of granting the right to practice the profession;
- functioning of a formal institution that associates practitioners, representing the interests of the profession, taking care of its development, reputation and autonomy.

In Poland, however, coaching as a profession is currently at an early stage of the professionalisation process. Ethics is commonly believed to be the science of morality. While the professional ethics covers principles that determine how representatives of a given profession should behave from the moral perspective. The organizations that associate coaches develop some professional codes of ethics. There is also the Global Code of Ethics that forces the coaches to reflect upon their works, to supervise systematically and to discuss the ethical topics within a supervisory group or a group of coaches. It also stresses the promotion of ethical behaviors in the professional environment and development of the ethical sensibility during preparations for the profession of a coach. Furthermore, in order to maintain the accreditation, the coaches do not only need the points confirming their permanent professional development, but also trainings in the field of coach ethics or supervision. There are certain professions that require so-called vocations.

Numerous researchers believe that to be a professional coach is to be consistent on the level of skills, beliefs, values and missions. Therefore, the work ethic of a coach should be based primarily on the following principles:

- continuous development of knowledge, also the ethical one,
- undertaking actions that level any potential effects of ethical dilemmas,
- remembering that this is a client who is in the center of the coaching process, and their goals are most important, as they work “on” the values and identity of the client,
- not exceeding the coach’s competence.

However, it was already Aristotle who stressed that a human nature is very complex. Therefore, there are numerous pseudo-coaches with pseudo-training on the market, who cause a lot of damage not only to the industry itself but first of all to the clients, because of lack of proper skills and competences based on the ethical standards. Therefore, the need to create some professional environments and discuss the topics of coach’s work standards and ethics is stressed. Ethics is the foundation of professional coaching.

Regardless of the type of coaching, the rules of the rescue coach work the same. The volume is determined by the method and method. It stands out for its diversity in coaching, e.g.:

- Business coaching;
- Executive coaching;
- Management coaching;
- Career coaching;
- Industry coachings;
- Sports coaching;
- Team coaching;
- Life coaching;
- Family coaching;
- Parents' coaching;
- Women's coaching;
- Mens' coaching;
- Health coaching.

5. COACHING IN AN ORGANIZATION

As proved by the European Coaching Survey, coaching is at the initial stage of development in Poland, as evidenced by: [18]

- interest in coaching (about 1/5 companies in Poland are interested in coaching);
- age structure of coaches (a statistical Polish coach is a person at the age of 30);
- registration of coaches (an estimated over 1000).

Development of employees should be the core value for both the organization and the coach themselves. Requirements of the contemporary market require the enterprises not only to offer high-quality products and services but also high-quality personnel. Therefore, a contemporary employer should pay a lot of attention to the human capital development opportunities. Chances for growth and success of an enterprise are strictly related to the developmental potential of the personnel. [8]

Based on an analysis of contemporary domestic and foreign literature, it can be concluded that coaching may be a tool which facilitates and accelerates development of an employee's career, improving the organizational services quality by allowing the employees to learn in a planned manner and in a relation with a coach. The main objectives of coaching in an organization include:

- Supporting a client in formulation of their professional and personal goals as well as ways to achieve them;
- Broadening the client's awareness of self, their goals and contexts, which they operate in;
- Fuller use of the natural resources;
- Making more informed decisions;

- Removing the internal (e.g. beliefs, attitudes) and external (e.g. pressure from the surroundings) barriers;
- Assuming responsibility for their own future and its active shaping.
- It is also worth mentioning about a role played by managerial coaching. It is a broadly-understood consultation between an employee and their supervisor:
- A supervisor-coach asks the manager plenty of questions to discover what is important for them, what prevents them from achieving success or what gives them a sense of fulfillment in life,
- With such support, the manager will undertake actions which will lead them to achievement of goals corresponding to their values, and at the same time they will feel to bear full responsibility for their life and decisions they make,
- The manager will find support in coach, who will motivate them to take up challenges, which he would not face on their own.

The essential role in success of coaching is played by promoting the concept of coaching in the whole organization. Research by A. Ellinger, R.G. Hamlin and R.S. Beattie suggest that coaching is a key element of effective management, and the advantages brought by introduction of the coaching culture include improvement of productivity and business results.

These desired effects can be achieved by implementing the coaching culture based on three pillars: [7]

- delegating responsibility,
- building self-confidence,
- a lack of willingness to seek persons to blame.

On each organizational level, the coaching helps in becoming a person who a given employee would like to be. It furthermore impacts the personnel motivation, managers effectiveness and enterprise results. How can the coaching support impact the employee's functioning within the working environment? Properly conducted coaching support refers to a person's identity, their system of values, beliefs which are the basis for understanding oneself and one's role in the working environment and in other spheres. A coach takes care that the employee's improvement paths undertaken within the coaching process provide for adequate harmony among various aspects of their lives. From the employer's perspective, it is significant not only that the employee copes well with the reconciliation of professional and private roles, but also that the values which are precious for the employee are coherent with the values that pose the basis for the organizational mission.

Thanks to coaching support, we can expect increased sense of work in line with one's own beliefs and organizational values, which an employee can identify with more easily when they become aware which values are common. Some valuable contribution from the coaching support is development of some competences, especially those which are related to self-awareness, management of one's life and shaping of relations with other members of the organization and persons from outside the working environment.

Thanks to coaching, an employee can become aware of the resources they will be possible to use for example in a workplace, as plenty of resources that are at our disposal are stored in our unconsciousness. [20]

It is a significant task of an organization to support an employee in the working environment, with reference to its mission and values shared by the employees. At present, some companies are moving away from the traditional management model in favor of modern management, where coaching is an element supporting the contemporary operation of a 21st-century company. The organizations are in search for new solutions and competitive challenges in order to improve the output of their activities. Implementation of a coaching culture is composed of the following stages:

- 1) Organizational analysis: here the organizational culture should be analyzed in terms of implementation of coaching, namely the readiness to provide and accept feedback as well as the level of trust in the organization and communication values present in a company;
- 2) Determination of a coaching group: namely who will play a coach role in a company, considering the company's needs and specificity;
- 3) Starting the managers-coaches education: the selected future coaches undergo a training process which prepares them to the coach-manager role through e-learning courses, certified courses, etc.;
- 4) Development of the coaching operation procedures: this stage begins during the training for coaches; future coaches are involved in the process to create the principles of coaching functioning in a company and to take responsibility for this coaching;
- 5) Promotion of coaching in the company: preparing the coaches to conduct presentations in this area. The implementation of a coaching culture should cover all levels of management in the company, because only then is it possible to link the objectives of the organization with the individual objectives of managers and to permanently permeate the coaching culture in the everyday practice of employee management.

The coaching process may be described according to the following stages: [18,19]

- analysis of a situation: the purpose is to determine the reasons of the occurring problems which must be solved; on this stage, the most important skills of a coach include observation and diagnosis of a problem as well as the skill to talk about that topic with an employee;
- an action plan: concluding a contract, defining and agreeing on the purpose of coaching, developing appropriate methods of action, determining the necessary resources, methods of settlement and indicating the associated consequences;
- implementation: i.e. introduction of an agreed action plan, depending on the content of the plan, is carried out by the employee with greater or lesser involvement from a coach;
- summary; analysis of what was done and evaluation of whether the coaching brought any expected results. If there was some improvement, the coaching process is closed. Otherwise, there is a need to come back to stage one - an analysis of the situation [Figure 1].

From the company's perspective, coaching brings the following advantages in relation to human resources management:

- time and money savings,

- possibility to develop oneself in a workplace and support in following a professional career path,
- coaching, by strengthening a person, also strengthens the organization,
- increase in efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the objectives,
- a motivated and involved team,
- the feeling of personal and team development - acquisition of new skills,
- conscious creation of one's own and team's motivation and commitment,
- improvement in freedom of creating relationships within a team and selecting methods which prevent the occurring dysfunctions.

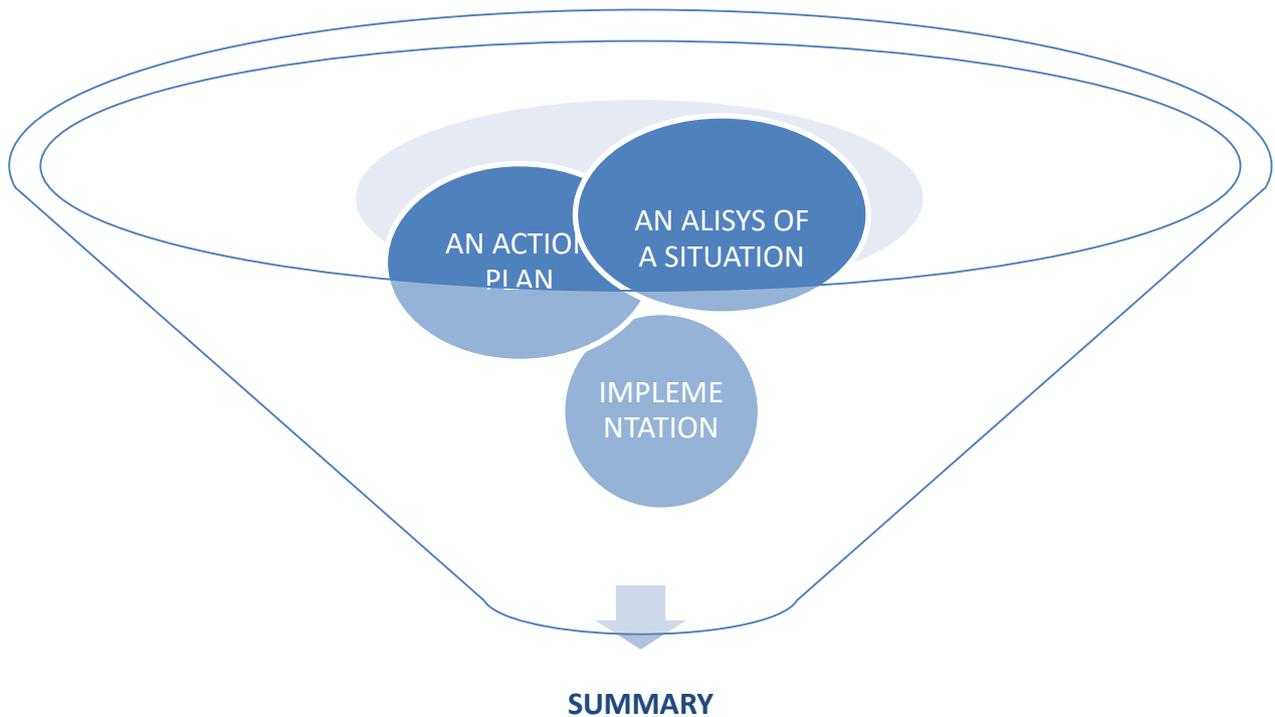


Figure 1. Source: own study.

The coaching process involves changes and, consequently, a series of barriers and fears that can be dealt with in a variety of ways. [Table 1]

Table 1. Resistance to changes.

Resistance	Method of counteraction
change of work organization	awareness that routine works badly on personal accumulation
work habits	showing the benefits as a result of implementing new methods

fear of own incompetence	understanding that the role of the coach is to focus on help and development
lack of faith in the reality of the change's success	getting to know the benefits of coaching
conviction about imposing change from above	presentation of benefits for the company and employees
lack of confidence in the coach	awareness that a coach is a professional not related to the company

One of the most important human skills is the ability to learn. After all, we learn throughout our lives. Coaching as a method of development is still growing dynamically. The efforts made by those dealing with this area to become professionals (especially in Poland) is necessary and possible thanks to reflective practice and getting inspired by the knowledge and results of empirical studies in the field.

6. CONCLUSIONS

A well-known humanist - von Humboldt - required an education process that would make a human what he should be - a human. Optimum development of a human means own initiative and emotional involvement. On the other hand, development of an employee covers improvement of qualifications, advancement of professional competences and an increase of motivation. Coaching is one of numerous practical methods for personal development, already known in the ancient times. It is a method that has been present on the Polish market for not so long, but it surely has a bright future. Coaching effectiveness was confirmed in numerous research what is confirmed in the literature of the subject. However, it is at the same time necessary to deepen the social awareness of the topic and give some ethical thought to the profession.

Coaching is already a popular method used in the area of human resource management. Its purpose is to motivate and inspire people to change and solve problems. To be effective, coaching should fully support the mentee and look at him objectively and without judgment. Coaching is based on the assumption that everyone is responsible for their lives and the results they achieve. A coach's job is the opportunity to have a positive impact on the lives of others.

The basis of the coach's activity is to inspire the client to search for resources independently, thanks to which he can implement his plans. The coach can share feedback on the actions taken by the client, but the client bears all responsibility for them. It is important, therefore, that the coach should try to avoid advising, and only stimulate the client in such a way that he would create solutions to his own problems. Customer's independence in building own strategies guarantees more willingness to implement them.

A lot of publications have already been written about coaching, there is a lot of evidence for improving the efficiency and results of people and teams and the performance of entire organizations. The literature on the subject shows that coaching, as an area of professional practice, is at an early stage of professionalization, it is still a market phenomenon, i.e. everyone can become a coach and provide coaching services. That is why one of the

challenges for coaches is to increase their own credibility and document their effectiveness. The market is constantly expanding the offer of coaching courses, as well as workshops drawing inspiration from various therapeutic and developmental approaches that allow for the improvement of additional competences useful in the work of the coach. Since the coach itself is a tool, the process of continuous self-improvement is a natural consequence of accepting responsibility for the quality of services provided. Out of concern for the good of the client, it is also a professional duty for the coaches to undergo the supervision process.

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