



WESTERN BALKAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTRODUCTION OF COACHING¹

1. Introduction

1.1 What is coaching?

Coaching is a methodology for unlocking people's potential to improve performance. It can help to develop people's skills as well as help them deal with setbacks and challenges. A coaching session takes a form of a structured conversation between the coach and the coachee (person being coached), and it focuses on helping the coachee discover answers for themselves.

Coaches do not offer answers or advice – that is the role of consultants.

They do not share their experiences to help the person learn – that is what mentors do.

They do not heal emotional or psychological trauma – that is the role of the counsellors and therapists.

Coaching is highly generic in terms of application (it can be applied in any work context and situation), yet it is always customised (the process is shaped to fit the person being coached, and the agenda always comes from the person coached).

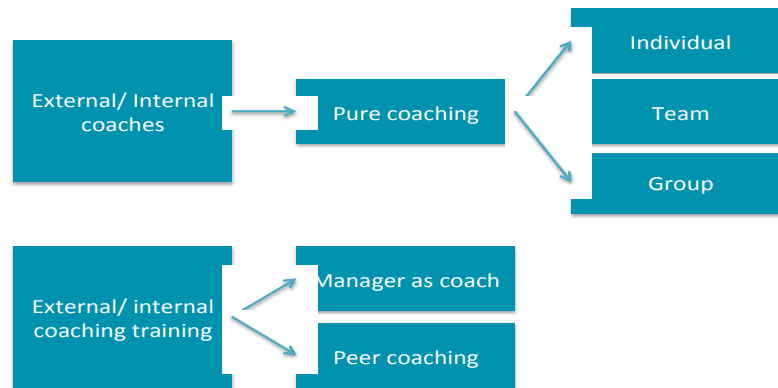
In the companies where coaching is used, the culture created is that of agility and adaptability, responsibility and awareness.

Nowadays a variety of organizational coaching modalities are available and it is important to make an informed decision when deciding which one to use. Using a variety of approaches works the best if the objective is to make more sustainable changes across the organisation or to evolve the organisational culture.

¹ Materials in this paper are based on the following documents: "Le coaching professionnel dans la fonction publique – Definition et method, bonnes pratiques ministerielles, outils pour agir" 2011 ("Professional Coaching in Public Administration – Definition, methodology, best practices and guide for action") and "Coaching in Public Administration in the Western Balkans – *Baseline Analysis*", ReSPA 2017, as well as the outcomes of the Workshop on Coaching conducted on the 27-28th of February 2018 in Belgrade by the ReSPA HRMD Working Group.

1.2 Modalities of coaching

Organizational applications



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- **Individual coaching** – Individual coaching is a process that involves regular one-to-one sessions between a coach and the coachee, over a limited period of time (sessions can be weekly, bi-weekly or once a month, commonly one hour in length, over the period of 3 to 6 months, sometimes longer). These sessions can be held face to face or over Skype or phone.
- **Team coaching** – Team coaching is a process where one or two coaches work with a team as a whole to improve their performance and strengthen the team culture, based on the goals that team itself has defined. Coaches facilitate reflection, dialogue and action in bi-weekly or monthly sessions over a period of time (6 to 12 months).
- **Group coaching** – Group coaching is a process where a coach works with a group of individuals, who are not from the same team, and are not line managers or direct reports to each other, facilitating a process that will support professional and personal development of each individual in the group by leveraging the insights and experiences of group members. Group coaching usually involves one to two hour monthly or bi-monthly sessions over a period of 6 to 12 months or longer.
- **Peer coaching** - Peer coaching is a process through which two or more professional colleagues, who are trained in coaching skills, work together to reflect on their goals, behaviour and overall professional development. Peers can have regular hourly sessions, on the bi-weekly or monthly basis, or they can meet on demand to work on a particular issue in one or a few sessions.

- **Managers and leaders as coaches** – Coaching can be used as an approach in managing people in order to help people develop, increase motivation, and improve performance. In this case, coaching would be a way of communicating rather than a structured process, although the manager might decide to have regular meetings dedicated to discussing the employee's development, providing timely feedback and allowing the space for reflection for both parties. This approach assumes that a manager is trained in coaching skills.

1.3 Key areas for the use of coaching

- **Person-centred coaching:** the goal is, for example, to help increase motivation, achieve willingness to change career direction, overcome difficulties in managing one's time. In this case, coaching will aim to develop the potential and achieve the professional goals of the beneficiaries;
- **Coaching focused on relational skills:** for example, it aims to improve the beneficiary's relations with his/her associates, peers, clients/customers and superiors. In this case, the coach will work with the beneficiary on the relational skills in the professional setting, based on the analysis of concrete situations;
- **Coaching focused on management:** it aims, for example, to develop the effectiveness of a team, to overcome the challenges of compartmentalization or even rivalries. In this case, the coach will focus on the group; this is coaching that can prove particularly useful during restructuring or the creation of new entities, to support a manager in the formation of his team;
- **Leadership development coaching:** this is a type of coaching in its own right that takes into account different dimensions, strategic in particular, in relation to the whole organization, and also the fact that the leader has a specific posture, distinct from that of an "ordinary" manager.

1.4 Coaches

The coach can be an internal coach, i.e. a civil servant (from the same or different public authority) or an external coach (external to the civil service, i.e. a consultant). The coaching service may in some cases be provided by a pair of two coaches: they can be either internal or external, or mixed.

Whether internal or external, the coach must be a professional, possessing skills recognized by the profession and exercising this function in compliance with the ethical principles.

Manager and leader can also use coaching as a part of their engagement with employees, as long as they are trained in coaching skills.

1.5 Benefits of coaching

Organizational benefits

Coaching can be useful for: Developing and sharing a new strategic vision; Developing new competences; Developing the potential for promotion; Developing performance of one's team and improving collective functioning; Supporting change management; Improving managerial

practice; Supporting mobility; Improving inter-ministerial network; Creating a shared culture; Better alignment of personal and organizational goals.

Individual benefits

Coaching can be useful for: Increasing confidence; Developing growth mindset and tapping into person's potential; Interpersonal effectiveness (better communication skills, less toxic behaviors); Developing strategies for coping with work demands; Enhancing personal performance (through increased ability for efficient problem solving, developing creativity, goal setting, adaptation of new skills); Increased levels of employee engagement, reducing absenteeism and turnover; Improved team work and collaboration; Leadership development and performance at all levels; Better self-assessment; Increased motivation.

1.6 External versus internal coaching

Both external and internal coaching has its benefits and can be successfully used.

Internal coaches have the benefit of understanding the culture of the organisation and the nature of work better. They require initial investment in their training, but once trained, they represent an easily available resource to the organisation without additional cost. As such, they are easily accessible to the coachees. An organisation that utilises internal coaches also has the added benefit that the internal coaches will use their coaching skills in other daily work interactions, not just in the coaching sessions. The potential downsides of using internal coaches are the issues of confidentiality and the influence of their opinions and bias on the coaching process that is supposed to be neutral. Often the level of training of the internal coaches is lower than that of the external ones.

The advantages of external coaches is that they are on average better trained, more experienced and that coaching is their main professional activity. They are often experienced in different coaching models and use a variety of approaches. They tend to be independent and unbiased. The main downside of the external coaches is the cost. Lack of understanding of the context and the company's culture can also be perceived as a drawback.

1.7 Who is coaching for?

Coaching is a tool designed to support an executive or a team at certain stages of their professional career:

- Executive managers/leaders;
- Senior managers (future executive managers);
- Individual cases, that can be considered as required.

Beyond this support, coaching represents a sign of recognition that can be sent by the hierarchy: offering such support to a staff member is indeed a sign of confidence in the professional qualities of the person concerned.

In any case, it is a Learning and Development policy/programme that should be defined and implemented by the central HRM authorities/departments within particular institution in charge of human resources. The scope of this policy, as well as the target audience, may therefore vary

from ministry to ministry or from organisation to organisation. Similarly, coaching can be a part of a range of tools that HR departments can mobilize according to their own practices and objectives.

Recommendations

1. Key requirements for introduction of coaching

1.1 EMBEDDEDNESS INTO POLICY-MAKING PROCESS: Ensure a legal framework for coaching. Ensure connecting coaching with the overall HR strategy and organisational culture and vision and its alignment with PAR strategies and legal framework. Create a Strategy for the implementation of coaching. This strategy would represent a road map for choosing how to do the right thing at the right time. The resources for Strategy development could be: the ReSPA *Baseline Analysis on Coaching in Public Administration in the Western Balkans* <https://www.respaweb.eu/11/library#respa-publications-2017-7>; the best practice examples in the region (in particular Serbia).

1.2 CAREFUL PLANNING: Develop an Action plan and conduct costing of the Strategy. The ReSPA costing methodology could be used for costing <https://www.respaweb.eu/11/library#respa-publications-2018-7>.

1.3 CHOOSING A HUB FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH: Choose a relevant institution at the national level that could become an advocate and potentially a sponsor for the implementation of coaching and represent a hub for the strategic approach to creating useful interventions, policy creation and evaluation; benchmarking, shared learning and participatory approach and identifying a leading institution /change agent.

1.4 SUFFICIENT RESOURCES: Ensure sufficient financial and human resources for the implementation of coaching. Allocate the money for the promotion of coaching, recruitment of coaches, coaching training programs, exchange of experience, case studies etc. Look for sponsors; allocate the time of the employees for the coaching programs; ensure space for coaching (training rooms).

1.5 SUFFICIENT TIME AVAILABLE: Reasonable time should be provided for introduction of coaching and implementation of all its planned steps in a quality manner.

2. Recommendations by stages for the introduction of coaching

2.1 RAISE AWARENESS: Define the type of needs that would justify the use of coaching; Analyse the value of using coaching in terms of the expected effects on the management of a service or on the quality of life at work; If coaching is considered relevant, the ministry must also define an attitude with regard to the individual requests of its managers for coaching. This is something that may become important in the coming years in terms of promoting the attractiveness of a particular public authority as an employer.

2.2 DECIDE WHEN TO APPLY COACHING AND FOR WHOM: Implement coaching as a development tool by clearly stating the desired benefits of coaching and target audience. Coaching is applied in the following professional situations:

- Development coaching: for the high potential, future managers;
- On-the-job coaching: for senior executives and managers;
- Crisis coaching (to respond to challenges);
- Coaching for identified problems: for managers in general, focused on strategic issues, management, relations, etc.;
- Team coaching: intended for teams, principally for management level.

2.3 SET SELECTION CRITERIA and IDENTIFY/SELECT COACHES: Develop a selection procedure for external coaches and internal coaches. External coaches should be selected based on accreditation and methodology they use.

Internal coaches should formally apply based on their inclination, and following a set of interviews with HR and external coaches, should be selected for the training. Selection criteria for the internal coaches should be established to provide a framework for the interviews. These criteria should cover the following areas:

- 1) *Experience and knowledge*
- 2) *Motivation*
- 3) *Personal skills and Qualities*
- 4) *Values*
- 5) *Adequacy of the profile of the candidate to the particular profile sought to diversify the pool of experts.*

2.4 VALIDATE THAT COACHING IS THE RIGHT TOOL: Validate whether coaching is the tool that answers the identified problem. In some instances more adequate options would be training, assessment or mentoring. The use of coaching is, therefore, a part of an approach to support the beneficiary's career path through his or her public authority.

2.5 SIGN THE CONTRACT: Once the decision to use coaching has been made by mutual agreement, it is implemented upon signing of the contract stating the objectives of the coaching and defining the respective commitments of the parties.

The use of coaching is the result of a decision made with the active involvement of the administration. It is, therefore, necessary to organise a **tripartite meeting** bringing together the parties involved (the beneficiary of the coaching, the coach, the administration or the authority who offered such support). Such a meeting is aimed at defining the objectives that will be included in the contract. This process involves the signing of the tripartite contract.

2.6 DEFINE AND IMPLEMENT THE GROUND RULES FOR COACHING:

- The place where the meetings are held is not insignificant: they should not be held in the office of the beneficiary and, more generally, in his professional setting.

- The understanding of the process is also important: The coaching sessions take the form of conversations between the beneficiary and his/her coach. The coach provides a safe environment and a structured approach, allowing for the safety of exploration and facilitating change. The objectives of the sessions need to be always clearly identified. The coachee (beneficiary) cannot remain passive during coaching: she/he needs to always be an active participant. This is a crucial prerequisite for achieving results.

2.7 CREATE A POOL OF COACHES AND RESOURCES: Use professionally trained and accredited internal and external coaches. Start with external and overtime invest in an internal pool of coaches. Move from externally based resources (programmes, experts, etc.) to internally based ones and create a bridge via network groups at local and regional level. Create a library of resources – hard copy (white papers, documents, manuals, books, etc.), and electronic resources (videos, e-learning sites and documents, etc.). Create a regional network for exchange of experience.

2.8 DEVELOP COACHING CULTURE: Develop a coaching culture through different modes of coaching – individual, group and team, and training managers in coaching skills.

2.9 CREATE MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS: Create evaluation tools that will measure both the short and long-term benefits of coaching. Set standards and create the quality control.

2.10 TRACK BENEFITS AND CONTINUOUSLY ADJUST AND IMPROVE

May 2018