

The Role of Managerial Skills Through Coaching Within the Contemporary Economy

Ionela STANCA PETRUTA¹
Denisa Mihaela ȘULĂ²
Liliana NICOLAE ȘTEFAN³

Abstract

The research aims to study the improvement of managerial skills through coaching, in service-providing and goods-producing industries. The reason for this research started from the need for studies on the coaching market in Romania that would result in concrete data regarding the level of benefits that such services can provide to clients from various industries. The need is to be able, both as a provider and as a user of coaching services, to refer to certain values that determine whether coaching services bring added value, and if so, how much. Starting from this need and from the theoretical areas of known benefits that coaching services bring to clients, the area on which the research will be focused was determined.

Thus, the main objective was defined as obtaining a package of values that would determine the level of impact of coaching services on the managerial skills of management personnel in Romanian industries.

This general objective gave birth to the objective of determining a model of managerial skills with an impact on managerial performance, which can be developed and improved through coaching programs.

Keywords: *industries, managerial skills, coaching, management*

JEL classification: *M 12*

DOI: 10.24818/RMCI.2023.1.92

1. Introduction

Over the years we have become accustomed to expressions such as born leader, or born entrepreneurial profile, and it is correct that some people are born or develop during childhood and adolescence the skills to carry out management activities effectively.

At the same time, research shows that those who have these skills can improve them and those who do not have them can gain them through learning and

¹ Ionela Stanca Petruta, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Romania, stancaionela94@yahoo.com

² Denisa Mihaela Șulă, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Romania, denisamihaelas@yahoo.com

³ Liliana Nicolae Ștefan, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Romania, lili.stefan@yahoo.com

training. Coaching for the formation of skills where the coaching is specifically focused on the manager's current activity. Coaching helps the manager to learn certain techniques, attitudes and behaviors, which can directly improve his work performance. Performance coaching that refers to learning designed to improve a manager's performance in a leadership role. This process aims to establish and develop the skills required for the position.

Coaching for dedication aimed at the future career or assuming a new leadership role by the manager. This type involves evaluating and clarifying future plans and training the necessary skills. It often includes reviewing the client's goals, values and vision. Coaching based on the manager's agenda, this type deals with personal or organizational topics that interest the client manager at the time.

It can be considered, what is often found on the market as peer coaching, a joining of coaching services with mentoring and consulting services. This type of coaching is carried out in groups of people with the same area of interest, who meet in an organized car to solve various problems connected to their area of interest. This can be one-on-one or group.

The differentiation of coaching and consulting processes can be done starting from the type of objective. For coaching, the objective can vary from human change, behavior modification, personality development, increasing thinking skills, self-directed learning, etc. For consulting, the objective can cover a wide range, for example: support in executive processes, creation/maintenance or modification of image/brand, profitability, quality, product, services, etc.

Another major difference is represented by the person who defines the problem. In coaching, the problem is defined by the client who is supported in this process. In consulting, the consultant analyzes data and information received, and then, based on his experience, defines the problem areas. This leads to another difference between the two types of services, namely, the level of expertise: the consultant needs to have extensive experience in the field of the problem, unlike the coach who does not need to be a specialist in the field of the topic addressed by client.

The competence held by the service provider is also one of the differences. The two, the consultant and the coach, require different skills to successfully provide the services. The coaching skills that a successful coach needs are: the ability to understand/manage the coaching process, the interaction between awareness/accountability, active listening, asking effective questions. A coach must have the following personal skills: self-esteem, respect for others, self-awareness, awareness of others, emotional adaptability, personal power, result-oriented, flexibility, inspire confidence, expressive skills and emotional control, skills conflict management.

Successful results for increasing performance, depending on the requirements of the client, be it an individual or an organization, can be obtained much better by accessing service joins. The differences between similar types of knowledge services were described above, which left room for understanding the useful ways in which they can complement each other, in order to offer the client

complete services, depending on his needs and requirements. In the following sections, we want to present the application of knowledge services that are already quite well defined in the profile services market.

2. Literature review

Whitmore (2018), defines coaching as *the release of people's potential to maximize their own performance. It means helping people learn for themselves rather than actually teaching them something.* (Whitmore, 2018)

Grant and Greene (2014) define coaching as a process of change and learning. It is a process of increasing the client's motivation, through which he tells his own story, and creates his own dreams. Coaching is about asking powerful questions more than giving answers. Also Grant and Greene (2014) say *coaching is about change and transformation* (Grant & Greene, 2014). Coaching opens up new possibilities, works on a behavioral and emotional level and focuses on results.

Zeus and Skiffington (2008) define coaching as essentially a conversation - a dialogue between the coach and his client, between the mentor and the mentee, in a productive context, focused on obtaining results. Coaching involves helping people access what they know. A coach offers assistance and support and encourages people to find answers to some questions they have not asked themselves.

Coaching means learning - although the specialist in the coaching activity is not a teacher and does not necessarily know how to solve things better than the one he guides (Gallway, 2011). A coach can observe patterns of action, prepare the ground for new actions, and then work with the person to help them set goals for success. Coaching involves learning. Through the various coaching techniques – listening, reflecting, asking questions and providing information, mentees begin to self-correct (learning how to change their own behavior) and become self-productive - beginning to create their own questions and answers (Conno & Pokora, 2017)

Meggison and Clutterbuck (2005) primarily define coaching as being closely related to performance improvement, with objectives established together with the client. Coaching is more about asking the right questions than giving answers. A coach engages in a cooperative alliance with the interlocutor, to establish and clarify his intentions and goals and to create a plan to achieve them (Britton, 2010).

In many facets of life, coaching professionals assist clients in identifying what they want, setting objectives to get there, and overcoming challenges along the way (Bermes, 2007).

Branch et al. (2007) define coaching as a conversation intended to inspire the client to create the life he wants. It is generally considered that the discipline of coaching is still in its infancy. However, it seems that coaching can be talked about since ancient times. Socrates had practiced things similar to coaching about 2,000

years ago, but his philosophy was somehow lost in time, overshadowed by materialistic reductionism (Aubry, 2010).

Aristotle in his work *Ethics* points out elements that can easily be included next to the basic concepts of coaching (Armstrong, 2009).

The characteristic features of coaching, such as clarifying values, providing support, encouraging, creating new action plans, are things we face every day in our interactions and discussions with those around us. At the formal level, many principles of coaching have their origin in psychology, especially in sports and educational psychology. Therefore, the laws of coaching are not something new. What is probably new is the way in which coaching has nowadays become a kind of amalgam, a synthesis of all these disciplines, also drawing inspiration from philosophy and spirituality.

Recently, there is more and more talk about the concept of manager and coach. Ellinger et al. (2010) mention that as HR and management responsibilities develop and pass to middle management, so does the concept of management through coaching. They define the concept of managerial coaching as that form of coaching provided by a supervisor or manager that serves as a learning facilitator. The manager or supervisor uses specific skills to support the employee to learn and develop, and therefore improve their performance (Adair & Allen, 1999). Coaching skills are also attributed to the manager, thus relying on the transition from the traditional management model through which the boss dictates, to the coaching management model, through which the boss supports and delegates the employee who thus becomes more involved and more responsible in the fate of the company. However, we know that for a coaching relationship to work, trust, security and minimum pressure are needed.

The attraction to the dictatorial style comes especially from the level of imposition, the fact that it is an easy, fast method, and it provides the one who imposes, a feeling of being in control. This way of management unfortunately upsets and demotivates the staff, but its members don't dare to show this, and they don't give feedback because they wouldn't have listened anyway. Employees are servile in the presence of the boss, but behave completely differently when he is not present. Employees are resentful and underperform. Another problem that appears in the dictatorial management style is that at the level of learning and remembering.

Ellinger et al. (2010) specify that one can speak of a specific mind-set for managers who choose to practice management coaching, summarized as: a supportive attitude, they have a lower need for control and instead have the belief that most people want to learn.

At the same time, they talk about the skills associated with management coaching, such as: listening, analytical and interviewing skills, techniques for asking questions and observing, skills for developing partnerships, skills for providing feedback and suggests that this activity is a multidimensional construct, and a coach manager should:

- ✓ communicate openly with others;

- ✓ have a team approach instead of an individual approach regarding tasks;
- ✓ to have a tendency to value people above tasks;
- ✓ to accept the ambiguous nature of the work environment.

Of course, in addition to having this set of skills, a successful manager, who wants to practice management coaching effectively, needs to be able to transform these skills into specific coaching behaviors.

It is important for the manager to be aware that this coaching model cannot be applied in every situation and that it depends on the needs of the employee, the skills and knowledge of the manager, the culture and the context of the organization. At the same time, for this type of management to work, it is necessary that between the two parties there is a mutual relationship of respect and trust, if there is no response to coaching from the employee, most often the managers have no way to coach effectively.

3. Research methodology

The article aims to investigate whether coaching processes applied at management level have an effect on managers' abilities or not. The idea of this research started from the need for concrete evidence of the benefits of coaching services, a need expressed at the national level. Thus, the necessity of the existence of a set of values that determines the expected average level of growth of managerial skills following participation in programs of this type was expressed. This need was expressed both from the point of view of the coaching service provider and from the point of view of the client, whether he is an individual or a legal entity.

Thus, the main objective of the research can be outlined as obtaining a set of values that determine the impact of the coaching process on the level of a specific group of managerial skills known to have effects on managerial performance, in the industry. From this main objective that provides an overview of the general results of the present research, clarifying sub-objectives can be extracted. The preparation of a comparative tool of the level of the impact of the coaching process, on the managerial skills for managers in the goods-producing and service-providing industries.

Designing a comparative tool between the levels of impact of coaching processes for female and male persons.

The present research took place between September 2022 and January 2023 in Romania. Both top and middle managers as well as specialists and team leaders who manage teams of employees participated in the research. The research focused on executives from various industries classified into two large comparative categories: the goods-producing industry and the service-providing industry.

Within the group of service-providing industries, the answers of respondents active in the following categories were included: public administration, insurance, aviation, finance - banking, trade, consultancy, project management, maintenance and upkeep, education and professional training, IT

software, media and advertising, medical, research, recruitment, telecom and telecommunications, tourism.

Within the group of goods-producing industries, the responses of respondents active in the following categories were included: construction, automotive construction, energy production, food production, oil production, electrical equipment production, security systems.

A number of 193 people participated in the research, of which 55 were associated with the group of industries producing goods and 139 with the group of industries providing services. Among the 193 participants, 104 were female and 89 were male.

The age of the participants was between 21 and 70 years old, with an average age of 39 years. The people who participated in the research were asked to fill in the answers to the questionnaire electronically, the form being compiled on the platform provided by Google, answers which were later interpreted through a statistical interpretation program.

4. Findings

In order to consolidate the obtained results, the interpretation of the results will also be done depending on the hierarchical level of the respondents' functions. Thus, the evolution of the level of managerial skills will be seen following the coaching processes reported at the level of the respondents' function. The sample of 193 respondents held top and middle management positions as well as specialist and team leader positions. The functions of the respondents were grouped into three management categories: top, middle and specialists. Data interpretation will be done according to these three groups.

The group of respondents is divided into 48 people occupying top management positions, 46 middle management positions and 99 specialist positions.

The interpretation is carried out on hierarchical levels, with the first category of abilities, namely, the group of personal abilities. Thus, Table 1 shows the average values for the group of personal skills depending on the participation in coaching programs correlated with the hierarchical levels of the respondents and their gender. Following the interpretation, it is observed that for female respondents the highest increase is recorded in the specialist segment, and for male respondents, the most important increase is scored by the top management segment, an increase of approximately 1 point.

The duration of the optimal interval for the coaching process results from the comparison of the averages according to the agreed intervals, also specified in the previous sections.

Table 1. Comparison of the averages of personal abilities according to the participation in coaching programs and according to the hierarchical level and gender of the respondents

The type of respondents	Participation in coaching programs	Hierarchical level	Mediate	No. items	Deviation standard
Female	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.3214	14	.72343
		specialist	8.4683	21	.82977
		<i>top</i>	8.6495	17	.76192
		Total	8.4880	52	.77589
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	8.1852	9	1.02383
		specialist	7.9669	34	1.06934
		<i>top</i>	8.2778	9	.84266
		Total	8.0585	52	1.01618
Male	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.1833	10	.89907
		specialist	8.2412	19	.86553
		<i>top</i>	9.0000	9	.64550
		Total	8.4057	38	.87426
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	7.2372	13	1.17647
		specialist	7.9117	25	1.15960
		<i>top</i>	7.9744	13	1.47995
		Total	7.7557	51	1.26403

Source: processing data obtained through SPSS program

Table 2 shows the interpretation of the results for the interpersonal skills group depending on the participation in coaching programs, correlated with the hierarchical level and gender of the respondents. Thus, it is noted that for female respondents, the greatest increase is presented by the specialist segment, the increase marked by the other two categories having a low value. For male respondents, for this category, there is an increase of approximately 1 point for respondents from the top management segment. Table 3 presents the same type of analysis and interpretation for the administrative skills group. From this, it is noted for female respondents that the impact of coaching processes is mainly scored among top management, similarly for male respondents, but the level of growth between the two gender categories is relatively high. Male respondents from top management show an increase of 1.19 points, while female respondents show an increase of only 0.48 points, the difference being approximately 0.7 points.

Table 2. Comparison of the averages of interpersonal skills according to the participation in coaching programs and according to the hierarchical level and gender of the respondents

The type of respondents	Participation in coaching programs	Hierarchical level	Mediate	No. items	Deviation standard
Female	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.8690	14	.65675
		specialist	8.6825	21	.86306
		<i>top</i>	8.9877	17	.57391
		Total	8.8325	52	.72322
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	8.8333	9	.96195
		specialist	8.3039	34	.96468
		<i>top</i>	8.9074	9	.74820
		Total	8.5000	52	.95376
Male	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.4167	10	.63099
		specialist	8.6272	19	.90964
		<i>top</i>	9.1574	9	.79543
		Total	8.6974	38	.84350
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	7.7564	13	1.13420
		specialist	8.2333	25	1.13931
		<i>top</i>	8.1603	13	1.07983
		Total	8.0931	51	1.11898

Source: processing data obtained through SPSS program

Table 3. Comparison of average administrative skills according to participation in coaching programs and according to the hierarchical level and gender of the respondents

The type of respondents	Participation in coaching programs	Hierarchical level	Mediate	No. items	Deviation standard
Female	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.4702	14	.68063
		specialist	8.6825	21	1.05298
		<i>top</i>	8.7647	17	.56996
		Total	8.6522	52	.81762
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	8.4444	9	1.08493
		specialist	8.3493	34	.91563
		<i>top</i>	8.2778	9	.93263
		Total	8.3534	52	.93062
Male	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.1417	10	.78572
		specialist	8.3728	19	.85858
		<i>top</i>	8.7222	9	.80147
		Total	8.3947	38	.83146
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	7.1538	13	1.38061
		specialist	8.0300	25	1.30190
		<i>top</i>	7.5321	13	1.28899
		Total	7.6797	51	1.34488

Source: processing data obtained through SPSS program

The same type of analysis and interpretation will be made, and for the correlation with the two groups of industries, the category of industries producing goods as well as the one providing services.

Thus, it is noted in Table 4 that for the group of industries producing goods, the highest increase in the level of personal skills is presented by the respondents from the top management segment, with an increase of 1.29 points. For the group of service-providing industries, the top management segment shows the highest growth following the coaching process. And for the case of interpersonal skills, the most important increase is noted in the group of industries producing goods in the top management segment, a similar increase to that in the group of industries providing services.

Table 4. Comparison of averages of personal skills according to participation in coaching programs and according to industry groups and hierarchical level

Groups of industrially	Participation in coaching programs	Hierarchical level	Mediate	No. items	Deviation standard
Manufacture	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.1071	7	.34599
		specialist	8.2569	12	.69218
		<i>top</i>	9.5417	2	.29463
		Total	8.3294	21	.68641
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	7.2083	8	1.19107
		specialist	8.0602	18	1.17983
		<i>top</i>	8.2500	7	.88192
		Total	7.8939	33	1.16467
Services	YES	<i>middle</i>	8.3284	17	.90928
		specialist	8.4048	28	.90912
		<i>top</i>	8.7066	24	.72142
		Total	8.4909	69	.85136
	NOT	<i>middle</i>	7.8631	14	1.16557
		specialist	7.8923	41	1.07278
		<i>top</i>	8.0278	15	1.40283
		Total	7.9155	70	1.15154

Source: processing data obtained through SPSS program

It was observed that for all categories of skills, participation in coaching programs brings an increase in their level both for the participants from the goods-producing and service-providing industries. Table 5 summarizes the growth coefficient for each skill according to the mentioned industries. This table can be used both as an indicator for the growth level of managerial skills and for the optimal duration of the coaching process.

Table 5. Synthesizing growth coefficients and optimal coaching periods for managerial skills according to industry groups.

Groups of managerial skills	Managerial ability	Industry groups			
		Production of goods		Providing services	
		coefficient of growth	term eighth	coefficient of growth	term eighth
Personal skills	Stress management	0.4	1 month	0.53	3-6 months
	Communication	0.4	1-3 months	0.49	1-3 months
	Initiative	0.1	1 month	0.63	1-3 months
	Organization	0.77	1 month	0.65	3-6 months
Abilities interpersonal	The construction of relations	0.39	1-6 months	0.76	3-6 months
	The motivation of others	0.45	1-6 months	0.45	>6 months
	Power of attorney and delegation	0.6	1 month	0.35	>6 months
	Influence	0.37	1 month	0.39	1-3 months
Abilities administration	Decision making	0.33	1 month	0.73	1-3 months
	Time management	0.39	1 month	0.39	1-3 months
	Establishing objectives	0.45	1-3 months	0.64	1 month
	Outcome/goal orientation	0.33	1 month	0.47	1-3 months

Source: processing data obtained through SPSS program

It is observed that in general the growth coefficient is higher for male respondents than for female respondents, and for participants from the service industry the growth index is generally higher than that of participants from the goods producing industry. As an optimal duration, it can be observed that, in general, the optimal duration for the goods-producing industry is approximately 1 month, while for the service-providing industry, the optimal duration is generally approximately 3 months. Regarding the hierarchical levels in general, it was observed that respondents from top management show the most significant increases in skills following participation in coaching processes. Only for female respondents for the personal and interpersonal skills groups, the higher increase was scored by respondents in specialist positions.

5. Conclusions

The article presents the vast area represented by personal development services and the complexity and diversity of these types of services against the background of industrial management. At the same time, the bibliographic study showed the usefulness of these types of services, and the ways in which they can be associated to offer complex solutions, and in particular the study focused on the coaching-type personal development service and how it can benefit clients.

It was observed that starting from the need to prove the impact of coaching services in organizations, it was necessary to identify those elements that it can positively affect in order to have a relevance on performance. Thus, the importance of individual and managerial skills in the context of performance and its management was noted.

Thus, the present study evolved through the analysis of managerial skills models proven in specialized literature as having an impact on managerial performance when designing and testing a particular model of managerial skills, which represents for the present research the basis of the investigated elements to achieve the objective of the work of to obtain the level of growth of managerial skills following the participation in coaching programs.

At the organizational level, the behaviors of employees and management will be reflected in its efficiency. Practically, it can be said that performance and efficiency are the results of behaviors applied in a positive way to the conjunctures that create the business environment or the organizational environment. Therefore, when we talk about managerial efficiency, we are basically talking about a set of behaviors, resulting from the level of development of some skills, generically called managerial skills or competencies. When managerial efficiency is affected by a coaching process, it will refer to making behavioral changes that affect the manager's performance. The process will target the development and improvement of some of the skills described in the previous chapters, depending on the needs of the organization and the established objectives.

Performance management focuses on both organizational and individual capabilities. The processes of improving the individual's performance will not necessarily lead to an improvement of the organizational performance and that is why a strategic approach is needed, through which the performance management strategy aligns with the company's business strategy. Performance management involves a continuous dialogue between managers and the people they manage, and this dialogue is based on the achievement of objectives, performance analysis and constructive feedback, leading to personal and professional development plans.

Limitations and possible further research directions: The choice of the 10-point scale presented the advantage of collecting better quantified answers than a five-point scale would have allowed, but the fineness of the answers is reflected in the growth values as a result of the coaching processes.

A limitation of the overall picture offered by the present research results from the lack of correlation or detail regarding the genders of the respondents in

the two industries. This can be interpreted as a possible future direction of research, regarding the gender composition of the participations in the two categories of industries addressed. Another future direction of research can represent the refinement of the research on specific industries, as well as the application of the study to a wider number of respondents, which would allow the detailing of the associations on various criteria.

References

1. Adair, J., & Allen, M., (1999). *Time Management and Personal Development*. Hawksmere, Londra.
2. Armstrong, M., (2009). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan Page, Londra
3. Aubry, B., (2010). *Managing your aspirations: Developing personal enterprise in the global Workplace*. McGraw-Hill, New York
4. Bermes, E.O., (2007). *Coaching vs. Consulting. Which is which and what to look for. Business People*. Wiley, Canada
5. Branch, R., Bryant, M., Burton, K., Mabbutt, P., Mumford, J., Ready, R., & Willson, R., (2007). *Personal Development All-in-one for Dummies*. John Wiley & Sons, West Sussex
6. Britton, J., (2010). *Effective group coaching*. Wiley, Canada
7. Connor, M., & Pokora, J., (2017). *Coaching and Mentoring at Work, Developing effective practice*. McGraw Hill, England
8. Elinger, A., Elinger, A., Hamlin, R., & Beattie, R., (2010). *Achieving improved performance through managerial coaching*. Pfeiffer, San Francisco
9. Gallwey, T., (2011). *The inner game of work*. Spandugino, Bucharest
10. Grant, A., & Greene, J., (2014). *Coach yourself – make real changes in your life*. Pearson education, Anglia
11. Megginson, D., & Clutterbuck, D., (2005). *Techniques for coaching and mentoring*. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Burlington
12. Whitmore, J., (2018). *Coaching for performance – Personal training, performance and purpose*. Publica, Bucharest
13. Zeus, P., & Skiffington, S., (2008). *The complete guide to coaching at work*. Codecs, Bucharest