

## Why would you opt for coaching?

Ian McDermott offers us the best definition of coaching:

*“Suppose you were offered a way to recognize & realize your goals, to find and utilize your unique strengths, to manage yourself more effectively, to identify and work around your limitations, to focus your intention & your resources and, above all, to make changes in your life for the better, would you be interested? That is what coaching has to offer.”*

Coaching? Such an overused term! Well... you tell me, skeptics.

I understand your reaction so well because part of me was just as doubtful.

My recent approaches to this very practical "fad" have made me confident. Coaching is a beautiful dedication over years of evolution in personnel management, human resource management, talent management and today, the management of potential! When done well, coaching provides an appropriate response to the changing desires of the organization and the individual. Its main asset: A respectful and balanced combination of organizational ambitions and the life plans of individual members.

Let me tell you a bit about my vision on this journey taken by human resources researchers.

Newly graduated from the Faculty of Psychology, I applied my human ideals in the service of the company. I firmly believed that a little altruism was quite compatible with this environment of excellence. Without a doubt, human ideals and business plans must coexist well. I then launched body and soul into developing young dynamic professionals. I was passionate about every new movement and each new discovery punctuated by humanist scholars from all backgrounds. In the 90s, I began with a reference tool, a "personality test" that involved a serious analysis and profile of each candidate and opened the door to a better understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Filled with new words, the candidate was now able to reflect on his inner self. Was I not totally in line with my mission as a human resources professional? To judge, assess, and dissect the strengths and weaknesses of these future active professionals in order to ensure a good fit with the corporate culture. These personality tests and tools improved gradually and now offer an increasingly friendly communication with the candidate. They progressively offer grids on mode of communication, attitudes to stress or even the ideal role played in the team. Let us not deny their usefulness. They allow a first take on an individual's awareness of his strengths and weaknesses and they provide benchmarks for professionals to ensure a good match, or to identify areas for further development.

Is this sufficient? Does one arrive at the objectives of human resources managers whose mission is the development of human capital?

That is why I welcome simulation exercises with open arms, the famous "assessment centers" that enable a face-to-face relationship between the evaluator and evaluated that is close to the reality on the ground. The relationship and the action are set up. The dialogue takes precedence over graphics. Human character gradually finds its equilibrium in an environment where once only performance figures had value. The actors in human resource management are less interested in personality resources than they are in skills. They are defined as capital know-how which has been built through experimentation and which leads to success. They refer to observable behaviors that contribute to the smooth functioning of the person in his position. The desire for efficiency combined with a lot of response to the need for human development. Techniques are within reach, they multiply and are constantly refined. The consultant's cart includes skills assessment, 360 degree feedback, development planning staff ... The human resources department adopts new piece of lingo: Talent management. The talents sound good and reflect a growing interest of managers for active forces. The man at the heart of the company becomes the "tool", indispensable for achieving the vision of the company.

However, the question remains: What should be done with these findings, this mass of information on the knowledge, know-how and expertise of executives and managers? Where are the levers to turn the behavioral indicators into real and lasting change, and how does one find them? Training is emerging as the first response to expectations of tangible and measurable progress on the ground. Leadership training still delights leaders and HR managers. Increasing knowledge, learning in groups, practicing by playing role-playing games, and participating in workshops are all methods on the path of personal development. Probably valid but not unique.

Training offers many answers to generic organizational questions, but does it take individuality into account?

Think back to your last training course. You were chosen for training in people management because your skills assessment revealed capacity gaps, namely: "able to delegate and manage interpersonal conflicts". The long-awaited arrival of these modules renewed your attention to integrating the good advice. What have you retained and what did you actually change due to the outcome of the session?

Can one really believe that every "trainee" will find and operate the levers of his own successful change in programs designed for groups? He who has his own journey, vision, who has values, beliefs, bearing or non-bearing.

I like the idea, expressed by Jean Gu henno, that "each person has his own dictionary". A coach would translate into NLP language (\*) "has his own world map". Awareness of its component territories is an essential starting point to changing behavior. One does not change if one is not convinced of the benefits of the change itself. The art of coaching is to invite the individual to see "in the mirror", to realize what he/she is not good at, to encourage his sense of observation and thought-provoking analysis, and to receive feedback and to experiment with new behavior. The art of coaching is to live this path in a spirit of personal achievement and collective performance.

That is why I see coaching as a tremendous humanist and performance-based opportunity to support companies and their staff in their daily challenges.

Do not be afraid of mass fads... They are popular for a reason!

See you, at The Coaching Square.

*(\*) Neuro-linguistic programming.*