How to BE a Team Coach by Georgina Woudstra (UK)

The World is Smaller Than You Think by Bradley Chapman (UK)

Advancement through Collaboration by Divya Parekh (USA)

Team Coaching on Sailing Yachts – A Transformative Experience by Mario González Forrellad (Germany)

Teams and Team Coaching by Veronica Wantenaar (South Africa)
Welcome to another exciting edition of the International Coaching News (iCN) online magazine! In our 19th edition, the theme is Group Dynamics: Team Coaching, inspired by helping people understand how to work better with others. It’s an effective method for showing teams how to reduce conflict and improve their working relationships.

This edition is loaded with content on a variety of relevant topics. It is focused on helping organisations develop high performing teams, provides tools & tips on how to build successful teams and how to be a better team coach. In this 19th edition, look out for the article ‘How to be a Team Coach’ by Georgina Woudstra from the United Kingdom. In this article, Georgina shares her coaching models and tools on how to be an effective team coach. Another noteworthy article ‘The World is Smaller Than You Think’ by Bradley Chapman shows the importance of connecting your business. ‘Team Coaching on Sailing Yachts – A Transformative Experience’ by Mario González Forrellad of Germany, discusses a unique way in incorporating an outdoor session on a sailing yacht within a coaching process to accelerate, strengthen and consolidate the effectiveness of the team coaching intervention. ‘Teams and Team Coaching’ by Veronica Wantenaar from South Africa, outlines how team coaching adds value to the organisation in terms of continuous performance improvement, reduced staff conflict and the achievement of business objectives. Each of our columnists, too numerous to mention, has taken some really interesting perspectives, and I would encourage a thorough read-through of this edition.

Just like all our other editions, this edition is not just an interesting read, but it provides you with helpful coaching tools, personal development ideas and professional development techniques to grow your business.

I hope you enjoy this issue and do let us know if there are any topics you’d like to see covered in the future.

Love,

Lovelia Caracut
Editor, iCN Magazine

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the International Coaching News Magazine, or Noble Manhattan Coaching Ltd.
The Competencies of an Effective Team Coach
by David Clutterbuck (UK)

Team coaching requires a portfolio of skills beyond those in one-to-one coaching. Most of these relate to the difference in context between individual conversations and group dynamics.

For example:

- **Managing varying paces of learning.** In team coaching, it is common for some members of the team to come to conclusions about the way forward, while others are still at the early stages of thinking it through. The team coach has to have processes that prevent this difference in pace from becoming a cause of conflict, and use it constructively to help the team come to better decisions overall.

- **Managing sub-groups.** Many teams divide into sub-groups. These subgroups can sometimes vary according to the topics under discussion, or the nature of perceived threats; and they are not always obvious. Being aware of these sub-groups and preventing them from hijacking the coaching conversation requires a strong understanding of group dynamics and how allegiances change. In order for the coach to make the team aware of these behaviours (so they can consciously seek to change them), the coach has to be hypersensitive to them first!

- **Confidentiality.** What gets said one-to-one often isn’t appropriate to say in front of the whole group. Yet the coach will typically be privy to a number of individual confidences from members of the team. Managing this takes delicate judgement and skill.

- **Facilitation.** While the role of team coach is not the same as that of a facilitator (one of the key differences being between solving a problem and building capability), he or she does need a good grasp of facilitation skills and a toolkit of team facilitation techniques and methods.

- **Listening** is a core competence for all coaches. However, the team coach needs to listen both to the person talking and to everyone else in the room. Being aware of their silent conversations, through observing body language and intuiting the mood of the listeners, isn’t easy – especially if the speaker is particularly passionate or persuasive.

- **Using silence effectively** is a sign of a confident and mature coach. But creating silence in a group situation, especially when the team is composed mainly of activists, is much more challenging.

- **Powerful questions** are often at the core of coaching. In one-to-one coaching, the emphasis is usually on the coach finding the right question at the right time to stimulate learning in the client. In team coaching, the emphasis is more firmly on helping the team find its own powerful questions, the story. Coaches help individual clients articulate, reflect upon and learn from their own story. The same principle applies to team coaching – but everyone has a slightly different (and sometimes radically different) perception of the story. The team coach has to help them accept and integrate each other’s version of the team story into a narrative that helps make coherent and compatible future choices.

- **Identity.** Coaches help individuals articulate and understand their own identity. Achieving this awareness as a team tends to be more complex.

- **Conflict management.** The one-to-one coach frequently helps clients to work out strategies for dealing with conflict in the workplace (or elsewhere). Those strategies are “opaque”, in the sense that they are known only to the coach and the client. In team coaching, conflict management strategies usually have to be transparent, because all the players are in the room and part of the conversation. Handling the emotional energy in such situations is a skilled task!

These differences make it essential that coaches, whose experience has been mostly in one-to-one environments, preface any move into team coaching by undertaking additional training to equip them for the extra demands of this more complex role. In doing so, they often find that those extra skills add to the impact of their one-to-one coaching.
Team Coaching Bias
by Barbara J. Cormack (France)

Team or Group Coaching is all about working with more than one person at the same time. It is said that a ‘team’ is a group of people working together to achieve a common goal or outcome; whereas a ‘group’ maybe a number of people who have the same interest, but may not specifically be working together to achieve a common goal or outcome, rather may be working together to achieve a more personal but similar goal or outcome.

While coaching one person at a time is a very powerful way for that person to achieve their goal – personal and/or professionally, within a team focusing on one person at a time is only part of the whole picture. Working with the whole team, where the team has a single or common goal or expected outcome, gives each person within that team the opportunity to learn, reflect, grow, develop, and be part of the success of achieving the common goal.

Research shows that for teams and groups, the individual person’s opportunity to grow and develop is more dependent upon working within the team environment; than working on their own to achieve a team goal or outcome. Having said that though, where the team is a group of people working together who have no desire to succeed as a team, then the outcome of team coaching may be very limited.

Teams come together for a specific reason – either as a department within a company or for a specific project. Whatever the reason for the team, each team will have a team goal or expected outcome. From the Director and Senior Manager to each person within this team; everyone has a role to play in its success.

The goal or expected outcome is defined by someone senior within the organisation. The goal or expected outcome is often ‘given to’ a senior manager to deliver. The expectation of success is set by others.

They do explain that if any of these conditions are misaligned, the result could be interpersonal conflict within the team.

SELECTING THE TEAM:

Whether this is a department within an organisation or a selected team, it is important to know that the right people are part of this team. As the coach supporting this team, how do you support each person in the team to know that they are the right person?

J. Richard Hackman (Harvard) and Ruth Wageman (Dartmouth College) have written a number of articles, papers, etc. on team coaching and have outlined the following six conditions critical to a successful team structure:

1. Clear ‘membership’ and boundaries.
2. Compelling direction or purpose to guide the team in their work.
3. Selecting the right people with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and/or experience to perform the task or tasks required to achieve the goal or outcome.
4. A solid team structure with a clear set of agreements to guide them on how to get the work done. In other words, this could be a team ethical code.
5. A supporting organisational structure that has the ability to provide (1) information, (2) time, and (3) resources for each member of the team to get their work progressed and completed.
6. A competent coach who is able to support the team as a whole. The coach could be a member of the team or they could be an internal organisation coach not included as a member of the team, or an external coach.

SELECTING THE COACH:

The coach must have the ability to work with each individual person, one at a time, and with the whole team simultaneously.

As well as all ‘standard’ requirements to be a coach, the coach must be able to be non-judgemental, put aside everything they know about the topic or reason for the team, put aside comments made by one member of the team about another, and maintain each client’s confidentiality.

The coach must be able to listen at the right level to both an individual member of the team and when they are working with the team as a whole. Listening at the right level when working with one person is a standard skill for every coach, but being able to be aware and listen at the right level when in a meeting takes the coach to the next level. They are looking for and listening to people who want to be the focus of attention, as well as people who don’t say anything and all those in between. It is not the coach’s responsibility to ‘chair’ the meeting, but rather to support each step taken to achieve the team goal or expected outcome. The coach will interject with appropriate questions to help the team take the next step. They will use tools like the GROW process to help the meeting move to a successful conclusion. They will question assumptions. They will help each person understand what another has said or explained. They will help work through all options and select the right action and individual team member’s tasks to take the next step.

EXPECTED OUTCOME OR GOAL:

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EXPECTED OUTCOME OR GOAL:
Each one of us knows how hard it can be to stay focused on achieving our personal goal or goals, but when departments or teams are ‘given’ a goal; it can be hard to make it a success.

When you are setting your own personal goals, using tools like the SMARTER process, you are absolutely clear about the benefits of this goal to you personally or professionally. When you are ‘given’ a goal you sometimes cannot see the same level of benefits.

It is important that the coach helps each member of the team (1) understand the goal, (2) understands the benefits to them, and (3) create a goal that allows each member of the whole team to support the steps that need to be taken to be a success.

Often organisations have an expectation that a goal or expected outcome can be achieved in a set period of time. This expectation may be based on a specific requirement, i.e. an exhibition or conference date; or it may be a date put in the diary because it felt like a good date.

It is important for the coach to be aware of the expected end date and to help the team work towards it. The coach is able to work with the team as a whole and each member of the team to overcome obstacles, concerns, worries, fears; as well as the time taken to learn, grow, and develop; while taking one step as a team at a time to achieve their successful outcome.

The coach is not a member of this team and can also work with the Senior/Project Manager in their report back to the person/people who defined the goal or expected outcome. This report can raise both risks and successes in helping set or reset their expectations.

**TEAM IDENTITY:**

Coaching within a business always raises the question about the identity of both the individual within the business and the individual within the department or team. Here the coach has the opportunity to work with the team as a whole to create, define, and understand the team identity.

**SUCCESS!**

It’s not surprising that when a goal or expected outcome is achieved that the team feel a little deflated. Often the person/people who defined the goal or expected outcome will say ‘great news’, ‘well done’, ‘congratulations’; but this does not mean that the team as a whole or even each person in the team is ‘feeling’ the success.

The coach can play a huge role here both for the team as a whole and for each person. One of the things that we do not do very well is CELEBRATE our successes! The coach can work with the team as a whole and with individual members to help them understand what they want to do or how they want to celebrate this success.

The skills each coach learns when they train to be a coach are what they need to be a competent team or group coach, used at a level of more awareness:

- Listening skills, enhanced to ensure that the coach is truly listening to each member of the team.
- Questioning skills, which will include helping the team to (1) think outside the box, (2) understand their strengths as a team, (3) help them realise their learnings individually and as a team, and (4) take each step forward.
- Provide feedback to individuals and the team as whole, as and when required.
- Use silence effectively. It isn’t always appropriate for the coach to speak or raise a question when the team are quiet and thinking something through.
- Framing and Reframing information, perspectives, and maybe also situations.
- Conflict understanding and support. Conflict is often a subject brought into individual coaching and it is no different when coaching a team.

**ONE STEP AT A TIME:**

Team and Group Coaching is very rewarding.

Coaching using all the tools and techniques available creates a journey of self-discovery and achievement!

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**ABOUT BARBARA J. CORMACK**

Barbara J. Cormack MNMC, CIAC, AFC, AFM is your leading Spiritual Coach, Mentor, Trainer, and published co-author and author. Barbara is an advocate of achieving in every arena of life and combines her extensive experience gained across her many different careers; to support her clients, colleagues, family, and friends achieve their dreams; become the best they can in all aspects of their lives; and find a true work/life balance. Clients hold Barbara in high esteem. Her style of working makes the possibility of sustainable change compelling, inviting, exciting and achievable; by combining her extensive background and experience with a keen insight into the demands of balancing the personal with the professional.
History is littered with examples of the great and the good coming up with definitions that prove to be less than helpful:

About two and a half thousand years ago in Ancient Greece, some of the better educated Athenians had all but accepted the great Plato’s definition of a human being, because after much deliberation he had distilled it down to this: a ‘featherless bipedal animal’. I’m sure there was much deferential nodding of heads and very little questioning, as they must have assumed all the necessary thinking had been done by someone of his standing and notoriety; because how else could the great man had come to this unique definition? However, the first person to be known as a cynic, an interesting chap called Diogenes of Sinope (not to be confused with plenty of other well known figures along the philosophical timeline named Diogenes - as I think the name must have been as common as ‘Alan’!), was brave enough to call this into question. Rather than debating the topic he apparently barged into one of Plato’s teaching sessions holding aloft a freshly plucked chicken crying, “Behold, here is Plato’s man!”

Diogenes were something of a unique character; apparently living in an upturned old bath at the edge of the town square, sleeping naked in the street, and distilling his life down to the very bare (excuse the pun) necessities needed to survive. Like all notable philosophers, he was not afraid to ask challenging questions and put forward his view on how to tackle the challenge of ‘life’. Indeed, so well-known was he, that Alexander the Great made a point of seeking him out when visiting Athens, and when given the opportunity to ask a question of this most important man is reported as saying: “will you move because you are blocking my sunlight”. Fortunately, Alexander was amused by his confidence and his willingness to shed anything he considered unnecessary, and replied; “If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes!” To which Diogenes quipped “... and if I were not Diogenes, I too should like to be Diogenes!” Clearly, he was both confident and had a sense of humour, and luckily for him so did Alexander. His value of coaching is his willingness to see through politics, hierarchy, and reputation, something we’d be well advised to think about when considering the raft of material claiming to teach and advise about any aspect of coaching. A confident, competent, light-hearted but serious approach to otherwise difficult issues is the mark of what I like to now call the Diogenes Test, a test that evaluates a definition put forward as being absolute and true, and asks if it’s possible to simultaneously refute it with good nature and clarity?

The challenge of applying the test is that it can be difficult to let go of any belief once it has been accepted, because even when faced with obvious contradictory evidence, there’s no guarantee that adherents to any now-discredited ‘fact’ will back off. If someone of Plato’s obvious intelligence continued to plough his previous furrow by trying to amend his plucked chicken definition by adding that a human had to have toes, then is it not likely that lesser souls will cling to their opinion and defend it? Looking back with twenty-twenty it’s clear why Plato’s definition didn’t catch on, - it really was a bit rubbish, but it’s also interesting to note how once invested in something it is difficult for anyone to back off and reconsider, even when it is clearly not doing what it was intended. Sadly, something similar can happen with coaching definitions. Often, the definers have come up with forms of words that are no more appropriate than Diogenes’ plucked chicken, yet coaches cling to them as if they are the gospel according to ‘whoever’; team coaching, group coaching, corporate coaching, business coaching, executive coaching, management coaching, workplace coaching, life coaching, ... the list goes on, and along with it a growing list of definitions almost universally either simply ‘made up’, or based on something that a previous enthusiast made up. Like Plato, they are present as fact when in truth they lack any significant empirical evidence and testing Therefore, they rarely stand up to the Diogenes Test.

There is no single agreed definition for any form of coaching, never mind the possible niche of coaching teams. Of course, there may be ‘ideas’ about coaching teams, no doubt some of which are worthy of exploration, and while it would be inappropriate to quote definitions given by others, allow me to make up a couple of apparently reasonable definitions of team coaching such as; a method by which a given number of persons engaged in a collective goal are facilitated to recognise and commit to personal actions toward the achievement of that goal. Or perhaps; the application of a sequential questioning approach to person’s engaged with forms of words that are no more appropriate than Diogenes’ plucked chicken, yet coaches cling to them as if they are the gospel according to ‘whoever’; team coaching, group coaching, management coaching, workplace coaching, life coaching, ... the list goes on, and along with it a growing list of definitions almost universally either simply ‘made up’, or based on something that a previous enthusiast made up. Like Plato, they are present as fact when in truth they lack any significant empirical evidence and testing Therefore, they rarely stand up to the Diogenes Test.

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For example, imagine that a team is mired in a sinkhole of internal politics and each team member has unaddressed personal issues, then consider how some of the proposed team-coaching definitions and approaches might work in these situations? Will a ‘process’ deliver the desired results? Probably not. Will an ‘open discussion about an aligned goal’ end in a successful outcome? Probably not. Whether it be issues of politics, resistance to change, personal problems between team members, unspoken and unacknowledged prejudice within the organisation, or other ‘individual’ barriers to the achievement of a team goal, the successful coach will probably need to take a flexible and masterful approach to the application of coaching technology to be successful. Therefore, be your own expert: If you are going to coach teams then start by refreshing your knowledge about coaching techniques and approaches, and only then formulate an approach that is likely to give you the best possible outcome. Ask yourself tough and insightful questions that push you to move past anything ‘standard’, and instead create your own bespoke methodology applicable to that team of people. I submit that any team coaching definition, or indeed any coaching definition will benefit from being subject to the Diogenes’ Test, because without it there’s a danger that they may end up being as useful as a plucked chicken!

As an entrepreneur, dealing with employees is a critical skill component. You have to make sure you attract the right people, filter them out before hiring them, retaining them for a long period, and ensuring their growth in the job assigned to them. The workforce today is more professional than ever. Even a person working in the most menial of jobs looks at factors such as job satisfaction and the workplace environment when analysing their working experience. As an entrepreneur, dealing with employees is a critical skill component. You have to make sure you attract the right people, filter them out before hiring them, retaining them for a long period, and ensuring their growth in the job assigned to them. The workforce today is more professional than ever. Even a person working in the most menial of jobs looks at factors such as job satisfaction and the workplace environment when analysing their working experience.

### Attractions

The first step in the process to get the best people working for you is attracting them. If your business fails to attract the cream of the crop, how can you expect to hire them? In this regard, this is the most important part of the process. If you manage to get the best people to apply for the vacancies, you can have your choice of the ideal employees you are looking for. Here are some pointers which will help you.

- Place emphasis on what the mission and culture of your business is. The grad students of today specialise in one particular area and if the business culture suits that, they are willing to come on board. If your business wants to educate the highly-educated people, this is something you have to work. For the low-educated personnel, the focus is on work hours, job safety, pay scale, benefits, etc.
- Advertise the benefits and growth opportunities for the position you are seeking applicants for. Candidates, who are looking to work full time (or even part-time) are interested in what their future would be like if they took the job. Unless you make their career path clear from the outset, you would have a hard time retaining employees.
- Make the recruitment messages suitable to the needs of the job. If the position advertised is an entry level one, you don’t need to be verbose or talk about job enrichment and other such things. What this means is that you have to tailor the message you send out to the prospective applicants based on the vacancy.
Hiring & Retaining Employees

Once you have attracted the best possible applicants, hiring them is not too difficult. You have to convince them that working with you is the best thing for them and they will happily sign on. Yet, there are some tips which you must follow when hiring employees. The best part is that the tips also help you retain your best workers.

Offer a Good Pay Packet

Being a growing company, paying high wages comparable to the leaders in the industry is impossible. The basic pay package includes the salary as well as other perks and benefits which you, at this point, cannot afford. What you can do instead is offer stock options, performance-related-bonuses, frequent promotions, a few more holidays off than the minimum allowable, etc., to keep them motivated and satisfied with the financial compensation. Offering a good pay packet does not mean you break your budget.

Accommodate Their Lifestyle

Employees love working at places where their lifestyle is easily accommodated. For instance, the family needs of some people don’t allow them to work the usual 9 to 5 shifts. If you are flexible in terms of working hours, the employee would be more happy to work and keep working for you for a long time. Some of their work might be able to be done virtually; therefore, saving daily drive time can be appealing to motivate and productive employees.

Bolster Job Satisfaction

Over half the people working hate their jobs. One good opportunity and authority with the passage of time. This would also make delegating work easier for you.

Ensure Growth and Development

Happy employees are the key to your business’ growth. However, job satisfaction alone is not enough. You should make sure there are plenty of opportunities for the employee to learn and grow in the job. Like satisfaction, job enrichment is a surefire way of retaining employees for a long time. Offer consistent chances for growth, including promotions, attending special job-related courses, as well as greater responsibility and

Final Word

Employees are the lifeblood of any business, big or small. If you want to take your business to the next level, it is imperative that you find, hire, and retain the best people for your business. Remember, it all starts with attracting the best – right off the bat!

Successful Coaching Leads to GREAT RESULTS

by Gary R. Gasaway (USA)

Most successful organisations consist of managers that have great coaching abilities. These managers are considered great coaches because they can motivate, inspire, overcome obstacles, transform risks into rewards, vision into realities, and values into actions. In other words, they use teamwork to lead their people to great results. But before teamwork, there is team building. One must come before the other. For successful teamwork, effective team building must take place.

Let me define teamwork versus team building: Teamwork is the ability of two or more individuals to work together towards a common vision or goal.

In other words, successful coaches know they must build a team before teamwork to achieve. As a coach, your job includes evaluating the different talents and skills of all your team members and then using each person’s unique strengths to the advantage of the entire team. At the same time, you are expected to motivate and inspire team members and help them stay on track toward achieving team goals.

Successful coaches have abilities to produce achievement in others. They keep the team focused while building members’ confidence, commitment, and trust in themselves and each other. By following enhanced coaching techniques, they can become a better leader and simultaneously assist their team members to reach peak performance.

Let me explain each resource and its importance to the coach:

YOUR TIME

True leadership means getting things done through others. It’s your job to lead your team as a coach. You must depend on your team members to perform. If you try to do too much of the work yourself or if you think only you...
can do it right, then you’re cheating yourself and your team. Furthermore, the team’s results will suffer because you are spending precious time performing routine tasks that your team members should do.

YOUR FINANCES

Your pay is a direct result of how well your team members perform – not specifically what you do. Because your team members actually do the work, they are responsible for the team’s results and ultimately, your pay.

YOUR TEAM MEMBERS

Your people are the unlimited resource. It’s a fact that you need your team members more than they need you. Your job is to lead. Because your time is limited – you cannot conceivably do everything. You need everyone’s help to achieve the team’s goals. Have faith in your team to reach the goals you set.

Using all three resources effectively will lead you and your team to great results.

To create team building, a great coach encourages collaboration. They understand that members of a team working collaboratively with one another can achieve more than working independently. Working in a team building environment allows for effective communication, resolving conflict, direction, focus, setting unified goals, and structure. Coaches realise that in most cases, the use of teamwork leads to desirable performance improvements such as: peak productivity, effectiveness, and higher quality.

Here are (12) components of team building to transform into successful teamwork:

1. Listen to the other team members first, then decide how to respond – this builds trust & mutual respect.
2. Recognise that everyone has an opinion about almost everything – this builds open communication.
3. Acknowledge differences of opinion – this builds flexibility and support for one another.
4. Use effective conflict resolution methods – this builds team confidence to overcome obstacles.
5. Anticipate and adapt to changes – this builds initiative, desire, and a willingness to accept new challenges.
6. Act and communicate in a positive manner – this builds a positive environment.
7. When in doubt about anything, seek clarification – this builds complete understanding.
8. Assumptions are risky; make them only when you have to – this builds commitment to high standards.
9. Clarify where your responsibility stops and starts, and how it fits with that of other team members – this builds purpose and clear roles.
10. Update team members who need to know what you know – this builds a sense of community.
11. If you have an issue or point of disagreement with a team member, tell them, not others – this builds honesty, integrity, and trust.
12. Use a strong sense of collective power – this builds synergistic harmony and enthusiasm.

THE BEST TEAMS ARE BUILT!

It is clear that true high performing teams are built on a foundation of valued components, including: communication, trust, encouragement, mutual respect, enthusiasm, flexibility, positive attitude, and recognising the diversity of individual talents required to accomplish peak performance.

Think of these same components as ingredients of a recipe. If one ingredient is missing or if you measure too much or too little of an ingredient, your results will not be successful. It is with the right combination of these ‘ingredients’ and the correct ‘measurements’ that are the keys to successful results in building teamwork.

If the coach takes the necessary time to get to know and understand all their team members – more importantly, learn what motivates them, they will be well on their way to personal and professional achievement and successfully coaching their team to great results.
Advancement through Collaboration
by Divya Parekh (USA)

Around the turn of the 15th century, John Donne penned his famous poem that started out with the line, “No man is an island.” Donne used the poem to explain how life has people intertwined together in all aspects of life. The connectivity is a great lesson for a professional in any career or organisation. While effective collaboration is the key to propelling a particular project or an entire business forward, it is also significant in advancing your career.

COLLABORATION

In any business or organisation, you need to work with others. They could be employees, clients, consultants, the management team, etc. Frankly, the list can be endless depending on what your company does. I have seen people grudgingly take on collaboration opportunities in a spirit of distrust. A negative attitude is a wrong approach as working with others can greatly enhance the career options presented to you in the future.

You could be collaborating with different people in a group effort. Within your company, it could be someone higher up the hierarchical ladder, a peer, or someone who reports to you. As you should realise by now, a company’s personnel are subject to change. People leave, move up, and, at times, might leapfrog a couple of rungs on the corporate ladder. The point is, whoever you work with during a collaborative project could be in a position now or in the future to help you with your career aspirations. Collaboration is the key to building your circle of influence. People see how you work and how you interact with others. They learn what your abilities are regarding leadership, communication, technical knowledge, etc.

Teamwork principle also comes into play if you are working with others outside of your company. When you are efficient, authentic, and genuinely support others to succeed, you are demonstrating character and talent. Good companies are always looking for great talent. Leaders keep a database of people they meet or work with who impress them. That is also a great concept to adopt for yourself. With the dynamics of many businesses changing rapidly, you could find yourself in a position of needing people right away to help you in your responsibility. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a list of “go to” people you worked closely with in some fashion that you can connect with when you find yourself in a position to hire talented people?

COMPETENCY

Working with others on a specific project allows you to sharpen your skill set. I am going to share a verse that my friend talked about: “As iron
Don’t let procrastination or lack of commitment, drive the performance of your team and company. GROW and LIFT your team and thus, your organisation will grow naturally. Team coaching has developed in Romania since 2006 and since then spread massively among companies. However, there are still managers who might consider team coaching conversation as “wide and broad” rather than the deep dive of an individual coaching conversation.

But is it truly like this?

Let’s test the reality, with Dr. Mihaela Stroe, team coach, author and sociologist, based in Romania, with clients all over the world.

Hello Mihaela and thank you for your time and answers to the questions below! Your feedback would highly benefit our international readers!

Q1 What is team coaching and how did it evolve throughout time in Romania?

Peer-coaching groups or team coaching includes a highly focused group of people (from 6 up to maximum 10/12) from the same organisation.

A coach/facilitator trains group members about how to select a coaching goal, how to get help in groups, how to help others in groups and how to ensure the group process remains focused. Coaching is not so old in Romania. I have personally heard about this concept in 2006 when Sir John Whitmore, the father of performance coaching held a conference.

Therefore, the idea and the necessity of group coaching appeared after the concept of coaching became more solid and reliable for team performance.

Q2 Where is it most applicable (which type of organisations / teams / groups)?

SUMMATION

The relationships you foster through collaboration are invaluable to your future success as an individual. When you mindfully apply all of your skills, talents, and leadership ability in a group effort, you are showcasing your capability as a team player and somebody to be counted on when given responsibility. Whether you are an employee of an organisation consisting of 10 people or 10,000, these attributes are in high demand. People recognise your contribution to team success and believe you are someone to be part of the advancement program or succession planning of the company. Thus, collaboration leads to meaningful relationships as well as organic career advancement.

CONFIDENCE

While achieving the desired goal of the collaborative group, a by-product is that every member of a successful endeavour should grow in ability and confidence. The confidence strengthens from the newest member up to the leader of the group. Confidence is one of those intangibles in life and in business needed for anyone to move up to the next level. While some people seem to radiate a natural confidence in everything, for most of us confidence comes with success. When you accomplish something, it is like a child on an Easter egg hunt. The more he or she collects Easter eggs in their basket, the happier they are and the more eggs they are able to find.
It is most applicable in any organisations/teams or groups that want to strive in the business world, that wants to bring productivity, performance, motivation on board.

It can be used when you want to undertake a complete diagnosis of the team’s culture, using a specific diagnostic tool (I use sociological instruments from Human Synergistics to analyse the organisational culture).

It can be useful to coach a team on a specific process or to specify the team’s vision and long-term business mission. Or it can rapidly introduce the team to a needed collective skill (such as delegation, communication, active listening, time control, productivity).

Also, it can be used to define measurable operational team goals for six months/one year or to make a team 360% inventory (here I collaborate with Hogan Personality Assessment tools).

Let’s not forget the classic tools for coaching, that can be applied successfully in team coaching too: The GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) model, The LIFT (Listen, Identify, Facilitate, Test) Coaching Plan, STEPPA (Subject, Target, Emotion, Perception, Plan) model.

Q: What tools are mostly used for team coaching?

I will state briefly some of the team coaching tools. One of them is “triangulation” which is a behavioural tool that consists in implementing behaviours that will create fluidity in all team interactions.

“Geography management” permits a good overview of the team members’ collective configuration. This geographical positioning of the team members in a meeting context offers a number of indicators that reveal the team’s “real” way of interaction.

“The equal time principle” means to adopt the same stance with all team members, very important tool in this team process. As well as finding commitment indicators, because of the focuses of team coaching concerns the degree of commitment team members have and display towards their team as a system and towards their results. As examples of indicators I use time management indicators, energy management indicators, ethics management indicators.

Q: Team coaching. Please list a few benefits for:

A. Clients: Clients receive diverse forms of feedback and feedforward resulting in more diverse views, opinions and perspectives; get more support and networking; along with getting coached, clients develop core skills in coaching too.

B. Organisations: It is often much easier to have more people get coached and do so more quickly across the organisation; group coaching can be much less expensive and it is much easier to use it for organisational development because effective organisation development always gets done by teams rather than by individuals.

C. Coaches: You as a coach use extensively your observation and listening skills, your intuition, you gain strategic competence to know how and when to progressively introduce a new frame and you get a lot of practice and experience.

Q: Team coaching vs. Individual coaching. Why & When to favour one against the other? This choice is made according to the size of the organisation. It is obvious that when you have a small organisation, it is needed the individual coaching because you can choose the managers you believe that must get coached, you set up business objectives and then the coaching process starts. Another way when you can use individual coaching is when you have newly appointed managers or persons that you identify that they have high potential for improvement.

Of course, when you have a large organisation, with various layers of management, team coaching are more challenging. Using group coaching you can improve faster organisational development.

Q: Timeline. How soon can changes be seen by clients and organisations?

The timeline varies from one organisation to another. From my experience the changes can be seen in a time frame of three months up to six months if the group is committed to organisation improvement.

Q: Romanian vs. World. From your perspective, is there any difference in team coaching between Romanian market and the international one? If yes, which main differences do you see, in terms of organisations/clients’ attitude and behaviour?

From my perspective, there is no much difference in the team coaching done in Romania and the one done at the international level. We use similar methods and Romanian coaches are well trained as other international coaches. The difference that I perceive is at the level of how organisations behave in Romania and how their attitude is so much different than in other countries. In Romania we need to be more proactive and to ask for help when our organisation needs improvement (to ask for individual and group coaching) and not to procrastinate and lose time waiting for the problems to be solved. Your people, well coached, will solve any issues, so my kind advice is to invest in coaching programs for performance.

One of my success stories is with a client (a production company) which was passing a period of massive change (they were sold to a bigger company). Their need was to stay accountable to be a great asset and to have high productivity in the production. Therefore, I worked for 3 months with the top management team (12 representatives at that time) and had several group coaching meetings. During this period, they managed to increase their productivity, they remained accountable for selling and they became a stronger management team with great communication and with high commitments.

Q: Success stories. And so do we. Please tell us one/two success stories that you had with your clients with the use of team coaching.

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Challenges that team coaches can face when working with conservative clients and ways to overcome them.

Lack of commitment is one of the challenges in team coaching. One way to overcome this is to help the team members to find their meaning and their purpose in what they are doing as a team. Like this they will be motivated and willing to put in the hard yards to achieve their team’s goal. 

Procrastination is another one. One of the best ways teams can work around this stumbling block is to break their common goal down into manageable sizes – mini goals. They should then create a timeline that clearly states when their mini goals should be achieved. How do you eat an elephant? Piece by piece!

Lack of direction is another challenge with many clients. When a group has little idea of what they want to achieve, it can be quite challenging for a coach to assist the group to discover what they want to achieve. When a group has little idea of what they want out of their group coaching relationship. 

I. Know all your team members very well:

- Their personal, professional, and resourcefulness and increasing the range of options available for action. Most coaches are trained and used for coaching individuals so a shift to coaching teams can open up fresh opportunities and challenges.

II. Define clear roles and responsibilities: I observed that this is a major issue inside teams and it is much easier to clarify these than to reach business results.

III. Learn to offer feed forward: In my book “Why You Should Put Yourself First” (you can find it on my blog www.mhelastrae.com) I dedicate a whole chapter to the art of feed forward, how to offer it, why to offer it. Very simply put: rather than providing positive or negative feedback, feed forward consists in providing future-oriented options or solutions.

ABOUT CRISTINA NICOLETA BURCA

Cristina has contributed to the iCN magazine since 2014, by interviewing coaches around the world to shed a light in this fascinating personal and professional development field. Cristina worked as a journalist in Romania (2006-2008) and then moved to Brussels to work in EU affairs. After an international journey in PR, taking her from Germany to Malaysia, she is now working with a EU agency based in Poland.

Team Coaching – A New Frontier

by Nick Wright (UK)

INTRODUCTION

Team coaching is emerging fast as a new area of interest and experience for coaches who work with people in organisations. There are a number of reasons for this, most notably perhaps a growing recognition that:

- **Potential**: The performance of a great team can often outstrip the performance of individuals or teams who work in isolation from each other.

- **Influence**: People and teams can affect each other significantly in terms of e.g. their thoughts, feelings, engagement, behaviour and performance.

This raises interesting and important questions about how team coaching can add value and how to do it in practice. I believe a primary goal of team coaching is and should be to enable a team to develop critical reflective practice. This will typically include raising team awareness and insight, enhancing team vision and resourcefulness and increasing the range of options available for action. Most coaches are trained and used for coaching individuals so a shift to coaching teams can open up fresh opportunities and challenges.

In my experience, the greatest advantage of team coaching over individual coaching is the possibility to see, experience and work with the people and dynamics of a team system in the room, even if the ‘room’ is a virtual one of those teams that are geographically dispersed. This here-and-now immediacy provides the team (and coach) with critical opportunities to observe, reflect on and, where needed, take actions to address focus, assumptions, feelings, behaviours, ways of working, impacts etc. in the moment, as they happen.

Conversely, the biggest risks in team coaching can be that the coach may become over-involved in the system, inadvertently collusive or find that dynamic within the team (e.g. hostility) are projected onto the coach so that the coach becomes a proverbial ‘lightning rod’. This means that awareness of and ability to work with group dynamics, social constructs and systems thinking can be invaluable tools in the coach’s toolkit, as can be use-of-self where the coach draws on his or her own experience in and of the group to create insight.

Some team coaches prefer to work with a colleague so that one will facilitate the team conversation while their peer will focus on team dynamics. Other coaches work alone and draw on an external supervisor to review, reflect and plan their strategies and interventions.

TEAM FRAMEWORK

In providing team coaching in a variety of different organisations, sectors and cultures, I have noticed recurring themes and patterns that have an impact on team inspiration and effectiveness. I have formulated them into a flexible team coaching framework. As coach, I...
may introduce this framework and invite team members to consider and discuss how clear and agreed they are in each area. If they are not clear or not in agreement, I will invite them to discuss and agree how to resolve any gaps or tensions that arise.

Before stepping into the framework, however, I will focus on contracting with the team (having contracted with the team leader or sponsor beforehand) around e.g. ‘Why this, why now?’, what we are here to do, what success will look and feel like, what we will focus our attention on, and feel like, what we will focus our attention on together, how we will do this piece of work, what our respective roles will be, what we will need from ourselves and each other to do this well. This models the principles of the framework that follow. I draw it on a Flipchart as a loose structure for conversation.

### 1 Context

The team exists in a place and time, not in a vacuum. A key question, then: ‘How clear and agreed are we about the wider organisation’s vision, strategy, values and (desired) culture?’ The areas that follow below are in relation to answers to these fundamental dimensions.

### 2 Purpose (Why?)

A central question: ‘What are we (as a team) here to do?’ Other questions could include, e.g. ‘What is our role/calling?’, ‘What do we want to achieve?’, ‘What do we know and understand about each other?’, ‘What passions and expertise do we have?’, ‘How can we best draw on them?’ and ‘What is the quality of trust between us?’

### 3 Content (What?)

A key question: ‘What should we focus our attention on?’ Other questions could include, e.g. ‘What are our priorities?’, ‘What would be the best use of our time together?’, ‘What questions should we address?’ and ‘What assumptions are we making?’

### 4 Method (How?)

A key question: ‘How shall we do this?’ Other questions could include, e.g. ‘What ways would be most effective?’, ‘What methods would most inspire and engage us (and others)?’, ‘What needs to happen first?’ and ‘Is this the best place and time to do this?’

### 5 People (Who?)

I also introduce simple flags or warning signs for the team to look out for as it works on tasks together. I have created a simple 4D list that corresponds to areas 2-5 above. For example:

- **Dulled:** If the team feels like it has lost its zest and inspiration, revisit ‘Purpose’.
- **Distracted:** If the team feels like its meetings lack useful focus, revisit ‘Content’.
- **Disengaged:** If team members feel bored or frustrated together, revisit ‘Method’.
- **Dismissed:** If team members ignore each other’s input and ideas, revisit ‘People’.

### PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

An important implication of this approach is that team members must be willing and able to develop and exercise significant personal leadership. This includes, for instance, being willing to: listen and speak up; pay attention to their own feelings and to their own part in what happens (or doesn’t happen) in the team; be proactive in addressing issues and dynamics that arise. It is the direct opposite of a passive mindset and team culture. It can feel risky and it demands courage, humility and a willingness to negotiate with colleagues.

In my experience, learning to exercise greater personal leadership in the context of a team is often the most transformative aspect of team development. If a team member says, ‘I’m bored in this meeting’, I may respond as team coach in a spirit of curiosity with questions such as, ‘What’s your contribution to what you are experiencing?’ and ‘What do you need to bring your best to this?’

Over time, the team member may respond with something like, ‘I’m being too passive’ and (to the team) ‘Could we try to do this X way instead?’

### FURTHER READING

For further resources on the team coaching topic, have a look at:

- **Peter Hawkins**, Leadership Team Coaching (2014)
- **David Clutterbuck**, Coaching the Team at Work (2007)
- **Christine Thornton**, Group and Team Coaching (2016)

### ABOUT NICK WRIGHT

**Nick Wright** is a leadership coach and organisation development consultant. He has a masters degree in Human Resource Development, a post-graduate diploma in Coaching Psychology and is a Fellow of the Institute of Training & Occupational Learning. Nick blogs regularly and has over 100 articles published in people-related fields.
Great leaders know that without a high level of interdependence teams lack the cohesion, focussed drive and combined might to achieve great things.

But here’s the big misconception; that teams achieve more when there is a balance and an absence of conflict.

Let us first consider Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow split needs into two distinct levels.

1. Deficiency needs, such as our physical needs, security, belonging and esteem.
2. And higher level needs of self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

Without the lower level needs being met we will be unable to progress to the higher level needs.

However, we need more than just to achieve our deficiency needs, we need to master them. And this is the key point which too many people forget.

To have our deficiency needs met would put us in a place of balance, but for growth, we require a mastery of the interplay between the various needs.

This is more akin to a Tony Robbin’s version of the 6 Human Needs where we attain growth through the interplay between certainty and uncertainty.

Balance has been variously described as a state in which competing influences are in equilibrium, resulting in no net change. Or where any movement forward or backwards results in a zero force, ie, a body at rest. The balance then is equivalent to a passive state of inertness, stagnation and zero growth.

So, the last thing we need is balance. What we actually need is a healthy tension. So much then for eliminating conflict.

This, of-course, is very different to inviting dysfunction into our lives or organisations.

1. Clear signs of dysfunction would be too much agreement (too much balance) which could indicate a lack of motivation, inspiration or engagement.
2. While disagreement that becomes too personal could indicate an unhealthy attachment, fixed mindset or one-sided outlook that can be stifling for the individual or the business, and lead to a breakdown of trust.

There are practical steps for a coach/leader in developing high performing teams:

1. Awareness raising. The job of the true leader is to enable awareness raising and an understanding of personality types within the team, in order to benefit from the interplay. A great mechanism for doing this is through DISC personality profiling, which looks at our individual personalities in relation to our environment. See my book DISCover the Power of You: How to cultivate personal, practice are the watch words here.

2. Focused attention. This is where the team channel their energies towards those aspects relevant to the current situation or environment. It is not uncommon for change processes to fall short at this stage if the team have not defined the reward for going through the change process sufficiently, or indeed if the reward is not a strong enough motivator to drive up the teams dopamine levels and so (combined with low cortisol) allows for that inquisitive state required for the next stage, that of open and honest reflection.

3. Reflect on values, beliefs and habits. This is where a good coach will be able to get the team to reflect on and consider the current situation and how their values, beliefs and habits have got them to where they are now. It is extremely important at this stage not to fall into denial or blaming others. The team needs to accept responsibility for their own journey focussing on the big ‘why’, values, beliefs and key habits.

4. Identifying limiting beliefs. The coach will help the team to identify which of their beliefs or habits are no longer supporting them and so blocking them from the high performance sought? So which of their beliefs or habits have become limiting. This can be an emotionally draining and difficult stage that requires a determined yet supportive coach, but without this support becoming a form of collusion that can knock the team into denial or blame.

5. Challenge and commit. This is where the team will need to be willing to challenge their own limiting beliefs or habits. If they are beliefs, they will need to start to reframe them to become more supportive and beneficial alternatives. If they are habits they will need to start creating new habits. This is where the team will really step outside their comfort zone and into their stretch zone.

6. Act. This is where the team needs to be brave enough to act on what is right, not on what is easy. This will require a high level of self and team awareness, and will require high levels of focus attention and energy. This is not a one off activity, but repetitive, which can result in a fight or flight response; attack without consideration which can result in a loss of focus and wasted energy and resources; or withdrawal and procrastination so stagnation or decline.

DISC is an extremely powerful tool that has the potential, especially when further strengthened by new findings in the brain sciences, to drive effective communication and support personal, team and leadership development.

DISCover the Power of You: How to cultivate change for positive and productive cultures lends you through a powerful journey of self-discovery, one that shows you the importance of self-awareness, how to create a culture where staff can perform at the highest level and more importantly a culture where staff feel rewarded, and empowered to make a difference. Andrew Green, CEO Brighton Film School and Deputy Principal, Chichester College

Having raised the team’s awareness sufficiently so they are able to accept the need for change and the need for new strategies for doing so will reduce stress levels sufficiently to identify the rewards change will bring. This in turn will enable the focused attention required to reflect and identify the key limiting beliefs holding the team back.

The team will be well placed then to challenge those beliefs in order to take the required and focussed action. This is a repetitive process (over and over) that will escalate any team to greater and greater success.

Robert has been published in TheCulturalTimes and The Coaching Academy eBlog pages, and Author of DISCover the Power of You. Robert is also a Speaker, having spoken on art, business and self-transformational issues, from the Holywood Arts Society, to the National Consortium of Colleges (NCC), the old Learning and Skills Council (LSC) forums, the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) events across the country, and a raft of individual institution and provider annual conferences.

He is also a highly experienced Trainer. He analyse, design and deliver learning and development programs, including a range of leadership and management aspects, equality and diversity, coaching and importantly DISC personality profiling that can focus on customer service, sales or communications.
The World is Smaller Than You Think
by Bradley Chapman (UK)

So the world is smaller than you think, but not everybody else sees it at the moment. Why?

Many of us are trading internationally and indeed we are connecting internationally, but so many are not. I asked myself, how can I open people’s minds to the fact that your business is global whether you like it or not?

Ok, let’s talk about the World just for a moment. Right now at the start of this article you may not be quite sure where it’s going and what it could mean to you and indeed how you could act upon this article to connect your business to the World right?

Well, that’s exactly what happened when I spoke on stage yesterday at a small business show in Witham, Essex UK yesterday. I came on to the stage where, usually I would give an inspirational and motivational speech that would light up the audience, engaging them in a way that empowers them to take Immediate action in their lives and their businesses, and I love that.

As I came out on stage the room was full of people, looking back at me waiting for me to start my speech titled the world is smaller than you think. I started to speak and engage the audience and tell them a story of a vision that I had for an idea called “Business Twinning”, they looked back at me with blank faces.

As I began to speak and explain to the audience that the World is actually smaller than you think, there was a look of surprise on their faces. I began to talk and explain to them that not everybody will see it, not everybody will understand it and in fact there would probably only be two or three people in the audience who would take action immediately action and seize the opportunity to reach and connect a global audience. You see we all have self-limiting beliefs in our lives and in our businesses. It is the self-limiting beliefs that stops us and can prevent us from growing our businesses and growing ourselves as business owners. It is only what we do not understand and what we cannot first see that can stop us from developing our global connectivity awareness.

In the World right now and indeed for business owners it is getting tougher, and that is a fact. In order for us to grow and develop and secure our position on a global business platform we have to be more creative now than ever before.

You may be reading my article and you may not yet be able to see why you would benefit from global connectivity. I have been talking about Business Twinning for some time. It’s been about 6 weeks since I came up with the idea. Since then I have been able to connect with and enjoy a global audience. A global audience that has opened up new possibilities and it has given me a greater range of global connectivity that I could have ever imagined.

There are many reasons why you may wish to start connecting your business globally, but for me it is number ten that intrigues me the most.

1. Increased business Revenue.
2. Greater number of global connections.
3. Discuss your business with other business owners in similar businesses from different parts of the World.
4. To open an exit route for your business.
5. To increase your advertising potential and business reach.
6. To develop yourself and your understanding of business and life in different parts of the world.
7. To share your passion and purpose with a global audience.
8. To collaborate with another country.
9. To become a part of a group of global directors’ group, sharing, collaborating and helping each other grow.
10. 100 other reasons that you cannot see right now.

So now that we have opened our minds to the possibility of what we could achieve globally. Let’s look at the most important one which in my humble opinion is number 10. Number 10 is the one that most people will not and cannot possibly see. It is number 10 that stops many people from reaching out to connect on a global scale. What is the reason for this? It is simply the fact that so many will not and do not and cannot look past what we first see.

We do not know what could happen when we start to reach out on a global scale. We really do not understand at the start of the journey the possibility of the beauty that lies ahead. But if we never start the journey will never see the beauty of the World, never experienced the possibilities that exist and indeed we will not grow and fully develop ourselves and our businesses.

The reason that I am talking to you today is that I started to reach out to the World and in the process of my Facebook Live broadcasts, my entries on LinkedIn, my blogs and other social media has brought me to ICN.

During a broadcast I met a young man from New York. We spoke, I interviewed him online and he introduced me to the three men in Missouri St Louis USA. One of those men recommended me to Gerard O’ Donovan CEO of the Noble Manhattan Coaching. I reached out to Gerard, we had a chat on Skype and a coffee and the next minute this article has been created. You see the world is smaller than you think. You might not say right now that twinning your business with a business owner in another country might be beneficial, but I promise you that it is.

Going back to my stage speaking event yesterday when 90% of the audience looked back at me with open mouths. I said to them that it would only take one or two people from this audience to step forward and ask me more about global connectivity and how I achieved it. Those people would see it and would take action and the others would not be able to look past what they first see at this stage.

Two people did come up to me after the speech and asked to sit down with me and talk about global connectivity. They took immediate action and most importantly, they saw it, they understood it and they recognised the benefits of global connectivity. Would you like to sit down with me and find out how I can help your business to connect globally?

It’s Your Time to Shine. To Your Success

ABOUT BRADLEY CHAPMAN

Bradley Chapman
Founder – The Diamond Experience
Global Business

◊ Coaching Global Business Coach
◊ Published Author
◊ Inspirational Speaker
◊ Broadcaster
◊ Journalist
◊ Expert Team Builder

Expert Team Builder

Global Business Coach

Published Author

Inspirational Speaker

Broadcaster

Journalist

Expert Team Builder
Tips for Building a Team that Leads To Your Success
by Anne M. Bachrach (USA)

If you want to learn how to build a team that builds success, you will want to take a look at the big picture. Take any successful entrepreneur, and behind him or her, you will find a well-suited team of supportive, knowledgeable, and energetic members all dedicated to increasing the success of the business.

For building a team that builds success, you should first pinpoint the mission of the business. Only when you have a clear understanding, as a leader, of the mission of the business, can you build the right team. When you can clearly identify and emotionally connect with the mission, you are able to identify the right people who are best-suited to support the success of the business.

Depending on the mission statement of the business, you may need to focus on building a team of creatives, analytics, intellectuals, or spiritualists. For example, a PR (public relations) firm would not necessarily build a team of spiritualists; that personality would be better suited for a business that is motivational or inspirationally based. A PR firm would more likely hire creatives and intellectuals. Another example of personality matching would be an accounting firm; they would look to build a team of analytical members, not necessarily creatives or spirituals.

Always start with the mission of the business, and then build your team. Let’s say you need an assistant to travel with you to help you with live events such as seminars and guest appearances. An important personality factor would be to ensure the team member has the following qualities:

- Reliable and punctual
- A great organiser
- Keeps you calm under times of stress
- Takes care of the small details so you don’t have to
- Loves travelling
- Love meeting new people
- Has a personable, magnetic personality

**ACTION STEP #1**

Revisit your professional mission statement. If it does not “sit right” with you or is not specific enough, rewrite it. Your mission statement should always begin with benefit(s) to your clients (and who those clients are), followed by a reason(s). It should always invoke some meaning for you, as in a passion or a personal mission.

For example, “ABC International is dedicated to providing expert overseas investment advice to small business owners (less than 20 employees) in the U.S. and Canada so they can increase their wealth, leverage their financial worth and grow their business.”
Learning to become clear on the strengths and weaknesses of the business can make a huge difference in its success. Taking a piece of paper, draw a line down the middle. List the strengths of the left and weaknesses on the right. For instance, say your client base is not growing as fast as you would like because you are not effective at closing sales. Potential clients like you, and the service offers, but don’t pull out their wallet.

In this case, hiring a team member that is adept at closing the sale would be highly desired. They would need to have an out-going, personable personality, backed up with a solid sales record. You would not want to hire someone who is shy, introverted or less than confident.

On the other hand, if you need someone to handle the administrative back-end, you will want to hire a team member who is detail-oriented, prefers to stay behind the scenes, and exhibits a reliable consistency.

Understanding your own personal strengths and weaknesses can give you a clear picture of what is missing from your business, and why it is not growing. A business must contain all the pieces necessary for it to grow and prosper. If you are missing just one piece, it will not be operating at its potential.

Just as you did with your business’s strengths and weaknesses, you will do for yourself and your team members. You can ask your team members to participate, by creating their own lists, but examine them with an objective eye because most people can’t see or will not be honest about their strengths or weaknesses.

When things don’t go as planned or operate at their most effective level, note where the breakdown happened and look for patterns. If you can attribute a breakdown to a specific team member, then you can pinpoint a weakness. Of course, the same goes for strengths.

As a business owner, it is important to be observant of the strengths and weaknesses of your team. This is why it’s vital to keep a running strength and weakness list for you and your team. Revisit the list at least once per quarter and update it as needed. Consistently refine processes and procedures that employ the strengths of you and your team, while minimising the weaknesses. The more consistent you are in this endeavour the more efficient and effective your business will grow.

Are you worried about how a potential candidate will fit in with an existing team? While this is a viable consideration, it should not make or break your decision. You, better than anyone, know what your business needs to succeed. The bottom line is that your team needs to learn how to work as a team - and you should support them in achieving that goal. If by chance you have a team with conflict, do not let it go unnoticed. Address it immediately by listening to the concerns of the team and then offering constructive solutions.

Additionally, take into consideration the kind of personality you tend to gravitate towards. Do you enjoy being with people who are: Funny? Serious? Energetic? Go-getter? Talker or silent-type? Make a list of the kind of personality you tend to enjoy the most and then look for those additional traits in candidates.

Unfortunately, interviews are not the ideal situations to explore personality traits, since potential candidate is generally nervous, but you could ask them to complete a personality profile as part of the application process. There are several sources for free or low-cost personality screens, but the Myers-Briggs Personality (MBP) Test is best suited for career related insight.

In this case, best suited for career related insight.

You may have to do some experimenting to find the right match, but if you pay attention, you will build a team that supports you - and each other. For example, say a team member is great behind the scenes, but chokes in public settings. They may be better suited to the office, responsible for administrative tasks such as bookkeeping, emails and answering phones. At the same time, if you have a team member that gets bored easily, appoint them to be your assistant. Take them with you on the road, give them a variety of duties that change from day to day, and put them on the spot with last minute errands. That will keep them on their toes, and their boredom at bay.

You’ll find that your business runs far more efficiently when you have properly assigned your team members to tasks that suit their personality and feed their interests. Boredom and complacency is one of the fastest ways to kill the success of your business.

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When building a team that builds success, think about the areas of your business where you struggle and could obviously use the help. Make a list of those tasks you would like or need help with and then look for those strengths in potential candidates.

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Team Coaching Essentials
– Powerful Knowledge Applied from Systemic Constellations

by Noomi Melchior Natan (UK)

In this article I will share with you how what I learned from training in Family and Organisational Constellations made me a much more efficient team coach and consultant. In fact, this knowledge, although it might seem basic, has helped me untie knots in relationship dynamics that normal talking therapy or conversations about “ground rules” could never have solved.

Let me start with a personal story. A few years ago, I found myself in an embarrassing situation. I was sitting in a grey metal conference chair when it dawned on me. I was one of those “difficult” participants I hated as a coach. I was angry and I was crying. Let me start with a personal story. A few years ago, I found myself in an embarrassing situation. I was sitting in a grey metal conference chair when it dawned on me. I was one of those “difficult” participants I hated as a coach. I was angry and I was crying. I did not get it. Here I was on a course that I really wanted to be on. I had stretched financially beyond what was comfortable and I had been jumping for joy about being part of this community. So why was I acting out?

To understand this we have to remember that as human beings, we are wired to want to belong. Belonging to a group or a tribe is one of our primary human needs because it guarantees our survival. And if you think back to old tribal societies you will know how important it is, not just to belong, but also to be in the “right place”. Traditionally, the strong will defend the tribe, the weaker will be protected. Being in the place that fits your strengths is essential, not just for you, but for the well being of the whole tribe.

So let’s return to me sitting angry and embarrassed in that conference chair. What prevented me from engaging in a productive way? See I was by far the most experienced in the subject matter of the group. So on the continuum of expert knowledge – I was the ranking in the hierarchy (not including the teacher). Most of the others were complete novices. At the same time I was by far the youngest in the group. So on the continuum of age – I was the lowest ranking. That meant I was simultaneously the “weakest” and the “strongest” in the hierarchy and that made it hard for me to find my place in the group.

What is the one thing you should always have front of mind when you are coaching a team? For me, it’s remembering that even though everyone might show up in their suits, clean-shaven with their professional facial expressions that don’t give much away in terms of true feelings, everyone is first and foremost a human being. And that means that, even in a work scenario, even if it is the top team meeting in a conference room, everyone in the team has basic human needs that will play out.

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Thankfully the leader of my course was experienced in Family Constellations and saw how I struggled with finding my right place. She did something that sounds simple, but really shifted my behaviour and feelings. At an appropriate moment she publicly acknowledged my experience and professional study in this field in front of the whole group. Once she did that I could relax and focus. I no longer had to fight to get others to see how much I knew. My age can be told by looking at my face. But my knowledge and experience can’t. If this had been back in the old tribal days what I was doing was fighting for my survival and the respect that befitted my experience. This is still our driving force as humans, although mostly completely unconsciously.

When everyone feels like they have found their right place in a group, team or organisation it is like order is restored and, rather than fighting to be seen, people can focus on participating in a useful way.

So as a coach it is essential you understand the multi-dimensions of hierarchy. Our job as coaches is first and foremost to help everyone find their right place in the team. Unless you do this first, ground rules written on flipchart paper will be worthless as soon as the team day is over, the conversations about how to communicate better will mean nothing because unconscious power games will still be playing out as people are fighting for their place.

When I get called in to work with a high-level team, the first thing I do is to make the multi-dimensional hierarchy visible. First, I get the team to line up in a circle – 12 noon is the position of the leader or the ranking member of the hierarchy. Then the rest organise themselves clock-wise in a circle, so that the “lowest ranking” stands at 11 o’clock. I ask the team to stand in the order of the length of time served on the team or in the organisation. Very often the person who has been with the team the longest might be the lowest ranking in terms of the official organisational hierarchy.
Then I get them to line up in a circle in terms of age. Age is a taboo in our society, but it is just a fact that those that are older have lived more days. Then a line-up in terms of experience in a relevant subject matter (e.g. years of sales experience) or time spent in their industry (e.g. years in FMCG).

For each circle line up I check to see how every person feels in their place. Ask them what they notice about their own place and about others. How do they feel standing in ranking places and “lower” in the circle. Does it change how they see others? And lastly, I get them to line up in the circle according to the official organisational hierarchy.

This circle exercise brings up lots of feelings for people. Most people will have many places in the circle. E.g. the official leader, might be the newest person in the team, and so lowest ranking in terms of time with the team. Once you complete it people see each other differently and feel different. It’s subtle but powerful. It settles the energy in the team and allows the real team coaching to begin.

When you notice someone in a team that seems to be “fighting to be seen”, seeking attention as they are trying to say: See me, see me, do what my program leader did. Our natural inclination will be to ignore the person. But just like a child that gets ignored gets louder and more annoying, so do adults.

So instead, see if you can figure out what they need to be acknowledged for. It might be their experience or extensive knowledge on a topic or it might be the personal sacrifice they are making to be present. Then when you find a suitable moment, publicly say — if you don’t already know, you might really find it useful to listen to what Susan has to say because although she is new in our team she has been working in PR with top companies for 17 years so we can learn a lot from her.

Then – just like me in on that course – the loud person can concentrate on being a productive team member.

No successful big business owner is an island. You can keep a business running by yourself, but if you are ready to achieve growth, if you are ready to expand, then you need a team surrounding you.

However, you cannot hire just anyone to work with you. Your team must be specifically suited to your business. They need to fit into your culture, they need to have the skills the company needs and that no one else on the team has.

There is a recruitment process that we devised that helps towards this end. However, beyond learning how to hire the right people, here are five other important elements I have identified that distinguish truly winning teams from failing ones.

1. **Exhibit Strong Leadership**
   They say a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. While it is true that the lower boundary is set by the weakest member, the upper boundary is set by the leader – and that may not be the strongest member.

   It is important to hire team members who are better than you in the areas that they are hired for. This means that, as a team, you can achieve more. However, if you are unable to lead them and direct the flow of that teamwork towards the goals of the business, their strengths will be either unused or wasted.

2. **Communicate The Organisation’s Goal**
   And what is leadership without a goal to strive for? No matter what your skills as a leader, if you do not know what path you are leading them down, you are not taking them down the most successful route.

   Everyone on your team should know what they are aiming for individually, and how their goals contribute to the larger goal of the business. If you were to ask each of your team members what was the goal for the next quarter, or the next year, would they answer similarly? Would their answer match your answer?

3. **Establish Non-Negotiable Rules of the Game**
   If they have a “sense” of it, then that is not enough – in an organisation, everyone should have absolute clarity on what the common goal is.
This is not the guidelines or the culture or values system; I consciously use the term ‘rules of the game’ because we really are playing a professional game here.

Your business is not a gathering of family members where it is a bit fuzzy and emotional. Even if you run a family-owned business, when it comes to the times you are operating the business, you are not acting as family members at those times. We are professionals and we are playing roles in this business. Good feelings augment that in the best way, but at the core this is a professional sport.

What you are aiming for here is a “loose-tight culture”. You should set some clear boundaries for what is acceptable and then within those boundaries, the culture should be loose and innovative. The best teams have the room to be creative, to take risks and to try new things, while keeping within limits of what is non-negotiable to ensure that innovation is directed towards results and not simply wasted energy.

Setting these rules is not the entirety of this tip though. The rules of sports are not just written down; if a player goes outside a boundary, there is a clearly defined consequence. What those consequences are for your business you must decide for yourself. They will be different depending on the kind of boundaries you have set, the kind of team you have and the effect on the business.

But what is important is does your team know what the consequences are for not playing within the rules of your game? Talk is easy, but can you implement?

**4 Formulate an Action Plan**
With strong leadership, a common goal and a set of boundaries for success set up you now need to make sure you have a clear action plan in place. Knowing where you are headed is quite a bit different from knowing how you are going to get there.

In the end, you are not managing a team, you are managing their activities. This means you need to lay out a plan for the business and then, importantly, share that plan with your team. Sit down with them and run over how that cascades down to each of them. Where are their responsibilities? What are they accountable for? What do they have ownership of?

Remember that business is a professional game and this is a team sport. There are few team sports where the players go out there and wing it; each has their position on the field and a role in the play that the coach and captain have agreed upon to try and win. Sometimes roles need to shift as a curve ball change where the critical action is, but then they return to their core responsibilities when the game readjusts.

There needs to be a moment – multiple moments – throughout the year where you pause and reflect on your plan. Business owners need to do this once a quarter (as we do with our clients in the Strategic Growth Intensive) and include their team members to ensure they are aligned with the plan, working together, and are clear about the common goal.

**5 Manage Your Team Effectively**
The final tip understands that management is what pushes a team forward. Leadership pulls a team together, but it is through management that you accelerate them.

The distinction between management and leadership is an important one that many business owners miss. Many business owners are great leaders and need to work on their management skills and vice versa, so it is an important element to become familiar with if you want to run a winning team.

One is not better than the other, but they are distinct with their own functions and activities. In a nutshell, management is about making sure that the preparations are in place, that the systems are operating properly and that the proper leverage is being obtained to drive the team and the business forward.

Where your leadership is in explaining to your team WHY they are doing what they do, your management comes in when you are explaining to them HOW they are achieving the goals of the company.

There are, of course, hundreds of elements that affect how and why a team fails or succeeds. However, by keeping a focus on these 6 areas, you will build a very strong foundation for creating the kind of team that scores goals and win results for your business.
Teams and Team Coaching
by Veronica Wantenaar
(South Africa)

Team coaching is designed to help the individuals in the team to work together to achieve the organisational results. The objective is to bring forward the strengths of each individual in the team so that the ‘whole is greater than the sum of the parts’. There is a theory that there is no I in team, but in fact that is not the case. Everyone in the team needs to be bringing their best game if there is to be real achievement and success.

The basis of success in business today is the quality of the relationships that we hold with our colleagues and our clients. We can function more effectively if those relationships are strong.

Tuckman introduced the stages of a team as:

> Forming
> Storming
> Norming
> Performing and later Reforming

This is a natural cycle that teams go through and coaching can be a tool to assist in moving the teams more quickly through the first three stages into the Performing stage. Ongoing coaching can assist to keep the team ‘Performing’ whilst they are going through the natural changes that take place in any organisation. People enter the team, others leave and then of course change happens!

The Forming stage is true for new teams and special project teams. For most organisations the teams are in place and they are somewhere between the other stages so taking a coaching approach can ensure that the team is regularly brought together to look at themselves, their work, their relationships and their challenges in a positive and open way. They become their own solution providers and have the satisfaction of moving from being an ordinary team towards a self-managing or self-directed one.

Patrick Lencioni has conducted extensive research to identify the principles of what makes a cohesive team (Lencioni 2002):

- The basis of working effectively as a team is therefore trust.

> Trust

When trust is low the cost is high because people are slow to respond to what is requested or needed. They are busy questioning the reasoning behind the request. That has a cost in terms of time and wasted resources. When trust is high people respond to requests immediately and that means there is a greater efficiency and shorter term turn around.

> Managing Conflict

Conflict is inevitable in a team and it can in fact be very constructive if it produces new thinking and perspectives. During the Storming team stage there is often conflict as individuals start to question their roles, the roles and responsibilities of others and even the goals that they are working towards. Having a process in place to agree mechanisms for handling conflict before it arises is very useful. It becomes easier to objectify the problem and to have a solution focused approach.

> Commitment

A united team will deliver consistent results and that means there is a greater efficiency and shorter term turnaround. When trust is low the cost is high because people are slow to respond to what is requested or needed. They are busy questioning the reasoning behind the request. That has a cost in terms of time and wasted resources. When trust is high people respond to requests immediately and that means there is a greater efficiency and shorter term turn around.

> Accountability

From commitment to the team comes the individuals’ accountability. This is the ‘I in Team’. Each one is now responsible for delivering their part of the whole team. They will have a sense of responsibility to their colleagues that will drive them beyond the organisational goals.

> Results

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THE ROLE OF COACHING

Bringing a coaching approach into the team will provide them with regular check in points along the journey.

Using our Integral+ Systems approach, we work with teams on both an individual and collective basis. If the team is at the forming stage we focus on them gaining clarity about the organisation, its vision and strategy to create the big picture. We then work with the team to align their goals and objectives with those of the business. Delivery by the team will contribute to delivery in the organisation.

We then work with the team on identifying the values and behaviours that they want to adopt as a team (again aligned with the organisation’s values). This opens up conversations amongst the team members, creates shared meaning and consensus. Handling conflict is then built into this part of the process so that there mechanism in place for the future, both for task and behavioural conflict. Moving the team to consensus and commitment builds stronger relationships.
Working on accountability takes the individuals back to their individual roles. Regular team coaching sessions, then enable the team to look at what is working, what is not working and what can they do differently. It allows space for recognition and celebration of success (what is working), the opportunity from a positive frame of mind to look at what is not working and take a solution focused approach to what can they do differently. This makes space for change and continuous performance improvement. It does not just stick with the status quo. What made them a high performing team has now become the norm so there is a need to lift their game, both individually and as a group.

In the pressure of business as usual the team does not have time to step back and reflect objectively on what is happening in their workspace. Short coaching sessions for the team provide that opportunity and can be focussed on whatever is needed for them at any time. As old members leave and new members enter, the coaching provides a supportive environment to make the transitions seamless. New people arrive into a reflective space, one that is used to Reforming and open to the loss of the old person and the benefits of the new person bringing a new perspective. This supports new team members to come up to speed more quickly.

**CONCLUSION**

Team coaching adds to organisational effectiveness. It is a cost effective way to provide support, motivation and ongoing development for a team of people who need to work together in benefit of their department and the organisation.

It adds value to the organisation in terms of continuous performance improvement, reduced staff conflict and the achievement of business objectives.

### ABOUT VERONICA WANTENAAR

*Veronica* has 30 years experience in organisational change consulting and development in the UK, Europe and Africa and she is passionate about seeing individuals and organisations achieve their full potential.

Veronica’s coaching process is built on the integral model and practical change principles. She focuses on optimising the change process to ensure sustainability working with both groups and individuals. She works from the awareness of the need to change through to the reinforcement of new behaviour, creating positive sustainable change.

She uses a combination of coaching, mentoring, facilitation and performance management processes tailored specifically to achieve the client’s/organisation’s stated objectives.

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Tuckman, Bruce, 1965 Developmental Sequence in Small Groups

### Networking for Sales Teams

*by Phil Bedford (UAE)*

**Imagine the scenario**

The board room door closes, the manager says “what are we going to do? Sales are down, marketing budgets have dropped and we need clients or we will have to let some of you go. What can we do that we are not doing already?”

The team starts to mumble and someone offers “Well, how about Networking”.

Reading this, many of you may begin to navigate the emotions that the team members go through. Some think “great idea I love it”, some think ‘tried that, it didn’t work’, some people break into a sweat “I don’t know how and it scares me” or “I didn’t even think of it, what is it? Is that when I fix my computer cables?”

The above is a real scenario. I have been in that room and I think many of you will have also faced similar situations. If not in a board room, then in conversation with yourself when you are thinking of how to get clients. Networking is one of our fundamental human abilities. Still confused? What if I called it Relationship Building for the benefit of yourselves, others and society?

The secret is to approach a networking group like you are trying to build a new circle of friends. We build relationships by helping people, finding commonalities and listening to them. How far would we get if we walked up to a stranger and said “Hi, buy me a drink and pay for my meal”. The networking event is actually the first step in what you do, get as much business as you can or get as many business cards as you can and then follow up with them, get meetings and then close them”. This rather aggressive and unfortunately ineffective strategy is what prevails in the minds of most people who try to network. It’s no wonder people do not enjoy being on the receiving end of this strategy nor in many cases being the deliverer. It’s tough, it’s uncomfortable and it is largely ineffective. You annoy more people that you can ever convert and you may even alienate yourself in future events and damage your brand.

It is worth mentioning here that some people are lucky with the above strategy, but it tends to be the exception and not the norm and it is often once in a while. They could be even more successful if they learned to master the skills. Even a blind squirrel finds a nut once in a while.

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The secret is to approach a networking group like you are trying to build a new circle of friends. We build relationships by helping people, finding commonalities and listening to them. How far would we get if we walked up to a stranger and said “Hi, buy me a drink and pay for my meal”. The networking event is actually the first step in what you do, get as much business as you can or get as many business cards as you can and then follow up with them, get meetings and then close them”. This rather aggressive and unfortunately ineffective strategy is what prevails in the minds of most people who try to network. It’s no wonder people do not enjoy being on the receiving end of this strategy nor in many cases being the deliverer. It’s tough, it’s uncomfortable and it is largely ineffective. You annoy more people that you can ever convert and you may even alienate yourself in future events and damage your brand.
the process of building business relationships that could convert into business, but could also grow into information and support resources for you. This does take time though and so it’s better to think of networking as investing in a high interest bank account where you can only draw once you have made deposits and allowed it to grow, not a slot machine.

Still don’t believe me how powerful it is? Then do a study of all your current clients and where they came from. 90% of businesses will agree that a very significant part of their new client base is gained through relationships. One of the most important business tips you will ever get is “if it’s working well, do more of it”

For bigger business who have always had a significant marketing budget, for CEO’s who have always had sales teams to do the sales for them the thought of networking strategically can be alien and just a nice extra. It is however, a significant and largely untapped resource.

For smaller business owners and one-man bands such as coaches, solopreneurs and small businesses the ability to leverage this cost effective and abundant resource could be the difference between survival and hitting your dreams or going back to the rat race.

For a final reality checks take a look at the nearest person to you right now, it could be a stranger it could be your partner. Most people know up to 150 people well, and have access to 2000+ through social media. Could they be introducing you to your dream clients if you had the relationship with them and they were willing to?

My final tip is that strategic networking is a science and if you wish to do so effectively and efficiently it is worth learning how to do it. Most people know just enough to get them in trouble. We would never do dental surgery on ourselves but we could always try.

Imagine you are the world’s most friendly relationship detective:

- Ask more about them then you talk about yourself
- Ask digging questions that show interest (and be sincere)
- Think of other people they could be connections to
- Ask more personal questions about what they do when they are not working
- Be clearly able to articulate what you do in about 20 seconds

We can network anywhere, anytime is not a 9 to 5 activities and does not have to have a big sign saying “network here”.

- What are we doing in our lunch break?
- What do we do for hobbies?
- Who is in our social circle, friends, family?
- Who is the person you bump into the shop each week?
- Do we ever get to know our grocer and his goals and challenges?
- Who else does our hairdresser, or Personal trainer knows?

Networking also occurs when we are with existing clients, competitors, suppliers, our own staff. When people know more about what we do and us. When they begin to care about us then we can also start to generate referrals or leads from these sources. Could there be more opportunities here to be developed?

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Coaching the Virtual: I, We, & All
by Howard B. Esbin (Canada)

The word 'coach' derives from an invention that revolutionised travel throughout 15th Century Europe. This started with a new kind of horse drawn carriage invented in the Hungarian town of Kocs. Over decades and centuries this type of carriage became known variously in Spanish and Portuguese as coche, in Italian as cocchino, and in Dutch as koets. By the early 1800s, 'coach' had morphed into a slang term used by Oxford University students to refer to their tutor/instructors. The idea was they “carried” their students through their exams to success. By mid century, the term extended to athletic coaches as well. Meanwhile the original idea of coach as transport also continued evolving; hence the rail coach and airplane coach class.

A new technology has once again revolutionised transport. This time it is moving communication and ideas in ways and speeds unimaginable to earlier generations. And again this new invention is changing the way coaches help carry their clients and students to success. The article title is meant to encapsulate the full gamut of virtual coaching practiced today. That is one on one, with teams, and with groups. A simple distinction between team and group is the former share and work together towards a common goal; a group shares a common interest but as individuals working for their own ends.

However a virtual coach must first learn to navigate in a new environment. Working with others virtually calls for even more effective interpersonal, or “soft” skills to compensate for all the challenges that arise including time zone spread, broadband constraints, language miscomprehension, and cultural differences. To get a humorous sense of how this may typically play out, do watch the comedic video “A Conference Call in Real Life”.

Virtual Team Aptitude Checklist
- Emotionally Mature
- Empathic
- Self Starter / Motivated
- Takes Initiative
- Committed
- Responsive
- Reliable

Simply put, virtual coaching is still in a pioneering stage. This is certainly how we see it. We are a virtual team, managing a virtual enterprise, offering a virtual team training resource called the Prelude Suite™. The Prelude Suite™ helps accelerate virtual team trust. This involves facilitated exercises in self-discovery, self-expression, and team co-creation. The process starts with a unique self-assessment called iStar™, leads to creating a vision and symbol of team excellence and concludes with a Team Alignment Plan™ (T.A.P.). This contributes to developing and implementing a robust, meaningful Team Charter.

Because of its modular scaffolded design, the process moves from individual to team experience. As such, it may be used effectively in one to one virtual coaching as well as team virtual coaching. Team size is ideally somewhere between 5 and 10 members. The team’s entire arc of learning is experiential and interactive. Training and certification for new coaches is also online and equally compact. We welcome professionals working with virtual teams and/or individual clients online to schedule a complimentary one-one-one exploratory session. For those professionals thinking about learning to work with virtual teams I recommend contacting Lisette Sutherland, the CEO of Collaboration Superpowers. Lisette offers a powerful introductory online and in person workshop that prepares people for working virtually. Then please come see us to practice what you learn.

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How to BE a Team Coach
by Georgina Woudstra (UK)

You assume that the core coaching competencies would equip you for coaching teams. They are great competencies, but team coaching is very different to individual coaching and it can be really challenging. In individual coaching, there is just you and your client and the system that the client is in. With team coaching you have your relationship with ‘the Team’ as well as with each individual team member, plus their relationships with each other and then the wider organisational context. It is complex and the pressures and underlying dynamics can be overwhelming. In one-to-one coaching, the client has chosen to work with a coach. In team coaching, team members might say they are up for team coaching, but is that for real or is that pleasing the boss, peer pressure, or group think?

The activities are all useful, however they are really team building and team development, perhaps delivered in a coaching style. Team coaching happens when we let go of these structures that provide control and we work with the team, live, in the moment around their own agenda. After all, in one-to-one coaching, would you have it all planned out, or would you work more with what the client brings to a session? So you have it all planned out, or would you work with off-piste and out of sight. This may well be unpredictable, uncertain, violative, ambiguous, so many of us have experienced that model. You can even buy the whole facilitator kit in a box, with slides, tools and script. The model made sense, people talked about it and it gave coaches a way to do team coaching.

It is a brilliant book! It speaks to the heart of many of the issues so many of us have experienced in teams. But is building and delivering a pre-determined workshop really the best we have to offer as team coaches, or do we need to be bold and take more risks?

I have discovered in my own self-reflection and in training and supervising other team coaches, that the underlying truth is that we are actually using the ‘content’ to do team coaching in order to appease our own anxiety about working with teams, thus increasing our sense of control. The impact is rarely lasting or sustainable for two key reasons:

1. The coach is driving the agenda, and providing the frame of reference, not the team

2. The coach can only ski on the piste, and the real work is usually off-piste

By following the piste, the pre-determined route, the team is processed through a series of steps, often missing or avoiding the underlying more complex and difficult dynamics which are found off-piste and out of sight. This may well be good-enough work for the team’s initial forming, resulting in a new team charter and a greater understanding of team members preferences and, on a good day, a set of collective team goals and agreement on norms of behaviour. However, masterful team coaches have developed a set of skills that supports the team in going beyond team forming, enabling them to be with the unpredictable, uncertain, violative, ambiguous, political and high pressure landscape that teams often inhabit.

Relational Team Coaching Model: Being a Team Coach, Woudstra 2017

So, what are the skills of team coaching mastery?
Relationship, authenticity and trust

Masterful team coaches seek to build relationships with and between all parties in the team based on authenticity and trust. I often see coaches work with teams inviting members to be more open with each other, perhaps using tools like Johari’s Window to explore their more hidden or private selves on the basis that trust grows when we open up more to each other. It is a great tool, however, too often coaches forget to build their own relationship with the team by opening up their own window to reveal more of themselves. To me this is like asking team members to be naked whilst you, the coach, remains fully clothed - an unconscious strategy for retaining control perhaps!

Awareness

Being a skilful team coach is not about adding more tools and techniques, it is about bringing greater awareness to everything you do as a coach. A high level of self-awareness is critical for team coaches as this is the foundation of presence and the precursor to intentional use of self. Only with great self-awareness can coaches ‘stand in the fire’, holding the space for what is truly wanting to emerge to come to the surface. Awareness-raising with teams is the primary catalyst for change and this is achieved through authentic dialogue.

Co-creativity and mutuality

Once coaches recognise their own need for control and begin to relax the habits they have formed to relieve their internal anxiety, they can begin to work with teams in a more relaxed and open way and in the spirit of mutuality. Coaches invite mutuality through co-creation, where the agenda is not pre-prepared, nor led, nor controlled by one person’s notion or agenda.

Here and now

Team coaching can focus on coaching the gap between the team’s desired state and current state. However, making meaning, taking decisions, changing our state. However, making meaning, taking decisions, changing our minds, finding new solutions all happens in the here and now. By focusing on what is happening live, right now, in the coaching room, between team members and between the coach and the team, we can observe, experience and tap into the most significant opportunities for development.

Emergent change

Creating the environment for authentic dialogue enables emergent conversations, rather than pre-determined ones. An emergent conversation is one which is co-created. It is a conversation where every voice counts and everyone is impacted, including the coach in a ‘continuous flow of reciprocal mutual influence’ (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992). What really needs to change emerges out of authentic dialogue, raising awareness in the here and now.

Active Experiments

Active experiments are a way for the team to create the change they are seeking in the here and now. Masterful team coaches devise active experiments spontaneously, as the need for change arises out of the dialogue occurring in the moment. Rather than being part of a pre-formed design, active experiments emerge naturally when the time is right. Encouraging teams to develop an experimental attitude and trying out new ways of thinking and behaving offer transformative experiences, which are often lasting and sustainable for the team.

By increasing your own presence and use of self you become the primary tool for team coaching, a tool that is unique to you and one that will make a lasting impact. This will give you an edge and that enables you to meet teams in their ever-changing landscapes. An edge that support teams in strengthening their aptitude for authentic dialogue, building greater resilience and capacity to apply their team work to what really matters most as the future unfolds.

REFERENCES:


ABOUT GEORGINA WOUDSTRA

Georgina Woudstra, MCC is an executive coach specialising in coaching CEOs and Executive Teams. She has been described by clients as having “strong presence and credibility”, as being “experienced and wise” and a coach who “has extraordinary empathy” allowing her to be “challenging but gentle”.

She is also the Principal of the Executive Coach Studio, a coach training organisation for professional coaches looking to deepen their practice and develop greater congruence and coherence in their work. Georgina is a successful entrepreneur in her own right. Co-author of ‘Coaching Global Top Teams’ in Leadership Coaching: Working with Leaders to Develop Elite Performance (Kogan Page), she is a thought leader and influencer in the coaching profession.
Getting a client team to sail a yacht is one of the most powerful tools for team coaching. It can be powerfully integrated with a classical team coaching process, as an outdoor workshop aimed to accelerate the development of the team in terms of cohesion, alignment and performance.

A set of brilliant individuals are often not performing as expected in a team setting: they all can be top performers individually, but together in a team, the team is not a high performing one. The first thing to consider is whether the individuals forming part of a team are indeed a team, or rather a group.

A team can be lacking a clearly stated common goal and an agreed set of rules to operate. Furthermore, some of the five dysfunctions of the team can be present: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results.

In a classical team coaching process, the intervention includes an initial assessment of the team, and then the coach accompanies the team in some of their regular meetings for a period of time. The coach observes the team from outside, and can see things that the team is not able to perceive from within, and mirror on what he sees. The team coach focuses on the interactions among team members, rather than on the members themselves: the team is as an entity in itself, and the interactions, rather than the individuals, shape the team. This classical team coaching approach is in its own already very powerful.

The extra session on-board a sailing yacht accelerates and amplifies dramatically all the beneficial effects of team coaching, because when managing a sailing yacht, the team must operate as a functional team, otherwise the boat is not sailing properly, providing immediate feedback to the team.

In the outdoor session, the team is put in charge of the sailing yacht, facing a set of sailing situations to solve, and the coach facilitates the analysis and parallelism with situations faced as the team they are in their professional lives.

The session on-board can be included ideally in the middle of a team coaching process, so after some initial team coaching sessions, comes the session on-board, and then, the coaching process continues with the regular team coaching sessions.

There are two ways to approach teams, the mechanistic approach (classical approach), where it is assumed that the members shape the team; and the systemic approach (modern approach), where it is considered that the interactions (not the members) shape the team. The systemic approach to team coaching is based on two principles: a team is a set of persons that have agreed on how to agree when they disagree (so, there are established rules for decision making); and that the structure of the system is the network of its conversations (so, as mentioned above, the interactions, and not the members, shape the team).

Furthermore, the team has two pillars: the goals of the team and the rules of the team. The goals of the team are the performance indicators; the performance of the team will be measured against those goals (for instance, yearly sales budget). The rules of the team are the commitment indicators; as much as the team is honouring its rules (for instance, “We make ourselves predictable”), as much they are committed to the achievement of the goals.

And, a functioning team will overcome the five dysfunctions mentioned above by: building trust, mastering conflict, achieving commitment, embracing accountability and focusing on results.

All these aspects of the team (goal setting, rules of the team, interactions among team members, and dysfunctions of the team) can be observed in a very much amplified way when the team is put in charge of the yacht. The interactions among the team, that are essential in order to properly manoeuvre a sailing boat, become completely evident: the boat performance is reflecting the team performance.

The urgency in the communication, along with the immediate actions to be set and coordinated in order to, for instance, tack the boat (change course), and the immediate feedback that the boat itself provides (the boat ‘demands’ an effective team in order to sail correctly), amplifies very much the working mode of the team: on board things are the same than in the office, but far more urgent, much faster and completely self-evident.

This amplification is a great tool both for the coach and for the team: the team becomes immediately aware of which aspects of its interactions to work on, and the new agreed upon working modes can be tested and adjusted in the next manoeuvre, straightway. And the coach can go along with the team in analysing the just experienced situation and its parallelism in the corporate environment. Everything becomes immediate, continuous and very fast: the awareness about the challenges of the team, the definition of the rules to overcome that challenge, and the experimentation with the newly defined working modes.

The effect of this team session is that powerful because it is a stunning experience, it really puts the team outside its comfort zone, and in this demanding situation the really best of the team is called in, there is no place for procrastination and no place to hide. In this challenging environment, is where the untapped potential of the team arises in all its strength.

In the setting of handling a sailing yacht, the team dynamics are very much amplified. The unknown and demanding setting works as a magnifying glass, where the team interactions become very much evident. This allows the team to be very aware of how the team works, and to work on the spot on the aspects the team requires.
The effects of the session are immediate; as it is essential for the team to work together in a functioning fashion from the first second, it demands top performance in teamwork, and there is a direct carry-over into the office, because the team skills needed are exactly the same on board and on land.

Another very important aspect of the team session on board is how lasting the effects are. The shared sense of accomplishment creates a very strong bond among the team members; it easily becomes a lifetime bond. A typical comment after this session is: “I’ve got to know more about my workmates in the last 4 hours, than in the last 15 years with them”. The facts that it is part of a complete team coaching process contribute to make the effects and learnings lasting.

An example illustrating these aspects of amplification in the effects, acceleration of changes and permanence of the improvements: a passage organised for a manufacturer of jet engines. There were two departments willing to improve their cooperation, willing to operate as one only team.

The targets of the team for the coaching process were to optimise the cooperation between departments, to improve the communication and synergy among them, and to develop a common plan of projects.

According to the team members, the turning point of the coaching process was, as a matter of fact, the coaching session on board. In that session the challenges of the team were clearly identified and new team rules were defined and tested on the spot. The client team reported remarkable improvements in the information flow, in the self-awareness, in the team cohesion, and in the achievement of its corporate targets.

Apart from the direct feedback from the client, the progress was as well measured by assessing the team at the beginning and at the end of the process with a set of tests, and comparing the results. There were the tests of Lencioni (the five dysfunctions of the team), McClelland (motivational needs), Belbin (roles of the team), and Thomas-Kilmann (conflict modes). Comparing results of those tests at the beginning and after the coaching process, there were measured remarkable improvements in team functionality, in orientation to action, in affiliation, and in conflict resolution.

Considering all above mentioned, one can conclude that incorporating an outdoor session on a sailing yacht within a coaching process accelerates, strengthens and consolidates the effectiveness of the team coaching intervention.

The word synergy comes from the Greek word sin-ergo, meaning, to work together. It points to a mutually supportive atmosphere of trust, where individual elements work towards their own goals, and although the goals may be very different, because they are all moving parts of a synergetic network, they support the whole ecosystem.

Recently, I have been working on creating a new human centred training and consulting company with several of my brilliant colleagues. We all come from very diverse backgrounds and we all share different skills.

We began by asking ourselves a few simple questions.
1. How might we build better workplaces?
2. How might we engage the hearts, minds and talents of people to create sustainable workplaces that don’t burn people out?
3. What if enjoying ourselves was the key to improving our learning and performance?
4. What if we could create a new paradigm of organisational structures and practices that did not rely on or even need empowerment because by design, everybody had a sense of power and no one felt powerless.

Those questions have enlivened and informed us about the kind of company we want to build, the kind of work we want to engage in and the kind of organisations and leaders we want to partner with.

Why do people and organisation stay the way they are?
You probably recognise this scenario. Everyone talks about how things need to change “around here.” But what happens? Nothing!

Maybe the team keeps on talking about it. Everyone is on the same page for the desired outcomes. Still nothing happens. The conversations and hope slowly fades over time. Once in awhile maybe the idea gets revisited, but often the same structures still stay glued into place, which only makes people feel more committed to things staying the same, since they can’t be changed anyway. Or maybe there is a lot of top down change, created by people who may not know the reality on the ground, and it just creates more and more frustration and a feeling of having no power or autonomy over your work life.

So what get’s in the way of creating real changes?
What I have noticed from my conversations with leaders is things tend to stay the way they are because we live in a set of commitments that helps
us to keep things stable and often predictable, which can be very helpful at times, however, our very need to maintain some semblance of stability also creates the disfunction of a less than compelling workplace where your life is rented out for a paycheque.

Here are a few statements you might have heard before that I think need to be re-imaged or, truth be told, retired for the good of ourselves and our planet.

**MYTH:** There is never enough

**RETRUTH:** Yes, there is! But we have to move from a model of endless growth to sufficiency. As Lynne Twist says “Sufficiency does not mean we should not strive or aspire. Sufficiency is an act of generating, distinguishing, making known to ourselves the power and presence of our existing resources, and our inner rescues. Sufficiency is a context we bring forth from within that reminds us that if we look around us and within ourselves, we will find what we need.”

**MYTH:** That’s just the way it is

**RETRUTH:** No, it’s not! That’s just the biggest lie we have been told to keep the status quo in place, which serves the few rather than the many.

**MYTH:** We tried that. It didn’t work.

**RETRUTH:** Talk to Thomas Edison or Temple Grandin or Elon Musk about that.

**MYTH:** It might work in certain organisations, but it will never work here: we’re different.

**RETRUTH:** Of course you are different, but it will work if you create the right circumstances for something new to ferment.

You probably have a few of your own to add to the list, and isn’t that list pretty dispiriting? So, in a strange way, these workplaces create within us a kind of immune response, where we are fighting off the new ideas and the required courageous patient attempts to bring them to life, which is always a prerequisite for real change to happen. Unless all of us, as individuals and teams alter our commitments, structures and beliefs to reflect something new, our immunity response will shut us down every time.

So, how do we nurture new attitudes, ideas and commitments that will make possible the new ways of being for which we long?

**Is it possible to make meaning and money in the corporate world?**

I like to think that both purpose and profit are not mutually exclusive, but actually support each other.

I believe it is, in fact it’s already happening and if you’ve read the book Reinventing Organisations, you can read about how workplaces are being re-imagined all around the world. However, there is still a lot of old school thinking in our work a day world.

Geoff Colvin argues in his book Humans Are Underrated that the most critical 21st century skill is empathy and calls for a shift in emphasis from “knowledge workers” to “relationship workers.” First, we must bring the shadow values of security and predictability out into the light and be willing to make changes. And to do that we must be able to ask ourselves: what do we need to say no to? That creates clarity of purpose. Perhaps we need to say no to perfectionism or fear of making the wrong move. We don’t need more options, we just need the one that is most in alignment with who we want to be when we are hooked up with our core values - our DNA.

Leaders can help people see internal dissonance. Leaders can set a course. Leaders can inspire. Leaders, however, do not change people’s commitments. That’s a choice individuals must make for themselves, because they find deeper value in making that shift than staying where they are. Perhaps the most crucial step a leader can take is to create the kind of workplaces that are responsible for growing the capacity of people to live and thrive in environments that are no longer predictable, stable or even recognisable sometimes. This kind of professional growth is the adaptive challenge of reinventing the organisation by revitalising the individual.

**Two kinds of change challenges:**

**TECHNICAL and ADAPATIVE.**

Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with fresh eyes and new perspectives. And the people there see you differently too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving. How to fly a modern Boeing 767 is a technical challenge. The skills and training necessary to do this are well known, and there is a direct path of time and training required if you want to become an masterful pilot capable of flying one of these planes. You will start in a much smaller plane and work your way up.

An adaptive challenge would be teaching a doctor how to develop a gentle bedside manner or develop the skills of empathy and caring to be able to handle the human elements of illness, disease, or death and how to handle their own ability to manage the stress and difficulties of the job, and be with people who might be going through intense suffering, knowing they could not fix it, no matter how much training they may have.

There is no exact path for that, and it’s internal work, so it’s much more subtle and very difficult to accomplish without guidance and support. You might have had the experience in a hospital or doctor’s office where that empathy or understanding was not very present, which is clearly a very important and often neglected part of our health care system. But you can’t cut out emotional pain or fear with a scalpel. That requires a state of being that is capable of understanding the complexities of the human experience. It is an adaptive skill set.

Most leaders try to solve adaptive challenges with technical fixes. Perhaps it’s why so many top down changes programs don’t really change much… and in spite of all the talk about values and culture, many so called successful organisations are still just glorified treadmills, with some clever perks.

In coaching we have a principle that you don’t coach the problem, you coach the person, and it’s the same with trying to identify adaptive problems from technical ones. I believe you have to move away from the problem and move to the person having the problem to find the lasting solutions. Working a 16 hour day may be fine in your 20’s and 30’s, but is this how you want to live your whole life? We need better solutions than just working faster, harder and longer.

It appears many don’t find the integration we are seeking in our lives, and the corporate world often doesn’t offer much room for supporting the notion of a holistic approach to wellness. And senior leaders and management are often too busy running the race to even think about what it means, until they retire, and wonder what it was all for.

The constant tug of war between profits and people, values and success, work and play never seems to get resolved. It’s always one or the other that appears to win or take over.
The circle as a leadership philosophy
There are no sharp edges in a circle, and no way to know what is beginning and what is ending. It all becomes present and important. When you make your goals linear, you are always on the “Get somewhere journey” and while that has its place... is it any wonder people become so burned out? They are not taught nor encouraged to enjoy the process in their work lives. They are always just getting somewhere, but never arriving.

One must inhale to exhale.
Connection: The sacred in the ordinary
Learning to find the connections in our lives, the intimate dance we have with all things, the beauty in the most ordinary moments, all reduced or forgotten by the “next big thing” we need to get done. And yet, are not some of the most touching moments in our lives the most ordinary? A kind word, a smile or a shared laugh with a friend, walking the dog on the beach, a home cooked meal shared with your family, or a swim in the ocean.

The mythology of success
When you see success somewhere, understand it was only a seed in someone’s mind when it started. If you can connect to your business life as a circle rather than a straight line, you can see the importance and value of all of it, both the wins and the losses.

Give & Take
We say giving is important in our world, but how can we give if no one is there to receive it? They are equal forces for me, and each of us will be on both sides of that equation at some point in our life. Isn’t that a beautiful thought that one must receive in order to let someone else have the joy of being a giver.

Equality
Everything is connected to everything else, and you cannot separate out the aspects of your life you think are painful or unnecessary.

• It’s all necessary
• It’s all important
• It all matters
• It’s all equal in the end. It’s just how you choose to work with perceived opposites that matters.

In order to overcome our personal and organisational immunity to change, I believe a good place to start is uncovering the answers to these questions:
1. What our true commitments are we want to focus on?
2. What we are doing or not doing to support them?
3. What are the things that really compete with our commitments?
4. What is the big status quo assumption that actually prevents us from changing?

From there we uncover the strategies required to begin to implement sustainable change in people and cultures. The solutions we require in our 21st century world are asking for a paradigm belief system shift, based on breaking old patterns that don’t serve us, but have become very comfortable. The phone has been ringing for a long time - It is just a question of how soon we will answer the call.

Reflective Team Learning in Retrospectives
by Olga Kiss & Gabriella Peuker (Hungary)

Today, in a VUCA world, it is essential for teams to use their personal experiences, learn from them, and change as fast as they can to stay ahead of the curve. Reflection is the key, and agile teams have elaborated interesting forms of reflective team learning to be able to adapt to - or even lead - an extremely fast changing business environment. We picked one single part of their organisational culture which we think to be the most important, and which is easily applicable for non-agile teams.

The retrospective is special meeting devoted to reflective team learning. It is a time to talk about the experiences of the past period (usually 1-4 weeks, because agile teams work in small iterations producing incremental parts of the final product), and to discuss what went well or wrong, find opportunities to improve the way they work together, and decide which one (or a few) changes to try out in the next period. The change is frequently experimental. At the next retrospective they discuss whether it has worked or not.

Retrospective originally comes from Norman Kerth’s project retrospectives, but agile teams took the genre, and adopted it to their special needs. He was talking about retrospectives in terms of 2-3 days to discuss every aspect of a big project, but agile teams have smaller time scale, so they do 1-2-hour retrospectives (the shorter the better). According to Kerth, the four key questions of a retrospective are:
1. What did we do well, that if we don’t discuss we might forget?
2. What did we learn?
3. What should we do differently next time?
4. What still puzzles us?

When Barbara J. Cormack talks about the reflective part of the learning cycle of leadership teams, she mentions similar questions:

"1. what went right
2. what didn’t go the way it was expected to, and
3. based on the results, in the future, what would you do differently?"
The clean-cut shared points of these two approaches are: learning from experiences and changing by action. But there are differences between them as well. While Cormack writes about the learning cycles of planning - taking action - reflecting, the horizon of learning is much wider in a retrospective. First of all, the fourth one of the key questions (What still puzzles us?) focuses on the problems that are still open. They may not be connected to the plan or the expectations at all. The excitement and fun of solving problems are an essential part of agile organisational culture. That is, problems as such are interesting in themselves. Another difference is the focus of continuous learning. Coaching agile teams is a continuous, lifelong process. The learning process - just like the product delivery - is made in tiny steps, in an incremental way, but agile teams make such tiny steps very frequently (in every 1-4 weeks).

Although the four key questions to focus on are the ones mentioned above, Esther Derby and Diana Larsen call our attention to that it is not possible to start an effective retrospective with the question of “What went well”, because it requires data. Let us explain this. Norman Kerth originally described retrospective as “a ritual gathering of a community at the end of a project to review the events and learn from the experience. No one knows the whole story of the project. Each person has a piece of the story. The retrospective ritual is the collective telling of the story and mining the experience for wisdom.” Collecting data is important because no one has the same experience, even if they are talking about the same facts. The team members need to see the whole picture to have an insight. Similarly, the question “What should we do differently next time?” is meaningless without data and analysis. This is why the structure of retrospective is important. Derby and Larsen suggested these steps:

1. Set the stage
2. Gather data
3. Generate insights
4. Decide what to do
5. Close the retrospective.

For now, it has become a widely used structure of retrospectives.

The first step is framing: It is essential for everybody to be clear what the exact focus of the retro is. The team discusses the working rules of cooperation. (Our experience shows that it can be useful to warm up the right brain with short visualisation or creative activities too.) The second and third steps belong to the reflective process. Most of the retro plans and techniques can be used here, because this is the main part of the retrospective, and it must remain interesting. The second step is gathering data: what is the team’s experience, what are the members’ points of view on the issues. This step aims the team members to have a closer look at the issues, and recognises others' thoughts and feelings concerning them, and see the big picture. The goal is to shape the collective, shared picture from the details, because without it team members may easily misunderstand each other, that brings down the effectiveness of the meeting. Generating insights means that the team digs into the depth of the issues: what has happened and why (you can use e.g. 5 why technique), what sort of resources have helped the team, what kind of interactions, patterns have led to the success, what has occurred as a risk (e.g. sailboat technique can be useful). This is the phase of analysis. It can take place not only by words, but also by visualisation (e.g. collective mind mapping). The goal of this step is to create feasible ideas to solve the problems emerged. By the beginning of the fourth step the team already has options of how to develop themselves and their processes further. At this point the task is to make a collective decision, to choose some of them to try out in the next period.

We would like to emphasise the significance of good framing. The members of the team may live their experiences on different levels: some of them have shallower, simply factual, sense perceptions, while others may have really deep revelations about themselves or about the team. It may cause problems in understanding, if depth is not explicitly allowed. Recognition of profound patterns in group dynamics may disturb some members of the team. It is the task of the coach to set her eyes on such nuances and treat them gently to help the team stay together in the discussion.

When we ask them to share their experiences, it may bring deep issues into the discussion, and it can be really helpful when it supports them to uncover the root problems. It is the interest of the team to find them. This is why depth has a great value in team coaching. The coach has to use this value in order to solve the problem at hand, so she has to keep the team together, and find the dynamic level where they are able to meet. Framing can give a permission to any team member to bring depth into the discussion. On the other hand, it gives a permission to anyone who may have difficulty with it, to take the responsibility for her actual limits, and to give a voice to her feelings in the here and now.

The coach has to be able to support any level of depth that the team members bring into the discussion, while keeping the team together helping the team members find a way to each other. She has to support this dynamic of divergent and convergent way of thinking together, accepting that we may live our experiences from different points of view, different levels, but at the end of the retrospective the team has to create an action plan.

The good retrospective helps the team to recognise their patterns, and to change or to overwrite those that do not bring the right result. In lots of cases, the team reproduces the same pattern at the retrospective as the ones they produced during the sprints - patterns of processes, attitude, mindset, way of thinking, or even feelings. To voice the recognised patterns requires deep trust among team members. Changing a bad pattern can be painful. The team members usually unconsciously stick to those patterns because they are convenient somehow. Understanding the vulnerability of the person...
and the team, and the fact that it can be put on the table and can be discussed shows the team’s maturity.

Retrospective provides support for collective learning on the team’s level. The team members’ personal knowledge can be an important contribution to the team’s development, if it is shared. Retrospective is not only to uncover and integrate this knowledge, but also to let the team to learn from it, and develop their cooperation in a self-organising way. It is for teams who take the responsibility for their own development.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Olga Kiss, PhD and Gabriella Peuker are the founders of AgileHuman - a team of experts to study the human side of Agile, and to bring its achievements to other fields of coaching.

Co-initiating, co-creating, co-evolving, co-sensing are essential parts of our working together.

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