



## COACHING IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ORGANISATION

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**Abstract.** Employees are the basic capital of an organization; they are called human resources. They make the organization be competitive in the market, and be successful. For this reason, investing in human resources, in people's qualifications and competences, equals investing in the position of an organization among other companies. Thus, it is needed for the human resources to be developed. There are several ways and methods of doing it; one of them is coaching. Coaching enables education, professional development and motivating employees. All of them are significant elements of human resource management. For this reason, coaching may/should be seen as an important tool for the human resource management in an organization. This paper deals with the application of coaching.

### COACHING W ZARZĄDZANIU ZASOBAMI LUDZKIMI W ORGANIZACJI

**Słowa kluczowe:** zasoby ludzkie, zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi, coaching

**Streszczenie.** Podstawowym kapitałem organizacji są zatrudnieni w niej pracownicy, określane jako zasoby ludzkie. To oni decydują o jej konkurencyjności na rynku i jej powodzeniu. Dlatego inwestowanie w zasoby ludzkie, w ich kwalifikacje i kompetencje, to inwestowanie w pozycję danej organizacji wśród innych podmiotów gospodarczych. Konieczny jest więc rozwój zasobów ludzkich. Wśród szeregu form i metod umożliwiających go wymienia się między innymi coaching, który ułatwia edukację, rozwój zawodowy i motywację pracowników. Coaching powinien być zatem uznany za ważne narzędzie w zarządzaniu zasobami ludzkimi w organizacji. Jego stosowanie jest przedmiotem rozważań w niniejszym artykule.

## **Introduction**

The subject of this article falls within the scope of both management science and pedagogy, especially a subdiscipline of pedagogy – labour pedagogy. For many years, this branch of pedagogy was called enterprise pedagogy; nowadays it is referred to as lifelong learning of the professionally active adults. It encompasses such issues as the education and professional development of workers. It is also the scope of the scientific interest of andragogy, called by some the andragogy of labour. Although the participation in education is mainly the choice of a worker, who undertakes such kind of activity striving for keeping their employment, supporting their professional and personal development, and being promoted, the help of the organization is necessary, or at least encouraged here; the organization being seen as the so-called dynamic organization. It is commonly believed that workers are the ones who influence the effectiveness of the organization's functioning. The development of the organization and its position in the labour market depend on the workers' personal values, qualifications, creativity and the motives that drive them towards working better. It is generally acknowledged today that it is crucial to invest in the intellectual assets, as well as in developing them (Gerlach, 2012, p. 170). The transformation into the knowledge-based economy makes the qualification requirements become higher; for both the people applying for a job, and the already employed ones. Thus, it is necessary to increase employees' qualifications and competences systematically, in order to adjust to the ever-changing requirements of the job posts. It is done by various means and by applying various methods. One of them, which has recently gained significant popularity, is coaching; it will be the main topic of this article.

## **Human/worker as the basic organizational resource**

Every dynamically-developing organization should take into consideration the key role of the workers in its development. It has been more commonly believed, as stated before, that the people employed in the organization are its highest value. Their qualifications and competences make the organization be competitive and successful in the market. For that reason, investing in human resources equals investing in the development and position of the organization.

Education, mostly the vocational one, of both the young people preparing themselves for employment, and the already employed ones, is the most effective investment. It is true for all the professional groups. Knowledge has been more and more often treated as the most significant resource of economy, and investing in intellectual assets generates more profit than material assets. The value of the human (intellectual) capital of the organization is several times greater than the value of its material assets (Gerlach, 2003, 2009).

The people employed in an organization are called personnel, staff, team, human capital, intellectual capital, labour resources or human resources. For the sake of this paper, the term human resources has been used; it refers to all the workers employed in a certain organization. In order to make it clearer, one may quote Aleksy Poczowski, who said human resources mean “all the innate and acquired properties, including knowledge, abilities, skills, health, personality traits, values reflected in people, all of which are utilized and improved during the time of one’s professional activity” (Poczowski, 2005, p. 191). According to H. Król, this term is of evaluative meaning, and human resources are treated as the capital of an organization, and they decide in what way the other resources will be used. It is important to develop the resources in a constant manner; it is as significant as managing them (Król, 2006, p. 51).

The development of employees is an essential task of every well-functioning organization. Much has been said and written about the development of human resources. The actions undertaken in order to enhance and develop the elements constituting human resources, mentioned by A. Poczowski, may be called their development.

Peter F. Drucker believes that it is no longer true, that:

1. A person working in an organization is its employee, is employed full-time, dependent on the organization as the source of income and professional career;
2. A person employed in an organization becomes its subordinate.

These assumptions have become baseless nowadays. Apart from the people employed in an organization full-time, there are people being outsourced, working part-time job, as part of an order contract or a contract of mandate. Today, a worker has been less and less often perceived as a subordinate. As P. Drucker says, they should rather be called a knowledge worker. “A knowledge worker is not a subordinate, but rather a co-worker, as after having undergone a regular training, they become experts in their field, more knowledgeable about their work than their boss. If it were otherwise, they would be useless for the organization”

(Drucker, 2009, pp. 26-27). It is necessary to re-evaluate the assumptions concerning the role of a person in an organization, and their work. The quoted author stresses it that managing groups of people more and more often resembles marketing. In marketing, it is considered a mistake to begin one's work with the question: what do I need? Instead, one needs to ask: what does the person I'm talking with need? What are their values? What goals do they have? In what way do they define results? Such an approach does not equal having to choose between Theory X and Theory Y, or any other human management theory. According to him, "people should not be managed. The true task is to lead them". More and more often, it is believed that workers need "to be treated as partners; by definition, there implies the thesis that partners have equal rights. [...] You don't give orders to partners. You need to convince them" (Drucker, 2009, pp. 30-31).

When stressing the role of the people employed in organizations, and the shift in the attitude towards managing them, attention must be paid to the necessity of learning how to manage oneself. It concerns the knowledge workers in particular. Referring again to what P. Drucker expresses, it must be emphasized that they will have to "acquire the ability to develop as a person, learn to save energy and mental capabilities during the whole fifty years of their professional activity. They will be forced to decide upon what they need to change in their work and when to apply those changes, in order to function effectively within the ever-changing work environment" (Drucker, 2009, p. 171). Thus, it will be crucial for them to possess the necessary qualifications and competences. Each dynamically-developing organization should take the key role of its workers into account, i.e. their qualification and competences. It must enable their development, by bearing considerable costs. However, the costs will soon turn out to be investments. For this reason, many methods are adopted in order to enable fulfilling those tasks. Coaching is one of them; it has been more and more popular recently. As part of complex programmes for developing the qualifications and competences of the workers employed in organizations, a variety of ways and methods enabling development have been used. They encompass trainings, counselling, mentoring, tutoring, and coaching. This article discusses coaching in the context of human resource management.

When talking about a person within an organization, one must not ignore their subjectivity, i.e., identity. There have been many theories related to human identity/subjectivity. One talks about it in philosophical, psychological, sociological or pedagogic perspectives. Due to the length limitations, it is not possible

to present all the perspectives in this paper. It may be mentioned, though, that the leading creators of human resource management acknowledge the significance of identity/subjectivity. In the following reflections, one must take the worker's identity into consideration. When discussing the concept of identity in workers' relations, it is worth referring to Zygmunt Bauman, who pays attention to the ability to make choices and the possibility of taking effective actions, according to the choices one has made, as well as the ability to influence the range of the available choices, and the social environment. Simply put, "the true empowerment" "does not only consist in acquiring the abilities necessary for effective participation in the game, the rules of which have been formulated by someone else. True empowerment also entails gaining the power necessary for co-deciding on the goals, stakes and rules of the game one participates in" (Bauman, 2007, p. 196 onwards).

Having accepted the fact that it is necessary to approach workers in a way which fosters their subjectivity, the importance of the subjective and subjectivity-oriented education must be emphasized. The responsibility for carrying it into effect rests mostly with schools; in case of the employees' subjectivity, mostly vocational schools, colleges, universities, as well as organizations employing certain workers. So, complying with this requirement depends mostly on the teachers preparing their students to becoming a subject in their future work (as well as in the life situations outside work), the people managing the organization, as well as workers themselves. One of the ways of fulfilling the requirement may be coaching, which enables the employees to feel subjective and empowered. Thus, preparing an individual to become a subject in the process of work relies mostly on the aforementioned entities. Shaping one's feeling of identity/subjectiveness is necessary nowadays, in the times of exceptionally rapid changes in all the spheres of one's life. Managing people who are empowered and have their own identity should prove to be more effective than managing the ones who need constant supervising, and their work controlled. As mentioned before, the workers who feel they are more partners than subordinates achieve far better work results, thus contributing to the development of an organization. It may thus be said that human resource management should take the subjectivity of competent workers into account.

Today, the way of managing human resources in an organization is changing. A worker must no longer be treated as one of the assets, but must have their own identity/subjectiveness and co-decide on the organization's functioning. It requires some proper qualifications and competences of workers,

the development of whom should be supported by various means in the organization. One of the increasingly popular ones has been coaching.

## **Applying coaching in human resource management**

The term human resource management has been interpreted in the literature in various ways. Discussing all of the concepts in detail would not be possible in such a short paper; however, there is no need for it, owing to the very rich literature regarding the matter. For the sake of this paper, the approach of Henryk Król's has been adopted, who wrote that "human resource management is the most recent idea of realizing the personal function of an organization, the task of which is to adjust the features (character) of the human resources to the goals of the organization, in harmony with its employees' needs, in certain conditions, both external and internal" (Król, 2006, p. 55). When writing about management, Józef Penc uses the term "humanistic". To him, humanistic management is "a concept, in which the values such as freedom of action (self-directed work), autonomy and entrepreneurship, progress (changes), self-creation, assertiveness, altruism, responsibility, sense of community, caring about public matters, etc., gain new value" (Gerlach, 2016, p. 173).

When talking about the development of human resources, it is often emphasized that it is necessary to learn within an organization. This is why it is worth mentioning here the concept of a "learning organization". According to Renata Tomaszewska-Lipiec, who refers to the reflections of P. Senge, "the essence of a learning organization lies in its ability to develop, as well as in encouraging its workers to enter education and search for new solutions, thus increasing their individual, creative capabilities" (Tomaszewska-Lipiec, 2012, p. 113). Coaching may be a perfect way of supporting the learning process of particular, individual workers, inspiring them to change/modify their behaviours. The learning workers, i.e., individuals, together with team learning, constitute the so-called organizational learning. Then, one may indeed talk about a learning organization (Tomaszewska-Lipiec, 2012, p. 106).

The development of human resources is a significant element of managing them. In this regard, coaching has played an increasingly more important role. The development of human resources can be stimulated through various means. Michael Armstrong presents the plans of individual development, which encompass a number of actions, including the following:

- Self-directed learning;

- Coaching;
- Active learning;
- Formal training, and more.

The individual development is a worker's property; they determine the direction of the development and the actions they are willing to undertake in order to allow it (Armstrong, 2007, p. 217). A coach may prove very helpful here, by supporting the learning process of particular employees.

The workers' learning is part of the human resource management process. It is/should be one of the methods allowing the employee to gain more qualifications. When wishing to make a general division of the employee education methods, one may distinguish the workplace ones, and the ones outside it. The former group includes coaching. More and more papers on coaching have been published. In addition to this, coaching sessions take place at workplaces; the workers of organizations take part in them; they are mostly managerial staff and HR workers. "Coaching means a way of sharing knowledge based on partnership, between a manager and their workers, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of work, development of employees and creating smart (learning) organizations. Coaching may take an informal form, as well as a formalized one, which is intentionally inspired, undertaken and organized by the managers of the company" (Rybak, 2000, p. 260).

Before the concept of coaching in human resource management is presented in greater detail, it must be noted that today most workers are expected to take care of their development themselves. Their professionalism mostly consists in the ability to learn, in both an individual and collective manner (Makowski, 2008, p. 456). Many authors, when writing about education, emphasize the fact that it is necessary to support the learning workers in doing so. More and more often, education is perceived as a process of self-development. Paul Lengrand claims: „For an individual, it is not the most important to gain knowledge, but to acquire the ability to direct oneself and that part of the universe, which falls within the scope of their influence. The actual programme, that is the content used to achieve the goals, is about helping a person in their self-development, in the aforementioned directions: it is necessary for systematically realizing any kind of talents that an individual possesses, in order for them to gain the competences which are necessary for fulfilling various functions, i.e., cognition, expression, associating and acting" (Lengrand, 1955, p. 23). One will acknowledge it that coaching is the way which fits the process in an optimal way, especially if one believes the following statement of the author is also valid. He points it out,

that a person/worker “is the main subject of their own development, not only because the help they receive from the outside may merely be of indirect and partial character. A person walks most of their life paths by themselves, having only their own resources at their disposal. No one is able to think, feel and realize oneself for them” (Lengrand, 1955, p. 24). Coaching definitely helps people unlock their potential.

However, there are still a number of interpretations of the process. Bożena Wujec has proposed three categories of defining coaching, and has said, that it is:

1. A historic category, where coaching is called a teaching process; as a kind of intervention, the aim of which is to improve the results of the development of particular competencies; the process of helping people, aiming at reaching their maximum capabilities, developing abilities, changing people and the organizations they work in, and the environment in which they live; as a conversation, or a series of conversations between two people.
2. An alternative category, where coaching is understood in a broad way.
3. A classic category, where, in coaching “a client is the source of ideas and solutions; a coach merely supports their creativity” (Wujec, 2013, pp. 9–17).

In turn, International Coach Federation has put forward the following definition: “Coaching is an interactive process, which helps individual people or organizations to boost the pace of development, and improve the results of one’s actions. Coaches work with clients on the issues related to business, career development, finances, health and interpersonal relations” (Majka, 2011, p. 119). There are several kinds of coaching: business, managerial, sales, life, professional. One of the types of coaching is personal coaching, which is related to such life spheres as relations, health, finances, personal development, hobby, spirituality. Often, coaching concerns the issues related to both the personal and professional spheres, e.g., work-life balance (Czarkowska, Wujec, 2013, p. 71).

Consequently, coaching is related to both private and professional lives. The former is called life coaching, the latter – business one. Life coaching concerns “the quality of the entirety of one’s life, or part of it; the variety of the themes related to it is immense (Majka, 2011, p. 119). In turn, professional coaching takes place at the workplace and is “a common, planned, solution- and result-oriented process [...] in which a coach facilitates increasing the professional achievements and supports the client’s learning process and personal development” (Wujec, 2013, p. 12). According to Alicja Majka, one of the kinds of business coaching

is corporate coaching, the aim of which is achieving the goals of the corporation. One of its kinds, in turn, is the managerial coaching, which mostly concerns the employees managing a certain organization; it is often dubbed leadership coaching (Majka, 2011, p. 119).

In order for coaching to be effective, it should be individual. Many researchers discussing the subject have pointed this aspect of coaching out. Maciej Bennewicz believes that „individual coaching greatly stimulates, and almost entirely eliminates the adverse phenomena of group trainings, such as resistance, competing within the group, or with the coach, being tired of the work-related travels, etc. In addition, coaching very quickly produces tangible outcomes” (Bennewicz, 2010, p. 68).

Stanisława Borkowska agrees with the aforementioned statements. In her opinion, coaching is a method of the so-called “one-on-one training”. Its goal is the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Borkowska, 2006, p. 466). Similarly, H. Król says that coaching is a method of training employees, which has been properly planned and applied by a proper coach, the so called one-on-one. It enables developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the learning person; this, in turn, leads to their individual capital and the capital of the organization becoming greater simultaneously. Coaching is often compared to sports training. Both the trainer and the trainees work together on obtaining a certain result. If perceived in this way, coaching has the following stages: realization, responsibility-oriented planning, implementing the plan, assessing the results (Król, 2006, p. 467).

On the other hand, M. Armstrong, when writing about the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes, puts a strong emphasis on the informal character of coaching and stresses it that it is part of a normal management process. It consists in:

- “Helping people realize what results they achieve and what they need to learn;
- Delegating in a controlled manner;
- Using every situation that arises as a chance to learn;
- Providing hints concerning the proper way of doing tasks; however, the coach should be helpful to the worker, and not just stuff them with instructions concerning what to do, and how to do it” (Armstrong, 2001, pp. 717-718).

So far, the role of coaching in worker education has been underlined. In fact, coaching is the most useful in this area. However, coaching makes it possible

to develop the human capital not only by investing in qualifications and competences of workers, but also supports their functioning in the professional work process. Coaching, if implemented properly, is an example of the actions undertaken in order to develop work potential. It enables improving work effectiveness, development of employees, and it also influences the creation of learning organizations. A coach may contribute to the objectivization of perceiving oneself, provide feedback, and follows the “open door” policy, as Mirosława Rybak puts it (Rybak, 2000, p. 260).

M. Armstrong, who has been quoted in this paper before, has stressed the role of coaching in increasing one’s awareness and responsibility for other people. As a result, there exists the possibility of empowering a person, and, consequently, gaining more independence and agency, which makes it possible for a person to take responsibility for their work (Armstrong, 2007, pp. 248–249).

As already mentioned, coaching is a workplace training technique. It results in extending one’s knowledge, increasing one’s skills and developing one’s work-related habits, and also (as a consequence) the development of the particular individuals who take part in it. It is true for both the personal (life-) and professional (business-) coaching. When emphasising the developmental character of coaching, Ewa Sokołowska refers to the changes that happen in an adult person’s life. It is a change, and the fact that is also occurs in the life of an adult person searching for a way of self-development and utilizing their capabilities in their work and private lives, makes it be of the interest of developmental psychology” (Sokołowska, 2011, p. 21).

Apart from developmental psychology, the role of social psychology is also important. When emphasizing the even greater popularity of coaching in employee development and motivation management, Michał Szulawski and Michał Bloch point out the social psychology as the source of inspiration for coaching (Szulawski, Bloch, 2011, p. 39).

Plenty of publications concern the developmental coaching. Its goal is to develop the professional potential of an employee. Tony Stoltzfus has accurately captured its essence, as they write that “developmental coaching concentrates on adjusting the passions, skills, and the value system of a client to their work. It helps a client to find their calling, strong points, values and aspirations, and then correlate them with work, or decide upon disengaging from one’s work, in order to find a more satisfying goal in life (Wojdyło, Zawadzki, 2019, p. 96). Thanks to developmental coaching, the professional potential of an employee increases, and they realize the possibilities of utilizing their resources in particular

situations (Wojdyło, Zawadzki, 2019, p. 103). Developmental coaching makes it possible not to focus on the competences one is lacking in, and not to put the blame for one's passiveness on the outside environment, which is beyond the client's control; instead, it lets one concentrate on noticing one's potential and assets. This kind of coaching, according to Monika Wojdyło and Kamil Zawadzki, should be applied to the people who have worked for a particular time, possess the necessary theoretical knowledge and have professional and personal experience. These assets make the client feel they have agency, they can take responsibility of their own professional situation and may make changes. Professional developmental coaching helps a client to specify and name one's professional aspirations, as well as place them in a broader context of life objectives. It is an important advantage of this kind of coaching (Wojdyło, Zawadzki, 2019, pp. 103-104).

Speaking of development, one has to agree with G. Pinear, who points it out that an employee decides, or at least, should decide upon their own development. "Development assumes, that there exists no finite form, which should be enforced from the outside. The form is still unfinished, it depends on our own actions. Its construction is a process which lasts for the whole life. The opportunities of this concept depend on burying the myth that an adult person is a finite being (Lengrand, 1995, p. 104).

So far, we have discussed coaching as a method/technique that makes education easier and supports the development of employees. It is worth noting at the end, that it also means a specific form of motivating. As S. Borkowska puts it, it consists in "creating situations, in which the employee determines/discovered the adequate behaviour (goal – task, the way of undertaking it, etc.) by themselves, hinted at (inspired by) a coach, who asks adequate questions. It is a form of supporting employees' development, as well as their competences, which is addressed to both managers and their workers" (Borkowska, 2006, p. 344).

A. Poczowski has also mentioned coaching as a tool of human resource management. The author has also determined the role of coaching in approaching the development of employees and motivating them, and "its essence lies within the specific relations between managers and their workers, which consist in setting goals together, and deciding upon the ways of doing the work, engaging managers in their subordinates' work and supporting them with advice and help, if needed. This way, impact is made on the attitudes and behaviours of the employees, which mainly leads to their motivational potential increasing" (Poczowski, 2003, p. 321). M. Armstrong has also written about motivating

workers; he believes that full engagement consisting in leadership and including employees in the life of organization to be the best way of motivating people. He calls the approach the “heart and mind” method (Armstrong, 2001, p. 127). According to the author, this kind of engagement is achieved only in the situations, when people know what they have to engage in, i.e., they understand what is expected of them (Armstrong, 2001, p. 131). Coaching may prove to be useful in this kind of activities, as well.

## Conclusion

Summing the presented reflections up, it is worth mentioning the trends related to the coaching needs. Maciej Bennewicz has listed three of the trends which should be found significant:

- The first trend – supporting and developing new management models, which is related to the changeability of the labour market, and the current economic situation in it;
- The second trend – developing and supporting workers’ creativity;
- The third trend – developing individual managing and team competences, including the reconciling of professional and personal lives, if needed (life coaching) (Bennewicz, 2010, p. 69).

At the end of the day, it must be agreed upon that education, professional development and motivating employees are important elements of human resource management. Coaching should prove useful as part of them, thus making the value of human resources increase in an organization, which translates into the organization’s competitiveness in the market raising. These are the significant possibilities of applying coaching; however, there are more of them. One could refer to A. Poczowski here, as the author extends the possibilities of applying coaching in human resource management. Namely, he states it could be used to solve the conflicts and crises happening in an organization, interpersonal issues, the problems of the communication among workers, the issues related to the workers’ self-esteem, and also the problems which concern the workers leaving their professional lives, the so-called outplacement. In order for such actions to be successful, it is necessary for the manager to have been trained in order for them to be able to become a teacher, patron, trainer and a guardian, besides fulfilling their formal roles (Poczowski, 2003, pp. 321-322). One must realize that the relations between managers and their subordinates in the coaching process should not result from the hierarchic system of the job posts, but

be based on partnership. The manager, when playing the role of a coach, should be a guide who helps the employees to self-develop, shape their self-awareness, initiate the creative process, inspire the client's potential to be maximized, in both its personal and professional aspects. A coach ought to support their clients in discovering what they wish to achieve, and then subsequently encourage them to finding and applying their own ways of reaching the solutions. A coach listens, asks proper questions; they do not give advice, though. A coachee knows the right answers (Grochalska, 2018, p. 158-159). Coaching fosters development, which is a series of changes; thus, coaching directly fosters the change. For this reason, according to Monika Grochalska, it is often applied in the organizations, for which changes are an everyday necessity (Grochalska, 2018, p. 162).

The presented reflections show it that the main focus of this paper has been the coaching which mostly focuses on working people. However, Wojdyło and Zawadzki are right, when they point it out that it could prove useful for the unemployed and the people who are professionally passive, too. It could contribute to a more effective job search (the unemployed) and regaining the confidence in the purposefulness of searching for a job (the professionally passive people) (Wojdyło & Zawadzki, 2019, p. 106). All in all, it may thus be said that coaching demonstrates its great usefulness in the process of human resource management; however, it has been pointed out that it is useful in the life outside work, too. It has also been gaining significant popularity.

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