

# EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GROUP COACHING AND ITS APPLICATIONS IN ORGANISATIONS

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## Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyse one particular group coaching method and its implementation; to generalize the results of the authors' research on the use of group coaching in order to evaluate its impact on employee characteristics, performance and development. We analyse the method and implementation of group coaching to help develop an evidence-based approach to this method. Economic point developing of organizations and teams has led us to pay main attention to intra-organizational cooperation and problem solving. That is crucial to achieving economic results of private and public organizationst. In 2017–2019, trainings and studies were carried out in group coaching with 445 leaders and specialists from the private and public sector in Estonia. The authors conducted interviews and questionnaires after group coaching sessions and used the results of the group coaching participants' reports. An analysis of the data indicates that group coaching enables many benefits including problem solving, self-awareness, self-confidence and other person skills. It has also shown to strengthen employee self-reflection and develop cooperation skills and a better understanding of the aims and nature of their organization.

**Keywords:** group coaching, development, problem solving, self-awareness, self-confidence, stress management, independent thinking, creativity, cooperation.

**JEL Codes:** C92, M12, M54

## Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyse one particular group coaching method and its implementation; to generalize the results of the authors' research on the use of group coaching in order to evaluate its impact on employee characteristics, performance and development. Economic point developing of organizations and teams has led us to pay main attention to intra-organizational cooperation and problem solving. That is crucial to achieving economic results of private and public organizations. This is closely related to the fulfilment of the economic policy goals of the state. A limited economic growth is one of the reasons of inadequate staff development in the field of problem solving.

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In this decade, the impact of group coaching on organizational development has increasingly been explored, but there are still only a few evidence-based studies. In 2017–2019, trainings and studies were carried out in 42 group coaching sessions with 445 leaders and specialists from the private and public sector (mostly schools) in Estonia. The authors conducted interviews and questionnaires after group coaching sessions and used the results of the group coaching participants' reports. The results of the study and the particular group coaching method are valid when we deal with the problem which belongs to one or some members of the group or team.

The research questions were following:

- What is the impact of this particular group coaching method to the quality of problem solving in organizations?
- What is the impact of this particular group coaching method to employee development and for the main person characteristics (self-awareness, self-confidence, cooperation etc)?
- What could be the benefits of group coaching for the leader and for the organization?

In this paper group coaching method is discussed, in which members of a small group discuss a work incident. We will look at one specific group coaching method (so-called advanced covision method) and its impact on some characteristics of employees. An analysis of the data indicates that group coaching enables many benefits including problem solving, conflict resolution, self-awareness, self-confidence, stress management and well-being. It has also shown to strengthen employee independent thinking, self-reflection and develop cooperation skills and a better understanding of the aims and nature of their organization.

## **1. Methods of employee development and coaching**

For over 25 years, performance appraisal interviews in different format, frequency and orientation towards appraisal and/or development have been used as a tool for organization management. About the same time, it was realized that performance appraisal interviews alone were not sufficient and so, mentoring, supervision, coaching and other employee development methods started slowly to step in addition (Whitmore, 1992).

Organizations have started to use coaching as a tool for employee development more frequently, understanding its importance in developing leadership competences, improving work performance and increasing employee satisfaction. It is used for succession and career planning and in order to enhance learning and increase performance in teams and organizations as a whole. (Grover and Furnham, 2016) According to O'Connor *et al.* (2017) and Jones *et al.* (2016), coaching has become one of the main methods for developing organizational culture and enhancing performance.

One of the first group coaching researches was Kets de Vries (2005: 61), who concludes that „ ... leadership group coaching establishes a foundation of trust, makes for

constructive conflict resolution, leads to greater commitment ... creates high-performance teams, is an antidote to organizational silo formation.“ The main components of group coaching are mutual listening and asking coaching-type questions, which enables to make sure that the discussion and development includes all group members. Listening to colleagues helps to understand them and is a prerequisite to cooperation and creativity, and by Alro and Dahl (2015: 501) for “... diminish conflict talk and conflict-based relationships”. Pakarinen and Virtanen (2016) offer a solution to form cross-dimensional steering groups for identify problems and resolve conflicts.

It is evident that leaders want to be successful and in most cases want to develop themselves and their organization and team. Therefore, different employee development methods are applied and combined together. For example, in addition to performance development interviews taking place a few times a year, regular coaching-type conversations and mentoring are also implemented. The difference between coaching and mentoring is that when mentoring is considered counselling in a certain field and/or by a practitioner of the profession, a coach creates the conditions for developing self-awareness, self-confidence and responsibility (Whitmore, 2017). Mentors who are familiar with the main principles of coaching do the same (Coppin and Fisher, 2016). In the end, their activities will be more efficient and sustainable.

A diverse reflection (as one form of feedback) that is based on different opinions supports the development of employees, teams and organization and ensures cooperation for common purposes. This assumes that different types of employee development methods are used, one of the most promising being coaching (Longenecker and Fink, 2017), which is also increasingly used in Estonian organizations (Saue, 2017; Saue and Türk, 2019). The younger generation expects constructive feedback from colleagues and leaders on their viewpoints and actions; they expect an immediate opinion, at the same time accepting a correcting feedback if it is developing and safe (Zaharec *et al.*, 2018; Türk, 2016).

According to John Whitmore (2017: 12) definition, coaching “... is unlocking people’s potential to maximize their own performance”. This helps to break the old-fashioned patterns of thought like followings: I have to be able to manage on my own; I have to hide my weaknesses and shortcomings; Asking shows foolishness etc. A tennis coach Timothy Gallwey (1986) claimed that the opponent is not on the other side of the net, but inside your head. Coaching helps the people to address their common problems such as stress, social relationships and confidence (Lancer and Eatough, 2018). By Anthony Grant study (2016: 82) “... coaching can continue to develop and to make important contributions to the well-being and performance of the individuals and organisations which we serve”.

The main ideas of coaching are not novel and leaders have used them either consciously or unconsciously all along, either deriving from intuition or from experience. By Grant (2016: 74) „There has been an almost exponential growth in the amount of coaching-specific and coaching-related research over the past ten years. At the same time there has been considerable interest in the development of evidence-based approaches to coaching ... the level of professional wisdom is no longer enough”. Much of the research

in the world has been done in educational and medical institutions and relatively few in business organizations.

Coaching helps grow self-confidence to open up more, gives courage to admit one's faults and lack of knowledge and accept mistakes made in new situations. John Whitmore (2017) claims that coaching results in replacement of *I have to* mind-set with *I want to* mind-set. Increasing self-confidence and faith in oneself, admitting one's own imperfection (I do not have to be ideal) and allowing making mistakes – this ensures emancipation and courage in staying true to oneself. It is also not important to be liked by everyone, most important are benefits for organization.

The task of the coach is creating a coaching relationship and contract with a coachee and reflect their viewpoints and activities done so far, and to create a context where coachee can become aware about his/her resources and opportunities (Flückiger *et al.*, 2017). Right and timely questions enable to develop the employees (coachees) and increase their effectiveness. A coaching leader has to be able to listen actively and formulate questions according to what would be beneficial for their employees. It is possible to learn this, but it assumes a willingness, a wish to support the development of another person and acquiring the appropriate methodology. By Manfred Kets de Vries study (2015: 5) „... one-on-one coaching is not as powerful for creating tipping points for change ... there is not the same intensity and focus in a single session compared with what we see happening in a group coaching session“.

Coaching also helps to overcome reluctance in a situation where the leader acts as a teacher; the people themselves are the most efficient persuaders, which is why self-motivating should be left to themselves (Wilcox *et al.*, 2017). Grover and Furnham (2016: 37) found “... that a number of individual-level outcome measures have been found to increase through the use of coaching, including well-being, career satisfaction and goal attainment”.

## **2. The nature and particular features of group coaching**

Group coaching is a safe and developing environment, in which a group member's work incident is discussed within a small group. Presenting ones work related problem and listening to other people, makes it possible to receive a reflection on the problem, develop one's particular abilities and raise self-confidence, by lessening fears and stress. (Fumoto, 2016; Barry *et al.*, 2017) By Alro and Dahl study (2015: 501) “...the dialogic approach emphasizes the importance of a coaching contract to create a common basis for reflection and action, which is found to reduce individual positioning”. Group coaching is an employee development method, which can be implemented in organizations of different sizes, incl. micro-enterprises. According to Shoukry and Cox (2018), group coaching methodology is still not applied enough and is still unknown to a lot of leaders.

This particular method of group coaching has been developed out of covision (peer group supervision), where suitable solutions are found by supporting on the competences and opinions of the group. Group coaching is an efficient method for

solving work-related cases (Fumoto, 2016) and "... resolving personal dilemmas in the workplace" (Flückiger *et al.*, 2017: 626). Group coaching is mainly used in a group of up to 10 people, which ensures everyone has equal opportunities for posing questions and expressing opinions and it helps to increase the effectiveness of employees and self-confidence in the area of independent thinking and operating. Aas and Vavik (2015) and Flückiger *et al.* (2017) recommend 4-6 people as the optimal size for group coaching groups, which enables elaborate discussion of the work case, to reflect and devise a suitable action plan. Leaders and specialists from different sub-units and management levels can be part of the work group, from wherein new leaders can be developed and favourable conditions created for the careers of employees. Group coaching can also be applied within a team, as this enables to develop cooperation between the team leader and members (Thornton, 2016).

According to Grant (2017), group coaching has evolved through three stages of organization management during the century. If originally it was implemented to increase the performance of problematic employees and a little later to cope with change, in the present decade, the orientation is towards influencing employee mindset and shaping behaviour towards achieving the common goals of the organization (Grant, 2017). Group coaching is oriented towards development of all (incl. successful) employees by helping them discover and increase their own potential for the purpose of realizing future changes and challenges. Coaching organizations have changed their focal point and focus on developing employee capabilities instead of achieving high performance directly (Fumoto, 2016).

Collective knowledge is always greater than individual and helps to avoid mistakes that can be costly. Group coaching helps to avoid mistakes and is a quick method for implementing changes (Flückiger *et al.*, 2017). When compared to individual coaching, this method enables to breathe new life into teams and open its potential by looking at it from new aspects, particular features and strengths of its members. Fumoto (2016) emphasizes that creativity is very important for team development and ensuring the sustainability of organizations – group coaching helps employees open up their creative potential. Open and active communication and discussion help create new thought patterns and synergy. Constantly developing people are more creative and not afraid of making mistakes.

Group coaching assumes that the person implementing it creates a trusting and constructive social environment. A mutually supporting environment will motivate to find and offer ideas and creative solutions for personal growth. The person who implements group coaching must be familiar with the corresponding methodology, who can manage the process and who can create a pleasant environment.

One member of the group is always selected to be in the role of group coach, whose task is to coordinate the process of group coaching and to make sure the format of this process is adhered to. One of the group members is in the role of coachee (owner of the incident), whereas all group members have possibility to be in the role of coachee and develop themselves during the next meetings. Group coaching enables to develop one another mutually and for the presenter of the work incident to understand the problem addressed

in more depth and to find a more suitable solution for the work case by using common wisdom. Employees and team will begin to offer solutions to work incidents and problems once the leader creates the opportunity for this, but avoids providing own solutions (Vesso and Alas, 2016).

In order to make sure the work environment of group coaching is constructive, deviation from the topic has to be avoided, equality between participants has to be ensured and occupational hierarchy, evaluation and competition prevented between employees. It can be done in the initial, contracting phase. A thorough and all-round analysis of the situation is also relevant, but personal judgement and accusations should be avoided. Coaching-type questions should inspire the presenter of the work incident to understand the situation in more depth and more systemically and find own solutions. The synergy that emerges in the course of discussion also enables other participants to learn and develop themselves.

Following the structure of group coaching enables to avoid deviation from the topic, dominance of single group members, offering premature solutions etc. Ketz de Vriez (2010) emphasizes that making sure group members have equal opportunities for expressing their opinions helps to create connections between employee's personal experiences (situations), opinions and propositions as well as develop their emotional and social intelligence.

Group coaching method does not always assume long-term studies, it is possible to start using it within your organization to discuss and solve practical issues after receiving the primary knowledge and skills. This enables to acquire the method gradually in cooperation with the group during practical work, it does not demand extra time – doing it by oneself and experimenting is a frequent development incentive for creative leaders. Lucas and Whitaker (2014: 7) argue with their experience that „With every group we run, we are exposed to new ideas and different thinking which moves our own coaching and coaching supervision practice forward.” The principles of group coaching methodology have a guiding and framing effect on planning and carrying out even regular meetings but also for other (personal) affairs and stress management (Saue and Türk, 2019).

### **3. Effectiveness of group coaching and its relationship with leadership**

Many reputable researchers have carried out academic research on group coaching. According to Berg and Karlsen (2016), the topic has started to be of interest to academic persons too, who have found it has a positive effect on the high performance of organization as a whole. Flückiger *et al.* (2017) have emphasized the importance of this management tool in forming a more systematic understanding and a wider picture and in developing employee professionalism in an organization which according to Berg and Karlsen (2016) and Grover and Furnham (2016) enables leaders to form a new and development-oriented leadership style – Coaching Leadership Style.

Group coaching facilitates a distributed/shared leadership style within the organization, which enables to decrease the negative effects deriving from the official structure and

hierarchy of the organization. The research of Cera *et al.* (2013) shows that self-regulated learning is related to metacognitive skills, which is linked to self-efficacy. Practice shows that group coaching is a context in which self-regulating learning takes place. According to Henson (2013) and Berg and Karlsen (2016), group coaching also helps to develop a coaching leadership style. Coaching is also associated with transformational leadership style (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Trevillion, 2018) with its *individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation*. As the research results of Grover and Furnham (2016) show, the principles of coaching can be successfully implemented both for first-hand and virtual communication on both group/team and individual level. Based on the authors' experience, this also applies to group coaching. This guarantees that employees are valued, respected, well looked after and motivated (Grant, 2017).

According to the principles of authentic leadership approach (Gardner *et al.*, 2011), the leader builds their personal work style deriving from their own strengths and characteristics, however, in its application, one still needs to support on the principles of group coaching (Fusco *et al.*, 2016). This also ensures that employee self-management skills are developed, which is a basis for an effective collaboration in today's organizations. Employees have different levels of openness and collegiality, so what works for one may not work for the other. Every manager should have a personal leadership style and the effectiveness of the activities done by many leaders is suffering because of bad self-management skills.

Group coaching also plays an important part in motivating employees (Fumoto, 2016; Berg and Karlsen, 2016) and ensuring the high performance of organization (Longenecker and Fink, 2017; Grant, 2017). The research of Berg and Karlsen (2016) shows that there is a strong correlation between a coaching leadership style and job satisfaction and work performance, which is accompanied by a purposeful distribution of information between the members of the organization and an increase in the performance of employees, teams and organization. Leaders that apply group coaching develop themselves and also their employees. They develop their skills by using different leadership tools, which is a basis for individual, group and organization development and high performance. By participating in the planning and application of changes happening around themselves as coaching leaders, they create good conditions for employee development.

#### **4. Methodology**

According to the practical experience of the authors, this particular group coaching method assumes that the following stages will be covered:

- introducing the work incident,
- posing specifying questions,
- reflection of the work incident for the purpose of understanding it (solutions are not yet offered),
- asking coaching-type questions from the owner of the work incident,

- group members and incident owner develop solutions for solving the work incident and present these,
- case owner reflects on the solutions received from participants, bringing out the most important aspects,
- ending round of the group – what was learnt (group coaching interview).

An incident owner presents ones work related problem to the group, gets questions and reflections from the group. Through this process incident owner develops broader and deeper understanding of the problem and its solving opportunities, this helps to develop one's abilities self-awareness, self-confidence, stress management, independent thinking, creativity and cooperation.

Leaders and authoritative persons should hold themselves back and submit their opinions only when others have presented their thoughts. This helps to overcome the pressure of authority and to avoid falling into a trap of experience. Supporting our thoughts with knowledge from colleagues helps to avoid simplifying situations and making old and experience-based decisions. One must make a difference between listening and hearing. The first also assumes understanding of what was heard and is active in its nature, therefore, one can make notes, specify what was heard and analyse by means of reflection and mirroring. All these activities are components of group coaching that an appropriate methodology helps to keep inside frames.

Even though the main element of group coaching is asking questions that stimulate independent thinking and refraining from offering solutions (so that people would find solutions themselves), it does not mean that at some point, the leader cannot express their opinion too. For example, during one of the last stages of group coaching, it is also important for the leaders and colleagues to express their opinions. At the same time, main principles of coaching should not be forgotten – listening and asking questions is more effective development than offering answers and solutions. It puts value to human beings, supports their thinking and helps them find a solution on their own, to make a decision and carry it into effect.

The authors are relying on the opinions of leaders (managers) and specialists, who participated in a group coaching delivered by the authors between 2017 and 2019 and will present these in parallel to international research results. The research relies on 445 Estonian private and public sector organization leaders' and specialists' opinions (including 82 participants of Business Academy, 318 participants in University of Tartu master's studies and trainings, 45 headmasters and teachers from Estonian schools). The group of leaders and specialist participated in three group coaching sessions, and headmasters and teachers of schools participated in 11 coaching session per group (about ten persons in group).

In this paper authors made an attempt to integrate academic researches and long-term practical experience into evidenced-based group coaching survey. In order to find out the specifics of group coaching two types of data were analysed: objective data from group coaching participants' (coachees) reports (incl. 385 questionnaires from

participants of business and state organizations) and subjective data collected by 42 semi-structured group interviews in the end of group coaching sessions. At the end of group coaching sessions, the authors conducted group interviews as the feedback from participants. During the group interviews, three perspectives were determined:

- What is the impact of group coaching method to the quality of problem solving?
- What is the impact of group coaching method to employee development and for the main person characteristics?
- What could be the benefits of group coaching?

During the group interviews, we determined the extent of development of the following characteristics of coachees: problem and conflict solving ability, self-awareness, self-confidence, stress management and cooperation. The qualitative approach was selected in order to focus on the deeper meanings of group coaching in the private and state organizations and in the schools.

In addition, the authors used the data from group coaching participants' reports on the group coaching performed by the participants in their organizations, during which they also responded to the questionnaire. The research questions asked at the end of group coaching sessions were as follows:

- What is the impact of this particular group coaching method to quality of problem and conflict solving in organizations?
- What is the impact of this particular group coaching method to employee development?
- What type of your characteristics developed through group coaching (problem and conflict solving ability, self-awareness, self-confidence, stress management, independent thinking, creativity, cooperation and well-being)?
- What could be the benefits of group coaching when implemented in my organization (for an organization; for me as a leader)?

The quantitative data is used to identify main characteristics of coachee development during the group coaching. The extent of development of the following characteristics of participants' (coachees) of the group coaching were estimated at three levels: 1) Very important impact, 2) Significant impact and 3) Unclear impact.

## **5. Discussion and results**

As a result of authors' research, leaders (managers) and specialists are convinced that performance appraisal interviews with the leader and other employee development methods are very important and help increase employee performance. It appears that practically all Estonian leaders who were questioned believe they are and want to be developing leaders, but almost half of them do not implement even regular performance appraisal interviews in their organization, not to mention other development methods (360° feedback, mentoring, coaching). At the same time, leaders of the new generation increasingly value coaching and mentoring and the leadership culture that comes with it.

A small number of Estonian leaders have previously experienced coaching and consider it important, but even more than half of them have not used it in practice. Almost half of the specialists expect a more operative, frequent and diverse feedback than what they have received so far, incl. primarily in the format of mentoring and coaching. The younger generation in particular is expecting immediate and constructive feedback on their activities from colleagues and leaders. One of the most promising methods of feedback offered by Longenecker and Fink (2017) is coaching, which is also increasingly used in Estonian organizations (Saue and Türk, 2019).

The main reason for not practicing coaching is the fact that it is time-consuming, which can be overcome by integrating group coaching methodology into regular group meeting practice where the leader's presence is not crucial because the role of the coach rotates. Acquiring the main principles of group coaching does not demand a lot of time from experienced leaders and developing oneself in the area in the course of work along with some support from coaches is a lot more acceptable for them as well. In most cases when leaders have a positive and useful experience of being coached, they consider it necessary to apply in their organization (team). More important is their competency and willingness to make it happen, but this assumes they are trained and had practice. It takes first just a willingness to support one's employee development and growth. Methodology is an easy part compared to the attitude.

According to the results of authors' research, it can be said that very few Estonian leaders and specialists have come into contact with group coaching. Shoukry and Cox (2018) also claim that group coaching is still unknown to many leaders. However, having done 42 group coaching sessions in the last three years, we can state that the method has received high recognition from the participants. The participants of group coaching have emphasized that adding coaching-type questions enables to develop the owners of the case more efficiently and increase their self-awareness and self-confidence. This particular group coaching method inspires the owners of the case to understand the situation systemically and more actively for solving their own case. Under the conditions of information overload and constant change, this primarily helps mid-level managers too, who are often rebuked from top and bottom.

Leaders can also find comfort to their principal loneliness when attending a group coaching with other leaders (managers) or partners and find affirmation to their actions or correct their views in problem (conflict). According to Kets de Vries (2005), group coaching also contributes to constructive conflict resolution. This would be a developing and useful discussion environment for leaders of organizations, in order to receive reflection and support for their management issues.

According to the authors' research, ensuring that opinions are presented equally is very important when implementing coaching where dominance of authoritative and competent persons within the organization should be avoided. It is also very important to accept the people's freedom not to change themselves and their behaviour, this way they can overcome their stubbornness, outdated beliefs and fear more quickly and easily. "Do this"; "This is the correct way"; "This is how we do things" etc. is not very efficient and

breeds defiance and reluctance. Rather than taking an interest in how difficult it is to accomplish something, instead one should ask “What kind of opportunities do you see in accomplishing this?”; “How do you see yourself accomplishing this?” Flückiger *et al.* (2017) also argue that it is firstly necessary to create a context in which the coachee is aware of his/her resources and capabilities. It is sometimes difficult for the leaders who come across group coaching for the first time to follow the principles of group coaching and main stages of methodology and at times, it takes some effort to overcome themselves. However, leaders who have acquired the main principles and methodology of group coaching are socially and emotionally more capable and able to create better conditions for mutual respect and support.

This particular group coaching methodology is about coaching the owner of the work case by the group, where the work case is discussed in more depth and more substantially. It enables to see themselves from aside and respect different opinions and personalities of group members. Understanding, that group coaching is beneficial, appears when group coaching is led professionally. Often internal coach trainings are organize within the company, which guarantees professionalism. Some training days would provide the necessary self-confidence and abilities to lead group coachings independently. We have drawn attention to the aforementioned problems and emphasized the following principles:

- learn to listen (otherwise, there will be two speakers and two truths);
- try to understand your partner and avoid prejudice;
- avoid emotions and focus on finding a new, common and better solution;
- ask for advice;
- do not hurry suggesting solutions;
- value your partner and support his or her independent thinking and decision-making etc.

Fumoto (2016), Grant (2017), Barry *et al.* (2017), Flückiger *et al.* (2017), Shoukry and Cox (2018) share the same view.

Authors, based on existing covision methodology (see Section 4), have developed this particular group coaching methodology used in this study. Based on authors' research, employee development and group coaching depend on the leader's own development, caring and shared leadership style. The research show, this group coaching method enables many benefits including problem solving, conflict resolution and stress reduction. The results of group interviews show that group coaching has also developed cooperation skills and a better understanding of the aims and nature of their organization of the owner of the case, but also of the other participants. Employees wish from leaders to hear them out and respect their ideas and solutions. Analysing the work case also increases confidence to manage similar cases. (see Table 1) All this helps the person to understand that they are not unique and alone with their problems.

Group coaching has a healing effect and provides support and abilities to manage difficult situations for all participants by being a learning environment for all participants. Mostly, constructive and supportive opinions are expected, which help the

employees to develop and increase self-awareness, self-confidence and well-being. The same claim by Fumoto (2016), Barry *et al.* (2017) etc. (see Table 1) Suggestions for employee activities and characteristics shown in the table have been based on previous theoretical studies (see Sections 2 and 3).

It is possible to say that group coaching has been unfamiliar to many leaders. Acquiring this technique has helped along to the acquirement of a mentality and methodology directed towards development, which has demanded commitment and time from leaders. In case of authoritative and self-centred leaders, this has meant a 180° turnaround in thinking and acting. At the same time, we have met many leaders whose mentality and manner of communication are already developing by nature – they have an inherent shared leadership and coaching style, which only requires methodological support. Berg and Karlsen (2016) and Grover and Furnham (2016) share the same view – group coaching enables leaders to form a development-oriented leadership style (coaching leadership style).

**Table 1**

The impact of group coaching for some characteristics of coachee's in business and state organizations and in schools in Estonia by the authors survey in 2017-2019 and based on other researches.

Characteristics of employees	Leaders (managers) and specialists of business and state organizations (n=385; 3 coaching session per group)	Headmasters and teachers of schools) (n=60; 11 coaching session per group)	Results of other researches (important impact)
development	++	++	Noon, 2018; Flückiger <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Berg and Karlsen, 2016; Lucas and Whitaker, 2014; Grover and Furnham, 2016; O'Connor <i>et al.</i> , 2017
problem solving	++	++	Grant, 2017; Fumoto, 2016; Flückiger <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Whitmore, 2017
conflict resolution	+	+	Alro and Dahl, 2015; Kets de Vries, 2015
self-awareness	++	++	Noon, 2018; Flückiger <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Fumoto, 2016; Whitmore, 2017
self-confidence	++	++	Lancer and Eatough, 2018; Fumoto, 2016; Berg and Karlsen, 2016
stress reduction	++	++	Barry <i>et al.</i> , 2017; O'Connor <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Grant, 2017
independent thinking	?	+	Fumoto, 2016; Lucas and Whitaker, 2014
creativity	?	+ ?	Fumoto, 2016;
cooperation	+ ?	+	Alro and Dahl, 2015; Lucas and Whitaker, 2014; Kets de Vries, 2015; Cappelli and Tavis, 2016; Lancer and Eatough, 2018
well-being	+ ?	+	Grant, 2017; Grover and Furnham, 2016; Fumoto, 2016; O'Connor <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Whitmore, 2017

++ Very important impact; + Significant impact; ? Unclear impact

The research of authors also shows that a regular implementation of group coaching increases employee proactivity, which is an important prerequisite for organization's high performance. It creates the opportunity for the creation of self-managing and resultant teams and enables the leader to release themselves from operational management and primarily manage the development and strategic questions of the organization.

## Conclusion

Authors have developed this particular group-coaching methodology used in this study. Employee development by group coaching depend on the leaders own development, caring and leadership style. As a result of research done by the authors, almost half of the group coaching participants expect more diverse, frequent and effective feedback from their leaders. This would be primarily in the form of opinion and expression. In modern times more emphasis is placed on coaching and mentoring and the leadership culture that comes with it. Group coaching it also increasingly implemented as a means to assist the organization and to conduct change. A limited economic growth is one of the reasons of inadequate staff development in the field of problem solving.

Coaching is not practised widely as it is seen to be time-consuming, whereas in fact this can be overcome by integrating a group coaching methodology into everyday leadership structure. You can acquire the main principles of group coaching from experienced leaders so it does not demand excessive time so developing oneself in this area can be achieved during the course of normal work – with some support from coaches. This is more acceptable for everyone.

The participants of this particular group coaching have emphasised that adding specific coaching-type questions enabled them to develop the owners of the case more efficiently and increase problem and conflict solving capabilities. After carrying out group coaching sessions in the last years the authors can state that the method has received high recognition by the participants. This enables an increase in self-awareness, self-confidence, stress reduction, cooperation and well-being, between the parties involved in the case. Analysing the work cases helps employees to understand that they are not unique and alone with their problems. Group coaching has a healing effect and provides support and added abilities to enable the leadership of difficult situations for all by increasing the learning environment for all participants. Actual developments within oneself and within one's colleagues is the best gratitude and acknowledgment you can achieve for this!

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