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Linda Räsänen

Developing coaching leadership style through a
coaching program

– Changes in service managers thinking and
behavior



Master's Thesis | Abstract

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Linda Räsänen

Developing coaching leadership style through a coaching program

- Changes in service managers thinking and behavior

The objective of the present Master's thesis is to study what kind of changes there has been in Company X's service managers' thinking and behavior after they participated in a training program of Company Y that lasted for two years. The research also sought to find answers to which things contributed to the development and which prevented it.

The research questions were: What kind of changes have there been in service managers' thinking and behavior during the participation in training program of Company Y and how these changes are reflected in the organization? Which were the factors in the training program and working environment that furthered the development of changes in service managers' thinking and behavior in the opinion of the participants? The research was carried out using a narrative approach.

The results indicated that there were changes in service managers' thinking and behavior. Focusing on individuals, building trust and changes in the service managers' time use emerged as important themes. The research could identify factors that made change possible, and the most important of these was the support of colleagues. Company X was provided with a concept of issues preventing development whereby it can work to solve these challenges.

The thesis discusses the subject from different perspectives and the project achieved the given goals.

Keywords:

Coaching leadership, behavior modification, coaching program

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Linda Räsänen

Valmentavan johtamistyylin kehittäminen valmennusohjelman avulla

- muutokset palvelupäälliköiden ajattelussa ja käyttäytymisessä

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli selvittää, millaisia muutoksia Yritys X:n palvelupäälliköiden ajattelussa ja käyttäytymisessä on tapahtunut, kun he osallistuivat Yritys Y:n kaksi vuotta kestäväan koulutusohjelmaan. Tutkimuksessa etsittiin myös vastauksia siihen, mitkä asiat edesauttoivat kehitystä ja mitkä estivät sitä tapahtumasta.

Tutkimuskysymykset olivat: Millaisia muutoksia palvelupäälliköiden ajattelussa ja käyttäytymisessä on tapahtunut Yritys Y:n koulutusohjelman aikana ja miten nämä muutokset näkyvät organisaatiossa? Mitkä koulutusohjelman ja työympäristön tekijät edistivät ajattelun ja käyttäytymisen muuttumista osallistujien mielestä? Tutkimus toteutettiin narratiivista lähestymistapaa käyttäen.

Tulokset osoittivat, että palvelupäälliköiden ajattelussa ja käyttäytymisessä on tapahtunut muutoksia. Tärkeiksi teemoiksi nousivat yksilöihin keskittyminen, luottamuksen rakentaminen ja muutokset ajankäytössä. Tutkimuksessa löydettiin asioita, jotka mahdollistivat muutoksen tapahtumisen ja näistä tärkein oli kollegoiden tuki. Yritys X sai konseptin asioista, jotka estivät kehitystä tapahtumasta ja sen avulla yritys voi pyrkiä ratkaisemaan nämä haasteet.

Opinnäytetyössä aihetta käsiteltiin eri näkökulmista ja projekti saavutti sille asetetut tavoitteet.

Asiasanat:

Valmentava johtaminen, käyttäytymisen muuttaminen, valmennusohjelma

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1 Introduction

Renewal of competence determines the organizations' ability to cope with change. As early as 1997, Laurence Prusak stated that an organizations competitiveness depends on what is known there, how that knowledge is used and how quickly one can learn new things. (Viitala, 2006, 11.) Business coaching fits this era and the needs of this era because it combines individual development with the achievement of organizational goals. It provides a personal and effective method for leadership and supervisory work as well as organizational empowerment. (Räsänen, 2007.) Business coaching is popular in the business field and the competition for customers is fierce. Regarding coaching, it is important to consider how long-lasting the results of the coaching are and how the coaching should continue after the coaching event to be effective. (Ojanen, 2020.)

This study examines the changes that corporate coaching brings in participants' thinking and behavior and which factors in the coaching and work environment influence to these changes. The research will be carried out with Company X whose service managers participated in a training program of Company Y. The reason for the participate to this training program is that one of the service managers roles is coaching leadership style and it is written into job description. Service managers had not got enough training for coaching before. This training program promised to help with the challenge how to take the new coaching skills from theory to practice. Training program ended in November 2021. It is common that companies use money and resources to develop skills of their employees and sometimes these investments do not reach the effect that is wanted. This research seeks for what are the factors in training programs that help participants change their thinking and behavior and what kind of changes there are in participants thinking and behavior in this specific case.

According to managers of Company X the goals for the training program are:

- Develop service managers competence with being present, being supportive with taking service managers differences into account

- Strengthening service managers self-knowledge and helping them find more options to their ways of working
- Improve contentment in the work community and contentment of the service managers
- Reduce sick leaves

The training lasted for two years. The first year dealt with the basics of the coaching and the second year with advanced special studies. This created a clear model for the trainees where the studies begin with the basics and moves forward to the advanced studies.

According to coach of the Company Y the coaching program involved two training days and two on-the-job learning days on each year. During the program there were also planning and steering groups for the trainees. The training days were group-focused gathering where the learning happened in groups. The learning includes sharing information and practicing different themes. Each training day ended with the double check method. With this method each trainee made a personal development plan that was checked on the on-the-job learning day.

The on-the-job learning days were carried out with small groups. Each group contained one coach from the Company Y, from two to three managers from the Company X and from two to four service managers. On these days the focus was on supporting the service managers progression with different methods.

The focus in the coaching program was creating a logical, participating program that aimed to the personal development of each trainee. The program took part in different environments; live, remote and hybrid.

2 Aim, research questions and methods

The purpose of this research is to find out what kind of changes there has been in the coaching leadership style after service managers participated in a coaching program that was implemented by Company Y. What kind of changes there has been to leaders thinking and behavior and how these changes reflect in the organization? This research also aims to provide what were the factors that enabled the changes and were there factors that prevented the changes from happening. The purpose is to produce information about the effects of an external coaching program in the organization for Company X, which is creating a concept that supports the development of coaching leaderships style in the future within the organization.

2.1 Research questions

The research will focus on answering the following research questions:

- 1) What kind of changes there have been in service managers thinking and behavior during participation in training program of Company Y and how these changes are reflected in the organization?
- 2) Which were the factors in training program and working environment that furthered the development of changes in service managers thinking and behavior in the opinion of the participants?

2.2 Methods

In this study the answers to the research questions posed are sought using a variety of research and analysis methods. This research is a case study. This study focuses on one organization of a larger company, and it involves a single case, and the individual case is examined in the context of its environment. Case study is a way for beginners to learn basic methods of data collection and analysis and its purpose is most typically to describe phenomena. The case study has its

roots in sociology, and it is typically a qualitative research strategy. (Saldana et al. 2011, 8; Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 135; Puusa & Juuti, 2020)

According to Puusa & Juuti (2020, 78-80) it is possible to research almost anything. Each researcher should be aware of the background assumptions of the research and what kind of limitations they bring. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in this research to collect the data. The aim of qualitative research is often to present the interpretations of the subjects under study. It is often used when the purpose is to give a voice to a certain limited group of people. The author of the qualitative research should consider the applicability of the research results to other similar target environments. (Aarnos et al. 2018, 32-34) Qualitative research seeks to understand the quality, characteristics, and meanings of an object holistically. It describes real life and contains the idea that reality is diverse. A pair of qualitative research is quantitative research that is based on the description and interpretation of an object using statistics and it emphasizes the laws of cause and effect. The key is that the data collected is suitable for quantitative measurement and that the conclusions are based on a statistical analysis of the data. (Jyu, 2021a; Hirsjärvi et al. 2009.)

2.2.1 Data acquisition and analysis

In this study, data is collected and analyzed with different methods. The aim of the analysis of the data is to describe, interpret and understand the phenomenon that is being researched. Typically, the collected data is wide-ranging and filled with many interesting matters and that is why the researcher should be able to choose a limited and narrow phenomenon for the research. This makes it possible to make a thorough review on the chosen phenomenon. The data is collected in several stages in parallel with different methods and the analysis is done throughout the process. The purpose of the analysis is to create a meaningful whole that makes possible to create rich and reasoned interpretation and draw conclusions about the phenomenon being researched. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, 333-343). In qualitative research, the collection and processing of data are

closely intertwined. The task of the researcher is to classify, analyze and interpret the material. These tasks are interrelated, but at the same time different. The steps of the analysis overlap and take place simultaneously. The stages of the study do not follow each other seamlessly. It is typical to go back from the various stages to evaluate and refine previous questions. (Ruusuvuori and others, 2010, 11-12). Figure 1 shows the analytical steps analytically separated.

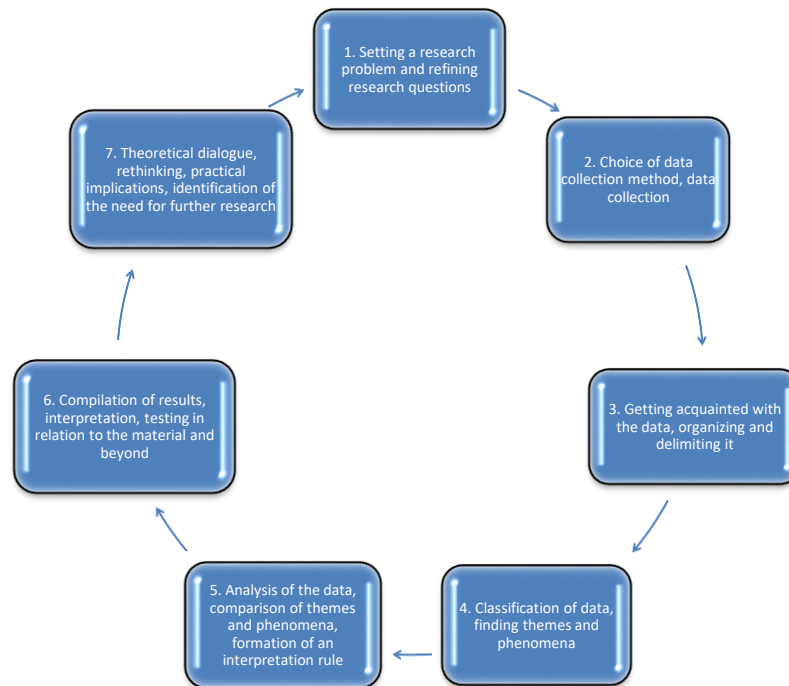


Figure 1. Phases of analysis (Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 12).

Analysis starts with setting research problem and defining research questions. This is followed by data collection and the selection of methods. After this, the data is taken for more detailed review and analysis. The results are compiled, studied, and interpreted in relation to the theory. Last phase is theoretical dialogue, rethinking, practical implications and figuring out if there is need for further research.

2.2.2 Interviews, workshops, surveys, and other methods

This research will use a thematic interview. Interview can be seen as a conversation that has a goal that has been set in advance. Initiator in the conversation is the researcher and the interview is interactive. The goal is to collect data that helps to make conclusions of the researched subject. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, 231-232.) A thematic interview starts with the assumption that the subjects have gone through a certain process. The researcher has clarified the relevant factors in the subject of the research by studying previous research and literature on the subject. Some parts of the interview have been determined in advance. This way the researcher can guide the conversation without having complete control over it. This method is free-form and flexible and the subject is encouraged to speak freely about the topic. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, 253-257.) In this research the management of Company x will be interviewed, and the results of the thematic interviews will be transcribed and analyzed. The interviews will focus on the themes: How the changes in service managers thinking and behavior are reflected on a daily basis at work.

The study utilizes group interviews. According to Hirsjärvi and others (2009, 211) group interviewing is an effective form of data collection. However, when interpreting the results, it must be considered that there may be dominant individuals in the group who seek to determine the direction of the discussion and everyone's opinions may not come up. Service managers will participate in workshops where they will work on the topic: Which were the factors in this training program and working environment in general that furthered the development making changes in thinking and behavior. The written materials of the workshops will be analyzed and classified by theme.

The study will collect statistical data from two different personnel surveys and the qualitative results will be analyzed. Participants in the study will be asked to write an essay and these essays will be analyzed using coding. Coding will be used as an aid in the classification of themes and in the evaluation of their quantitative prevalence. Coding is also used as an aid in the analysis of the learning diaries

participating in the study. Coding is a tool for content analysis, with which the processing of qualitative research material begins. In coding, the material is organized and classified, and after this is the material analyzed. (Tietoarkisto, 2022).

In the study, the calendar entries of the service managers will be examined and based on the entries, the aim is to make observations about how the behavior has changed. Events related to meetings with team members will be examined and discrepancies are searched for between two periods of time: March – April 2020 and March – April 2022. The results will be entered into a table, from which changes in the number of meetings can be observed.

2.2.3 Narrative analysis

The most important method is to analyze the essays of the service managers. One approach in this study is narrative analysis and the data is also collected through writing.

Self-assessment emphasizes awareness of own actions and changes, and critical reflection is essential. Self-assessments may be confused with different goals, such as meeting accountability, beautifying one's own activities and convincing outsiders and this needs to be considered when interpreting the results. (Korkeakoski & Silvennoinen, 2008, 132-133)

One of the potential objectives of narrative analysis is that it can provide information that can help find the best practices in the field that has been searched. It provides a bigger picture of a phenomenon by summarizing different aspects of the same phenomenon. This approach gives the reviewer a chance to be critical and reflective. (Saldana et al. 2006, 219). This method transforms participants stories into creative nonfiction. It gathers scattered accounts and stories and turns them into a new, coherent form. The stories can be life stories, interview texts, diaries, letters, researcher field notes, or everyday messages and notes (Saldana et al. 2011, 12; Aarnos et al. 2018, 561.) Written story consists of a linear scheme that unites single events and experiences. Life itself does not go

on linearly and this can be seen as a criticism to this narrative approach. Some events can be chosen to the written story and the writer can build connections to these events that justify the events and hold them together. Some of the events or experiences can be left outside because they do not fit with the storyline. (Syrjäläinen et al. 2007, 21.) Narrative analysis is perceiving what kind of stories are told about the subject. The subject of the analysis can be a text, a picture, a movie, or music. The subject is analyzed using concepts, terms and viewpoints that are related to narrative theories. The analyzing formulates core reports that can be used for indicating what kind of general thinking and behavior, meanings and attitudes relate to the subject. (Jyu, 2021b.)

The best way to gather information on experiences of individuals is either an individual interview or a writing request. With these approaches it is important to keep in mind that the writer always considers the expectations of the recipient. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, 512-514).

In narrative analysis there are no right or wrong interpretations of the data. There are only interpretations that are well justified. It is important to start the analyzing by only reading the materials first without making any notes. After the materials have been read, the researcher can start to get to know the materials at a more detailed level with the help of various questions. Narrative analysis does not try to reveal the objective truth. It seeks to shed light on the construction of reality through the social meanings built in social relations. There are many interpretations of the social phenomena. The data are the interpretations of the participants, and the report is the researcher's interpretation of them. The stories are not considered as an exact description of what has happened. Increasing understanding is a key element. The task of narrative research is to analyze people's stories critically and not just pass them on. While analyzing the stories it needs to be noted that each text is written in a certain context and when people write the stories, they do not present ready-made interpretations – they seek their attitude towards issues. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, 518-527).

3 Coaching leadership style and effectiveness of coaching

Coaching refers to putting the principles of coaching psychology into practice. The goal is to develop individual, team, and organizational behavior and enable better learning. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 79) In the process, the coach helps the person mobilize their resources to help them achieve their goals. (Suomen coaching yhdistys, 2022a).

Management has been seen through the managers personal qualities. These qualities are for example the ability to adapt in different situations, ability to cooperate and the ability to make people more committed. In the 1950's and 1960's the focus was on different leading styles as democratic leading style and authoritarian leading style. At the same time the focus was on finding a style that would combine both, production and focusing people. In the 1970's and 1980's the accent was in situational management. In situational management the managing is putted into perspective in each situation weather the case is technology, motivation, or employee's competence. The leading business coaching models are often integrative, and the managing is considered from different perspectives at the same time. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 260.) Leadership theories have evolved over the time. The trend has been moving away from one factor unitary models to models that express multiple capabilities. One example of this kind of model is transformational leadership. The focus has changed from skill development to empowerment and collaboration and the trend is moving towards leadership that is more distributed and shared. (MacKie, 2016, 11.) Management has changed from controlling to coaching. The foreman in the managerial role focuses on transforming the basic task of the organization into everyday goals, tasks, and processes. In the leader role the leader leads by his own example and draws inspiring visions and plans for the team. In the coaching role, the foreman supports employees in carrying out jointly agreed tasks, taking individuality into account. All these roles can be seen as the core roles of a leader. Management has been influenced by sports life and sports psychology.

Managerial coaching can be seen as positive and intentional change, accepting oneself and glorifying own strengths. Developing, learning, and achieving own goals are important areas in coaching. Coaching psychology is a trend that is arising alongside managerial coaching. In the future understanding psychological knowledge combined with the mentality of the leader is going to be the way the future organizations are run. A true coach creates a culture of constant dialogue. Sparring in groups and practicing thinking together are part of this culture. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 78, 266; Räsänen, 2017, 39.)

The companies can achieve following improvements with coaching: improved productivity, improved interpersonal relationships, developed customer relationships, strengthened organization, and improved job satisfaction. Inconsistent leadership style can increase work-related stress, burnout, and job satisfaction. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 77-78; Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 44.)

Coaching as a business development method has become popular in Finland in the early 21st century. In 2007 a coaching conference was held in Helsinki, and this can be seen as an important milestone in coaching. The Finnish coaching association was founded in 2004. Companies exploit coaching as in-house-coaching where the coaches are employees of the company, and they are in charge of coaching or as a service from a consultant outside of the company. The consultant is professional in his own field and has no position in the company and the company's rules and history does not limit the coaching process. The persons who are in charge in developing employee competence have strengthened their own coaching skills in Finland. (Carlsson & Forsell, 2017, 32-35.)

Leppänen & Rauhala (2012, 80) present The University of Sydney's Faculty of Preparatory Psychology's view of coaching:

- 1) Coaching aims for change.
- 2) Coaching is based on solution-orientation.
- 3) Coaching is based on the goals set by the leader and the manager.
- 4) Feedback and trust are core issues.

- 5) There is a scientific basis for the fact that systematic coaching can effectively influence development as a leader.

3.1 Coaching skills for coaching leaders

Leadership means getting the individuals and groups to work in the direction the organization wants. A leader can influence people's behavior and motivation by setting their own example and encouraging. (Järvinen, 2014, 24-25.) Leadership is created in the co-operation between leader and subordinates, and they shape it through their own actions. Coaching leadership style can be used when the goal is to increase motivation, increase taking responsibility, support self-management and support development in one's own work role. With coaching it is possible to enable more vigilant and creative thinking and support the achievement of own goals. The leaders' understanding of his or her own role is an important part of the coaching leadership style approach. The resources and circumstances available also determine whether a supervisor can act like a coach. (Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 13; Räsänen, 2017, 53-54, 89.)

3.1.1 Solution focused approach

The roots of solution-based approach were created in 1986 in Milwaukee where a group of employees of a therapy center published an article that discussed a new way of approaching problem solving. The ideas around the new approach were gathered from family therapy, Buddhism, and philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's thinking. In the past the therapy processes had focused on trying to get away from the problem. The conversation between the therapist and the client focused on the problem itself and the methods underlined that it was important for the client to talk about the problem to be able to move forward. The new focus was to get closer to the solution. The working group questioned the problem focused method and believed that the wanted change would occur easier if the methods based on solution focusing methods. The solution-based method was defined as a conversation that focused on clients' objectives, clients'

resources and finding out what kind of helpful things the client was already doing. Essential parts in solution-oriented approach are attending to strengths instead of flaws, mapping out possible and desired futures and finding out what has already helped the desired future to realize. (Iverson et al. 2012, 9-10.)

According to system theoretical viewpoint everything effects on everything. Gregory Bateson worked together with solution focused therapists and developed this way of thinking. According to this a team can be seen as a system where one change affects to the whole team and system. Cybernetics effects on solution focused thinking also. In cybernetics conclusions based on observations, not interpretations. The objectives can be reached with feedback system and reconstructive actions. These elements reflect cybernetics: "do not fix what is not broken, do more things that function well, do a small fix to that what is not functioning". (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 65.)

Words and choice of words are the basics in solution focused approach. Using these wisely helps to build meanings. The meanings are constructed but they can also be built. Figure 2 shows how the meanings are built. Talented leader gathers followers and makes the group work by influencing on its way of speaking, interpretations, and structuring. Most of the successful leadership is managing different meanings. Hirvihuhta & Litovaara present guidelines for managers for situations where harmful interpretations can be found. 1) It is important to accept the employees' description of the situation as a starting point for discussion. 2) The manager can consider such structuring methods that are useful and become interested in them by asking questions and helping the working group to develop them further. 3) By listening the choice of words carefully and offering new, more positive, or more spacious interpretations that suit the earlier discussions and ways of speaking the conversation can be lead forward. 4) Others can be helped by making them critically examine established perceptions and asking how they were born and being interested in what would speak for another opinion. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 45-53) With solution focused approach it is important to focus on the solution speech that contains small sparks of hope, suggestions, ideas, and positive findings. A good leader can help people move

from problem orientation to solution orientation. (Hirvohuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 95.)

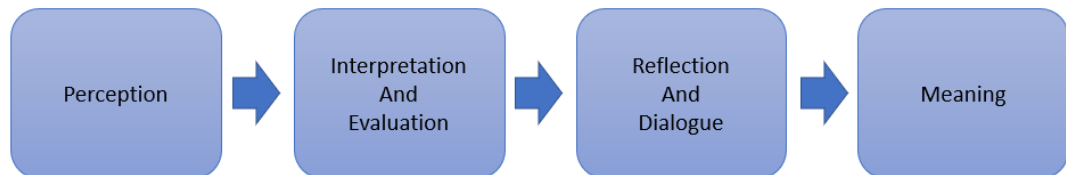


Figure 2. Meaning building (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 52).

Figure 2 shows the four phases of how the meaning is built in the minds and how the perception is structured in the mind and how it becomes meaningful.

3.1.2 Self-knowledge and self-management

When people are doing well in the work community, they work more efficiently. Efficiency is reflected in the results and the results increase motivation. This can be called a positive circle. Leader always leads people and that is why human factors are always present. Leader's knowledge of people and himself is the basis for leader's ability to be present on this human side. Manager's self-knowledge is one key element in managerial work. The ability to make self-evaluation means the ability to observe own actions and to reflect own behavior. With these actions it is possible to become more aware of the attitudes and thoughts that drive the behavior. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 262; Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 9-10.) There are different sides in people and knowing oneself means that people can feel, accept, and take advantage of all the different sides in life and in work – it is possible to make different sides of the personality to talk to each other. Human ability to learn new things is almost limitless and the person develops in the area to which the attention is directed. Self-awareness increases flexibility and opportunities for constructive interaction. Developing self-knowledge is developing awareness skills. Through these skills, a leader can increase self-understanding and understanding of others. Accepting the difference of others is

easier through good self-awareness. This makes it easier to understand own and others' reactions and helps make wiser choices. The development of self-knowledge builds a separation between one's own and others' inner world and the surrounding reality. It also creates an opportunity to experience and deal with things openly. Increasing self-knowledge is a slow process. Changes in the work community do not just happen if the leader is more aware of what is going on in themselves and others. This makes it difficult to achieve external rewards quickly and for that reason the importance of intrinsic motivation increases. Internal motivation factors, such as the understanding of meaning, make a person do things, even if external motivation factors, such as rewards, are absent. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 125-128; Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 43-44, 80.)

Hirvihuhta & Litovaara present a model that they have created for managers and leaders to use as a theory in solution-based approach. The model is based on Robert J. House's directory of managers tasks. This model can be used as a self-evaluation tool. First step is to consider how important each task is in current role in a scale from 1 to 10. The second step is to evaluate current competence in each task with the same scale. The next step is to make plan how to develop competence in each task using solution focused approach: what has already accomplished and what kind of competence that has acquired, what needs to be focused on the future. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 261-263.)

Main tasks for leaders
1. Maintaining objective orientation
2. Managing interaction
3. Managing learning, competence, creativity, and knowledge
4. Developing work processes, working methods, coordination, and quality
5. Offering possibilities and resources
6. Solving conflicts
7. Managing culture, stories, and values
8. Interpreting reality and building purpose

9. Managing foreign policy
10. Making decisions

Figure 3. Main tasks for leaders. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003).

Figure 3 shows ten different aspects or tasks for leaders. Each task can be developed, and each leader is on different level on these tasks. This can be used as a framework for development. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 261-263).

3.1.3 Emotional intelligence

Self-knowledge is a key element in developing own actions and interaction skills (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 262). Self-knowledge is continuous consciousness of own emotional state. This means that it is important to observe and examine own experiences and own emotions. Self-knowledge stands for brain activity that keeps up with soul-searching even during the most seething emotions. Awareness of feelings and awareness of thoughts towards these feelings describes self-knowledge. (Goleman, 1997, 69-70.) Social consciousness signifies sensing other persons inner state of mind and understanding their thoughts and being able to read complicated social situations. According to Goleman (Goleman, 2006, 93.) it includes: instinctual empathy - the ability to identify with the feelings of others and to detect non-verbal emotional messages, psyching emotionally - the ability to listen with concentration and the ability to tune in to the same level as the other person, empathetic accuracy - the ability to understand other people's feelings, thoughts and intentions, and social cognition - the ability to understand the operating principles of human relationships.

Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be improved by committing to change and moving forward step by step and not trying to learn too much at the time. Comprehensive feedback on emotional intelligence competence can help in this process. The old habits have formed neural connections and changing the

behavior creates new ones. To make the new neural connections strong the new behavior needs to be repeated. Being persistent with the new actions the brain will change the new habits as a default value and the new actions will become automatic. (Goleman, 2011, 67-69.) Leadership can be improved by coaching own mind. It develops emotional intelligence and empathy. It helps to accept differences and seeing things from someone else's perspective. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 86.)



Figure 4. Coaching own thinking and mind (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 86).

All these elements shown in the figure 4 can be developed. The best way is to practice briefly but regularly and with patience. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 98.)

3.1.4 Interaction skills

By setting an example, a leader can influence the attitudes and motivation of others. Leader cannot change another person alone, because influencing is always about interaction, and it involves both parties. (Järvinen, 2014, 24-25.)

Interaction skills are skills that can be developed. To succeed in interaction and communication the managers have to be ready to estimate their own ways to interact and communicate. Hirvihuhta & Litovaara (2003) present five principles for good communication. Interaction skills can be seen as skills and as attitudes that based on person's values. The first principle is respect. The purpose of this principle is to make people notice what they think about others. They should focus on each interlocutor's own history, own choices, and experiences. After noticing these elements, the interaction can change into respectful interaction towards them. If thinking towards others focus on underestimations the interaction changes into manipulative. When people act respectfully it encourages interlocutors to reveal their own values and principles. When the other participant of the conversation is disappointed it is important to keep calm and desist from making counterattack and begin to turn complaints over to wishes and focus on finding common goals. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 71-73.)

The second principle is listening. It is common for people to think they are good listeners but in different interaction and listening exercises can reveal that they are eager to give their own advice instead of listening others. Person who is focused on listening makes specified questions about what he or she has heard and shows interest with facial expressions and signs. A good listener tries to draw a picture in his mind about what interlocutor is telling. This helps the listener focus on interlocutors' story. If the listener starts to think about his own experiences on a similar situation the listener will be tempted to talk about those. When subordinate is telling something important to the manager, the manager needs to consciously stop from activating own remembrance to arise. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 73-74.)

Focusing is the third principle and it begins with calming the situation. Keeping up with the agreed schedule, planning the seating arrangement in advance, booking a room for the conversation, and turning mobile phones to silent mode create basis for successful meeting. Keeping eye contact during conversation helps focusing. The similarity in interlocutors' gestures and movements reveal mutual agreement between them. Leaning towards each other, gesticulating the

same way, and smiling to each other talks about the mutual agreement. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 74-78.)

The fourth principle is lightness in the conversation. Airiness, mobility, playfulness, and delicacy with the choice of words illustrates lightness in interaction. Focusing on gesture language helps making the conversation light. The gestures need to be relaxed and postures open, hands can be used to support expressions and verbal expressions needs to be kept variable and expressive. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 78-79.)

Patience is the last principle in good communication. This links to two different levels: a single conversation and the level of interrelationship. In a conversation level this stands for looking for shared ideas in different ways. If the conversation moves to a dead end the manager needs to bring the conversation back to the last crossroads where there was still promising continuum in sight. Patience requires lively grip to the conversation remembering what the interlocutor have said earlier. In the level of interrelationship this means admitting that changes do happen even though they might be small in the beginning. Solution orientated manager keeps on going the conversations repeatedly and keeps on trying to find different approaches with the team or a single subordinate. Manager searches patiently small changes that have already happened in interlocutors' thoughts or actions. (Hirvihuhta & Litovaara, 2003, 79-80.)

The pace of interaction affects the ability of others to think. Some of the managers are extrovert and their energy moves outwards, and they communicate dynamically. They are socially capable and skillful. It might be not easy for them to notice how this kind of interaction affects to an introvert colleague or employee and it might be hard to notice that not everyone is able to keep up with the same pace. The interaction situations can be more successful when manager controls the rhythm, pace, and the sound pressure of his speaking. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 212-213.)

3.1.5 Competence of giving and receiving feedback

The starting point for giving feedback can be considered that it is worth giving feedback on everything that affects the success of the work. In an organization, the leaders must be aware of these things that are important to success and know which areas of the job are crucial. Feedback should be given on all actions or omissions that have been agreed and on things that are commonly known. It is important to give feedback on a daily basis, about the things that affect the outcome. When giving feedback, the characteristics of the recipient should also be considered. The recipient of the feedback can interpret the feedback received as an attack, a judgment or receive the feedback responsibly with an adult and conscious grasp. Giving feedback and receiving feedback can be practiced. (Erämetsä, 2009, 209-219.)

3.2 Effectiveness of coaching program

When evaluating a coaching program, it is worth paying attention to factors that add value to the development of the program. Prior to the evaluation, the objectives must be defined, and the evaluation must be carried out before, during and after the training. (Frisk, 2005, 6.)

3.2.1 Factors influencing individuals' learning

Competence is always the result of learning. Competence development can be supported by developing processes leading to learning. Learning as a process is complex and difficult to control in a straightforward way. (Viitala, 2006, 135.)

According to the behaviorist view of learning, learning is the same as a change in behavior caused by an external factor. The learner is a passive recipient who is guided by external stimuli. Cognitive view of learning emphasizes thinking and understanding. The person notices a discrepancy between their previous knowledge and the new situation, and this triggers learning. Learning begins

when awareness of the inadequacy of one's own skills arises. The person is seen as an active carrier and central person in their own learning process. Learning can be supported considering the individual needs of the learner. (Viitala, 2006, 136-137.) According to Viitala (2006, 137) the concept of cognitive learning has been expanded with a constructive concept of learning and can be described as:

Learning is not a passive reception of knowledge but an active cognitive activity in which the learner interprets his or her observations and new knowledge based on his or her previous knowledge and experience.

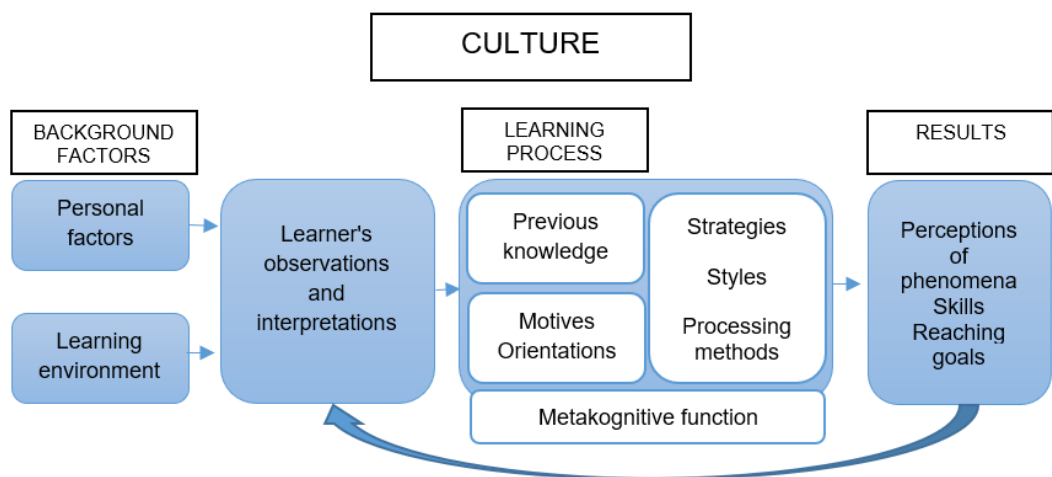


Figure 5. The overall model of learning (Viitala, 2006, 140).

Background factors in figure 5 include personal factors such as background, personality and values, and the learning environment which is the context in which learning takes place. In the corporate world, the learning environment consists of a corporate culture, atmosphere, guidance, feedback, goals, and systems that support development. Metacognitive function is the regulation of one's own learning process. The learning process can lead to an increase in knowledge and the development of thought patterns and skills. The cultural context determines the tools and conditions of learning. (Viitala, 2006, 138-139.)

Crucial to growing as a leader is a constant desire to learn about oneself, one's work environment and one's job. Leaders own attitude to these things will solve

the opportunity to learn. Leader needs to identify its own barriers to learning and find out what are the things that motivates learning and what factors prevent it. Learning is a conscious reflection and is made possible by an exploratory approach. This means stopping at own situational experiences. By listening to own feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and imagery, the leader can bring out new perspectives on things. An exploratory approach is lifelong learning and is based on observations. A diary can be used as a tool to when writing the words and describing one's own observations. (Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 76-78, 82-83.)

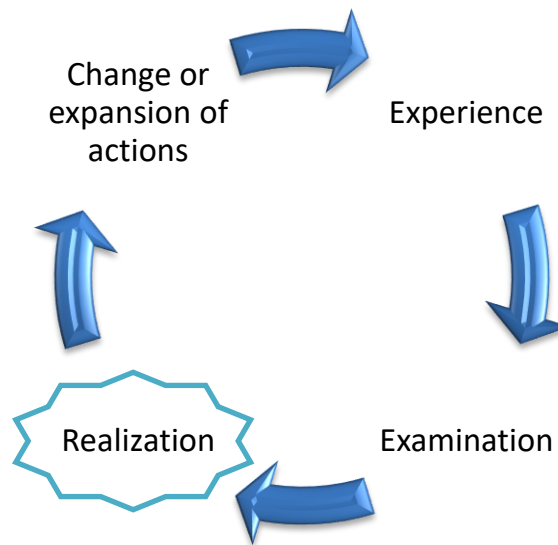


Figure 6. The perimeter of learning (Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 77).

Figure 6 shows the different phases of learning. First learner gets an experience and examines this experience in mind. After this, understanding takes place and after that it is possible for change to take place or expansion of actions to happen. (Kaski & Kiander, 2007, 77.)

3.2.2 Training evaluation and training effectiveness

Coaching is discussed in this chapter from the perspective where a company purchases coaching services from an outside party. The challenge in coaching programs can be that the things learned are forgotten. Emeritus professor Robert O. Brinkerhoff has shown in his research that 15% of participants put what they

learn into practice, 70% tries to do that but stop trying and 15% do not even try to make changes based on what they have learned (Ojanen, 2020). Success requires a culture where people act as each other's coaches, share challenges and sorrows with each other and think together about what should be focused on and what is essential right now. The biggest result in the role of the leader is made by coaching the team by leading joint encounters on the principle of coaching leadership. This creates a culture of sparring and community in the team. A coaching culture is achieved by emphasizing collaboration and paying attention to the following: practices and respect, competence development and deepening the quality of interactions. (Leppänen & Rauhala, 2012, 266; Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2017, 266-267.)

The purpose of the evaluation is to find out after the training how the training has changed activities. The purpose is to find out whether the participants use the things they have learned in the desired way. (Frisk, 2005, 27.) There are factors in both training program and the workplace that contribute to changes in thinking and action (Frisk, 2005, 28-29) and are presented in this chapter. All the factors will be followed by questions that can be used to find out the issues that affect the changes in behavior at work.

- **Factors related to training program and teaching.** How do teaching methods support the application of lessons learned in the workplace? How does education promote the application of lessons learned in the workplace?
- **Individual factors.** How has the training changed the participant's actions, thinking, and beliefs? How appropriate does the participant consider the training for their work and their own development?
- **Manager's activities.** How is the manager committed to the goals of the training? How does the manager enable the use of what has been learned? How does the manager support and guide the use of the learned tools?
- **Guidance and support.** What kind of guidance and support is needed and from whom? Who implements the control and when?

- **Organizational factors.** How do organizational norms, culture, and expectations, as well as the actions of the manager and colleagues, support change in operations? Is there enough time to try and apply what has been learned?
- **Tools, equipment, and materials.** Does the workplace have the equipment, tools, and materials needed to apply the lessons learned? (Frisk, 2005, 27.)

Measuring the effectiveness of changes in coaching leadership style is a challenging task. The problem is that the behavior of leaders in an organization is affected by many factors that cannot be controlled. (Räsänen, 2007, 124.) The change in an individual's activities is influenced by whether the participant considers the things he or she has learned in the training are important in his or her own work and whether the participant has learned things in accordance with the goals. (Frisk, 2005, 31.)

Effective coaching process consists of three components: pre, act and post. Pre covers things that happen before coaching, act during a coaching meeting and post things that happen after the actual coaching meeting. According to Ojanen (2020, 14) coaching can be seen as a journey that begins with a commonly defined starting point and continues toward a commonly understood state of mind. Coaching is built on dialogue and active thinking and active doing. Behavior changes and new routines need repetition. For this reason, in effective coaching, change does not depend on a single coaching session. The change starts after the pre and act phases in real situations. In the post part, support, feedback, follow-up, and encouragement are key factors. According to 10-20-70 theory, 10 percent of learning takes place during a coaching event, 20 percent happens through feedback and dialogue and 70 percent of learning happens by doing. When coachee thinks, does, and feels the coachee is an active learner and not only an object to whom information is given. (Ojanen, 2020.)

Coaching design is one of the elements of effective coaching. It begins with a conversation between the organization as a customer and the coach who

provides coaching services. The goal in this conversation is to find out the current situation, future state of mind and develop a way to get there. (Ojanen, 2020.)

The coach and the trainee form counter-roles in which both parties have a similar understanding of their own and the other's role. (Räsänen, 2007, 40.) Coach and trainee two parts of the four elements of effective coaching. It is the responsibility of the trainee to work for their own development and to take responsibility for their own development. Motivation and volition are important elements for trainee. Motivation stands for independent desire to pursue something that is valued. Personal values determine what a person considers important and core values are seen to be fairly permanent in adulthood. Making a change is easier when finding a deeper meaning to the change, that rests on values, and the motivation to make a change is more permanent when it is based on one's own values. (Ojanen, 2020; Tevanlinna, 2020) Volition is the ability to consciously and consistently regulate and utilize equity and environmental factors to achieve goals. It is a skill, and it can be evaluated, developed, and managed. In practice it is reflected in the maintenance of the work ethic. (Suomen coaching yhdistys, 2022b) Coach has an important role to play in making change happen and the role is to help to remove the obstacles to success from the trainee. The coach turns problems into challenges and helps make goals out of them. It is the job of the coach to ask good questions to bring out a theme that the coachee has not noticed or is avoiding. The role of the coach also includes providing information, giving examples, and encouraging. (Räsänen, 2007; Ojanen, 2020.)

Organizational commitment is one of the elements of effective coaching. For coaching to be used as a tool, the organization must be able to implement changes with the coach. Ojanen (2020, 150) presents assumptions that can be used to map the organization's willingness to change:

- The organization has at least from two to three options under consideration to implement the change.
- The organization wants to take care of the personnel's skill level and competence in a timely manner.

- The organization has a desire to implement its strategy in a higher quality and streamlined manner.
- The organization values development work and has the budget and resources for upcoming work.

3.2.3 Kirkpatrick model

Kirkpatrick model was developed in 1954 by Donald Kirkpatrick. He wrote four articles based on his PhD dissertation. Articles were called: Evaluating reaction, Evaluating learning, Evaluating behavior and Evaluating results. These articles helped the trainers with the struggle with word evaluation – there was no easy way to communicate what evaluation meant and how to accomplish it. This model helps to sort out the impressiveness of a training program and it will be used as a frame of reference in this study when evaluating efficiency. Kirkpatrick's model is one of the most comprehensive strategies when evaluating organizational training. The model is shown in figure 7. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005, 4; Smidt et. al, 2009.)

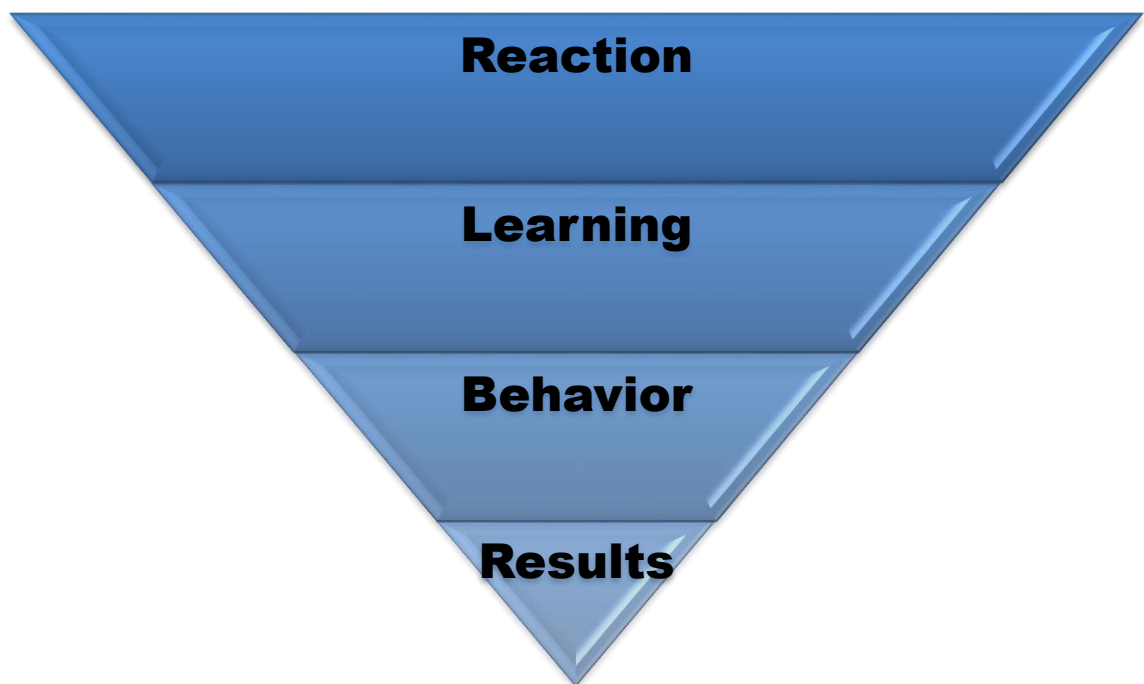


Figure 7. The four levels of Kirkpatrick model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, 21).

Level 1: Reaction. The first level measures how do trainees react to the program. The measurement is done for two reasons: “to let the participants know that trainers value their reaction, and to measure their reactions and obtain suggestions for improvement”

Level 2: Learning. To what extent has learning occurred? Learning can happen in three different areas which are: Understanding the concepts, principles, and techniques, developing, and improving skills and changing attitudes.

Level 3: Behavior. How much has the behavior changed because of a program? According to Donald Kirkpatrick this is the most important level and the most difficult to measure. It is important to find out if the behavior has changed and find out the reasons if there have not happened any changes in behavior.

There are four necessary conditions that need to occur to make it possible to make change: 1) The person must have a desire to change. 2) The person must know what to do and how to do it. 3) The person must work in the right climate. 4) The person must be rewarded for changing. The training program can help with the first two conditions and the third one refers to participant’s supervisor. There can be different climates that can be preventing, discouraging, neutral, encouraging and requiring. This step measures how the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned are transferred to the workplace and how they reflect positive change in behavior and in performance. This step evaluates the participants ability to use newly learned skills or knowledge in their working life. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, 22-23; Smidt et. al, 2009; Abdulghani et. al, 2014)

There are few guidelines for evaluating behavior. There must be enough time for behavior to change and the trainees need to have an opportunity to use the new skills learned. There is a possibility to apply the learned skills to the job immediately, but it may take time to make the changes permanent. It can be useful to evaluate both before and after training program if it is practical. It is not always possible to make evaluation before and after and the alternative approach is to measure the behavior only after the program. The survey should focus on the persons who know the behavior. These can be trainees, their supervisors,

their subordinates, and others who have knowledge about their behavior. The most qualified person to do the determination are the subordinates who see the behavior of the trainee on daily bases. The subordinates can be biased in favor of or against the trainee and can give a distorted picture. The trainee also knows his or her own behavior but may not admit that the behavior has not changed. The immediate supervisor can also be qualified if they spend time with the trainee. The best way is to use more than one source when doing the evaluation. (Kirpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, 52-55.)

Level 4: Results. This level measures how much results have changed because of the training. With this survey the interesting part is to measure the quality of the work. (Kirpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2005, 5-7.)

4 Research process and results

The management culture of the Organization X is changing, and the organization has wanted to start moving towards coaching leadership style. The organization wanted to support the competence of service managers by participating in a two-year training program of Company Y. This study examines the changes that corporate coaching has brought in participants thinking and behavior and what factors in coaching and the work environment contributed to these changes.

There were 22 participants in this training program of Company Y, and they all work in the same business area in Company X. 17 of them were service managers and 5 of them managers. They were from two different units and this study will focus on the other of those units. This unit that has 14 service managers and 2 managers. Each service manager has from 10 to 18 team members in their team. The other unit will be left outside of this study. Due to personnel changes, 10 of the service managers who participated in the training were there for the entire duration of the training. One service manager started working in the organization during the training.

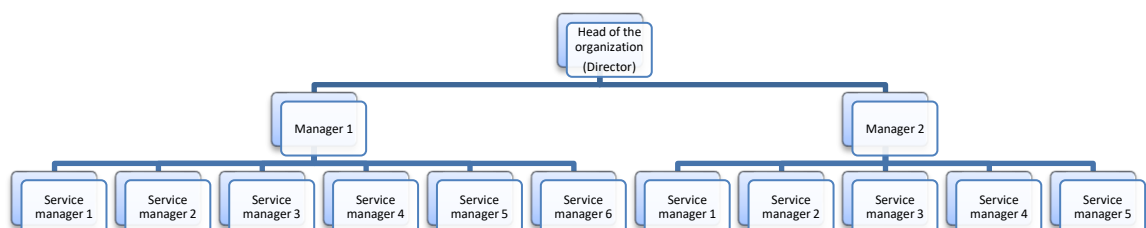


Figure 8. Organization chart of Company X.

Figure 8 shows the part of the organization that is the subject of the study. These 11 service managers are the ones who participated in the entire two-year training program excluding one service manager who started working in this organization during the training program and participated only for one year. Each service manager has their own team that includes from 10-18 team members. There are two managers who are immediate supervisors of the service managers, and they are referred as managers in this study. The head of the organization is referred as director in this study. The director started working in the organization in early stage of the training program but was not involved from the very beginning.

4.1 Content of the development plans

The service managers made a goal plan for themselves five times during the two years of coaching program. The plan was made for the first time in January 2020 in connection with the first training day and the last time in November 2021 when the training program ended. The plan was written during the training day and sent by email to the coach of Company Y. The coach collected the plans in one pdf file and sent the file to everyone who participated in the training. In this way, the plans were public and visible to all participants. Only the goals of service managers are presented here. The means by which the goals were said to be reached have been left outside this research.

The plans emphasize individuality and the fact that each trainee is an individual with own areas of development. It is possible to observe themes that have been covered in the training. Each participant has found something to develop in their work and have been able to write down their development targets in the form of a goal. When making a development plan, the starting level was considered, and the development journey was planned using solution focused approach.

Content of the first development plans, January 2020

In the first development plans, thoughts about goals were personal and only a few themes came up more than once. Three out of eleven service managers brought up the theme of improving team spirit. Increasing trust also came up in the goals of the three service managers. Two said they wanted to improve in asking questions. Other themes are illustrated in figure 9. All of these were raised only once.



Figure 9. Themes in the first development plans.

Content of the second development plans, August 2020

A few more consistent themes were found in the second development plans than in the first ones. Three out of eleven service managers mentioned that they want to increase encouragement of the team members. Giving more feedback was also brought up by three service managers as well as the pursuit of increased trust. Improving team spirit was the goal of two participants. Other themes are illustrated in figure 10. All of these were raised only once.



Figure 10. Themes in the second development plans.

Content of the third development plans, January 2021

In the third development plans, there was more dispersion in terms of unified themes. Four service managers mentioned improving team spirit as their goal. This theme was also related to the grouping of a new team by one respondent. Building a sense of togetherness and openness was also mentioned in connection with team spirit by one respondent. Three respondents stated that their goal was development in feedback, both in giving and achieving feedback. Figure 11 shows the themes that were raised only once.



Figure 11. Themes in the third development plans.

Content of the fourth development plans, August 2021

After this coaching session, only one theme was mentioned more than once in the goals in the fourth development plans. Creating we spirit and clarifying its meaning for the team emerged in the development plan of three respondents. In figure 12 themes that came up once. In some of the themes, there is a clear continuity compared to the previous development plans. Some of the service managers carried the same development themes through the training program.



Figure 12. Themes in the fourth development plans.

Content of the fifth development plans, November 2021

These were the fifth and the last plans that the participants made during the training program. This was the last time the group gathered and met the coach. These themes were raised twice in the answers: know how to be genuinely present and curious, listening more, encouraging people, giving more feedback, and asking better questions. Three service managers said that their goal is to challenge people more to think for themselves and not always give them right answers. Figure 13 shows all the fifth plans made by service managers.

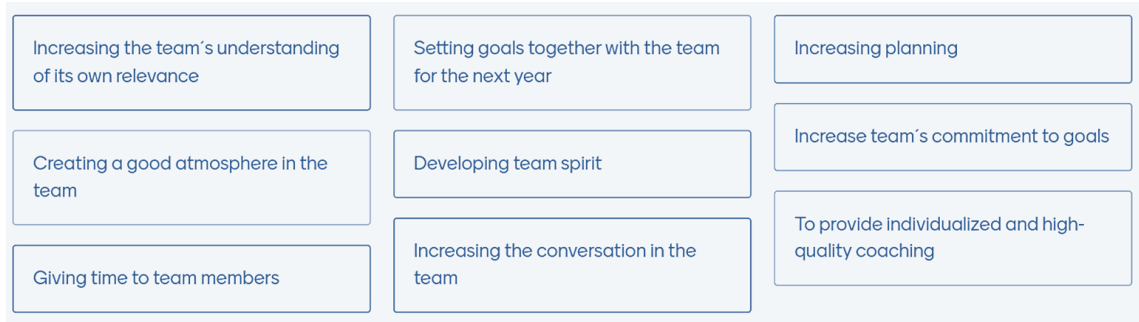


Figure 13. Themes in the fifth development plans.

4.2 Changes in service managers thinking and behavior

In March 2022 the 12 service managers were asked to write an essay about the topic: What kind of changes there have been in your thinking and behavior after participating in this training program? The length of the essay was narrowed down to two pages. This writing took place right after each group work and the service managers were asked to finish the essays and send them to the thesis author as soon as they finished the writing and at the latest during the same day. The essays were read through by the thesis author and after that the content of the essays was analyzed by dividing the content under two themes: changes in service managers thinking and changes in service managers behavior. The researcher wrote down each item in the essays and calculated how many essays the item appeared in, and the results were also converted to a chart format which indicates the prevalence of the theme in the essays.

This study focuses mainly on the Kirkpatrick models third step: behavior. This level is the most important for this survey. It can be defined as the extent to what kind of changes there has been in the behavior because of the participation in the training program. Thinking and mind can be coached and practiced by committing to change and moving forward step by step and not trying to learn too much at the time as stated in the chapter 3.1.3.

4.2.1 Changes in thinking

Eleven out of twelve participants wrote and send the essays to the researcher. The essays were from one to two pages long. In their essays, service managers raised several themes related to changes in their own thinking. The courage to do things and the increase in self-confidence rose in 27 percent of the 11 essays. The courage to talk about challenges and opportunities and the courage to be steadfast had increased. Changes had taken place also in the courage to speak up, being more open and in the ability to delegate things. Mercy toward oneself had increased and feelings of inadequacy diminished, and the feeling of self-worth had increased. One participant said it was a relief to learn that there was no need to have answers to everything. One also told that own thinking has expanded after participating in the training program and that was easier to reflect own work. Self-knowledge means the ability to observe own actions and reflect own behavior. Such changes also indicate that self-awareness exists.

Trust also was mentioned in 54 percent of the essays. It was learned that it is important to dare to “trust so that it hurts”. Relationships of trust were reported to have deepened between service managers and team members and between service managers and managers. One service manager wrote that trust had given the courage to make difficult things and decisions. The essays also reported that trust was now being built more systematically than in the past: exchanging news at the coffee cup and chatting without an agenda. Understanding of the importance of everyday encounters had grown. One service manager wrote that work had become more meaningful because the manager now was spending more time with people.

The understanding of diversity and individuality had increased. Nine out of eleven service managers mentioned individuality in their essays. Team members were seen as individuals, it was understood that everyone needed to be coached from their own starting points and learning cannot be forced. An understanding that there was not just one way to coach was also found - there were as many coaching leadership styles as there were coaching leaders. One service manager

wrote: "I realized that there are other ways to do things than my own way". The focus was now more on the development of the individuals instead of the teams and the diversity of people was considered in coaching. Two respondents said that their appreciation for colleagues and team members increased because of the training program, and one said that equality had increased, and it was easier to consider own team members more equally. The understanding of diversity is related to emotional intelligence and social consciousness, the ability to signify other persons inner state of mind and understanding their thoughts.

There were several ideas about individual's coaching. Some felt they had received confirmation of their own coaching leadership style. It was also understood that not everything could be affected no one could be changed. Even if a person cannot be changed, work performance and coping at work could still be coached. The trainees had to be made to realize their own development goals and thus commit to them. There are no quick wins in coaching individuals. Coaching was seen more than just pre-arranged calendar appointments. Continuity is important in coaching and one service manager wrote: "keep in mind to insist constantly so that progress does not stop".

4.2.2 Changes in behavior

When considering changes in their behavior, service managers highlighted changes that affect their own team members. There are more encounters with team members. 45 percent of the service managers wrote that the use of time has changed, and more time is spent with individuals. One-to-one discussions, chatting without an agenda and facing people as they are as individuals were raised as things that are done more because of the training program. Some said they had focused more on the group in the past and changed their focus on individuals and start using individual coaching as a tool. More time is now spent on coaching and team members are helped to develop as individuals. 82 percent said their focus had changed in a more individual direction. 27 percent told that they feel like they are more present than before.

Competence for coaching had also been received from the coaching program. There is now a coaching approach to discussions with team members. Coaching discussions are held more regularly and prepared by designing and tailoring them for individuals. There is more systematic way of working when it comes to coaching. Work observation and listening to calls has increased. Talking about performance goals has also become part of everyday life and team members keep track of their goals. One service manager described it this way: "In the spirit of continuous improvement, we are working together on ways to improve the results". Three out of eleven service managers said that they have defined goals for themselves to develop in their own work.

One service manager learned to look for and find potential in their team members. Service managers have also learned to encourage and bring things up when discussing with individuals. The skill of listening is also better mastered today in 27 percent of the service managers, and it is easier to question and challenge team members and demand things. Situations and grievances are addressed more. Through coaching, service managers have learned to ask more questions and to demand answers. The team is challenged more, and no ready-made answers are given. Team members are also required to prepare for coaching moments. Three of the service managers said that they are now making training plans with their team members to help them progress with their development targets. Several service managers said they are working to create a relaxed and interactive atmosphere in team meetings. 36 percent of the respondents said they invest more in creating team spirit with their own teams.

The importance of feedback came up in 36 percent of the essays. It has been observed that change occurs through positive feedback. The aim is to give feedback honestly and constructive feedback has been learned to give more directly. When giving feedback it is worth giving on everything that affects the success of work and on actions that have been agreed or are commonly known. Feedback should be given on a daily basis about the things that affect the outcome of the work. 18 percent of the service managers reported that prioritization ability have improved, and 45 percent reported that time

management have improved. Delegation has also increased with 27 percent of the service managers and all things are no longer done on behalf of one's own team members - they are also required to take care of things themselves.

There is now a lower threshold for keeping in touch with colleagues. The coaching helped to get to know them better and the trust between colleagues also deepened. There is more sparring these days and it is easier to ask for help. In 45 percent of the essay's colleagues were brought up.

Three service managers pointed out that there is too little talk of the training program with their own manager now. One of them also told that this training program did not bring any changes to the current ways of working but still strengthened own thinking in coaching.

Based on the answers to the essays, another part was included in the study, which examined how much encounters with team members have increased. This was examined by comparing the number of service managers' calendar entries and entries with a meeting with a team member were considered. The results were entered into a table, from which changes in the number of meetings can be observed. Calendar entries were examined for 8 service managers. The entries of the three service managers were not available for February-March 2020.

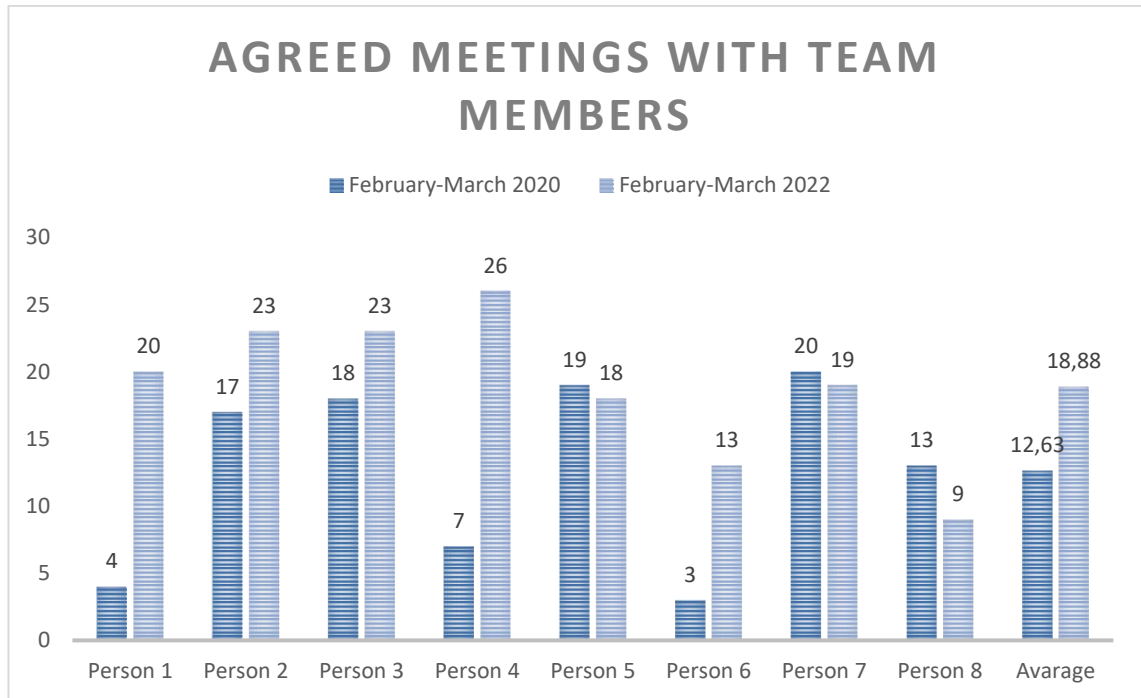


Figure 14. Agreed meetings with team members.

45 percent of the service managers said that encounters with team members have increased, and more time is spent with them. Figure 14 shows the number of scheduled appointments based on calendar entries. The comparable periods are February-March 2020 and February-March 2022. Based on the chart, there were an average of 12,63 meetings in February-March 2020. At the comparison time in 2022, there were an average number of meetings 18,88.

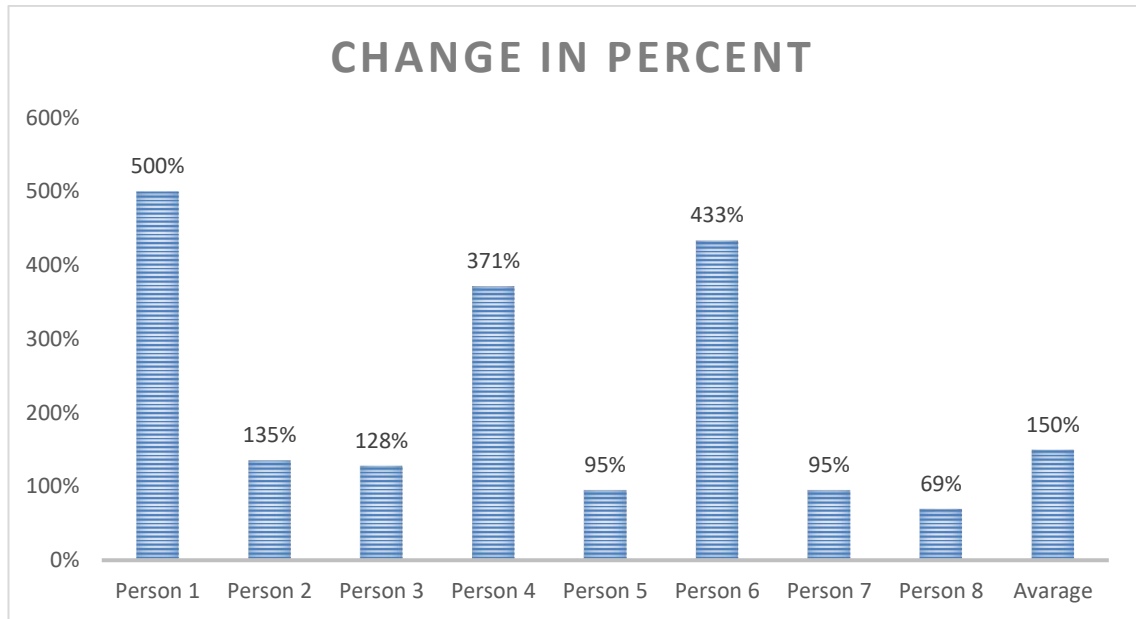


Figure 15. Change of agreed meetings in percent's.

Figure 15 shows the change in percentage. The number of meetings has remained the same when the percentage is 100 in figure 15. Growth has taken place in two years by an average of 50 percentage points. In reality, there are more meetings in everyday life at the workplace. Observing these actual workplace encounters is not practically possible for the researcher. It is not possible to conclude from the calendar entries what the meeting has included. From these figures, it can be concluded that the number of meetings with team members have increased. This statistic does not consider how much the time was spent on each meeting. The duration of the meetings varied from 15 minutes to 2 hours based on the calendar entries.

4.2.3 Summary of essays

There were differences between the authors of the essays in reflecting on their own behavior and thinking. Four of the service managers reflected changes thoughtfully and carefully and two did not report that thinking had changed. For some of the service managers the story was strongly based on the topics of the workshop, and some wrote their answers purely according to the assignment. The workshop was held just before the stories were written and this is the reason

it appears in the essays. The figure 16 shows how many respondents raised each issue in their essay.

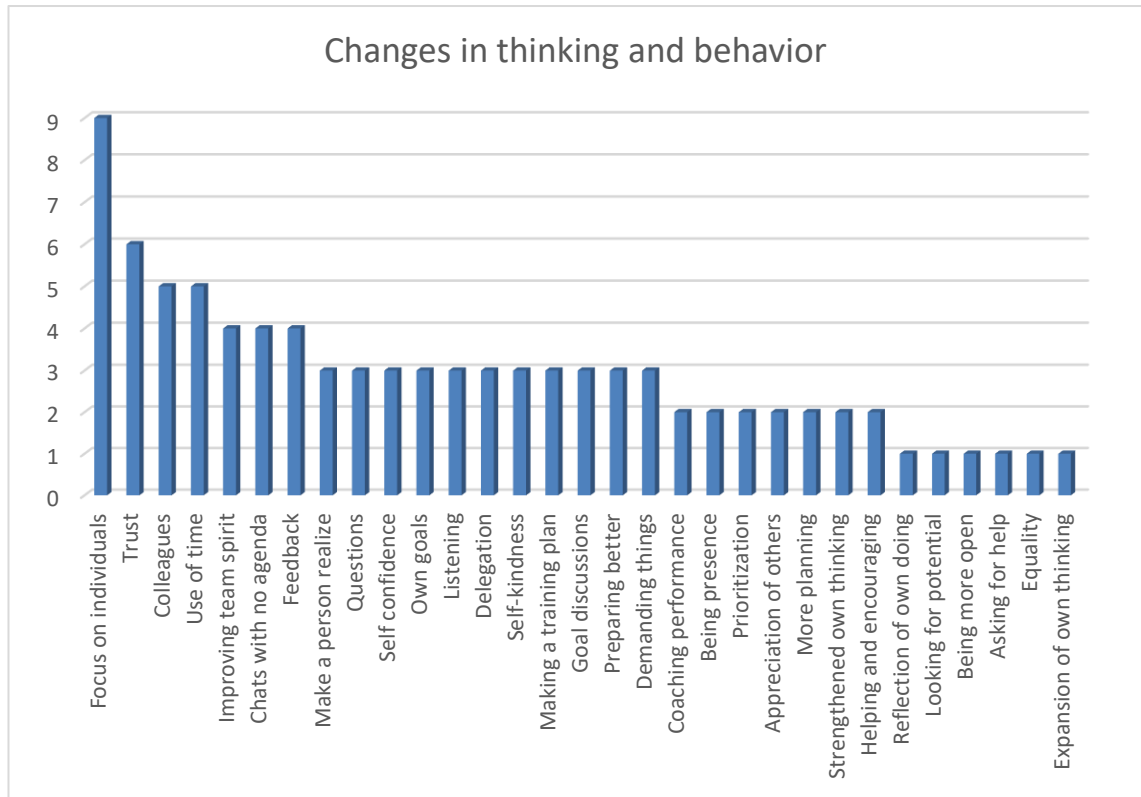


Figure 16. Raised issues in the service managers' essays.

When the essays are compared to the development plans, a few differences are noticeable. In the development plans, certain themes such as improving team spirit, encouragement of the team members, giving more feedback, always came up with a maximum of four service managers. In the essays focusing on individuals was raised nine times, building trust six times, co-operation with colleagues five times and better use of time five times. The figure 16 also shows teams that were raised by three or four service managers. Based on this, the service managers reported in the essays that they have changed their thinking and behavior regarding more themes than what they themselves raised as goals along the way. Themes that were said to have changed in reality were not highlighted so extensively in the goal setting.

4.3 Effects of training program and environment, group conversations

Service manager participated in workshops where they worked on the topic: Which were the factors in this training program and working environment in general that furthered the development making the changes in your thinking and behavior?

There were three workshop groups, and all the workshops were held during the week 12 in the 2022. The workshops were held online with cameras on as Teams meetings and each group had from four to five participants. Each group chose one person who wrote the thoughts down and sent those to researcher after the group had finished working. The participants were given a list of things that they could use as a guide for the conversations and the list was from Tarja Frisk: factors related to training program and teaching, individual factors, managers activities, guidance and support and organizational factors (2005, 29). Each group were given 25 minutes to discuss about the topic and two of the three groups exceeded the given time. The data from these group conversations was read through and grouped into sections and the sections were the same as the list that was given to the participants to use as a guide for the conversations. The list included the following themes: the factors related to education and training; individual factors; activities of the managers; guidance and support; organizational factors and tools, equipment, and materials. There were differences between the groups in how deep the discussions went and in one of the group the discussion remained superficial. Not all participants took part in the discussion to the same extent, but everyone was given the opportunity to share their thoughts. Some participants dominated and led the discussion more and tried to get support for their own thoughts from others.

Matters relating to the training program and teaching

All the three groups gave feedback that group dynamics worked among colleagues during the training. People knew why they had participated to this

program and agreed on what the goals were and that they were important. It was found important that the service managers got to determine together with the managers what coaching leadership means in this program and in the organization where they work. The discussions between service managers helped promote the development of each participant. In the opinion of the participants the best part of the coaching program was the coaching days where it was possible to talk with colleagues and there was room for discussions during these days. Thoughts that differed from colleagues' own thoughts helped participants develop their thinking. Towards the end of the course, the time for discussion decreased. One of the groups wondered if the coach got tired of the opinions of the participants which arose during the conversation and therefore gave less space for other discussions.

The coach from the Company Y also was brought up in these group conversations. The coach was said to have been relaxed and practical and he was told to have been able to get the participants to focus and throw themselves into the tasks. The examples used in the coaching were perceived as down-to-earth but not so much new or innovative. The examples were taken from working life situations and were familiar with the participants and no new things were learned. The examples were felt to be in line with service managers own thinking about coaching leadership style such as focusing on individuals and building trust with team members. With the help of examples, it was possible to challenge one's own thinking. One of the groups brought up that more diversity was desired in the examples. The coach's feedback was appreciated. Some of the participants have been service managers for a long time and in their opinion the issues dealt with in the training were largely familiar. It was hard for some of the participants find something new from the training. Participants sometimes felt that if the coach was challenged on a matter, the coach did not like it. The challenge was not noticed, and the discussion was not continued the topic. The discussion ended shortly, and the coach moved on to the next topic. For this reason, the participants in one group discussion felt that things were not handled properly and that their opinions were ignored.

Matters related to guidance and support

Participants own development was supported by the other participants. Participants felt that everyone needed some support, and this helped to create a sense of community. They also found that others have the same type of challenges with the teams as themselves. Group support was perceived as one of the most important elements of the training. Participants got to know each other better as the training progressed. Good team spirit and trust among service managers helped participants to be open and learn. The goals set in training days were left behind in working life because other things seemed more important in everyday work. Some participants felt that they started training again and again when a new training day came. The agreed things did not progress as expected. Some of the more competent and experienced service managers felt that they were not adequately supported. Mutual sparring moments with colleagues were eagerly awaited. Discussions raised the theme of how well managers know how their own team members work and how it is possible to coach service managers individually if the manager is unfamiliar with the ways of working.

Manager's activities

The presence of a new director was felt to have affected the atmosphere. Service managers did not know the new director when the training program begun, and it was felt to cause stiffness and excitement. The tone of the discussions changed in the presence of the director. Participants found it helpful that the new director got to know them better through the training. Some service managers did not have a long history with their own manager and for this reason it was difficult to assess whether the managers activities changed during coaching. During the training program, own manager was felt to be closer than before. This was seen as a consequence of getting to know each other better. One-on-one conversations with own manager increased as coaching program began. Towards the end of the coaching program these conversations decreased. Participants found the conversations useful and helpful, and some said that they

longed for the discussions to continue. The groups also pointed out that their own manager is busy and thought that the decrease in discussions is due to other important work tasks. The support and follow-up with own manager were felt to have influenced how the goals agreed in the training were achieved at work. The development of service managers own manager had been noticed and this had increased confidence in managers leadership.

One part of the training program was on-the-job learning days. These days included feedback discussions with the coach, managers, and the director. The presence of them was felt to show appreciation for service managers and their development. Thoughts about these feedback discussions were divided into three categories. Some of the participants found these useful and got more energy to make changes in their own work. The feedback was appreciated and felt to have helped move forward. These days forced to reflect one's own work honestly and openly. Some participants felt the feedback was neutral and partly supportive of their own development. Some participants found these feedback discussions anxious. It made participants feel anxious to go in front of a small group to tell them what has been done and what has not been done to advance the goals. Some participants felt that the managers did not believe they were serious with the training program. In these on-the-job days managers were perceived to be prejudiced at the meetings and they were felt to give feedback even though they did not know how the work was actually done. The feedback was not always felt to be relevant and timely, and the feedback focused too much on failures. Some of the feedback focused on own civilian life and this was felt to be inappropriate. Participants did not feel the environment was safe enough to dare to tell if there were ongoing challenges in their lives that affected development at work. Participants wondered if managers had been given "good cop-bad cop" roles and they felt that their own manager gave neutral or good feedback, and the other managers gave constructive and corrective feedback. It seemed that the managers peered at each other about the development of their own team members. One group pointed out that the managers probably practiced giving feedback as part of their own training. The first experiences of these discussions led some participants to change their attitude negative towards these

sessions. After feedback discussion support was sought from colleagues to go through own bad feelings and experiences.

Organizational factors

The participants appreciated that the company invested in this training program and gave the opportunity to grow as a leader. It was considered a good thing to be allowed to focus more on people. Service managers wondered in group discussions that how well management really knows how they work. In the previous leaders' day, it was noticeable that the management style had changed in a more participatory direction. This development was seen to be due to the coaching program. Service managers own team members were asked for feedback on the service managers development during and after the training program and this feedback was found useful. However, only from three to six team members of each team responded to the survey and provided feedback. During the training the organization set up qualitative and quantitative goals for each team in the organization. These team-specific goals helped service managers with sparring their own team members.

Tools, equipment, and materials

At the first coaching lesson, participants received red notebooks in which they wrote notes throughout the coaching program. These notebooks were mentioned in all the groups. It was found useful that all the materials were in one place, in that one notebook. Preliminary assignments for the course were considered good as well as making and modifying a development plan. The course materials were evaluated in the groups superficially. Books and podcasts were also named as part of the course materials.

Each participant made individual development plans and some of the participants said that those plans helped to keep focus on right things and helped to prioritize things.

Individual factors

Some participants felt that they did not receive adequate guidance due to their long work experience. Those with less experience as a service manager got more out of the program. Some also wondered if they would have gotten more out of coaching program if they had prioritized it higher and focused more. In the group conversations it was also discussed that after coaching program, work has changed in a more planned direction.

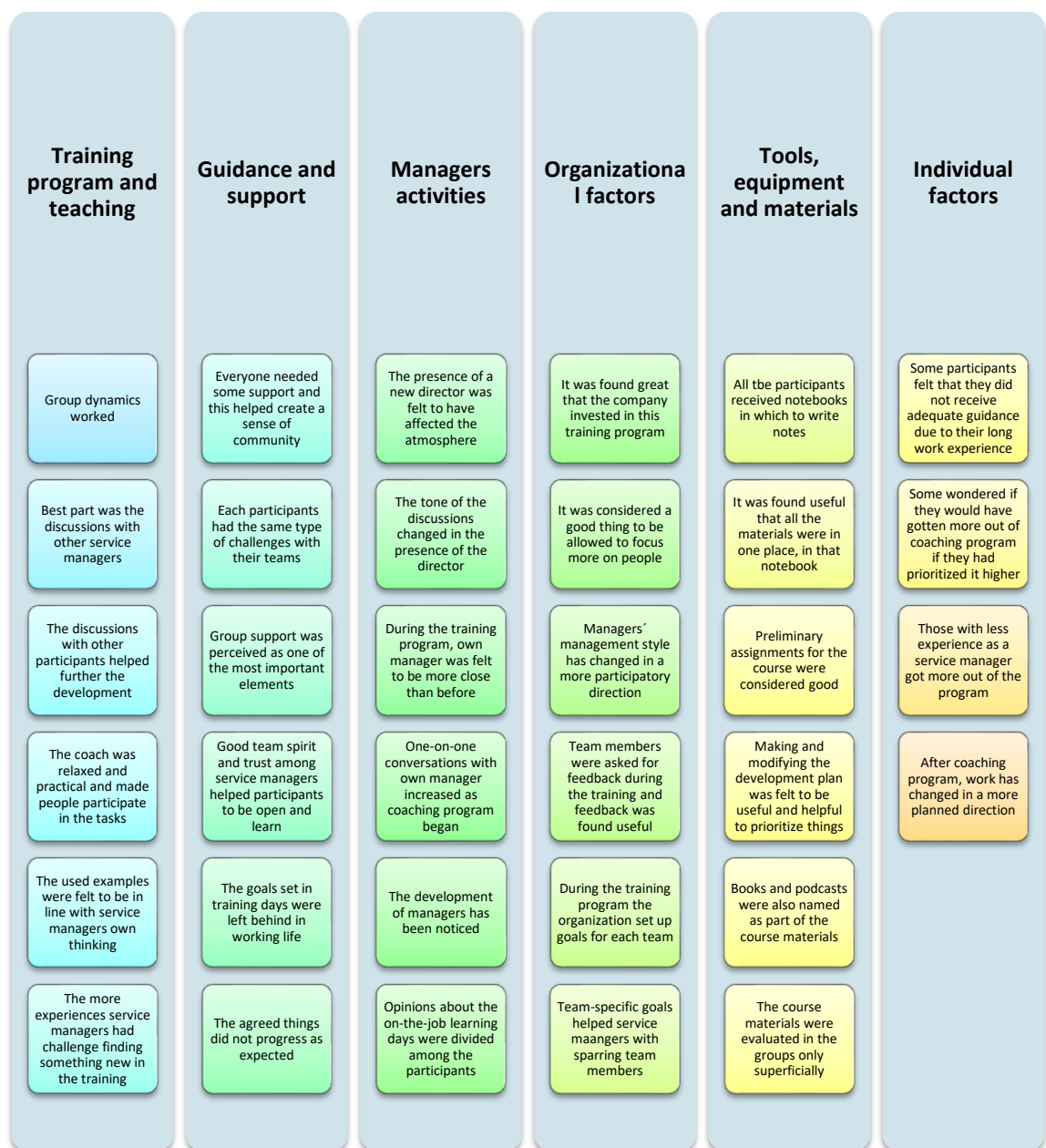


Figure 17. Affinity diagram of group discussions.

Figure 17 is the Affinity diagram that shows the most important thoughts that came up in the three group discussions. This diagram summarizes the ideas that arose in the discussions, and they are divided according to six different themes which were selected according to Tarja Frisk's educational evaluation themes in chapter 3.2.2.

4.4 Reflection of changes in Company X

In Company X there is a survey for the personnel twice a year. These surveys give data of well-being at work, job satisfaction and employee engagement. Data from these surveys was collected and analyzed over a period of two years. The organization has also kept surveys for personnel before the training program started, during the program and after it ended. The survey concerns the coaching leadership style. According to Kirkpatrick in chapter 3.2.3, subordinates are the most qualified to evaluate changes in behavior, but they may be biased in favor or against the trainee and give a distorted picture.

The organization conducted a personnel survey on coaching leadership style four times during coaching program. The fifth survey was conducted six months after the coaching program had ended. Results of the surveys shows that the results had developed in the desired direction and personnel gave a higher rating for leadership skills than before. Personnel answered to the proposition: our goal is to develop people with a genuine presence, encouragement, courage, and consideration for people's diversity. The scale for answers was 1 to 5.

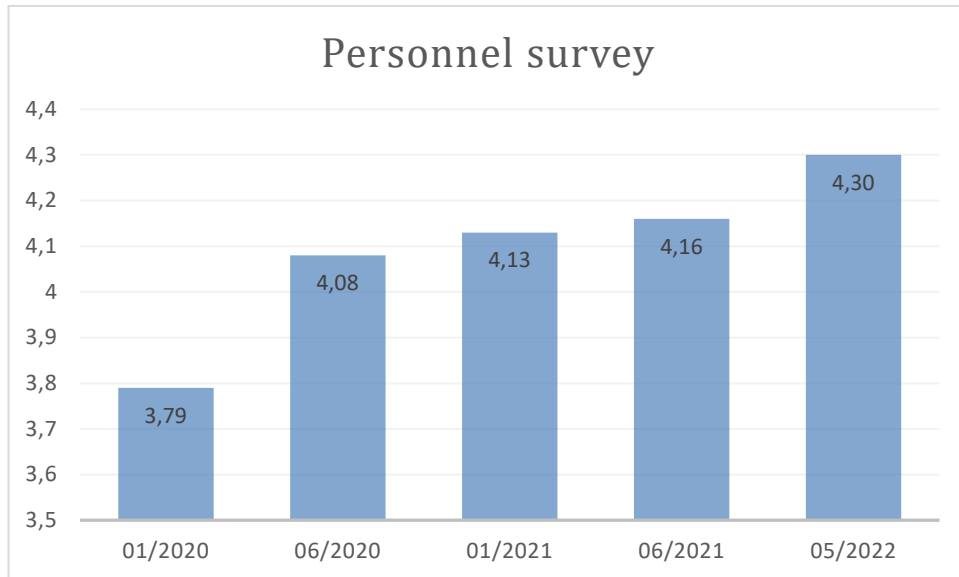


Table 1. Results of the personnel surveys.

There was an average of 70 respondents in the surveys. Compared to the results of the other personnel survey presented in table 2, the number of respondents in this survey has remained significantly lower each time. The survey also included open questions which were

- Justify the numerical estimate.
- What do you think are the things your service manager should develop?
- What do you think are the strengths of your service manager?
- Tell us what you could do to improve your work community?

The organization conducts a comprehensive personnel survey for all personnel twice a year. Two questions from the survey and their development over the past two years were included in the study. The table 2 shows the development of these two questions in the period from April 2020 to April 2022. The table includes the number of respondents N and the measurement result *%-of favorable-responses*. All respondents work in the teams whose service managers participated in the two-year training of Company Y.

	2020 (Apr)	2020 (Oct)	2021 (Apr)	2021 (Oct)	2022 (Apr)
N	196	189	172	182	205
My manager cares about me as a person	91 %	92 %	89 %	84 %	87 %
My manager communicates with me openly and honestly	91 %	89 %	90 %	82 %	87 %

Table 2. Results of the more comprehensive personnel survey.

Regarding the first question the favorable responses have first improved and then declined. In April 2022, the results have turned up again, but the level of spring 2020 has not yet been reached. Regarding the second question, the results have also turned downward after the first survey. In October 2021 the results have been at their lowest, after which in the spring of 2022 the results have been better again. The results can be considered good, but no clear improvement can be observed. The covid pandemic and a change, where all employees moved to 100% remote work, coincided with the measurements. In the spring of 2022 employees started to return to hybrid working and the hybrid model means that the office is the main place of work.

Managers' view of organizational support and changes in service managers thinking and behavior

In this study the management of Company X was interviewed, and the interview was focused on the themes: How the changes in service managers thinking and behavior are reflected on a daily basis at work? In chapter 3.2.3, it is reported that, according to Kirkpatrick the immediate supervisor can be qualified for evaluating behavior if supervisor spends time with the coachee and knows how coachee behaves. In June 2022 two managers answered questions regarding organizational support. One manager answered questions via email and the other

in a structured interview. The same themes were highlighted in the responses. The first section of the survey dealt with the outlook for the coaching leadership style in the organization. Responses said coaching was more involved in service managers' speeches and they know better what coaching leadership means in their work and the perception of this is more unified. Service managers' self-confidence and skills have developed, and more time is spent on coaching. Concretely, this is reflected in an increase in coaching times, and this can be seen in the increase in the amount of floor work and calendar entries. Service managers are more aware of team members' personal situations as well as their development goals. They are also more aware of what kind of competence is expected as being a coaching leader. The entire organization invests more in coaching and genuine encounters. Service managers have gained more tools and an understanding of how to act in certain situations. Coaching is perceived as part of the service manager's job and daily life.

Changes in service managers thinking and behavior had also been observed according to two managers. Employees are treated as individuals and given personal goal plans and individuals are personally coached. Team members are no longer treated as a single mass. In difficult situations, the root causes are sought by asking better questions and demanding better answers. Direct answers are also avoided, and efforts are made to get answers from the trainee. In terms of time use, the changes are reflected in the fact that there are more coaching moments. This means that each service manager uses more time each week coaching their team members than before, and this can be seen when checking service managers calendars. The two managers themselves took part in the same training program and, as a result, in their own opinion their skills also increased. They know how to have better quality in conversations and demand better leadership from service managers as well according to the teachings of coaching program. For this reason, service managers and managers have a unified view of what coaching is and what it can accomplish. Managers also know what kind of things they can demand from service managers because they have seen what kind of training they have received. Another interviewee summed up thoughts on his own development as follows: "I try my best to help to realize,

listen, be present, and help service managers succeed in their work. I have tried to develop as a feedback provider, and I think I am better at it now than before”.

Another part of the interview addressed organizational support for change to move the entire organization toward a more coaching leadership style. Managers were asked how the organization supports the service managers with their own development after the coaching program was ended. Managers saw that it was their responsibility to keep the coaching matter involved in day-to-day work. The other manager summed it up as follows: “Two years of theory-based training is behind and now we are doing practical work together.” In practice, this means sparring and support in difficult cases and 1 to 1 conversation between manager and service manager. HR organization also supports in special cases, such as work ability issues and underperformance issues. The service managers days and the development days also maintain the theme of coaching.

Obstacles to development were also identified. There are many other important things that take time out of coaching. Also, team sizes vary between 10 and 20 people and a team of 20 people is big and then there is also less time for each individual. It can still be noticeable in the attitude of the organization that other tasks sometimes take precedence over coaching. These include many acute things that are easier to prioritize. The answers also considered whether the coaching work and the moments of coaching should be those that are protected from other tasks when it comes to time management. Attitude and desire to develop was also identified as an obstacle to development. Attitude may affect whether or not the service manager attaches importance to coaching and if the service manager does not have the desire to change it is an obstacle to own development.

Managers were asked about the most important things that effect on service managers coaching leadership styles development. Attitude and understanding of the importance of this issue were said to be an important part of development, because it is difficult to develop with a bad attitude. The organization must ensure that everyone has time to coach their team members. The organizational environment was seen as such that coaching leadership can already be done

and further attention must be paid to the overturning of possible obstacles. In the role of managers, it is important to encourage, support and provide sparring assistance in difficult situations. The importance of feedback was also identified as a part of good management and with feedback managers can help service managers in their development. Also finding areas for development and monitoring the development on those areas was also mentioned as an important factor in terms of development. After identifying the development targets, their development can be observed, and feedback can be given.

The last question was about which about these important things could be done better and what should be given more attention. One answer was: "We could be even more supportive and monitor how coaching is done and what areas of development are identified by superiors themselves and where they need help." Also, the size of the teams was raised in both answers, and it was found important to figure that out so that everyone will have the opportunity to lead the teams with coaching leadership style. Sharing the organization's world of thought and continuing to show its importance to all was also raised as an important part.

5 Summary

The purpose of this research was to find out what kind of changes there has been in the coaching leadership style after leaders participated in a coaching program that was implemented by Company Y. What kind of changes there has been to service managers thinking and behavior and how these changes reflect in the organization, and which were the factors in training program and working environment that furthered the development of changes in service managers thinking and behavior in the opinion of the participants? The aim of this study was also to find out which factors made the changes possible and if there were factors that prevented the changes from happening. The purpose was to produce information for Company X that is creating a concept that supports the development of coaching leaderships style in the future within the organization.

5.1 Research process

The research started with the researcher's planning in fourth quarter of 2021 by starting literature review and by contacting the commissioner. Company X decided to start conducting research together with a researcher, and the actual planning began at the beginning of 2022.

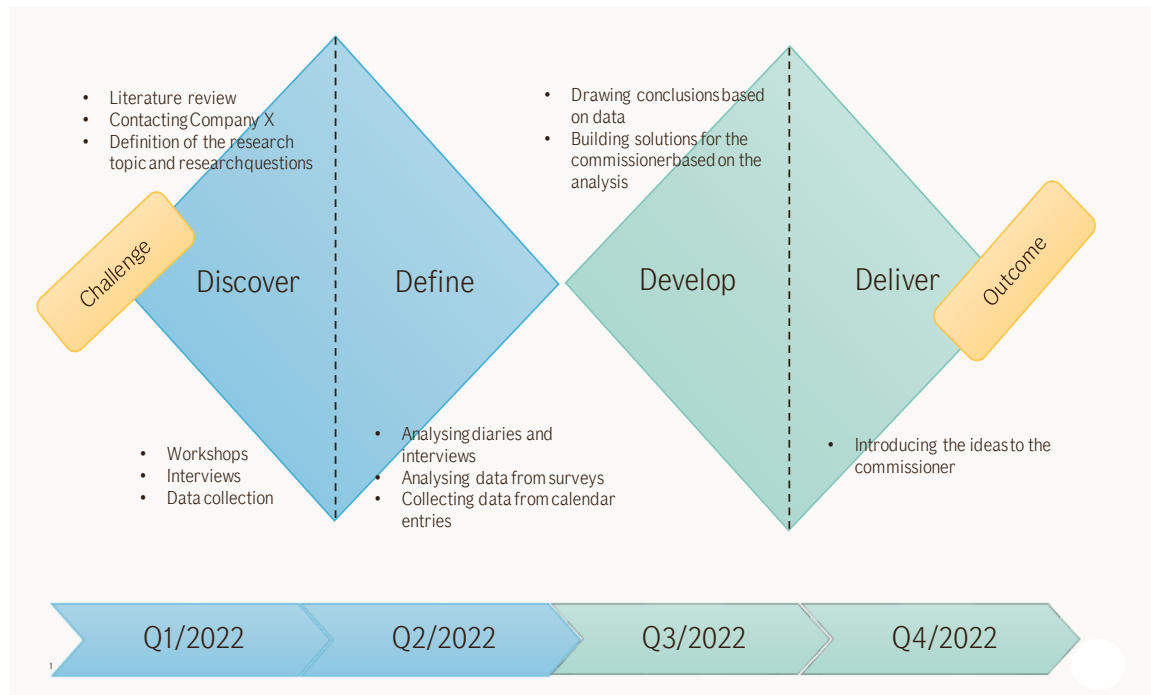


Figure 18. Project schedule in double diamond design process model (Modified from Design council, 2022).

Figure 18 shows the main features of the study and the timeline in which they are located. The research started with planning the research questions together with the commissioner. After the research questions were defined, the researcher started collecting data using different methods. The idea was to study the theme primarily from the point of view of service managers, using a narrative perspective. In addition to this, the study also considered the views on coaching leadership style of those working at different organizational levels. The aim was to study the subject from the perspective of different organizational levels. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the results and began to draw conclusions. The proposed solutions based on the analysis that were presented to the commissioner in November 2022.

5.2 Concept

As a result of the research a concept was built for the commissioner. It provides information about the factors that influenced the changes taking place.

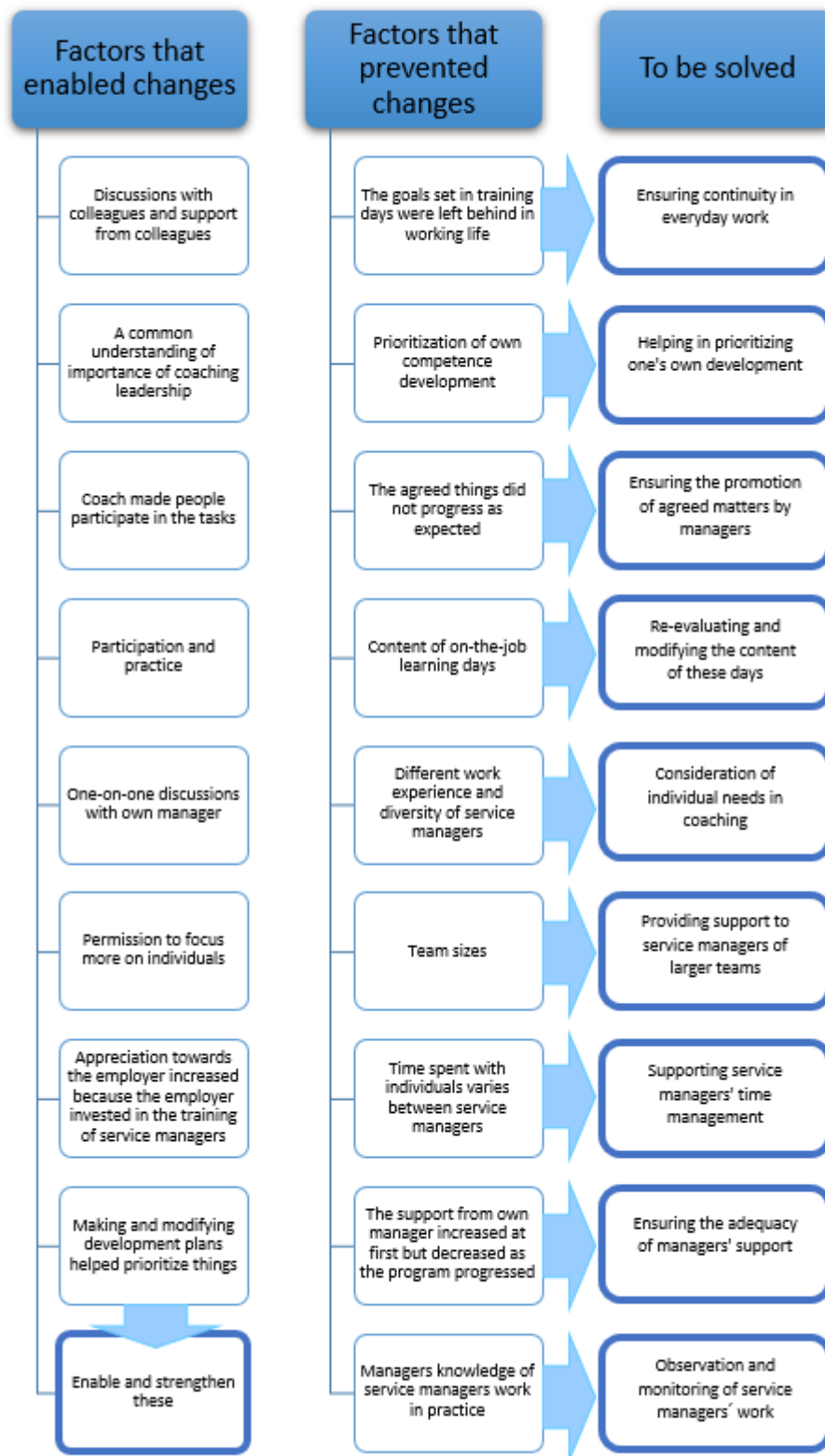


Figure 19. Concept for the commissioner.

Figure 19 shows the things that enabled the change in service managers' thinking and behavior, as well as the things that prevented the change. The factors that enabled changes are those whose promotion and strengthening should be remembered in the future as well. The research also found factors that prevented changes from happening and when creating the organization's internal training model, these questions need solutions.

Based on the research, it can be said that the idea of a coaching management style has been internalized among service managers. How the behavior has actually changed was partially revealed. Evaluating changes in behavior is challenging and this study relied on the service managers' own views on their own changes. Examining the calendar entries, it could be observed that the coaching leadership style has developed to the extent that there have been more meetings with team members after the training program. Based on the personnel survey, it was also found that the team members feel that the service manager's work has improved. In the work of service managers, the understanding of individuality and diversity was more emphasized.

Through the research, the target organization gained valuable information about how service managers experience their thinking and behavior changed as a result of the training program. With the help of the research, organization also received information about which things in the training promoted learning. Based on the group discussions, it was found that the service managers clearly know what coaching management means in the organization. Colleagues' support and cooperation with them was perceived as valuable and this was mentioned in all small group discussions. The research also revealed the experience that support for own development was received from managers in the form of meetings and discussions more in the early stages of the training, but as the training program progressed, the support decreased. Other obstacles to a coaching leadership style were also identified. Some service managers have a large team size, and, in this case, there is less time for individual-oriented coaching. In the group discussions, it was brought up that managers do not necessarily know how service managers work in practice, and it was also discussed that personal

coaching is then difficult and this can be seen as one of the obstacles to the development taking place.

One central observation in the study can be considered that the service managers felt that they have understood through the training that coaching leadership style means focusing on individuals. The participants felt that they have been given the right to spend more time with individuals. Trust was seen as one of the most important factors in a successful coaching leadership culture and many service managers had a goal of building better trust with their team members. Courage and self-confidence were said to have increased as a result of training program.

Based on the research, it can be said that there is a good basis for permanent change. However, the research also found obstacles that must be solved in order for change to be possible.

5.3 Reflection of the results

The narrative approach was interesting, and it helped to get information about the real views of the research participants. It should be considered that every service manager reflects thoughts and behavior subjectively. Evaluating behavior is difficult and an even more realistic picture could have been obtained by interviewing service managers' team members before, during and after the training. This research was timed when the training had already ended, and the research used the available means to get answers from different levels of the organization.

The research process was interesting and instructive and partially changed along the way. Many different research methods were used and based on these, a good picture of coaching leadership style in the organization was formed. By reading through the essays many times and dividing the themes into different categories, a clear view emerged of which themes emerged more than others. The use of different research methods and approaches to the theme from different perspectives gave the research more reliability.

For a permanent change to a coaching leadership culture to take place, the organization must include in its strategy a vision of how coaching leadership is developed and how the vision is implemented in practice. Structural changes should also be made in the organization that support the development of coaching management. Such changes could be changing team sizes to such a size that everyone in the team can receive individual coaching. Challenges related to time use should also be solved - there are many other things on the desk that take time away from individual focus.

The organization should communicate more clearly about expectations and consider how deeply one wants to proceed with the coaching leadership style. What does it mean for a service manager? Currently, there are many differences in the working methods of different service managers and differences in how much time each service manager spends with individuals.

The theme of a coaching leadership style should be maintained even more as a part of everyday life and the skills of service managers should be supported. Predictability and continuity are important in support. Training, observation, and feedback should be part of the support given to service managers. Since the support of colleagues was considered valuable, it should be possible for service managers to receive this support in a structured way in the future as well.

There were themes in the training program that can be continued internally without the help of an external agency. The service managers' development plans had good and broad themes related to their own development, and the organization has continued to discuss these themes. In these discussions, attention should be paid to the content of the themes and how they can be concretely brought into everyday working life. There were so many issues and themes in many development plans that it is practically impossible to promote them all at once. When working with these, managers are required to know how to lead the themes in the right direction - themes should be broken down into smaller sub-themes or micro-themes and taken to a practical level in actions. Managers should spend time observing the work of service managers, so that it would be possible to see how coaching leadership is realized in practice. In this

way, it is also possible to see the development and give feedback on the progress.

In the narrative approach, it must be considered that the subjects try to tell the story from their own starting points and may want to give a certain impression of themselves. In addition to the essays, interviews, and data from the results of personnel surveys were used to make the analysis. Based on the use of different perspectives and suitable different methods, it can be said that the research meets the requirements of reliability and validity.

5.4 Further research topics

A further research topic could be the development of the organization's internal coaching program using the lessons learned from the training program. The research could look for answers to what kind of support service managers need and with what kind of support for development is possible. Another subject for further research could be a study of the coaching leadership culture from the point of view of the coachee: what effects has this had on the coachee's work.

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Questions of the managers´ interview

How do you think the coaching approach to work is reflected at different levels of the organization?

What kind of changes have you noticed here during the two years of coaching program?

Have you noticed any changes in service managers thinking or behavior? What kind of changes?

What kind of support did you get yourself through coaching program to support service managers?

How does the organization currently support service managers in their own development / continued development after the coaching program?

What kind of things are currently supporting the development of service managers?

What kind of things are potentially an obstacle to development?

What do you think are the main factors that contribute to the further development of coaching leadership style?

Which of these key issues are things that could be done better or that need more attention?