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Philosophical Consultancy or Coaching for Leaders?

How Philosophy Can Be Applied in the Business Area

Abstract

The paper offers an answer to the question given by the title, starting from the revision of some specific elements of the appearance of the philosophical counsellor in the business and organisational environment, but also of the coaching as a service for the leaders, and it presents the characteristics of each one. The work makes a comparative analysis between coaching and philosophical counselling to observe the similarities and differences between the two applications that can act successfully in the field of building effective leadership in the business field. The concept of philosophical leadership is presented as a result of the application of philosophy in the business area. It leads implicitly to launching a collaboration proposal between the two practices, which can be materialised by issuing common services for the leadership, but also by taking over some specific tools from philosophy, now implemented in practice in the organisational and business area.

Keywords

philosophical consultancy, coaching, business area, organisation, philosophical leadership

Introduction

The appearance of the economy as a specific form of human activity, which generates goods and material values necessary for humanity, has implicitly led to the use of the specific forms of contemporary counselling. Some forms manifest since antiquity and have often been practised by philosophers. Philosophers, such as Confucius and Lao Tzu, offered advice and counselling to leaders, even in the military field. In the context of ancient Greece, we also identify the Academy created by Plato. Among his students, Plato had some leaders of their time, and later, Aristotle had Alexander the Great for his disciple. Surveying the history of humanity, we find other monarchs who used the advice of philosophers such as Descartes, Machiavelli, Locke, Hume and Rousseau. Some of them also had the role of tutors, for example, Hobbes for King Charles II. Our contemporary practitioner Lou Marinoff, who supported the introduction of philosophical practice and, concerned with securing people's well-being, referred to virtuous organisations. Being aware of the potential that consulting can have in the United States, Marinoff advocated in his books the application of philosophy in the organisational environment.¹

The more recent approach to philosophy as practice followed the emergence of the individual offices for philosophical practice during the 1980s. They were opened by philosophers who later defined themselves as specialists in

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Cf. Lou Marinoff, *Philosophical Practice*, Academic Press, New York 2002, pp. 139–171.

a new occupation called philosophical counselling, differing from the established profession of philosopher. After the movement of philosophers who became practitioners, there was also the need for the involvement of philosophy in the field of organisation, especially in the area of management and leadership, a fact that occurred through the appearance of the philosophical consultant, an equivalent of the business consultant, but who uses in practice tools taken from philosophy, to support a manager in finding answers regarding the organisation they run, the people involved, the specificity of the activity carried out, the responsibilities resulting from the economic process carried out by the organisation, the communication requirements with all participants in the process; but also for managing the success and power offered by the implemented leadership concept.

Currently, there are many concerns from some specialists, such as coaches, on how to support organisations and the management team, which we consider to be an opportune moment to promote philosophy as a practice option, now through specialists and practitioners in philosophy as a philosophical practice intended for organisations and the people. We will analyse this orientation of the philosophical practice towards the business environment by presenting some premises that led to the emergence of the organisational philosophical counsellors, highlighting specific philosophical work tools that were taken by the practitioners in their practice. We will also perform a comparative analysis with another process developed for this field, coaching, to observe the similarities and differences between the two services, which can be successful in building effective leadership in the business field. This paper is trying to find an answer to the question posed in the title – which forms of practice and advice to propose to the leader, philosophical consulting or coaching? This paper continues by briefly reviewing some elements of the historiography of philosophical practice related to the organisations as well as the need for coaching as a development practice applied to leadership, followed by the analysis of the main characteristics of the two. The conclusions offer an answer to the initial question.

The Historiographic Moments of the Philosophical Counselling Applied in Organisations

The first Romanian research on the philosophical counselling included a presentation of the contemporary conceptual evolution of philosophical consulting for the organisational field. Some elements of the study are a foothold for this paper.² The first contacts of practitioners in philosophy with the economic field were manifested after the first philosophical practice cabinet (*Philosophische Praxis*) appeared in Germany. It opened in 1981 at the initiative of Gerd Achenbach, the philosopher who established the first professional association of practitioners, subsequently acquiring international character. Manager Thomas Kaiser is a practitioner who made the first steps towards building a professional reputation for the philosophers involved in organisations, joining other organisational consultants working in the fields such as counselling, training and coaching. In Holland, philosopher Ad Hoogendijk published *Philosophy for Managers*³ and was the first practitioner who has opened a philosophical practice office in the Netherlands, in 1987. The office was initially dedicated to personal counselling, but later he decided to collaborate with organisations, through ethics applied in business. Another Dutch

practitioner, Minke Tromp, is working in the same field, and he explained the difference between consulting for organisations and other types of consulting already present in the field.⁴

In Norway, Pia Axell, a philosopher specialised in economics, managed to increase the client portfolio of a company with the help of the philosophical practice. In Finland, the practitioner Esa Saarinen collaborated with Nokia company, to which he introduced the concept called reflection space used to attract the inspiration of a person.⁵ In the same context, professor of philosophy Tom Morris brings many suggestions and ideas for reflection to those in the organisational field, through his motivational books using suggestive titles, such as: *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*.⁶ In the same period, the book of Eugenie Vegleris appeared in France, who gave up her academic career, orienting herself towards philosophical practice dedicated to managers.⁷ The book discusses how to ask questions, as a form of dialogue, made with the help of a philosophical consultant. The philosophical practice has an important role also in the case of the companies that are beginning with their activity (the type of start-up), an area of interest in which Eli Eilon is noted,⁸ a philosophical counsellor who shows the importance of defining investor's worldview, emphasising the use of discussion models by the practitioner to improve relationships within the company, show the connection that can take place between philosophical counselling and entrepreneurship, in the sense that the entrepreneur needs by a philosophical counsellor or they may become a philosophical practitioner themselves.

The American practitioner Peter Koestenbaum has been a business consultant for many years and, as a philosopher, he has become a philosophical practitioner, who is promoting various ways of improving management with the support of the philosophical counselling. When his first book about the philosophical consultancy was published,⁹ he was considered to be a pioneer in the field of corporate philosophical consulting, a concept specific to the American continent, where a real interest for the consultancy for this field has quickly manifested. Koestenbaum also refers to the concept of coaching as a set of psychological advice for the client involved in the business area, tips that had a connection with philosophy,¹⁰ indicating that some corporations confirm that they need guidance from philosophy. The involvement of philosophy in

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Cf. Vasile Hategan, *Consilierea filosofică: de la practică la profesie*, Ars Docendi, Bucharest 2018.

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Cf. Ad Hoogendijk, *Filosofie voor managers*, Veen, Amsterdam 1991.

4
Cf. Paolo Cervari, Neri Pollastri, *Il filosofo in azienda*, Apogeo, Milano 2010, pp. 80–81.

5
Cf. Esa Saarinen, “Philosophy for Managers: Reflections of a Practitioners”, *Philosophy of Management* 7 (2008) Supplement 1, pp. 1–25.

6
Cf. Tom Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*, Holt Paperbacks, New York 1998.

7
Cf. Eugenie Vegleris, *Manager avec la philo*, Eyrolles, Paris 2006.

8
Cf. Eli Eilon, “Philosophical Counselling and the Philosopher-Entrepreneur”, *Philosophical Practice* 4 (2009) 1, pp. 386–492.

9
Cf. Peter Koestenbaum, *The Philosophic Consultant. Revolutionizing Organizations with Ideas*, Pfeiffer, San Francisco 2003.

10
Ibid., p. 71.

this new type of consultancy is underlined by the corporate philosopher, stating that “business philosophy is a profession”¹¹ which must be distinct from philosophy.

In the field of leadership and governance, Koestenbaum proposed a new working model, called “Leadership Diamond”, schematically represented in the form of rhomb, containing in each corner the specific components of the leader’s mastery: vision, reality, ethics and courage; the model being intended for the person, to become a true leader, and for each of the strategies of the model, where the American practitioner proposes some specific tactics, which he detailed in his book.¹² The British philosopher Geoffrey Klempner assumed the role of “business philosopher” by presenting the philosophy he sees within a business arena,¹³ where he can penetrate, he says, and philosophy, through his practice expressed in the form of specialised philosophical consulting, which can also address the business people concerned with various topics that can be developed by the philosophical practice, by using concepts and working tools specific to the philosophy, which are brought into the new specialisation, the philosophical consulting for the business environment. In Spain, philosophy professor José Barrientos-Rastrojo is concerned with the field, presenting a course on happiness to a pharmaceutical company; and the practitioner Jaume Puigferrat studied the development of the human capital of company, where he proposed to use the help of philosophical counsellors.¹⁴

In Italy, with the publication of the book on leadership, economist Andrea Vitullo presented the issue of leadership from the viewpoint of reflexive philosophical practice.¹⁵ This debate was continued by another philosopher, Marcelo Marino, in his work *Philosophical Leadership*.¹⁶ In the same sense, Italian sociologist Alessandro Dal Lago was wondering where we can meet business thinkers and managers surprised by philosophy, and he brings to attention two new concepts and presents them as a play of words, referring to the managing philosopher or the philosophical manager.¹⁷ The initiative was taken over by other practitioners, for example, Neri Pollastri and Paolo Cervari, dedicated to the field. They published a handbook of philosophical practices for organisations, in which they presented cases resulting from the practice, regarding the use of philosophical tools in counselling applied to organisations.¹⁸

Another recent study concluded a set of challenges intended for 21st century management that were published by Italian practitioners concerned with organisational philosophical consulting and who developed a handbook for this applied field of philosophy, placing, from the title of the book, on the philosopher in within a company or organisation. To engage the proposed set of challenges, Pollastri and Cervari identified the areas of action for the philosophical practice: changing identity and diversity; applied ethics for the development of values and social responsibility; communication, democracy and community development; leadership development through change and innovation; the field of innovation through imagination and creativity; managerial development through understanding the problems and introducing new thinking tools; knowledge management and lifelong learning.¹⁹ They also discussed an unwanted form of leadership, referring to the *toxic leadership* that needs a certain therapy, which is why we propose applying some forms of philosophical counselling, useful for its recovery or for helping the leader to face problems or for the change, using the tools of the working methods used by a practitioner in the philosophical consultancy process. We are convinced

that this process can continue, along with the number of those who will join the practice in this new field of business, in which the philosophical consultancy enters. We can say that all these expressions are components of the interdisciplinary links that are formed between philosophy and business areas for a new application in companies and organisations.

The Beneficiary of Organisational Philosophical Counselling

The implementation of philosophy within organisations can have various forms of application from which we can deduce the categories of persons within a company or economic entities that can request philosophical consulting or counselling services. The first category is managers, seen not by their role in deciding but by the openness manifested towards using philosophical consultancy as a way of perfecting or supporting their activity, thus implicitly the organisation. Another category that can be the object of this type of service is the management team with which the manager works, followed by the category of groups of personnel who can benefit from specific applications or adapted to their activity, or in situations of resolving the conflicts or divergences related to them, by the activity carried out in the company. Another way in which the specialist in philosophical counselling can act in an organisation is to identify what are the social and environmental responsibilities related to company's operation, thus also pursuing the company's incorporation into the moral norms of contemporary society.

The role of philosophy in the development of the business environment was presented by Eugenie Vegleris in her book *Manager avec la philo*. Vegleris tried to answer the question regarding what happens when a manager meets a philosopher.²⁰ The book indicated that the main recipient of the philosophical consultancy is the manager of company or organisation, and the expression of making philosophy in the company can mean: asking questions when everything seems clear, defining something even if it seems obvious, to use the dialogue instead to communicate, to be creative in a standardised world

11
Ibid., p. 81.

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Cf. Peter Koestenbaum, *Leadership: The Inner Side of the Greatness. a Philosophy for Leaders*, Jessey-Bass, San Francisco 1991.

13
Cf. Geoffrey Klempner, "Philosophy in the Business Arena", *Philosophical Practice* 4 (2009) 1, pp. 376–385.

14
Ibid., p. 94.

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Cf. Andrea Vitullo, *Leadership riflessive. La ricerca di anima nelle organizzazioni*, Apogeo, Milano 2007.

16
Cf. Marcelo Marino, *Leadership filosofiche*, Morlachi, Perugia 2009.

17
Alessandro Dal Lago, *Il business del pensiero. La consulenza filosofica tra cura di sé e terapia degli altri*, Manifestolibri, Roma 2007, p. 65.

18
Paolo Cervari, Neri Pollastri, *Il filosofo in azienda. Pratiche filosofiche nelle organizzazioni*, Apogeo, Milano 2010, pp. 140–155.

19
Ibid., p. 218.

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Cf. Eugenie Vegleris, *Manager avec le philo*, Groupe Eyrolles, Paris 2006.

and to be in agreement with themselves.²¹ In promoting the new practices, we consider that it is important to present the competencies that a specialist in philosophical counselling has. They were detailed by the Italian philosopher and practitioner Stefania Contesini,²² who combines the philosophical competences of practitioner and some specific competencies for organisations, of transversal type (soft skills), which leads to a “philosophical work” capable of creating value and responsibility within the company and generating its well-being. To present the philosophical skills in need of development for the application of philosophy within the organisations, Contesini asked a few questions, and the answers revealed competencies necessary for the philosophical practice. They are related to analysing, exploring and managing the concepts, where it is necessary to argue and capitalising on rhetorical strategies to convince, further, to agree a dialogue is needed, and to decide, the existing ethical conflicts need to be analysed and resolved.²³

The Philosophical Leadership, a Practice for Managers

To properly identify the role of philosophical practice in the organisational environment, another question needs to be brought to attention: why philosophical counselling is necessary in management? Fabio Cecchinato, a philosophical practitioner who has studied some problems that a manager is facing, concluded that they need a philosophical thinking capacity, which can be developed or activated with the concept of “philosophy of management”,²⁴ thus bringing into discussion the philosophical dialogue as a working tool for solving situations or increasing efficiency, for defining a new project of the personal counselling. Another approach of applied philosophical counselling comes from Danish consultant Morten Paustian, who described the concept he calls “leadership development” and identified five areas of knowledge and development, which are: emancipation, empathy, imagination, transformation and efficiency of leadership. Paustian concluded that “the efficiency of management becomes the philosophical practice of thought”.²⁵ In his book, Paustian defined his method of working based on some philosophical tools that activate the intuition of the leader. The process begins with developing a client’s journal during the course of two weeks in which the person will reflect and analyse the events, emotions, ideas and problems, and later with the help of the consultant makes a new reflection, following the aforementioned areas of knowledge, to create a new perspective on the problems, dilemmas or questions that the person confronted.²⁶

Unlike other forms of leadership training that are present as training offers, we will detail another form of leadership presented by a philosophy practitioner who specialises in reflective thinking, and who brings these working tools into the process leader training. Andrea Vitullo introduced the concept of reflexive leadership in 2006.²⁷ In the dedicated book, Vitullo metaphorically described this concept as a search for the soul within the organisation. The author, although with no philosophical expertise but through the experience gained in the economic field, developed a relationship with the philosophy expressed in a reflexive form. He brings this idea to the benefit of the manager interested in becoming a leader. Vitullo wondered *what would Socrates do today*, and in his answer he showed that the antic agora, where philosophers were active, has now become the place where business takes place, manifesting itself through discussions held in governing councils, meetings

or conferences where people from these fields participate.²⁸ In another observation about the leaders, concerning automatised functioning based on well-understood procedures, Vitullo proposed changing this attitude with the help of philosophy. The consultant offers support in achieving the transition from the interest of the leader to that of the person, to develop the need to stop the dependence existing between the need for personal development and the requirement to realise profit of the company,²⁹ achievable through the philosophical or Socratic dialogue, used as a counselling tool. Vitullo wondered can personal training continue within the organisation next to the professional training – or it has to take place outside the unit.³⁰ The answer was provided by presenting his experiment with philosophical reflection, envisioned to take place in a special area denoted “breathing room” in which no emergencies or time limits are allowed, and where space is dedicated only to personal reflection. By the end of the period, implications on the person’s life are analysed, generated by reflection.³¹

Noticeable is that for the achievement of philosophical reflection, other tools specific to the philosophy are introduced, such as philosophical dialogue and meditation, both being necessary to achieve the proposed objective, that of focusing on the leader’s personality. In this context we can associate the concept of leadership with the concept of *philosophical coaching*, viewed by the same author as a therapy for the ideas of the person,³² where philosophical practice becomes a form of care for the dysfunctional ideas of the leader or serve to put them in contact with reality, thus generating new behaviours. We find here some examples of the questions that can be asked to promote so-called “spaces of reflection”.³³ The questions imbued with philosophical approach thus become useful tools for a coach, who can depart from a particular need of the person, to arrive at ideas that can then be subject to philosophical reflection.

“Socratic dialogue, philosophical approach, questions, can be introduced and used as important tools for consultants and reflexive practices, using the combination with other practices such as yoga, writing, meditation. A synergic and interactive connection for to evoke in person the daimon, vocation, talent, values and mission in the world. Its uniqueness.”³⁴

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Eugenie Vegleris, *Manager con la filosofia*, Apogeo Milano 2008, p. 132.

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Stefania Contesini, *La filosofia nelle organizzazioni. Nuove competenze per la formazione e la consulenza*, Caroci, Roma 2016.

23

Ibid., pp. 118–144.

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Cf. Fabio Cecchinato, “La filosofia e il management delle organizzazioni”, *Phronesis* 2 (2004) 3, pp. 36–40.

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Morten Paustian, *Leadership development. The practice of philosophical counselling in everyday life*, Lulu Publishing, Copenhagen 2015, p. 157.

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Ibid., p. 160.

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Cf. Andrea Vitullo, *Leadership riflessive. La ricerca di anima nelle organizzazioni*, Apogeo, Milano 2006.

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Ibid., p. 119.

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Fabio Mulas, “Andrea Vitullo, Leadership riflessive. La ricerca di anima nelle organizzazioni”, *Phronesis* 4 (2006) 7, pp. 119–126, p. 123.

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A. Vitullo, *Leadership riflessive*, p. 121.

31

Ibid., pp. 125–129.

32

Ibid., p. 130.

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Ibid., p. 131.

The philosopher Aleksandar Fatić has another approach. Fatić regards the company as a human community and introduces in his practice the concept of humanistic consultancy to achieve the consolidation of the corporate management towards friendly relationship within the organisation. He highlighted the role of the humanistic consultant to corporate leadership enhancement, about which he says:

“The primary mission and measure of corporate success today is the capacity of company to influence society in ways that will enhance it economically, culturally, and morally. Profit and transactional efficiency are no longer the primary focus; they are, rather, the expected and logical effect of social engagement. (...) At the same time, humanistic consultancy enables the company and the people behind it to enjoy and take pride in their changed identities as the fulfilment of the company’s ‘personal’ mission.”³⁵

In Romania, there is a special interest for the research in the business field, through works and studies carried out within a postdoctoral project on a theme on applied ethics and organisational philosophical practice,³⁶ as well as the concept of leadership.³⁷ Another paper related to the described concerns was published in *Annals of the University of Bucharest*.³⁸ A good source of information regarding the practitioners in Romania is the newly published book dedicated to the topic of philosophical counselling in organisations.³⁹ It contains some of the references cited in this paper, three papers published in the *Philosophical Practice – APPA Journal*, translated into Romanian for the mentioned volume.

All these approaches regarding the practical involvement of philosophy in the life of leaders point us to the conclusion that through the process of philosophical reflection, they can become a person open to any options, achieving personal development and wisdom too.

Coaching as a Personal Development Practice of the Leader

Coaching is a practice offered by a specialist called *coach*, manifested in the form of service addressed to the person or groups intending to improve the performance and personal development of a person or group by establishing its professional objectives, by exploring the person’s values and beliefs, followed by the outline of an action plan for achieving the goal pursued by both parties involved in the personal development process. This is not done by giving coach advice or speeches on some principles to follow, but by facilitating the person trained on awareness of a situation, followed by a learning process generated to overcome the situation or reach the goal. Being a coach does not have as a requirement the accumulation of knowledge, skills or experience in the activity of the trained person. Instead, it requires the knowledge of working modalities and tools necessary to carry out the coaching process applied to the person in training, to reach the goals pursued by them and the organisation in which they are active.

The coaching process can be regarded as a form of professional counselling applied to the staff of an organisation to produce changes and improve their professional performances, being considered by some practitioners to be an *organisational coaching process*.⁴⁰ It is based on a training process applied to human capital in organisations. Viewed from this educational approach, we can say about coaching that it derives from the individualised counselling and takes the forms of an *ad personam* training. There are two beneficiaries of the training process: the person to whom the coaching program is addressed, as

well as the organisation in which it activates, who becomes the beneficiary of effects resulting from the application of the program on the person, usually a manager or a leader. In this process, there are three parts, the specialised person or the coach, the person trained and the organisation, the latter being included in the category of the real beneficiary of the training, aimed at improving some performances or achieving organisational goals of the people undergoing a coaching process. The personal development practice of a leader can be applied in the form of a coaching process, which takes place with the help of specialists who intend to achieve some objectives, such as recognition, improvement and development of the leader's personal knowledge, skills and resources; developing its ability to generate solutions; to develop the person's ability to manage and carry out some changes and transformations necessary for the organisation; as well as the ability to guide, motivate and improve the relationship with other partners.⁴¹ Coaching can become a philosophical process, made possible by moving from the approach of *knowing how to do* at *knowing what to do*, an aspect that represents a process of change of meaning between the traditional method of coaching to an approach inspired by philosophy, a process for which the Italian practitioners studied some specific concepts and elements, such as the project, the action, the self-knowledge, and the construction of the senses.⁴²

However, coaching as a practice for the individuals remains a process attached to an organisation, the one that requests the service (and usually pays for it), where the expert named coach is concerned to help the organisation indirectly "where it cannot or does not want to reach",⁴³ even if the subject of the service is the leader or manager who works in the coaching process, in the form of a development program of the person. However, there is an expressed interest of the organisation in which they are active. It leads us to the conclusion that coaching is a service of result. The coach becomes a consultant for personal development when they are concerned in their actions to stimulate the creative potential of their client and their concern for improving the knowledge in a particular area. This is why Italian coach Andreea Vitullo believes that this type of consultancy can be personalised, and

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Ibid., p. 133.

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Cf. Aleksandar Fatić, "Friendship with the company: Building corporate leadership through humanistic consultancy", in: Lydia Amir (ed.), *New frontiers in philosophical practice*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle upon Tyne 2017, pp. 223–236.

36
Cf. Vasile Hațegan, "Interdisciplinary connections of philosophical practice with the business environment", *Analele Universitatii Ovidius Constanta* XIX (2019) 2, pp. 504–508.

37
Cf. Camelia Hațegan, Vasile Hațegan, "Leadership in Organizations – Influences of Philosophical Practices and Social Responsibility", *Analele Universitatii Ovidius Constanta* XVIII (2018) 2, pp. 456–460.

38
Cf. Vasile Hațegan, "Philosophical practice and ethics applied in organizations", *Annals of University of Bucharest, Philosophy Series* LXVIII (2019) 1, pp. 53–65.

39
Cf. Vasile Hațegan (ed.), *Consilierea filosofică în organizații*, Eikon, Bucharest 2020.

40
Stefania Contesini et al., *Fare cose con la filosofia. Pratiche filosofiche nella consulenza individuale e nella formazione*, Apogeo, Milano 2005, p. 153.

41
Ibid., p. 157.

42
Ibid., pp. 159–173.

43
Ibid., p. 175.

“The coach’s approach is usually reflective and non-directive, using questions, listening and feedback for the consultant on a large scale, which in this way leads to understanding the importance of reflection before acting or adopting inefficient communication styles.”⁴⁴

In the same context, posing the question about whether coaching is “a new practice of power” or not, Vitullo presents the relationship of help that resulted in the coaching process, as a trusting relationship between the coach and the manager,⁴⁵ as well as a partnership for a real dialogue, in which a coach is a person outside the organisation, avoiding any interference with organisational power or influence, where the coach suggests reflecting on how some things are done, including approaches like “what to do”, as it often happens in the management of an organisation. The practitioner shows that in the coaching process there is a call for reflection, specific to the philosophical practice; the coach uses that to generate certain states of reflection on some organisational or personal situations, using a pause as a “useful moment of reflection, to contemplate one’s own behavior and to reflect before acting”.⁴⁶

Thus we find out about the risks of the coaching process becoming an exercise of power or even manipulation, and they choose to eliminate any dependency that may arise between personal development and corporate profit when calling on the new practice called coaching. British researcher Julia Vaughan Smith observes that the coaching process is delimited by any traditional therapeutic process applied to the person by a psychotherapist, showing that the coaching process makes a change for the person in different ways compared to the therapeutic processes, and indicating characteristic elements of it, but also the differences between therapy and coaching.⁴⁷ Analysing all these approaches we find the conclusion that by resorting to the coaching practice, the organisation also becomes the place where the personal development of the leader takes place, a process that must be delimited distinctly from the main purpose of a company, to generate the profit; where the organisation finances the development of the leader, to achieve the broader goals.

Short Comparative Study between Coaching and Philosophical Counselling in Organisation

There are papers dealing with comparisons between coaching and psychotherapy⁴⁸ and between psychotherapy and philosophical counselling.⁴⁹ They reached a similar conclusion, as a result of the links of interdisciplinarity that manifests itself between the analysed processes.

The first intention to compare these two concepts was made by the coaching practitioner David Brendel from the United States, who presented a short comparison of coaching related to philosophical counselling,⁵⁰ showing some similarities but also differences between these two services applied to managers or leaders. The author suggests for the future the need for collaboration that can be achieved, he says, in the form of partnerships between these two professions, considering to be “the helping professions” specific to the century in which we live, going further to the idea of dual certification for these two specialisations of practice, which can thus be delivered in the form of a combined package of consulting and personal development. In the “Table 1”, we present some of the specific elements of the coaching process⁵¹ and the philosophical counselling, as practices applicable to the organisational field and leadership.

COACHING <i>versus</i> PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING	
COACHING	PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELING
Occupation is recognised in Romania.	Occupation is in the process of recognition in Romania.
Coach as a specialist in the coaching process.	Philosophy practitioner or philosophical counsellor as a specialist.
The coach uses methods and procedures specific to the coaching process.	The specialist uses specific tools in philosophical practice.
Working with a client within an organisation.	Working with a client/person.
The specialist is trained in coaching activity.	The specialist is trained in philosophical practice (philosophical counselling).
It has common features taken from NLP.	It has its origins in philosophy, as a practice.
It is based on a contract signed by the parties: the coaching provider, the person trained and the organisation in which it operates.	It has an informal character that does not require the conclusion of a contract; the parties negotiate the payment of the consultancy service.
The goal is to improve the person for professional and personal success.	Supporting the client in identifying a personal vision of the world and life.
The action has a result, reaching a goal.	Counselling process without pursuing a result.
The approach is to help the client achieve some goals, starting with one of them.	The approach starts from the problem/situation, touching the existential problems.

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A. Vitullo, *Leadership riflessive*, p. 74.

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Ibid., p. 75.

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Ibid., p. 89.

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Julia Vaughan Smith, *Therapist into Coach*, Open University Press, Berkshire 2007, pp. 45–52.

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Meg Jordan, John B. Livingstone, “Coaching vs Psychotherapy in Health and Wellness: Overlap, Dissimilarities, and the Potential for Collaboration”, *Global Advances in Health and Medicine* 2 (2013) 4, pp. 20–27, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7453/gahmj.13.036>.

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Vasile Hațegan, “Therapy or counselling? Current directions of the philosophical practice”, *Revue Roumaine de Philosophies* 63 (2019) 2, pp. 367–382.

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David H. Brendel, “Insight and Action: The Relation between Professional Coaching and Philosophical Counselling”, *Philosophical Practice* 9 (2014) 2, pp. 1365–1371.

51

Alexandru Mihalcea, *Leadershipul – suport pentru optimizarea performanțelor profesionale și a climatului organizațional*, Editura Universitară, Bucharest 2017, pp. 70–85.

The relationship between the specialist and the trained person is a collaborative one.	The relationship between the specialist and person is to facilitate the counselling process.
It aims to generate the learning process, change the attitude or behaviour of the leader, to increase personal performance.	The action is searching the meaning of life or finding a solution, using the specific philosophical thinking tools.
A coaching plan is outlined.	A counselling requirement is established.
Using a coaching method adapted to the person, through individualisation.	It does not follow a specific method; it is usually specific to the counsellor.
The process takes time to complete the training and can create a certain dependency on the specialist.	The process has a short time for resolution or clarification, without generating a dependence on the specialist.
Has good working instructions, providing support, encouragement, support, feedback.	The process can be without procedures. Free choice of working methods and strategy.
The client has a recommendation for coaching.	The client's participation is voluntary.
There are various categories: life coaching, executive, team, group and career coaching.	The philosophical counselling can be: individual, group, organisational, community.
The coach has the concern for the continuous development of the trained person.	The counsellor does not solve problems but can clarify situations and dilemmas of the person.
To seek the transformation of the person and supports it to achieve the goals.	The counselling process has no well-defined goals.
The coach offers an educational program (only for adults) and develops the skills of the client.	The facilitator between the client and the problem.
Can use questions to identify perspectives for clarification.	Can use questions to clarify and understand a problem, situation or dilemma.
The process analyses the present, aiming to produce effects for the future.	The process clarifies the past, analyses or accepts the present and can generate directions for the future.
The specialist shows professionalism by generating benefits for the client.	The specialist shows professionalism by not being involved in the solution.
There is no particular concern for the person to clarify existential problems.	Helping the client to find their personal vision of the world.
The specialist is involved in the development of the client's career, through knowledge transfer or development of new skills.	The specialist has a neutral position towards the problem or dilemma, as a facilitator between the client and their problem.

No other specialists in the process are involved.	Other specialists or family members can participate.
The client cannot stop a training process.	The client can stop the procedure at any time.
The process generates a solution, as a result of a transfer of information, with behavioural effects and to increase the professional performance of the trained person.	The process generates an agreement or reconciliation of the client with themselves by clarifying the dilemma and solving the organisational problem or situation subject.
The trained person can apply the coaching process within the team.	The counselled person can initiate elements of philosophical advice to their team members.
It is a non-directive process; it does not need advice or guidance, only offer exhortations, to find a solution.	It does not offer solutions to the situation but supports the person for clarifications and the ability to think or to philosophise.
Building the strategy for the success of the trained person (usually the manager).	Outlines the leader's vision within the organisation or the world.
Evaluates the progress for stimulating the professional career of the leader.	Individual evaluations are avoided, to have a concern for stimulating the person's life.
Uses the strategies of development of the person to achieve the professional goals of the leader and the team.	Uses the specific tools of the philosophical practice for the development of a leader, their team, organisation and community.

Table no. 1: Coaching *versus* philosophical counselling

This comparative presentation highlights the differences reflected by the working procedure and the practical approach of each specialisation, but also common elements of similarity, given by the purpose pursued by each analysed practice, both aimed at the business environment, including the active leaders from this sector. Important is the effort and concern of both specialised practice services, intended for leaders within an organisation, who will benefit from advanced training and counselling tools and methods, and who can work together to develop their person and career, in the form of a complex service offered by the new specialists. But, for this aim to be achieved, it is necessary to have a communication and information exchange between the practices analysed to find characteristics based on common goals, followed by identifying tools specific to one of the parties, to be included in their practice, on both parts. Thus, coaching can be included in philosophical approaches, this being called by some practitioners as philosophical coaching, or the philosophical consultancy can be initiated as part of an organisational coaching process. In this case, both forms of practice mentioned here can be successfully outlined and can be included in an integrated service for the leader of an organisation or institution.

Conclusions

We can affirm about philosophy, through all its forms of practice, working methods and tools, that it can be included into management, and it can be applied not only to leaders but also to the workers of an organisation or company. The initiative for the recognition of a new qualification and specialisation in Romania was started in 2016 by founding the *Professional Association of Philosophical and Ethical Counselling*, which aims to promote, recognise and regulate new professions, namely philosophical counsellor and ethics counsellor, in which the intended for organisational counselling to have a special place, being regarded as a professional specialisation of the practitioner in philosophy. We consider that practitioners in philosophy can include in their counselling message that philosophy represents for organisations and companies more than worthwhile and necessary investment for the growth of economic performance and the development of its human capital, thus benefiting from specialised support represented by the philosophical consultancy and applied ethics, as specialisations that now enter Romania, and which show some tendency for recognition and distinct regulation, compared to the practice of a philosopher.

In the same perspective, the authors of the book *Counselling and Coaching in Times of Crisis and Transition*⁵² also encourage researchers and practitioners in the fields of counselling and coaching to serve as agents of change, who may have original solutions to the challenges of contemporary society. It urges the practitioners to leave the offices and to respond to a real need for counselling or coaching, applied in different fields, but that also concern the human relations, the development of the career and the well-being of the person, besides the specific objectives of creating an effective leadership. We conclude that both coaching and organisational philosophical counselling are practices whose main purpose is to help the person to become the actor in their life, both of them supporting the action of implementing strategies that stimulate the establishment and achievement of professional goals or those in training an active leader in the organisational field, for the business area.

Vasile Hătegan

Filozofijsko savjetovanje ili treniranje za vođe?

Kako filozofija može biti primijenjena u području poslovanja

Sažetak

Rad pruža odgovor na pitanje postavljeno naslovom, počinjući od revizije nekih karakterističnih sastavnica pojavnosti filozofijskih savjetnika u poslovanju i organizacijskom okruženju, ali i u treniranju kao usluzi za vođe, te se predstavljaju posebnosti svake. Izvodi se komparativna analiza između treniranja i filozofijskog savjetovanja radi motrenja sličnosti i razlike između dviju primjena koje uspješno mogu djelovati na području građenja efikasnog vodstva u području poslovanja. Pojam filozofijskog vodstva predstavljen je kao ishod primjene filozofije u području poslovanja. Implicitno vodi do lansiranja suradnje između dviju praksi, što se može materijalizirati tvorbom zajedničke usluge za vodstvo, ali i preuzimanjem nekih specifičnih alata iz filozofije, sada implementiranih u praksi u području organizacije i poslovanja.

Ključne riječi

filozofijsko savjetovanje, treniranje, područje poslovanja, organizacija, filozofijsko vodstvo

Vasile Hategan

Philosophische Beratung oder Coaching für Führungskräfte?

Wie Philosophie im Geschäftsbereich angewandt werden kann

Zusammenfassung

Die Arbeit gibt eine Antwort auf die Frage, die der Titel stellt, beginnend mit einer Revision einiger charakteristischer Komponenten des Auftretens philosophischer Berater im geschäftlichen und organisatorischen Umfeld, aber auch beim Coaching als Dienstleistung für Führungskräfte, wobei Besonderheiten jeder einzelnen Komponente wiedergegeben werden. Es wird eine vergleichende Analyse zwischen Coaching und philosophischer Beratung durchgeführt, um die Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Anwendungen zu beobachten, die erfolgreich im Sektor des Aufbaus einer effizienten Führung im Geschäftsbereich eingesetzt werden können. Der Begriff der philosophischen Führung wird als Resultat der Anwendung der Philosophie im Geschäftsbereich präsentiert. Dies führt implizit zur Einleitung einer Zusammenarbeit zwischen den beiden Praktiken, die durch die Schaffung eines gemeinsamen Dienstes für die Führungskräfte materialisiert werden kann, indessen auch durch die Übernahme einiger spezifischer Instrumente aus der Philosophie, die gegenwärtig in der Praxis auf dem Gebiet Organisation und Geschäft implementiert werden können.

Schlüsselwörter

philosophische Beratung, Coaching, Geschäftsbereich, Organisation, philosophische Führung

Vasile Hategan

Conseil philosophique ou formation pour les leaders ?

Comment la philosophie peut-elle être appliquée dans le domaine professionnel

Résumé

Ce travail offre une réponse à la question posée dans le titre en commençant par réviser certains éléments caractéristiques liés à l'apparition de conseillers philosophiques dans le domaine professionnel et organisationnel, mais également dans la formation des leaders comme service offert pour eux, pour présenter ensuite la particularité de chacun des éléments. Une analyse comparative est réalisée entre la formation et le conseil philosophique afin d'observer les ressemblances et les différences entre ces deux activités qui peuvent être bénéfiques dans le domaine visant à construire un leadership efficace dans le domaine professionnel. Le concept de leadership philosophique est présente comme le résultat de l'activité philosophique dans le domaine professionnel. Elle mène de manière implicite à l'ouverture d'une collaboration entre deux activités, ce qui peut être concrétisé en créant des services communs pour le leadership, mais également en reprenant certains outils de la philosophie, qui sont à présent mis en œuvre dans la pratique dans le domaine de l'organisation et des affaires.

Mots-clés

conseil en philosophie, formation, domaine professionnel, organisation, leadership philosophique