THE EFFECTS OF TEAM LEADER COACHING ON TEAM MEMBERS: AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT AT DHL THAILAND

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Abstract

All organizations have their individual strengths and weaknesses. Keeping up with technology and finding an appropriate strategic focus is important, but the driving force to success lies with the engagement of employees.

This study aimed to determine the impact of team leaders who used coaching skills with their team members, at DHL Thailand’s Supply Chain Division. The challenge for DHL Thailand is to develop its team leaders and members to meet the corporate vision and mission through opportunities for enhanced relations between team members and leaders, and engagement in work. The research examined how development of team leaders’ coaching skills, and subsequent coaching of team members, affected the dimensions of the team leader/team member relationship as measured through the dimensions of the Perceived Quality of the Coaching Relationship (PQCR), a tool which measures a team member’s perceptions on dimensions of the relationship that team members create and share with their team leader. Additionally, the Gallup Q12 survey was given to team members to measure changes in team member engagement before and after the intervention. While the PQCR measures the dimensions of the coaching relationship, the Gallup Q12 provides data regarding changes in team member engagement.

The research findings indicated that the ODI had an impact on the team leader and team member relations and on employee engagement. This conclusion was supported by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. It is proposed that team leaders coaching of team members may enhance the team leader/team member relationship and the level of engagement of team members. Recommendations for further study include investigating aspects of the development of the coaching skills of team leaders, the frequency of use of these skills with their team members, and exploration of other

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types of interventions which could affect employee engagement, as well as reinforcing the quantitative results of this study by conducting interviews with participants regarding topics related to attitudes of employee engagement.

**Keywords:** coaching, team leader coaching, coaching relationship, employee engagement

**INTRODUCTION**

Studies indicate that organizations are determined to develop and maintain high-performance and an engaged workforce (Lewis, 1996). For businesses to survive they must respond to economic change, customer behavior and globalization, while the rate at which they can achieve this goal also determines their competitiveness (Phakdeesattayaphong and Chungviwatanant, 2014). This desire for increased employee engagement creates numerous challenges and options for organizations to explore changes in policies and practices which can influence employee attitudes and behavior, such as analysis and redesign of work, rewards systems, changes in compensatory policies, and skills development for increases in innovation and productivity (Need, 2006). Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) suggest that coaching can foster increased development of team members by helping them to plan their work, develop meaningful goals, and strengthen the relationship between the team member and team leader with the team leader acting as a coach.

As the global community becomes increasingly connected there is greater emphasis on the importance of employing teams that can quickly react and adapt to changes in a constantly fluctuating business environment (Bass and Bass, 2008). It is increasingly important that team leaders spend less time in directing or controlling team members as was traditionally practiced (Bass and Bass, 2008). Coaching can support organizations in meeting these challenges by providing increased productivity, performance, and improved relations between team members and between team members and team leaders (Lewis, 1996).

As a result of globalization Asia is now home to the fastest growing economies in the world, remaining the most dynamic part of the global economy, but also bracing for the effects of a weak global recovery, a slower global trade, and the short term impacts from the growth transition of China (IMF, 2016). Meeting these challenges is key to ensure steady economic growth across the Asian region. Additionally, the challenges facing organizations in retaining talent are important to organizational success. In order to ensure long-term team retention there is a growing need to enhance leadership development and improve the communication skills of team leaders (Work Taiwan, 2004). Thus, in recent years, many organizations in Asia have utilized coaching as a strategy to address the needs of teams to be more resourceful.