

# 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

and flexible as well as more engaged and connected with their organizations (Nangalia & Nangalia, 2010).

Within Asia, Thailand in particular has achieved a record pace of growth in 2016, signaling a positive outlook. This fact has hastened urbanization, wealth creation, education and mass communication, and has encouraged growth in the middle class while offering greater business autonomy (IMF, 2016). Consequentially, Thailand has faced challenges as it eased into the twenty-first century, requiring its corporate teams to interact more skillfully in order to meet the demands of the global and regional economies that are increasingly connected and complicated (Wedel, P., Rondinelli, D.A., 2001).

### **The Focal System – DHL Thailand**

DHL conducts business in over 220 countries and territories, making it a leading international company. Its workforce exceeds 340,000 employees, providing solutions for a vast number of logistics needs. DHL Supply Chain is the global market leader in contract logistics (DHL, 2014), providing warehousing, managed transport and value-added services, and offering solutions for corporate information and communications management. This study focused on DHL Supply Chain, Thailand. The participants for this research were team leaders at a distribution center for Makro, which is managed by DHL Thailand's Supply Chain.

A focus group discussion with leaders at DHL revealed that while the

organization strives to be open and positive in its relations with all team members, there is still room for increased engagement and commitment. While DHL provides leaders with skills training to assist them in their development, challenges still remain in order to encourage the move from a 'command and control' paradigm of tactics, towards the enablement and empowerment of team members. Moreover, the level of proficiency in performance management skills that team leaders currently possess appears to be in need of improvement.

Team members have expressed a desire to receive more meaningful development from team leader feedback and have also expressed the need for increased support from their leaders to develop their growth potential. Those in the focus groups were adamant that a coaching intervention combined with strategic skills development initiatives had the potential to increase team members' commitment to the organization as well as to leadership. The focus group members expressed a hope that a coaching initiative would positively affect the performance of employees, building their skills through coaching, to ultimately achieve a greater level of customer satisfaction and meet the organization's goals.

### **The Need for Action Research at DHL Thailand Supply Chain Division**

The main purpose of this study was to increase employee engagement through the use of a coaching intervention at DHL Thailand's Supply Chain Division. While

team leaders have received some prior leadership and management training, there is a perceived need to further foster the development of their team members. DHL would like to see teams capable of developing goals that are in line with the organization's expectations. This action research project aimed to meet the management's view of an opportunity to introduce coaching and coaching sessions for team leaders that would include employees from various departments within DHL Thailand's Supply Chain Division. The research would evaluate the effects that the development of team leader coaching skills in team leaders, had on both the team leaders and team members.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The primary aim of this research was to measure the effects of the development of coaching skills among team leaders and the consequent coaching of their team members. This opened an opportunity to develop leaders with coaching skills which could enable team members to explore and solve their own problems, becoming increasingly self-directed in their own development and thinking. Organizations face many challenges due to the increased need for a workforce that is flexible, self-directed, committed and engaged in their organization's mission and goals. Consequentially, the objectives of this research at the DHL Thailand, Supply Chain Division were:

1. To assess the current relationship between team leaders and team members as measured through the

Perceived Quality of Coaching Relationship Survey;

2. To assess the current level of team member engagement as measured through the Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey;
3. To determine the appropriate ODI for developing the coaching skills of team leaders;
4. To determine the appropriate ODI for the utilization of team leaders coaching skills with their team members;
5. To measure the effect of the ODI on team leader coaching of team members post ODI, qualitatively, through interviews, and quantitatively, through the Perceived Quality of Coaching Relationship (PQCR) Survey and the Gallup Q12 Survey.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study endeavored to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the current relationship between team leaders and team members as measured through the Perceived Quality of Coaching Relationship Survey?
2. What is the current level of team member engagement as measured through the Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey?
3. What is the appropriate ODI for developing the coaching skills of team leaders?
4. What is the appropriate ODI for the utilization of team leaders coaching skills with their team members?

5. In what ways did the ODI of team leader coaching on team members affect the team members, as measured qualitatively through interviews, and quantitatively through the Perceived Quality of Coaching Relationship (PQCR) Survey and the Gallup Q12 Survey?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses for this study were formulated based on the research questions. The research hypotheses are:

### *Hypothesis 1*

H1<sub>0</sub> There is no significant difference in the Gallup Q12 team member engagement scores for team leaders between pre-ODI and post-ODI;

H1<sub>a</sub> There is a significant difference in the Gallup Q12 team member engagement scores for team leaders between pre-ODI and post-ODI.

### *Hypothesis 2*

H2<sub>0</sub> There is no significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the genuineness of the relationship between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI;

H2<sub>a</sub> There is a significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the genuineness of the relationship between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI.

### *Hypothesis 3*

H3<sub>0</sub> There is no significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the level of effective communication between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI;

H3<sub>a</sub> There is a significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the level of effective communication between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI.

### *Hypothesis 4*

H4<sub>0</sub> There is no significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the comfort level in the relationship between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI;

H4<sub>a</sub> There is a significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the comfort level in the relationship between team leaders and team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI.

### *Hypothesis 5*

H5<sub>0</sub> There is no significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the development and learning of team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI;

H5<sub>a</sub> There is a significant difference in the PQCR scores regarding the development and learning of team members, pre-ODI and post-ODI.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research was intended to benefit the focal company as a whole, by developing DHL's team leaders with new skills in coaching that could support team members. The research focused on how these skills may have resulted in increased team member engagement with the company and its clients, as well as in the development of their own capabilities to meet the company's mission and vision. The intention of this intervention was to:

- Create a measurable positive difference in the dimensions of the team leader/team member relationship as measured through the PQCR survey and subsequent follow-up interviews.
- Create a positive difference in the engagement level of team members towards organizational goals as measured by the Gallup Q12 survey and subsequent follow-up interviews.

It was thus intended that the research would provide a beneficial model for future coach training initiatives conducted at DHL Thailand's Supply Chain Division as well as for other organizations within Thailand.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Providing coaching to team members can lead to increased confidence, self-directed thinking, and positive solutions-based attitudes (Pickerden, 2014). By addressing the possibilities for team members to reach their true potential,

coaching may be the key towards building the personal capacity and personal contribution of team members to the organization (Greif, 2007). With the demands of the modern business environment, many organizations are working to improve their productivity and maintain their competitive advantage by increasing employee engagement (Saks, 2006). A SOAR analysis and a McKinsey 7S study was made of DHL Thailand Supply Chain Division by Lynn & Lu (2017). The McKinsey model provided a method to explore the challenges and changes both externally and internally within the organization. This study consequently explores the influences of coaching on dimensions of the team leader-team member relationship, and on the engagement of team members.

### **Coaching**

Multiple modern definitions of organizational coaching appear within the literature. Since its inception in 1995 the International Coach Federation (ICF) has been a leading organization in defining and developing ethical standards and protocols of organizational coaches. The ICF defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential", insisting that coaches honor their clients as experts in their own lives, and holding the belief that all clients are creative, resourceful and whole (International Coaching Federation, 2016).

It is not enough to simply define the coaching relationship or to understand what roles a coach holds. It is also important for new coaches to learn and use specific coaching processes when working with their coachee. There appear to be some commonalities found in the coaching process. First, coaches are expected to reserve specific times for their coaching. They should collaborate with their coachees to set challenging goals that stretch the coachees' abilities (Kinlaw, 1999). Moreover, coaches should hold their coachees to a level of accountability in their expectations for achieving the goals that the coachee has established. Coaches also aid in the coachees' progress by offering resources or by clearing any environmental challenges or barriers that may impede their success. Coaches should also provide consistent feedback in a helpful and objective manner that serves the agenda of the coachee (Crane, 2007).

The shift to team leaders coaching their team members required an updated definition which Heslin (2006) termed 'team leader coaching'. This concept was defined as "team leaders providing one-on-one feedback and insights aimed at guiding and inspiring improvements in team members' work performance". Brodie and Levy (2010) further established a concise definition of team leader coaching drawing from many researchers, and a valid and reliable survey which encompasses the elements of this definition. They defined coaching as "a developmental activity in which team members work one-on-one with their direct team leaders to improve job

performance and enhance the capacity for future roles and challenges". The research studies determined that the relationship should be based on the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data, or assessments. The subsequent model created by Brodie and Levy (2010) was created based on common dimensions of the coaching relationship as derived from a summation of the literature on employee coaching. These include the (1) *genuineness of the relationship*, the level of (2) *effective communication*, the degree of (3) *comfort in the relationship*, and the extent of the (4) *development of the learning and development* of the team member.

Researchers began observing ways in which coaching affects the relationship between the team member and the team leader, in particular looking at the elements of trust and mutual respect between the two (Whitmore, 1998), and the impact that this relationship has on the team members' levels of engagement to the organization (Wright, Gardner & Moynihan, 2003). It was noted that many organizations began implementing coaching programs for the specific purpose of increasing team member morale and productivity (Hahn, 2008). Coaching also empowers team members by encouraging the development of new skills, enhancing performance and preparing team members for change as well as promotion (Witherspoon & White, 1996). Definitions of employee engagement and how coaching may affect the engagement of team members are explored in the next section.

## **Employee Engagement**

Organizations ideally recruit team members who can adapt and react to an ever-changing and demanding global market. As far back as 1996 Lewis suggests that team members be flexible and continuously develop their professional skills in order to maintain their value within their organization (Lewis, 1996). More recently Bass and Bass (2008) found that organizations seek engaged team members in times where stiff competition demands a resilient workforce. Truss (2014) also discussed the value of organizational development, noting that the way that people of a workforce feel regarding their organization will affect the overall performance of the organization. This sentiment is a particularly relevant issue when team members interact with customers. These findings place a premium on defining and promoting employee engagement, and are discussed within this chapter.

Engagement itself includes a prevalent affective-cognitive connection to the employee's function in any specific job, event, or behavior (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000). Engaged team members show their engagement through work performance, work behavior, and attitude. Frankl (1992) addressed this finding, asserting that team members have strong motivation to seek meaning and that they attempt to define this meaning within the value of their work, goals or purpose, in relation to their personal ideals and standards. Additionally, meaningfulness

can refer to the feeling that one is receiving a return of investment (Kahn, 1990) and that the lack of meaning in work may lead to an alienated or disengaged employee (Aktouf, 1992). This 'dark side' of engagement may, according to Purcell (2012), lead to increased experiences of team member burnout, problems with health, and an overall disengagement with work roles and the organization.

One of the first academic studies of employee engagement was conducted in 1988, when Gallup created the Q12, an employee engagement measurement tool consisting of 12 questions. Gallup's surveys categorized actively engaged, non-engaged, and actively disengaged team members. After nearly a decade of collecting results, Buckingham and Coffman summarized their findings in their book *First, Break all the Rules*. Employee engagement is an important factor in team member turnover, loyalty, safety, and customer satisfaction (Phale, 2008).

Observing the current state of the organizational system at DHL Thailand's Supply Chain Division, one can recognize the opportunity to improve engagement in the company's employees through the proposed team member coaching intervention. According to identified DHL values, there is a mandate to encourage self-directed thinking and develop proactive employees in order to increase competitiveness and creativity. DHL encourages the setting of goals to ensure that team members feel they are cared about and developed. These aspects of employee engagement could possibly



be met through enhancement of team leaders' coaching skills for use with their teams, and is explored in the following section.

The results from previous research have demonstrated a link between engagement and team member performance, and to enhanced organizational business outcomes. While there are other key elements of engagement, including effective communication, development opportunities for team members, and leaders who are better connected with team members; helping to create engagement, is still a process that requires different specific needs in each organization. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' model (Kular, 2008). It is therefore possible that team leader coaching has the capability to affect team-member development, learning, feedback, and the general communicative relationship between team members and their team leaders.

## **Summary of Literature Review**

### **Findings**

As organizations face the challenges of innovation and the need to quickly react to changes in the market, they should benefit from team members who are committed, responsible, and flexible. While coaching has received increased

attention as one possible solution to these needs, questions still remain as to the level of its effectiveness as a measure to increase the engagement of team members to meet the required goals. Review of the literature subsequently explored how coaching affects levels of engagement. It was recognized that it may also be useful to determine how coaching can lead to effective organizational outcomes when used to develop team members' work engagement. The training of team leaders in coaching skills and the means by which coaching can benefit companies by altering the work engagement level of team members is explored further in this research.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework displayed in Figure 1 illustrates how team leader coaching of team members may affect their mutual relationship and shift the level of organizational engagement of team members. The development of the professional relationship between the team members and the team leaders can potentially enhance the level of communication and openness between the team members and team leaders, as well as the development of the engagement of team members following the coaching intervention.

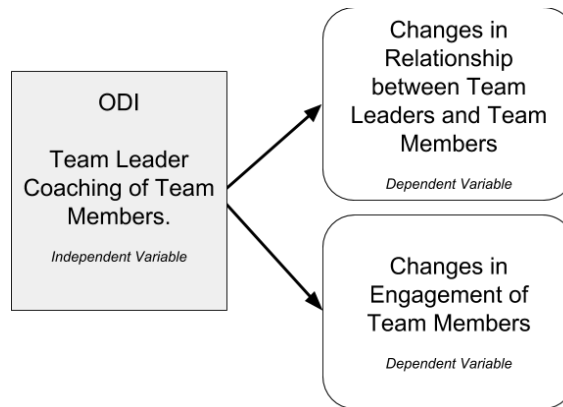


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Action Research Framework

The pre-ODI data and associated analysis, explored the opportunity for DHL to train select team leaders in coaching skills, which they could use with their team members. The ODI consisted of team leaders being trained in specific coach training skills and using these skills with selected team members. The post-ODI analysis consisted of applying the PQCR and Gallup Q12 surveys to

investigate changes in the team leader / team member relationship and changes in the engagement level of the team members. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with team leaders and team members to provide more in-depth information on their respective experiences of coaching or being coached. The semi-structured interviews were based on the PQCR and Gallup Q12 surveys. Figure 2 illustrates the action research framework.

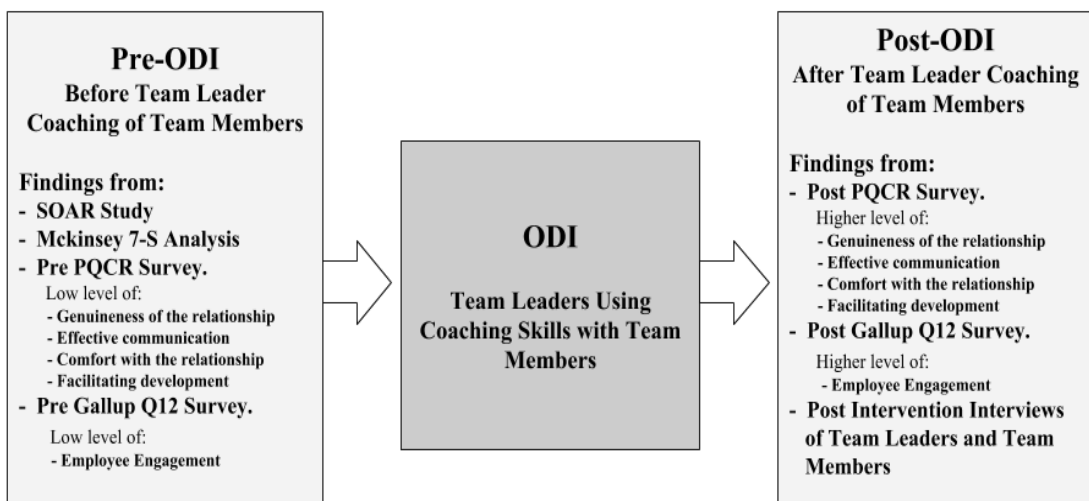


Figure 2. Action Research Framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to establish measurement of the effectiveness of coaching on employee engagement. The empirical data procured by this research provides insight into the area of coaching and its effects on employee engagement. The evidence revealed a correlation between coaching and employee engagement which may be useful for developing leadership coaching programs. Evidence that linked coaching with employee engagement may also promote the adoption of coaching as a leadership development tool.

An approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative analysis was used in gathering data for this research. By combining quantitative and qualitative research and data, a wider and deeper understanding was gained regarding the corroboration within the research. The subjects of this study were selected team leaders and team members from DHL Thailand's Supply Chain Division. These particular subjects were members of the Makro Distribution Center.

In order to determine the statistical significance in answering the hypotheses a meta-analysis of pre and post data from the PQCR and Gallup Q12 surveys was conducted, as well as a more specific analysis of each subset of questions in order to test the individual significance in the various dimensions of the PQCR. The qualitative data was derived from semi-structured interviews, which were based on elements of the PQCR and Gallup Q12. A five-step method was utilized for analysis of this qualitative data, as

designed by Piercy (2015).

### Summary of ODI

The Pre ODI study was conducted by providing an orientation to all participants of the Perceived Quality of the Coaching Relationship (PQCR) survey and the Gallup Q12. The surveys were distributed and completed directly after the orientation to the participants.

The ODI consisted of team leaders receiving two days of coach training. These sessions included basic coach communication skills, training in a goal-setting model, techniques for raising the awareness of the coachees, and processes for following up on agreed actions. After receiving the training, team leaders were asked to apply their coaching skills on a day-to-day basis with their team members. Team leaders were also asked to provide at least three full coaching sessions of between 45 minutes to one hour to the chosen team members over the six weeks of the intervention, once in week two, week four, and week six. The coaching sessions followed a specific process, as taught to the team leaders during their coach training program. This ensured that the coaching being offered to team members was consistent across the participants.

For the Post ODI study, a randomized sample of the participants (five team leaders and eight team members) were interviewed. The interviews were between 30 and 45 minutes in length. The PQCR survey was resent to all participants and the Gallup Q12 survey was resent to all team

members.

**Analysis of Findings**

The total population of the focal system was 335 employees, thus the respondents represented 16.9% of the total population. The team leaders and team members included in the study were chosen through a process of random selection. There were 41 males and 23 females in the study. The 64 participants included 1 managing director, 15 line managers, and 48 team members. The years of service with DHL for the 64 participants ranged from 3 to 16 years, while the age of the participants ranged from 27 to 54 years. The level of education of the 64 participants included technical diplomas, bachelor’s degrees, and master’s degrees.

Table 1 presents a summary of the hypotheses, which showed statistically significant results and were thus accepted.

It was determined there was a positive increase in the quantitative results in all areas from both surveys. This indicates that there was a shift in employee engagement, employee commitment, and in the area of the team leader – team member relationship as defined within the PQCR. These results are supported by the post ODI interview data of team members and team leaders which are discussed in the next section. The results appear to indicate that with the intervention of coaching there was a positive impact on both the team members as well as team leaders.

*Table 1*

*Hypothesis Testing Summary*

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Pre-ODI</b>		<b>Post-ODI</b>		<b>Paired</b>	<b>Significance</b>
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Differences</b>	<b>(2-tailed)</b>
<b>H1</b>	Gallup Q12 - Team Members	51.20	4.22	53.12	3.64	5.87	.001
<b>H2</b>	Creating Genuine Relationship	12.35	1.41	13.70	1.12	5.02	.001
<b>H3</b>	Level of Communication	12.75	1.68	13.86	1.24	3.49	.001
<b>H4</b>	Comfort Level of Relationship	12.78	1.90	13.29	1.37	1.35	.001
<b>H5</b>	Development and Learning	12.67	1.82	13.83	1.30	3.22	.001

## Synthesis of Findings

Results from the quantitative data in all areas of both surveys showed a statistically significant increase. This indicates that there was a positive statistical increase in employee engagement as defined by the Gallup Q12 survey, and in the area of the team leader – team member relationship as defined within the PQCR. These results were supported by the post ODI interview data of team members and team leaders, which was discussed within the hypothesis testing section of this study. These results appear to indicate that with the intervention of coaching there was a positive impact on both the team members and team leaders.

The qualitative data indicates the relationship between the team leaders and their team members within the dimensions of the PQCR after the coaching intervention, as noted below. When asked about feeling cared for by their team leader, multiple positive responses were made. “The team leader supports me to have a positive mindset and a good attitude about work”, one team member noted, while another said “The team leader encourages me to join training and to increase my skills development” and “I am encouraged to seek new opportunities in my own development”. These comments indicate the level of care that team members felt from their leaders. The team leaders themselves also reacted positively when asked how they care for their team members. One team leader answered that “I frequently check up on my team

members and their work progress, as a result of the coach training”. Another team leader noted that “I talk to my team members about personal, non-work related issues and topics” and “I encourage my team members to share their thoughts and feelings with me”.

Within the area of job performance, one team member noted that “the team leader allows me to find my own solutions” and “the team leader speaks carefully and thinks about what he or she is saying to me”. Both of these comments indicate a developing coaching relationship. A team leader also commented that “I encourage my team to think without giving them solutions”, and “I try to be as clear as possible in my communications and work hard to build our teamwork”. Emphasis on the process of goal setting is also indicative of a coaching relationship.

When asked to reflect on their level of engagement, team members responded positively. One team member noted “The manager and team are always willing to help one another” and “the relationship with the team leader is like that of a family member”. Others commented that “I feel listened to and appreciated at work”, and “I am engaged in my work and want to learn new things”. Another commented that “I feel like I want to prove myself”. Team members also noted similarly, with comments such as “I feel engaged with my team members” and “coaching is a great tool and has helped me to feel more trust with my team”. They also noted that “I am encouraged to fulfill my full potential” and that “there could be stress in the job but our close family style helps

with that”. Comments such as these indicate that the team leader / team member coaching relationship had a positive influence on the engagement of the teams themselves.

## **CONCLUSIONS BASED ON FINDINGS**

The objectives of the research at DHL were to provide development of coaching skills to team leaders in DHL and for the team leaders to utilize their learned coaching skills and processes with their team members.

The survey and interview results suggest that the coach training and use of coaching by the team leader resulted in an increase of engagement in the team members. Throughout, it appears that coaching led team members to feel more connected to their goals and more supported in their work by their team leader. In addition, team members also felt more connected to their team leaders through increased communication. Team leaders indicated a greater sense of support and empathy for their team members as they worked to achieve personal and professional goals.

Schaufeli (2013) noted that when employees feel satisfied, they may find their work more enjoyable and rewarding, and feel they are appreciated and are being developed, so that they may be more likely to care for and contribute more to the organization. It was noted that throughout the team leader coaching intervention the team members felt a greater inclination to encourage one

another, including sharing ideas while creating deeper levels of communication on both professional and personal levels. As a result of the coaching relationship the team members felt more ‘listened to’ by their team leaders and this encouraged certain team members to want to prove themselves and strive to achieve the goals they set as a coachee.

The increase in team leader engagement was similar to that of the team members. As a result of their training the team leaders learned how to listen empathetically, and see their team members’ full potential. This enhancement along with specific coaching skills helped the team leaders connect and increase the development of their team members. DHL values strategic thinking and self-directed thought and action in all employees. The skills that the team leaders gained through the training allowed them to not only become more open in their thinking but also to have the tools to create a deeper level of self-directed awareness and thinking in their team members.

Thus, the results of the research indicate that when team leaders are provided with coach training and go on to use coaching with their team members, there will be a positive impact that creates a more genuine relationship, an increase in effective communication, and an improvement in the comfort level and learning level of team members. The results appear to meet the needs of DHL in creating a supportive environment where team leaders encourage their team members to think in a more goal oriented, self-directed and strategic manner. It is

thus recommended that the coach training of team leaders be continued and expanded.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON CONCLUSIONS**

The intention of this study was to develop the leaders at DHL regarding specific coaching skills and processes, and for them to use these skills with their team members. The intervention was conducted to determine whether it would create a measurable positive difference in the various dimensions of the team leader/team member relationship as measured through the PQCR survey and subsequent follow-up interviews. It also seemed useful to explore whether the intervention would create a positive difference in the engagement level of team members regarding organizational goals, as measured by the Gallup Q12 survey and subsequent follow-up interviews. It was hoped that the research would provide a beneficial model for future coach training initiatives conducted at DHL Thailand Supply Chain and for other organizations within Thailand.

It was observed that the program instilling a leader's coaching skills, positively influenced the relationship between team leaders and team members. The relationship appeared more trusting, communicative, and supportive, with a tendency to enhance team members' effective goal creation and their accountability towards goal completion. This improvement in the team-leader/team-member relationship was indicated through the statistical data.

It is recommended that DHL continue developing the coaching skills of its team leaders and take measures to ensure that team leaders continue using these skills with their team members on a regular basis. A longer term, expanded team leader coaching initiative could have a significant impact on team members' relationships with their team leaders, as well as having the potential for development of the team members own personal efficacy. By continuing with subsequent coach training and team leader/team member coaching programs, further study and measurement of the program could be conducted to establish the level of change in the future.

It would be interesting to explore other types of interventions that could affect employee engagement. Results of this research indicated that coaching can positively affect the team member/team leader relationship, which also has an ancillary effect on the level of employee engagement. Accordingly, the research indicates that it would be useful to explore non-coaching interventions that could be used in combination with coaching or alone, measuring their effectiveness. Looking at areas such as team and individual development initiatives, ways to improve job security, leadership development, compensation practices, or other interventions, would help to explore areas which may also affect employee engagement.

Regarding the completed coaching study, it could be useful to conduct further interviews with the participants about topics related to attitudes of employee engagement. More specifically, follow-

up queries might explore how the act of being coached has affected their own engagement to the organization. Also, conducting pre and post interviews with regard to the team members impressions of support from their leaders and the engagement they feel to their organization, could provide greater perspective on the effects that the intervention had on the participants. Further refinement of the survey tools and the interview questions could also help to obtain specific information from the participants.

Finally, an additional long term recommendation includes further exploration of other developmental approaches and to decide which approach or combination of approaches should or could be used that would best complement the coaching program that has been implemented. The other developmental approaches should involve knowledge, skills and attitudes and can include a combination of cognitive and humanistic approaches. In this way new ideas and training can be tried spontaneously, which may avoid the risk of the training program itself becoming stagnant. The deeper the development program provided for team leaders, the greater the effect of their coaching among team members, which should in turn increase the benefits of the program. Further customization of the program for DHL should then provide an increased beneficial impact for all involved.

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