MODEL FOR STRENGTHENING PERSONAL COMPETENCIES OF PROJECT MANAGERS THROUGH COACHING TOOLS

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PMQ

Abstract

The Project Manager is more and more a key agent in the development of business, growth and capabilities of organizations, particularly in a changing, complex and challenging environment (PMI, 2007; PMI, 2013). He has the responsibility of assisting needs related to project team management, ensuring that results and quality of the project meet requirements and stakeholders satisfaction. Having a critical role in the organizations, to be an effective Project Manager requires a grate understanding of different fields that must be coordinated, as well as strong personal skills (Ahsan & Ho, 2013).

Since personal competencies has demonstrated to be better predictor of successful Project Managers (Clarke, 2010; Muller & Turner, 2010; Skulmoski & Hartman, 2010), the academic research has focused on understanding what are these personal competencies. However, less research has been developed to better understand how these competencies can be strengthened. Executive coaching has gained popularity during last decade as a tool for developing better behaviors and attitudes in the workplace, but there is still an important need to enrich the theoretical framework and better understand how it works, specially in the context of project management.

The aim of this research is to develop an specific project management coaching model, which will provide a baseline for applying coaching to strengthen personal competencies of Project Managers. The model will be validated by conducting an experiment with active Project Managers to analyze the effectiveness of this approach, success factors and the impact of coaching on different competencies.

Project Management Coaching Model

Project Management Competencies

Literature on Project Management suggests that the main areas of competencies for an effective Project Manager are:

- **Business and Technical Knowledge:** technical competence in a specific field (i.e..: Construction, Engineering, Information Technologies) and business knowledge related to the project and the organization.

- **Project Management Processes:** knowledge and capabilities in the use of processes, methods and tools regarding Project Management (i.e..: Scope management, Risk and Quality management)

- **Personal Competencies**: behaviors, attitudes, and core personality characteristics that contribute to a person's ability to manage projects
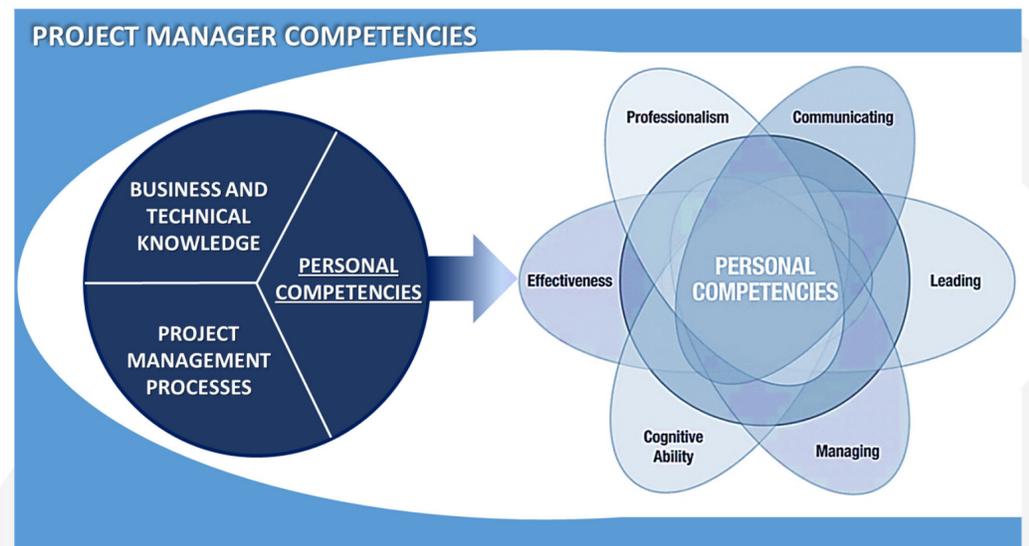

Figure 1. Project Management Competencies: Personal Competencies

¿What does the PM Coaching Model include?

- **A coaching process design** with objectives description, inputs, steps, activities, tools, templates and outputs.
- **A definition of key personal competencies:** for both the Project Manager and the Project Coach.
- **A set of good practices:** based on success models in Project Management.
- **Definitions and principles of PM Coaching**

Design of the Experiment

Sample

- **30 Project Manager** (15 Experiment + 15 Control)
- **From different industries**: Aeronautical, NGO Information Technologies, Construction, Consultancy.
- **7 coaching sessions** for each Project Manager.

Data Collection

- Surveys (before an after the process)
- Participant Observation (>120 sessions)
- Interviews

Preliminary Results of PM Coaching

- Strengthening of: Oral communication, Project leadership, Assertiveness, Creativity, Uncertainty management, Self-motivation, Cognitive ability, Time management, Self-confidence.

Figure 2. COmpetence DEvelopment process steps (CODE)

COACH
- Creative Questions
- Active Listening
- Rapport
- Feedback
- Intuition

PM Coaching Sessions

P. MANAGER
- Objectives
- Awareness
- Responsibility
- Self-belief
- Action Plans and results

Improvement

Figure 3. Project Management Coaching Sessions

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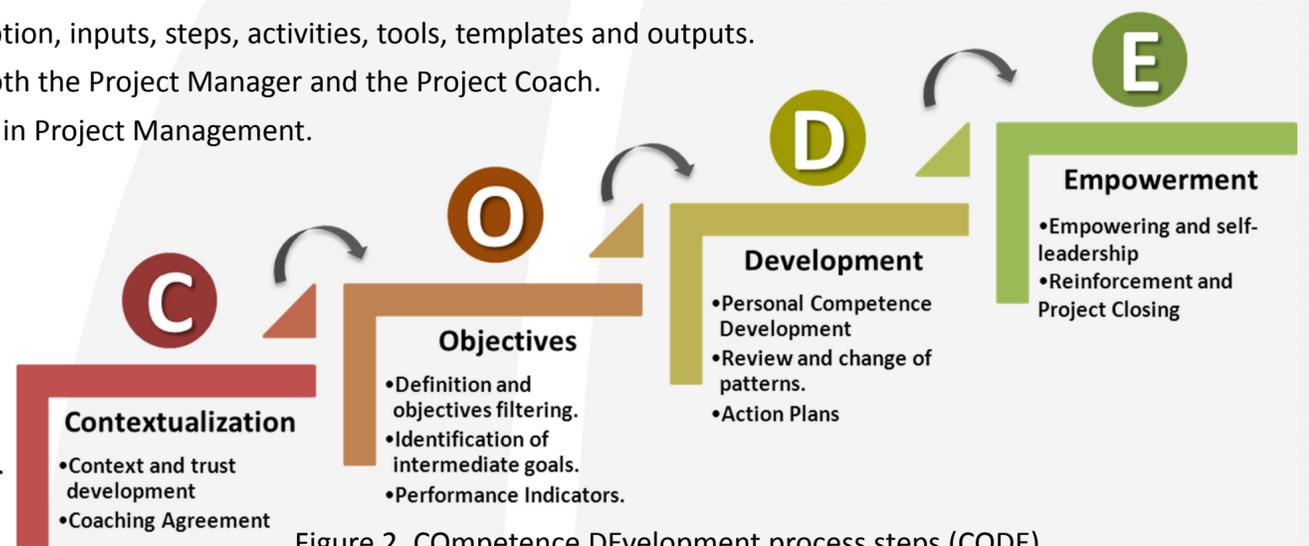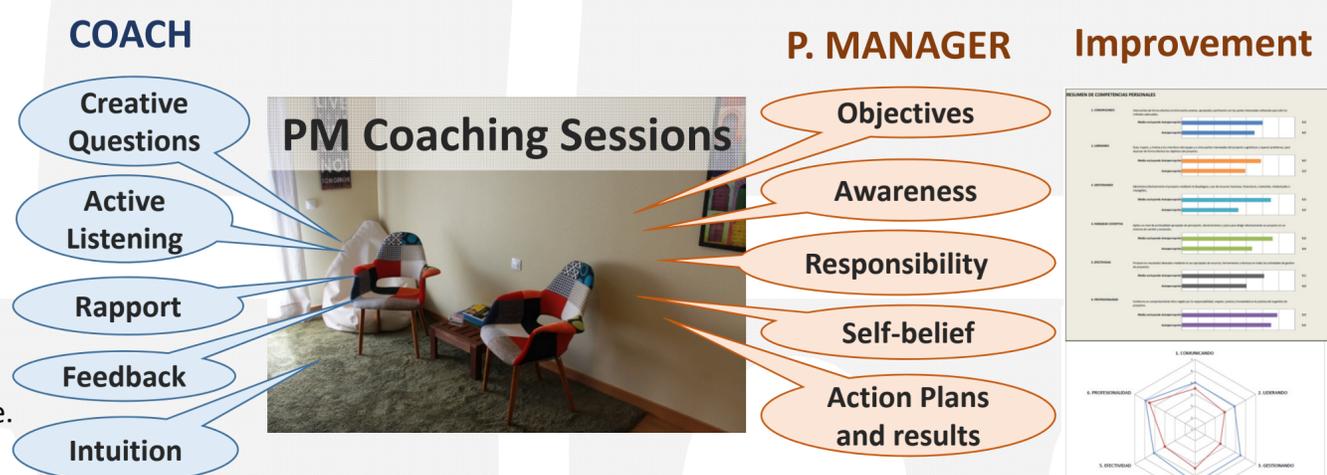Skulmoski, G. J., & Hartman, F. T. (2010). Information systems project manager soft competencies. *Project Management Journal, 41*(1)