Coaching supervisor in development discussions

Case Wärtsilä Energy

Henriikka Nokkala

Master's Thesis

Leadership and People Management

2021

Author Henriikka Nokkala	
Specialisation Leadership and People Management	
Thesis title Coaching supervisor in development discussions	**Number of pages + number of appendices** 54+ 1

This thesis was commissioned by Wärtsilä Energy and the objective of this thesis was to produce information to the Wärtsilä's Human Resource Department of how the supervisors are using coaching in the development discussions and whether and how the supervisors can implement strategy to subordinate's objectives.

Wärtsilä has launched new Leading and Learning program and they wanted to get feedback from the program from the leaders. This thesis is exploring also that what kind of coaching methods the Wärtsilä leaders are using and what did they feel is challenging in development discussions and what support is needed from the Human Resource Department in order to have better quality in the development discussions. The research is also exploring that whether the Wärtsilä leaders get feedback from the subordinates.

This research was conducted as a qualitative case study. Data was collected by interviewing eight Wärtsilä leaders by using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted using Teams.

When conducting the interviews, it became clear that the leaders did not have any problems with implementing the strategy to the subordinate objectives. Strategy and performance targets were easy to define for them. Challenges in the development discussions were creating a concrete development plan for the subordinates and challenges concerning different personalities. The Leading and Learning program helped the leaders to communicate better. It also helped that Wärtsilä had organised coaching sessions and trainings on coaching for the leaders before the actual development discussions. Coaching itself was used by all leaders and the most important thing was listening to what the subordinate has to say and be present in the development discussions.

The leaders needed support from the Human Resource department to align the strategy and the development discussions timing better so that the strategic goals are clear before the actual development discussions are held. More practical coaching training was also needed to learn the coaching teachings in work related environment and with the help of professional coach.

Keywords Coaching, coaching supervisor, development discussions, feedback

Contents

Abbreviations

HR   Human resource

HRM   Human resource management

HRD   Human resource development

1   Introduction

Working life is changing and with these changes there are new kinds of demands targeted towards supervisors, work wellbeing and competence development. Continuously changing working environment presents challenges to the supervisor and requires leaders to think about their working habits and leadership practices. The role of the supervisor is highlighted primarily because the top-down controlling management style no longer fits to any of the expert organizations. (Uutela 2019, 11.) Rasa (2017, 98) states in her research that changes in business, technology, political and social factors have made the need for companies to develop efficient leadership skills and competencies.

This master's thesis was commissioned by Wärtsilä Energy. A new program for Leading and Learning was launched for the whole company where how development discussions will take place. The company wants to study the effectiveness of that new program. Wärtsilä's purpose for this new program is to highlight the importance of individual's career development and the experience of the supervisor in being able to clarify the company's strategy for his / her subordinates and link individual development and corporate strategy together. It would be desirable to take development discussions towards better interaction using coaching dialogue so that individuals understand the company's strategy and thereby develop themselves.

Sitra's Work 2040 study (2017, 24, 37) states that the working culture is changing significantly so that leadership training and coaching will be increasing, and management trainings will emphasize on interaction skills. Supervisor tasks will change to an interaction coach who will coordinate and develop competences. Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 37) points out that coaching professionals believe that the use of coaching will increase as a tool for leadership development in the future. International Coaching Federation research 2020 ICF Global Coaching Study (2020, 3,5) states that the global growth and spread of coaching since 2016 is evident when you compare the responses from the 2020 study. Growing number of individuals and organizations have adopted coaching and coaching has expanded from professionally trained coach practitioners to include managers and human resource professionals who use these competencies in their daily workplace interaction.

Wärtsilä emphasizes the importance of good coaching dialogue between the supervisor and subordinate in the development discussions. The discussions should be moved away from monologue discussion lead by the supervisors towards more dialogical direction where the leaders guide the discussion by using coaching methods. The company highlights the importance of ongoing discussion throughout the year as well. Wink

(2007,10) points out that development discussions should not be ordinary discussions any more in organisations, it does not give the subordinates any clear vision what the expectation of the organisation has towards the subordinate. The ordinary discussions repeat good old thoughts and acts, and they do not create new ideas or acts.

Development discussion form has also been criticized for being just a tick in the box form and that this paper dominates the discussion. (Stonehouse 2013, 339.) According to (Cunningham 2015) there has been debates that if the traditional yearly performance appraisals still support today's business cultures. One of the biggest news was when Accenture announced that it is changing the development discussion and performance review processes and getting rid of approximately 90 percent of what they have done in the past. Accenture announced that they will implement a more fluid system where the subordinates will get feedback on a regular basis from their managers. After the Accenture announcement, Deloitte announced as well that it will be piloting a new program.

Chillakuri (2018, 245-246) states that companies like Accenture, Deloitte and KPMG moved away specifically from the existing performance management tools which were past-performance based and they wanted to focus on new future-based performance management. The new tools focus on positive development of the subordinates and it aims on getting a more engaged and productive workforce. The big companies noticed that the traditional development discussion did not benefit the company anymore, so they changed the system. The focus has shifted also towards individual skills by providing opportunities for the subordinates to develop and nurture their own strengths. The appraisal systems should focus on developing people and coaching them and not pointing out what they have not done.

This thesis topic is important, because it gives valuable feedback to the Human Resource department for them to support the leaders to create better quality in the development discussions. The purpose is to get feedback that how the supervisors are able to create and agree on strategy-based actions during development discussions and what kind of coaching methods they are using during the discussion.

According to Järvinen (2014, 31) it is important to clarify the company strategy to the subordinates through supervisor because then people understand what is expected from them and it gets them excited and motivated to take steps to the same direction that the company is going. This needs good dialogue and communication skills from the supervisor's side. Subordinates can make miracles when they are genuinely motivated and feel that they are appreciated and that their work has a meaning. Wärtsilä is

emphasizing also the supervisor role to guide the subordinates to find information about the company strategy from their Leading and Learning system.

1.1 Objectives

This thesis is researching development discussions, whether the supervisors are implementing the company strategy and if the supervisors are using coaching dialogue to create good communication and quality in the development discussion.

This thesis is also researching supervisors' feedback from the development discussions and what topics in the development discussions are more straightforward, what is challenging and whether the supervisors get feedback to themselves easily.

1.2 Research questions

RQ1: How well are the supervisors able to create and agree on strategy-based actions during development discussions?

RQ2: How are the supervisors using coaching in the development discussion?

RQ3: Which development discussion topics are more straightforward, and which are more challenging to discuss?

RQ4: How does the supervisor get feedback for oneself?

RQ5: What kind of training or other development support do the supervisors need to create better quality in development discussions?

2 Coaching

International Coaching Federation (2021,1) defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 24-25) defines coaching so that a coach helps the person being trained to realise their own potential and, in this way, exceed their own goals which helps their entire organization to succeed. The coachee is the person being coached. Mellanen & Mellanen (2020, 214) points out the same that coaching is not just a method, but a way to meet own team members appreciative and with curiosity believing their potential. Coaching offers the individuals the possibility to realise themselves to invent solutions which makes them more committed to the work.

McCarthy and Milner (2013, 5) define coaching supervisors as being supervisors who coach their team members in a work context. They also state that supervisors who want to implement coaching leadership methods should also be as a coachee themselves, because in this way, they can promote subordinate coaching and their own coaching skills.

International Coaching Federation (2019, 22-23) presents in their report that there are three different coaching types as shown in Figure 1. There are internal professional coach practitioners, external professional coach practitioners and then managers and leaders who are using coaching skills in their work and with their team members. Usually, managers are trained to use coaching skills by Learning and Development department, HR department and internal coaching practitioners. The results chapter focuses on leaders who are us coaching skills and the topic is discussed in more detail in subsection 5.5 where the results are reviewed.

External coach practioners	Internal coach practioners	Mangers /leaders using coaching skills

Figure 1. Three different coaching types (adapted from International Coaching Federation (2019)

Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 36-37) states that in general, it seems that it is the top management and middle management who use individual coaching. At the organizational level, the effectiveness of coaching remains low if the proportion of coaches is small and if the focus is only on the top management. Coaching approach to managerial work is often

used by only few individuals and they are often naturally characterized by a coaching approach to people leadership and interaction. The number of coaches within the organization also seems to grow even more in the future. The challenge is that "Business Coach" and "Leadership Coach" titles, for example, are not protected and can be used by anyone.

2.1 Coaching as a development tool

According to Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 53-54) coaching is an excellent development tool, when wanting to:

- Increase motivation
- Increase responsibility
- Support self-management, self-reliance and decision-making
- Support leadership skills and understanding of one's own strengths.
- Support the achievement of goals in accordance with their own values
- Streamline routines and be more alert and creative
- Brighten future goals

The main principle of coaching is to see the coachee as a skilled and smart learner who already has all the resources to achieve the objectives. The coach has to believe in the resources of the coachee because it is an important way to build trust between the parties. Important purpose of coaching is also to increase the self-knowledge of the coachee and to promote the awareness of his / her ways of working and raise the knowledge of different possibilities. Insights and learning from them are important during the coaching process and should be in line with the coachee's own values and other motivational factors. Coachee, for example, may realize that the goals set for them, do not meet his or her own needs. By far the most important technique in coaching are the powerful questions, which is discussed more in subsection 2.3.2 (Carlsson & Forssell 2017, 62-63, 73, 75, 96.)

2.2 Coaching supervisor

Uutela (2019, 6) states in her research that coaching as a management system improves the fluency of daily work, enables learning at work, provides constructive feedback, strengthens resources of well-being at work, improves communality and interaction at work and builds trust among the subordinates. McCarthy & Milner (2013, 9) points out that trust and mutual respect are the most important part of the supervisor subordinate interaction, and good interaction is an essential part for achieving success in the coaching process.

5

Kesti (2014, 138) states that in the organisation where developing subordinate skills is seen as an asset, a supervisor with coaching and good interaction abilities brings the best result. Supervisors with positive and encouraging leadership skills create the best conditions for knowledge sharing in the company. Supervisors should have the qualities of a coaching and interactive supervisor, but it always depends on the team how the supervisor's skills are developed and what abilities should be emphasized and developed. A supervisor always needs the help from the subordinates to know what kind of development and training he / she needs.

According to Ristikangas & Grünbaum (2014, 26) coaching supervisor has three different roles that they can use (Figure 2). Traditionally, managerial work has been described through the roles of people management and leadership, now the third dimension is coaching. Supervisor roles are emphasized differently depending on the current situation. In the role of the manager, the supervisor is responsible for the operation of processes and legal obligations. In the role of leader, the supervisor shows the direction where the team is heading and makes sure that subordinates are moving in the same direction. In the role of coach, the goal of the supervisor is to find the subordinates strengths and potential resources. An important task for a coach is to listen and ask and to be present.

Coaching Leadership

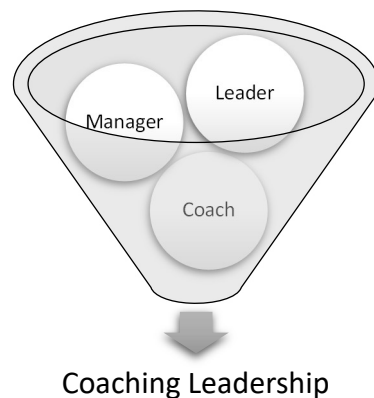Figure 2. Three roles of the coaching supervisor (adapted from Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2014, 26)

McCarthy & Milner (2013, 10) states that sometimes coaching managers can experience some conflict in their role, because sometimes the relationship with the coachee will shift. The coaching managers may have to adopt the role of teacher, trainer, mentor or consultant depending on the current company situation.

Kultalahti points out in her research (2015, 77) that the subordinates want the supervisors to take responsibility for coaching and ensure that they remain on top of the supervisor's tasks. In order this to happen supervisors need time and leadership skills to succeed in their role.

Grant & Hartley (2013, 110) points out that the supervisor must take the lead and act the same way that they would want the others to act. If supervisor starts acting impolite, the subordinates can starts acting the same way or even turn on against the supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for setting an example to others. Uutela (2019, 129,135) reports the same, that an important part of supervisor role as a coach is to lead by example to the subordinates and constantly develop oneself. Her research also states that in interactive situations, there was also an opportunity to promote positive attitudes, in which case also the supervisor's own example appeared to be relevant. The open and conversational atmosphere that coaching supervisors created supported a communal learning attitude.

The supervisor should accept the role as a coach, they should pay attention to the way they listen to others and they should recognize the personal strengths of others at work. They should find ways to build and increase trust among the team. (Grant & Hartley 2013, 11.) Trust towards supervisors is created when supervisors stick to what they agree on, listen, be direct and present (Alahuhta 2015, 73). Usually, people perform better and teams are more productive when people know and trust each other. This social capital can be vital to an organization to create success and increase people's well-being. In busy and stressful working environments supervisors should pause and recharge so that they can put emphasis on having positive interactions with subordinates at work. Subordinates are less likely to be able to let the supervisor to act as a coach if they do not have time to be present in the moment. (Grant & Hartley 2013, 110–111.)

McCarthy & Milner (2013, 5,6,14.) states that for to managers to be able to coach their subordinates, they need coaching training to understand how to use coaching in their role and in the organization. If the managers have been coachees themselves and have had a positive experience, they are more likely that they want to develop their own coaching skills. Continuously training is only one step, the organizational culture should support coaching to succeed in it. Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 36) states also that when supervisors are being supported in coaching by training them, they can internalize the coaching role and tools better and improve themselves. Juuti (2016, 59) points out that in order for the supervisors to develop themselves as leaders they need coaching and personal support. Improving leadership skills improves the interaction between supervisor

and subordinates, which brings better team atmosphere, and even personnel productivity increases.

According to Uutela's (2019) research coaching should be extended to the whole company. McCarthy and Milner (2013) states that coaching methods should be used in all leadership levels, because it strengthens the need to develop the coaching skills, for example, from the supervisor's point of view. Järvinen (2014, 137,144) reminds that when coaching methods are implemented for the leadership, people need to know how the new mode of operation works. At its best, coaching would be the core of the operation culture which would make coaching as a natural part of everyday communication.

McCarthy & Milner (2013, 8) states the supervisor can help their subordinates gain clarity about their own motivation, aspirations, and commitment to change. According to Aaltonen, Ahonen & Sahimaa (2020, 188-189) internal motivation means that subordinates are truly interested on their work tasks and want to achieve the best results in them. Internal motivation relates to genuine interest towards the tasks and possibilities to make own choices. When a person has inner motivation, they feel that the work itself is enjoyable and valuable that the person wants to do the job. When managing internal motivation, the key idea is to understand what ignites the person being led. Coaching feeds the internal motivation and supervisors give responsibility to the subordinate and the key word here is trust. The subordinates' objectives are set in common understanding and the supervisor does not control or micromanage and the follow up of the objectives is defined together.

A coaching supervisor can help their team members to understand how the personal objectives align or do not align with the organizational targets. The supervisor can visualize, give options and feedback on how to achieve the organizational objectives. A good way to clarify and align organizational and unit objectives is to use target orientated and solution focused approach. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 8.)

The solution focused thinking has influenced how the supervisor is expected to communicate with his / her subordinates. Solution focused thinking is also a fundamental idea in coaching. Solution focused mindset emphasizes finding solutions and it tries to change the thinking from the problem to future and how to achieve the objectives and what resources is needed for solving the problem. (Juuti 2016, 67-68.)

The focus on solutions emphasizes the search for solutions and seeks to reverse the reflection on problems trying to achieve future goals and find resources on how to find solutions. In solution focus, it is thought that the person who experiences the problem is

not the problem, but the problem is the problem. In this way, when the person and the problem are separated, the burden of guilt is avoided. (Juuti 2016, 67-68.)

2.3 Supervisor building dialogue

Dialogue differentiates from normal discussion because dialogue requires deep and mutual listening skills and equal approach. Dialogue is more than just a normal conversation. It is a creative process of constructing and questioning familiar patterns and reaching for something new. Positive emotional experiences and successful interaction situations create the basis for good and appreciative dialogue. (Kulmanen 2019, 32.) The idea of dialogue is that both subordinate and supervisor listen, and same time appreciates what the other person is saying. Equal relationship will happen when both bring their thoughts directly visible to one another. (Kupias 2016, 147.)

The supervisor's role in the work community is to maintain and improve good dialogue. Dialogue is more than discussion, because the facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice and posture affects as whole to the content of the interaction and the participants. (Kulmanen 2019, 29, 33.) Dialogue requires trust and at the same time it also strengthens it (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 117).

Genuine dialogue between the subordinate and supervisor needs equal relationship that values the other person's difference and independence. If a supervisor has a lot of power, it is unlikely that there will be any genuine dialogue. Genuine dialogue requires continuous learning of discussion skills. (Autio, Juuti, & Wink 2010, 23.) Open dialogue is a key tool when the supervisor wants to build genuine trust with the members of the team. If a supervisor treats his / her subordinates fairly and respectfully, then subordinates are more likely to trust the supervisor as well. (Juuti 2016, 25.)

In coaching leadership, the attention focuses on the other person through dialogue and interaction. The attitudes and feelings of both parties either improves the dialogue or prevents the dialogue to happen. The coaching leader encounters the other people as humans and in a genuine dialogue the individual feels heard and understood. When the coaching leader agrees to the dialogue and focuses to the other person, he / she learns to see and hear new things and perspectives from others and new insights will arise. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas 2017, 86, 104.)

2.3.1 Listening

Ability to listen is one of the most important qualities of a supervisor who wants to use coaching method in leadership (Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2016, 44). According to Autio et

al. (2010, 23) when trying to understand the other person, listening is the key skill. A good listener will listen without critics, listen more than talk and reflect more than react directly. The idea is to experience the discussion situations as a possibility to deepen one's own understanding about the topic.

Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 81-82) points out three degrees of listening. First-degree of listening is a state of mind where the coach focuses entirely on what the coachee is saying. Secondary listening focuses not only on words but also on body language. Carlsson & Forssell (2017) states that over 90% of interactions are nonverbal communication. The skilled coach also listens to quiet moments, hesitation in voice, enthusiasm and other small gestures. The coach is often so focused on the coachee that he / she also hears what the coachee is not saying or can at least ask about it. Third level of listening is described as intuitive listening and is a skill for many to learn. Body language plays a key role here.

The authentic listening is expected in coaching and it creates both trust and authenticity. Listening is the best part of coaching because the ideas are valued and heard at the deep level. In managerial coaching the supervisor sees how the other person sees the facts and feels about them and notice how things are said and what kind of body language the other person is using. Supervisor strengthens the positive relationship by organising time and giving attention to help to create a positive relationship with the subordinates. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 7.)

The task of the leader is to listen actively and be present in the situation. Even though the coach can have their own solution to the situation on hand, their task is to listen what the other person has to say. The main task is to listen and see the person who is talking, so the person feels themselves heard, seen and encountered. (Järvinen 2014, 144.)

2.3.2 Asking questions

Questions are at the heart of the coaching dialogue. If the supervisor offers an answer before the person is heard, the person may resist the solution. It takes supervisor skills to be able to ask questions that introduce the subordinate's own thinking and makes the subordinate reflect on their own objectives and intentions. Coaching supervisors understand the team members' thoughts and motivation and focuses more on behavior, feedback, and objectives. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 7.)

The important tool for coaching is listening to what the other person says, open questions that are timed to the right moment and keeping clear picture about the objectives. Open

questions mean questions that support the coachee to think about the topic on a wider scale and from different perspectives. (Järvinen 2014, 161, 166.) Questions can help a person gain new insights. Technically, questions can be either open or closed ones. Closed questions can only be answered with the words yes or no so only using one word. The closed questions are can be for example: Are you happy with your current work task? Do you trust him? Closed questions work in situations where the supervisor, for example, wants to test a subordinate's state of mind for example: Are you willing to take a risk? (Ristikangas & Ristikangas 2017, 111.)

When answering a closed question, the coachee does not have to reflect on his / her own emotions or experiences to find the answer. In this case, many interesting perspectives are left out of the discussions. Closed question example: Do you feel like something is not working on Project X? This can only be answered for example answer yes and then the thought process of the coachee ends and he does not have to think about the subject more widely. An open question option would be for example: What do you think could be developed in the project? Coaches should avoid negative question form for example: What does not work in this project? Coaching wants to look to the future to find the solution, so coaches should use the positive question model always. (Carlsson & Forssell 2017, 98.)

Open-ended questions create space for new ideas and creates new kind of thinking. Question words: what, how, why, when, how, to whom and who are all open. The questions are usually short and focus on the right place. The purpose of the questions is to make a person realize something new or see another perspective. Ristikangas & Ristikangas (2017, 112.) (Mellanen & Mellanen 2020, 217-218) say that good questions focus on the future or the present and not the past, they should not be leading the other person and good questions cannot be answered with a yes or no. The question word "why" should also be avoided, as it is often difficult to answer. The same question should be formulated as a what-question. Why does this feel difficult? → What feels challenging here? When the coach has the right questions, then the principle is that the coachee has the necessary answers.

According Ristikangas & Ristikangas (2017, 112-113) the basic question types are:

3   Descriptive questions: What is it about?
4   Contextual questions: What is due to something?
5   Reflective questions: In-depth reflection
6   Strategic questions: Future objectives

Descriptive questions help to clarify a situation or problem and find out what it is about, for example: How would you describe your current situation? How satisfied you are with your own job description? Contextual questions aim to help subordinates find a cause-and-effect relationship and find out what is causing something, for example: Where have you previously experienced success? What did you do then? Reflective questions guide thoughts to deeper reflection. The purpose of the questions is to encourage the subordinate to self-examine and they may raise the need for change, for example: What does it mean to you? Strategic questions guide the activities that link to the future and potential objectives. What do you need to do to get closer to your objectives? Whose support do you need? (Ristikangas & Ristikangas 2017, 112-113.)

One of the main goals of coaching should be to help the coachee to look to the future instead of living in the past and do things how they have always been done. For example, if coach has been working on project management skills the coach should not ask for example: Tell me more that how did the meeting go? The coach should ask, for example: How did the meeting go in relation to your goals? In this way, the question is connected to the future and it makes the coachee reflect on its own objectives and how he / she could achieve them. (Carlsson & Forssell 2017, 98.)

6.1   Coaching tools

Coaching skills can be trained by using different coaching tools for example using GROW and SMART models presented below.

GROW model (Figure 3) comes from words: goal, reality, opportunities and will. This simple model can be adapted to multiple situations in leading, meetings or even customer negotiation. Goal seeks to clarify the purpose of a discussion or action with questions like: How can I help? What do you expect from this discussion? The Reality phase helps a person figure out what is important in achieving the goal. Questions are for example: What is relevant in this situation? What things affect the situation? Opportunities explores what different opportunities there are available. The questions can be for example: What are the alternative solutions you currently see? What help or support do you need? The Will stage concludes the discussion and helps the coach to think of solutions. Questions can be for example: What are you going to do next? What would say you succeeded? (Järvinen 2014, 164.)

Goal	Reality	Opportunities	Will

Figure 3. GROW model (adapted from Järvinen 2014, 164)

SMART (Figure 4) is another coaching tool which can also be used to deepen the GROW model's goal phase. SMART comes from words: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. (Järvinen 2014, 165.) Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 149) points out the same that SMART model can be used to ensure the effectiveness and achievability of the goal. They also state that the words used in the abbreviation may change in different sources.

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-Bound

Figure 4. SMART model (adapted from Järvinen 2014, 165)

According to Järvinen (2014, 165) specific means that the goal must be precisely defined. Example questions can be: What exactly do you want to accomplish? Which things fall outside this goal? Measurable means that the goal must be measurable, and everyone knows when the goal has been achieved. Questions can be: How do we know that we have succeeded? What does this mean in practice? Achievable means that a good goal is one that is possible to achieve. Question can be: How possible it is to achieve the goals? Relevant means that the goal leads a person to wanted direction. Questions can be: How important the goal is to you? How it feels to succeed in this goal?

6.2 Feedback

Mellanen & Mellanen (2020, 273-275) states that feedback has a significant impact on learning. Without feedback, learning remains self-reflection and, for example, a person needs feedback from a more experienced person on performance in order to steer that person in the right direction. In the worst case, a person only receives feedback in development discussions once a year. A person needs feedback in order to learn and move forward. The most essential thing about feedback is that it can be given by anyone

and at any time. The subordinate must also dare to give feedback to his or her own supervisor.

According to Uutela's research (2019, 152) giving feedback should be part of everyday working life in all organisational levels. Her research results show that more information and training is needed on how to give and receive feedback. Practising in practise would also help that it would become a natural part of daily routines in organisation. Her research also points out that everyone in the organisation should give feedback, not just the supervisor. Mellanen & Mellanen points out (2020, 205) that feedback is one of the cornerstones if an organisation wants to be competitive and it is a key tool for building trust. The purpose of feedback is to help another person to perform better and tell them how much their performance is being valued.

Kupias & Peltola & Pirinen (2014) states that when a supervisor can build relationships with subordinates where trust is mutual, it helps to build an open atmosphere on giving and receiving feedback. Subordinates can then then trust the feedback given by the supervisor and they are able to receive negative feedback as well. Ristikangas & Ristikangas (2017, 273) states that in coaching, giving and receiving feedback is seen as an opportunity and not a threat and supervisors should set an example on how to give and receive it.

Ristikangas & Grünbaum (2014, 92) states feedback can either strengthen or weaken interaction, which causes that the giving and receiving feedback has risks but great number of possibilities as well. The basic rule is that one should give positive feedback three times more than critical feedback (3:1) to increase the positive and secure atmosphere (Figure 5).

Giving feedback

Positive feedback   3:1   Constructive feedback

Feedback culture

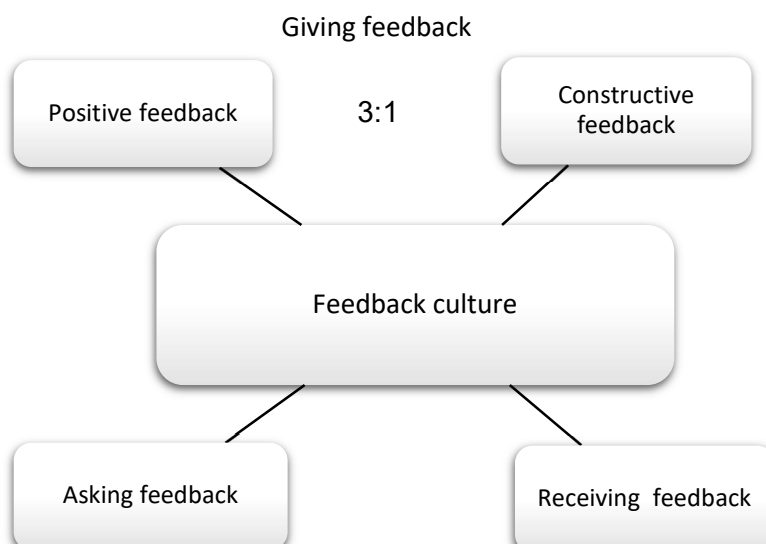Asking feedback   Receiving feedback

Figure 5. Feedback culture (adapted from Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2014, 92)

A supervisor's ability to give feedback through coaching should be developed and the supervisors themselves should also be coached by their own supervisor, because the supervisor who is being coached himself can give feedback by using coaching methods. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 9.)

A coaching manager has on-going opportunity to give feedback continuously to the subordinate. Supervisors who have experience being coached themselves know how to give effective feedback themselves. Coaching supervisors help the subordinates to understand how they understand themselves and how others see their actions by giving them feedback. A future an target orientated viewpoint is a useful way for the coaching supervisors to highlight the strengths of the team members and guide them how they can work even better in the future. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 6, 9.)

People are different, so feedback should always be tailored to whom it is given to. A coaching supervisor knows how to adjust the feedback according to whom he / she is giving it to. For others, feedback should be given gently and for the others directly and purposefully. Feedback should always be focused on what the other person is doing and not on the person themselves, because a personal criticism can damage the relationship. Feedback is a condition for the development and growth of an organisation. The supervisor should be able to discuss about difficult things because the problems will only increase if situations is not addressed and then no one can learn about these situations. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas 2017, 242, 246- 248.)

A supervisor can reinforce competence by clarifying the job description and setting objectives together with the subordinate, as well as increasing feedback from work to provide an experience of development. (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi 2017, 90.) Ruoranen's (2011, 69) research shows that the feedback has an impact on the success of communicating the strategy successfully to the subordinate.

According to Aarnikoivu (2016, 171) the general opinion among subordinates is that they feel that they do not receive sufficient feedback from their supervisors. This may also be due to the possibility that the subordinates do not acknowledge the situations when they are getting feedback from the supervisors.

6.2.1 Positive feedback

Positive feedback is the most effective way to develop yourself and your organisation (Mellanen & Mellanen 2020, 207.) But if a supervisor gives continuously only positive

feedback, it can soon suffer from inflation. Supervisor feedback can be an excellent incentive when it is focused on the things where subordinate has performed well. When given correctly, feedback from a supervisor serves as an excellent incentive and feedback should focus on issues where the subordinate has performed well. (Juuti 2016, 42.)

Positive feedback can also be focused on something else that the subordinate's performance for example the subordinate's attitude or motivation are good reasons to give positive feedback to support the subordinate. It is important to remember to give more positive than negative feedback to maintain a positive and safe atmosphere in the work community. (Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2016, 93.)

It can be difficult to give positive feedback if one has not learned how to do so and it can take years to learn but it is possible to practise. A person needs systematic practise and at some point, it will become easier. As Figure 6 shows a person should be fast and give positive feedback as soon as possible. It could be even given through phone, text message or email, but the speed is they key here. Positive feedback could be given spontaneously, and it can take only a minute to give positive feedback. Practise should be part of giving positive feedback, so it becomes a habit and easier. Good feedback is clear and given kindly to the receiver. Ristikangas & Grünbaum (2016, 94-96.)
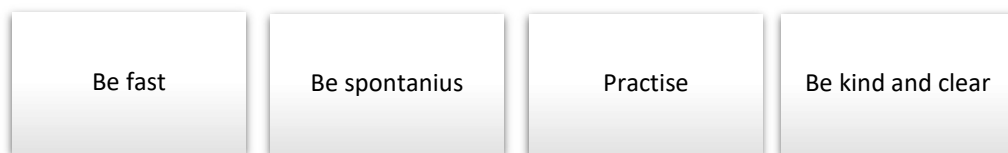
Be fast	Be spontanius	Practise	Be kind and clear

Figure 6. Giving positive feedback (adapted from Ristikangas & Grünbaum (2016, 94-95)

6.2.2 Constructive feedback

Learning and change often require feedback. Learning something new usually needs constructive feedback for a person to get rid of old habits and unwanted activities. When the coaching supervisor gives feedback to his / her subordinate, it enables learning and change. It is the duty of the coaching supervisor and at the same time other members of the work communities to give critical feedback because it increases the development. (Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2016, 98.) A supervisor who does not ever provide critical feedback to the subordinates does not support the development of the subordinates. (Aarnikoivu 2016,168.)

Constructive feedback needs an atmosphere of trust and appreciation. If they do not exist, then constructive feedback may cause a stress reaction and awake the protective instincts, because constructive feedback threatens our natural need to be accepted and included in a group. If we give only negative feedback, then the recipient of the feedback will take a defensive stance, even if the feedback would be constructive. (Mellanen & Mellanen 2020, 206.)

Communities could even reward those who can give constructive feedback. It demands courage, controlling one's own feelings, determination and listening skills. Giving constructive feedback is never a one-sided announcement, it is always a possibility to learn something new. Learning requires that feedback is given correctly to a person. Feedback should be always focus on what the other person is doing and not on the person themselves, because a personal criticism can damage the relationship. Feedback is a condition for the development and growth of an organisation. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas 2017, 99, 246.)

As shown in Figure 7, before giving critical feedback, a person should always be prepared, think what they want to say and set up a clear goal for the result. The feedback should always be focused directly to the person to whom you want to give the feedback. It should be given as soon as possible, and not wait because then it loses its power. The feedback should always be focused on the behaviour and not to the person. The person giving the constructive feedback should always avoid accusations and using guilty words like always, not because, but and you. The person giving the feedback should follow through and even ask the receiver to repeat the giving feedback so that they understand the received feedback. The feedback should always be given on only about those things that the other person can influence. The aim of the critical debate is to find a way for positive solution. (Ristikangas & Grünbaum 2016, 100.)
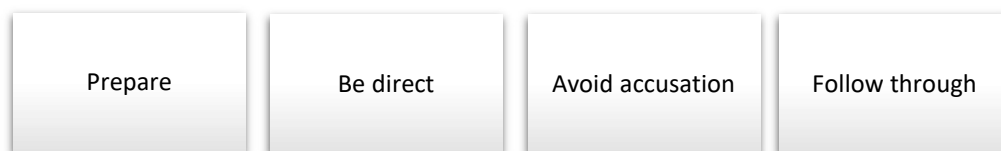
| Prepare | Be direct | Avoid accusation | Follow through |

Figure 7. Memory list of giving critical feedback (adapted from Ristikangas & Grünbaum (2016, 100)

6.2.3 Asking feedback

Supervisors who ask feedback usually have coaching leadership skills because asking feedback requires courage, self-confidence, and a desire to learn something new. When a supervisor makes it a habit to ask feedback, they are at the same time building a new approach where feedback is a natural part of collaboration. It is important that the supervisor can receive the feedback given, whether it be positive or constructive feedback. Supervisors should understand that positive feedback strengthens and then one can learn from constructive feedback. In insecure work environments usually, feedback is not given because the atmosphere is dominated by fear of indifference. (Ristikangas and Grünbaum 2016, 92.)

Ristikangas and Grünbaum (2016, 103) points out that even supervisors need positive feedback to keep their positive and energetic attitude and to develop themselves. If they do not get feedback automatically to themselves, supervisors should learn how to ask that. Getting feedback as a coaching supervisor should not be a threat it should be the opportunity to develop oneself as leader. The more easily a supervisor can target his / her request, the easier it is to get feedback exactly on those things where they want to develop themselves. Uutela's research (2019, 132 -133) points out that supervisors and management should act as an example and proactively put their own actions under evaluation as well and ask feedback from it.

3 Development discussions

Development discussions are regular, pre-arranged and planned confidential one to one discussion between supervisor and subordinate. In the development discussions the subordinate's competence and professional skills are developed to be suitable for the organization. The development discussion focuses on the subordinate's performance at work, professional growth and cooperation between the supervisor and the subordinate. The role of the supervisor in supporting the subordinate's personal growth is significant. Management can also be evaluated based on how well the subordinates have kept up with the growth development of the organization. (Autio et al., 2010, 29). The development discussion evaluates the past year, defines new goals for the next year and examines the subordinate's development needs (Aarnikoivu 2016, 89).

Development discussions are an excellent discussion forum for sharing the organization's strategy for subordinates. Development discussions are also related to HR management, for example, competence management, performance management, work well-being management and rewards systems. High-quality and high-level development discussions can help to create real leadership in the company. True leadership only emerges when subordinates are committed to the company goals and take responsibility for themselves to accomplish those goals. The supervisor's example is important so that he or she can guide the subordinates to act independently and gives them possibility to reach those goals. (Autio et al., 2010, 69.)

To create successful development discussion there should be good preparations before the discussions, they should be kept confidential between the participants and follow-up after the discussions is needed. Development discussions are a tool for personal and professional growth, setting targets and a way to see how the person is doing in personal and working life. (Aura & Ahonen 2016, 137).

The development discussion should be kept between supervisor and subordinate. Good preparations, possible pre-tasks before the development discussions help to gain more advantage of them. The development discussion cannot be replaced by any technological solutions, they should be always one-to-one discussion in a peaceful place and there should be enough time for them. (Aura & Ahonen 2016, 136). According Ruoranen's research (2011, 94) year-round evaluation discussions do not substitute development discussions.

Development discussions are important because they can be used to develop and motivate staff. The development discussion goes through what has happened during the year and what they should look to in the future and whether the person needs some training, for example, in order to achieve the goals. (Stonehouse 2013, 338.) According to Ruoranen (2011, 26) successful development discussion is seen as one of the forums for communicating the company strategy to subordinates.

3.1 Implementing strategy

According to Alahuhta (2015, 81) leading people requires understanding what is important to the other. The better you get to know yourself, the better you can do that. Through self-knowledge, a supervisor learns what kind of supervisor he / she is and by what means he / she can motivate people. Juuti (2016, 51) points out that if the organization wants to achieve good results, thinking, and interaction in demanding tasks, supervisors should step down from hierarchical leadership and get the subordinates work independently and free from micromanagement. Rasa (2017, 101) states that the main task of a good leader is to identify values and goals, modify vision and strategy and to initiate organizational changes. In order to implement the company strategy successfully to an organisation the organisations need to develop the competencies of managers in various levels. Skills required for successful leadership includes future orientated mindset, setting goals, good communication, promoting values, the ability to gain acceptance towards a future vision, its planning and implementation.

The challenge for a supervisor is to enable the subordinates to have the right skills and motivation to achieve the set objectives. A supervisor has to have good leadership skills own their own to get everyone work together, because no one can be forced to act as the supervisor would like them to behave. A good supervisor understands that people think and behave differently and learns how to listen to them and find ways to achieve the company goals using people's difference as an asset. (Autio et al., 2010, 66.)

When the work community works well, the supervisor becomes more of a servant of the work community. Serving leadership means that the supervisor begins to serve the work community and the people working there. When creating an employment relationship, the supervisor must take a step or a couple lower than the other members of the work community, which requires a good self-esteem from the supervisor. Many supervisors may protect their egos and position themselves precisely above others to protect themselves. The key task for supervisor as a servant involves giving meaningfulness and purpose of work to the entire team. (Juuti 2016, 54.)

The role of the supervisor is to support and help his / her team members to experience their work, values and objectives associated with the work community in a positive way. The supervisor supports subordinates and strengthens successful experiences, as well as provides support in difficult situations. A supervisor needs members of his / her team more than they need a supervisor because the supervisor alone cannot achieve the results expected by the organization. (Juuti 2016, 21, 41.)

The supervisor's task is to act as a link and combine the corporate strategy and the individual's personal development strategy together (Järvinen, 2014, 60). A supervisor should be able to clarify the organization's strategy for members of the work community and the supervisor could also involve members of the team to think of ways of how the organization's strategic goals could be achieved. (Juuti 2016, 41.)

The supervisor must understand the strategy of the organization or at least the strategy for which he / she is responsible for. It is also the supervisor's task to share this strategy with his / her subordinates. When implementing the strategy successfully to an organization, it is important that the supervisor understands the mission of the organization, which he / she is leading and can share it among the subordinates so that they experience a sense of importance in their work. When a supervisor understands the importance of existence of the organization and the strategy and can share those into smaller pieces and responsibilities with those they manage, it is more likely that the strategy is implemented successfully to the organization. (Järvinen 2014, 220.)

The supervisor has important role to get the subordinate to understand the meaning of their work to an organization so that the strategy, doing, and individual growth combine in an individual's work. This makes the subordinate to work towards achieving the strategy when they understand that their actions have meaning to help the organization to achieve the strategic goals addressed to it. (Järvinen 2014, 220.) Alahuhta (2015, 81) points out that it is important to practice speaking and telling a strategy in such a way that people get excited about it.

3.2   Setting objectives and clear direction

According to Alahuhta (Figure 8) when the direction and objectives are clearly defined, it will give the whole personnel the possibility to work towards achieving them. It is important that the whole organisation and not just the executive team knows where the company is heading so that they do not have to make assumptions on their own. Openness and straightforwardness are good principles for all human interaction. The larger the organization, the more determined and visible the directness must be so that the people

do not start to be pursuing their own interest at the expense of common goals. Focus means that whatever you do, do it well. Simplicity and clarity mean that the company vision and strategy should be simple and clearly defined so that everyone can understand their own role and responsibility in the organization. Timing is everything when it comes to distinguish the winners from the others.

Openness and stragithforwardness	Clear direction and objectives	Focus
Simplicity	Timing	

Figure 8. They key principles of leadership (adapted from Alahuhta 2015, 63)

The mission of a supervisor is to get people to work towards the objectives that have been set for them. This requires that the supervisor is interested in matters that fall within their area of responsibility and must be interested in the people who work on the team. The supervisor must be able to encourage subordinates and develop the activities of the area of responsibility so that the goals and objectives can be achieved. (Juuti 2016, 14, 41.)

 An important role of the supervisor is to regularly clarify the goals and objectives of the group. The clearer the common goal is to the members of the group the more they are willing to work for achieving it. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to explain this goal to the group members. (Kupias,Peltola& Pirinen, 2014.)

According to Grant & Hartley (2013, 111) objective setting is important and to make the objectives useful it is important that they are specific. Objectives should be realistic and possible to achieve. They should be flexible, and they should be checked from time to time. They cannot limit a person's skills to adapt new situation or changing demands. A united vision should always be clear in the community.

A supervisor's mission is to build good interaction, team spirit and each of the team members should be treated fairly. The supervisor should know the subordinate's strengths and capabilities so that they can support their development. The supervisor's task is to define and divide the work tasks and agree objectives with the subordinate. Every subordinate should find their work meaningful for them and their own objectives as a part of bigger company goal. (Kesti 2014, 138.)

Aaltonen et al. (2020, 55-57) states that in the future people are searching more and more for the meaning of their work. A person who finds their own work meaningful is more committed, healthier, happier and more efficient. The team doing meaningful work knows the goals of their work in the bigger picture and the objectives they need to achieve.

3.3 Role of supervisor and purpose of the discussions

From a supervisor's point of view, development discussions have multiple benefits. The supervisor gets to know the subordinates and what are their key competences, the supervisor gets the possibility to get new creative ideas, and the possibility to give positive feedback or address unwanted behavior. (Autio et al., 2010, 42.) The development discussions offer opportunities if they become a genuine dialogue between the supervisor and subordinate. In this case it is possible that this genuine dialogue will spread to other interactions situations in work community. (Auto et al., 2010, 21-22.)

The role of the supervisor in the discussion is always to listen and be present and encourage the subordinates. The atmosphere should be always positive even when there would be challenging topics to discuss. The supervisor should have good skills to keep the development discussions. They should have ability to listen, understand and interpret the personal issues that the subordinate has. It is rare that any supervisor can do this naturally, so supervisor training and coaching is a key element of preparing for the development discussions. (Aura & Ahonen 2016, 137-138.) Kultalahti points out (2015, 95) the same that development discussions can be smoothly facilitated, and they can be used as a proper tool for actual development if the supervisor has the right skills to hold them to their subordinates.

Development discussions give supervisors the opportunity to encourage and motivate subordinates. They are good place for supervisors to do mapping of subordinate resources. Open interaction in the development discussion allows feedback on both sides. (Uutela 2019,31.) Development discussions are helpful when they are well managed, regular and the main focus should be on their high quality. The good quality in the development discussions can be achieved when both parties can express ideas openly and freely and the joint objectives are agreed and achieved the objectives will be followed. However, development discussions are not a substitute for daily discussion with members of the work community. (Juuti 2016, 43.)

One the most important tasks of the development discussion is to create meaning for the work done by the subordinate. Creating meaning for everyone helps the company to achieve its goals. The supervisor's task is to make it clear to subordinates that they can

influence the achievement of the organization's goals through their own work. (Aarnikoivu 2016, 92.)

An important part of development discussions is the setting of objectives. The supervisor must work together with the subordinate to set these objectives jointly and not so that the supervisor sets the objectives for the subordinate. (Stonehouse 2013, 339.) The development discussion is a tool for target setting, personal growth, and development of well-being at work. The development discussions create a base for other discussions as well. (Aura & Ahonen 2016, 137.)

Development discussions are a place for the supervisor to implement mission, vision, strategy, and company values to subordinates. And a place where the supervisor can get feedback as well. A genuinely useful development discussion requires an effort to give and receive feedback from both the subordinate and the supervisor. (Aarnikoivu 2016, 90-91.) The Ruoranen study (2011, 26) shows that development discussions can transmit the strategy to subordinates by good interaction between the supervisor and subordinate.

Based on the research, development discussions are a key tool in the supervisor's and subordinate's construction of co-operation that promotes well-being at work and work-based learning and development. Development discussions are pointless if the supervisor does not recognize or pay attention to the subordinate's strengths, development needs or gaps in skills. However, increasing interaction is not always easy and it requires conscious and long-term work. The research points out that not all the supervisors have already existing coaching skills, and it would be important to pay attention to the coaching skills of supervisors and their development needs. (Uutela 2019, 145.)

Aura & Ahonen (2016, 136) states that the development discussions should be kept regularly to gain advantage of them. Discussions should be confidential, good preparation before the actual discussion is important and then the key to taking advantage of them is to follow up after the discussion. Based on their research, development discussions are key tool for increasing well-being at work.

3.4   HR supporting the supervisors

Nehles, Van Riemsdijk & Kees Looise (2013, 2) points out that the HR department is responsible for facilitating the needs they define in their HRM practices to supervisors by providing them enough training as well as relevant procedures and policies to successfully fulfill their managerial role. Kultalahti (2015, 74, 77) states the same that HR functions have a key role in providing trainings, tools, and time for supervisors. Supervisors should be trained well because they implement the HRM practices in everyday management.

HRM is a relevant department because supervisors need help from them to perform well in their managerial duties. Supervisors may need training for example in HR systems, processes, or the challenging interaction situations with their subordinates. Supervisors should receive ongoing training to improve their skills continuously. To succeed well in their managerial role, supervisors need tools to perform their tasks. These tools can be related to IT systems or then it can be something like well-planned procedure and functional development discussion form which guides the supervisors to hold the development discussions. HRM is responsible for giving these tools to the supervisors. (Kultalahti 2015, 95.)

Lindholm & Salminen (2014, 221-223) states that supervisor skills can be improved for example by giving supervisors coaching training from the HR department. In case where the company does not have capacity itself or skills to do the coaching, then the company can outsource external experts to come and organise the trainings. External coaching should be given to the entire organisation from the management team to supervisors and subordinates. This will ensure an increase in expertise in this area throughout the whole chain. In coaching often, the importance of subordinate is ignored.

3.5   Why setting the objectives is difficult?

Grant and Harley (2013) highlight in their research that setting objectives is vital and for them to be useful they need to be specific, otherwise measuring them is difficult. Often objectives are intendent to be specific, measurable, attractive, realistic and time framed. If they are made too restrictive it decreases the ability to adapt to new situations or changing demands. There should be flexibility and from time-to-time, review and revision of the objectives. (Grant & Hartley 2013, 111.)

There are a lot of problems associated with setting the subordinate objectives. For example, one reason for failure may be if the objectives set for the subordinate are merely the objectives set for the organization and they are not at all the subordinate's own objectives they want to achieve. It would be important that the objectives would combine both the organisational and personal goals of the subordinate. This would allow the subordinate to experience the objectives as their own and make them strive for them. (Autio et al., 2010, 70.)

McCarthy & Milner research (2013, 8) points out that if the targets of the person are not aligned with their personal and professional objectives, then it will be difficult to achieve them. The objectives set by the supervisor must fit the inner needs and values of the

subordinate. The supervisor has to make sure that the subordinates does not accept the objectives because they only want to please their supervisor.

According to the research, if supervisors unanimously defined the objectives for the subordinate then the subordinates experienced a lack of dialogue and the objectives did not feel personally important to the subordinates. Defining the objectives together with the supervisor by having good coaching skills brought better interaction to the discussions and the subordinates and supervisors both felt that the views of both were heard. (Uutela 2019,90.)

3.6   Dialogue and building trust

Wink (2010, 10) points out that if the organisation wants to create new thinking, new meaning, and new actions the key is to have dialogue in the development discussions. Lindhholm & Salminen (2014, 30.) points out the same that one goal for a good development discussion is to have dialogue between the parties. Through good dialogue, new thinking, a new kind of meaning and new activity can be created.

According to Aarnikoivu (2016, 178-179) success in development discussions requires that both parties can listen to each other. Genuine listening may not take place if both parties have already formed an opinion in advance on the issues to be addressed. Supervisors should be able to create a situation in the development discussion where the subordinates find motivation and they realize what they need to do to achieve the objectives set for them.

Research shows that if the supervisor does not take a subordinate's perspective into account in development discussions and he or she sets objectives according to their own views, and then the subordinate feels frustration. The lack of dialogue between the supervisor and subordinate causes that the subordinate does not feel the objectives set in the development discussions are personally important. A genuine development discussion consists of an open dialogue between the supervisor and the subordinate, in which the supervisor acts as a coach. (Uutela 2019, 85, 90.)

When genuine dialogue happens in the development discussion, it is seen as mutual respect towards each other's and motivating, encouraging, and expressing feelings to one another. Emotions cannot be left out of the process when two people meet face to face and trust in a relationship is built by showing humanity and work-related feelings. (Autio et al., 2010, 32.)

Uutela's research (2019, 129) points out that the supervisor's appreciative attitude increases the sense of community, openness and trust in the work organization. Subordinates feel that they can better trust a supervisor who behaves respectfully towards the subordinates. Supervisors should be easy to approach, he or she should encourage and trust their own subordinates.

Creating psychological safety

According to Edmondson (2019, 14) many managers still believe in the power of fear to motivate people but today's jobs where learning and collaboration is required for success, fear is not an efficient motivator.

Psychological safety is defined as a safe working environment so that people can take interpersonal risks. The term refers to the experience of feeling that subordinates can speak up with relevant ideas, questions, or concerns. Psychological security is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel that they are even obligated to be honest to one another. In workplaces with psychological safety, communication tends to be open and authentic and problems and mistakes are seen as opportunities of sharing knowledge. (Edmondson 2019, 8.)

Edmondson (2019, 14-15) states that the research in neuroscience shows that fear consumes physiologic resources, and it causes obstacles for the subordinates to do their best at work because they are afraid. In a safe environment people share more information, ask for help and experiment new things. People believe that colleagues do not react bad if they make mistakes or ask for help. In unsafe environments, creativity and problem solving become impossible for the person. A safe environment also affects the subordinate satisfaction and commitment.

Psychological safety enables directness, openness, and it creates trust to the environment. Edmondson states that psychological safety enables an atmosphere where setting ambitious goals is possible and people want to work hard and together for achieving them. (Edmondson 2019, 18.)

Supervisors are also required to have the skill to create a safe environment for conversation. In a formal coaching conversation, it is possible that people reveal more than what they would normally reveal about themselves or their thoughts. This safe environment and confidentiality mean that things told by the trainee are not used against him or her. It is good for the parties to agree on the level of confidentiality. (McCarthy & Milner 2013, 10.)

Effects of personalities

Hautala (2005, 3) points out in her research that the subordinate's personality affects the development discussion in that way that the supervisor has a tendency to evaluate the performance of people they find pleasant better than they actually perform. Some personality traits may easily be associated with good performance, even if they have nothing to do with this. Such traits are loyalty, reliability, trustworthiness, good at initiating things and good self-expression.

Hautala (2005, 10) states that according to literature, those people with similar personalities tend to give more positive feedback to each other. It is also assumed that completely different personalities find the conversation the most difficult.

Based on Hautala's (2005, 12) research results, supervisors as well as subordinates can better prepare for the development discussion when they will take into account their own and the other person's personality. A similar style of communication is associated with effective communication. It is not of course the idea that either of the parties would try to change their own personality but be flexible with their own communication style so that the communication would be easier and smoother for both of them.

3.7   Why development discussions are unsuccessful?

Development discussions can be unsuccessful because of the poor implementation of those discussions. Poor implementation may be due to the inexperience of the supervisor and the fact that they do not perceive their own role as a leader in development discussions. If a successful development dialogue is to take place, it requires interaction from both parties. (Stonehouse 2013, 338.)

Development discussions are often not used when it comes to strategic work at the company. The lack of a strategic link is one of the reasons why development discussions are not valued or taken seriously among people, which leads that development discussions are unsuccessful. However smart managers have realized the opportunity provided by development discussions to engage in strategic dialogue and get ideas from subordinates to implement strategy in their day-to-day operations. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 51.)

Development discussions can fail if there is avoidance to go to uncomfortable areas in the development discussion which leads to failure to address any work problems of the subordinate. The quality of development discussions does not fully meet expectations when unpleasant topics such as emotions, personal matters, and problems are left out of

development discussions. (Ruoranen 2011,137.) According to Autio et al. (2010, 32) development discussions will be shallow and good interaction will not happen if the supervisor does not want to understand the subordinate's point of view and they only see what they think is the best approach. When this happens then the subordinates often begin to defend themselves. In this case emotions will not be revealed, and things will not be discussed directly.

According to Stonehouse (2013, 339), criticism of development discussions comes from the fact that some people think that development discussions are time-consuming and unnecessary for the supervisor's use of time. The development discussion form has also been criticized for just ticking the box to fill out the form, and then this paper dominates the discussion. Aarnikoivu (2016, 13) states that development discussions fail if people think they are just a waste of time and at worst, they can have a negative impact on the contribution, commitment and well-being of their subordinates.

In the USA some estimations are that more than one-third of U.S. companies have been abandoning the traditional appraisal processes and replacing them with frequent, informal discussions between the supervisor and subordinates. Annual reviews have been described as last-century practice and they are blamed for a lack of innovation and collaboration. However, companies worry that if going numberless it can be hard to align the individual and organizational goals, award merit raises, identify poor performers and address discrimination, however the traditional appraisals have not solved these problems either. (Cappelli & Tavis 2019.)

Cappel & Tavis (2016) points out that the main point all in all for companies is to carefully consider whether their current processes is supporting the company to get what they need for solving current performance problems and developing future talent.

3.8   Success factors

An important part of starting the development discussion process is the work of the management team. Top management should prepare a clear picture of the organisation's strategy priorities and possible development targets. (Lindholm & Salminen, 117.) Autio et al., (2010, 38) points out that both parties should have a clear picture of the current organisation's operations and the future vision and goals. The participants should have possibilities to plan their own work and participate to the decision making. Objectives should be clear to the subordinate and if there are any obstacles on achieving the objectives. The organisation should understand how important the development discussions are and they should be kept for everyone in the organisation. (Autio et al.,

2010, 38.) Carlsson & Forssell (2017, 36) states that based on their research many supervisors have found that coaching skills have clearly improved, for example, setting common goals.

The supervisor should have enough time for the development discussions. Clear managing processes help the supervisors, because then they have more time to perform the tasks belonging to the role as supervisor in the work community. Different HR actions such as development discussions help the supervisors to perform their task better. Supervisors act as encouraging coaches to their team and in the development discussions the supervisor sets the individual objectives in accordance with the organization's goals. Competence development stops if supervisors are so busy that they do not have time to conduct proper development discussions. (Kesti 2014, 145, 147.)

It is important that the development discussions are conducted throughout the organization according to a consistent process (2) when they are committed to a company's strategy. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 121.) The topics covered in the development discussion should be based on the company's strategy. This allows staff to truly understand the importance of development discussions and why strategy work is so important to an organization's success. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 57.)

The most effective and most beneficial model of development discussions for the supervisor and the organization is that in the first phase, the supervisor conducts development discussions with his / her own supervisor and only then with the team. The second part of the discussion will take place after these debates. In this way, strategic ownership is also best highlighted in development discussions. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 88.)

A successful development dialogue process also ensures that the discussions are fair and have a good interaction between the subordinate and supervisor. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 170–171). The goal of developmental discussions is to be a dialogical developmental discussion where a person wants to create something new. It can be new ideas, new kinds of activities or new ways of working. Strong trust and unlimited cooperation are needed for dialogue to emerge. Mutual trust between the supervisor and subordinate is a key role of improving the interaction. (Autio et al., 2010, 38, 57.)

Top management should also provide clear feedback from the objectives set for the previous year and how they were achieved. (Lindholm & Salminen, 117.)

Successful development discussions include systematic monitoring. A follow-up meeting once a year may seem too long for the parties. It would be good that the issues agreed in

the development discussions are monitored as part of normal operations. At its best, the things agreed in the development discussion become part of the daily life between the supervisor and the subordinate. Development discussions will not be able to retain their place as a tool for strategic management if the discussion process does not continue after personal discussions. (Lindholm & Salminen 2014, 64, 182.)

The content should be related to company's operations and strategy. It is important for the success of development discussions that the ideas, messages and development ideas are carefully recorded, and their activities are systematically followed up afterwards. The development discussion process should be made an important part of the company's management and operating culture.

4   Methodology

This chapter presents the chosen research methods and the chosen data collection method of this research and implementation of the study.

This study was made for Wärtsilä Energy. They had launched new Leading and Learning program for the whole company where development discussions are kept. The company requested to research how strategy-based actions are handled in the development discussion from the supervisor's side. The second research task was to explore how the leaders are using coaching dialogue in the development discussions.

4.1   Qualitative case study as an approach

This research uses case study as an approach because case study suits well as an approach when the idea is to explore something more deeply and produce new development ideas. Case study allows the researcher to get a lot of information from a narrow target rather than getting little information from a wider target. In a case study the aim is to provide detailed and comprehensive information of a certain case. Usually there is only one target that the research is exploring. The subject can be an individual, a group of people, an event, a certain function, a certain organization, or some geographical area. Case study provides new information, which supports the development process. The key element is to understand the target as a certain case in the company. Case study usually answers the questions how and why. (Moilanen, T., Ojasalo, K. & Ritalahti, J. 2014, 52 - 53.)

Case study suited well because Wärtsilä wanted to explore the new Leading and Learning program and in this study the target group was narrowed down to Wärtsilä leaders who already had been using the new program. There was a desire to get more in-depth information from this particular group of people to the HR department so that they would know that if there are any development needs and whether this new program is working as it should.

Figure 9 shows different phases of case study. Often the researcher has previous knowledge about the object to be developed, which makes it possible to define a preliminary development task. After this is done the researcher has to get familiarized with the topic in practise and through theory before the precise development task is defined. After that, it is possible to start collecting the data through interviews, surveys, or observation. In the end the researcher gives development ideas. It is also possible that

the original development tasks change on the way, this is natural part of development process. (Moilanen et al., 2014, 54.)
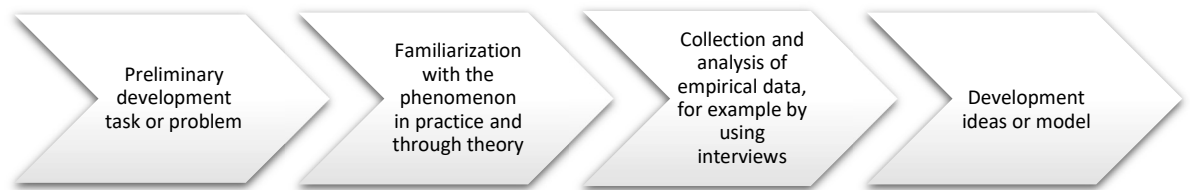

Figure 9. Phases of case study (adapted from Moilanen et al., 2014, 54)

The choice of research method should answer the question that what kind of information wants to be sought with the research. After the answer is clear it is easier to choose the most appropriate research method. There are two research methods, one of which is quantitative research method and the other is qualitative research method. Quantitative research methods achieve numerical information and qualitative research method find information which helps to understand meanings. (Vilkka 2015, 66.)

Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault (2016, 10, 209) points out that the point of qualitative research is to look things from different vantage points. Qualitative methods allow researcher to stay close to the empirical world and it ensures close fit between the data and what people say and do. Qualitative researchers should stay objective and set aside their own opinions and views of the world. Nothing should be taken for granted and qualitative researchers should view things like they would see them happening for the first time. Qualitative researchers use data to collect insights from patterns in the data. However, it is impossible to avoid all the assumptions of the world and usually qualitative researchers have some own goals and questions in mind. (Taylor et al., 2016, 8,10,209.)

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 87) states that qualitative research does not aim at statistical generalizations but at describing a phenomenon or event, understanding a particular activity, or giving a theoretically meaningful interpretation of a phenomenon. In qualitative research, it is important that the persons from whom information is collected know as much as possible about the phenomenon and that they have experience from the topic. The informants should not be chosen randomly but deliberately.

Case study is often considered as a qualitative research, but it can contain quantitative data collection methods, for example surveys. Providing more comprehensive results and getting deeper understanding of the case sometimes it is needed to combine both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods like interviews, surveys, focus group

interviews, benchmarking or observation. (Moilanen et al., 2014, 52 - 53.) Qualitative research method was chosen to be used in this study, because it was decided to use interviews as a qualitative data collection method. Only a small amount of people wanted to be interviewed for this research and get more deep information about the subject through them. According to (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2015, 164) qualitative method is the best solution, as only a small number of people are interviewed, and their responses are intended to gather views and suggestions for improvement.

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 76) states that the advantage of an interview is flexibility. The interviewer can repeat questions and correct misunderstandings, clarify the wording of expressions. Flexibility also means that questions can be asked in the order that the researcher deems appropriate. In a qualitative interview, the most important thing is to get as much information as possible about the desired topic, so it is justified to give the interviewee questions in good time before getting acquainted with the research. One of the advantages of the interview is that the interviewer can also act as an observer and write down not only what is said but also how it is said. One advantage in making interview is that a person with experience of the phenomenon or topic under study can be selected for the interview. In qualitative research, the challenge may be that the material is very limited if, for example, the interviewee has no experience or knowledge of the topic. Interviews are also a time-consuming form of data collection.

4.2   Implementation of the study

This thesis research was launched in 09/2020 (Figure 10). The researcher contacted Wärtsilä September 2020 and asked to write thesis for them. Wärtsilä had the need to explore their new Leading and Learning program where development discussions are held. The first meeting with Wärtsilä was held mid November 2020 where more specific details were discussed that what are the key elements that this research should study. By the end of 2020 the preliminary theory was collected and the plan to collect data for this research. In the beginning of 2021 the theory part was written and after that two interviews were done in March 2021 where theory was tested to practice. Methodology part was also written in Q1 of 2021. The rest of the interviews were done in Q2 and analyzing the data from them. In May thesis was finished.

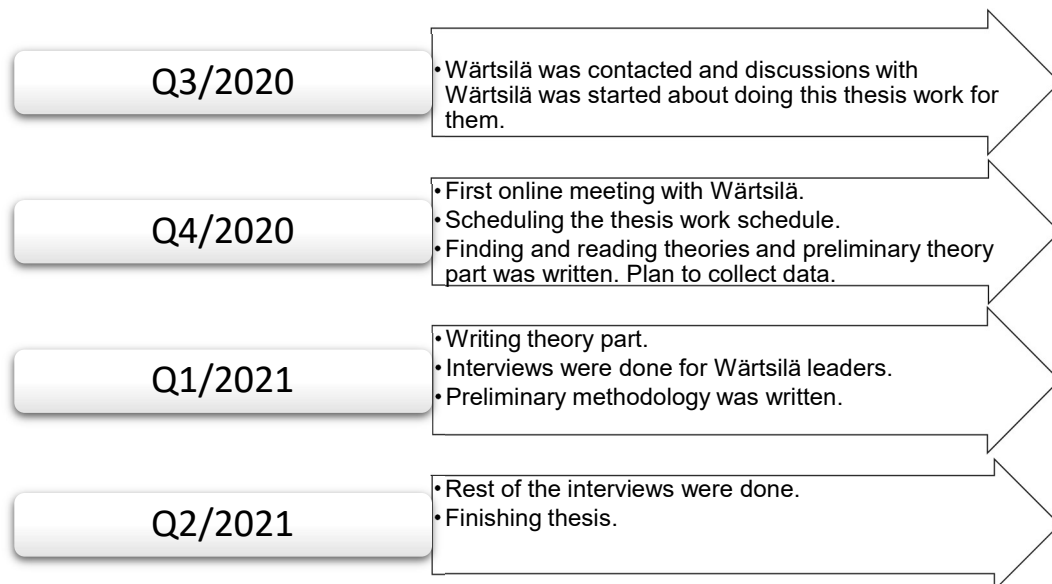| Q3/2020 | • Wärtsilä was contacted and discussions with Wärtsilä was started about doing this thesis work for them. |
Q4/2020	• First online meeting with Wärtsilä. • Scheduling the thesis work schedule. • Finding and reading theories and preliminary theory part was written. Plan to collect data.
Q1/2021	• Writing theory part. • Interviews were done for Wärtsilä leaders. • Preliminary methodology was written.
Q2/2021	• Rest of the interviews were done. • Finishing thesis.

Figure 10. Thesis project plan

This thesis project team included researcher Master Student Henriikka Nokkala, Researcher Tiina Brandt from Haaga-Helia as thesis advisor and from Wärtsilä's side Kati Järvinen.

Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interview was chosen for a data collection method in this research. Semi-structured interview is a qualitative method (Kananen, 2017, 23). Semi-structured interviews mean that the interviewer has specified themes and theme-related questions. The person answering the questions is called the participant. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of topics to be covered but the order can vary depending on the responses from the participant. The researcher can even ask some additional questions to find out further details or explore the subject in more depth way or make sure that they have understood the participant correctly. (Saunders & Lewis 2018, 158-159.) Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 77) points out that it is not possible to ask whatever in the semi-structured interviews either, the purpose is to find meaningful answers that can be used to find answers to the research problem.

Semi-structured interview differs from a survey because the interviewer seeks to provide the themes for the interview and the participant is otherwise allowed to speak freely. In the survey, on the other hand, success is influenced by the preparation of questions and answer options, standardization, while the open interview specifically seeks to take advantage of the lack of standardization. This semi-structured interview method aims to minimize the researcher's impact on responses. (Grönfors & Vilkka 2011, 60.)

The interview questions try to find answers to the research questions and the question frame was built on below themes.

- Development discussions topics
- Interaction and supervisor feedback
- Implementing strategy
- Coaching methods
- Support from HR

Data collection and conduction the interviews

According to Moilanen et al. (2014, 104) qualitative research method often speaks about purposive sampling, because the target group is carefully chosen for the research. It was decided to choose eight leaders from Wärtsilä for the interviews. This study target group was interviewed by using the semi-structured interviews. The leaders were chosen on the basis that they all had already used the Leading and Learning program and held the development discussions through it.

The interview process progressed so that the person selected for the interviews were said that they had been selected as the target group for this research and asked if they would agree to be interviewed. The researcher contacted the interviews through email and all interviewees got the interview structure and questions beforehand by email, so that they would be prepared for the interview.

The interview time and tools were planned with the interviewees. These interviews were decided to do using Teams as a tool and the interviewees were asked for permission to record the interview. According to Saunders & Lewis (2018, 162) audio recordings allow the interviewer to listen again the interview, because making notes when interviewing is not easy. Audio interviews should be practised beforehand. It is always the participant's choice to decide whether the interview is recorded or not. In this case it saved time and it was more efficient to record the interviews. The interviews lasted no more than an hour. The Microsoft Teams tool in general was tested and test recording was done before the actual interviews.

After the interviews were done and recorded, they were transcribed in the same or next day to plain text in word to make the material easier to process and analyse. Saunders and Lewis (2018, 162) states that after the interview it would be important to transcribe notes immediately so that they are not forgotten. In this research the interviewer also made their own notes during the interview.

The content and order of the interview questions were semi-structured but there was some variation of how the interviews proceed but the variation was, however, small and the interviews were able to stick to the desired themes. The interview schedule is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Interview schedule.

Person	Date	Time
Person A	12.3.2021	55 min
Person B	16.3.2021	50 min
Person C	26.3.2021	50 min
Person D	29.3.2021	45 min
Person E	29.3.2021	30 min
Person F	29.3.2021	30 min
Person G	2.4.2021	25 min
Person H	2.4.2021	25 min

The question frame used in the interviews is attached as Appendix 1.

4.3 Data analysis

Document analysis was used to analyse data from the interviews. Document analysis is a method where the researcher tries to make a conclusion on, for example, verbal material like interviews and translates the verbal data in a written form. The purpose of document analysis is to systematically analyse documents and create a clear description of the topic under study. Creating clarity in the data enables the researcher to make clear and reliable conclusions about the topic. The documents can include all written and spoken material of the phenomenon that the researcher is studying. Content analysis is one analysing method which describes the content of documents in written form, and it tries to identify different meanings from the text. The content analysis of the material can be facilitated, for example, by drawing a concept map. (Moilanen et al., 2014, 136-137.)

Figure 11 shows the process of the document analysis. When the material is prepared and, for example, the interviews are done the researcher should read the material several times and after that categorize the main topics and connect the findings to the theory used. Last step is to connect the theories used and reconnect them to the whole, interpretation, and phenomena.

| 1. Read the spelled or otherwise processed material several times. | 2. Categorize and try to find connections to the theory used. | 3. Go back to the theories used and reconnect them to the whole, interpretation, and phenomena. |

Figure 11. The process of the document analysis (adapted from Moilanen et al., 2014, 138)

According to Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 94) the description of the progress of the qualitative research analysis is shown below:

- Decide what interests in the material and make a strong decision.
- 2. Go through the material, separate, and mark the interesting topics and findings.
- Everything else should be left out from the research.
- Collect the interesting topics together and separate from other material.
- Categorize the material based on themes.
- Write a summary.

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 94) points out that that in qualitative research there can be some problems because usually there are many topics that are interesting, and the researcher can have difficulties to make decisions that what topics are most related to the study. It would be important to limit interesting topics to those related to the research.

According to Moilanen et al. (2014, 110-111) when the interviews are made in written form the material is typically divided into themes. The purpose of diving to themes is to study phenomena in material or matters that are common to several interviewees. These phenomena may be related to the topics of the interviews, or there may be surprising new themes that emerge in the interviews. It is possible to use different methods when searching similarities from the material. Typifying is one method, which works if there is clearly a different type of responses.

This research data analyses started by reading the material several times and after reading it through, the material was categorized into themes. The themes were the same that were used in the interviews. The amount of material collected through the interviews

was sufficient and it became saturated. According to Moilanen et al. (2014, 111) the number of the interviews depends on when the saturation point is achieved. Saturation means that information gathered from the interviews starts to repeat itself and new information does not appear anymore when using the current method.

Interview data was analysed and data collected from interviews was condensed to facilitate analysis and interpretation of results. The compilation of the material was started by carefully reading the material and grouping the content in a Word file based on the framework used in the interviews.

5 Results

This chapter presents the results of this research. The results of the study are described following the structure of the semi-structured interview framework.

5.1 Implementing strategy

One research task was to explore what difficulties there are when aligning the strategy to the targets. When conducting the interviews, it became clear that aligning the strategy with the subordinate objectives was the easiest part of the development discussions for the leaders.

> "Strategy is not a problem."

The leaders never summarize the strategy in the development discussion as the strategy discussions with the whole team have already taken place separately before the development discussions. In the development discussion there is no time to start going through the strategy, so the strategy discussions are held in different context. It also became clear that Wärtsilä's systems contain a lot of information where the subordinate can go and read about the company's strategy. It is important to connect subordinates to the strategy before discussing development and it is up to the supervisor to guide the subordinates to find out where the strategy information can be found.

The main finding in the strategy disucssions was that it is not problematic to the leaders. They know what their own strategic actions are and how to align them to the subordinate objectives. However the wider and more vague the company strategy is, the more difficult it was for the interviewees to implement it and try to figure out what it actually means in practise. For example, if the company has some bigger strategic actions to the whole company, then they should be clearly defined what they mean in practise. The clearer the strategic actions are, the easier it is to personalize it. Now in the virtual world it was also little bit harder to discuss about strategy, when all calendars are fully booked and there are no face-to-face discussions. One statement was also that now when everything is online it is harder to discuss about the strategy, because usually at the office some strategy discussions are kept during coffee breaks and other live discussions.

5.2 Development discussions topics

Under this theme, it was explored what topics are easy for leaders to discuss and which are more challenging to discuss in development discussions.

An easy topic was to link the strategy to the subordinate objectives. Performance targets were an easy and safe area to discuss with the subordinates.

> "Performance targets are easy because they are so customer-centric and come from strategy and they are so-called hard things and the real business."

It became clear that the Leading and Learning program helped the leaders for setting the targets. The program also helped to monitor the objectives through follow-up discussions on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

Leaders also responded that in general discussing with employees is easy.

> "In general, it is easy to talk and I am not afraid or nervous before the development discussions. They are even inspiring, and it is nice to have more in-depth discussion. They can be stressful if there are a lot of subordinates."

Challenging topics caused lot of discussions in the interviews and there were couple of key points that were challenging to discuss in the development discussions.

The first interesting finding was that the subordinate's motivation affects the development discussions and if the subordinate is not willing to learn and is unmotivated, then it is harder to keep the conversation flowing and the subordinate engaged to the discussions. Difficulties may also be associated with critical feedback if the participant is unwilling to receive feedback.

> "It is difficult if there is a member in the team who does not want to receive critical feedback and who is not open to receiving feedback and builds a wall around."

The second finding was that difficulties may be related to the personality as well, when the leader and the subordinate have different personalities. If one person is big picture and the other is detail oriented, the leader has to make sure that they are speaking the same language.This means that if the other person sees only the big picture and, for example, the subordinate does not think the same way, the leader has to make sure that the subordinate understands what is expected from him or her.

> "Difficulties may be related to the personality if the other person sees the really big picture and the subordinate is really detailed. Linking these together so that we speak the same language can be challenging."

> "Relationship skills should be improved. Understanding people and different personalities would be important. And to learn to talk to different people."

The third finding was that sometimes it can be challenging to a create concrete development plan for the subordinates. Some interviewees thought that they could have challenged the subordinates a little bit more, but it is all about finding balance of making the subordinate comfortable and not pushing too much. The leader may see potential, but the subordinate does not always see that or believe in themselves so then it is the leader's task to guide them and push them to the right direction. Sometimes it can be challenging to talk about the career progression of the subordinate because they can be reluctant to talk about the next steps in their career because not all individuals want to be seen as too ambitious.

> "Development plans can be challenging. It is easy to say that everyone needs to learn. These are not skills you need to learn but more soft skills. How are these defined as goals?"

The fourth finding was that this corona and virtual world can cause that some data can be uncollected, and things can be unnoticed because all discussions are now online.

> "In virtual world some data can be left uncollected."

5.3 Interaction

The main finding under this theme was that there is always room for improvement when talking about interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate.

> "There is always room for improvement."

The second finding was that the interviewees said that they are open to any interaction and they try to say everything very constructively. It became clear during the interviews that all interaction is very open, and the leaders stated that in the development discussion there is always safe environment to talk about anything. All leaders were very open to any discussion with their subordinates, whether they were positive or negative topics.

> "I ask lot of questions in the session. I am keeping the common ground so that the employee is also free to tell what needs to be improved. I'll let the subordinate talk and keep the healthy discussion."

The third finding was the leaders have to make sure that the subordinate understands everything that has been discussed in the development discussions. The leader must also ensure that they get their message through, even if the subordinate does not want to hear it. If the leader feels that they are not on the same wavelength, then they will have to work harder to get the message through to the subordinate.

> "Never let things be. Always get your message across, even if the other person does not want to hear it."

Good advice was that the supervisor should never dissolve their own message but stay in his / her position and explain the message in different ways so that the subordinate really understands it. One statement was that concrete examples can help subordinates understand things better if there are some problems in understanding what the leader is trying to say to them.

The fourth finding was that the leader should try to relate with the subordinate as much as possible and understand their background. Then they could more easily support them in their growth. Leaders should adapt their managing and interactive style so that the subordinate understands them.

As Figure 12 shows, when creating a good interaction, it is important that both the supervisor and the subordinate are well prepared beforehand for the development discussion. The leader has thought about what they want to talk to their subordinates about and how they are going to say it. There should be a peaceful environment where the development discussions are held. Phones and other distracting equipment for example should be put away and that both parties have to find a peaceful place for themselves. Listening was important for all interviewees and at that moment the leader should be present and listen when the other person has something important to tell him / her. The leader should create confidential and safe environment so that there is the possibility for open communication. The last part was that it is important to be transparent. This means that the subordinate knows what has been discussed and understands what is expected from them. Some interviewees send the development discussion form to the subordinate before accepting that, so that there is no possibility for mistakes.

| Prepare well beforehand. |
| Create a peaceful environment. |
| Listening. |
| Confidential and safe environment. |
| Be transparent. |

Figure 12. Success Factor of creating good interaction

5.4 Supervisor feedback

Main finding was that in generally the leaders thought they are getting too little feedback and they would like to get more feedback for themselves. Usually when everything works smoothly subordinates do not give feedback, so it is usually only then when something does not work well that feedback is obtained.

> "The supervisor is given terribly little feedback at work. Probably if things were bad, then more feedback would be given."

A good tool for getting feedback was to ask it directly in the development discussion. Leaders can ask questions from their work like:

> "What works well now? What can be improved? What should be done differently or stopped completely? What can be continued as it is now?"

> "People are careful, it's better just to say it works well. It is the easy way out."

The second finding was that all leaders had good attitude on asking feedback and understanding their own weaknesses.

> "I have no problem on asking feedback because I understand my own weaknesses."

Figure 13 shows findings of what helps in getting feedback. The supervisor should always ask direct feedback from the subordinates. The discussion should be casual, and the leader should keep the development discussion atmosphere open for discussions. also asking feedback should be kept simple. Open dialogue during the development discussion will help getting feedback for oneself. The leader has to be prepared which means that the leader should think in advance how to ask feedback and which part of the discussions.

The Leading and Learning program has helped the interviewers overall in discussions to be prepared to directly ask for feedback. Others made comments that the discussion could be started with questions like:

"How did we perform as a team? "

After that leader can continue asking more feedback on oneself as a leader. One option was that asking feedback could be done so that the leader will first give feedback to the team members, for example, through their own excel notes and then the team members answer the same questions about their leader.

Ask direct feedback.
Keep discussion casual.
Keep it simple.
Keep open dialogue.
Prepare well.

Figure 13. What helps to receive feedback

5.5 Coaching methods

One of the themes in the interviews was coaching and the aim was to find out if the supervisors using coaching during the development discussions and if so, how are they using coaching.

The main finding was that everyone had some experience in coaching and most had even been as a coachee themselves. Everyone thought that coaching is helping them to improve the dialogue between them and the subordinate in the development discussions. The leaders thought that coaching is a basic thing to know in supervisory work. All interviewees also wanted to learn more about coaching. Some had more experience than others, but all seemed to be keen on learning more. Some of the interviewees were highly skilled in using coaching methods in the development discussions.

"Coaching is a basic thing in supervisory work."

The second finding was that the best result when using coaching seemed to be when the whole team had been in the same coaching training with the leader because then the subordinates knew as well how coaching works. People could then use each other's as coaches.

"Coaching has improved dialogue. Now we can use each other as a coach. I can reach out and ask: Can you be my coach and help me to think of a solution to this? We can do coaching from the left and right side."

Figure 14 shows the main coaching methods that supervisors are using. Active listening was the main method that the interviewees are using. It was very united that all leaders wanted to listen to what their subordinate has to say to them.

"And specifically important would be the ability to listen. Not listening to the answers but just listening to this other person."

Then the leaders helped the subordinate to identify the problems on their own and not give answers straight. However, this can be challenging for supervisors not to provide ready-made solutions for the use of their subordinates.

"I try to help the employee identify the problems on their own and not give too many solutions, but it can be difficult."

The leaders also ask lot of open-end questions and try to create atmosphere where the subordinate can open up in the discussions. The finding was that the leaders try to keep the questions simple and easy.

"Have you put any thought on your career journey in Wärtsilä? What brings excitement to you? "

The leaders also thought that there should not be no right or wrong answers to the questions. Then the leaders also shared experience from the past and they set themselves an example. This means that they give examples of failures so that the subordinate can relate to those and find ways to outcome their own fears and obstacles.

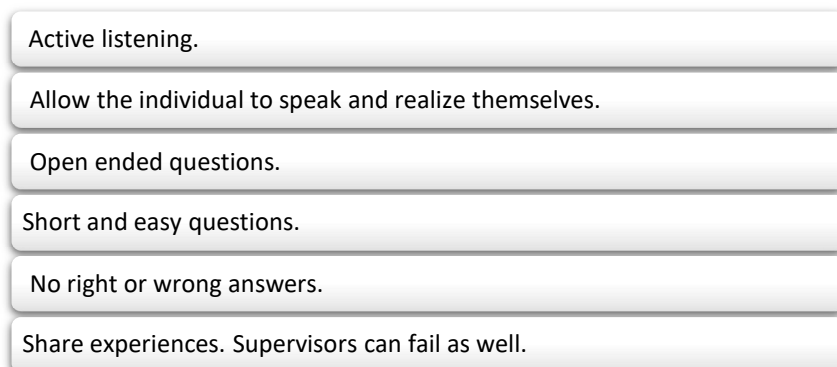| Active listening. |
| Allow the individual to speak and realize themselves. |
| Open ended questions. |
| Short and easy questions. |
| No right or wrong answers. |
| Share experiences. Supervisors can fail as well. |

Figure 14. Coaching methods used by the Wärtsilä leaders

All leaders thought that development discussions are for subordinates and their job is to help them grow.

> "Training the subordinates to understand what their capabilities are is important. They cannot be put to places where they are not competent. Managers need to think what the full employee capability is and put them to the places where they are happy. Development discussion is one platform to do that."

What the leaders would want to learn more:

All leaders would like to learn more about coaching. Some of the leaders even mentioned that they would want to get coaching certificate for themselves and learn the tools thoroughly.

> "I would like a certification or a more in-depth course. I think it would be useful in leadership skills."

Other interviewees said that they would like a certification or a more in-depth course. All interviewees thought that coaching would be useful in improving managerial skills. It would be good to have better interpersonal skills and communication skills for supervisors in general throughout the whole company.

Coaching and challenges

Challenges comes from cultural issues, because there should be a lot of coaching and many should speak in favour of coaching and use the tools in daily life.

> "However, it is a cultural issue because this is an engineering house, so there should be a lot of coaching and many should speak in favour of coaching and use the tools. There is a challenge."

Usually, coaching was well received among the subordinates, but there is also feedback that it really irritates a lot when the supervisor says things in a coaching way. It is also challenging is that even if others find that some leader needs coaching training, but they do not realize it themselves.

> "I have received feedback from some that is really annoying when you use coaching methods."

5.6   Support from HR

Findings were that the interviewees wished more trainings on coaching and especially practicing, seeing real life examples, and practising the coaching techniques. Online coaching courses are good, but it can be challenging to find motivation and time to study independently because usually the materials are so document heavy. Interactive or recorded courses would be good as well because then everyone could listen to those on one's own time. It could be even so that different teams in different countries could do the recordings so then everyone would get information that how are they doing things there.

It should be organised so that more practising would happen together at the work environment, because it is harder to manage when people are self-studying. In virtual courses it may be harder to organise time than face to face training because when studying online people interrupts easier. Interviewees felt that studying with co-workers is the best way to learn about coaching. Examples and joint reflection reinforce the learning experience. Statement was that coaching is a powerful tool and it should be trained in a controlled environment if a person is new in coaching. If done incorrectly, it can cause harm, so it should first be practiced in a shared situation with professionals.

> "When studying together using examples was the best practice."

The second finding was that it is sometimes difficult to set the targets and have development discussions when the global company targets are unknown. This causes that the targets have to be modified after the development discussions are already kept and it takes time. It is even more work if a person has many direct subordinates. HR could help align the development dialogue process only once the global targets have been established because it is hard to set the targets if the leader does not know what the targets are.

The third finding was that target setting could be even easier if the leader's supervisor's business-related targets would be transparent to the whole organisation. It would be good to know the goals of the supervisors as well. This would help the whole organisation. Of course, all personal targets would be kept private.

> "Targets should be transparent through the whole organization. What are my supervisor's targets? Personal targets could be separated of course. Showing the business targets would help the whole organization."

The four finding was that it would be good to keep onboarding and training for the new leaders so that they are aware of leadership expectations. This Leading and Learning program's material and trainings had been helpful, and the content is good and feedback from it was positive. Interviewees thought that it is good if there would be programs for managers to help their communication skills.

5.7 Other findings

Other findings from the interviews were that the corporate culture should be changed so that the supervisors take an approach that they do not give any ready-made answers and tell the subordinates how to do something. It should be taken more towards the direction where supervisors are coaching the subordinates to think of the solution on their own first. Subordinates should take more responsibility for themselves and this would be important for Wärtsilä as a company.

Relationship skills should be improved, and leaders and subordinates should understand the different personalities. Understanding different personalities would make it easier to communicate with and between the parties. Listening and improving active listening skills should be developed continuously and not listen to just the answers but listen to what the other person what has to say.

Leaders should always give feedback, even if the subordinate does not want to receive it. Some individuals are thirsty for feedback and others do not want to hear anything. This can be challenging for the leaders. Giving feedback in the development discussions is important for subordinates to know how they are doing and if there are any difficulties with the subordinate. If the individual would never get any feedback about their work and then she / he would be forced to leave the company because they have not performed well then it would be unfair to the subordinates because they should be updated how they are doing at work. It is lazy and easy leadership when the leader is avoiding difficult conversations.

After the development discussions are held the follow up discussion are important, and it is important to adjust the targets in those. It became clear that all discussion during the year, for example monthly discussions with subordinate, helps to improve the overall communication.

6   Discussion

This last chapter presents the conclusions of the study, answer the research questions and considers its reliability. This chapter also presents a further research proposal and reflection of own learning.

6.1   Answers to the research questions and conclusion

This part summarises shortly the finding to the research questions separately.

1) How well are the supervisors able to create and agree on strategy-based actions during development discussions?

The result was that the leaders did not have any problems with strategy, and it was clear for them to create and agree on strategy-based actions during development discussion.

2) How are the supervisors using coaching in the development discussion?

All leaders use coaching techniques in the development discussions, the other knew coaching more than the others. Some interviewees stated that they could have used coaching even more during the development discussions.

The methods used by managers were active listening, which means that managers want to hear what subordinates have to say. Leaders want the individual to speak and understand the answers themselves and not to give ready-made answers on their behalf. Leaders asked a lot of open-ended questions that were short and easy to understand. What was important was that there was no right or wrong answer when answering the questions. Leaders considered it important to lead by their own example.

3) Which development discussion topics are more straightforward, and which are more challenging to discuss?

More straightforward topics where topics concerning strategy and the performance targets. It is easier to discuss about performance. It is a more logical and straightforward and safe topic to discuss. More challenging topics were topics involving the individual itself and his / her behaviour and making concrete development plan for individuals.

4) How does the supervisor get feedback for oneself?

All supervisors asked feedback for themselves. Majority asked feedback in the development discussions but some also asked feedback only then when they sensed

something is wrong. Common answer was that the leaders got too little feedback and that would be nice to have more feedback to themselves. Asking straight from the subordinates was the best way to get feedback.

5) What kind of training or other development support do the supervisors need to create better quality in development discussions?

The leaders need more coaching trainings in order to improve communication. Best result from coaching was when the whole team went through the same coaching training as well. Online courses work well, but then people have to be highly motivated to learn from those independently. Interviewees mainly thought that learning in face-to-face at work environment and through examples would be the best way to learn. Virtual coaching or interactive sessions could be possible to test if they will work.

6.2 Practical implications

The purpose of this study was to produce information to Wärtsilä's HR department about how the leaders are able to link strategy to subordinates' objectives. The research was also exploring how the supervisor used coaching in development discussions, how do they get feedback for themselves and what were the challenging topics for the leaders. The aim was to get data to the HR department so that they know what kind of support is needed in order to improve the quality in the development discussions and in the Leading and Learning program.

Clearly the COVID-19 affected the results because at this moment, for example, there are no face-to-face coaching courses, everything is online now. The leaders wanted to learn coaching in the work environment by using examples and real-life situations. Of course, in this situation when everyone is working remotely it is not possible to organise these kinds of trainings.

The leaders knew lot of coaching methods and most of the interviewees knew what kind of methods they are using. Active listening seemed to be most important to the leaders. Coaching the subordinates to see their capabilities and being present in the development discussions was important for the leaders as well. Leaders thought development discussions were important moments for subordinates to develop their skills and the targets are to help the subordinate develop and improve. It was also important for the leaders to understand what challenges there are achieving the targets. For the researcher it came as a surprise how enthusiastic everyone was talking about coaching and how they use it in the development discussions and at work in general.

The HR department could provide tools for managers to get feedback for themselves. It could be some kind of survey that allows managers to ask certain questions during a development discussion. It should be part of the discussion to get feedback for yourself. Now there was no consensus on how managers get feedback, and they clearly would like to get more feedback for themselves.

6.3   Ethics and reliability

The researcher must show that in the research the information, research methods and research results meet the requirements for the scientific research. According to good scientific practise the researcher must be honest, accurate and thorough in the research work they do and when presenting the results. Good research practise requires that the research must be planned, carried out and reported with high quality. (Vilkka 2015, 27.)

Ethical concerns also arrive when designing and planning the research. In the context of research, ethics refers to standards of behaviour that guide a researcher's behaviour in relation to the assumptions of individuals. Ethical principle is also that when collecting the data, it is important to maintain objectivity. It means that a person should make sure when collecting data that it is accurately and fully collected and that a person should avoid exercising subjective selectivity in what has been recorded. Without objective data collection there is no ability to analyse and report the work accurately. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 239, 255.)

This research was designed and implemented in accordance with good scientific practice, by collecting data from multiple sources and using a variety of techniques. Efforts were made to maintain neutrality at all stages of the study. The case study was carried out based on Wärtsilä's needs. The processing of the material followed principles of ethics. The interviewees were told that the interviews will be recorded and deleted after this research is done. All material collected was only used for this research.

Reliability refers to replication and consistency and validity refers to the appropriateness of the measures that have been used and the accuracy of the analysis of the results. However qualitative research is not necessarily intended to be replicated because usually the research has been done with certain participants in a particular setting at a certain time. When using more than one person for interviews, observations, and data analysis also improves the quality and internal reliability of the study. When using semi-structured interviews, it is important to explain the research design, the research methods and how the data is collected. Semi-structured interviews can achieve a high level of validity

because it is possible to use clarifying questions and examine answers from different perspectives. (Saunders & al., 202, 205, 399-400.)

This case study used qualitative semi-structured interviews. The process was explained in previous parts why this research method was chosen, how the research data was collected and how the research data was analysed. When the interviews were done by using Teams there were a couple of internet connection problems and not all interviews were done using a camera. This means that there are possibilities that the researcher could not read facial expressions and make observations during the interviews. Face-to-face interviews would have given more observational possibilities and eliminated distractions, like occasional sound problems when using Teams for the interviews.

6.4 Proposal for future studies

When making this research it became clear through interviews that personality affects the interactions between the supervisor and subordinate. The supervisor should know what kind of interaction and dialogue can be used with different personalities. A proposal in the future studies would be to explore more about how different personalities behave and communicate during development discussions and what would help different personalities to communicate and understand each other even better.

This research only took the supervisor's point of view so one possibility would be to explore the subordinate's perspective as well. Determine how they see coaching in the development discussion and whether they have noticed that the supervisor has been using coaching methods in the development discussions.

6.5 Reflection on own learning

This was great research opportunity for me to learn more about the topic and it was an excellent opportunity to write this thesis to Wärtsilä. I had excellent mentors from Wärtsilä's side, and my thesis teacher Tiina Brandt from Haaga-Helia provided valuable coaching and guidance, encouraged, and gave me support along the way. We had thesis meetings during this nine-month journey and these meetings gave me motivation to write this thesis and move forward step by step.

The planning and selection of the subject in the beginning was the hardest part in this journey. The theory section was interesting to write but narrowing down what to use for this research was a challenge because I found many interesting theories that I would have wanted to explore more. For me, the topic itself was interesting therefore the writing part was not so difficult, and I enjoyed making the interviews and hearing how people are

acting as a supervisor. The hardest for me was to narrow down and make choices what to bring to the research and what should be left out. I am thankful that I got to write this thesis to Wärtsilä, but when I am not working at the company it is always harder to communicate and contact different people.

During this process I realised that I enjoyed finding information about coaching and reading coaching related books, I even ended up changing my career path towards HR and I realised that I could use this knowledge at my work for setting objectives, coaching and development discussions. I learned myself that moving step by step is an excellent tool for me to work and get things done, make some smaller milestones and put the pieces together in that way.

References

Aaltonen, T. & Ahonen, P. & Sahimaa, J. 2020. Johda merkitystä. Alma Talent. Helsinki.

Aarnikoivu, H. 2011. Aidosti hyödyllinen kehityskeskustelu. Kariston kirjapaino Oy. Hämeenlinna.

Alahuhta, M. 2015. Johtajuus – Kirkas suunta ja ihmisen voima. Docendo Oy. Jyväskylä. E-book.

Aura, O. & Ahonen, G. 2016. Strategisen hyvinvoinnin johtaminen. Talentum Pro. Helsinki.

Autio, V-M., Juuti, P. & Wink, H. 2010. Kehityskeskustelut ja keskusteleva johtaminen. HansaPrint Oy. Vantaa.

Bos-Nehles, A.C., Van Riemsdijk, M.J. & Kees Looise, J. 2013. Employee perceptions of line management performance: applying the AMO theory to explain the effectiveness of line managers HRM implementation. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. The Netherlands. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anna_Bos-Nehles/publication/258882090_Employee_Perceptions_of_Line_Management_Performance_Applying_the_AMO_Theory_to_Explain_the_Effectiveness_of_Line_Managers'_HRM_Implementation/links/59f6df4daca272607e2bdc95/Employee-Perceptions-of-Line-Management-Performance-Applying-the-AMO-Theory-to-Explain-the-Effectiveness-of-Line-Managers-HRM-Implementation.pdf. Accessed: 22 December 2020.

Cappelli, P. & Tavis, A. 2016. The performance Management Revolution. Harvard Business Review. Available at: https://hbr.org/2016/10/the-performance-management-revolution. Accessed: 15 December 2020.

Chillakuri, B. 2018. Scrapping the Bell Curve: A Practitioner's Review of Reinvented Performance Management System. South Asian Journal of Human Resource Management. Available at. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2322093718795549. Accessed: 15 March 2021.

Cunningham, L. 2015. In big move, Accenture will get rid of annual performance reviews and rankings. The Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/on-leadership/wp/2015/07/21/in-big-move-accenture-will-get-rid-of-annual-performance-reviews-and-rankings/. Accessed: 15 December 2020.

Edmondson, A. C. 2019. The fearless organization. Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New Jersey.

Grant, A. M. & Hartley, M. 2013. Developing the leader as coach: insights, strategies, and tips for embedding coaching skills in the workplace. Coaching: An International Journal of Teory, Research and Practice 6 (2), 102–115. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2013.824015. Accessed: 13 December 2020.

Grönfors, M., Vilkka, H. 2011. Laadullisen tutkimuksen kenttätyömenetelmät. Hämeenlinna.

Hautala, T. 2005. Kehityskeskustelut – alaisten persoonallisuuden yhteys kokemuksiin keskusteluista. Available at: http://lta.lib.aalto.fi/2005/3/lta_2005_03_a4.pdf. Accessed: 17 March 2021.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2015. Tutki ja kirjoita. Tammi. Helsinki.

International Coaching Federation. 2019. Building Strong Coaching Cultures for the Future -Final Report. Available at: https://coachingfederation.org/research/building-a-coaching-culture. Accessed: 18 March 2021.

International Coaching Federation. 2020. 2020 ICF Global Coaching Study Executive summary. Available at: FINAL_ICF_GCS2020_ExecutiveSummary.pdf (coachingfederation.org). Accessed: 15 March 2021.

International Coaching Federation. 2021. About ICF.ICF Definition of Coaching. Available at: https://coachingfederation.org/about. Accessed: 16 March 2021.

Järvinen, K. 2014. Työn mielekkyyden johtaminen. Talentum. Helsinki.

Juuti, P. 2016. Johtamisen kehittäminen. PS-kustannus. Jyväskylä. E-book.

Kananen, J. 2017. Laadullinen tutkimus pro graduna ja opinnäytetyönä. Juvenes Print. Jyväskylä.

Kesti, M. 2014. Henkilöstövoimavarat tuottaviksi. Jaarli Oy. Turenki.

Kulmanen, R. 2019. Työnohjaus, coaching ja fasilitointi kehittymisen tukena. Työnohjaus arvostavan dialogin vahvistajana. Helsingin Yliopisto. Available at: https://hyplus.helsinki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Tyonohjaus_coaching_ja_fasilitointi_kehittymisen_tukena_web.pdf. Accessed: 8 January 2021.

Kupias, P. 2016. Toimijuus työssä. Tukena työnohjaus, coaching, mentorointi ja fasilitointi. Available at :https://hyplus.helsinki.fi/wpcontent/uploads/2019/09/paivi_kupias_toimijuus_tyossa_tukena_tyonohjaus_coaching_mentorointi_fasilitointi_web.pdf. Accessed: 8 January 2021.

Kupias, P., Peltola, R. & Pirinen, J. 2014. Esimies osaamisen kehittäjänä. Helsinki. Sanoma Pro.

Kultalahti, S. 2015. "It's so nice to be at work!" Adopting different perspectives in understanding Generation Y at work. Vaasan Yliopisto. Vaasa.

Lindholm, T. & Salminen, J. 2014. Keskustele ja kehitys 2.0, kehityskeskusteluista vuoden paran työpäivä. Multiprint Oy Helsinki.

McCarthy, G. & Milner, J. 2013. Managerial coaching: challenges, opportunities and training. The Journal of Management Development 32 (7), 768–779. Available at: https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1397&context=gsbpapers. Accessed: 18.1.2021.

Mellanen, A. & Mellanen, K. 2020. Hyvät, pahat ja millenniaalit. Miten meitä tulisi johtaa. Atena Kustannus Oy. E-book.

Rasa, P. 2017. Interaction between managerial competencies and leadership in business organisations. Vilnius University. Lithuania. Available at: http://journals.ku.lt/index.php/RFDS/article/view/1412. Accessed: 18 December 2020.

Ristikangas, M-L. & Grünbaum, L. 2016. Valmentava esimies, Onnistumista palvelevat positiot. Talentum Pro. Helsinki.

Ristikangas, Marjo-Riitta & Ristikangas, Vesa 2017. Valmentava johtajuus. Alma Talent, Helsinki.

Ruoranen, R. 2011. Miten strategia kiteytetään 90 minuuttiin? - Tutkimus kehityskeskusteluista. Tampere: University Press. Väitöskirja.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2016. Research methods for business students. Pearson Education. Harlow.

Saunders, M. & Lewis, P. 2018 Doing research in business and management. An essential guide to planning your project. 2nd edition. Pearson Education Limited.

Salmela-Aro, K., Nurmi, J. & Feldt, T. 2017. Mikä meitä liikuttaa: Motivaatiopsykologian perusteet. PS-kustannus. Jyväskylä.

Stonehouse, D. 2013. Appraisal: a key tool to delivering quality care. British Journal of Healthcare Management 19 (7), 338–341. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Stonehouse/publication/257164396_Appraisal_A_Key_Tool_to_Delivering_Quality_Care/links/00b7d5249734f75116000000.pdf. Accessed: 12 January 2020.

Taylor, S., Bogdan, R. & DeVault, M. 2015. Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New Jersey. Available at: https://books.google.fi/books?hl=fi&lr=&id=pONoCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=writing+qualitative+research+methodology&ots=Qhte9CbA2R&sig=RDGP6EtSEwnsVM2OSyNC5Jid-h8&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=qualitative&f=false. Accessed: 11 December 2020.

Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2006. Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy. Jyväskylä.

Uutela, U. 2019. Valmentava esimiestyö työhyvinvointia ja työssä oppimista tukemassa. Fenomenografinen tapaustutkimus esimiesten ja työntekijöiden käsityksistä. Lapin Yliopisto. Rovaniemi. Väitöskirja.

Vilkka, H. 2015. Tutki ja kehitä. PS-kustannus. Jyväskylä.

Wink, H. 2007. Kehityskeskustelu dialogina ja diskursiivisena puhekäytäntönä - tapaustutkimus kehityskeskusteluista metsäteollisuuden organisaatiossa. Tampereen yliopisto, Kasvatustieteen laitos. Tampere.

Attachments

Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview questions

- What topics in the development discussions seemed difficult to discuss?

- What topics in the development discussions seemed easy to discuss?

- In which area of interaction in the development dialogue has room for improvement? How could it be improved?

- How does the supervisor (you) get feedback in development discussions? Do you have examples of questions about how to get feedback?

- How well were you able to create and agree on strategy-based development actions during development discussions? What felt easy/difficult and why?

- How well did you apply coaching methods during development discussions?

- How do you use coaching methods in development discussions? Do you have examples?

- How would you prefer to learn or develop your coaching skills (applying the Wärtsilä's 70-20-10 learning model)?

- Have you been a coachee / in coaching trainee yourself?

- What support do you need from the HR department for development discussions in order to have better quality in the development discussion?