

Lean Coaching: The Wheel of Life and the Harada Method [A New Approach from the “as is” to the “to be”]

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Abstract— This paper presents Lean paradigm, methods and techniques and how, in concrete, is possible to go from the “as is” to “to be”, supported by tools and methodologies people focused. Continuous improvement, eliminating waste and creating value and agility becomes possible through action: people's action. Coaching and Harada Method are both focused in people's action. From the diagnosis with the Coaching tool “Wheel of Life” to a “Long-term goal form”, it arises a road towards Lean success.

Keywords— Lean Coaching, Harada Method, Lean Coaching Tools, Lean.

I. INTRODUCTION

AS this paper is about the Lean paradigm, methods and techniques, we will introduce it supported by a Lean tool: 5W2H.

The “What”: Present the Wheel of Life - a Coaching tool - and relate it with Harada Method – the Spirit of Self-Reliance. We will get to a Lean Coaching step-by-step technique. The “Who”: for only those who are interested in live a life with less waste and more value and agility, for both individually and organizations and teams. The “Where”: reducing waste and creating value can be applied everywhere. The “When”: as for the “Where”, reducing waste and creating value can be applied every time. The “Why”: because all of us – individuals and organizations – are looking every day – even unconsciously – for survival. This survival can mean increasing life quality and happiness (for individuals) or grow up and conquer success in the market (for organizations). The “How”: that's what we will present, briefly, in this paper. The “How Much”: some time, but mainly, willingness (or necessity!).

II. WHAT IS COACHING?

A. *What Coaching is not*

Considering the amount and variety of concepts related with Coaching, what may cause some confusion, it is easier to clarify what Coaching is not.

Coaching is not Consulting. A consultant is engaged to help

finding solutions to specific problems and challenges. The ways in which that is to be done generally falls to the consultant to decide, within the details agreed with the client, such as budget, time and other resources. The consultant is expected to think, solve client's problems, find solutions and put it into practice. Consulting is based on giving answers and solutions based on the consultant knowledge and experience.

Coaching is not Mentoring. A mentor is an advisor who can help the mentee to find the right direction and who can help them to develop. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to gain an empathy with the mentee and a correct understanding of their matters. Mentoring provides the mentee with an opportunity to think about options and progress, usually related to the professional/career field. Mentor teaches through its experience and example. Mentoring is based on the mentor's experience but related to mentee's issues.

Coaching is not Psychology/Psychiatry/Psychoanalysis. These three areas operate in clinical aspects, in matters such as depression, burnout, trauma and other mind and behavior disorders. This professionals work is based on the clients experience, but filtered and interpreted by their knowledge and experience and forwarding to possible solutions for the clients problems. Every time someone looks for a coach, he has an “issue”. In Coaching, we refer to “issue” because the client doesn't have, necessarily, a problem. It may be a problem too, but may be also a challenge, a necessity, and a dilemma. The Coaching basic principle relies upon the client's experience and the client's action. The Coach just ask questions but these questions have to be without presuppositions. Coaching works without any assumptions or value judgments. The great value of Coaching is to enhance the client's vision, the search for answers. It is assumed that the customer has all the resources he/she needs within him/her.

But how this process is conducted? What kind of questions are this?

B. *Fundamental principles in Coaching*

As referred previously, coaching requires the absence of judgments and assumptions. At a first approach, asking questions may seem abusive, even invasive of privacy. So, these questions must be free of assumptions, should focus on the experience of other and should make him/her think. In Coaching, these questions are called “Powerful Questions”.

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Coaching assumes that each individual has within all the resources needed to solve problems, make decisions and act from actual state towards a desired state. Coaching works, simultaneously, with the past, the present and the future. The past allows the individual to be whom he is today and have a huge resource base. All the experiences, knowledge and feedback can (and should) be worked and used as resources. The problem often is that, when used incorrectly, the past can lead to feelings of guilt and depression. Coaching uses the past as a source of resources. The future may, sometimes, be misused, by feelings of worry and anxiety. Coaching works with future as the world of all possibilities, where one can dream, plan, create and define goals. Despite working with the past and the future, we act in the present. So, through a journey into the past in searching of resources and a trip to the future to define the desired state, Coaching will potentiate the action, and this action will take place in the present.

In order to allow this action, it is fundamental that, first of all, one who wants to do something different – within its “issue” – correctly knows and understands its actual state. As when one feels sick and visits the doctor, it is expected a correct diagnosis, before the doctor do the recommendations and suggest medication. And what about life in general? If we don't know where we are, it is difficult to define a goal and to measure how far away we are from that goal and how we will know that the goal is achieved. We will not have a possible comparison. The first recommended step is to do a correct diagnosis. In Coaching there are a very interesting tool to help people with diagnosis. It is called “Wheel of Life”.

Following is an example of a graphic and caption (“Figure” style).

C. Mapping the “as is”: The Wheel of Life

All papers The Wheel of Life is a very simple tool, which has a great visual impact. To work the Wheel of Life, one should begin by identifying five to ten important areas in life. No less than five, as there are certainly at least five fields that correspond to basic areas of our life. For example: health, finance, romance, career and social life. No more than ten fields, otherwise it would create too much dispersion. With the key areas identified, the second step is to draw a circle and divide it into the number of fields identified. Then, for each one of them, corresponding to each life area, analyze the current level of satisfaction compared with what one considers to be “100% satisfaction”. This analysis and evaluation are personal. What is considered an “ideal situation” for one person may not be to another. Given the same scenario, a situation may be satisfactory for one person and for another it can be completely unsatisfactory. This review will be placed on the wheel, in the respective fields, filling it accordingly, from the center to the periphery, in the area that corresponds to the level of satisfaction. For example, a 50% satisfaction with regarding Health corresponds to half-filled area. A satisfaction level of 85% will correspond to the filled area, closer to the boundary of the wheel. The process is repeated for each of the key areas. In the end, one should look to the resulting graph

and analyze the visual information that it gives us. In the same way, it is important to reflect about the imbalances in our lives, if the areas with less padding are, in fact, those with we feel less satisfied and that may contribute to the general dissatisfaction or even sadness that sometimes one feels but doesn't understand from where it comes, because everything seems to be apparently well. Life, as a wheel, needs certain conditions to run in balance. A wheel with gaps will not roll smoothly. The imbalances identified in the Wheel of Life may themselves also be responsible for the bumps and senses of imbalance in our lives that cause us feelings of dissatisfaction and distress, which sometimes we do not identify the source. The result of this exercise is to have a current state diagnose: identify, in our lives, what areas we consider important and what is the current level of satisfaction in each one of them. This will be the first step in planning for changes towards the desired future state. And now, where to start this change?

There are several possibilities. The considered more ecological in Coaching, is the identification of the leverage area. The leverage area is the area where, with less effort and less investment, we are able to improve, to have more positive impacts on levels of satisfaction with other areas. After identify this area and choosing to act on it, the action plan will be made to boost this area. Some questions – powerful questions – to help us in this reflection may be:

How do I want it to be? - Identification and clarification of the desired future state;

What can I do to change? - Find out what actions can be taken;

What tasks / concrete actions? - Initiate those actions on specific tasks;

When will I start? - Set a date for the first step.

Another possibility is to identify, freely, looking at the various areas, and choosing to work on that which is understood to be the most important, although it may not be the neediest. Of course this option may incur costs to maintain imbalances senses due to discrepancies between the levels of satisfaction with various areas.

The Wheel of Life is a very simple tool in its application but that may have profound impact on a person's life, from the analysis that it promotes. This should be the first step in the action plan, by which also allows actions that are planned are consistent with the desired future state. This tool, widely used in Coaching, may have several variants, always following the wheel structure. We can draw the Wheel of Values, the Wheel of Team, the Wheel of Health, the Wheel of Company, and the Wheel of a Product or a Service... Each wheel can be deployed through their areas, in other wheels with more specific fields. After knowing where we are and knowing for where we want to go, it becomes easier to choose the way. Choose a road without knowing where it starts and where it may lead, may become a waste of resources and, therefore, does not add value to our lives. Retaining the concepts of “waste” and “value”, we will link to Lean Thinking, which base is core principles on reducing waste and creating value.

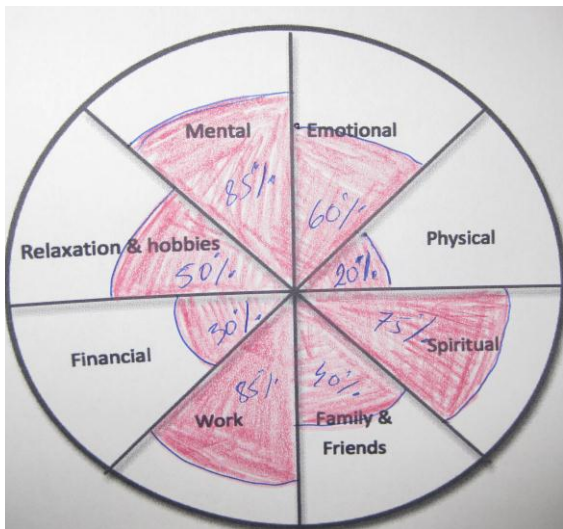


Fig. 1: The Wheel of Life - example

III. LEAN THINKING AND PEOPLE FOCUSED PRINCIPLES

Lean Thinking basic principles are to eliminate waste and create value and agility. Lean philosophy gives great emphasis to people and to their active role in the daily realization of these principles. Concerning about people's role in Lean practices is so huge that 6 of the 14 lean principles identified by Liker et al (2005) and referred to by Pinto (2009), are people related:

- P1: Management decisions based on a long-term philosophy, even pledging financial results of shortterm;
- P6: Standardization is the structure of continuous improvement and empowerment of people;
- P9: To facilitate the development of leaders who truly know the work, live the philosophy and teach others;
- P10: Develop exceptional teams, who follow company's philosophy;
- P11: To respect and extend it to the network partners (including suppliers), challenging them and supporting them to improve;
- P14: Foster the creation of a learning organization, through safe reflection and continuous Improvement.

These ideas summarize the importance that the lean philosophy assigns, whether to eliminate waste, whether the role of people in continuous improvement. It can be inferred about the importance of Coaching in working with the Lean Philosophy and with people, emerging the concept of Lean Coaching. Lean Coaching will therefore cross the Lean principles with the methodologies of coaching. The Wheel of Life, referred above, is a diagnostic tool for identifying waste, while is a tool focused on people. Can be used at individual, team or organizational level.

Arises now the need to take the next step, ie, having identified the wastes and based on a paradigm of continuous improvement, which implies that some action should be taken regarding its elimination and creating value, how and with which support can this step be achieved?

IV. LEAN COACHING AND HARADA METHOD – THE SPIRIT OF SELF RELIANCE

The Harada Method is closely related to Lean philosophy. It materializes the human side of Lean. It has been developed by Takashi Harada and it is a sport's analogy. The Harada Method is based upon some core principles as a path to success, to be a greater leader of people, building great employees and a great organization. It emphasizes the day-to-day management activities and influences workers to pick their own success goal, to build their skills and capabilities and to learn how to coach others towards success. The key in Harada Method is self-reliance. Until now, it becomes clearer that Harada Method, Lean Philosophy and Coaching have common principles. And what about the process in Harada Method? This method assumes that it is fundamental to have a strong personal goal to motivate and drive people forward. The value of the goal should be identified. This is the true purpose of the goal. This method also promotes the analysis of success and analysis of failure, anticipates problems and solutions, is materialized in concrete daily tasks and there should be a coach to support the process. As Harada Method improves analytical skills (by self-analysis, preparation, planning and imagination), enterprise skills (problem solving, creativity) and leadership skills (group management, active communication), it helps create Lean People, ie, people that think and live accordingly to Lean principles. As this method focuses on personal improvement, before any plan, it is fundamental to have the design of the “as is”. This design can be done with Wheel of Life”.

Lean thinking is usually called a “philosophy” and, in fact, it is, because, first of all, it is a way of thinking, act and live. Our behavior is the result of many factor, such as values, beliefs and situational aspects. In spite of the fact that Lean is a philosophy, it is a very practical one, concretized in a lot of tools and concrete methodologies that boosts action. In other words, it is with action that Lean is implemented. Reducing waste and creating value and agility is depending upon action: what we do to eliminate waste. So, what we do to create value and agile the process, in order to become Lean?

As Lean thinking is deeply focused on continuous improvement and as it highlights the role of people on this process, it is needed to concretize it in some way. If people's behavior is guided by motivation towards something, the first step to become Lean is to promote people to do a diagnosis of what is important in their lives and what level of satisfaction each one has in the actual moment. This can be done with the coaching tool Wheel of Life, which will allow identifying waste. Then, the next step, should be creating value and agility, which can be done with Harada Method, defining the future state, goals and purposes and the daily tasks towards the desired state. To support action and change, Harada Method uses some templates. Here we present a template that can be used to plan and monitoring a long term goal.

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE/PROJECT			
Your Name			Starting date
			Closing date
Objective / Project title			
Optimistic target		Closing date	
Intermediate target		Closing date	
Current capacity		Closing date	
Impact evaluation (value and purpose of the Objective/Project)			
Tangible effects			
For others (eg. family and society)		For you	
Intangible effects			

Fig. 2: Long term goal form

V. CONCLUSION

Lean thinking is a very simple but powerful paradigm that promotes and sustains cultural changes in people and organizations. Through simple tools, with common people, it enables to achieve extraordinary results. As this changes must be sustained, there are tools and methodologies that help to concretize lean basic principles of eliminating waste and creating value and agility.

As the first step towards continuous improvement should be a diagnosis, we presented the coaching tool “Wheel of Life”. This tools allows individuals (or teams or organizations) to define the “as is” state, which will help to identify wastes. As Lean assumes continuous improvement, to eliminate waste, usually, there is needed to take some action, regarding waste elimination. So, it will be helpful to have some method that allows to define the desired state, the “to be”. In this paper, we presented Harada Method, which aims to grow and develop people, focusing on goals, towards success, deeply related with continuous improvement.

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