

## PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS OF AN ACTION LEARNING COACH



In 2022, I conducted two groups of Action Learning projects in Melaleuca. There were 6 people in each group. The topics of the two groups were:

1. How to integrate the company's business practices into each employee's work to strengthen the building of corporate values
2. Adjustment of stock preparation strategy in the post pandemic era

The first group did not have any director, was younger, more energetic, innovative and passionate. The second group had three directors, a little older, two members are from the supply chain department, high relevance of their work and the topic.

### **My Insights**

The first group reframed the problem to "how to quantify the behavior of employees in embracing the corporate culture". They have reached the realization stage of the project and have some preliminary results.

The second group went through problem reframing. The topic became "How to make Mela's stocking more resilient in the VUCA era." They were in the program delivery stage, and the implementation effect was not as obvious as the first group.

The first group won the Outstanding Project Award in the final presentation. However, both groups' performances were well received by the judges, and the difference in the final scores was not very large.

Problems I encountered and reflections:

### **1. Systematic learning of problem refactoring**

- In fact, I have a very deep feeling that there is no standard answer to "problem refactoring", and I don't know to what extent "refactoring" should be about the same. The participants analyze the organization's weaknesses, and then change it. When the trainees have analyzed the organization's inferiority, it is very difficult to change it, and it is not possible to change it, and it is not possible to do so. If the analysis is too superficial, it will not work either. Therefore, if this problem is reconstructed to the extent that it is almost reconstructed, systematic learning is needed.

**Coach's reflection:** The coach should also learn from doing, and learn more systematically the process of problem reconstruction, methodology, and judge the "reconstruction" in place, because the process of student reconstruction of the problem has always been a "dynamic" process. The coach needs to have enough professional insight in this aspect, because the process of refactoring is always a "dynamic" process.

### **2. Accumulation of problem-solving tools**

- During the practical process, I wondered if it is possible to accumulate more different problem-solving tools, so that when leading the group, I can teach them more different problem solving methods, or when encountering different topics, we can use different methods, or is it possible to use different tools in the group? Or is it possible to try different problem-solving methods and models in different periods of the problem-solving process? Since enterprises still have expectations and requirements for project results in the process of action learning, and many students really lack problem solving ability, I think it is necessary to learn more about the scientific method of problem solving and do it together with practice.

**Coach's reflection:** The coach should master more problem-solving tools/models, and give more weapons to the trainees in the process of the project to facilitate the trainees to solve the problems better.

### **3. Practical tips on "pulling out the elephants for a walk".**

- When I was leading these two groups, I obviously found that the first group, because they were all at about the same level and relatively young, had good

listening skills and were willing to accept other people's opinions. Even if there were heated discussions, the field was still very energetic and gave positive impetus to the topic; however, the second group, because there were a lot of directors and people who had their own job, which was supply chain, had 2-3 people who spoke a lot. I actually realized this problem early on, reminded that the two have been speaking a lot, but also try to go through a number of different attempts, or use the first group of positive and team spirit to do some motivation.

**Coach's reflection:** How do you make participants with higher positions and even more conceited ones realize that they can put themselves down and listen to others? This is a process that the coach has to keep on improving, and it is also a place where it is easy to make the participants convinced and feel the power of the action learning tool in the whole process of the project. In fact, in the organization, there are a lot of problems to solve the stumbling blocks. If the action learning coach can be very skillful to expose this problem, it can be very good to the participants. Confidence is doubled.

4. How to better design the "participant growth" and "organizational growth" parts of the program

- After the first phase of my own attempt, I felt that as a coach, I still put a lot of energy on how to help the participants to move forward according to the main line of the program, and I have spent a lot of thoughts and energy on this, but I didn't feel that there was a clear "main line" for the participants' self-growth. I tend to intervene when I feel that there is a learning point, or the group discussion follows the observation of teamwork and individual choice of leadership. This is not wrong. I always feel that since personal growth is so important, when designing the project, can we design more about "personal growth" or "organizational learning", so that at the end of the project, we can look back with more clarity. It would be more convincing if we can do some visual and quantifiable measurement and comparison.

**Coach's reflection:** How to design the "personal growth" or "organizational learning" part more clearly in the course of the project, and it would be better if visual and quantifiable comparisons can be made at the end of the project.

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