Coaching Trends in Latin America

By Jeannette Karamañites

Managing employees in 2014 is no longer about correction, command and control. The key to improving employee performance today is coaching.

Increasingly, managers are taking responsibility for ensuring that their staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform at a high level, and this often takes the form of person-to-person interventions.

Latin American employers are increasingly using coaching as a management tool, according to research conducted among the 15 member organizations of the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations (FIDAGH). Employers in our region primarily use this tool for team development, executive development and fostering leadership skills, but they also report using a coaching methodology in the employee assessment process as a way to improve performance and commitment.

Our survey found that employers in our region tend to use two types of coaching: ontological and NLP (neurolinguistic programming). The ontological approach addresses individuals’ deeply held—but perhaps limiting—beliefs and works to transform the basic way they understand and interpret themselves as well as those around them. NLP focuses more on using the connection between an individual’s neurological processes, language use and behavioral patterns learned through experience to change habits and improve performance.

Latin American HR professionals often seek out certification in coaching through one of two organizations: the International Coaching Community (ICC) and the International Coaching Federation (ICF). They report that becoming certified has helped them to grow as professionals and to develop skills that can be employed as part of their HR duties. Many go on to create programs within their organizations to develop coaching skills among their managers.

Country Trends

In Argentina, the emphasis is on ontological coaching, with employers developing diverse programs primarily serving executives. There are many training opportunities for people management professionals, including postgraduate degrees.

In Costa Rica, the trend is to use coaching in the employee development process. However, it is seen as costly in a country with mainly small to midsize enterprises, so only a small percentage of companies use this best practice.

In the Dominican Republic, the trend in coaching is moving in the direction of team development as well as executive development. It is considered an added value for organizations. In November, Coaching Trends continued on page 2
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the World Congress of Coaching will be held here, demonstrating the growing influence of coaching in this country.

In Ecuador, we have seen the growth of coaching as a tool for talent development in organizations. ICF has a major presence here, and several business schools offer coaching training to serve the needs of senior leadership.

The state of coaching varies widely in different markets, with uneven levels of experience, quality and reputation. This puts a lot of pressure on certification organizations to maintain consistently high international standards.

The use of coaching in Guatemala is growing. The country has a national coaching association with six member organizations offering certification as well as a post-graduate training program. The focus is to enhance employee development through managerial coaching.

In my country of Panama, ICC has been an active proponent of coaching since 2005, certifying more than 500 professionals, many of whom have gone on to implement coaching-based programs in their companies for executive development. However, Panama is a market of small to midsize employers, so coaching is often outsourced.

Latin American Multinationals Challenged by HR Issues

By Roy Maurer

Consequent to their rapid rise in recent years, Latin American multinational companies face many workforce challenges in foreign markets, especially when expanding via mergers and acquisitions.

Global professional services consultancy Towers Watson’s 2013 survey of Latin American multinationals revealed Latin American companies’ great appetite for entering new markets, although obstacles abound. The most vexing workforce issues companies cited with their overseas operations were recruiting talent and lack of sophisticated succession planning.

Despite their quick growth, Latin American multinationals still face many barriers, the report noted. They need to focus more on their HR strategies, especially when they expand via mergers and acquisitions, which pose particular HR risks. Talent management should be more consistent globally, especially among those wishing to advance to the next stages of internationalization. Succession planning—which, if mishandled, can jeopardize the viability of a company when a key operational position goes vacant—still has a long way to go.

The Towers Watson report included responses from 33 multinationals in eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. The selected companies have, on average, more than 25,000 workers and collectively employ 840,000 people.

Seizing Opportunities Globally

Latin American multinationals have entered foreign markets that seemed out of reach a few decades ago, according to the analysis. While Western economies have been keeping a watchful eye on Asian multinationals, Latin American multinationals “have been sharpening their skills in the global arena and are poised to become fierce competitors,” the report said.

The average Latin American multinational has operations in 13 countries. Specifically, about 69 percent of respondents reported having a presence in North America, and 60 percent reported having facilities in Western Europe. Brazilian multinationals have operations in the most countries, followed by Argentinean and Mexican companies. The most widespread type of operation worldwide is sales, according to the survey results.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents plan to explore new markets over the next three to five years, despite current financial troubles in Europe and the slow economic recovery in the United States. Latin American multinationals also want to further expand within their
Latin American Multinationals continued from page 2

own region. Among those with plans to expand, 67 percent were looking in Latin America, 30 percent in Asia-Pacific, 18 percent in Africa and 15 percent in Europe.

Asia is expected to be very attractive to Latin American multinationals for exploration and development because of its large markets and natural and human resources, the report noted. Moreover, many Asian-Pacific countries are eager to attract foreign investment, and many Latin American companies have taken advantage of the financial and tax incentives being offered in these countries.

Culture Shocks
Survey respondents cited mergers and acquisitions as the most challenging entry mode, garnering 55 percent of responses. This reflects the difficulties of cultural and organizational integration. Latin American companies will need to bridge a significant cultural gap to succeed, particularly in Asia and Africa, Towers Watson said.

Joint ventures may be the safest mode of entry, especially when the company does not know its target market well. This can easily be remedied by creating strategic alliances with local companies.

However, the report noted that Latin American multinationals—along with Asian multinationals—have an advantage in Africa over their competitors from more-developed regions because of their experience with similar government, political and economic systems and environments.

Easier entry modes include “green field investments,” wherein a parent company creates a completely new enterprise as a subsidiary or expands its own firm. This approach does not require companies to adapt to established organizational cultures. Joint ventures, however, may be the safest mode of entry, especially when the company does not know its target market well. This can easily be remedied by creating strategic alliances with local companies.

Survey respondents perceived Asia and Africa to be very challenging targets because of their geographical vastness and their cultural and linguistic differences. Respondents cited not only the difficulty in finding employees willing to work in and travel to these regions, but also the challenge of locating qualified local workers. Even though HR assigns high importance to cross-cultural understanding, these efforts have yet to yield beneficial results, according to respondents.

Latin America is generally considered an easy region to do business in. Within the region, however, Brazil is the most difficult country to enter, the survey results reveal, primarily because of its complex legal framework and high costs.

Regional Roadblocks
The most common workforce obstacle to international growth cited by Latin American multinationals is lack of succession planning (57 percent of respondents), followed by the loss of talent in key skill areas (42 percent). Other HR challenges Latin American companies mentioned include the following:

- Aggressive recruiting from competitors (33 percent).
- Inability to attract necessary talent (27 percent).
- Inability to pay at competitive levels (18 percent).

Curiously, while a slim majority of surveyed companies said they involve their HR function in identifying and mitigating workforce risks—including succession planning, executive compensation design, talent retention and quality assurance—only 12 percent reported that HR directors and executives are full members of the standing risk committee. In about 15 percent of these companies, HR directors and other executives participate in local and international risk management decisions only in specific areas, such as occupational safety and training.

“Although they face many challenges, Latin American multinationals have performed very well in recent years, achieving global recognition,” Towers Watson concluded, adding that multinationals from the developed world are aware of the threat they pose and view their increasing strength as a near-term challenge.

Managing Teams the World Cup Way

By Dayra Muñoz Montecer

The 2014 FIFA World Cup captured the attention of an estimated 3.2 billion people this past summer. Now that it is over, I want to reflect on how this event, and the people at the center of it, offers lessons in people management for all of us.

Like many of you, I am not an expert in the technical details of football, but I enjoy the game and the intense competition. With teams enduring a yearlong qualifying process and an exhausting month of final matches, the relationship between the coaches and the players is complex, long-term and central to the success of the organization. Does this sound like our profession?

I believe there is a useful analogy to be drawn between the role of an HR leader and that of a football coach. To get the most out of the team—a diverse set of individuals with differing talents, backgrounds and attitudes—coaches manage, teach, correct and discipline to create an effective working whole from the sum of the players’ individual skills and personalities. It is a similar case with people management. Let’s consider the following aspects:

Communication
The best football coaches communicate strongly and effectively. From the HR, point of view, it is essential that any person who manages teams is able to transmit clearly to members what is needed, is able to motivate them and is able to make them feel that they can count on his leadership.

Consistency
Good coaches should be reliable and consistent. Those who lead work teams must also be steady in their actions.

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and expectations. Team members will not feel comfortable with managers who fail to lead by example, but they will strive to improve if they see their leaders constantly striving for excellence.

Motivation
Good coaches motivate their players. Similarly, the work-team manager is a leader who motivates and raises self-esteem, improving individual performance, effort and participation in the team’s decision-making processes.

The manager must give each team member a role to play and the resources to carry it out. Further, the manager can get more out of the team by demanding more from those who succeed in their roles and offering support to those who cannot.

Setting and Meeting Objectives
A good coach is able to set a goal and establish a method to achieve it. He knows that the team will have difficulties and setbacks, but his directions will be clear and firm, covering all probabilities. Similarly, the work-team manager also must have a defined timeline and know how to share it with all members of the team. The manager must then give each team member a role to play and the resources to carry it out. Further, the manager can get more out of the team by demanding more from those who succeed in their roles and offering support to those who cannot.

Team Defender
It is said that good football coaches defend their teams. When something goes wrong, rather than searching for culprits, a true leader looks for ways to solve problems. Those who lead work teams should also play a protective, nurturing role. The team manager must be able to handle conflicts sensitively but effectively so that the team remains functional and durable, with morale intact.

Emotional Intelligence
The best coaches are adept at understanding and using emotional intelligence because they must deal with interpersonal issues, ego conflicts and other problems. Work-team leaders must have similar skills to guide the group, keeping ahead of conflicts and predicting future relational problems. Managers must be able to help team members to develop self-esteem and the group to develop self-efficacy—belief in the success of the unit as a whole.

Appreciation
Good coaches understand that the members of their teams are not machines but human beings with diverse values, feelings and personality traits. People managers also must treat their teams with the right mixture of energy and calm, neither imposing rigid discipline nor being extremely flexible, guided by the relationships and collegiality that arise from team interaction.

Finally, the human resource professional wants to build a champion team. By keeping this analogy in mind, and approaching each problem and challenge with a winning mindset, we can achieve successful results, bringing victory to our organizations.

Leyla Nascimento is President of the Brazilian Association of Human Resources.

Human Resources: The Corporate Alchemist

By Leyla Nascimento

There is a complex Greek word that seems to be appropriate to the subject of people management—phármakon, which can mean either medicine or poison. It can also refer to something cosmetic, as Plato tells us in Phaedo, when he proposes that language is a phármakon when it helps to mask a reality.

So what represents the “medicine” or the “poison” in the corporate world? The answer is simple: the employee.

Studies about change management often point toward the human individual as one of the main obstacles to the success of such initiatives. Ironically, the most important player in the pursuit of change—the employee—can also be considered the most negative aspect of it.

This is not really surprising, since every change process brings with it a dose of fear and anxiety for the people involved. Leaving one’s comfort zone is never easy. But for some people, the possibility of change arouses the expectation of new horizons, exciting challenges and career growth. For others, fear and mistrust guide their responses to change.

Therefore, in the midst of change, we find some people representing the poison in the company—perhaps unconsciously sabotaging a project—and we find some people who act as a medicine, helping to minimize the pain of a transformation process.

In an environment where labor relations are increasingly more complex and unstable, and where a good job and a reasonable salary are no longer enough for a satisfied workforce, one of the most urgent demands on a company is to bring out the medicine side of people. This challenge falls to the HR professional, who acts as a kind of “corporate alchemist.”

As alchemists, HR professionals must engage people directly in the values and purpose of the organization. They must also strive to align what the company wants and what the individual craves, creating an ethical and productive environment from a new social contract between the parties that takes into consideration both the company’s business and the individual’s business.

Dayra Muñoz Montecer is Secretary-Treasurer of the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations.

Leyla Nascimento is President of the Brazilian Association of Human Resources.
How People Management Is Changing Latin America—
The Presidents’ Perspective

Compiled by the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations

Each June, Latin American countries celebrate the Day of the Human Resources Professional. To mark the occasion this year, the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations (FIDAGH) interviewed some of its former presidents on the changes the profession has seen over the years.

We asked them “In what ways has people management evolved in Latin America since its beginnings? What changes do you feel have had the greatest impact on the businesses of our region and why?”

Cassio Mattos, 2003-2005

I think the human resource profession has contributed greatly to our countries’ economic expansion into the global business world. It has generated significant advances in entrepreneurship and job creation. As such, unemployment in our region has decreased significantly. However, this has made people management much more complex. Attracting, developing and retaining the best professionals becomes not only harder but also more critical to business success.

The price of employee turnover extends beyond the tangible costs of hiring and training—it also must take into account the loss of intellectual capital. The knowledge of the employee who has been cultivated and integrated into the organizational culture of the company cannot be replaced easily at any price.

Another challenge for Latin American organizations is that it is increasingly difficult to find people with the desired profile at the right salary, which means employers have to either settle for candidates who don’t meet the minimum requirements or pay more than they would like to meet their hiring goals.

Other challenges we find in this new economic scenario include managing people from four different generations in the same organizational environment, the need to succeed in “doing more with less” and developing leadership skills among employees to get the best performance out of teams.

Eladio Uribe, 2001-2003

In my view, the data and evidence available to guide our profession is still too weak. Research studies, key performance indicators, and the ability of people management leaders to correlate their strengths and skills with the strategic needs of the organization must be improved.

People management professionals should be increasingly trained on issues related to human behavior, return on investment and social responsibility—both globally and locally. Certainly we all have these processes circling around in our heads, and we hear about them everywhere, but we need to act accordingly and connect our execution with results. We need to take macro strategies and tactics away from the advisors and analysts and give them to those who can execute them. From my point of view, this adds value to organizations and is even applicable to national governments.

Horacio Quiros, 2007-2009

It is a bit daring to generalize about such a complex subject, but I believe HR in Latin America has made a strategic shift that has placed our profession—at least in the urban centers of the region—in the same league as the most advanced countries of the globe. We share the same problems and seek the same solutions—adapted, of course, to our local and particular situations.

The widespread adoption of the concept of HR as a “business partner”—as defined by management guru Dave Ulrich—has given a greater strategic role to people management. This concept has been translated into the day-to-day duties of HR and placed into the hands of those who supervise and lead people in organizations.

The increased delegation of HR functions to outsourced service centers was also helpful to reorient and refine the practice. The greatest challenge we face now is the need to manage a diverse workforce, sometimes from different geographical areas, in a time when organizations are no longer contained within four walls. It is important to keep in mind that these new challenges only confirm that our profession is always renewing and always remains exciting.

The knowledge of the employee who has been cultivated and integrated into the organizational culture of the company cannot be replaced easily at any price.’

Leovigildo Canto, 2009-2011

I have argued throughout my career that the “talent manager,” regardless of his strategic role in a particular company, produces a synergy that can lead the company to its goals. In recent years, however, the human experience has changed. Societal transformations and contemporary lifestyles place different demands on individuals. Shifting priorities require people management to have a flexibility never seen before.

Therefore, I am convinced that our profession in Latin America faces a demand for a more human approach by organizations—one that will consider the individual in a more holistic manner that incorporates the individual, his or her family, and their future dreams. Employees will feel fully developed within the company when their job not only is fulfilling their financial needs but also becomes a place where their dreams come true.
FIDAGH Celebrates 50 Years

The Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations (FIDAGH) reached its golden milestone last November, celebrating 50 years of leading the human resource profession in Latin America. To mark the anniversary, FIDAGH staged a special seminar in Rio de Janeiro, gathering 300 representatives from the 15 member organizations in the region. Jeannette Karamañites was inaugurated as president of FIDAGH—the first woman to serve in this position.

During the seminar, participants had the opportunity to build and fortify business relationships and share experiences with their counterparts across the continent through formal discussions, networking and social events.

Chile’s Human Resources Executive Circle (CERH), represented by its president, Miguel Ropert, and its executive director, Sergio Urbina, officially announced the theme of the WFPMA 15th World Human Resource Management Congress to be “It’s All about People,” emphasizing the need to return to the origins of the profession. The World Congress takes place biannually, rotating its location through five continents. This year it will be held in Santiago, Chile, October 15-17.

Also, Ivan Arenas, president of the Colombian Federation of People Management (ACRIP), officially invited the Latin American delegations to the Interamerican Human Resources Management Congress—CIGEH 2015—in Barranquilla, Colombia, May 13-15, 2015.

The event wrapped up with a gala where guests paid tribute to former FIDAGH presidents Ruben Casavalle of Uruguay and Carlos Aldao of Argentina.

To mark its 50th anniversary, FIDAGH published Gestion Humana en America Latina, a compendium of human resource management in 15 Latin American countries. The book project was born during the FIDAGH General Assembly, held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 2012, after which work began to gather and compile information from member countries into each of 15 chapters. Publication was made possible through the sponsorship of the Brazilian company Qualitmark Editora Ltda.

The book may be ordered through info@fidagh.org.
Argentina
Price controls
In September, Argentina’s Congress passed a consumer protection law that allows the imposition of price controls, despite opposition arguments. The law is aimed at protecting consumers as well as small and midsize companies. According to the Fernandez government, it is intended to promote investment, boost employment in the regional economies, and set the stage for government regulation to prevent abuses such as artificial price increases and hoarding of surpluses by producers of goods.

Bolivia
Controversial child labor law
A new law in Bolivia allowing children as young as 10 to work legally has brought sharp criticism from many international human rights groups who note that it goes against a United Nations convention setting a minimum age of 14. Supporters of the legislation say the law guarantees legal protections and fair wages for children, who will work regardless of laws prohibiting child labor. A 2013 report from the U.S. Department of Labor stated that more than 20 percent of Bolivians between the ages of 7 and 14 work, while the United Nations put that figure nearly three times higher in 2008, according to The Associated Press. Both reports note that Bolivian children work in some of the country’s most dangerous working conditions.

Brazil
Longer tenure for temps
A new law allows companies in Brazil to retain temporary workers for up to nine months, under certain circumstances. Brazil’s Ministry of Labor and Employment issued the new regulation, which became effective July 1, 2014. Brazilian law generally prohibits the use of temporary workers, allowing employers to use temps only to substitute for employees on leave or to assist during an “extraordinary” increase in workload. Previously, the limit for temporary assignments was three months.

Chile
More costly to do business
Chile’s left-wing Congress has approved a sweeping tax reform bill that will increase the cost of doing business in the country by raising corporate taxes and closing some tax exemptions. The measure was fiercely opposed by the right-wing opposition and business leaders, who said it will hurt private-sector investments at a time when Chile’s economic growth has slowed. The Chilean economy is expected to grow by about 3 percent this year, down from 4.1 percent in 2014. However, the government asserts that the extra funds brought in by higher business tax rates—equivalent to about 3 percentage points of gross domestic product by 2018—will pay for an overhaul of the education system and other social reforms that will benefit all Chileans. The legislation would lower personal income taxes.

Colombia
Falling unemployment
Colombia’s National Administrative Department of Statistics has released data showing that unemployment in the country is continuing to fall, fueled by an increase in jobs in the energy sector. Unemployment fell from 9.9 percent to 9.3 percent in July, following a downward trend that has been ongoing since 2010. However, there are still weaknesses in the employment sector: More than 36 percent of Colombia’s working-age population is “inactive”—not searching for work and not considered unemployed. Moreover, nearly half of the working-age population works in the informal sector, where a cash-only business model and off-the-books accounting make it impossible to collect taxes and integrate workers into the larger national social architecture.

Costa Rica
Hiring slowdown
Only 10 percent of employers across all sectors plan to hire new workers in the last quarter of 2014—the lowest level in recent years—according to the results of Manpower’s Costa Rica Employment Outlook Survey 4Q. Five percent plan to reduce staff, while 85 percent will keep current staff unchanged for the next three months. The most optimism could be found in the manufacturing sector, which projects a net employment increase of 9 percent. Construction employers report an outlook of –1 percent. Manpower’s analysis concluded that the decline is due to caution because of the country’s fiscal deficit, an increase in the national budget for 2015 and a spike in informal employment.

Ecuador
New worker protections
The Ecuadorian government has introduced a new law offering a number of benefits and protections for a variety of workers. It establishes a National Labor Council charged with reducing discrepancies between salaries for upper-management positions by requiring employers to consider the rate of inflation, the productivity of the company and equitability. The proposed legislation also gives more rights to employees who are unfairly dismissed, better protecting vulnerable workers such as union leaders, women, people with disabilities, Afro-Ecuadorians and the LGBT community. The law allows for the possibility of terminated employees being reinstated to their job if they were victims of discrimination. Families will benefit, too: Nonworking mothers will be able to access social security benefits for the first time, and pregnant women can extend maternity leave to a year, up from the current nine months.

Guatemala
Labor standards failure
The United States has accused Guatemala of failing to live up to the labor standards spelled out in the countries’ trade agreement, pursuing a case that could lead to fines if Guatemala doesn’t move to better protect its workers. The case is being filed at a time when the U.S.-Mexican border is being overwhelmed by young immigrants, many of them Guatemalan children and teens fleeing violence in their home country. The U.S. Trade Representative has stated that its action aims to help make Guatemala a safer place to live and work so that fewer immigrants attempt the dangerous journey north.

Panama
First in feeling good
According to the 2014 Gallup–Healthways Well-Being Index, Panama ranks first among 135 countries in the happiness of its citizenry, far above its nearest rival, Costa Rica. The index measures more than wealth and good health—it ranks how people feel about their lives, with data points for sense of purpose, social connections, community, finances and physical vigor. Panamanians’ positive attitude may be due in part to their employment prospects: They were the most likely in the world to say this is a good time to find a job, reflecting a growing economy anchored by the massive Panama Canal expansion.

WorldLink Calendar

October 15-17, 2014
WFPM 15th World Human Resource Management Congress
Centro de Eventos CasaPiedra
Santiago, Chile
Website: www.lapersona.cl

October 22, 2014
47th Portuguese Association of People Management (APG) National Conference
Belem Cultural Centre, Lisbon
E-mail: global@apg.pt
Website: www.apg.pt
Phone: +351 21 358 09 12

November 5-6, 2014
Paraguayan Association of Human Resources (APARH) Human Resources Congress
Conmebol Convention Center
Asuncion, Paraguay
E-mail: informaciones@aparh.com
Website: www.aparh.com
Phone: +0986 139 700

November 9-12, 2014
Institute of People Management (IPM) South Africa Annual Convention 2014
Sun City, North West Province
South Africa
Website: www.ipm.co.za
Phone: +716 7504/03

November 20-21, 2014
Ecuador Association of Personnel Directors (ADGHE) 22nd International Congress of People Management
Quito, Ecuador
E-mail: info@adghe.com
Website: www.adghe.com/congreso-2014

May 13-15, 2015
Interamerican Human Resources Management Congress (CIGEH 2015)
Centro de Convenciones Barranquilla, Colombia
E-mail: dirección@acripnacional.org
Phone: +57 1 540 2020 ext 108 and 109

October 19-21, 2016
WFPM 16th World Congress on Human Resource Management
Istanbul, Turkey
Website: www.wfpma2016istanbul.org

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President: Ernesto G. Espinosa, Philippines

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FIDAGH (15)
INTERAMERICAN FEDERATION OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS
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President: Jeannette Karamanítes, Panama

NAHRMA (3)
NORTH AMERICAN HRM ASSOCIATION
Canada, Mexico, United States
President: Jorge Jauregui, Mexico

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WorldLink welcomes news stories, announcements of events and ideas for articles. These should be accompanied by a telephone number and e-mail address.

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