



# Coaching as a talent management practice in a global bank: specificities and impact at individual and organisational level

NUCAM Coaching Group

Webinar

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# Relevance, background and context

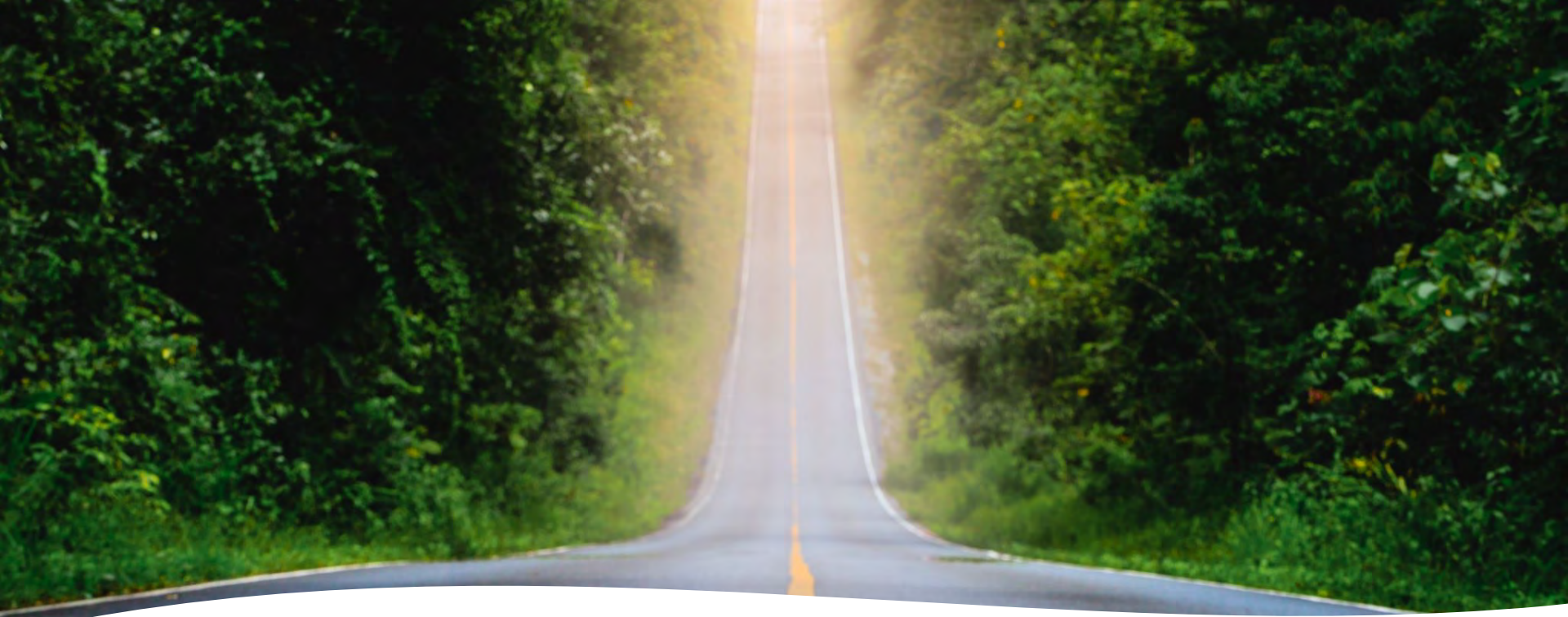
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- TM and LD : a perennial issue and a priority for organisations in post covid-19 era (Caligiuri et al. 2020; Collings et al. 2021)
- TM in the banking sector: talent shortages and leadership crisis (Quinlan and Associates, 2017; PWC, 2017)
- Wide use of coaching in organisations in UK and world and one of the most effective TM practice (CIPD, 2015; ICF, 2020)

## **BUT**

- Effectiveness of TM practices often questioned (McKinsey, 2018)
- The views of talented employees is often missing in empirical studies (Gallardo-Gallardo-Thunnissen, 2016; Sparrow, 2019)
- Coaching often studied as part of a bundle of TM practices, not examined specifically (Blackman, Moscardo and Gray, 2016)





## Research questions

- Defining the role played by talent coaching for talented employees
- Understanding coaching as a specific TM practice

- RQ1: How do multiple stakeholders (talented employees, HR managers, and coaches) perceive the contribution of coaching in the context of TM in a global bank?
- RQ2: What is the role of talent coaching ?
- RQ3: How is coaching characterised in the context of TM?

# Talent or not Talent?

- 17 definitions of talent based on 4 different approaches (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnissen, 2019; Skuza et al., 2022). :
  - elitist vs egalitarian;
  - the trait/skill approach (innate abilities or acquired competencies);
  - high-performance vs high-potential;
  - TM as object (talent as people's characteristics) vs subject (talent as people)

***The management and development of high-performing and high-potential incumbents in critical organizational roles***  
***(Collings, 2014:111)***



# Talent management

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- An inevitable topic and a growing field of study (McDonnell et al., 2017; Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019; Sparrow, 2019)
- TM and LD schemes typically include coaching, mentoring, training, international assignments, rotation programmes, etc.

## **BUT**

Lack of empirical research on the talented employees' views, experience and their expectations

Little is known on the impact of TM practices on career progression and leadership development (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen, 2016; Cascio and Boudreau, 2016)



# Coaching in organisations

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- Many definitions and hybrid practice (Western, 2012; Garvey, Stokes, & Megginson, 2018)

***“A human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee, and potentially for other stakeholders”***

(Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2018:1)

- Prevalence of the positive impacts of coaching : Leadership development, performance enhancement, well-being and employee engagement (Birckerich, Michael & Shea, 2017; Theeboom et al., 2014)
- **‘Talent coaching’**: one-to-one developmental interventions received by talented employees taking part in a TM programme



# Theoretical Framework

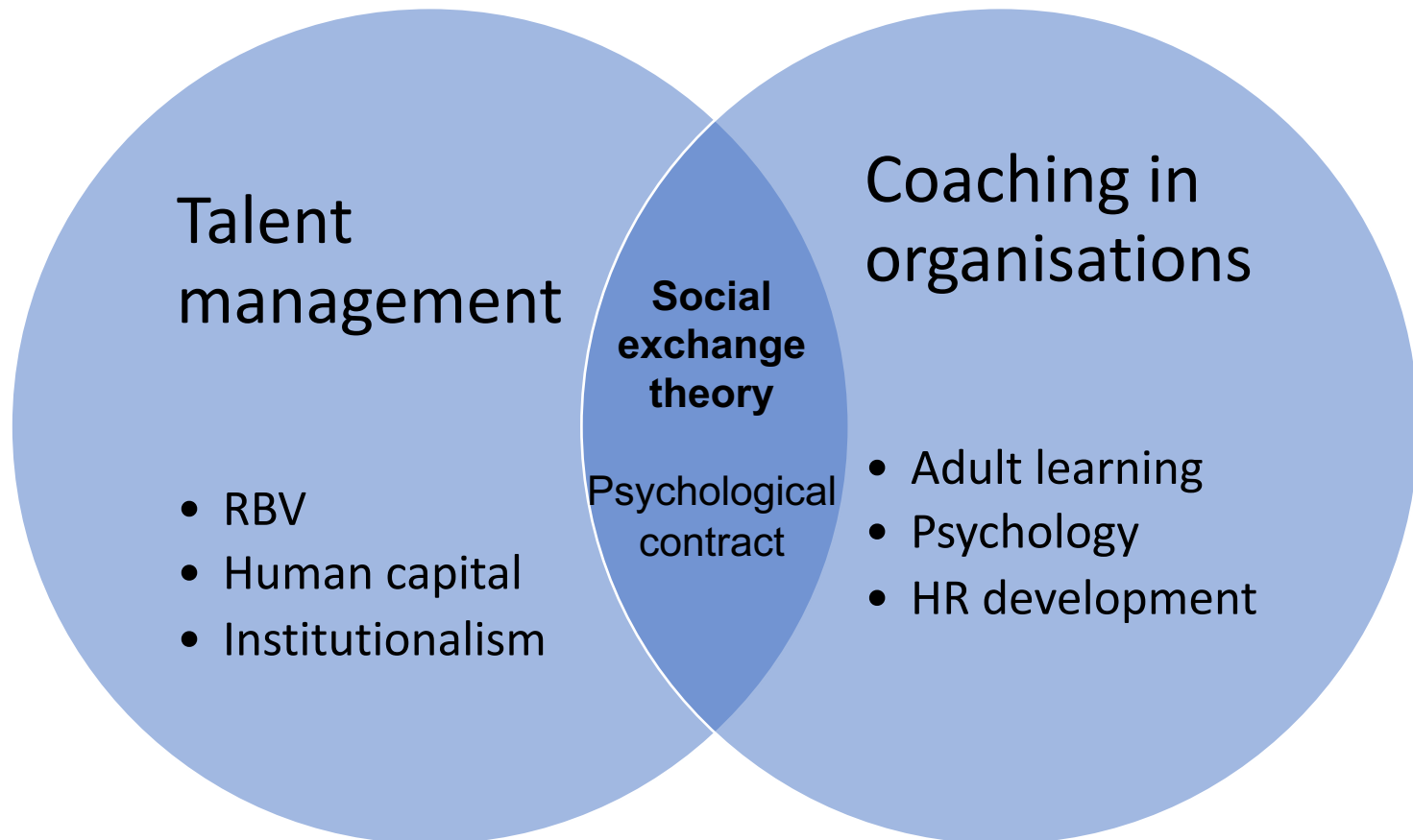
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- Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a theoretical lens to make sense of the data, emerged in the analysis phase
- SET posits that social behaviours are the result of an exchange process between two parties based on a cost-benefit analysis (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1986)
- SET is used as a theoretical framework in:
  - TM studies: to understand the reactions of talented employees to the talent status (King, 2016; De Boeck, Meyers, & Dries, 2018)
  - Coaching studies: to understand the positive and negative impact of coaching (Nyfoudi & Tasoulis, 2018; Schermuly & Graßmann, 2019)



# Theoretical framework

(Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2015; Gallardo and Thunnissen, 2016; Shutte and Sheyn, 2015; Schermuly and Graßmann, 2019)





# Methodology

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- Social constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology
- Qualitative, abductive
- Single case study research design: real-life and in-depth understanding of talent coaching as a phenomenon (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Ellinger, McWhorter, 2020):
  - One multinational bank, 4 TM programmes including coaching element
  - 30 semi-structured interviews
  - Participants: talented employees, HR managers, internal and external coaches
- Purposive sampling designed from preliminary meetings with EMEA Head of OD and TM managers.



# Data collection

<b>TM Programmes in EMEA</b>	<b>1st interview</b>	<b>2nd interview</b>	
Programme A - Junior	3	1	
Programme B- Senior	2	1	
Programme C- Middle managers - Consumer division	4	1	
Programme D- Senior women	3	1	
External coaches	3	2	
Internal coaches	2	1	
HR managers	3	0	
Programme managers	3	0	
	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>

# Overview of the 4 TM programmes

Programme	Target participants	Length	Coach	Structure	Format
A			Internal (HR managers and MDs)	3 sessions	
B		3 months	Internal (HR managers and MDs)	2 sessions	
C – Business specific (Consumer division)		6 months	Internal (HR managers)	3 sessions	
D – Gender specific (Women)					

# Finding 1: Talent coaching as social reward

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- A **rite of passage**, especially for leaders transitioning to MD level (Oliver, T, B, 2)
- A **gratifying career event**, although not systematically conducive of career progression

*A hard-landing. (Nathalie, multiple, 2)*

*It is not a panacea. (Adam, HR, 1)*

- A **relational reward**

*So you feel a little bit of love, that they want to spend time and money on you; and that you are not completely unnoticed. (...) We are being recognized and rewarded. (Emma, T, A, 1)*

- A **symbol of high status** and enactment of the talent status

## Finding 2: Talent coaching as catalyst for leadership change

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- **Coaching capacity and capability building**

*Broadening the leadership repertoire of managers and moving away from a command-and-control approach.*

*Better quality conversation, (Head of OD, Int C.,1)*

- **An unspoken mechanism for the selection of a talent elite**

*There'll be the smaller group [of employees] that think, yes, I can do that [coaching] to make me sort of a better person, whether it's here or outside work or whatever. And they're the people that I think eventually go into the really big leadership roles.*

*(Georges, Int. C, 1)*

- **An alternative to employee relations management and mediation at senior level**

# Group discussion



How would you use talent coaching in your organisation?



Explore the rationale, implementation, expected outcomes for all actors



Any pitfalls, risks, barriers to a positive impact of talent coaching?

## Finding 3: Talent coaching characteristics

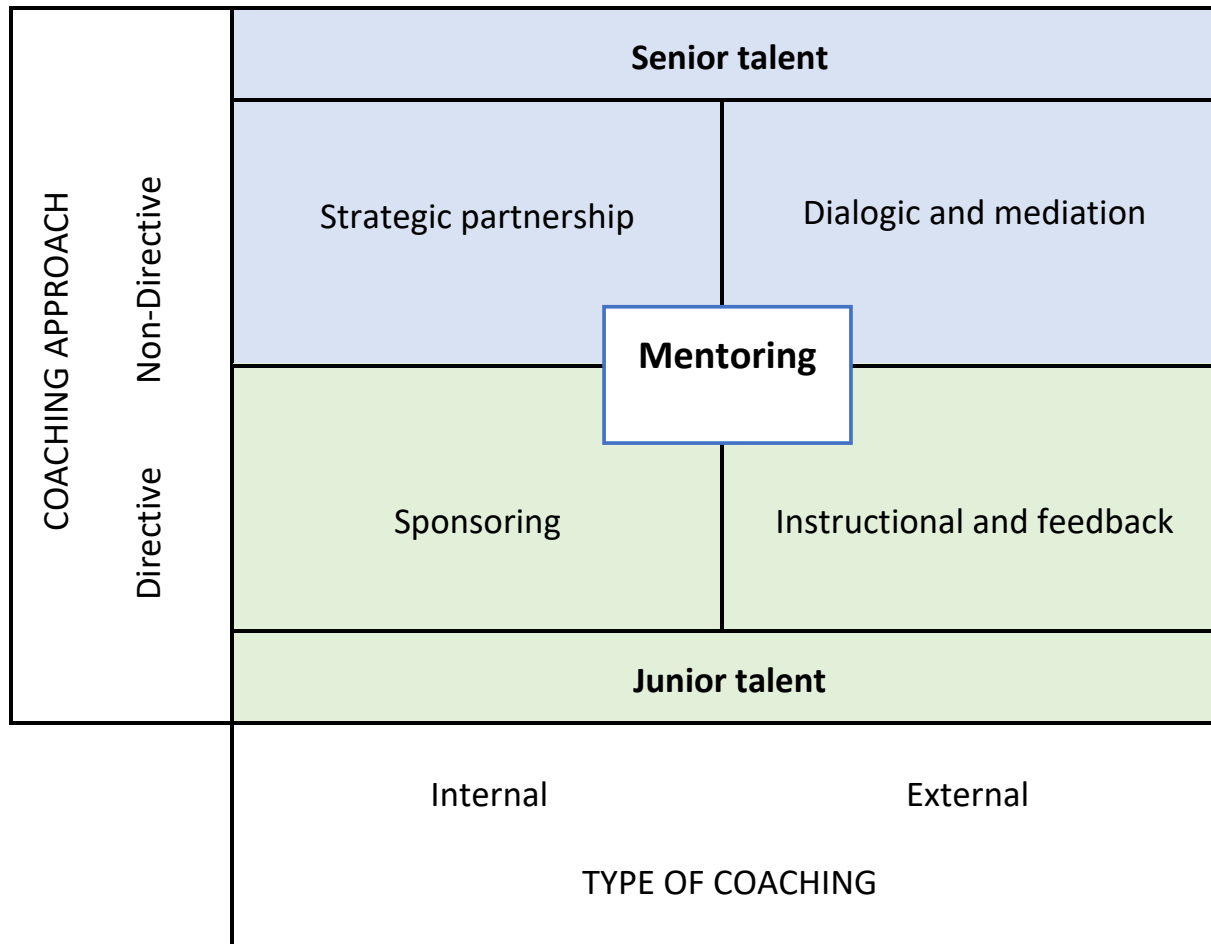
- **Not a remedial** intervention to address performance issues
- An individualised platform for the development of leadership capabilities based on **mutual exchange gains and long-term relationships**
- Develop the **political skills and network** to climb the career ladder
- Talent coach as “ **advocate, ambassador, sponsor, mentor**”

*I am quite sure that coaching helps in the positive politics that you need to evolve in any firm. (Emma, T, A, 1)*

*You realise that the organisation doesn't necessarily have a structure for people who want to peddle faster, because it's a very case-by-case basis how people get to the next point. (Carry, T, A, 1)*

*If you are positively impacted by a coach, you are the brand ambassador for him as well. Trust me, I know my coach. (Emma, T, A, 1)*

# The Talent Coaching Matrix





## Discussion

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- Prolongs the work of King (2016) on the talent deal:
  - how talented employees **make sense of the talent status** through coaching
  - how coaching is experienced as an **anchored career event** in the employee life cycle
    - Induce talented employees to become coaches
    - Is seen as a springboard to a fast-track career in the organisation
    - experienced as **social reward, social exchange and long-term relationship**
  
- Workplace coaching has been described as a hybrid practice, blending coaching and mentoring approaches (Stoke, Fatien-Diochon, Otter, 2020; Garvey, Stokes, Megginson, 2018; Western, 2012):
  - Confirms the **developmental purpose** of coaching (Cox et al. 2018)
  - Questions the **nature and purpose** of coaching as a short-term intervention for performance improvement
  - Emphasises **mentoring** as a core approach for talent development
  - Reveals coaches may play the role of **mediator** at senior level

## Practical implications

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- Talent coaching relies on internal coaching capacities and capabilities, which may vary across EMEA and globally
  - Embedding digital talent coaching in TM (inclusive TM)
  - Formal recognition and reward for internal coaches
  - Awareness of talent coaching as a mutual and reciprocal relationship
- Ethical challenges due to imbalance of power and unspoken role of talent coaching for talent elite selection:
  - Systematic coaching training and supervision for internal coaches
  - Transparent communication on talent status and the role of coaching (Dries and Gieter, 2014, Sumelius et al. 2020)



# Additional references provided during the Q&A

- On the conceptualisation of talent according to the sector and context:
  - an elitist approach in the private sector (Meyers et al., 2020)
  - an egalitarian approach in the public sector (Tyskbo, 2023)
  - in small or medium-sized organisations (Meyers et al., 2020).
- On the implications of the multiple interpretations of the term 'talent' :
  - on TM practices (Skuzza et al., 2022)
  - on employees' reactions towards TM (De Boeck et al., 2018; Sumelius et al., 2020).
  - On perceived organisational justice (Gelens et al., 2014)

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