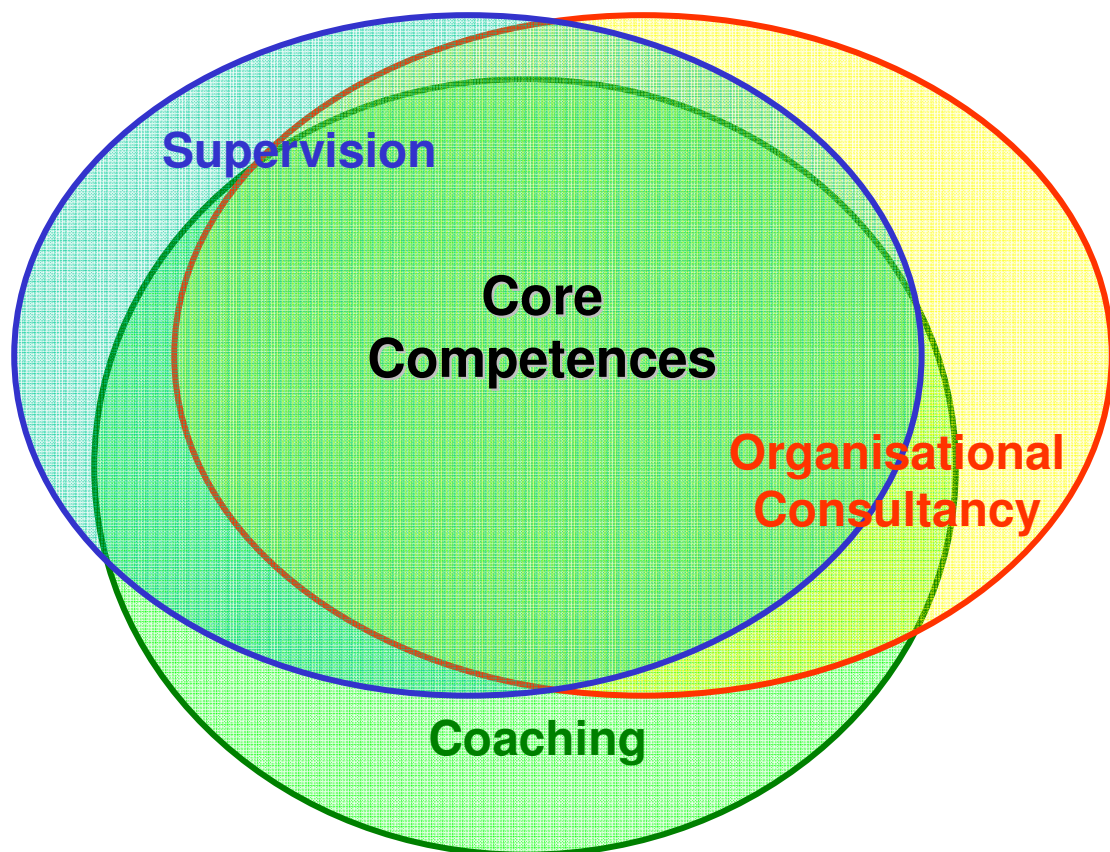


BSO Consulting Formats



Consulting formats

Definition

Supervision, organisational consultancy and coaching are professional consulting formats tailored to the industrial field and the occupational field. They address individuals, groups, teams and organisations. All three consulting formats accompany processes of learning, change and development in the industrial and occupational field. They belong to the broad spectrum of process consulting.

In professional circles detailed and controversial discussions on the commonalities and differences between these three formats have been taking place for quite some time. Clients use these terms differently due to their cultural backgrounds and contexts. However, it is not the term itself that is crucial for a good consultation but an accurate explanation of the assignment and appropriate handling of the clients' concerns. As in each and every case clients rely on the professional expertise of the consultant, it would be beneficial to have a mental template that allows all parties involved to reflect on suitable formats for the consultation.

Commonalities and differences

As illustrated in the diagram, the three formats overlap in many respects, which is expressed distinctly in the common core competences. At the same time each of the three consulting formats has its own areas. This facilitates different points of intersection, transitions and combinations.

Supervision, coaching and organisational consultancy originate from different contexts, occupational fields, professional jargons and traditions. Supervision emerged and developed within the scope of social work with the objective of improving work and team processes. Coaching is rooted in sports and targets the behaviour of individuals. Organisational consultancy developed in the context of different system-theoretical approaches with the objective of advising the organisation as an overall system.

On the actual consulting market a differentiation of the three formats is not easy. For example, the term 'coaching' is currently undergoing a boom, resulting in many consulting services, which have up until now run under the terms of 'supervision' and 'team supervision', being referred to as 'coaching' or 'team coaching' nowadays.

In the subsequent descriptions we will proceed from the following distinctions:

- Supervision refers to people-oriented consulting approaches, which are aimed at the reflection of work and the development of professional and psychosocial competences and which fundamentally address all employees.
- Coaching refers to approaches, which focus on the professional role, function, performance and (problem) solution within the system and address exposed individuals and decision-makers.
- Organisational consultancy refers to approaches, which initiate and methodically accompany processes of change and development within organisations. Thereby the skills of all involved and the organisation as a whole are utilised.

These differentiations should not be regarded as absolute and immutable but currently serve as orientation in the diverse and constantly developing consulting market.

The quality of the consulting formats and therefore the respective demands on BSO consultants are illustrated on the basis of competences.

Competences

Definition

We draw upon the definition verbalised by the European Commission (2005):

Competence includes: i) cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; ii) functional competence (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they are functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity; iii) personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and iv) ethical competence involving the possession of certain personal and professional values.

At the same time the notion of competence is distinguished from the notion of qualification:

Competences involve the ability to apply knowledge, skills and know-how in a given job situation.

Qualifications are the formal expression of the professional skills of an employee. They are recognised at national or sectoral level.¹

Reference framework

The subsequently described competences further draw upon the BSO Mission Statement, the BSO Professional Ethics and the BSO Consulting Code of Conduct as well as a thorough analysis of the field of work and activities of consultants. They form the essential basis for any consultancy.

We differentiate between core competences (the competences of all three consulting formats) and the specific competences for the individual consulting formats. Please refer to the recognition and admission regulations for the specific competences.

Core Competences

Core competences serve the purpose of giving the understanding of consultancy of the BSO a uniform direction. They form the framework for qualitatively describing the competences of the association members and displaying them externally.

Structuring

The core competences are structured as follows:

1. Professional competence
2. Methodological competence
3. Self- and social competence

All three categories overlap in certain areas.

1. Professional competence

a) Fundamental knowledge

BSO consultants possess a fundamental knowledge with respect to contexts in personal and social systems, including the interdependencies between the two system dimensions. The range of knowledge of these systems can be selective, i.e. knowledge related to a certain occupational field. Knowledge of the effect of small, medium-sized and large systems on psychosocial contexts is present and reflected (cf. field knowledge).

b) Consulting knowledge

BSO consultants have a basic knowledge with regard to consulting philosophies, consulting models and consulting processes. This basic knowledge manifests itself among other things in intervention competence and competence for autonomous action (cf. methodological competence) that is appropriate to the situation.

c) Professional experience

BSO consultants demonstrate professional experience, which includes agogic work with people.

d) Field knowledge Field knowledge is defined as specific knowledge and skills with regard to the fields of work or target groups that the BSO consultants offer consulting services for. BSO consultants possess in-depth field knowledge in at least one of their consulting fields. Their knowledge of the importance of specific field knowledge also helps them to be aware of knowledge they lack and, if required, step back.

¹ Commission of the European Communities: Auf dem Weg zu einem europäischen Qualifikationsrahmen (En route towards a European Qualification Framework). Brussels 2005.

e) Fundamental issues, gender and diversity

BSO consultants are aware that a relationship of dependence between the consultant and the client is created in every consultation. The consultants respect the personal integrity of clients with particular sensitivity and avoid any kind of encroachment. In addition to affiliation with a certain class or culture as well as the generation gaps, the relationship of the sexes to each other is one of the most crucial structural features of our society. BSO consultants are able to take these dimensions into account for the consultation and to promote the required multi-perspective communication in the field of work.

2. Methodological competence

Methodological competence refers to competence for autonomous action and intervention competence related to a specific field.

a) With reference to the client system

BSO consultants are able to perceive, classify, reflect and appropriately intervene in complex situations. This is associated with the ability to adjust flexibly to rapidly changing action and role contexts. (Cf. 3c Role acting).

b) With reference to the professional principles

BSO consultants offer a coherent understanding of consulting, a broad repertoire of practices and tools for the quality development.

c) With reference to personal development

BSO consultants are able to change their thought patterns. They take up a personal position with regard to new phenomena/developments in the social environment and bring their professional action in line accordingly.

d) With reference to aesthetic presentation

BSO consultants work respectfully and descriptively. They are able to organise the type, design and the course of a consulting process according to criteria relating to inner order.

3. Self- and social competence

Social competence is a complex personality characteristic, which is based on the ability to conduct oneself appropriately and effectively in a social situation. Socially competent behaviour is based on psychological regulatory mechanisms of self-control. BSO consultants possess the following main personality oriented skills:

a) Self-perception, self-reflection and self-expression

BSO consultants know that know-how and social skills are of equal importance for a competent occupational activity. They have trained their personality with respect to intellectual, social and emotional areas. They are able to perceive and reflect their own condition and behaviour as well as the way it is perceived by others, embrace critical feedback and develop an authenticity matched to the situation. They continually assess their professional action according to professional, ethical and idealistic criteria.

b) Communicative and relational competence

BSO consultants are able to deal with conflict and handle closeness and dissociation flexibly with their character. This allows them to adapt their communication to the circumstances and needs of diverse target groups in the field of work and to reliably devise working relationships.

c) Role awareness/role acting

Particular attention should be paid to the adoption of professional roles by the consultant. BSO consultants are able to distinguish between person and role and therefore have the ability to handle diverse role characteristics in different ways, which are suited to each situation.

Consulting format 'supervision'

Definition

Supervision offers support with the accomplishment of occupational tasks, the reflection of professional action and the further development of the professional and psychosocial competences. Qualitative elements, among others transparent handling of power and preservation of autonomy towards the professional environment of clients, are an inherent part of supervision.

Task and objective

The objective of supervision is to accompany and optimise processes of learning, change and development for individuals, groups and teams. In the process it works at perception, reflection and action level. Supervision always includes the context of the organisation as a whole and the distinctions of the specific field the supervisees work in. The qualitative improvement of professional work is one of the crucial objectives of supervision. It deals with personal and role-related aspects in the area of conflict between stability and change.

Assignment and setting

Contract partners for supervision are individuals, groups and teams and their respective clients for supervision. The contract substantiates the period and objectives of the consultancy, the performance of the supervisor and that of the supervisees. All contractual parties involved, in particular employers of teams and inter-organisational groups and individuals must be included in the conclusion of the contract and the clarification of the respective contractual contents.

Working methods

Individual supervision

The aim is to expand and deepen the personal, social and professional qualification of individuals. Possible working methods and contents:

- Personal development issues, which are directly or indirectly connected with the professional action
- Clarification of the relational dynamics in the work with clients, patients and students
- Examination of the demands on the individual and further development of the personal and professional resources
- Support in handling and dealing with stress and conflict situations
- Consultation with the clarification of role and function
- Preparation for the assumption of new functions within the organisation

Group supervision

Group supervision is a service offered to groups within and outside of organisations: Project and specialist groups, training and learning groups and groups of people in higher positions.

Group supervision supports professional people with the conceptual design, development and implementation of projects in a specific field of work. It also aims at supporting trainees and/or young professionals with the personal and practical integration of know-how. Within organisations group supervision accompanies projects or provides room for reflection and practice e.g. for people in higher positions.

Team supervision

Team supervision is understood as team development and has the objective of renewing or deepening forms of co-operation or improving the job performance within a team, dealing with conflict situations, preparing teams for changes within the organisation and accompanying it in the implementation phase.

Case supervision

For case supervision the focus is rather on a certain field of work and requires respective field knowledge and/or experience of the consultant. It can be carried out with individuals, groups or teams.

Training and teaching supervision

Training and teaching supervision focuses on specific teaching or learning situations involved with the new job role or with the consulting format. It requires respective professional competence of the consultant. It can be carried out with individuals or groups.

Training/qualification

In their consultancy all BSO consultants draw upon the competences specified by the Association. The BSO Professional Association has admission and training regulations, which specify the preconditions for activity in the area of supervision. Members offering other consulting formats in addition to supervision possess respective additional qualifications

Consulting format 'organisational consultancy'

Definition

Organisational consultancy is the generic term for all consulting interventions aimed at stabilising organisations or parts thereof, changing them and effectively developing them to achieve the set objectives. Qualitative elements such as transparent handling of power and respectful handling of in-house culture constitute an integral part of organisational consultancy. Within the BSO concept, organisational consultancy operates according to the principles and objectives of organisational development.

Task and objective

In principle organisational consultancy is based on the assumption that profitability and performance on the one hand and humanisation of work on the other hand are mutually dependent.

Organisational consultancy strives to increase self-monitoring skills within an organisation and individual parts thereof and to optimise the balance between stability and change. In the consulting process the motivation of employees and the flexibility of the organisation with respect to the demands of the environment are taken into account.

Organisational consultancy aims at improving the performance of the organisation or its parts with respect to achievement of its objectives. Organisational consultancy directs, shapes and accompanies processes of change in order to enable the organisation to respond flexibly to the demands of the environment with its structure, tasks and culture.

Assignment and setting

Organisational consultancy takes place in sections of the organisation and/or encompasses the organisation as a whole. In doing so it orients itself by the principles of a process that is planned and laid out for the longer term. The development of the organisation and that of the people working within it run parallel. Learning processes are shaped through practical experience and the co-operation of all involved.

Organisational consultants work either as external consultants within the scope of fixed-term contracts or they are permanently employed as internal consultants within larger companies. The contractual partner in organisational consultancy is, whenever possible, the top management of the organisation. This is to provide for the required freedom for development projects. The content of the contract substantiates for example consulting period, consulting objectives and methods, performance of the consultant as well as the contribution of the organisation to be mentored.

Working methods

Depending on initial position, objective and culture of learning, specific designs tailored to the individual organisation are developed.

BSO organisational consultants work with the concept of organisational development. This includes an analysis of actual situations, the development of future scenarios and, based on this, substantiating objectives and conceptions of change. The necessary optimisation of cooperation within the organisation requires among other things accompanying psychosocial processes, dealing with conflicts and shaping information processes. Here the focus is on company as well as individual competence.

Training/qualification

In their consultancy all BSO consultants draw upon the core competences specified by the Association. The BSO Professional Association has recognition and admission regulations, which specify the preconditions for activity in the area of organisational consultancy. Members offering other consulting formats in addition to organisational consultancy possess respective additional qualifications.

Consulting format 'coaching'

Definition

Coaching addresses individuals, groups or teams. These are subsequently referred to as coachee.

Coaching is aimed at the successful accomplishment of tasks and challenges, the expansion of the spectrum of activity as well as personal reflection. Coaching focuses on the individual, his positions, roles and role acting.

Depending on the situation, the method of coaching is tasks-, person- or processes-oriented.

Task and objective

The contents of coaching orient themselves by the task requirements and the individual learning needs of the coachee.

Coaching is aimed at enabling the coachees to independently develop and implement desired changes for the issues they have chosen themselves or agreed with the client. The objective of coaching can also include improving performance, empowering the coachee to take on new tasks or directing decisions and change. The individual, attitude and behaviour, role and function and the further development thereof are taken into account in equal measure within the coaching.

Depending on the field of activity and assignment, coaching can on the one hand deal more with the psychosocial competences of the coachee or on the other hand be strongly based on a range of organisational development issues (strategy, structure, culture).

Assignment and setting

The BSO makes a distinction between the external coach, who is independent of the organisation of the coachee, and the internal coach, who is integrated in the organisation of the coachee.

Contractual partners for coaching are the employers of coachees, superiors and/or the coachees themselves.

The content of the contract substantiates among other things the consulting period, consulting objectives, methods, personal contribution of the coach and the client, as well as the type of feedback for these and possible integration thereof.

Within the setting of coaching, training can constitute part of the consultation.

Working methods

Individual coaching

Possible contents:

- Executive coaching
- Consultancy with the clarification of role and function
- Preparation for the assumption of new functions within the organisation
- Examination of the demands on the individual and further development of the personal resources
- Support with handling and dealing with stress and conflict situations
- Personal development issues, which are directly or indirectly connected with the professional action.

Consulting services offered that address several people are referred to as *team or group coaching*. They are mostly identical with the formats described under team and group supervision.

Training/qualification

In their consultancy all BSO consultants draw upon the core competences specified by the Association. The BSO Professional Association has recognition and admission regulations, which specify the preconditions for activity in the area of coaching. Members offering other consulting formats in addition to coaching possess respective additional qualifications.