

When Communication Quality Transforms Relationship Quality

Organizational Development Case Study | Leadership Coaching & Team Development

If you have ever experienced as a leader or team member that unspoken tensions affect both performance and workplace atmosphere — this story is for you.

Every organization is different, so every story is unique. This example offers a glimpse into how we work together with a leader and a team, the challenges we encountered, and the tools we use along the way.

Starting Point

In November 2025, the leader of a team of approximately 25 people reached out with two needs: **individual leadership coaching** for themselves and a **communication and team-building training** for their team.

In December we outlined the main goals:

- More effective collaboration at team level
- Reduction of communication-related errors and better handling of them
- More conscious emotion management and practicing constructive feedback at leadership level

Program Structure

~3 months	Coaching period
11 sessions	Out of 12 planned
25 people	Team size

- Bi-weekly 1-hour coaching sessions (mid-December – mid-March)
- Communication & team building training: 2x half days + 1 full day

- Focus: aligning systemic functioning with leadership style

The 3-month coaching program is, in my experience, the most effective format: long enough for deeper change, yet short enough to maintain focus and momentum.

The First Weeks: Understanding, Not Quick Fixes

In the beginning we didn't "solve" — we mapped:

- Understanding how the organization and the individual function, and the relationship between them
- Understanding errors: where they come from (lack of information, inattention, misunderstanding)
- Uncovering recurring patterns and quantifying them

Some systemic issues were resolved within the first 6–8 weeks through group messages, personal alignments, and optimized information flow.

At the individual level, understanding communication patterns was key:

- When and why emotional reactions arise and how they manifest
 - Which early signals (feelings, tone of voice) warn of escalation
 - What the leader wants to do differently going forward
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The Turning Point: The January Training

This was the team's first experience of this kind. The leader was initially uncertain: "Will the team building just be a momentary pleasure?" But they were also hopeful and actively present — creating space for open communication.

How the training unfolded:

- Playful warm-up exercises to lighten the atmosphere and build trust
- Participants uncovered the sources of previously unspoken tensions
- Different viewpoints met; people understood each other's perspectives and good intentions
- Together they examined systemic problems and found constructive solutions

There were tears and a great deal of laughter — a clear sign that team members truly connected.

Tools and the Learning Process

- Understanding their own and each other's communication styles (via assessment)
- Assertive self-expression: clearly communicating feelings and needs
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Recognizing verbal, nonverbal, and tonal signals in interactions
- Reframing mistakes: replacing blame with shared problem-solving strategies
- Conflict resolution methods
- Understanding the stages a team goes through from formation to high performance

A key goal was to foster a culture of psychological safety — where mistakes can be owned and treated as learning opportunities.

Immediate Impact

“Finally, colleagues are talking, laughing, and connecting during lunch break.”

This was the first sign of open communication — a crucial foundation for the work ahead.

Two Months Later

“The quality of relationships has changed.”

At team level:

- Better information flow
- Stronger solution focus
- Greater accountability

At leadership level:

“I changed too. Emotional reactions are minimal. I notice early — from my tone — when something bothers me, and I focus on solutions rather than blame.”

Embedded Habits and Trigger Words

Key phrases now appear in the team's daily communication, activating the learned patterns:

- "assertively, please"
- "we're not going back to storming"

Praise and recognition have also become regular — reinforcing each other both verbally and in writing.

Personal Topics: Energy and Lifestyle

The originally set professional goals were achieved relatively quickly, within 8-10 weeks. In the final weeks, we shifted focus to leadership energy and resilience, and to nutrition, movement, and recovery.

The goal: sustainable high performance over the long term. The leader began implementing concrete changes driven by internal motivation, contributing to a better

overall wellbeing.

Closing and Follow-Up

11/12	Sessions - goals achieved
2	Follow-up sessions remaining

The leader carried the program through with a high level of commitment and consistency. They became a master of self-reflection, recognized dysfunctional patterns, and changed them in the blink of an eye — a sign of exceptional adaptability.

One key goal of coaching is that the system should work independently — not only in the coach's presence. Based on the final session, this has been achieved.

This story clearly shows: developing communication and leadership coaching can be crucial for both performance and organizational culture.

When the communication guidelines within a team change, the relationships — and the entire way of working — change with them.

What signs do you see that communication is truly working in your team? Or is it struggling?