

COACHING TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING ASSERTIVENESS AS A KEY FACTOR IN BUILDING ENTREPRENEURS' PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS FOR BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

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Summary

This article examines coaching technologies as an effective tool for developing assertiveness in the context of forming individual psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity. In today's competitive business environment, entrepreneurial success is determined not only by professional skills but also by the level of psychological readiness, with assertiveness being a key component. The author defines assertiveness as the ability to confidently and ecologically defend one's rights and interests without violating the boundaries of others, which is critically important for effective entrepreneurial functioning. The research methodology comprises theoretical analysis of scientific sources by domestic and foreign scholars, as well as an empirical online survey of young entrepreneurs regarding key components of their psychological readiness for business. The results demonstrate high significance for respondents in maintaining constructive behavior in crisis situations and making informed decisions under conditions of uncertainty. The structural components of an entrepreneur's psychological readiness are defined as motivational, cognitive, emotional-volitional, reflexive-evaluative, and communicative. It is proven that coaching technologies contribute to individualizing the development process, forming responsible thinking, increasing awareness, and developing emotional competence. The advantages of the coaching approach are revealed, among them the disclosure of individual internal resources, formation of assertive attitudes and behavior through dialogue, reflection, and work with limiting beliefs. The practical significance of the study lies in outlining the effectiveness of coaching approaches for professional training of entrepreneurs and individual support of their activities under current economic challenges.

Key words: emotional competence, individual internal resources, professional training of entrepreneurs, stress resistance, self-regulation, personal development.

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1. Introduction

In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, the success of entrepreneurial activity is largely determined not only by the presence of economic knowledge or professional skills, but also by the level of individual psychological readiness for conducting entrepreneurship. Psychological readiness encompasses such important characteristics as the ability to make

decisions under conditions of uncertainty, take responsibility, act proactively, interact effectively with others, withstand the pressure of stress, and adapt to changes. One of the leading factors in psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity is assertiveness – the individual's ability to confidently and ecologically defend themselves, express thoughts, emotions, and convictions without violating the rights of others. Assertive behavior allows entrepreneurs to communicate effectively with partners, clients, and team members, make informed decisions, manage conflicts, and maintain internal stability and independence from external pressure.

In this context, coaching technologies serve as an effective tool for developing personal potential, particularly assertiveness. Coaching is oriented toward revealing clients' internal resources, goal setting, developing self-regulation and responsibility. Through dialogue, reflection, and work with limiting beliefs, coaching creates conditions for forming assertive attitudes and behavior. Thus, research on coaching technologies for developing assertiveness acquires practical significance for the sphere of professional training of entrepreneurs and for individual support of their activities. The relevance of the topic is determined by the needs of the modern business environment for psychologically mature, communicatively competent, and internally stable individuals capable of effectively realizing entrepreneurial potential.

The aim of the article is to identify the significance of coaching technologies in developing assertiveness as a significant factor in individual psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity and to substantiate the effectiveness of coaching as a tool for supporting entrepreneurial potential.

2. Analysis of Recent Research and Publications

Research on assertiveness and its multidimensional nature has been conducted by contemporary Ukrainian scholars, including K. Baklanov, H. Ball, Ye. Holovakha, N. Maksymova, S. Medvedeva, L. Nikolaiev, N. Pobirchenko, N. Podoliak, M. Savchyn, V. Semychenko, Ye. Skolota, K. Chulkova, M. Shynkar, and others. In the context of studying coaching technologies for developing assertiveness as a factor in psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity, the works of K. Boiko, O. Voskoboieva, O. Husieva, I. Ivakhnenko, O. Kushniruk, O. Kredentser, T. Lepeiko, Ye. Lohvynovskyi, O. Martsinkovska, N. Nahorna, O. Nezhynska, V. Pavlova, I. Petrovska, O. Romashchenko, V. Tymenko, H. Fedosieieva, T. Khlevytska, L. Chernyshova, and others should be mentioned.

3. Psychological Readiness for Entrepreneurial Activity as a Multidimensional Phenomenon

Psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a system of personal qualities, motivational attitudes, cognitive and emotional-volitional components that ensure the ability to act effectively in business environments. It is considered as an internal state of the subject that presupposes conscious aspiration for realizing entrepreneurial activity, ability to adapt to changes, make responsible decisions, overcome difficulties, and achieve goals under unpredictable and risky conditions. N. Nahorna reveals the essence of the concept of "psychological readiness" in psychology "as an essential necessary prerequisite for various kinds of purposeful effective activity, possibilities for its regulation, both in short-term and long-term perspectives" (Nahorna, 2024: 116).

Scientific sources identify a number of structural components of an entrepreneur's psychological readiness: motivational – achievement orientation, striving for autonomy, internal

motivation; cognitive – presence of knowledge about entrepreneurial activity, understanding of market processes, strategic thinking; emotional-volitional – stress resistance, self-regulation, endurance, initiative; reflexive-evaluative – ability for self-observation, critical thinking, objective self-assessment; communicative – ability to establish contacts, conduct negotiations, resolve conflicts (Kredentser, 2020; Lepeyko, 2014; Nahorna, 2024; Nezhynska & Tymenko, 2017; Husieva et al., 2019).

Readiness for entrepreneurship is formed under the influence of external factors (social environment, education, support) and internal ones – personal resources. Its presence allows not only starting one's own business but also maintaining stability during periods of uncertainty, crises, or changes. A special role in the structure of psychological readiness, according to L. Nikolaiev, is played by assertiveness as the ability for open, honest, and confident interaction that does not violate the boundaries of others. It contributes to constructive task solving, skillful team management, and defending one's ideas – those components that are critically important for effective entrepreneurial functioning (Nezhynska & Tymenko, 2017).

Thus, psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity is an integrative characteristic of personality that ensures productive participation in entrepreneurship, promotes the realization of business ideas, and achievement of results in a complex socio-economic environment.

In the context of the current socio-economic situation, characterized by high levels of instability, competition, digitization, and rapid changes, entrepreneurial activity requires demonstration of not only economic but also psychological knowledge and skills. Entrepreneurs daily face risks, uncertainty, decision-making pressure, the need to adapt to new conditions, interact with large numbers of people, and bear full responsibility for the results of their activities. All this places heightened demands on their psychological readiness as a prerequisite for personal effectiveness and stability. Decreased psychological readiness often leads to emotional burn-out, loss of motivation, activity disorganization, conflicts, and in some cases – abandonment of entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, developing this quality is no less important than acquiring professional knowledge and skills (Kredentser, 2020; Lepeyko, 2014; Husieva et al., 2019).

To investigate the level of young entrepreneurs' psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity, we conducted an online survey involving 57 individuals. We were interested which components of this readiness are most significant for them under conditions of external challenges: economic, social, and organizational (Table 1).

Table 1

**Level of development of psychological readiness components among entrepreneurs
(based on empirical research results) $n=57$**

Psychological readiness indicator	Percentage of respondents demonstrating ability
Ability to maintain constructive behavior under crisis conditions	82%
Ability to make informed decisions in situations of uncertainty	76%
Ability to maintain internal integrity in interaction with partners and team	74%
Resistance to responsibility and emotional pressure	70%
Quick switching between tasks	68%

Therefore, most young entrepreneurs recognize the importance of psychological readiness as a resource for conducting business. Respondents place highest significance on constructive behavior in crises and judiciousness under conditions of uncertainty. Respondents acknowledge the need for emotional stability and effective team interaction as important factors

in long-term success. At the same time, quick switching between tasks proved to be the least developed skill, which may indicate a need for developing thinking flexibility and time management.

Psychological readiness acquires particular significance during an entrepreneur's transition to new stages of activity – business scaling, entering new markets, changing the format of team interaction, etc. At such moments, internal barriers, doubts, and fear of failure can become serious obstacles. Therefore, there arises a need for purposeful development of psychological readiness as an important prerequisite for stable professional growth of the entrepreneur.

In the structure of psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity, assertiveness occupies a special place – the individual's ability to confidently, openly, and ecologically express their thoughts, feelings, and convictions, defend their own rights and interests without violating the boundaries and dignity of other people. Ye. Skolota believes that assertiveness comprises internal confidence, respect for oneself and others, ability for constructive communication, and effective conflict resolution (*Skolota, 2020*).

For entrepreneurs, assertiveness is not merely a desirable quality but a psychological necessity that affects the effectiveness of business processes and stability of professional development. In the process of entrepreneurial activity, there is a constant need for making decisions, conducting negotiations, distributing responsibilities, delegating, resisting pressure, and maintaining personal boundaries in complex interpersonal situations. In such circumstances, assertive behavior allows one to remain consistent, confident, open to dialogue, without transitioning to aggression or passivity.

In our view, an entrepreneur with developed assertiveness is capable of clearly conveying their position in negotiations; saying no politely or setting boundaries without feeling guilty; maintaining emotional stability in conflict/crisis situations; taking responsibility for decisions without shifting it to others; building partnership relationships based on respect, trust, and openness. Assertiveness supports entrepreneurs in decision-making, strengthens internal motivation, reduces risks of professional burnout, and contributes to building a healthy business environment.

Thus, assertiveness functions as an internal regulator of entrepreneur behavior that ensures balance between personal goals and external demands, promotes effective self-realization and preservation of psychological well-being under conditions of high uncertainty and pressure characteristic of modern entrepreneurship.

The implementation of tools that promote the development of awareness, emotional self-regulation, confidence in one's decisions, and effective communication becomes relevant. Coaching belongs to such technologies, capable of supporting entrepreneurs under challenging conditions and contributing to the disclosure of their personal and professional potential.

4. Coaching Technologies as a Tool for Developing Assertiveness

The coaching approach in developing entrepreneurial potential is studied by domestic scholars. Thus, I. Ivakhnenko believes that "coaching is not only a tool for enterprise personnel management but also an important life trainer and mentor who reveals human potential" (*Ivakhnenko et al., 2023: 41*). Among the main coaching tools, the scientist and colleagues highlight the "Four Planning Questions" technique. It includes answers to four questions: What do you want? How can you achieve this? How will you support yourself if something goes wrong? What will be the result? These questions are "closely interconnected and allow supporting subordinates on the path to success" (*Ivakhnenko et al., 2023: 37*). Studying the role of coaching

in leadership development among Ukrainian women entrepreneurs, H. Fedosieieva emphasizes that "Coaching is one of the most effective tools that help make decisions in any crisis situations. After all, it promotes the development of critical thinking among women entrepreneurs" (Fedosieieva, 2024: 307). Coaching is a method of systematic questioning that helps people independently find solutions, develop action plans, and think in new ways. Its goal is to develop independence, help overcome barriers, and achieve better results both in career and personal life (Chernyshova, 2020).

The coaching approach has particular value in the context of developing entrepreneurial potential because it is aimed not only at solving current problems but at revealing individual internal resources, forming growth mindset, and increasing the level of independence in decision-making.

Analysis of the results of studying the investigated problem by scholars (I. Ivakhnenko, H. Fedosieieva, L. Chernyshova, and others) provides grounds for identifying the advantages of the coaching approach (Table 2), which manifest in the following aspects: individualization of the development process – coaching focuses on unique characteristics, goals, values, and needs of the entrepreneur, allowing maximum precision in adjusting the vector of personal development and activating those internal mechanisms that best correspond to a specific stage of professional growth; formation of responsible thinking and independence – coaching does not give ready advice but forms the ability to make independent decisions, realize one's actions, and take responsibility for them; increasing the level of awareness and purposefulness – coaching helps entrepreneurs clearly define their goals, formulate future vision, identify barriers and resources for achieving them, which promotes strategic thinking, planning, and proactivity; development of emotional competence and stress resistance – coaching practices contribute to better understanding of one's emotions, learning emotional self-regulation, forming internal resistance to failures and pressure – which are basic components of psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity; formation of assertiveness and communicative competence – entrepreneurs undergoing coaching learn to ecologically defend their interests, say "no", conduct constructive negotiations, and establish partnership interactions, which significantly increases effectiveness in interaction with team, clients, partners; activation of personal potential and internal resources – coaching allows to identify and develop strengths, internal motivation, creativity, and flexibility – those qualities that are the basis of entrepreneurial initiative and ability for innovation; fostering advancement to new levels of self-realization – coaching sessions often become points of transformational changes – not only in business but also in personality worldview; entrepreneurs begin to see challenges differently, work with fears, risks, comfort zones – and transition to a new level of their own effectiveness (Ivakhnenko et al., 2023; Fedosieieva, 2024; Chernyshova, 2020).

Table 2

Indicators of psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity among young entrepreneurs

Advantage	Content/Explanation	What this gives to the entrepreneur
Individualization	Focus on personal goals, values, requests	Targeted potential disclosure, relevance of each development step
Responsibility formation	Instead of advice – stimulus for independent decision-making	Development of autonomy, leadership thinking
Awareness and purposefulness	Work with goals, vision, internal barriers	Strategic planning, effective achievement of results

Continuation of table 2

Emotional competence development	Processing emotions, learning self-regulation	Stress resistance, stability in crises, emotional balance
Assertiveness and communication development	Training confident and constructive communication	Effective negotiations, leadership position, preservation of personal boundaries
Internal resources activation	Work with "strengths," motivation, internal beliefs	Increased confidence, life energy, personal stability
Support for transformational changes	Stimulating growth, going beyond comfort zone	New level of professional self-realization, openness to development

Therefore, coaching as an approach has powerful potential in developing the main personal qualities that ensure psychological readiness for entrepreneurial activity and also promotes harmonious combination of personal growth and professional success.

5. Conclusions

Coaching technologies have proven their effectiveness in developing key qualities necessary for successful entrepreneurial activity, particularly assertiveness. Assertive behavior helps entrepreneurs maintain confidence, constructively resolve conflicts, and interact effectively with team and partners. Research results confirm that psychological readiness, particularly the ability to act in crises, make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, and maintain internal stability, is a determining factor of entrepreneurial success.

Coaching, oriented toward developing individual internal resources, promotes increased awareness, thinking flexibility, emotional stability, and proactivity. Coaching approaches acquire particular relevance for beginners who are just forming their entrepreneurial style.

Thus, coaching serves not only as a method of professional support but also as an important resource for personal growth under conditions of the modern entrepreneurial environment.

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