



Report: Analysis on the existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence in France

Y.U.S.S. – Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes

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1 Introduction:

The beginning of interest on skills, which can be useful in various professions, began during 1970s. The report Learning to Be (Faure et al., 1972) was a response to social and labour market dislocation in Europe, especially France, set the basis for lifelong education. It recognized that a once-only experience of education could not prepare citizens with the knowledge and skills they would need throughout their lives. The changing context included globalisation and technological innovation, and one of the Faure Report's prescriptions was for learning throughout life. Instead of preparing adults for a lifetime vocation, it suggested the preparation for mobility among professions.

We define soft skills as intra- and inter-personal (socio-emotional) skills, essential for personal development, social participation and workplace success. They include skills such as communication, ability to work on multidisciplinary teams, adaptability etc. These skills should be distinguished from technical, or "hard skills".

We characterized them as "skills" in order to emphasize the fact that they can be learned/developed by suitable training efforts, and they can also be combined, towards the achievement of complex outcomes.

There are three main theoretical perspectives or models (Talavera & Perez-Gonzalez, 2007):

- a) the conductist, analytical or molecular model, originally from the United States, in which the emphasis is laid on the molecular elements of skills. According to this model, skills are seen as a coherent corpus of "observable" behaviours which allow a particular activity to be appropriately carried out.

b) in the personal qualities and attributes model, originally from Great Britain, and described as 'functionalist', skill is seen as a combination of attributes (traits) which underlie successful work, and are usually defined more broadly and generically in such a way that they may be applied in different contexts. Examples of these attributes are leadership, initiative and team-working;

c) the holistic, or integrated, model has its roots in France, but is also applied widely in Australia and England. This approximation of the skills focus embraces skills such as the skill to integrate tasks carried out (behaviours) and the person's attributes, and simultaneously takes the setting into account. In short, this model sees skills as the outcome of dynamic interaction between separate masses of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and aptitudes and personality traits mobilized according to the characteristics of the context and the work that the individual is engaged on.

Nowadays, soft skills are not valued as it should be in France. However, the idea emerges and several personalities rise to the niche in order to highlight the importance of formal learning.

The reflection on this subject begins to make its way. In fact, many companies rely on soft skills in their recruitment and some schools take into account these skills in their teaching.

Various studies have highlighted the important role in the professional sphere of certain skills that are not strictly professional. These skills are identified under a variety of designations: ---

- Capacités-clés- Key Capabilities
- Compétences du 3ème type/ skills of 3th type
- Compétences génériques /Generic skills
- Employabilité/ Employability

The social skills required in the professional sphere vary depending on skill level and type of employment. Nevertheless, a number of them are now expected by the companies, even at the lowest level of qualification

In reference to the work on social skills of the Mission Générale d'insertion programme « Nouvelles chances », and based on the findings of the youth orientation book "*Les compétences sociales - L'accompagnement des jeunes en difficulté*" written by Dominique Duval and Elisa Blanchard and edited by the "CRDP de Champagne-Ardenne" on 2001, 4 categories of skills are identified:

- Autonomy
- Assertiveness
- Communication
- Adaptation to the life of the company

Companies, organizations and freelance trainers and coaches deal with training, coaching, workshops and seminars on soft skills in social competence.

2 First best practice

The unemployment rate in France in July 2012 was 2.9 million (up 1.4 percent), the most affected are young people (16-25) and elderlies.

In Corsica (305,674 inhabitants) – there were registered 12,900 unemployed people, of which:

12.6% are aged under 25 = 1600 people.

3500 people are registered at Pole Emploi (National Agency for Employment) for more than one year

Aiming to fight against unemployment, Pole Emploi isn't able to receive all the job seekers. (despite higher recruitment consultants + 3000 2006); so it delegates to other organisations (public market) some of its activity in direction of the job seekers with a difficult situation.

The main soft skills covered in these programmes are related to the communication competence and the ability to adapt to a company's environment (mainly through the traineeship period that the young people should undertake for example within the DIP service).

- Control and management of emotions
- Understands the culture of the organisation that he wants to be integrated in. He identifies the company activities and his role when he will integrate in it
- Overcoming interpersonal communication barriers
- Manages his own emotions
- Has the ability to negotiate with others
- Is able to go alone to an appointment
- Is able to give a personal point of view
- Respects the imposed schedule
- Respects the hierarchical relationship
- Knows how to adopt a dress code appropriate to the situation
- The ability to manage interpersonal conflict
- Knows how to present himself verbally in a weighted and positive way

The methodology of this coaching programme is designed to facilitate learning new behaviour for personal growth. For the communication purposes, the coaching method is carried out with groups.

The services subcontracted by Pole Emploi are:

A) Specific support for job seekers who need a little boost for their work skills (facilitating their employability).

A)1. Workshop

Duration: 3 hours collectively.

Objective: To create or improve their job search tools.

Suggested topics:

- Curriculum vitae,
- Letters of Spontaneous applications,
- Letters of response to offers,
- Simulation of an interview: Knowing to present himself (in a few minutes), Having convincing argument, Dealing with disruptive issues, Know the rules of verbal communication (voice quality, intonation) and nonverbal communication (appearance, look, posture).
- Organize job searching: Use grids and tools for the activities to undertake, Manage your schedule and plan your actions, Organize your documents, Provide a budget for your job search, Search information in a directory and manage them, Organize your RDV, Monitoring and assessment of the action undertaken
- Use the Internet for job searching: Optimize the steps to undertaken and the research approach using internet, Collect information on the labor market and business via the internet, Being aware of practices on social networks to stay competitive in the enterprise market,
- Take contact with companies: Prepare a spontaneous application, Looking for a job within the own network, Develop its image, Targeting companies.

A)2. Job Search Strategy.

Public: job seekers coming to register at Pole Emploi or requiring specific support

Duration: 4 days.

Missions:

→ Identify the strengths, weaknesses, skills, abilities related to the target trade.

→ Learning about the labor market and the logic of recruitment used by companies (business survey).

→ Identify tools and methods to optimize your job search.

→ Practice an interview during a simulation (presentation of professional career and answers to destabilizing questions).

→ Develop a strategy (an action plan).

Objective: To develop techniques to improve its methods of job search.

B) Enhanced support for job seekers who face great difficulties in their professional insertion.

B)1. Objective Employment.

Public: long-term unemployed people registered to Pole Emploi for more than one year

Duration: 3 months with an face to face RDV per week (at least 6 interviews).

Procedure:

Phase 1 Development of an Individual Action Plan (update the CV and prepare to interview).

Phase 2: Follow-up actions (tools).

Phase 3 Results of the performance (the strengths, areas for improvement, actions to be implemented after the guidance).

B)3. Mobilization to employment

Duration: 180 days including weekly individual contact and a face to face interview every 15 days.

Missions:

- Finding solutions to financial problems, housing, health and cultural integration.
- Identification or stabilization of researched trades (build a professional project).
- Support/guidance to employment (removing barriers to job search, seek to match the profile with the labor market, identifying job realistic leads, labour market inclusion).

B)4. *Path to employment.*

Public: long-term unemployed people registered to Pole Emploi for more than one year - registered for at least 12 months in the last 18 months and who need intensive support for job searching.

Duration: 6 months.

Procedure:

Phase 1: (1-3 months): preparing job search (set a feasible target business, develop its strategy of job seeking). It includes 4 face to face interviews and one contact every week.

Phase 2: Intensive support for job seeking activities (3to 5 months depending on the duration of phase 1). Every 15 days one face to face interview and one contact between the two interviews.

C) Work on the skills and capabilities of job seekers and thus on their professional project.

C)1. ECCP (Assessment of Professional Skills and Abilities).

- Validate skills and abilities in relation to a chosen trade (a business referred)
- Identify transferable skills to other professions.

This evaluation includes tests of general knowledge, generic skills, questionnaires professionals, professional simulation and real or simulated practical cases.

It takes a half day to a day depending on the business or to evaluate.

The results are presented in individual interviews.

C)2. CAP (build professional project)

Objective: To build a professional project.

Duration: 3 months.

Procedure:: 6 individual interviews lasting 1:30 each + 5 days working in a group.

Missions:

- Feedback on experiences and career.
- identify strengths and skills, interests, values and aspirations.
- Define employment and job matching the criteria of the public and the needs of companies.
- Define a project “back to work” and implement actions to achieve it.

C)3. DIP (from Diploma to employment).

Aim: getting a first job /supporting the unemployed people and helping them to:

- specify the project access to a sustainable employment that matches their skills, aspirations
- undertake a traineeship in a company

Duration: 3 months

Public: Graduate with a Bachelor plus 3 years' higher

Procedure : 9 interviews: 4 interview in group, 4 face to face, with minimum of 1 hour and an internship in company - 3 to 4 weeks with weekly contact by the provider.

Missions:

- Know the job market.
- Develop methods of job search.
- Being encouraged through the integration of a group of young graduates.

C)4. CPP (confirm the professional project)

Public: unemployed people having a professional experience, a professional project and being able to identify the necessary skills he should have related to his project career.

Duration: 12 hours (on 42 days).

It includes 8 individual interviews (face to face) and 1hour and half of skills assessment 30 (tests or questionnaires).

Objective: Secure at least one path to employment for which the person has clearly identified the steps he should undertake and in the order in which he should achieve each step to employment (Detailed Action Plan).

C)5. EPCE in direction of job seekers wishing to create their businesses

Public : Individuals who have a specific project business creation or takeover.

This service is a way to return to work within 6 months after the end of the evaluation.

Procedure: 6 interviews over 3 to 4 weeks, an interview lasting 1 hour 30 minutes.

3 Second best practice

The territorial collectivity of Corsica (CTC) implement a programme "Parcours vers l'emploi" aiming the development of a personalized teaching approach should allow everyone to find an answer to its own qualification requirements. The idea is to establish a procedure common to all actors of insertion and training on the territory: The "passport emploi" is a tool developed in the context of Mediterranean cooperation by the network of access to social inclusion services and human resource development "More & Better Med Jobs Network." It includes an inventory of social skills taking classifying them in 4 main categories: - Autonomy- Assertiveness- Communication- Adaptation to the life of the company

It will be generalized from September 2012 to all training activities. This interactive document via Internet, show for each person seeking a job and registered in a training center or a specialized center for inclusion on the labor market, the development of gains on basic skills, social skills and professional skills, as well as its action plan (business objectives, trades concerned, steps, resources).

It will measure the progress of the person on his path to employment.

The training center chosen through a public market ordered by CTC should first of all assess the key competences of its public using the data base « Maîtrise des compétences clés » included in "passeport-emploi". The duration is 12 hours and concern : communication in mother tangué, internet an pc skills, communication in foreign language (English), reasoning and science.

The training center, the training programme pedagogy must develop an individual modular itinerary including collective time and individual time. The training programme include also an experience in a professional environment (traineeship). The center should :

- Implement upstream of the period in company a job search workshop;
- Support the person in his internship research;

tutoring the person during his work placement.

The professional and social inclusion action undertaken by CTC is a pre-qualification that aims to initiate a dynamic professional and social integration. It aims at the acquisition or consolidation of basic skills and social skills. Concurrent with the acquisition of basic skills in preparation for qualification, the public should be allowed to build his career project by the discovery of a trade/job position, the acknowledgement of the labor market and business environment. These elements convey our understanding of socio-professional environment, preparing young people to meet the demands and prepare for each an action plan.

Public : unemployed young people (16-25 years old) - Participants receive a certification of skills acquired after successfully completing the programme.

Content of the programme:

Step 1: Assessment and developpement in terms of knowledge, know how, self-management skills, soft skills by providing individualized training courses.

Step 2:

- Define a path of building a professional project: exploration and diagnosis.
- Implementation of various tests on professional competence and self-knowledge.
- Discovery of the local economy, knowledge of business and verification of prerequisites.

Step 3: Period in enterprise

Step 4:

- Operation of the business period. Validation of the employment project or qualification.
- Adjustment of the training course: continuation and consolidation of acquisitions (skills, knowledge)

The soft skills covered in the programme are the skills identified and included in "Passeport emploi" (here attached):

4 Third best practice

We'll present here 2 organisations – a) BGE Ile Conseil and b) C2E /Couveuse d'entreprise Corse that provide business support program in direction of unemployed people (in general) willing to create an economic activity. Their activity includes a coaching programme aiming to develop specific social skills needed by managers (Is thorough in tasks execution, Takes personal initiatives, Has the ability to anticipate and respond effectively to change, Accepts the cultural and social differences, leadership, Manages his own emotions, Has the ability to negotiate with others, • Is interested in learning new things/ is interested in innovations, Is able to manage time efficiently, Knows how to develop strategies,...).

a) BGE Ile Conseil

“Les boutiques de gestion” represent the first independent network of support with the creation of business and companies in France. This structure provide : Technical support, training, individualized monitoring/mentoring, taking into account the personal dimension of each person ...

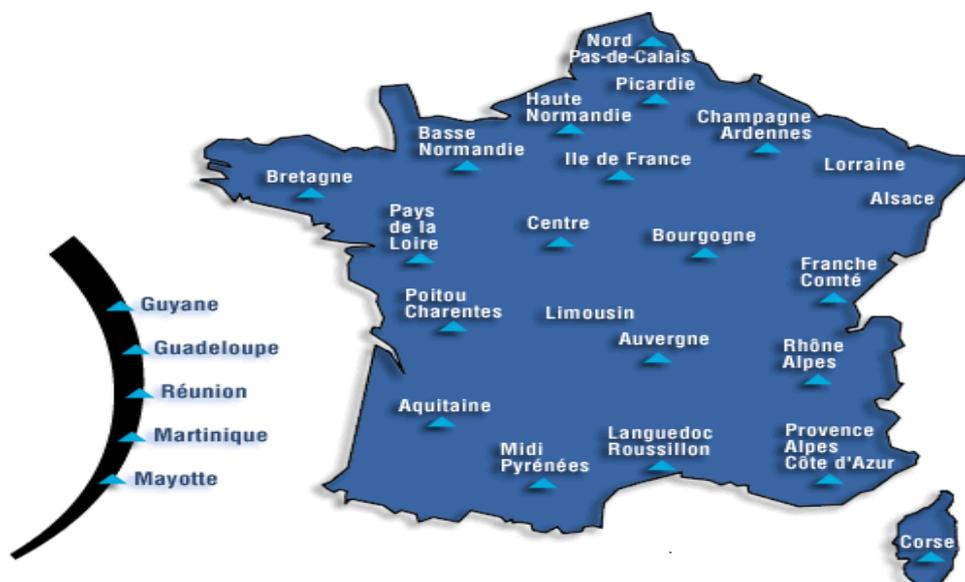
The Boutiques de Gestion support the project leader from the idea of project, to the achievement (economic activity creation) and even two years after the creation.

Stages of the overall support:

Reception: from idea to project

Coaching: from project to business creation

Monitoring: the development of business



b) C2E /Couveuse d'entreprise

A business incubator is a comprehensive business support program designed for startup and fledgling entrepreneurs to facilitate their growth and integration into a market economy by providing access to shared services, training, financing, equipment and often times physical space for the development of their business.

The business incubator is a relatively new instrument for the promotion of entrepreneurship and local economic development through enterprise start-up, job creation and improved value-added production. The business incubator concept promotes grass-root initiatives and capitalization of the local economic development potential, with the intention to support regions in crisis to find their own solutions.

The goal of a business incubator program is to enhance the capacity of the largest possible number of entrepreneurs in the community in order to accelerate local economic development.

In France, those regional organisms are often in close partnership with the government. They are financed by the government, territorial collectives, banks, financial institutions and European funds and offer many services: administrative services, specialized trainings and individual support, strategic and technical advice, financial and technology support, empty offices, commercial contacts.

In Corsica, C2E is one of this business incubators that use technical, humans and financial ways to manage the trial entrepreneur within the framework of their activity and their training to become businessmen.

This period of test, transition period actually, between the statute of employee and the one of businessman, was necessary to support the development of a succeed project and to grant to each person the right to control a company.

To try to create a company : The contractor can prospect, produce and sell his products or services and then to check the economic and financial viability of his activity.

Test in all safety: The contractor profit from a legal lodging and keeps his social statute and his incomes.

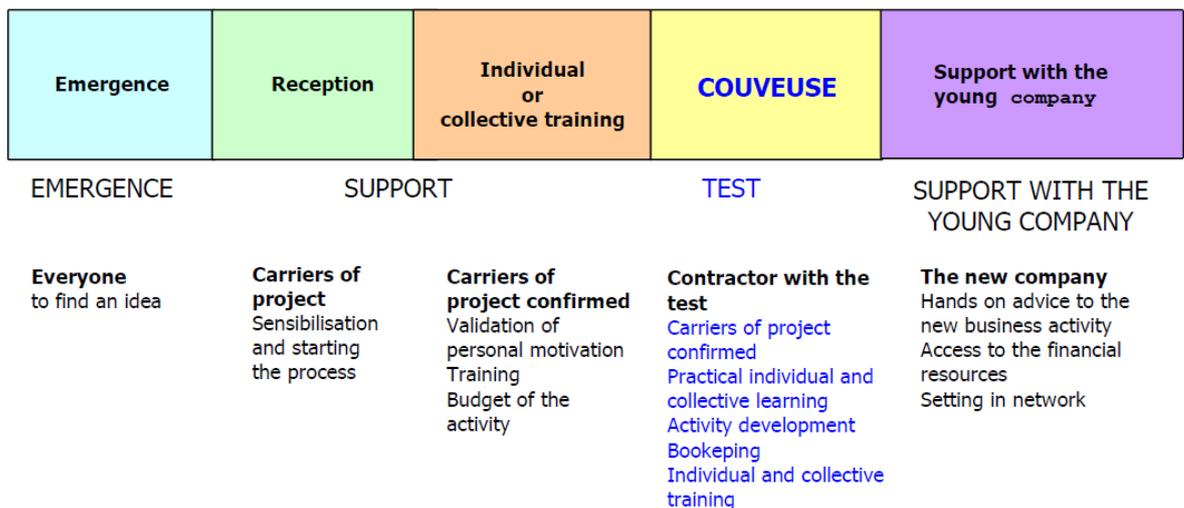
Learn how to manage: The couveuse gives the contractor the possibility to check themselves to the trade of entrepreneur, to be advised daily to optimize their project. They can also set up management tools, which they can transfer to their next company.

Through the exchanges and the division of the good practices with the other contractors in test, they consolidate their project.

To get into Couveuse, the creator's project must have been validated upstream by an organisation of accompaniment (as Boutiques de gestion, presented here). The test is accomplished over a limited period, with objectives and a specific planning. The couveuse gives a continuous operational support to the trial entrepreneur.

While getting out of the couveuse, the new business activity is directed towards financial and helping structures adapted to its project.

The following diagram summarizes the landscape of the accompaniment in France and the positioning of the couveuse within this framework.



This businessman illustrates a major part of the couveuse's objectives, which are:

- ▶ To let the people test their activity in a real size (buy and sell), while profiting from advices and formations.

- ▶ To support the appropriation of the projects carriers of the various aspects of the boss function.

To avoid surrendettement and maintain the income of the contractors in test.

- ▶ To improve qualitatively the projects of creation and to increase the endurance of the companies created.

- ▶ To stimulate the future businessmen to exceed the stage of clandestine work.

The project carriers has to estimate in a concrete way the viability of his project, or in a contrary case, to take conscious by himself about the difficulties to create a business. The

couveuse has a prevalent economic aspect, but people are involved in one dynamic process which gives them confidence.

The decision of creating or not a company is easy to get along with.

The project carrier can start testing his activity and learning how to become a businessman.

From the start of his arrival into the couveuse, the businessman who is testing his activity is on:

- ▶ A strong accompaniment based on advices and individualized trainings, which support the learning of being a businessman.
- ▶ Collective formations allowing the synergy and the exchanges of information between the contractors.

The individual support aims at autonomy.

The personnel of the couveuse meet the project carrier in a regular way. The referent meets him every week to teach him how to manage his commercial strategy and how to “stick” his activity to the provisional established before.

He supports him in his steps towards his customers and his suppliers.

An administrative follow-up is taken with the contractor who looks after his company rentability, and he records the whole of his operations.

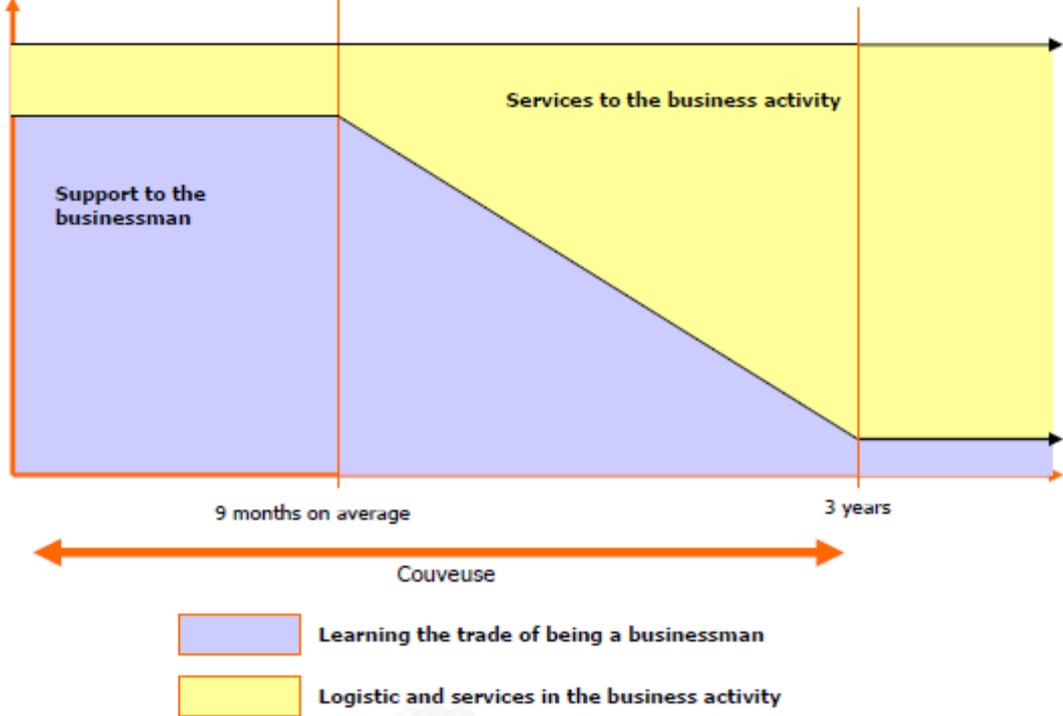
The collective accompaniment consolidates the notion of networks.

A collective monitoring (workgroup of exchanges) is regularly organized to facilitate the synergy and the exchanges of information between the trials entrepreneurs.

Some meetings of collective trainings, specific to the problems seen encountered into the couveuse, are organized every month.

The two jobs of the couveuse

We could simplify the couveuse activity as below:



5 Conclusions: SWOT analysis at national level

The coaching programmes presented as good practices are part of global programmes aiming to facilitate the access to the labor market and are implemented with state financial support. The unemployed people are the target group and they can benefit of these programmes with no financial contribution. The advantages of these practices are related to positive long term effects/ results on individuality, work and work environment.

A strength of these actions for professional and social inclusion implemented with the aid of local actors in Corsica is represented by the using of an unique tool “Passeport emploi” that capitalize the experiences and skills of individuals in terms of professional and social skills, particularly social skills expected by the labor market for each job target.

This passport allows employment awareness and capitalization of experiences and skills. It is a dialogue tool (link between trainers, integration professionals, employers and beneficiaries) for networking professionals and the beneficiary himself (like a curriculum vitae on which we can identify which social skills are acquired by the beneficiary, and on which ones the beneficiary should focus and develop. It allows the person to reflect on the professional image that he returns adapt and meet the expectations of business environment, acquiring a better self-knowledge and knowing how to value his skills and knowledge.

The disadvantaged is that the best practiced we’ve presented are not focused only in coaching of soft skills. The coaching activity is a part of the implemented programme for the social and professional inclusion in direction of unemployed people.

Another weakness of coaching programmes included by the good practices presented in this document is the difficulty to evaluate its quality and to transfer this knowhow. The providers don’t have any specific support/product for the coaching activity. The support provided to the beneficiay depends on the experience and knowhow of the advisors. Indeed, Coach posture is based on know-being and know-how.

One issues on our territory is to elaborate/develop a specific product of coaching based on the development of soft skills listed by “passeport emploi” that can be accessible to all the training centers, corporations, structures specialized on professional and social inclusion.

These programmes supported by the state and provided by local actors could be enhanced and improved in order to benefit to young unemployed people and promote employment.

Nowadays, companies, organizations and freelance trainers and coaches deal with training, coaching, workshops and seminars on soft skills in social competence, but generally, participants need to pay for the coaching programme. The price depends on the on the topic and number of sessions:

- an average of 6-10 business sessions over a period of 6 months, sessions 1 to 2 hours, could coast from 5,000€ to 10,000€.
- for an individual coaching (decided by one person, and unrelated business): 100€ to 200 € per session.

In 2010, the market of professional coaching in France is estimated at about 105 million euros (about 1500 professionals said exercising a coaching activity). About 450 are

accredited by professional organizations. These coaching programme helping participants learn how to communicate effectively, how to work more productively, how to improve and develop their emotional intelligence, how to become more autonomous are not accessible outside the structure that provide it because the programme represent its know-how, it assure its turnover.