

APPENDIX 7: Interview of Daniel Bauman – June 29, 2017

Daniel Bauman : As for Katarzyna, Daniel is part of the International board and responsible for one area, Asia-Pacific. He is leading virtually, on one hand, all the MCPs of Asia-Pacific network and, on the other hand, Operations Support Teams of his area

Daniel (Interviewee): D

Thibault (Interviewer): T

D: I'm responsible for AIESEC Asia-Pacific and I'm leading VTs Operation Support Teams.

T: Regarding communication, do you think that social communication is important in a VT?

D: I never had a team where that was not automatically happening. I do not know if that is because I have a very clear connection to the people as in AIESEC everybody has some connection through the vision of the organization and everybody wants to contribute to something positive. I do not know if that would be transferable to normal. In my case it was always happening and I guess it would help immediately the team dynamic. It would give you trust and if you are the leader of the team, does not matter what kind of team, if people like then they will be more liking follow you.

T: So sometimes you take time to talk about random stuff, random topics instead of only speaking about work related topics?

D: Yes, that's for sure, that's actually happening a lot. What I do with my team for the moment is for example, every day in the morning we are doing a check-in. So I send them 3 questions and I'm answering them myself and I try to answer them also by voice note because it's better to hear the voice of the people than a written answer. I ask them first, "How are you doing? ", second: "What are your mains accomplishments, what are the things you going to do today" and you try the vary a bit. But one of the questions is always more social.

T: Another key success factor are the social skills of the leader of a VT, how do you establish the relationships between your members? You said you try to have some touchpoints.

D: It depends a bit on how the team is formed, let say I have a complete new team and I put it together myself. I start from the moment on I have the team, I was creating a whatsapp group with all of them and I was, even before we knew each other, planning, interacting with them to hear their voice, how they talk in order to socialize with them. If I'm doing cool things during the weekend I sometimes post a picture to share with them, I send them greetings from wherever I am. That gives a dynamic and they do it aswell, they send pictures, ask how I'm doing. But this is how I get things going. If I want to specifically make it faster, I can them for certain challenges at the beginning or make some funny games with them not to assess their performance but just to get to know them.

T: Does all of that help to establish cohesion between your members?

D: Yes, exactly.

T: How do you motivate your members? Do you use incentives, recognition?

D: I recognize them myself, I tell them personally if they did good or bad. I have regularly one on one conversations with them. I think that the most important as a team leader is that you have one on one conversations. I had it with my physical team every two weeks, and I have it with my VT at least once a month, it depends on how much

In this conversations I talk about 50% of the time of their goals, their performance, things they did good or not so good and give them feedbacks and the other 50% of the time is about their personal development, why are they actually doing this job, how they connect, how they develop all of it, how does this help them in the next steps of career life. And with this they should be very clear how they do, how good they do, how they can do better but also what they personally get out of it and that should be the point that leads them to be motivated.

T: The next success factor is the mission and goal clarity. How often are you making sure that your members are understanding their final objective? How often do you ask for feedbacks, meetings, one on one or collective meetings?

D: When I do plannings, I do it maximum for half a year. Which is because we have peaks in AIESEC that are always within half a year so that's the normal time that you can work with. I put always 3 priorities, so I set for the team and for every individual, 3 priorities. In these priorities are for the semester, the six months. Then I ask them to break that down into the first quarter, so what does that means that we put also three priorities for the 3 months and we break this down into three priorities for this months and then for this week and then for this day. So everyday I could ask them "what are your three priorities for today?" which is connected to the week, the months, the 3 months and the six months. So in every check-in that I have with my members I do not do that with everyone of them. I ask them their priorities in every weekly meeting but I do not always go in details but I always have slides where people put in their priorities. And then for the monthly review, I go through that and for the quarter review as well and then we go back to the semester planning. So this is one thing. And besides this, I have individuals one on ones, at least once a month. If the team is my main team and I would do it every two weeks.

T: How about the leadership, you said that sometimes you had to be a bit stricter, severe depending on the people. What would be, for you, the best way to lead a VT?

D: The dynamic is always different, you have to find you own way. For me the best way is to establish a good connection with the members, I'm friend with most of the people that I work with and that was over the last 3 years always the fact. And based on that you can build a good team dynamic. But sometimes I got to close and forgot to track their deliverables precisely, achievement and their performance and this can lead to under achievement but now I've learned from that experience. I believe if you find a good mix in this relationship building and in the way of tracking them very clear then all the team is agreeing on it so you are not tracking them personally but they are comfortable towards the team to deliver their part and that makes it easier. And at the same time I'm trying to put in like a dashboard 4DX (For Dimension Executions) very good for operations as I was always leading operation support teams. I tried to bring that in, have the deliverables clear on actions steps that are influencing the goals. Immediately I could say if they had delivered this, I could connect it to the influence and that also makes it easier to push for results.

T: The tools you're using, you said you're using whatsapp, do you also use slack?

D: We are using slack in my team, in AIESEC international, I'm not using it my operations team because the Internet connection sometimes is not good enough. But my colleague that is handling AIESEC in Europe, she is Europe director, she is using Slack with everybody because the Internet of everybody is better.

T: Do you have other success factors that come in your mind? Some other interviewees mentioned the selection of the right people as very important.

D: Yes always.

T: How do you make sure you select the right people? Which skills are you looking for?

D: It depends on the position that I'm looking for, what is the objective of the team. But yes, if it's for a VT, I'm looking specifically how are their communication skills. I assess how I connect with them because in the end of the day this is one of the key to make a VT work. So if they can not properly communicate to me and I can not understand them, then that's already an exit criterion. I'm doing a lot of personality tests, I just send them a bunch and analyze afterwards. I'm doing cases studies, I love giving cases studies related to real situations and then just see what they propose and how they communicate, how competent they are in the responsibility that I'm looking for. By now, I have a lot of experience doing interviews and getting to know them and also pushing them a bit out of their comfort zone and based on that I can already a bit identify what kind of person it is.

T: The final top, the performance, how do you evaluate your members? Do you do it individually or collectively?

D: I do the one on ones once a month. At the end of the day everybody has an individual goal. So for example my current team for Asia-Pacific, the people in my team are responsible for either different AIESEC charters in the Pacific. So, their performance is related to how they are doing, they are all responsible for one product of all Asia-Pacific. So the product performance is what they are working towards. It is sure not always a 100% able to be influenced by them. But therefore, I have based on this 4DX that I was mentioning that they have activities, I can track them on. So, for example, how many coaching calls did they execute with the national responsables of their product, did they talk with them once a week, every week since they started the responsibility, I can already say this would influence how the product is doing, so I have these deliverables, in the end one percentage of the performance and then the end result that I want to achieve is the other percentage. Then I need to have a clear connection towards it, that's why I'm tracking them.

T: Final question, what shows that an AIESEC VT is performing? Is it only because they have achieved their final objective after one year? Or it's also the environment of the team that has worked perfectly during the year?

D: The main final goal is to achieve the objective for sure. For example, for the OSTs, our main objective is that operations are growing in all regions. But sure if it's only that, if the team dynamic is not constructive, then it's not necessarily performing. So the team dynamic and how people are treating and supporting each other is a main factor for being performant. I believe that if that's does not work, it is very unlikely that the other part will work.