
Cracking Coaching:

Five ways to make an impact at work



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Introduction

Coaching is one of the most powerful learning and development interventions available when it comes to helping individuals improve their performance and unleash their potential. It's ironic then, that despite being in existence for decades, it remains under-utilised by many organisations.

Coaching and mentoring can help individuals improve performance, conflict resolution and communication and interpersonal skills. It has never quite shed its elitist image, though. The perception is often that coaching is only available for, or useful to, those in executive positions.

Research carried out by ILM, however, reveals that more than four-fifths (84%) of employers believe coaching should be part of every organisation's management and development programme. In particular, it demonstrates that those that don't offer coaching are missing out on a powerful tool for effecting organisational change. Coaching can have major benefits when it comes to increasing engagement and boosting productivity in new joiners and returners. Those that have received coaching cite improved confidence, performance and productivity.

Here are five ways you can use coaching to create more productive, engaged and fulfilled workforces.

Coaching can improve confidence, performance and productivity across your organisation

1

Help your teams navigate change

“To deal with current difficulty, employers need to encourage and support staff at all levels of the organisation – to maximise their individual performance, as well as that of the business.”

Nick Cutland, director of quality at City & Guilds and ILM

We're at the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and many organisations are entering a period of transformation. That's why coaching is a particularly useful tool – with three-quarters (76%) of respondents to our survey agreeing that it helps teams when implementing organisational change.

Change is on the agenda of the vast majority of organisations and will remain so in the coming months and years. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and robotics are altering how people do their jobs and bringing in new ways of working. Some individuals will find that parts of their daily work will disappear and, in some cases, entire roles will be eradicated and new ones created. That's where coaching can come in. Four-fifths (79%) of those surveyed believe coaching can help teams when adopting new technology and different ways of working.

As well as the impact of technological change, the uncertainty surrounding it means the potential for more disruption. From the employer's point of view, skills gaps are a major concern and are already a reality for many organisations.

Coaching is the most nuanced of L&D interventions and as such can help members of the workforce to understand that change can be good and can help shift their mindset from a negative one to a positive one. It can remove the fear factor from change and help individuals transition mentally and practically.

Half of respondents said they are most likely to copy a colleague's behaviour when in challenging or unfamiliar situations and a third when something goes wrong. The negative effects of this type of contagious leadership are hard to control but ensuring individuals feel well-equipped to deal with day-to-day leadership challenges is an effective form of defence. Organisations that use coaching are future-proofing their teams, making them more resilient to change in the future.

2

Improve performance – across the board

The one-to-one and highly focused nature of coaching has huge potential to improve an employee's performance. It can directly target areas in which a person is weak and both coach and coachee can monitor progress.

58% said they felt more confident after coaching and 42% saw an improvement in performance in colleagues who had been coached, which in turn meant improvement in the entire team took an upturn.

The benefits coaching brings go beyond pure performance though. Coaching makes individuals feel valued and promotes a more inclusive culture within the organisation. This helps to make individuals feel more motivated and engaged with their work. In turn this will help to unlock discretionary effort which is a vital factor in increasing productivity.

“Companies that don't harness coaching are not only missing out on a powerful tool for organisational change and employee engagement, but also one that boosts productivity,”

Nick Cutland, director of quality at City & Guilds and ILM



3

Show you're investing in staff at all levels

The research found that companies that don't coach leave employees thinking their employers could be doing more for them: of the 15% that aren't offered coaching, a third say there is a lack of investment; a similar proportion (31%) believe that staff are taken for granted; one-fifth (22%) that leaders are not interested in staff; and the same number that the organisation doesn't understand the value of coaching.

Individuals are unlikely to feel valued at such organisations and morale, engagement and motivation levels will drop, leading to a fall-off in performance and productivity. Coaching sends an extremely positive message to employees that they are valued and worthy of investment. This also feeds into the employer brand and provides attraction and retention benefits for the organisation. Managers also report that they feel positive about the impact of coaching: two-thirds (67%) of those surveyed agree that coaching would make them feel good about managing others.

Coaching needs to move away from its executive level connotations and be viewed as something that is accessible to all levels of the workforce and at all stages of a career. The viewpoint is starting to change, but too many organisations are overlooking coaching as a powerful tool to increase engagement and performance at key parts of a person's career, such as those returning from a break or moving into new roles.



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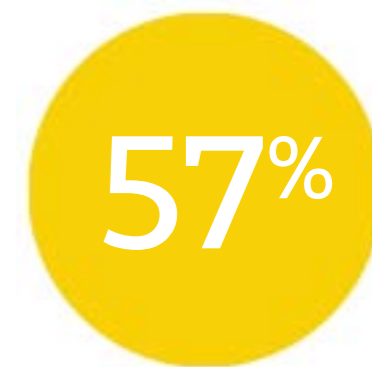
Make the return to work painless

Currently only two-fifths of people returning from a career break receive coaching and, of those that didn't, there was a strong sense that it would have eased their re-entry to the workplace. Three-fifths (60%) of them said they think it would have benefited them, their team and the organisation while just over half said it would have benefited them personally. A fifth of returners said it took them four months or more to feel part of the team again and 17% cited a similar period of time before they were back up to working at the best of their ability.

As well as adding up to a costly loss of man hours, this could have a potential detrimental impact on the returner's confidence levels as well as their motivation. They may have returned with insecurities about their ability to perform and if these aren't allayed quickly, they will continue to feel uncomfortable in their role and may even make a decision to leave. Coaching provides a way to protect an organisation's investment in someone who is returning from a break whether it be from maternity/paternity leave or a sabbatical.

The availability of coaching seems more prevalent when it comes to new joiners. Of those respondents who had moved to a new company, fewer than three-fifths (57%) had received coaching. Out of those that didn't, three-fifths (59%) said coaching would have been helpful for either themselves, their team or their company. Out of those who had changed role in their company, two in five did not receive coaching and four-fifths believe it would have been of benefit.

While the figures are more encouraging in terms of the volume of people coached, organisations are still losing too many valuable man hours while individuals get up to speed in a role. More than a quarter of respondents who had moved roles said it took as long as four months or more to work to the best of their ability and 10% of these that it took seven months. Out of the two-fifths who didn't receive coaching after they were promoted, 70% said it would have been helpful.



Fewer than three-fifths of those respondents who had moved to a new company had received coaching

5

84%

of those surveyed said that coaching would have helped them in periods when they struggled to manage an individual

Coaching improves confidence

Putting in place a coaching strategy and a coaching culture does not happen overnight. It demands effort, commitment and investment, but developing coaching skills at every level of an organisation can pay dividends.

For two thirds (67%) of those surveyed, the extra guidance and support provided by coaching made them feel good about managing others, while 71% said that coaching would be useful for their role. In fact, 84% said that coaching would have helped them in periods when they struggled to manage an individual and 88% when they had struggled with a particular project.

Amongst those respondents who have received coaching, improved confidence, performance and productivity are cited as three of the most important positive changes witnessed for themselves, others and their wider team and organisation.



The time to crack coaching is NOW

Organisations need to act now. The pace of technological change, digital disruption, globalisation and complex operating environments means that for organisations to thrive, they must ensure their workforce is aligned with the organisation and performing to the best of its ability.

“Coaching is an easily accessible tool that empowers employers to undertake successful organisational change, boost employee performance and increase engagement, in turn maximising productivity,” says Cutland. “Our research demonstrates that people place real value in coaching, a fact that employers cannot afford to overlook. Being so easy to implement, and yet affecting employees and the wider organisation so positively, coaching is a missed trick for employers that fail to get on board.”

Want to find out more about coaching?

Get in touch with the team and request an appointment to discuss how we could help you.

[Click here to get in touch with the ILM team.](#)

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ILM surveyed 1,008 UK professionals working in Healthcare, Finance or Retail. The research was conducted by Censuswide in August 2018

About ILM

ILM is the leading specialist provider of leadership qualifications in the UK. Last year, over 70,000 people enhanced their skills and performance with ILM, including over 14,000 management apprentices.

We believe that great leaders can come from anywhere. With the right support, anyone can grow and develop to make a real difference to their team and organisation.

Which is why we help individuals from all levels to realise and apply their potential, so that the organisations they work for can reap the benefits.

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