

Coaching & Mentoring 2023: Our Top 6 Findings

Use our cheat sheet to explore the 6 key outcomes from our 2023 State of the Industry: Coaching & Mentoring report

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Executive Summary



Coaching and mentoring continue to be essential components of workforce development strategies. It has a demonstrable impact on both the individual and organizational levels. The past two research studies on coaching and mentoring ([The State of Coaching and Mentoring 2021](#) and [2022](#)) showed considerable differences in both individual and organizational performance within organizations that had highly effective coaches and mentors versus those that did not.

Looking into the future, the importance of coaching and mentoring will increase, in part due to a different looming priority: the need for massive upskilling and reskilling. In the HR Research Institute's recent report, [The Future of Upskilling and Employee Learning 2023](#), coaching and mentoring are considered the second most effective training and development method for upskilling/reskilling our workforce.

About the Study

- In partnership with HR.com, the survey ran from January through March 2023 and gathered 245 responses from HR professionals in virtually every industry. Respondents were located worldwide—the majority residing in North America.
- Participants represent a broad cross-section of employers, ranging from small businesses with <50 employees to enterprises with >20,000 employees. Survey questions were guided by an independent panel of HR professionals whose coaching and mentoring expertise were invaluable.

Covered topics

- HR professionals' perceptions of the importance of coaching & mentoring
- Primary drivers of increased focus on coaching and mentoring
- Key barriers to successful coaching/mentoring
- Key differences between coaching & mentoring
- Competencies, or lack thereof, of today's coaches and mentors
- Who actually serves as a coach & mentor in organizations
- Technology for coaching and/or mentoring efforts
- The impact of coaching/mentoring on individual and organizational performance

6 Top Findings

1

The importance and usage of coaching and mentoring is on the rise.

- 70% of respondents strongly agree that coaching is an important practice in their organization, and two-thirds (66%) say the same about the importance of mentoring.
- This is a steady increase from 2021, where about half (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that coaching is important and 50% said the same about the importance of mentoring.
- Roughly half have also reported an increase in the amount of coaching and mentoring in their organizations:
 - 53% say coaching has increased a little or a lot
 - 45% say mentoring has increased a little or a lot

2

There are several factors driving coaching/mentoring programs.

- Of organizations that increased coaching/mentoring over the past year, the reasons are to:
 - prepare people for new roles or assignments (52%)
 - provide guidance to help others realize their potential (50%)
 - improve employee engagement (46%)
 - create a positive organizational culture (41%)
- The top 4 reasons for implementing coaching and mentoring over the next 2 years:
 - create a positive organizational culture (51%)
 - prepare people for new roles or assignments (50%)
 - provide guidance to help others realize their potential (47%)
 - improve employee engagement (46%)
 - increase employee retention (45%)



About 1/3 say their organization does not have coaching and/ or mentoring programs

3

Less than 1/3 say coaching/mentoring is effective in their organization

- On a scale of 1 to 10, (that is, 1 being not effective and 10 being perfectly effective), 31% rate the coaching in their organization as an 8 or above, and 26% say the same about mentoring.
- While coaches' and mentors' skills are on the rise, roughly half or fewer say coaches and/or mentors in their organization are very effective in the following skills:
 - building rapport/trust
 - listening to gain a better understanding
 - asking questions to generate insights
 - giving useful feedback
 - guiding conversations toward positive outcomes

4

Coaching and mentoring face barriers to improving their effectiveness.

- Only 46% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they provide specific training in coaching skills to leaders/managers, and even fewer (41%) say the same for mentoring skills.
- The most common challenges hindering coaching and mentoring programs are:
 - not devoting enough time to coaching/mentoring (78%)
 - managers avoid difficult conversations (56%)
 - lack of concrete options for training, development, and career pathing (47%)
 - those who excel at coaching/mentoring are not rewarded/recognized (44%)

Roughly half of organizations have increased the amount of coaching and/or mentoring over the past year

5

More organizations are turning to technology to enhance their major coaching/mentoring programs.

- 40% of respondents have relied on virtual coaching and mentoring to a large degree due to the increase in hybrid/remote work
- Multiple technologies are already being used by many organizations to bolster their coaching and/or mentoring efforts. The following technological capabilities are most commonly provided to facilitate coaching and/or mentoring:
 - Video capabilities allowing virtual/distance coaching and mentoring (52%)
 - LMS-based e-learning (38%)
 - Goal-setting capabilities (35%)
 - Internet-based learning (35%)

6

Companies with more effective coaches/mentors do things differently. When compared with organizations with less effective coaches/mentors, they are:

- more likely to say leaders/managers in their organization receive specific training in coaching and/or mentoring skills
- far more likely to say coaches in their organization are very effective in numerous skills
- much more likely to say the usage of coaching and/or mentoring has increased a lot over the last year
- less likely to say low skill levels of coaches and mentors are a hindrance to coaching/mentoring efforts

Mentoring will continue to be an effective way of developing people, especially from within the company, as this leads to upskilling, inspiration, engagement/retention, and potentially to sponsorship and advancement opportunities.

Dr. Michelle Prince

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Your Next Steps:

Key Takeaways to Improve Coaching & Mentoring at Your Org

Nurture the right coaching and mentoring culture.

- A good coaching and mentoring culture helps shape and reflect your overall corporate culture.

Invest in developing managers'/leaders' coaching and mentoring skills.

- Honing these crucial skills may require an organization to invest in formal coaching and mentoring training.

Broaden your coaching resources.

- A large portion of both coaching and mentoring is top-down and/or relies on outside coaches or mentors

Select external coaches who align with your organizational needs.

- External coaches were far and away the most frequently chosen resource for coaching.

Ensure coaches and mentors can thrive in hybrid work environments.

- The majority consider virtual coaching/mentoring equally effective.

Explore technology to enhance the coaching/mentoring experience.

- Newer technologies offer the promise of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the coaching experience.

Measure the impact of coaching/mentoring.

- Research shows that organizations proficient at coaching/mentoring see an impact in both employee and organizational performance

Be the hero. Give your team coaching & Mentoring

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