



# EXECUTIVE COACHING

## INDUSTRY RESEARCH

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## Introduction

2020 will be a year to remember. Two major catalysts impacted the executive coaching industry, disrupting our ways of working with a "new normal": the COVID-19 pandemic and the United States' Social Justice movement. With our commitment to support organizations, leaders, and coaches alike, we felt it was more important now than ever to listen, learn, and understand what is happening, and what will happen, within the coaching industry.

*Executive Coaching for Results* is the fourth study of its kind, first conducted in 2005, and again in 2013 and 2018. The 2020 version includes responses from over 750 participants. Three groups were surveyed: organization practice managers, external coaches and internal coaches. We hope this fourth iteration continues to provide valuable insight into this profession, especially during this time of global change.

We will be hosting conversations to discuss our key findings and trends in the industry. This research as well as further information can be found at:

[coachsource.com/drupal7/thought-leadership](https://coachsource.com/drupal7/thought-leadership)

Many thanks go out to our generous respondents: participating organizations, external coaches, and internal coaches. This study would also not be possible without the support of the amazing talent at CoachSource and our valued research partner, Seattle Pacific University.

Further inquiries regarding this research can be directed to [jaimie@coachsource.com](mailto:jaimie@coachsource.com) or +1 (424) 224-9055.



Brian O. Underhill, Ph.D.  
Co-Author, *Executive Coaching for Results: The Definitive Guide to Developing Organizational Leaders*

Founder & CEO  
CoachSource



J'Aimee A. Mission, Ph.D.  
Co-Author, *Executive Coaching for Results 2020*

Director of Client Service & Strategic Initiatives  
CoachSource

## Study Methodology

The current study replicates and extends a focused set of findings from *High Impact Executive Coaching* completed by Executive Development Associates and CoachSource in 2005, as well as from *Executive Coaching for Results: Executive Coaching Industry Research* completed by CoachSource in 2013 and 2018. The first study examined the coaching industry from the perspectives of external coaches, executives, and organization practice managers<sup>1</sup>. In 2013, the study expanded to also include a fourth perspective from internal coaches. In 2018, the study was enhanced to allow a wider variety of answer choices, answer choices were modified based on new and relevant trends and explored potential gender and regional differences.

The present study served several purposes:

- **Follow up on 2018 results:** We wanted to see how the industry shifted in specific ways since 2018. Did our predictions about the use of coaching come to fruition? Will our perspective on future trends change in a matter of two years? To fulfill on that purpose, the current study focused on the coaching experience, the use of coaching, the purpose of coaching, fees and future trends.
- **Take a closer, qualitative look:** For several of our research questions, we provided respondents the ability to provide their own responses if our answer choices did not quite capture what applies to them. Then, we conducted qualitative analyses to share their contributions thematically.
- **Flexing to 2020:** This year, there were two key environmental factors present that do not apply to previous studies. First, was the COVID-19 global pandemic. Many organizations and the countries in which they reside entered lockdown and/or social restrictions starting in early 2020. Second was the rise of the movement toward greater justice and equality in the United States, which reverberated around the world. We felt that the impact of these two factors in today's world were too great *not* to call out and adjust to in our research. As a result, we reopened our survey to *add* open-ended questions to ask participants what they think will be the impact of COVID-19 and the social justice movement on the executive coaching industry.

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<sup>1</sup> While the word “executive” may be used to describe a certain level of role within an organization, we asked all leaders who have been coached, regardless of level, to take our executive survey. We typically considered “executives” to be Director, VP, SVP, and C-level, though that can vary by company. Within this report, we refer to executives as leaders.

The following is a summary of enhancements and modifications to the current research:

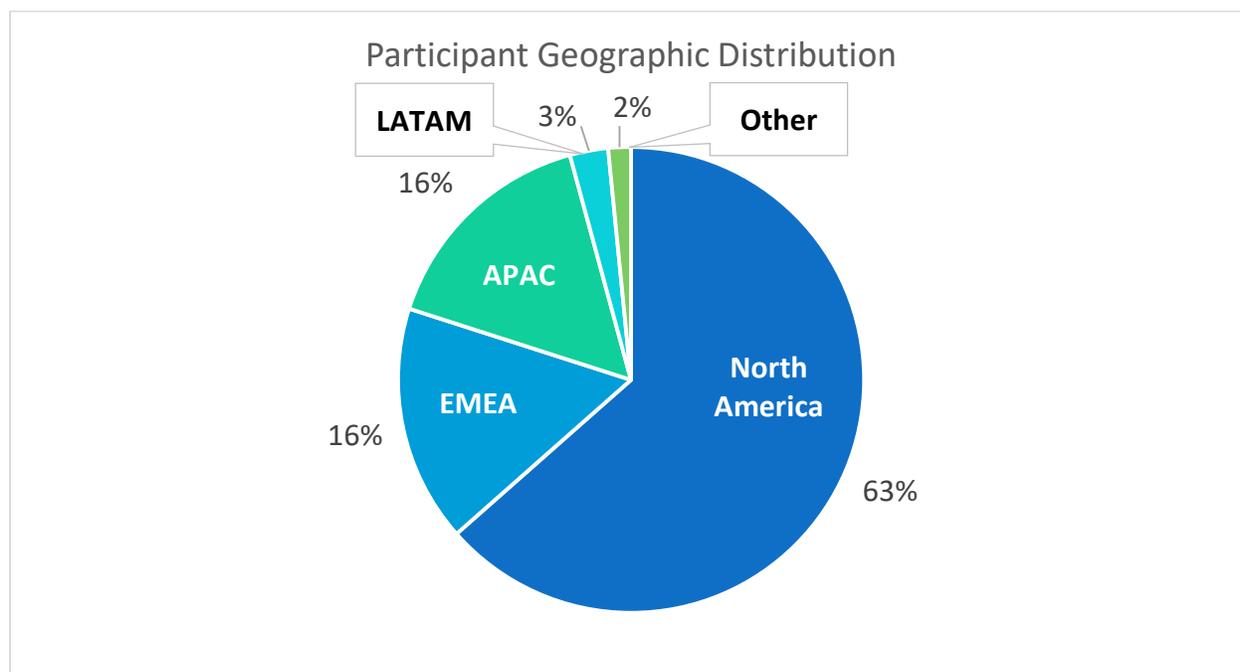
- We focused on surveying external coaches, internal coaches, and organizational practice managers.
- Follow up questions were added to provide more detailed information on topics such as coaching fees and the purpose of coaching.
- We investigated the *Top 4 Development Areas* that coaching engagements are requested for.
- Qualitative analyses for open-ended questions.
- Questions were added to explore the impact of COVID-19 and the movement toward greater justice and equality on the executive coaching industry.

Over 750 participants contributed to our survey. Similar to previous years, most participants were external coaches, followed by organizational practice managers, and internal coaches. Between practice managers and internal coaches, a total of 97 unique organizations were represented in our study.

GROUP	PARTICIPANTS
External Coaches	599
Organizational Practice Managers	91
Internal Coaches	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>765</b>

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Our participants responded from countries around the world. Most participants were based in North America followed by EMEA and APAC.



**FIGURE 2: PARTICIPANT GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**

*NOTE: The Other category includes participants who indicated they were based in more than 1 location.*

Region	External Coaches	Internal Coaches	Organizational Practice Managers
North America	62%	72%	73%
EMEA	18%	11%	11%
APAC	16%	17%	10%
LATAM	3%	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%	6%

**FIGURE 3: PARTICIPANT GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION BY GROUP**

## High-Level Findings

Executive Coaching for Results is a multi-year industry research study first begun in 2005, which looks at the field from multiple perspectives. This year, external executive coaches, internal coaches, and organization practice managers were surveyed. 765 respondents responded to the 2020 study (599 external coaches, 75 internal coaches and 91 organization practice managers).

Here are this year's key themes from the research:

### **Catalysts for Change: COVID-19 and the 2020 Social Justice Movement**

The world as we knew it shifted in 2020, including the coaching industry. The COVID-19 pandemic moved nearly all interactions to the virtual environment while blurring the lines between work and home. The United States' 2020 social justice movement toward greater justice and equality impacted people all over the world. As a result, how coaching engagements are held, and the focus of engagements have shifted. A spotlight has been directed toward increasing the accessibility of coaching, increasing the diversity of coaches, and coaches' ability to navigate and coach to wellness, work-life balance, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **The use of coaching to support leaders' development remains strong and stable**

Though the context of 2020 is significantly different from 2018, practice managers' outlook on the coaching industry remains bright. Based on our findings, 91% reported that the use of executive coaching has either remained the same or increased at most organizations over the last 2 years, a trend that 96% of practice managers expect to continue into 2022.

### **The purpose for retaining a coach remains consistent**

*Leadership development, transitions and executive presence* continue to be the top three purposes of executive coaching from practice managers' perspective. As an industry, we have continued to move away from remedial coaching and also increased our focus on *career coaching*, especially for internal coaches.

### **Program managers and coaches are aligned on the top 4 development areas**

According to those requesting coaching and those fulfilling on those requests, coaching is most commonly leveraged by leaders to develop in their *executive presence, emotional intelligence, ability to influence others and communication skills*.

### **The Top 3 predicted trends in 2018 remain strong and are expected to continue into 2025**

Consistent with 2018, *leadership development programs with additional coaching; leader-as-coach training (teaching coaching skills to leaders); and team coaching increasing* remain the top 3 predicted trends in the industry moving forward. *Coach certification and group coaching* increased in stature since 2018.

**Though the average 6-month coaching engagement is consistent across groups, internal coaches are shifting toward shorter, higher-touch engagements**

On average across rater groups, coaching engagements tend to last for 6 months, include between 11 and 30 hours of coaching support, and have a cadence of 1-2 coaching sessions per month. Internal coaches, however, are more likely to have shorter engagements and meet with their leaders more often than their external counterparts.

**Hourly fees have increased since 2018, though 6 month “packages” have actually decreased in cost due to fewer hours used**

On average, hourly fees paid by practice managers have increased 30% since 2018. While we found consistency in hourly rates from external coaches' perspective across regions, there is a wide range of 6-month assignment fees across regions. These differences may point to variability in how coaching engagements are designed across regions as well as how the fees organizations pay are split between coaches and the coaching firms they are a part of.

## Chapter 1: Coaching Overview

### Coaching Experience

Consistent with previous studies, we asked external coaches, "How long have you been doing 1-on-1 executive coaching?" The largest proportion of external coaches (37%) have been coaching executives for *over 15 years*. The remaining proportion of external coaches widely ranged from less than 3 years to 12 years of experience.

From the organizational perspective, we asked practice managers, "How many years has your organization been providing 1-on-1 executive coaching?" The majority of practice managers (28%) worked in organizations that have been providing executive coaching for *over 15 years*. This group of practice managers was followed by those in organizations that have been providing executive coaching for *4-6 years* (21%) and *less than 3 years* (19%).

In 2018, practice managers reported their organizations had been providing 1-on-1 executive coaching for an average of 10.3 years. Thus, practice managers for the current study worked in organizations that have been providing executive coaching for a longer period of time.

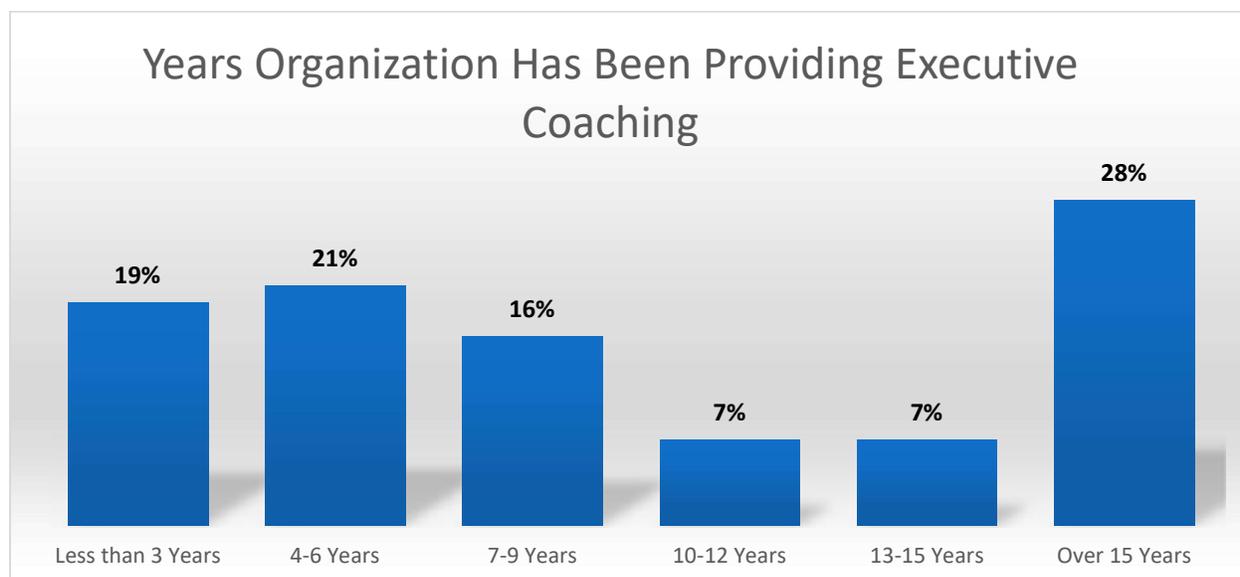


FIGURE 4: LENGTH OF TIME ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PROVIDED COACHING

We asked internal coaches, "How many years has your organization been providing formal internal coaching?" The majority of internal coaches worked in organizations who have been offering formal internal coaching for 6 years or less (75%). Only about 7% of the internal coaches surveyed worked in organizations who have been providing internal coaching for 13 years or more.

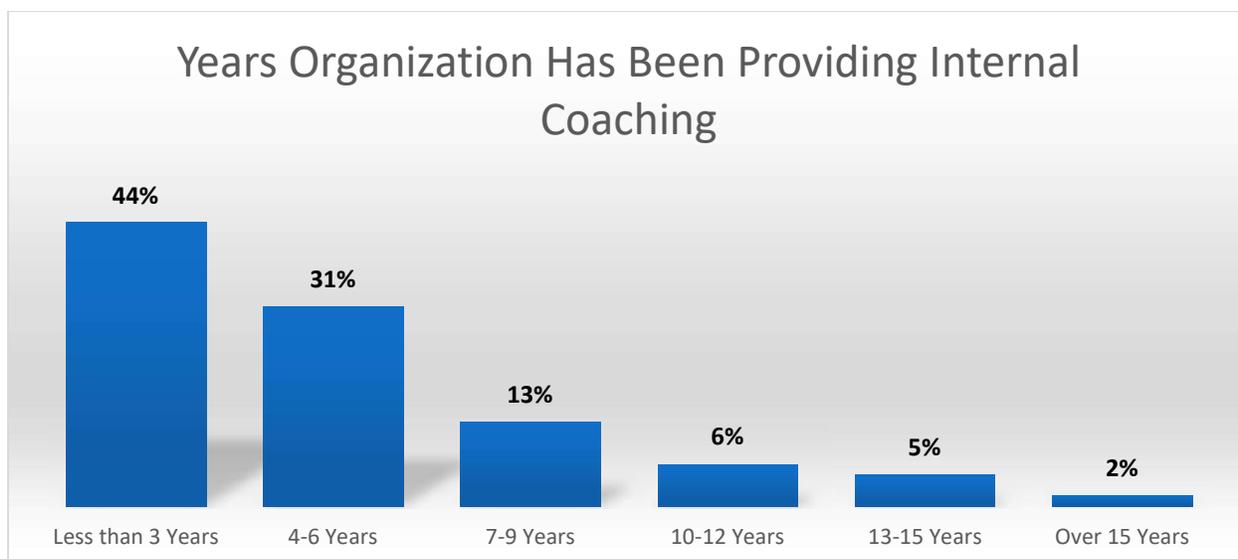
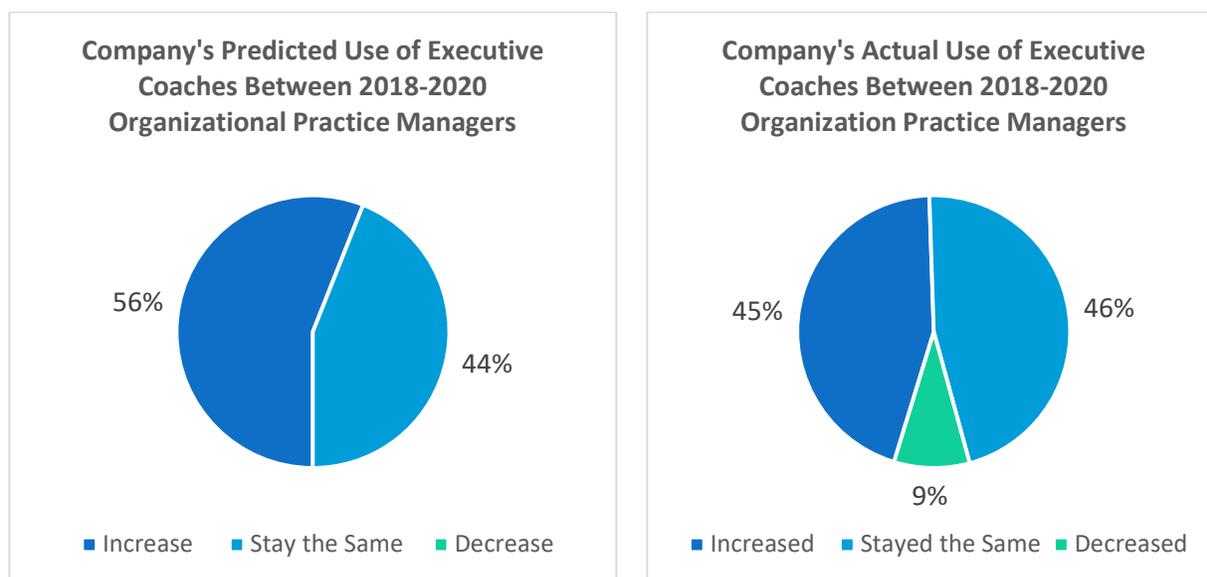


FIGURE 5: EXPERIENCE OF INTERNAL COACHES

### Use of Coaches Since 2018

In 2018, 56% of practice managers expected an increase in their use of executive coaching and 44% believed their use of coaching would stay the same over the next two years. Practice managers also expected their organization's use of internal coaching to *increase* (57%) or *stay the same* (31%) between 2018 and 2020.

This year, we asked practice managers if their company's use of executive coaches had changed over the past two years. The majority of practice managers indicated their company's use of executive coaches has either *increased* (45%) or *stayed the same* (46%). Few practice managers said that their company's use of executive coaches has *decreased* (9%). This suggests, from the organizational perspective, more stability in organizations' use of executive and internal coaching than was expected over the last two years.



**FIGURE 6: ORGANIZATIONS USE OF EXECUTIVE COACHES BETWEEN 2018 AND 2020**

We also asked internal coaches if their company's use of internal coaches has changed over the past two years. The majority of internal coaches said their company's use of internal coaches has either *increased* (48%) or *stayed the same* (46%). Few coaches said that their company's use of internal coaches has *decreased* (7%).

### Future Use of Coaches

Looking to the future, we asked practice managers and internal coaches whether they expected their company's use of coaching to decrease, stay the same, or increase over the next two years as well.

When asked if they expected their company's use of executive coaches to change over the next two years, about 60% of practice managers indicated that they expect their company's use of executive coaches to *increase* between 2020 and 2022. Over a third expect their company's use of executive coaches to *stay the same* (36%) and only 4% expect it to *decrease*.

This is consistent with practice managers surveyed in 2018 who also expected their company's use of executive coaches to either *increase* (56%) or *stay the same* (44%). However, in 2018, zero practice managers expected that it would *decrease*.

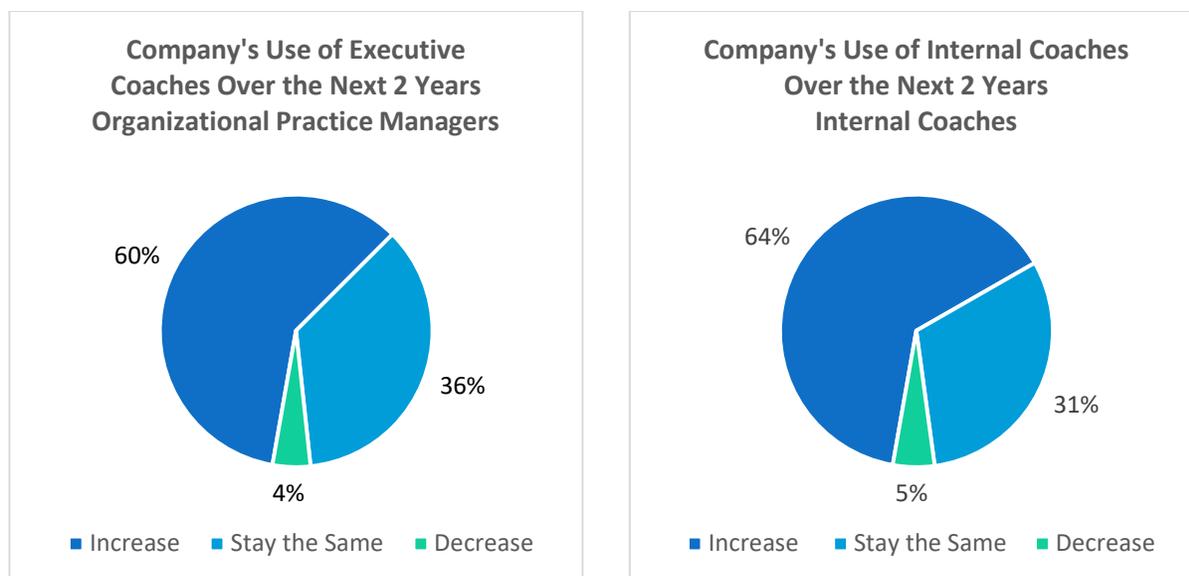


FIGURE 7: EXPECTED COMPANY USE OF EXECUTIVE COACHES FROM 2020-2022

More than half of the internal coaches expect their company's use of internal coaches to *increase* (64%) over the next two years. More than a quarter of internal coaches surveyed expected their company's use of internal coaches to *stay the same* (31%), with only 5% expecting a *decrease*.

Overall, it seems that the use of coaching has either remained the same or increased at most organizations over the last 2 years. According to internal coaches and practice managers, this trend is expected to continue into 2022.

### What is the Purpose of Coaching?

We asked external coaches about the primary type of executive coaching they provide. The most prominent type of coaching was *leadership development* (93%), followed by *executive presence* (47%) and *transitions* (37%). Only about 11% of executive coaches indicated *life coaching* as the primary purpose of their coaching engagements.

Comparing 2018 and now, *leadership development* remains as the #1 purpose for coaching from external coaches' perspective. *Executive presence* and *transitions* switched places in the rank order, followed by *fixing performance problems*, *career coaching*, and *life coaching*. *Fixing performance problems* has continued the downward trend in previous studies. However, while *life coaching* remains to be the least common purpose for executive coaching, it is being requested twice as often now than 2018. This suggests stability in the use of the primary purpose of coaching over the past 2 years with a rise in *life coaching*.

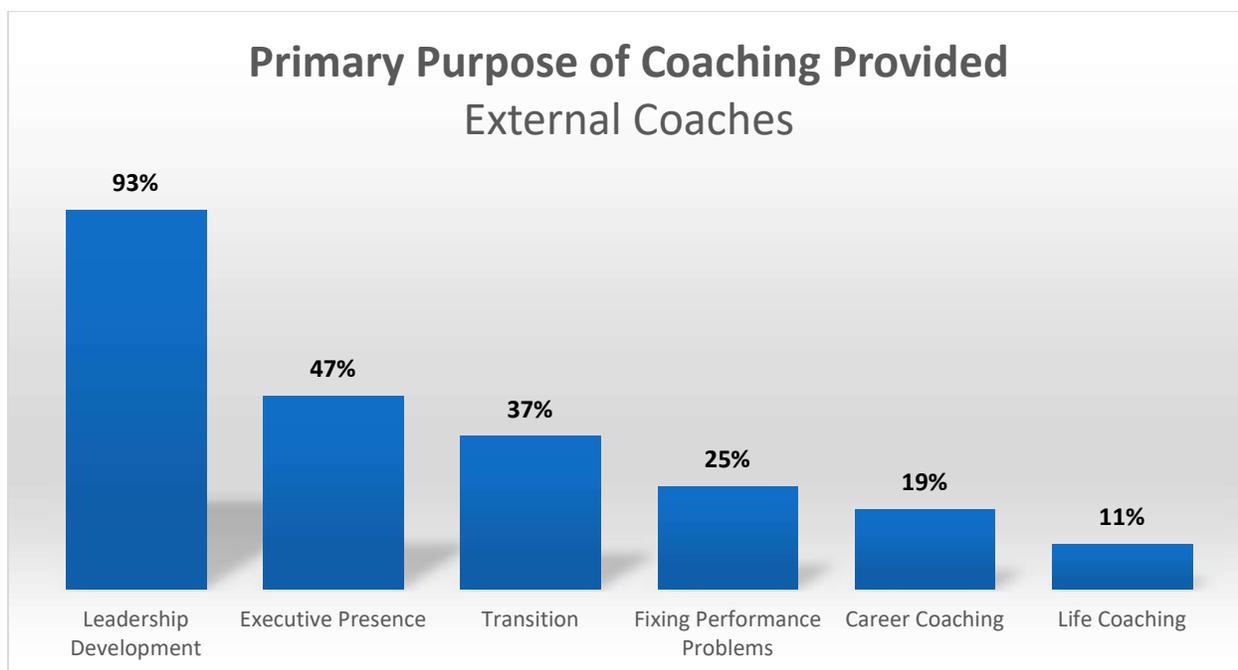


FIGURE 8: PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING EXTERNAL COACHES' PERSPECTIVE

	Leadership Development	Executive Presence	Transition	Fixing Performance Problems	Career Coaching	Life Coaching
2020	93%	47%	37%	25%	19%	11%
2018	96%	55%	42%	32%	17%	5%

FIGURE 9: PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING PROVIDED IN 2018 VS. 2020

We also allowed respondents to submit their own responses to this question if the primary type of coaching they provide does not fall within the given options. Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that external coaches are often asked to provide coaching for individualized sessions with *CEOs, c-suite executives, company founders*, and other “higher ups” in the organization. Additionally, numerous responses indicated that coaching is frequently used for *team development*. A few specific topics of coaching that were frequently mentioned included *communication skills, business strategy, wellness, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE & I) initiatives*.

When asked about the primary purpose of executive coaching in their organization, most practice managers indicated *leadership development* (97%), followed by *transitions* (48%) and *executive presence* (46%). *Life coaching* was also the least likely purpose of executive coaching from practice managers' perspective (1%).

*Leadership development, transitions and executive presence* were also the top three purposes of executive coaching in 2018 from practice managers' perspective. *Career coaching* jumped up 10% and *fixing performance problems* decreased by 12%.



FIGURE 10: PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING: PRACTICE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE

	Leadership Development	Transition	Executive Presence	Career Coaching	Fixing Performance Problems	Life Coaching
2020	97%	48%	46%	19%	13%	1%
2018	84%	55%	45%	9%	25%	2%

FIGURE 11: PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING: PRACTICE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE

	Leadership Development	Transition	Executive Presence	Career Coaching	Fixing Performance Problems	Life Coaching
Practice Managers	97%	48%	46%	19%	13%	1%
External Coaches	93%	37%	47%	19%	25%	11%

FIGURE 12: PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING: PRACTICE MANAGERS VS. EXTERNAL COACHES

It is interesting to note that while there is general alignment between practice managers and external coaches in terms of the purpose of coaching, there are differences (at least 10%) in terms of how often *transition*, *fixing performance problems*, and *life coaching* are requested. Practice managers tend to request coaching for *transitions* more often than external coaches

perceive. Conversely, practice managers tend to request coaching for *fixing performance problems* and *life coaching* less often than external coaches are asked to coach on them.

We also allowed practice managers to submit their own responses to this question. Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that coaching is also primarily leveraged for *individual development*, specifically related to *enhancing current performance* and *managing talent*.

The most common type of coaching provided by internal coaches was *leadership development* (87%), followed by *career coaching* (37%), and *executive presence* (32%). The least requested purpose for internal coaching was *life coaching* (11%).

In 2018 and 2020, the top four purposes of internal coaching were found to be *leadership development*, *career coaching*, *executive presence*, and *transitions*. This year, *leadership development* remained the #1 purpose of internal coaching. *Career coaching* and *transitions* switched places as the 2nd and 4th most common types of coaching provided by internal coaches, respectively.

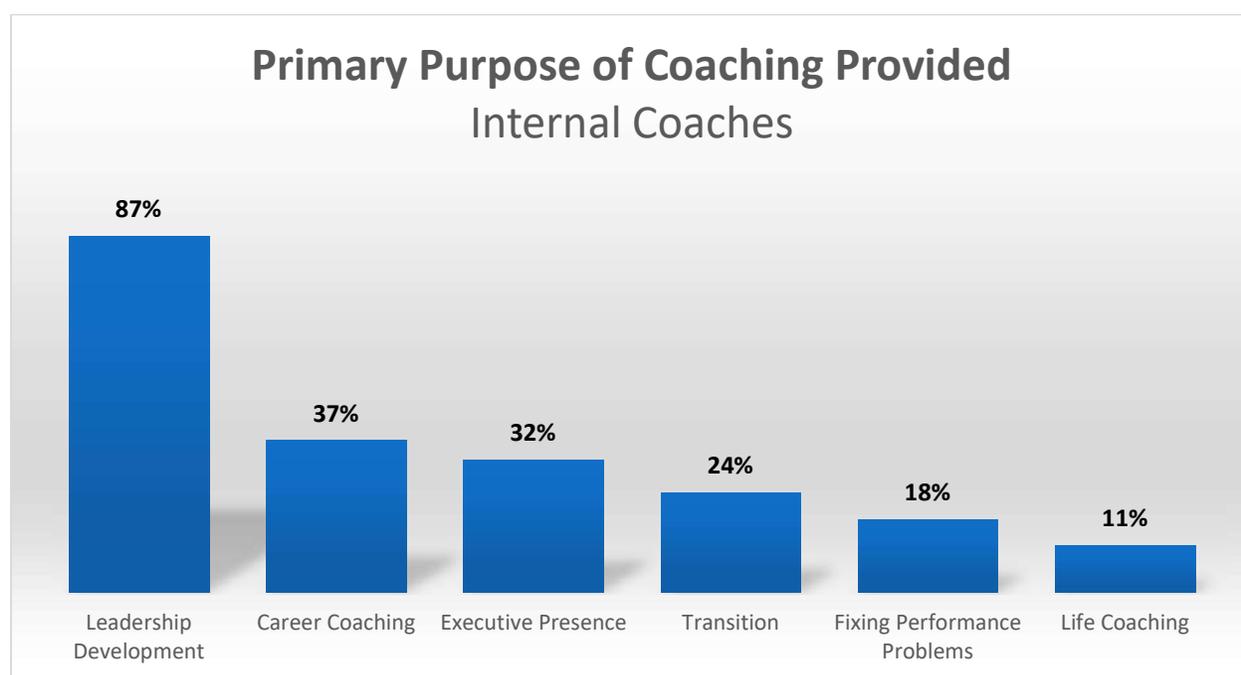


FIGURE 13: PURPOSE OF INTERNAL COACHING PROVIDED

	Leadership Development	Career Coaching	Executive Presence	Transition	Fixing Performance Problems	Life Coaching
2020	87%	37%	32%	24%	18%	11%
2018	93%	33%	35%	46%	31%	9%

FIGURE 14: PURPOSE OF INTERNAL COACHING PROVIDED IN 2018 vs. 2020

We also provided internal coaches the option to write in the primary purpose of their coaching engagements if it did not fall within the given options. Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that, similar to external coaches, internal coaches are often requested for *team coaching*. Additionally, a number of specific topics of coaching were frequently reported, such as *leaders-as-coach training* (teaching leaders coaching skills), *conflict management*, *change management*, *succession planning*, and *wellness*.

### Top 4 Development Areas

To dive deeper into the types of coaching provided by coaches and requested by leaders, we asked organizational practice managers, external coaches, and internal coaches about the top 4 development areas their coaching engagements are focused on. In addition to the development areas provided, respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own responses to this question.

We asked practice managers about the top four developmental areas that executive coaching is most commonly requested for. The top four responses were *executive presence* (54%), *emotional intelligence* (48%), *influencing others* (45%), and *vision and strategy* (40%). They were closely followed by *communication skills* (37%) and *change management* (33%).



**FIGURE 15: TOP 4 DEVELOPMENT AREAS FOR WHICH EXECUTIVE COACHING IS MOST COMMONLY REQUESTED**

Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that some of the top developmental areas coaching is most commonly requested for are related to *personal development*, including *self-*

*awareness, resilience, and work-life balance.* Other topics that were mentioned included *career development, team effectiveness, and agile leadership.*

We asked external executive coaches about the top four developmental areas they are most commonly asked to coach on. With nearly half of all external executive coaches who responded to the survey in agreement, the top four development areas were *emotional intelligence (56%), communication skills (54%), influencing others (52%), and executive presence (45%).*



**FIGURE 16: TOP 4 DEVELOPMENT AREAS FOR WHICH EXTERNAL COACHES ARE MOST COMMONLY ASKED TO COACH**

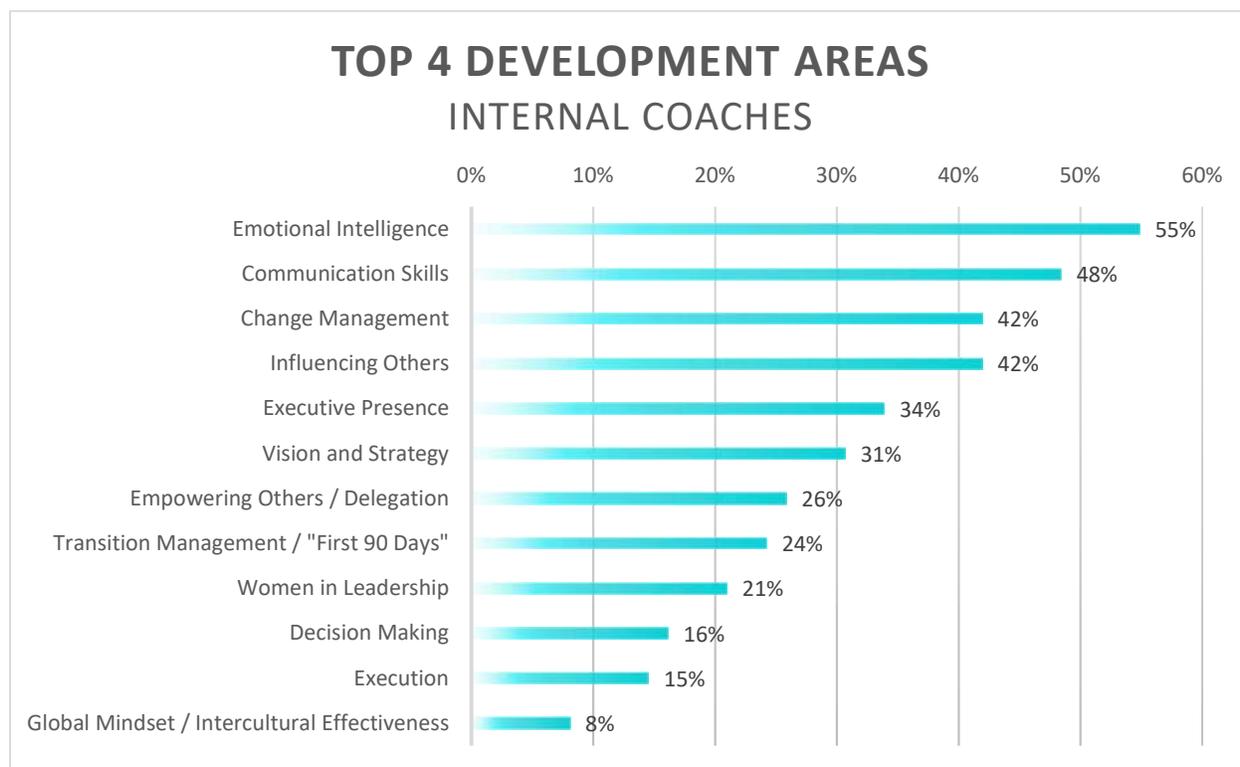
Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that additional top developmental areas requested of external coaching are related to *personal development*. These areas include *performance issues, changes in mindset, self-awareness and purpose, and work-life balance.* Other frequently mentioned areas included topics related to *interpersonal development*. Topics in this area of coaching included *team relations and collaboration, conflict management, and other forms of interpersonal relationships.* Other frequently mentioned areas included *career development* and work-related skills such as *prioritizing, time management, and problem solving.*

Lastly, we asked internal coaches about the top four developmental areas they are most commonly asked to coach on. Their top four development areas were *emotional intelligence (55%), communication skills (48%), change management (42%), and influencing others (42%).*

This suggests regardless of whether a coach is external or internal, they are most often asked to coach on *emotional intelligence*, *communication skills* and *influencing others*.

Of interest is internal coaches' higher rating on *change management* than external coaches. One possible reason for this may be internal coaches' ability to leverage their internal knowledge of organizations (e.g., systems, stakeholders, norms, etc.) to support leaders developing their ability to manage change within their organizations.

Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that some of the top developmental areas internal coaches are asked to coach on include *career development*, *interpersonal skills*, and *stakeholder management*.



**FIGURE 17: TOP 4 DEVELOPMENT AREAS FOR WHICH INTERNAL COACHES ARE ASKED TO COACH**

Across rater groups, these findings suggest that between both perspectives, those requesting coaching and those fulfilling on coaching requests, there is alignment on coaching being leveraged to develop in *executive presence*, *emotional intelligence*, *influencing others*, and *communication skills*. Additionally, the development of *women in leadership*, *decision making*, *execution*, and *global mindset/intercultural effectiveness* are areas that are currently requested the least across all three rater groups.

## Chapter 2: Coaching Processes

### Length of Coaching Engagements

Consistent with 2018, we asked all three rater groups how long their typical coaching engagements tend to last. Nearly half of the external coaches' engagements last for *6 months* (49%). This was followed by *9 months* (23%) and *12 months* (16%). Less than 5% of external coaches indicated that their engagements lasted 15 months or more.

This suggests that the typical external coaching engagement is no less than 6 months and not likely to last more than 12 months. These findings are consistent with external coaches surveyed in 2018, suggesting stability in the typical length of external coaching engagements.

Consistent with external coaches, most practice managers indicated their typical coaching engagements last *6 months* (66%), *12 months* (15%), and *9 months* (14%). Zero practice managers indicated contracting engagements *less than 3 months* and only 5% last *more than 18 months*. These findings are also consistent with 2018, suggesting stability in engagement duration over the last two years from practice managers' perspective.

For internal coaches, the most common response was *6 months* (38%) and *less than 3 months* (24%), followed by *9 months* (17%) and *12 months* (17%). Less than 5% of internal coaches' typical engagements lasted more than 15 months. Similar to external coaches, this suggests that the typical internal coaching engagement is between 6 and 12 months.

A key difference, however, is the higher proportion of internal coaching engagements lasting less than 3 months compared to external coaches. One possibility for this difference may be leaders requesting internal instead of external coaching support for specific, short-term development opportunities. Internal coaches may also be more likely than external coaches to take on shorter engagements that focus on debriefing 360 feedback and other assessments.

In 2018, the most common responses for internal coaching were *6 months*, *9 months*, and *12 months*, respectively. This suggests that over the last two years, there has been an increase in shorter, 3-month engagements with internal coaches.

Across all three rater groups, 6-month coaching engagements were the most common engagement duration. This finding has remained consistent over the past two years for all three rater groups as well. The only exception being the increase in shorter-term internal coaching engagements.

## LENGTH OF TYPICAL COACHING ENGAGEMENT ALL GROUPS

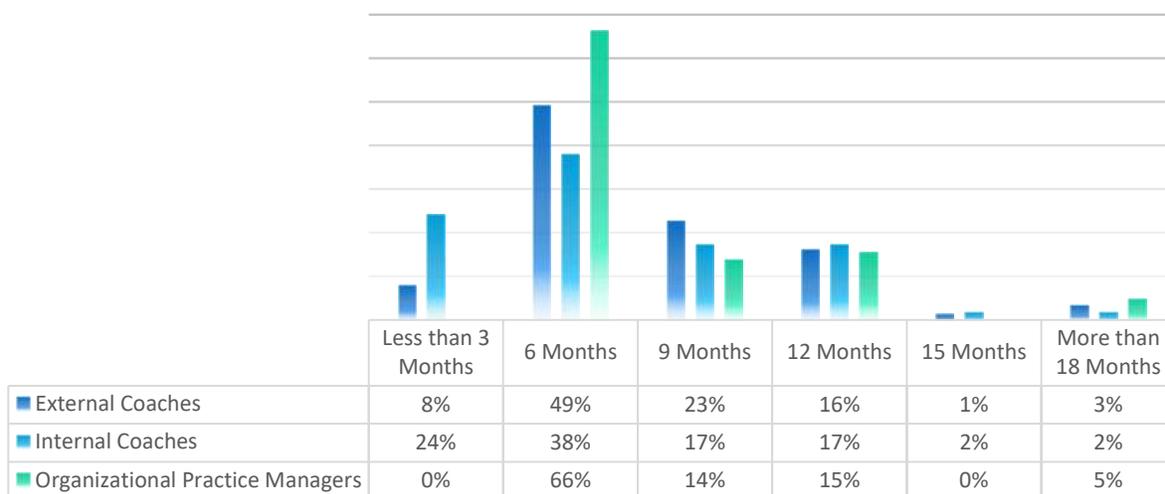


FIGURE 18: THE TYPICAL LENGTH OF COACHING ENGAGEMENTS ACROSS ALL GROUPS

### Engagement Hours

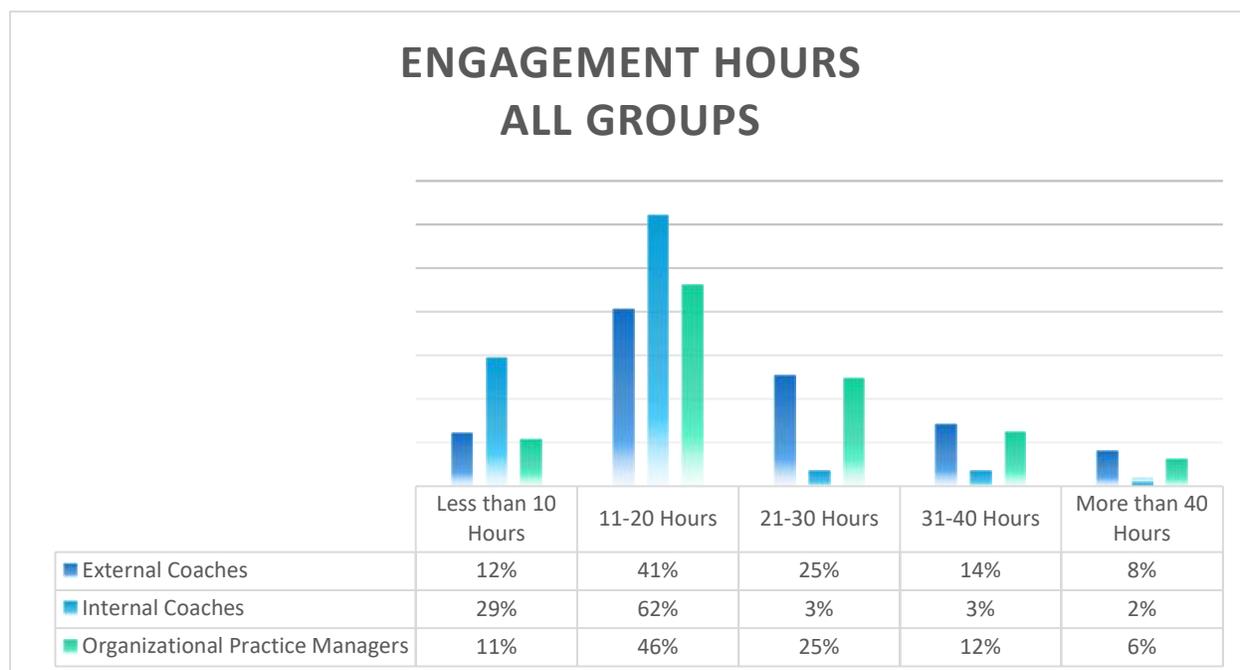
After our study in 2018, we realized that while two coaching engagements may last for the same duration (e.g., 6 months), this does not necessarily mean the same amount of time was spent during the engagement. For example, an engagement can last 6 months while the number of key stakeholder interviews, number of coaching sessions, etc. can vary, ultimately impacting the total amount of coaching support.

This year, we asked all three rater groups about how many hours their typical coaching engagement includes. For external coaches, the most prominent response was *11-20 hours* (41%), followed by *21-30 hours* (25%) and *31-40 hours* (14%). These findings suggest most external coaching engagements include between 11 and 30 hours of coaching support (66%). However, about 34% indicated *less than 10 hours* or more than 30 hours for their typical coaching engagement. This suggests a wide range in the number of hours delivered by external coaches.

From the practice managers' perspective, most coaching engagements included 11-30 hours (71%). About 29% of practice managers indicated their engagements included less than 10 or more than 30 hours. The pattern of these findings mirrors the responses of external coaches. Perhaps practice managers responded to this question with only external coaching engagements in mind. Alternatively, it is possible that external coaching engagement hours are tracked more consistently than internal coaching engagements because of the investment external coaching entails.

Consistent with external coaches, most internal coaches surveyed include *11-20 hours* (62%) in their coaching engagements. This was followed by *less than 10 hours* (29.3%). However, while 66% of external coaching engagements included 11-30 hours, about 91% of internal coaching engagements included 20 hours or less. Again, this may point to more internal coaches engaging in shorter-term engagements in 2020 compared to 2018.

Despite their differences, the most common response across all three rater groups was *11-20 hours*, followed by 21-30 hours. This suggests that the typical coaching engagement is, on average, 6 months in duration and includes between 11 and 30 hours of coaching support.



**FIGURE 19: HOW MANY HOURS TYPICAL COACHING ENGAGEMENTS INCLUDE**

### Leader Interaction

To further understand the coaching process of typical coaching engagements, we also asked survey participants how often, on average, leaders interacted with their coaches throughout the engagement. According to more than half of the external coaches surveyed, they interacted with their leaders *every 2 weeks* (57%). This was followed by *monthly* (25%) and *weekly* (14%). Only 2% met with their leaders *more than once a week* and a little over 1% met with their leaders on a quarterly or annual basis. This suggests that on average, 82% of external coaches meet with their leaders 1-2 times a month. These findings are also consistent with external coaches surveyed in 2018.

## LEADER-COACH INTERACTIONS THROUGHOUT ENGAGEMENT ALL RATER GROUPS

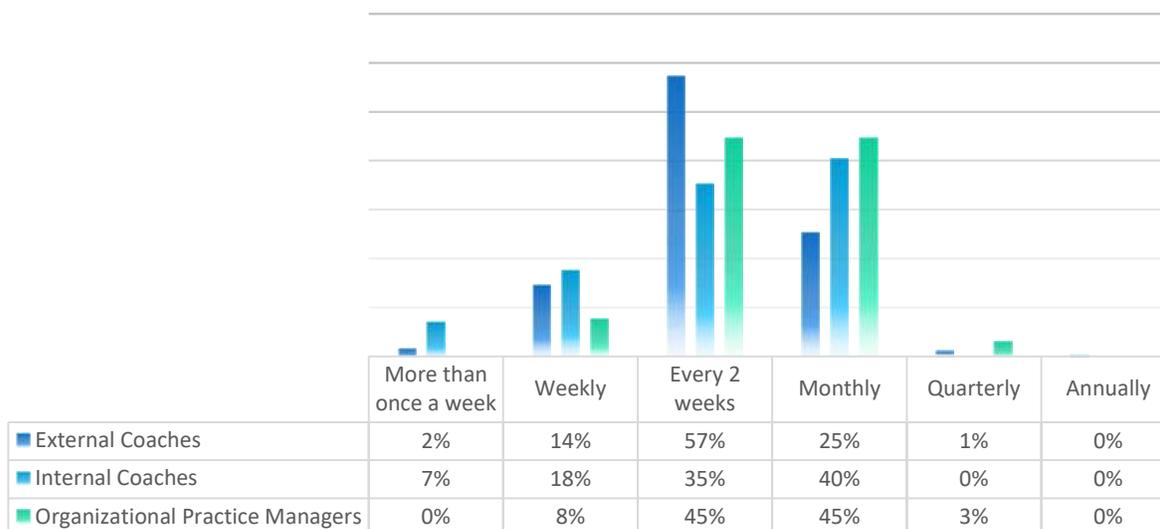


FIGURE 20: HOW OFTEN, ON AVERAGE, LEADERS INTERACT WITH THEIR COACH

When asked how often on average their leaders interacted with coaches, most practice managers (90%) indicated meeting 1-2 times per month. These findings are consistent with practice managers who were surveyed in 2018.

When asked how often, on average, internal coaches interacted with their leaders, about 75% met with their leaders 1-2 times per month, followed by *weekly* sessions (18%). Zero internal coaches indicated meeting with their leaders on a *quarterly* or *annual* basis, while 7% meet with their leaders *more than once a week*.

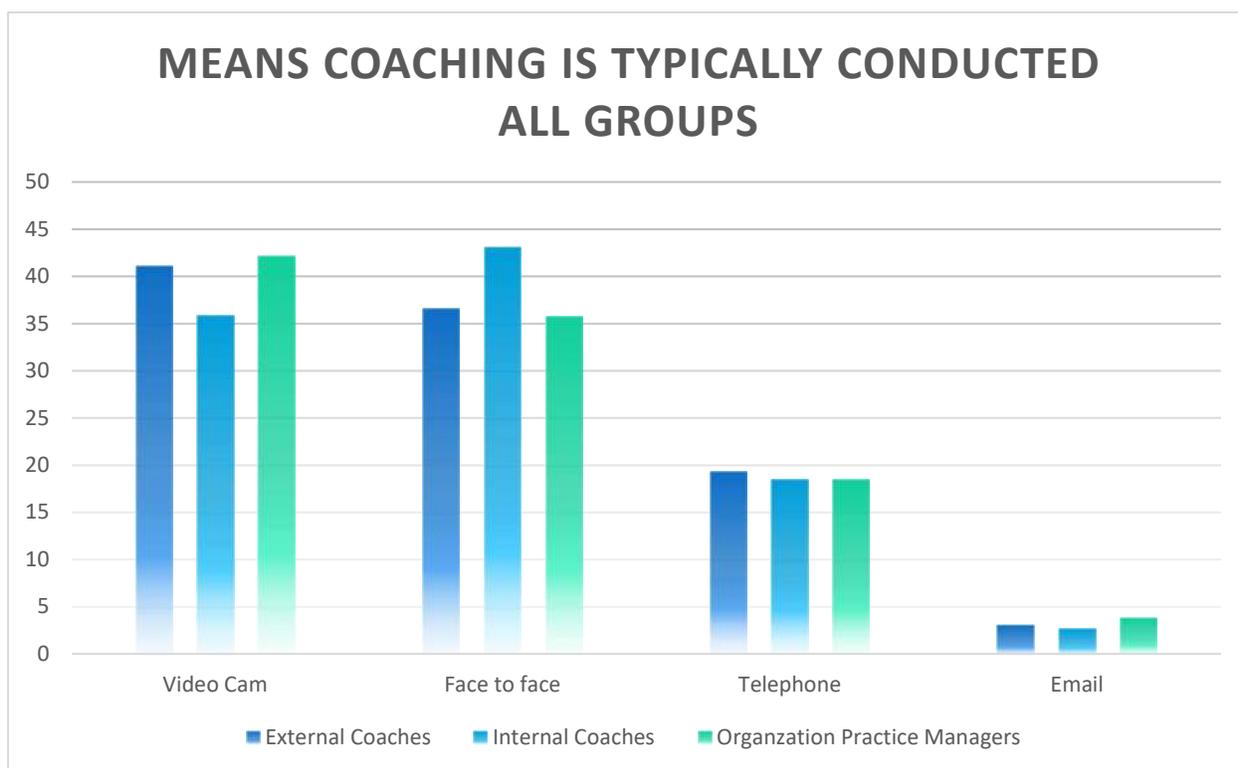
These findings suggest that similar to external coaches, most internal coaches met with their leaders 1-2 times a month. However, unlike their external counterparts, they are less likely to meet with their leaders over longer periods of time and more likely to meet with their leaders over shorter periods of time. This is consistent with more internal coaches surveyed taking on shorter engagements – meeting more often when given a shorter time frame makes sense, especially when working on specific, short-term development opportunities.

These findings suggest that on average across rater groups, coaching engagements tend to last for 6 months, include between 11 and 30 hours of coaching support, and have a cadence of 1-2 coaching sessions per month.

### How Coaching is Conducted & the Effectiveness of the Method

Similar to participants asked in 2005, 2013, and 2018, current study raters were asked, "Through what means is executive coaching typically conducted?" Raters could choose from among four options: *face to face*, *telephone*, *email*, and *video cam*. Similar to 2018, raters in the current study distributed 100 points across the four categories based on their frequency of use.

Across all three rater groups, most coaching engagements were conducted via *face to face* and *video cam*. Similar to 2018, *face to face* remained one of the predominant coaching modalities. However, more coaching is being conducted by *video cam* and *telephone* today than 2 years ago. This is no surprise given the current impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Through What Means Is Executive Coaching Typically Conducted? (Divide 100 points across as applicable)			
	External	Internal	Organization
Face to Face	37%	43%	36%
Video Cam	41%	36%	42%
Telephone	19%	18%	18%
Email	3%	3%	4%

FIGURE 21: HOW COACHING IS TYPICALLY CONDUCTED ACROSS GROUPS  
 FIGURE 22: HOW COACHING IS TYPICALLY CONDUCTED ACROSS GROUPS (%)

In addition to asking what means coaching engagements were conducted, we also asked how effective they felt each method of communication is. Across all three rater groups, *face to face* was rated as the most effective, followed by *video cam* and *telephone*. Not surprisingly, *emails* were rated as the least effective method of conducting coaching engagements.

In 2018, *face to face* was rated as the most effective form of communication, followed by *telephone*, *video cam*, and lastly, *emails*. The results of the current survey suggest that while *face to face* coaching is still seen as the most effective method, *video cam* coaching is now being recognized as more effective than *telephones* and *emails*.

**Effectiveness of Coaching Communication Method**

	EXTERNAL		INTERNAL		ORGANIZATION	
	2020	2018	2020	2018	2020	2018
<b>FACE TO FACE</b>						
<i>Very / Mostly Effective</i>	90%	92%	88%	91%	88%	94%
<i>Very / Mostly Ineffective</i>	5%	3%	0%	5%	2%	0%
<b>VIDEO CAM</b>						
<i>Very / Mostly Effective</i>	77%	58%	63%	51%	75%	45%
<i>Very / Mostly Ineffective</i>	2%	3%	0%	5%	2%	0%
<b>TELEPHONE</b>						
<i>Very / Mostly Effective</i>	43%	59%	46%	54%	32%	45%
<i>Very / Mostly Ineffective</i>	4%	3%	0%	5%	3%	0%
<b>EMAIL</b>						
<i>Very / Mostly Effective</i>	5%	6%	0%	8%	2%	6%
<i>Very / Mostly Ineffective</i>	12%	15%	19%	17%	14%	16%

**FIGURE 23: EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH COMMUNICATION METHOD**

In addition to *video cam* being the most effective method, its perceived effectiveness jumped up an average of 20% across all three rater groups since 2018. This is paired with a decrease in the perceived effectiveness of all other methods since 2018. These findings may reflect the differences in not only how coaches and leaders meet during the global pandemic but why. Before the global pandemic, coaches and leaders have the option to meet and build their rapport face-to-face. Perhaps this is why connecting by telephone in between in-person coaching sessions were evaluated as more effective in 2018 than today.

In today's world, where in-person sessions are much less likely to be done, telephone sessions may not provide as strong of an opportunity for rapport to be built in the coaching relationship.

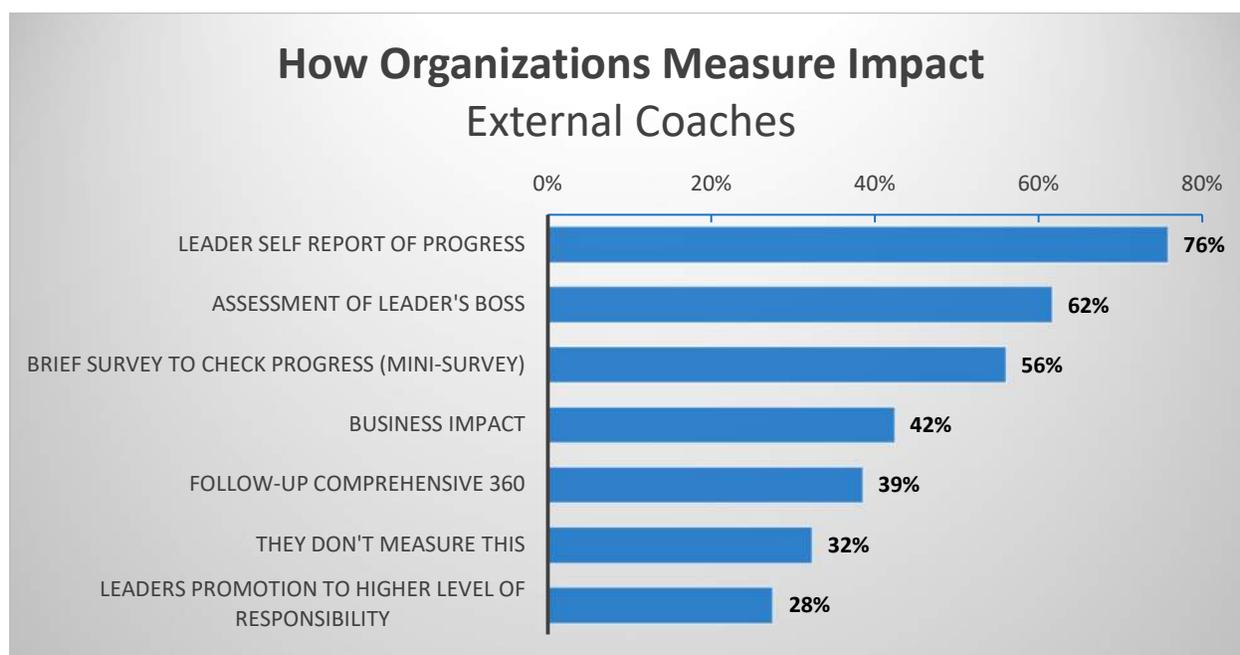
Instead, more coaching sessions may be held via video cam to supplement what is lost from less opportunities to meet in person. Perhaps, overall, face to face is the preferred and most effective method of conducting coaching engagements. When face-to-face is readily available, intermittent telephone sessions are quite effective. However, when face to face is not a readily available and video cam is preferred, telephone sessions may be less effective. Future research should look further into this potential phenomenon.

## Chapter 3: Measuring Impact

### Means of Measuring Coaching Impact

Similar to previous years, we asked all three rater groups how organizations are typically measuring the impact of coaching engagements. All three groups were also provided the opportunity to provide their own responses to this question.

From the external coach perspective, organizations typically measure the impact of executive coaching through the *leader's own report of their progress, an assessment by the leader's boss, and a brief survey to check their progress (mini-survey)*. These findings are consistent with external coaches surveyed in 2018. One surprising change from the 2018 report was the increase in external coaches that said that organizations do not measure the impact of coaching. In 2018 only 6% of responses indicated that impact was not measured, but in 2020 this number has jumped to 32%.



**FIGURE 24: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY MEASURE THE IMPACT OF EXECUTIVE COACHING - EXTERNAL COACHES' PERSPECTIVE**

Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that the impact of coaching is typically measured using some form of feedback, either from the *coach* or *other key stakeholders* (aside from the leader's boss). Other frequently mentioned metrics of success included the *leader's goal attainment* and any *visible signs of improvement*, such as *changes in the leader's behavior* or the *impact* they have on those around them.

Consistent with external coaches, practice managers indicated their organizations typically measure the impact of executive coaching through *the leader's own report of their progress, a brief survey to check on their progress, and an assessment by the leader's boss*. These findings suggest alignment between external coaches and practice managers in how they are measuring

success. While not measuring the impact of coaching was the least mentioned response (14%), it should be noted this response has increased by 8% since 2018.



**FIGURE 25: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY MEASURE THE IMPACT OF EXECUTIVE COACHING - PRACTICE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE**

Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that the impact of coaching is typically measured using *feedback from stakeholders, check-ins with the leader, and multipart evaluations* that include feedback from a variety of sources.

The results slightly vary for measuring the impact of internal coaching. *Leader's self-report of their progress and a brief survey to check on their progress (mini-survey)* remain as two of the most common ways organizations measure the impact of internal coaching. Unlike external coaches, more internal coaches indicated their *coachee's promotion* as a measure of their impact. The pattern of these results is also consistent with internal coaches surveyed in 2018. Similar to external coaches and practice managers, more internal coaches in 2020 (30%) indicated their organizations do not measure the impact of internal coaching compared to 2018 (19%).



**FIGURE 26: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY MEASURE THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL COACHING**

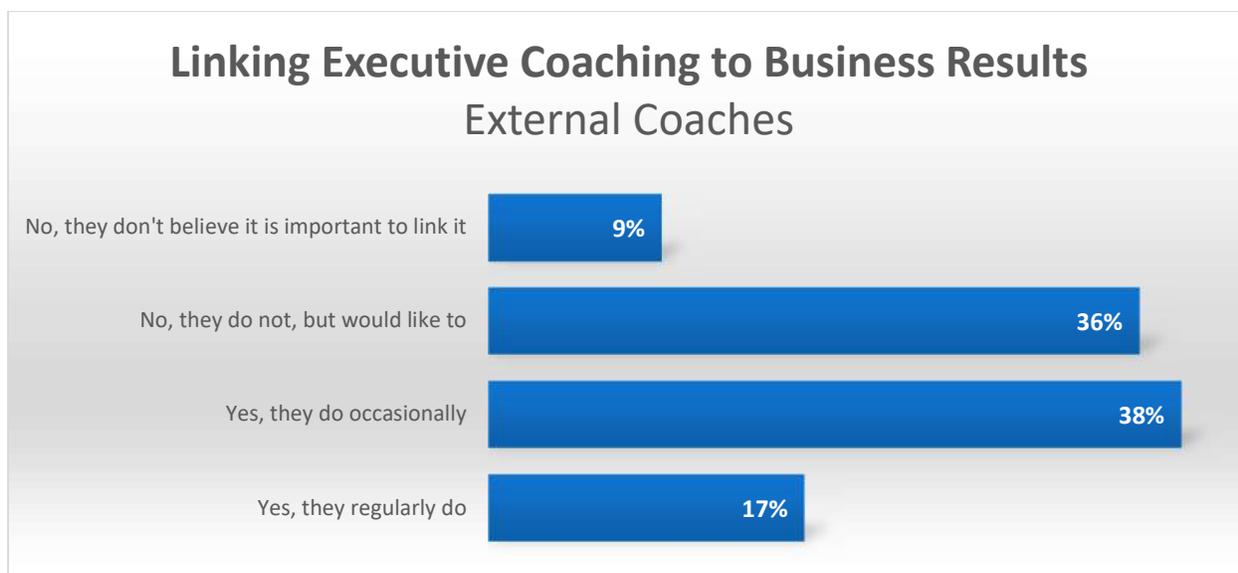
Results from the qualitative analysis suggest that the impact of internal coaching is typically measured using feedback from the *leader's supervisor*. Additional responses mentioned the use of *internal mobility* as a metric.

Across all rater groups, *leader self-report of progress* remains the predominant method for measuring the impact of coaching, however, using a *brief survey to check progress (mini-survey)* gained popularity since our last survey. Unfortunately, not measuring the impact of coaching also increased across all groups since 2018.

#### Linking Coaching to Business Results

Similar to previous years, we asked all three rater groups whether organizations are linking coaching with business results. For the current study, we also asked participants to describe how organizations are linking coaching with business results.

The largest proportions of external coaches reported that either most organizations *occasionally already link coaching to business results* (38%) or they currently do not but would like to (36%). These organizations are followed by those who regularly link their executive coaching to business results (17%). Lastly, organizations who do not believe it is important to link coaching to business results remain in the minority at 9%.



**FIGURE 27: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY LINK EXECUTIVE COACHING TO BUSINESS RESULTS - EXTERNAL COACHES' PERSPECTIVE**

We then asked external coaches to describe how they have seen organizations link their coaching work to business results. The most frequently provided responses are organized by themes below:

- **Alignment with Business Objectives:** The goals of the coaching engagement are strategically aligned with the mission or vision of the organization. For example, one respondent stated that "Coaching development plans can be linked to business goals/culture/company values and measured over time."
- **Employee Engagement:** Most often measured as the level of engagement of the employees that the leader manages, typically measured in engagement scores or other engagement results. For example, one respondent stated that results were linked through "...improvement in team members' engagement levels."
- **Employee Turnover/Retention:** The number of employees that have decided to stay with the company or leave after the leader has received coaching. For example, one respondent explained that "One of the easiest ways to link behavioral shift to business outcomes is through looking at turnover and employee morale, pre and post engagement."
- **Leader's Communication Skills:** The leader's ability to verbally interact with their employees. For example, one respondent mentioned that the leader is expected to have "Constant communication with the team..."
- **Financial Outcomes:** Revenue, sales, and other measures of organizational profit. For example, one respondent said that "...the company looks for the leader's organization to have increased revenue and/or better bottom-line results."
- **Leader Performance:** Positive workplace behaviors that contribute to the leader's own performance, the performance of their team, or business outcomes. One respondent

described the link between performance and results, saying that "Effective leaders create effective teams and therefore, business results that increase as their leaders' skills increase."

From practice managers' perspective, nearly half of those surveyed in the current study indicated they either *occasionally link executive coaching work to business results*, or they do *not but would like to* (68%).



**FIGURE 28: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY LINK EXECUTIVE COACHING TO BUSINESS RESULTS - PRACTICE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE**

When asked to describe how their organization links executive coaching work to business results, practice managers most frequently provided responses fell into the themes below:

- **Alignment with Business Objectives:** The goals of the coaching engagement are strategically aligned with the mission or vision of the organization. For example, one responded said that coaching results are "linked to strategic goals of the organization as well as the business unit."
- **Employee Engagement:** Most often measured as the level of engagement of the employees that the leader manages, typically measured in engagement scores or other engagement results. For example, one respondent simply stated that "We look for employee engagement."
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Stakeholders in the leader's development, such as the leader's supervisor, peers, HR, and the coach help to determine the impact on business results. For example, one respondent said that "In post-engagement survey we ask leader coached and manager about business impact."
- **Individual Subjective Outcomes:** The success of the leaders coaching is based on the context of their accomplishments. For example, one respondent said that their

organization might ask “What did the leader/team accomplish that might not have happened had the leader not improved?”

For internal coaches, most organizations (47%) *do not link their engagements to business results but would like to*, followed by those who *occasionally link their engagements to business results* (28%).



**FIGURE 29: HOW ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY LINK INTERNAL COACHING TO BUSINESS RESULTS**

When asked how their organizations linked internal coaching work to business results, internal coaches’ most frequent responses fell into the themes below:

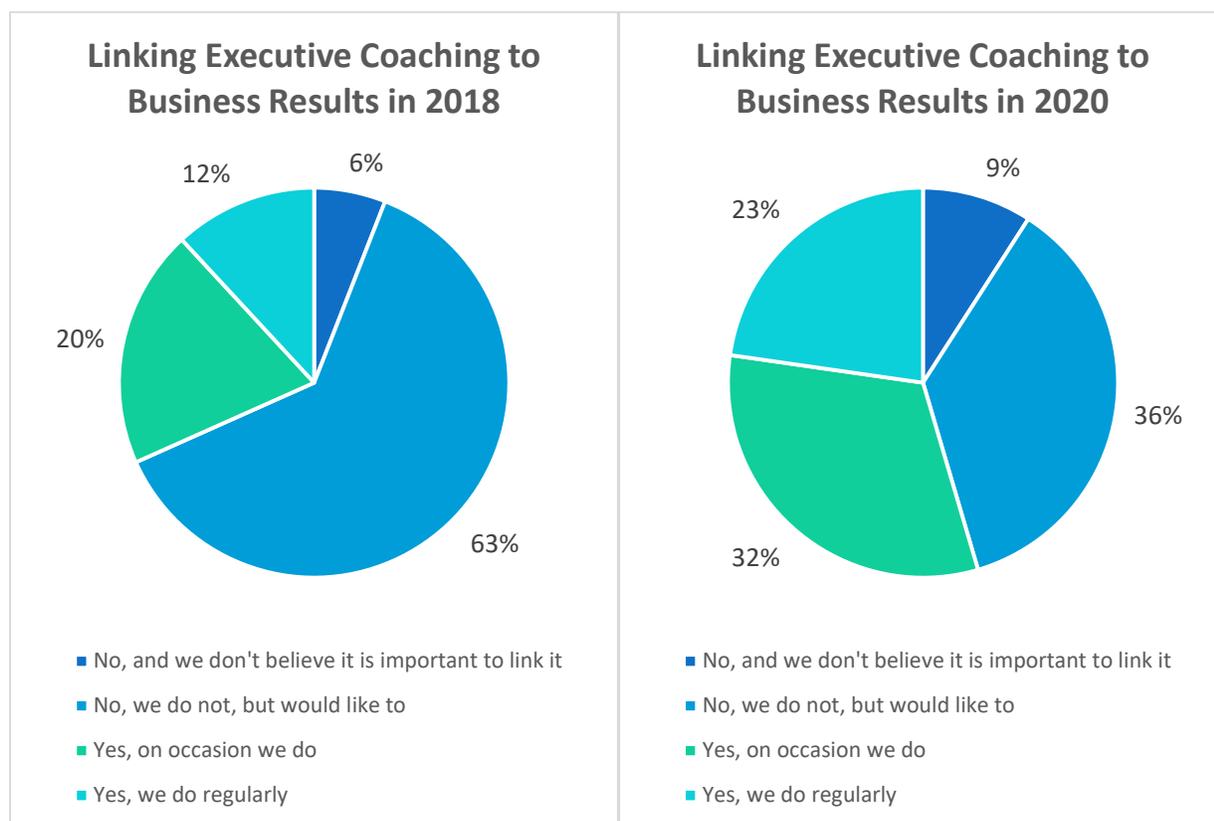
- **Alignment with Business Objectives:** The goals of the coaching engagement are strategically aligned with the mission or vision of the organization. For example, one employee stated that in their organization "Any coaching engagement starts with high level business objective to map back to."
- **Employee Engagement:** Most often measured as the level of engagement of the employees that the leader manages, typically measured in engagement scores or other engagement results. For example, one respondent discussed the use of "Employee engagement survey results" to measure business results.
- **Employee Turnover/Retention:** The number of employees that have decided to stay with the company or leave after the leader has received coaching. For example, one respondent stated that their organization looks at "Retention of talent..." to measure business results.
- **Leader Promotion:** The leader's eligibility for promotion to a higher level in the organization after coaching. For example, one respondent said that "Increase on readiness for succession is the primary measure."

Overall, the results suggest external coaching is more likely to be linked to business results than internal coaching. For organizations who do link coaching to business results, *alignment with business objectives* and *employee engagement* are two consistent ways organizations are linking coaching work to business results across rater groups. These additional themes also emerged in the qualitative analysis across rater groups:

- **Pre/Post Tests:** Organizations assess business results before and after the coaching engagement to test the effectiveness of coaching. For example, one respondent conducted a pre/posttest "By comparing the results achieved before the coaching sessions (which triggered the coaching requirement) with the results achieved during and after the sessions."
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Organizations take multiple measurements of business results over the duration of the coaching engagement to measure the effects of coaching. For example, one respondent described the process at their organization by saying "We use a benchmarking approach involving the sponsors, leader and coach at the beginning of engagements. We then do pulse checks with the leader and the sponsors separately mid-engagement and close to anticipated end of the engagement. We look at performance metrics at each stage as well."

As we previously noted, the percentage of organizations surveyed who do not currently link coaching to business results and do not believe it is important to do so has increased by 3% since 2018 from practice managers' perspective. Similarly, the percentage of organizations who currently do not link coaching to business results but would like to have decreased by 27%.

These decreases, however, are met with increases in the proportion of organizations who occasionally (+12%) and regularly link coaching to business results (+11%). This suggests that more organizations have incorporated ways to link coaching being doing in their organizations to business results over the last two years.



**FIGURE 30: TWO-YEAR COMPARISON OF ORGANIZATIONS LINKING EXECUTIVE COACHING TO BUSINESS RESULTS - PRACTICE MANAGERS' PERSPECTIVE**

## Chapter 4: Future Trends / Fees

### Future Trends

Similar to previous years, we asked participants to rate the likelihood of the following trends in the coaching industry over the next 3-5 years. Respondents can respond to each trend from 1 - *Extremely Unlikely* to 7 - *Extremely Likely*:

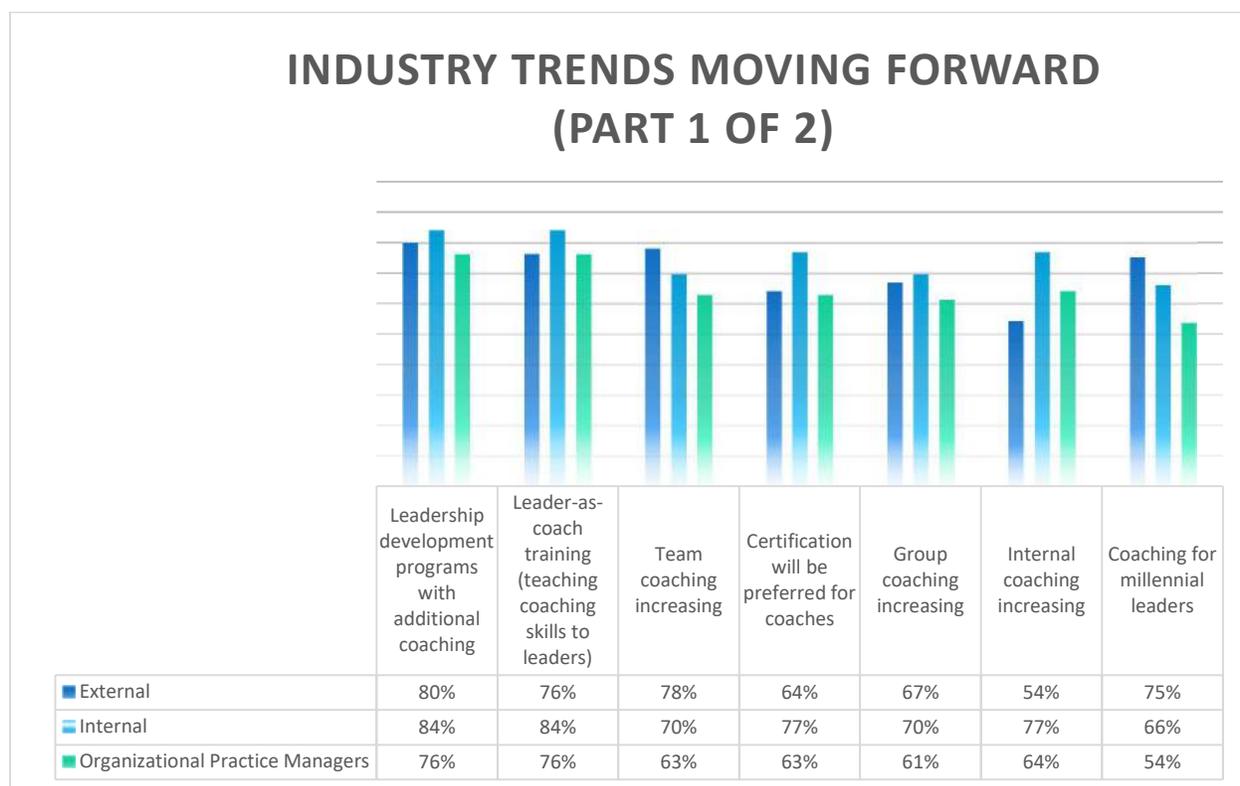
- Leadership development programs with additional coaching
- Team coaching increasing
- Leader-as-coach training (teaching coaching skills to leaders)
- Coaching for millennial leaders
- Group coaching increasing
- External executive coaching increasing
- Certification will be preferred for coaches
- Organizations centralize / streamline executive coaching under fewer vendors
- Coaching management systems (online tracking of coaching engagements) in greater use
- Internal coaching increasing
- App-based coaching platforms (very low-cost virtual coaching) will be a significant player in the industry
- Coaching supervision will become more prevalent
- Peer coaching increasing
- Coaching fees will decrease (become a commodity)
- Artificial intelligence will eventually replace human coaches

In the current study, we found that on average, the top three predicted industry trends across all three rater groups were consistent with 2018: *leadership development programs with additional coaching*; *leader-as-coach training (teaching coaching skills to leaders)*, and *team coaching increasing*. This year, more study participants anticipate *certification will be preferred for coaches* (+19%) as well as the *group coaching increasing* (+9). *Coaching management systems (online tracking of coaching engagements) in greater use* also increased in likelihood by 18%. Though it is the 10th most likely trend, the greatest increase this year was found for *app-based coaching platforms (very low-cost virtual coaching) will be a significant player in the industry* (+25%). Lastly, *coaching supervision* (+12%), *coaching fees will decrease* (+10%), and *artificial intelligence eventually replacing human coaches* (+1%) remain as the least likely future trends in the coaching industry.

While some ratings were consistent across rater groups, there were differences in their perspectives regarding the likelihood of *internal coaching increasing*; *peer coaching increasing*; *organizations centralize/streamline executive coaching under fewer vendors*; *external executive coaching increasing*, *coaching supervision will become more prevalent*; *coaching for millennial leaders*; *coaching fees will decrease*, and *app-based coaching platforms becoming a significant player in the industry*.

Specifically, external coaches tended to perceive the increase of internal and peer coaching as less likely than internal coaches and practice managers. Conversely, external coaches also tended to perceive *coaching for millennial leaders*, *external executive coaching increasing*, and *coaching fees will decrease* as more likely than internal coaches and practice managers.

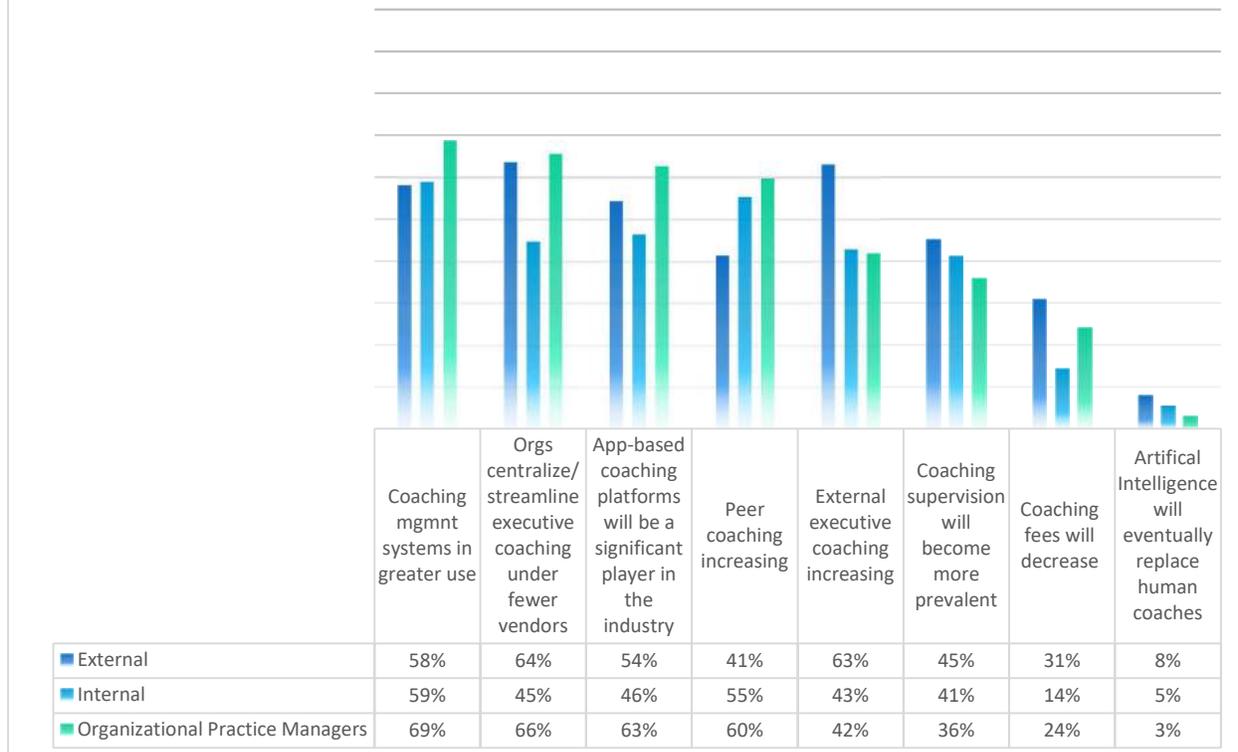
On the other hand, internal coaches tended to perceive *organizations centralizing/streaming under fewer vendors* and *app-based coaching platforms becoming a significant player in the industry* as less likely than external coaches and practice managers. Lastly, practice managers were less likely to believe that *coaching supervision would increase* and more likely that *app-based coaching platforms will be significant players in the industry* than external and internal coaches.



**FIGURE 31: THE MOST LIKELY TRENDS IN THE COACHING INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS - PART 1**

**NOTE:** The criteria are listed in ranked order from most likely to least likely as determined by the average of a criterion across the three groups.

## INDUSTRY TRENDS MOVING FORWARD (PART 2 OF 2)



**FIGURE 32: THE MOST LIKELY TRENDS IN THE COACHING INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS - PART 2**

*NOTE:* The criteria are listed in ranked order from most likely to least likely as determined by the average of a criterion across the three groups.

The Most Likely Trends - 2018 vs. 2020		
	2018	2020
Leadership development programs with additional coaching	81%	80%
Leader-as-coach training (teaching coaching skills to leaders)	73%	79%
Team coaching increasing	67%	70%
Certification will be preferred for coaches	49%	68%
Group coaching increasing	57%	66%
Internal coaching increasing	65%	65%
Coaching for millennial leaders	62%	65%
Coaching management systems (online tracking of coaching engagements) in greater use	44%	62%
Organizations centralize / streamline executive coaching under fewer vendors	58%	58%
App-based coaching platforms (very low-cost virtual coaching) will be a significant player in the industry	30%	54%
Peer coaching increasing	N/A	52%
External executive coaching increasing	64%	49%
Coaching supervision will become more prevalent	28%	41%
Coaching fees will decrease (become a commodity)	13%	23%
Artificial intelligence will eventually replace human coaches	5%	5%

**FIGURE 33 : THE MOST LIKELY TRENDS IN THE COACHING INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS - 2018 VS. 2020**

*NOTE:* The criteria are listed in ranked order from most likely to least likely in 2020 as determined by the average of a criterion across the three groups.

We also asked all three rater groups to describe any additional trends they saw emerging in the executive coaching industry. Their responses are summarized below:

**External coaches'** most frequently mentioned trend was the shift from face-to-face coaching to *virtual coaching* that utilizes video conferencing platforms such as Zoom. With many employees shifting to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large influx in the number of responses related to the use of technology in coaching including the use of *virtual coaching platforms* and *app-based coaching*.

Another frequently mentioned trend was the *increased accessibility of executive coaching* for employees beyond high-level executives. A number of respondents described the democratization of coaching with standardized or tiered coaching models that allow for more

cost-effective coaching at lower levels of the organization. *Virtual coaching* and *team or group coaching* were mentioned as methods of offering more affordable coaching. *Team or group coaching* was also mentioned as a rising trend independent of cost effectiveness.

There were mixed responses regarding whether the general *demand for coaching* will increase or decrease. Some respondents seemed to believe that there will be a greater need for coaches in specific development areas, such as *change management*, *leading during times of crisis*, *cross-cultural coaching*, and coaching related to mental health, such as *wellbeing*, *work-life balance*, and *resilience*. Other respondents felt that due to the economic decline related to COVID-19, executive coaching will be seen as a luxury that many organizations will not be able to afford.

One of the main trends noted by **internal coaches** was an *increase in accredited coaches*. One respondent noticed an increase in coaches that don't have any formal training and stated that "this is a challenge to the field." Other frequently mentioned trends were related to the *format of coaching*. Internal coaches mentioned that coaching will move to a more "on-demand" or "as-necessary" role in organizations and coaching engagements will be shorter and serve a specific purpose. Internal coaches provided additional support for the increase in two specific types of coaching: *leaders-as-coaches training* (teaching coaching skills to leaders) and *cross-cultural coaching*. A few respondents also mentioned the use *team or group coaching* becoming more prevalent.

Consistent with the external coaches' perspective, **practice managers** frequently mentioned an anticipated increase in the *accessibility of coaching*. One respondent in particular mentioned that they felt coaching at lower levels would be mainly handled by internal coaches, while senior executives would work more with external coaches. A number of respondents commented on the increase in *virtual coaching* and how they saw it decreasing the cost of executive coaching, thus increasing its overall accessibility. Respondents also provided specific types of coaching that organizations may be looking for in the future. These included areas of coaching that were also specified by external coaches, such as *resilience*, *wellness*, *leaders-as-coaches training*, and *leading during times of crisis*. In addition, practice managers suggested *agile coaching* as an upcoming trend. One respondent also specified *team or group coaching* as a rising trend. A few respondents stated that it will be important to assess the value of coaching through ROI and evidence-based metrics.

## Coaching Fees

Similar to previous years, we asked external coaches and organizational practice managers about their coaching fees. This year, we aimed to gain a finer-grained understanding of coaching fees. Specifically, we asked both rater groups to provide coaching fees by leader level, hourly rate, and by 6-month engagements in United States Dollars (USD). We also asked respondents whether coaching engagements held in different regions of the world were paid for or charged at different rates.

In 2018, the average hourly rate paid by practice managers was \$497 with a standard deviation of \$225. Fees ranged from \$250-\$1,100. This year, the average hourly rate paid by practice managers was \$647 with a standard deviation of \$671, fees ranged from \$36 to \$6,000. External coaches' average hourly coaching fees have also increased since 2018 in a similar fashion.

Interestingly, this increase is not exactly reflected in the assignment fees reported by practice managers and external coaches in 2020. Specifically, while practice managers reported a slight increase in assignment fees since 2018, external coaches reported a decrease in assignment fees since 2018.

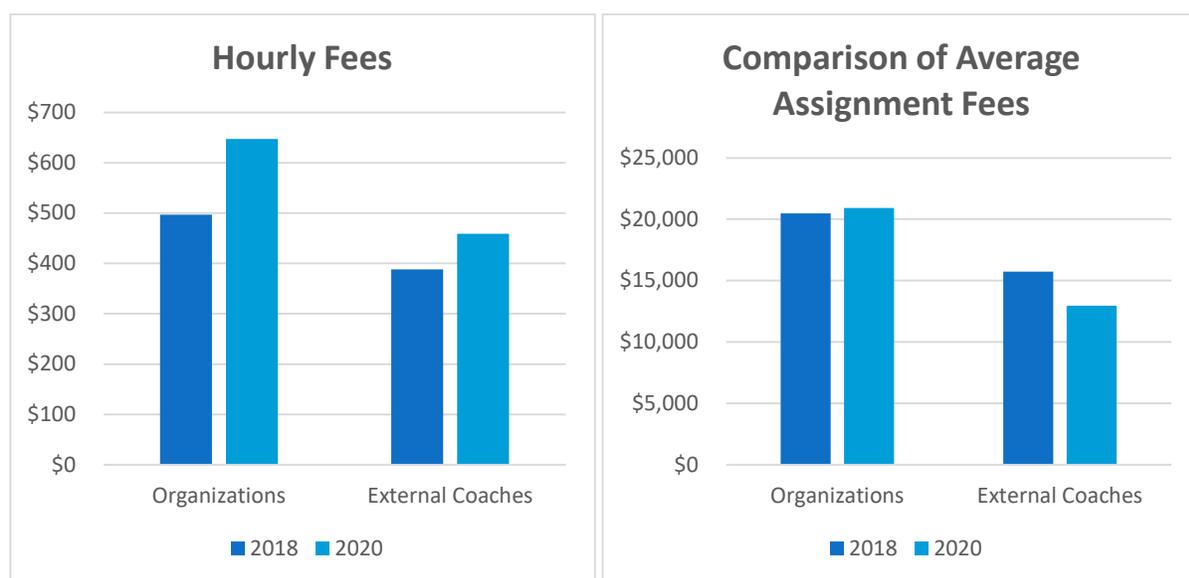


FIGURE 34: 2018 vs. 2020 COMPARISON OF AVERAGE COACHING FEES

Also, the median 6-month assignment fee reported by practice managers in 2005 is identical to this year's median fee of \$15,000. These findings suggest stability in what organizations are paying for 6-month coaching assignments over the last 15 years, despite fluctuations in hourly fees. In contrast, external executive coaches reported being paid less for 6-month assignments than they were two years ago.

There are several possibilities for these results. First, hourly rates may be paid for and billed at higher rates than package fees. Second, while coaches' independent rates may be increasing over time, organizations and the presence of many companies providing coaching in the market may be keeping the overall price of coaching assignments stable over time.

These fee comparisons to previous years are enriched by the current study's results by region and leader level below. A few trends in coaching fees emerge. First, not surprisingly, coaching fees on average increase as the leader's level in the organization increases. This holds true for both hourly rates as well as 6-month package fees. Second, practice managers' fees tend to be higher than the coaching fees provided by external coaches. This makes sense considering a

portion of the fees paid by organizations are paid to the coach and another portion to the coaching vendor or provider.

Third, coaching engagements seem to be offered at a wide range of rates at each level, especially the C-suite. There are several potential reasons for this in the current study. For example, coaching vendors offer standardized packages and fees across coaches, while independent coaches offer a variety of rates that differ from coach to coach. Those rates may be impacted, among a myriad of considerations, by regional market rates, the coach's expertise and as well as their level of experience. While some individual coaches' fees may be closer to the mean, others may provide coaching at much higher rates.

Another potential reason for the wide range in fees could be the variability across regions. When asked if they pay different rates for executive coaching in different regions of the world, 57% of practice managers said yes, they do. About 50% of external coaches agreed. With different fees across regions, plus factoring in conversion rates into USD, a wide range of fees are to be expected. To look further into this, we explored coaching fees by the following regions: North America, EMEA, APAC, and LATAM.

Hourly Fees by Leader Level (External Coaches, n = 404)				
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$581	\$500	\$348	\$90 - \$3,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$484	\$400	\$250	\$90 - \$2,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$410	\$350	\$207	\$90 - \$2,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$344	\$300	\$161	\$75 - \$1,000
(Organizational Practice Managers, n = 36)				
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$971	\$725	\$1,023	\$250 - \$6,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$729	\$500	\$596	\$250 - \$2,650
Sr. Director / Director	\$490	\$450	\$350	\$36 - \$2245
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$357	\$300	\$167	\$36 - \$800

FIGURE 35: TYPICAL HOURLY FEES FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING BY LEADER LEVEL

6-Month Executive Coaching Package Fees by Leader Level (External Coaches, n = 361)				
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$16,740	\$15,000	\$13,965	\$200 - \$120,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$13,919	\$12,000	\$10,863	\$200 - \$90,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$11,355	\$10,000	\$9,337	\$150 - \$90,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$9,127	\$7,500	\$7,588	\$150 - \$60,000
(Organizational Practice Managers, n = 43)				
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$35,347	\$25,000	\$32,109	\$400 - \$150,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$20,986	\$20,000	\$14,369	\$400 - \$85,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$14,409	\$12,000	\$11,381	\$300 - \$60,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$8,073	\$6,750	\$6,208	\$250 - \$28,000

FIGURE 36: TYPICAL 6-MONTH ENGAGEMENT FEES FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING BY LEADER LEVEL

### Fees by Region

Among external coaches and practice managers surveyed in North America, EMEA, APAC and LATAM, median hourly rates also tend to increase as the leader's level in the organization increases. The wide range in coaches' fees at each level remains, especially for C-suite engagements.

### Hourly Fees

When looking at external coaches' average fees, APAC tends to have the highest hourly rates across leader levels. North America or LATAM tends to have the lowest hourly rates. These differences, however, are negligible when we look at the median rates across regions. Because the median rates are less influenced by extremely low and high fees, more consistency emerges across regions within each leader level. Specifically, the median hourly rate for C-suite engagements is US\$500; US\$400 - US\$450 for Sr. Vice President/VP; US\$350 - US\$400 for Sr. Director/Director, and US\$300 - US\$350 for Sr. Manager/Manager levels.

In contrast, when looking at the average fees paid by practice managers, North America tends to have the highest hourly rates across leader levels. EMEA tends to have the lowest hourly rates. There is also less consistency in median rates across regions within each leader level. Specifically, the median hourly rate for C-suite engagements is US\$588 -775; US\$500 for Sr. Vice President/VP; US\$375 - US\$438 for Sr. Director/Director, and US\$250 - US\$300 for Sr. Manager/Manager levels.

### 6-Month Assignment Fees

Across external coaches and practice managers, North America tends to have the highest 6-month assignment fees on average. APAC and EMEA tend to have the lowest 6-month assignment fees. The medians are also less consistent across regions for both rater groups.

There are several possibilities for the differences between our findings in hourly rates vs. 6-month assignments. First, it is possible that engagements across regions may vary in the number of contracted hours. For example, while APAC may tend to have higher hourly rates, North American engagements may be designed to include more hours. Differences may also emerge due to management fees billed by different coaching providers.

Median Fee Ranges Across Regions		
	External Coaches	Organizational Practice Managers
C-Suite	\$6,000-\$18,000	\$5,000-\$30,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$5,300-\$15,000	\$10,000-\$20,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$5,000-\$12,000	\$1,500-\$15,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$3,800-\$10,000	\$1,200-\$8,000

FIGURE 37: TYPICAL 6-MONTH ENGAGEMENT MEDIAN FEE RANGES FOR EXECUTIVE COACHING BY LEADER LEVEL

North America – External Coaches								
Hourly Fees (n = 263)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n=242)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$577	\$500	\$362	\$150 - \$3000	\$19,717	\$18,000	\$14,756	\$200 - \$120,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$474	\$400	\$239	\$150 - \$2000	\$16,173	\$15,000	\$11,263	\$200 - \$90,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$397	\$350	\$190	\$100 - \$2000	\$13,139	\$12,000	\$9,915	\$175 - \$90,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$340	\$300	\$152	\$100 - \$1000	\$10,719	\$10,000	\$8,101	\$150 - \$60,000
North America – Organizational Practice Managers								
Hourly Fees (n = 26)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n=34)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$1,119	\$775	\$1,168	\$350 - \$6000	\$40,485	\$30,000	\$33,561	\$10,000 - \$150,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$792	\$500	\$677	\$350 - \$2650	\$23,000	\$20,000	\$14,579	\$1,500 - \$85,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$509	\$438	\$399	\$36 - \$2245	\$16,432	\$15,000	\$11,549	\$1,500 - \$60,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$349	\$300	\$177	\$36 - \$800	\$9,233	\$8,000	\$6,450	\$1,500 - \$28,000

**FIGURE 38: NORTH AMERICA HOURLY AND ASSIGNMENT FEES**

*NOTE: Fees generally do not include assessments, travel, etc. Results shown if more than 5 raters in the group responded.*

EMEA – External Coaches								
Hourly Fees (n = 65)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n=58)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$590	\$500	\$329	\$200 - \$2000	\$10,230	\$7,650	\$8,158	\$250 - \$35,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$509	\$450	\$259	\$200 - \$1500	\$8,442	\$6,000	\$6,418	\$250 - \$25,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$433	\$400	\$200	\$100 - \$1000	\$6,974	\$5,200	\$5,441	\$150 - \$25,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$377	\$350	\$175	\$100 - \$1000	\$5,876	\$5,000	\$4,753	\$150 - \$20,000
EMEA – Organizational Practice Managers								
Hourly Fees (n=6)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n=5)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$529	\$588	\$176	\$250 - \$750	\$12,880	\$5,000	\$14,613	\$400 - \$30,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$496	\$500	\$168	\$250 - \$750	\$12,100	\$10,000	\$13,454	\$400 - \$28,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$372	\$375	\$126	\$230 - \$500	\$1,233	\$1,500	\$833	\$300 - \$1,900
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$316	\$250	\$129	\$200 - \$500	\$1,117	\$1,200	\$828	\$250 - \$1,900

**FIGURE 39: EMEA HOURLY AND ASSIGNMENT FEES**

*NOTE: Fees generally do not include assessments, travel, etc. Results shown if more than 5 raters in the group responded.*

APAC – External Coaches								
Hourly Fees (n = 53)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n=41)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$617	\$500	\$332	\$90 - \$1750	\$9,215	\$6,250	\$7,237	\$300 - \$30,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$516	\$400	\$296	\$90 - \$1750	\$8,560	\$5,300	\$8,052	\$300 - \$40,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$460	\$400	\$283	\$90 - \$1750	\$7,479	\$5,000	\$6,821	\$300 - \$30,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$351	\$300	\$187	\$90 - \$950	\$5,201	\$3,800	\$4,746	\$300 - \$25,000

FIGURE 40: APAC HOURLY AND ASSIGNMENT FEES

*NOTE: Fees generally do not include assessments, travel, etc. Results shown if more than 5 raters in the group responded.*

LATAM – External Coaches								
Hourly Fees (n = 5)					6-Month Assignment Fees (n = 6)			
	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE	MEAN	MEDIAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	FEE RANGE
C-Suite	\$494	\$500	\$339	\$150 - \$1000	\$16,250	\$6,000	\$22,104	\$2,500- \$60,000
Sr. Vice President / VP	\$479	\$450	\$346	\$125 - \$1000	\$15,080	\$5,400	\$17,264	\$5,000 - \$45,000
Sr. Director / Director	\$404	\$400	\$270	\$100 - \$800	\$10,160	\$5,000	\$11,146	\$4,000 - \$30,000
Sr. Manager / Manager	\$319	\$350	\$173	\$75 - \$500	\$7,440	\$5,000	\$7,069	\$3,000 - \$20,000

FIGURE 41: LATAM HOURLY AND ASSIGNMENT FEES

*NOTE: Fees generally do not include assessments, travel, etc. Results shown if more than 5 raters in the group responded.*

## Chapter 5: 2020 and the Future of Coaching

### The Impact of COVID-19

Unlike previous iterations of this study, we had the opportunity to survey external coaches, internal coaches, and practice managers during a pandemic that impacted the industry. We asked survey participants, "Given the COVID-19 crisis, what are 3 predictions you have for the future of the executive coaching industry?"

Among **external coaches**, the majority of responses were related to the use of technology to facilitate executive coaching. Within the context of *technology and coaching*, most respondents predicted that virtual coaching would persist even after employees are able to regularly attend work. Additionally, multiple respondents stated that the increase in virtual coaching would enhance the *globalization* of executive coaches by allowing them to coach a client from anywhere in the world. A number of respondents also noted that there will likely be an increase in the use of other technologies, such as *app-based coaching*, *virtual/augmented reality*, and other *virtual coaching platforms*, to deliver coaching. Many respondents discussed an increase in the use of *team or group coaching*.

In the wake of the pandemic, many external coaches predicted that the cost of coaching would decrease overall. As stated by one respondent, a potential reason for this may be that "small organizations will focus on survival first and then growth, [while] large organizations will look forward to developing effective remote working." Another reason for this may be due to the *commodification and increase in accessibility* of coaching, as several respondents previously discussed. Interestingly, this is not supported by the practice managers surveyed - a decrease in coaching fees is one of the least likely trends predicted in the next 3-5 years.

A large portion of external coaches also predicted an *increased demand for executive coaches* to coach employees in areas related to the pandemic. Some of these coaching areas include *leaders-as-coaches training*, *leading during times of crisis*, *leading in a virtual environment*, and coaching related to mental health such as *wellness*, *work-life balance*, *resilience*, and *adaptability*.

Similar to the external coaches, **internal coaches** also consistently refer to the use of *technology in coaching*. In particular, internal coaches mostly discussed the increase in virtual coaching. They also talked about coaching becoming more *globalized*, however, they did not tie this directly to the leveraging of technology. A few respondents mentioned that organizational budgets have been strained as a result of the pandemic, suggesting that coaching may not be a top priority in some cases. However, a number of respondents indicated that there may be an increase in the demand for coaches in areas related to *work-life balance*, *leading in a virtual environment*, *leaders-as-coaches training*, *transitions*, and *resilience*.

Consistent with internal and external coaches, a major theme among **organization practice managers** was the use of *technology in coaching*. The majority of responses surrounding the use of technology were related to the increase in *virtual coaching*. A few respondents also described an increased use in *virtual coaching platforms* and *app-based coaching*, as well as the ability to *globalize coaching* through the use of technology. Other responses were related to changes in the *format of coaching*. More specifically, respondents discussed a decrease in the duration of coaching, an increase in the number of coaching programs that are offered at a given time, and a shift to a more “on-demand” model of coaching. Respondents also mentioned an increased *demand for internal coaches* and a demand for coaching in areas such as *wellness, life coaching, and work-life balance*.

These qualitative results are interesting since they do not *exactly* match up with the quantitative analysis of future trends. Specifically, the quantitative analysis puts app-based coaching at the bottom half of anticipated future trends. One potential reason for this may be the lack of distinction between coaching modality and pricing with how coaching is provided. For example, when someone thinks of virtual, more cost-effective coaching, they may think of app-based coaching. However, that may not necessarily be the case – non-app-based coaching providers may be making virtual, more cost-effective coaching available to organizations as well.

### Impact of the 2020 Social Justice Movement

Also, unlike previous iterations of this study, we experienced a rise in the movement toward greater justice and equality in the United States that reverberated around the world. We asked survey participants, “Given the movement towards justice and equality, what are 3 predictions you have for the future of the executive coaching industry?”

**External coaches** gave a variety of responses related to *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE & I)* in organizations and across the field of coaching. A number of respondents predicted that coaching would be made *more accessible* to employees at all levels of the organization, with an increased focus on providing coaching to *Women in Leadership* and *Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) leaders*. Additionally, respondents also predicted that there will likely be an increase in the *demand for more racially and ethnically diverse coaches*. Another major prediction was related to an increase in demand for *coaches to receive training and certification in DE & I*. Coaches that have a greater background in DE & I may be preferred as more organizations seek to include DE & I development in their coaching engagements. Other topics that respondents frequently mentioned included a greater focus on international perspectives and how they relate to coaching and the workplace, the use of coaching to create a *safe space to discuss DE & I* related topics, *further integration of ethics* into coaching engagements, and dealing with *resistance from coaches and leaders* surrounding the implementation of new DE & I initiatives.

The majority **internal coach** respondents discussed some form of change in *what coaches are expected to know and coach on*. Similar to the responses given by external coaches, internal coaches discussed an increased demand for *coaches with training and knowledge in DE & I*.

In addition to being asked to coach on DE & I related topics, respondents mentioned that coaches may be asked to focus more on *coaching effective listening and communication skills*. Another frequently mentioned prediction was an increase in *organizational support for DE & I initiatives*, as well as the use of coaches in these initiatives. Respondents also predicted an increase in the *demand for racially and ethnically diverse coaches*, aligning with predictions made by external coaches.

In parallel to the responses given by external and internal coaches, a number **organizational practice managers** predict an increase in the demand for *DE & I focused coaching* and coaches that are *knowledgeable in the topic of DE & I*. A few respondents also noted a need for more coaching on *interpersonal skills* such as listening and communication skills. Another consistent prediction was that coaching would be made *more accessible to BIPOC leaders*. Respondents also predicted an increase in the *demand for racially and ethnically diverse coaches and leaders*.

These qualitative results point to several shifts in the industry as a result of the movement toward greater justice and equality in the United States and around the world. First, more training and development in DE & I may be required for coaches and leaders alike. Second, an increase in the leadership skills that enable leaders to better-navigate DE & I-related conversations, such as effective listening and communication skills.

## Conclusions

2020 has been a year like no other, that is for certain. This research study began data collection in April, just as COVID-19 really started to change our world forever. We launched our survey as previously designed (pre-COVID), figuring (wrongly) that COVID lockdowns would only last another few weeks, and such, our survey could proceed as planned, unchanged.

Unfortunately, we were wrong. Along with the worsening pandemic, the United States was met with a summer of cries for social injustice to be righted. In June, we then amended this research for new respondents to answer additional questions pertaining to both topics. Pivoting “on the fly”, we enhanced the research study to incorporate these latest realities into our findings. We have shared those findings here.

While our industry may be changing, our calling has not. The ICF writes: “ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential, which is particularly important in today’s uncertain and complex environment.” That last portion, likely written before 2020, is even more poignant now.

There are few professions better-suited to help individuals, leaders, teams, organizations – and in turn, the world – thrive during and beyond times like this to maximize their potential. Perhaps each one of us in this profession have been growing for such a time as this. Our time is now.

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## About the Researchers

### **Brian O. Underhill, Ph.D.**

Brian is an industry-recognized expert in the design and management of worldwide executive coaching implementations, and a prominent author and speaker. He is the Founder of CoachSource and the Alexcel Group, and previously spent 10 years managing executive coaching operations for Marshall Goldsmith. Brian's most recent book is *Mastering Executive Coaching* (Routledge, 2019), co-edited with Marshall Goldsmith and Jonathan Passmore. Brian is also the author of *Executive Coaching for Results: The Definitive Guide to Developing Organizational Leaders* (Berrett Koehler, 2007).

### **J'Aimee Mission, Ph.D.**

J'Aimee A. Mission, Ph.D. is the Director of Client Service and Strategic Initiatives for CoachSource, the world's largest executive coaching firm. In this role, she leads strategic initiatives as well as the team that ensures our clients are fully satisfied with our service. She also partners with HR leaders and executives for the day-to-day strategic management of over 50 accounts, comprised of start-up to Fortune 500 Companies with global reach. She also oversees research projects, manages individual coaching engagements, and creates and/or streamlines coaching programs with her clients. Her work is in service of those ultimately touched by the decisions, products, and services that are impacted by the leaders whose development she has the privilege of supporting. She highly values and stands in her partnership with clients to ensure their shared success.

### **Joey Collins, Psy.D.**

Joey A. Collins, Psy.D. is a core faculty member in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology graduate program at Seattle Pacific University (SPU) and oversees a team of doctoral level scholar-practitioners conducting research in leadership and coaching. He is a founding member of the SPU Center for Leadership Research & Development (CLR&D) that serves individuals and organizations internationally. Joey also collaborates with the University of Washington's Center for Leadership and Strategic Thinking in various engagements.

### **Hunter Brokema, MA**

Hunter W. Bronkema, MA, is a Ph.D. student at Seattle Pacific University (SPU) working under Dr. Joey Collins on his research team. Hunter received his Master's Degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology from SPU in the summer of 2020 and is currently in his third year at SPU. He has experience in coaching research through his work on the Collins Research Vertical Team and intends to evaluate the value of coaching through his dissertation.

### **Sam Murray, MA**

Sam Murray, MA, is an Industrial Organizational Psychology practitioner who received his master's degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## About CoachSource

CoachSource is the world's largest and most experienced leadership coaching firm. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of CoachSource's business is executive coaching and coaching project management. We are also asked to provide online coaching management solutions, team coaching, group coaching, coaching supervision, coach training and more. We seek to be the best in the world in all aspects of this industry.

CoachSource, LLC is a privately held partnership, and is a direct "spin off" company from Marshall Goldsmith's, who is recognized as one of the world's leading executive coaches. Our roots originate from Keilty Goldsmith & Company, the Alliance for Strategic Leadership and most recently the Alexcel Group.

Our coaching community includes 1,100 executive coaches in 58 countries. Each coach is an independent contractor working under our umbrella and using our methods, systems and guidance. All of our coaches have a proven track record of success in executive coaching and extensive experience coaching senior leaders (C-level, EVP/SVP, VP, Director) for a minimum of 5 years, 10+ years preferred.

At CoachSource, coaching is our passion - and it's all we do. Please contact us to learn more about how we can energize your coaching programs, one assignment at a time.

[www.coachsource.com](http://www.coachsource.com)

[Info@coachsource.com](mailto:Info@coachsource.com)

**+1 (408) 490-0490**