



Executive Coaching Survey Summary | 2020



This document is an Executive Summary of the 15th Annual Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey report. It is offered as a service to the coaching industry and to assist coaches and clients understand our business.

The complete research report is available in hard copy only, from the 'Books' section at the Sherpa Coaching online store (www.sherpacoaching.com/store).

This year's report serves two purposes, both highlighted in this free public report summary. It delivers not only the most current survey data (INFO 2020), but we also bring you an exclusive, detailed look at over a decade of trends and constants within the industry (HINDSIGHT 2020). You will find extensive detailed analyses and data in the full 84-page report.



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This report is a distinct work from the full survey report, an 84-page hard copy document available for sale at www.sherpacoaching.com/store in the Books section.

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The full survey report is only authorized as a hard-copy version, available for purchase on line and made available to attendees at EXCO, the Executive Coaching Conference, held June 7-9, 2020 at the Westin Hotel, Fountain Square in Cincinnati, Ohio USA.

For academic purpose, please use the following format for citations:

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Hindsight 2020

Looking Back | Looking Forward

These days, people toss out various clichés and figures of speech all the time. They say buzz words and catch phrases without even realizing it. A phrase like “Hindsight is 20/20” can mean several things.

- We use it as a phrase of **reassurance** when unfortunate circumstances occur: *Hindsight is 20/20*, as if to say: *You couldn't have predicted this would happen.*
- We also use it in a more sarcastic way when we say: *Well, hindsight is 20/20*, as if to say: *I told you so!*
- We use it with an instructive tone: *Hindsight is always 20/20*, implying that **lessons are being learned**, and *things can be different going forward.*

For Sherpa’s Executive Coaching Survey report, the phrase *Hindsight is 2020* is a perfect theme. This year marks an opportunity to look back over 15 years of data and almost 400,000 data points, specific answers to specific questions. This unique data collection strikes us in the same three ways described above:

Reassurance

A Critical Perspective

Valuable Lessons

With annual information collected from around the world, we have the ability to monitor trends as they evolve. We can see how the coaching industry has matured over time. We have tracked earnings and marketing information, techniques and methods used, the effect of technology on coaching, demographics, relationships between coaches and clients, and more.

Collecting data over many years also shows us **things that have remained constant**, topics within the industry that have standardized and do not seem to change at all. We find these observations just as valuable as the changing trends.



Welcome to the 2020 Executive Coaching Survey.



This market research is a service of Sherpa Coaching, a team of coaches, authors, educators, and researchers working across the world via video conference and based in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. Your research team consists of Karl Corbett, Managing Partner and Joseph Valeri, Research Executive at Sherpa Coaching, along with Shawn Herbig and his IQS Research organization.

This year's research is sponsored by:

- INFO 2020** University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education, Athens, GA
- INFO 2020** Sherpa Coaching, Cincinnati, OH
- INFO 2020** Training Impact Leadership Expeditions, Lahore, Pakistan
- INFO 2020** EXCO, the 15th Annual Executive Coaching Conference



This year, as always, we polled executive coaches, business coaches, clients, HR and training professionals, and a wider group of professionals with an interest in leadership development. All data about coaching in this report comes from this data set and subsets, such as 'executive coaches only,' as labelled.

We have now reached critical mass in our research on corporate culture. The Corporate Culture Survey is now housed at its own website: www.corporateculture.cc

Our research on women in leadership has also reached critical mass. A separate report is now housed at www.women-in-leadership.cc

What Is Executive Coaching?

With thanks to our sponsors and supporters, the Executive Coaching Survey is a market research project now in its fifteenth year. Through this market research, you will discover how to make the most of coaching as a service for your organization – or as a career for yourself.

What exactly is Executive Coaching? Let's draw some distinctions between two general areas of discipline: 'executive coaching' and 'business coaching'. What are some of the differences in emphasis, focus, and training between these two types of coaching?

Executive Coaching	Business Coaching
Business Behavior	Strategy and Tactics
Soft skills	Hard skills
includes: communication	includes: finance
includes: setting expectations	includes: operations
Personal development	Performance

Business coaching is an alternative term for consulting, as research shows:

“Many business coaches refer to themselves as consultants, a broader business relationship than one which exclusively involves coaching.”

Lorber, Laura (10 April 2008). "Executive Coaching – Worth the Money?" *The Wall Street Journal*.

We ask respondents to identify themselves, with two of the choices being:

- *business coach* (working to develop client's knowledge and skills) or
- *executive coach* (working to permanently enhance business behavior)

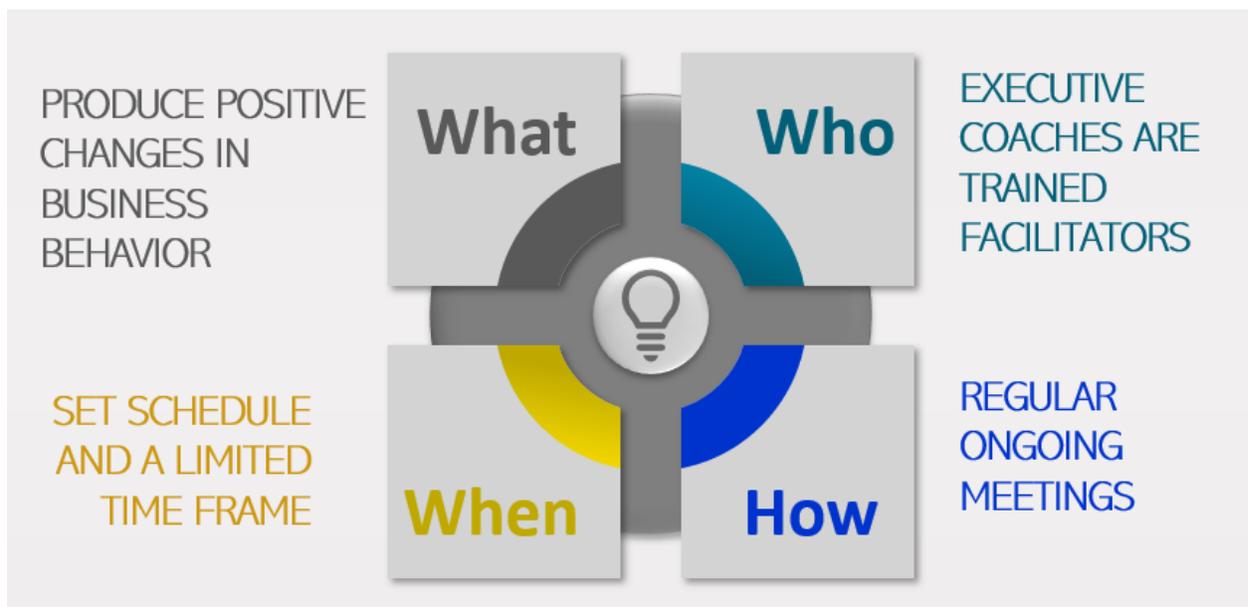
Defining the Industry

To gather insightful and useful data, we need to distinguish between a variety of professional roles, such as coaching, training, consulting, and mentoring. This allows us to separate and analyze answers that come specifically and exclusively from executive coaches. We can make direct, factual comparisons between different types of professionals.



Let's focus specifically on what *executive coaching* means. An accurate and viable definition of executive coaching offers specific information that distinguishes it from other coaching – such as life, sports, fitness or business coaching.

The most widely accepted definition of executive coaching is this: "**regular meetings between a leader and a trained facilitator, designed to produce positive changes in business behavior in a limited time frame.**" *



* Definition from 'The Sherpa Guide: Process-Driven Executive Coaching' (Thomson 2005)



Delivery and Technology
Technology has significantly changed the way coaches deliver services.

Purpose of Coaching
The leading reason coaches are assigned and hired has changed over the years.

The Coaching Confidence Index
We provide an all-encompassing “state of the industry” index for coaching.

Who Gets a Coach
Where do valuable coaching resources get allocated throughout an organization?



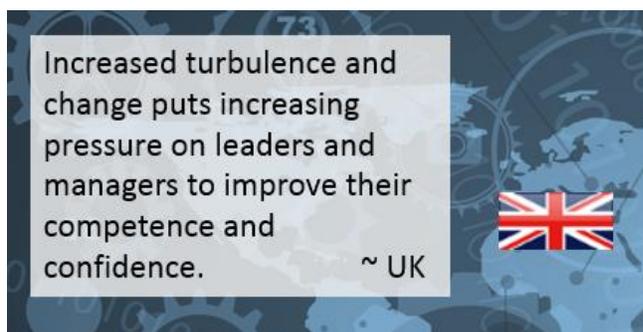
Hot Topics

Delivery and Technology – The way in which services are provided will remain a hot topic for one simple reason: technology is always changing. Ten years ago, nearly half of all coaching was done in person. Now a majority of coaching is conducted by phone or video. With video conferencing surpassing face-to-face coaching, it is vitally important to stay current. Coaches, clients, and business professionals look to utilize all forms of service delivery, especially video, to best accommodate everyone’s needs. We will provide the latest market trends and a look back over the years, so you can stay current.

The Purpose of Coaching – Who needs an executive coach most? Is it up-and-coming leaders seeking development? Individuals working on a specific challenge? Or those going through job transition? This is an area that we have seen significantly affected by changes in the world economy over the years, but it has leveled out recently. This valuable indicator tells us why purchasers of coaching services are seeking them. Over the years, coaches have been used increasingly for leadership development and less often to address specific problems.

The Coaching Confidence Index: The Coaching Confidence Index is another unique and proprietary Sherpa research ranking system. With 15 years of earnings changes, supply and demand data, and more, we can provide an all-encompassing “state of the industry” index for coaching. How do things look compared to last year’s Coaching Confidence Index? How have things changed over the last decade, as this crucial tool has evolved?

Who Gets a Coach – Coaching can be an extremely valuable resource. Organizations that use executive coaches would love to have one-on-one coaching throughout the organization, but that is seldom feasible. Instead, valuable coaching resources – whether in-house coaching staff or hired externals – must be allocated as best as they possibly can. From 2008-2011, coaching was more likely to be spread across all levels, rather than limited to executives. In 2020, interestingly, senior managers are most likely to receive coaching.



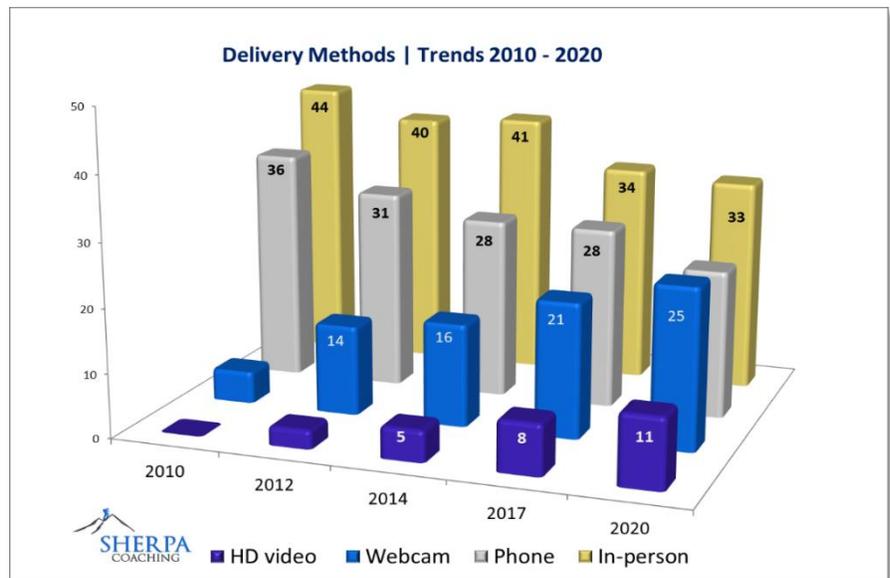
A professional from the UK made a comment that we’ve heard in recent years: *“Increased turbulence and change puts increasing pressure on leaders and managers, who will seek development to improve their competence and confidence.” ~ UK*

Delivery and Technology

In 2020, video conferencing tools now account for more coaching sessions than face-to-face meetings.

We first reported the use of webcams and applications such as Skype in 2007, when coaches were first starting to use this medium. Between 2011 and 2012, use of these methods exploded. Now, most coaches and clients use webcam coaching to some extent and a third of all coaching services are delivered that way.

In 2012, we separated “high-definition videoconferencing (HD)” from Skype and other “low-definition” webcam video tools. Back then, about 4% of coaching was delivered in HD. Now that number has more than doubled. Large screen, high definition systems deliver consistently high image quality, synchronized audio and video, and real-time



delivery, without lags or dropouts. High definition studios are becoming more widely available to coaches and clients at larger firms and shared office centers.

At the same time, low-def video capability improves constantly. Connection speeds get faster, video quality increases, clients and coaches gain familiarity. This type of video meeting has increased even more significantly since 2010: from 5% to 25%.

Older technologies, like telephone and email, are still being used as well. In fact, those numbers are not decreasing. Telephone has stayed around 25% and email has leveled off between 5 – 10%. Video and other technology account for two-thirds of coaching services.

The Purpose of Coaching

There are three main reasons coaches are hired. Coaching is used to address specific problems, to assist in transition and to develop ‘up-and-coming’ leaders.

In the first Executive Coaching Survey, published in 2006, behavioral problems were a big part of the rationale for executive coaching. Now, the emphasis has clearly moved to something different: leadership development.

Over the years, the figures have moved constantly in one direction. In 2016, for the first time ever, ‘a specific problem or challenge’ became *the least likely* reason that someone would be paired with an executive coach, a flip from the early days. Coaching to help individuals in transition (not pictured here) has remained level, while leadership development has soared as the predominant reason for coaching.

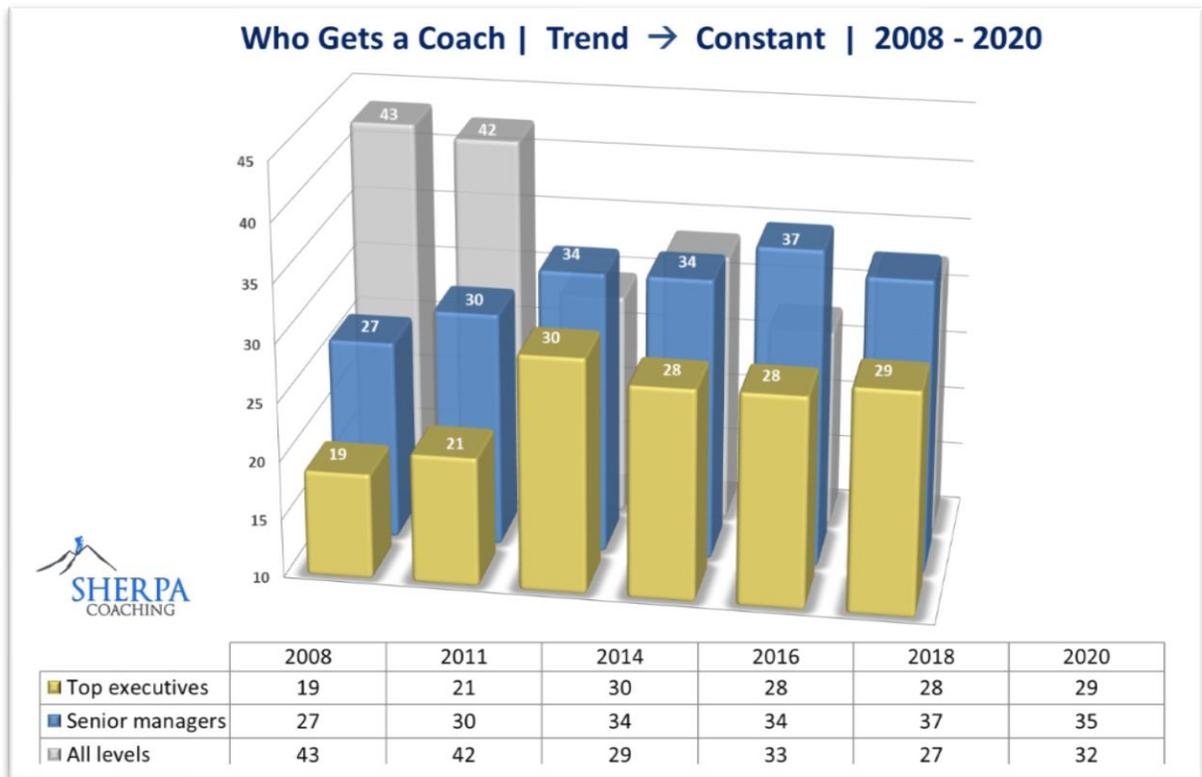
Leadership Development | UP
Addressing Problems | DOWN
Helping in Transition (not pictured) | STEADY



INFO 2020

Who Gets a Coach?

Here is the global breakdown from 2008 to date, in which a trend has leveled off and become a constant.



Executive coaching, in its early days, was being democratized, spreading across *all levels in the organization*. Then, several years ago, it became more exclusive. Coaching became the province of *senior leaders* and *top executives*. The number of organizations that reserved coaching for leadership development grew. This aspect of executive coaching was trending for a while, and now has become a constant, as shown in the chart above.

- Why do “up-and-coming” leaders get coached more than top executives?
- Do top executives not need coaching? Or... do they *think* they do not need it?
- Is talent retention more crucial these days?



Age and Tenure
Coaches seem to be sticking around: a majority have been coaching for over 10 years.

Strength vs. Weakness
While it's not either-or, some coaches focus on strengths while others look at weaknesses.

Coaching Constants
Some areas of coaching have become established standards of practice.

Women in Leadership
An industry standard look at a 'cutting edge' topic, women in leadership.

The Landscape of Coaching

When Sherpa's research started in 2005, the field of executive coaching was still in its formative years. Hundreds of coaching schools opened and closed. Trade organizations came and went. The role and definition of coaching remained poorly defined. Coaches themselves were confused about what they did – and what exactly to call it. Since then, the industry has matured, developing some standards and constants along the way.

Age and Tenure – These demographics have settled into some constants as the industry has matured. Coaches tend to be older: for the past 3 years, at least 60% of coaches are over 55 years old. And coaches tend to be sticking around: a majority of all coaches have been coaching for over 10 years. What does this mean for new coaches breaking into the game? We will look closer at this data to provide relevant analysis for all business professionals, whether they are internal coaches, external, HR staff or senior executives.

Strengths vs. Weakness – While it is not an either-or situation, some coaches prefer to focus on strengths while others look more at weaknesses. While seven in ten coaches overall tend to work on strengths (*appreciative inquiry*), HR and training professionals, more often, favor a deficits approach. Older coaches – those in the business the longest, also tend towards correcting weaknesses, as do process-based coaches. We will investigate the nuances of this unique data and see what has changed over the years.

Women in Leadership – A couple of years ago we compiled an industry standard look at an important topic, women in leadership. We took a look aimed at the topic of gender diversity in leadership and provided a separate stand-alone report investigating a specific set of questions introduced to the annual survey in 2017. How do perceptions differ by gender, age and type of professional? A majority of executive coaches are women and the data provides valuable insight.



Landscape of Coaching

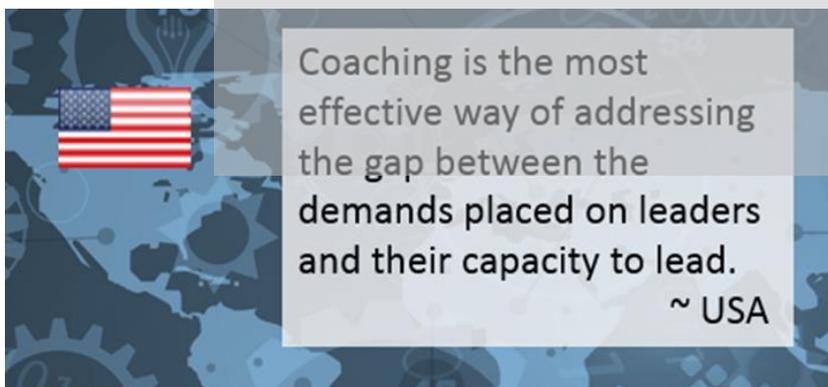
Coaching Constants – Some areas of coaching have become established and constant. In the early days of coaching, neither its value nor credibility was particularly high. It took time for it to catch on. But once it did, we have not looked back. Over the years, nearly 100% of all survey respondents indicated that the value of coaching was perceived as somewhat or very high. In fact, we stopped asking this question all together!

Standards of Practice – Do different kinds of coaches model their practice on published processes? What kind of standards have emerged as the coaching industry has matured? Some aspects of coaching seem to have reached a point of standardization – such as whether or not coaches use assessments and which ones they use – while others have not.

In this section, we look for long standing trends over time that level off and define areas of the coaching industry as *standard*.

HIND
SIGHT
2020

See more in
the full 84-
page report



Coaching is the most effective way of addressing the gap between the demands placed on leaders and their capacity to lead.

~ USA

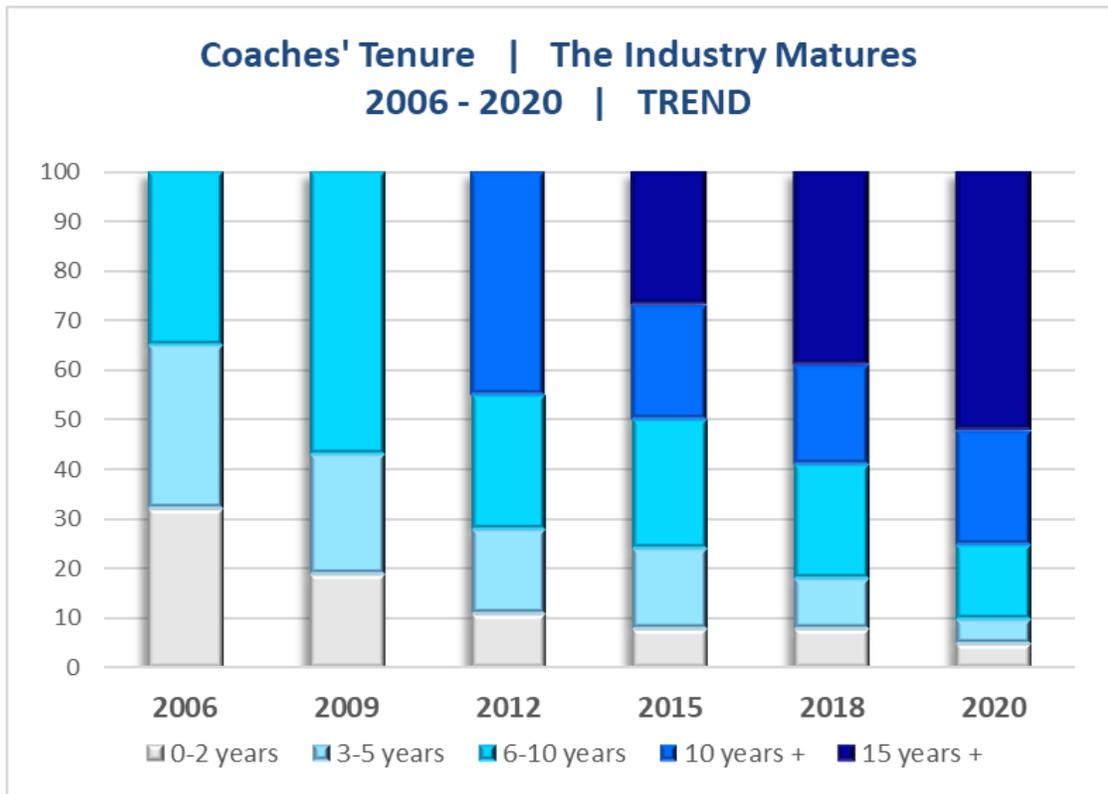
Age and Tenure

A Remarkable Story of the Coaching Industry

The annual data showing the age and tenure of executive coaches reflects the overall story of the industry. The average age of executive coaches has not changed much over the years. New coaches enter the market, but they do not encounter a barrier to entry because demand has increased. There is turnover but the *average* age of coaches does not change.

This data show shows the coaching industry maturing over the years, as coaches entering a burgeoning field in the 1990's and early 2000's moved "up the ranks."

Here is the cycle we now see in place:



Demand increases slowly as coaching produces benefits.
A small number of new coaches enter the field.
Veterans continue to have success, but eventually retire.
The pattern continues.

Strengths Versus Weaknesses

There are two basic schools of thought in coaching. One approach involves identifying and working with strengths. The other focuses on identifying and correcting weaknesses or deficits. Let us look at the differences between strengths/weaknesses coaching.

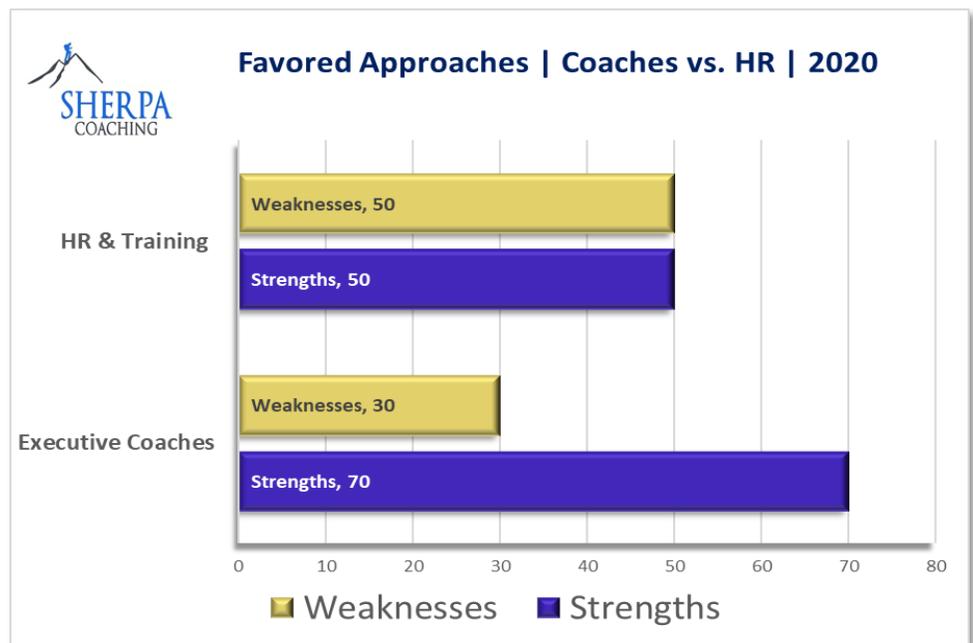
Strengths

Advocates of strengths-based coaching, drawing from positive psychology, will say: *Know your strengths, craft your life around them and you will be happier, more productive and reach your goals.* Positive psychology supports change by focusing on positive emotion and core strengths -- rather than facing challenges and improving upon weaknesses.

Weaknesses

The weakness-based approach says: *Your strengths have gotten you where you are. Dealing with weaknesses in behavior is the only way to get to the next level.* Advocates of the weakness approach include Marshall Goldsmith and 'Sherpa Guide' author Brenda Corbett, who writes: *"Often, a client has reached a nice plateau with [their] strengths, but is held back by weaknesses."*

Although it is not an either/or situation, which approach did the 2020 Executive Coaching Survey find is favored?



Strengths Versus Weaknesses

Fast Facts | Strengths/Weaknesses | 2020

INFO 2020 A weakness-based (also called 'deficits') approach is more likely to be favored by internal coaches.

INFO 2020 Coaches focused on correcting weaknesses are more likely to base their coaching on a published process.

INFO 2020 Strengths-based coaches are more likely to develop their own process or simply apply a unique approach to each client.

INFO 2020 Deficits coaches, perhaps because they tend to follow a process, are more likely to offer online learning programs and licensed content.

INFO 2020 Women are more likely than men to favor a strengths approach – 77% to 63%.

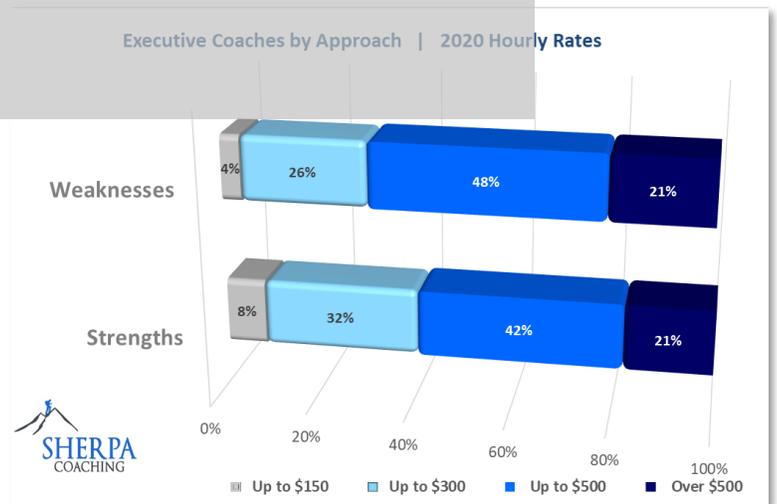
INFO 2020 Coaches from Canada and the UK tend more towards strengths than other coaches.

INFO 2020 More weakness-based coaches can be found among newer coaches (active less than 2 years).

INFO 2020 Coaches under 45 are nearly split down the middle.

See more in
the full 84-
page report

INFO 2020 Coaches addressing weaknesses earn more per hour, but work with fewer clients, than coaches who work with strengths.



In 2018, for the first time, we asked questions about women in leadership. Our interest in this topic was encouraged by two female leaders in our organization. Brenda Corbett and Judith Colemon-Kinebrew are the authors of The Sherpa Guide: Process-Driven Executive Coaching (Thomson, 2005).

We ask organizational and cultural questions about opportunity, perceptions and other topics relevant to *Women in Leadership*.

Fast Facts | Women in Leadership | 2020

We reveal wide gaps in perceptions between men and women in the business world:

Women	Men
Are women given equal consideration for advancement when opportunities arise?	
➤ 29% of women say <i>always</i>	54% of men say <i>always</i>
➤ 39% say <i>sometimes</i> or <i>rarely</i>	13% of men say <i>sometimes</i> or <i>rarely</i>

Do men and women have equal chance to hold positions of power?	
➤ 66% say <i>yes, always</i> or <i>usually</i>	89% of men say <i>yes</i>
➤ 34% report negatively	11% of men answer negatively

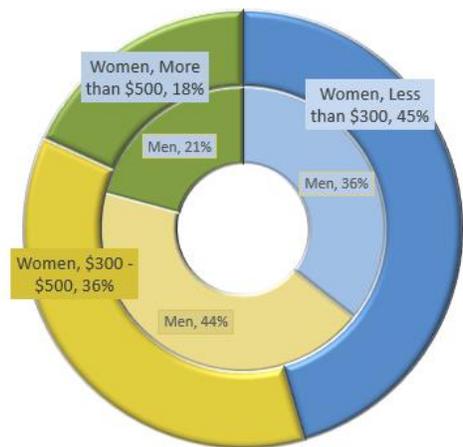
Does your organization value women as leaders?	
➤ 58% of women say <i>always</i>	70%

Is your organization open to change?
➤ Over 80% of men and women both said yes.

Earnings among coaches also show a gender difference, as seen in the pie chart:

Organizations who want research conducted inside their organizations often contact Sherpa Coaching. Only Sherpa can compare results against global benchmarks and long-term trends.

Hourly Rate | by Gender | 2020



Coaching Constants Processes and Background

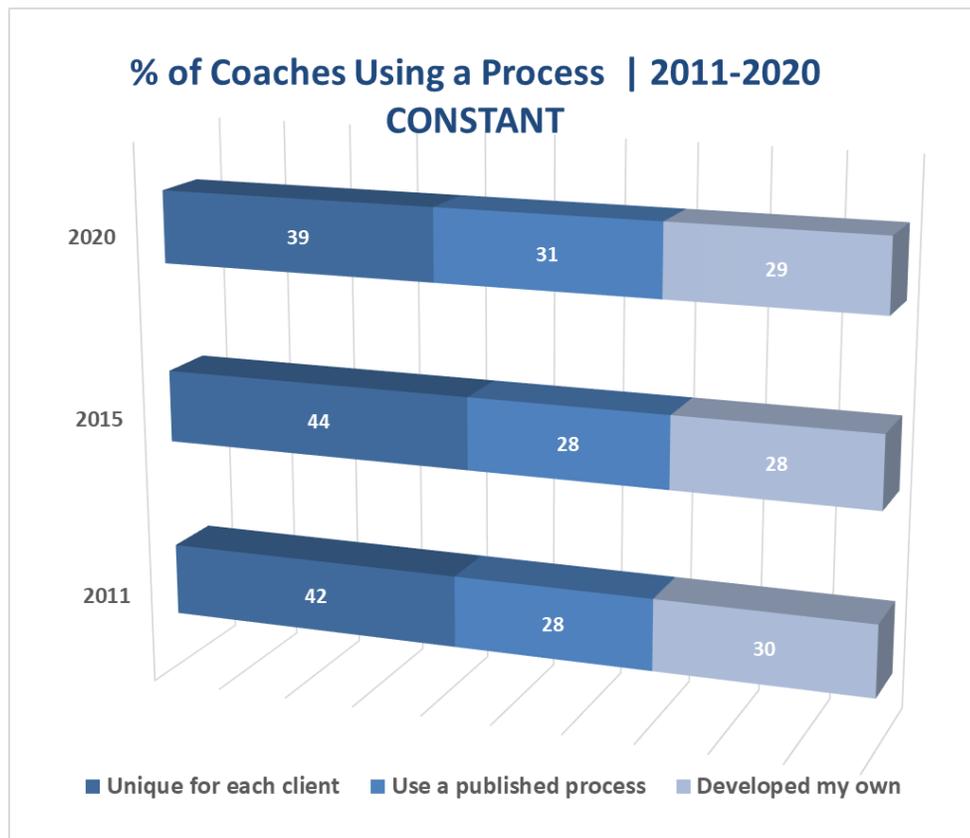
So far, we've seen a few Coaching Constants: from the value and credibility of coaching to the ways in which coaches are found. Let us look at a few survey questions about coaches' processes and backgrounds.

Do coaches base their coaching on a published process?

The answer to this question has remained remarkably consistent over the years. Only 30% follow a published process while 30% develop their own. The remainder changes their approach for each client.

CONSTANT:
Only 30% of Coaches Use a Published Process

**HIND
SIGHT
2020**

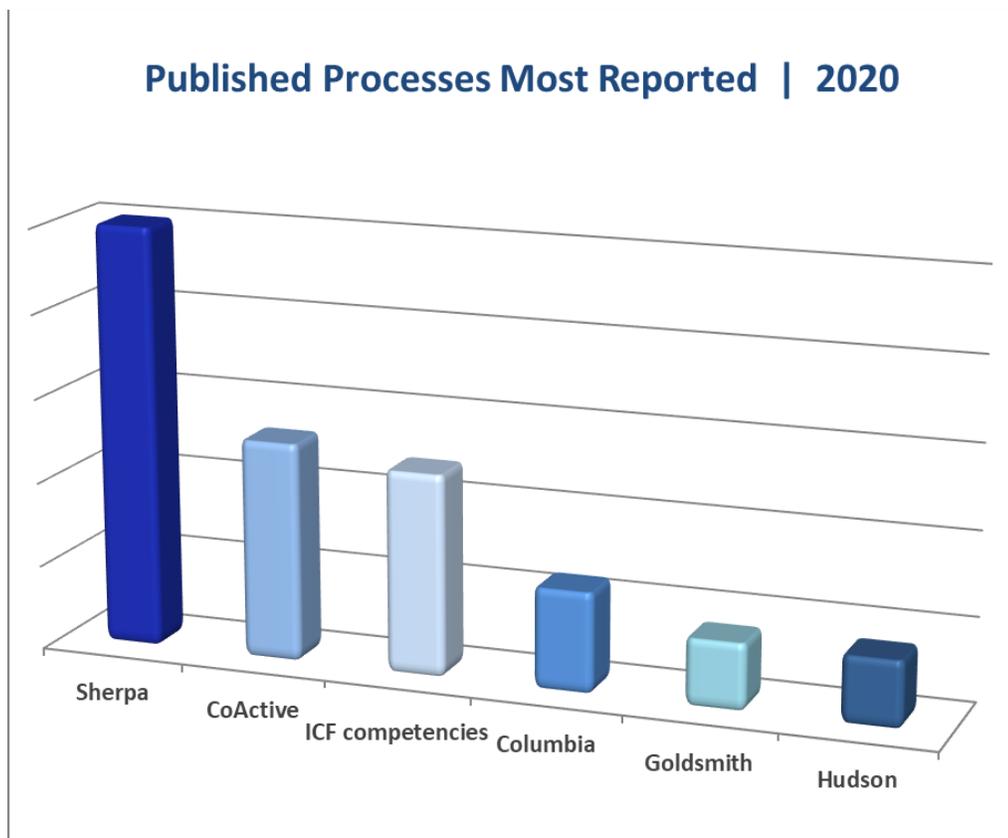


Standards of Practice

Even if 'following a published process' does become universal, that does not mean that there will only be one process. As we have reported over the years, a variety of processes have gained and lost traction.

Coaches and clients will always prefer one or another for various reasons, the same way strengths- or weakness- based coaches differ.

For coaches who do, which processes do they report using most?



WHAT CLIENTS WANT



Where Coaching Produces Value
Where do people think coaching can produce the most results?

How Buyers Find a Coach
Clients, executives, HR staff, etc. can all find coaches in different ways.



Demand for Coaching
A majority of business professionals expect the demand for coaching to increase.

Measuring the Benefits
Nearly all coaches and clients want to know the results of their coaching engagements.

What Clients Want

Where Coaching Produces Value – Although people may want different things from coaching, they generally all want a positive impact on business. Clients want to see lasting results and permanent change. What does this really mean? How can executive coaching best be applied to different types of professionals in different situations? Where do people think coaching can produce the most results? Is it effective for change management? What about succession planning?

Demand for Coaching – A majority of business professionals expect the demand for coaching to increase. This has been true for a while. But this high level of expected demand has slowed in recent years. Will the market for coaching level off or even decline in the coming years?

How Buyers Find a Coach – Although this area of the industry has almost become a Coaching Constant, it still remains valuable to discuss. As we have seen in other areas of coaching, technology can swoop in and change things quickly. Clients, executives, HR staff, etc. can all find coaches in different ways, from web searches and personal networks to social media and referrals. This section of the report will keep you informed on all the different ways coaches are found by clients.

Measuring the Benefits – It became clear early in the coaching industry that no one could really evaluate the value of coaching without attempting to measure the benefits. Nearly all coaches and clients want to know the results of their coaching engagements and there are numerous ways business people are doing this. From performance reviews to Marshall Goldsmith's *360 Feedback* method, from traditional *ROI* formulas to the more contemporary *Impact on Business* formula – how are people measuring the benefits of coaching?

See more in
the full 84-
page report

How Buyers Find a Coach

Executive coaches, like any other service professionals, must connect with their clients. There are time-honored traditions and brand new ways to communicate a message and build a network. Some ways of ‘spreading the word’ are free. Others come at a cost.



In recent years, we have asked whether web search, LinkedIn and other online networks would chip away at the 80% held by Personal Referral. That has not turned out to happen – at least not yet.

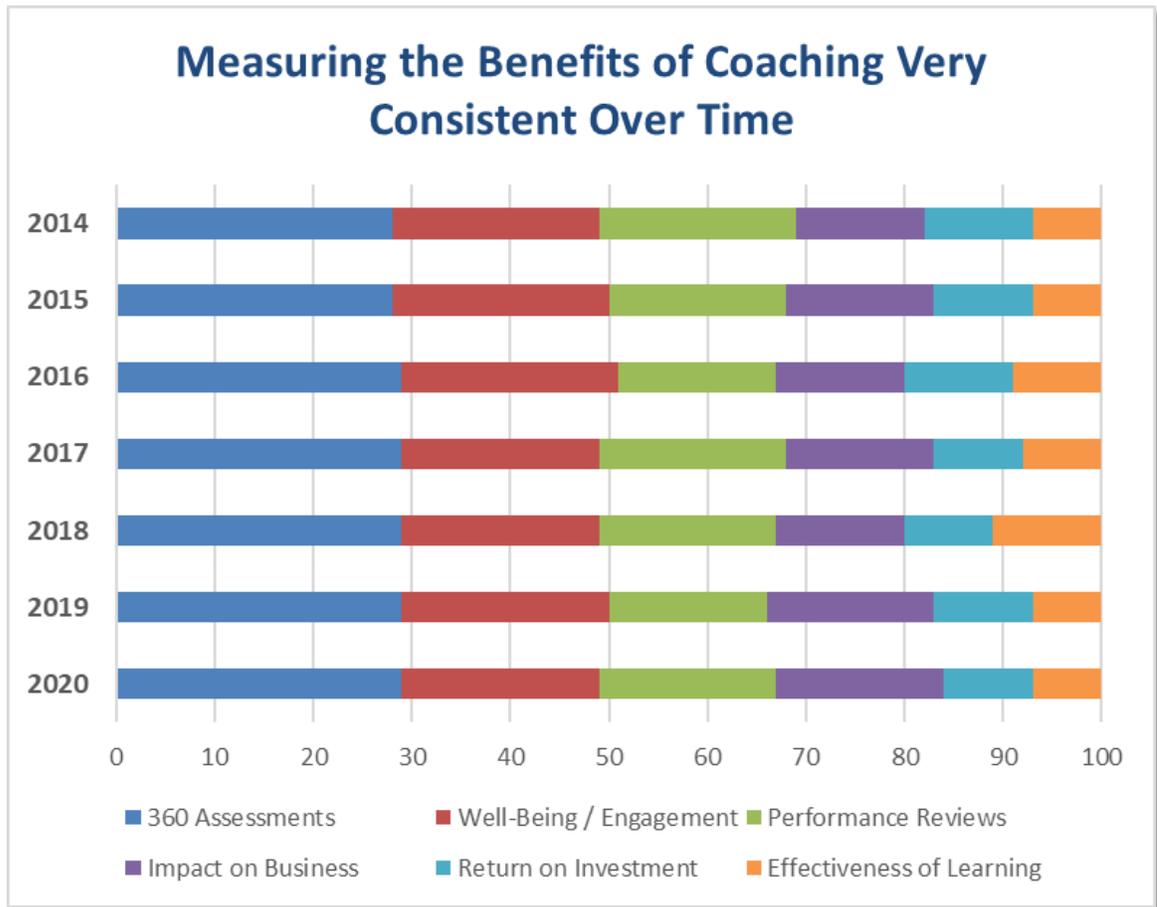
How do people find coaches? The market tells us that people find coaches through ‘personal references’ a vast majority of the time. They occasionally use web searches, trade associations, service brokers and LinkedIn. Personal references, however, are used *ten times more often* than any other method. We have seen very little change in this area in recent years. Currently, 2020 is no different, although it is worth taking a closer look.



Measuring the Benefits

The only way to gauge whether results are improving is to measure them. How do business leaders measure the benefits of coaching?

Results this year are just about the same as last year's. Perhaps, in the near future, we can move this topic to the 'Coaching Constants' section of our report.



'360 Assessments,' a before-and-after method pioneered many years ago by Marshall Goldsmith, is used most, 29% of the time.

Other common methods include 'Well-being and Engagement,' 'Performance Reviews' and 'Impact on Business' which are used 15-20% of the time. Fewer organizations use 'Return on Investment' formulas and the 'Effectiveness of Learning' method.



Coaches' Earnings
Entry-level and tenured coaches can see where they fit in financially.

**Executive Coach
Business Coach**
Defining the differences: working on behaviors vs. skills.



Internal and External Coaches
Their roles are similar in many ways, yet several differences also exist.

How Coaches Market Services
Social networks allow connections that were only recently made possible.

Executive Coaching as a Career

Coaches' Earnings: How often do various coaches work, how much do they get paid and how much are clients willing to pay for coaching services? These basic numbers plus a few others combine to form our analysis of Coaches' Earnings. This section can serve as a gauge for both entry-level and tenured coaches to see where they fit in the grand scheme of things, financially. This year's data indicates good news for most coaches.

Executive Coach, Business Coach: We define executive coaches as those specifically working on business behavior. Business coaches (consultants) help clients with specific business knowledge or skills. Of this year's survey respondents, 73% identified themselves as executive coaches, with 10% as business coaches. In this section we will look closer at the demographics, earnings and various other differences between the two.

Mentoring: Although similarities exist between the role of an executive coach and that of a mentor, there are some key differences. Mentoring helps orient new employees or provide guidance through valuable workplace relationships. We first investigated this new topic in our 2019 report. We now can paint a picture of the landscape of mentoring programs, and how they compare to coaching.

See more in
the full 84-
page report



Internal and External Coaches: We can split executive coaches into two categories: internal and external coaches. Internal coaches work within their own organization with executives, team leaders, management and other fellow employees. Externals generally work independently and often must work on promoting their own business and generating their own client engagements. Their roles are similar in many ways, yet several differences also exist. We will explore all of this in the pages that follow.

How Coaches Market Their Services: The landscape of marketing and self-promotion has changed in recent years. Personal, professional and social networks allow for direct connections that were only recently made possible. Coaches can market their services in any number of ways and purchasers can find what they need through various channels. Personal reference still dominates them all. Let us figure out why.

Coaches' Earnings

Putting in the Time Really Pays Off

More experience means more work and more money for executive coaches. Veteran coaches make far more than new entrants.

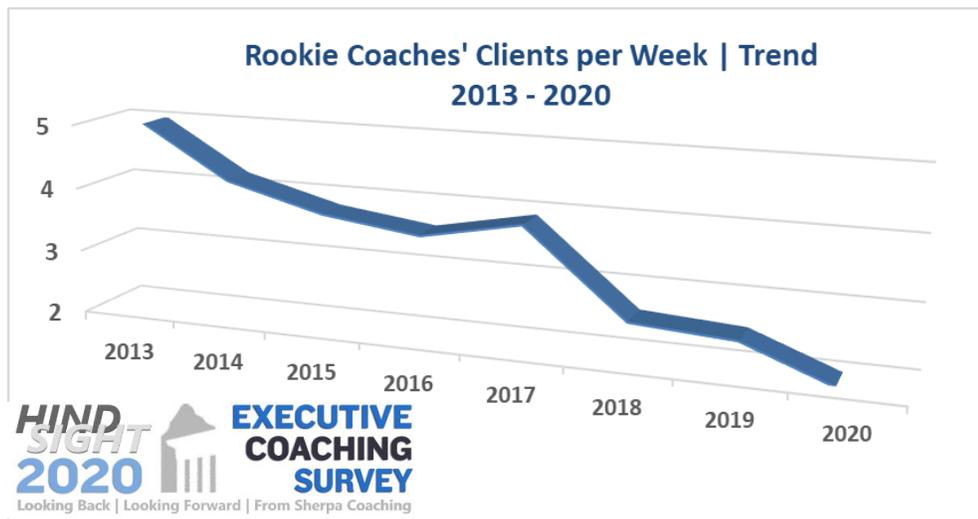
INFO 2020 Earnings for coaches in the 10-15-year bracket have increased to \$122,000 per year due to an increase in both hourly rate and number of clients.

INFO 2020 Those in business 15 years or longer are averaging close to \$160,000 annually from their coaching, up \$10,000 from last year. They are charging over \$450 per hour.

Not everyone makes more money every year. For several years now, coaches' earnings across the globe have both risen and fallen at different times. Coaches see different numbers of clients as well, which affects their annual earnings but not hourly earnings. Although "rookie" coaches (new entrants) earn less overall, they have seen their hourly rate skyrocket.

INFO 2020 Coaches' earnings in the 0-2-year range have increased from about \$200 per hour, five years ago, to nearly \$300 the last two years. Veteran coaches see more level rates.

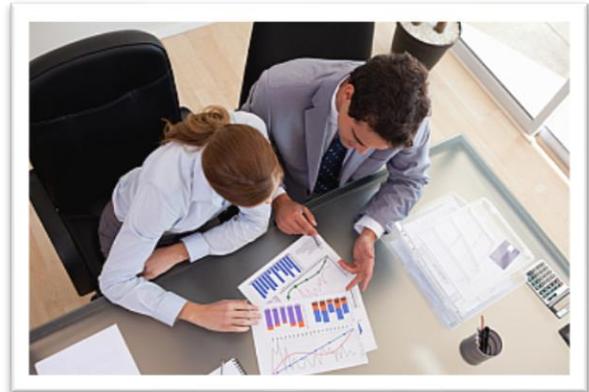
INFO 2020 Eight years ago, brand new coaches were seeing five clients a week. Now they only see two. Many of them are internal coaches, with other duties assigned.



INFO 2020 While rookies are seeing fewer clients, veteran coaches and those in the middle tenure range have a steady number of clients in our survey each year.

Demographics

- Women are the majority in executive coaching, which is consistent with data over the years, 55% to 45% -- a slight advantage.
- Males are more likely than females to be business coaches but there are fewer men among the ranks of non-business coaches (life coaching, et al.).



- Both business coaches and executive coaches tend towards the older side, with a majority of both being over 55.
- There are far more veteran executive and business coaches than life coaches. Three-quarters of executive coaches have been in the business greater than 10 years. The same can be said of business coaches. Non-business coaches have a higher percentage of newer coaches, which indicates turnover, likely because of less success over time.

Service Delivery

- In the past, our study showed that executive coaches worked with clients face-to-face more often than consultants. In recent years we see very little difference.

Number of Clients

Which type of coach is busier? Who gets the most clients per week? Most life coaches and business coaches have five clients or less, while executive coaches tend to fall higher on the spectrum.

- Two-thirds of business coaches see five clients or less.
- One-fifth (18%) of executive coaches report seeing 10 or more clients per week.
- A majority of executive coaches serve from 3 – 10 clients.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a way for colleagues to help each other grow in a professional setting through a relationship that provides guidance.

“Mentoring has become an effective method for businesses to help employees with orientation, career advancement, problem solving, coaching, and support. In addition, mentors can assist employees to deal with the challenges associated with successful, productive, meaningful work life.” – www.mentors.ca

Organizations provide a variety of types of mentoring programs to help employees with career advancement and orientation, with veteran employees “showing the ropes” to new employees.

This new section of the Executive Coaching Survey now has two years of data.

Let us differentiate some distinctions between mentoring and coaching.



INFO 2020 Mentoring tends to be more situational and informal, though longer-lasting than a coaching engagement.

INFO 2020 Mentoring is skills-focused and involves organizational and culture knowledge – as opposed to executive coaching, focused on behavior.

INFO 2020 Mentoring is a form of apprenticeship.

Internal and External Coaches

One way to split executive coaches is into two general categories: *internal* and *external*. Let us review how their roles differ.



What image comes to mind when you picture an executive coach? Most are outside experts. These *external* coaches – often from a one-person shop – offer independent services to several client companies.

They are professionals assigned to provide coaching to employees of various organizations and businesses. Ninety-four percent of coaches this year described themselves as external coaches.

As internal coaches gain experience and seniority, they can take on higher-level assignments, working with top leaders in an organization. Often, however, their reach is limited as an employee. As time goes on, many internal coaches go independent to take full advantage of their experience.

Age is Nothing but a Number:

INFO 2020 External coaches are more likely to be veterans while internals are more likely to be new entrants.

INFO 2020 Thirty-two percent of internals have been coaching for 2 years or less (21% just one year). Meanwhile, only 4% of externals are that new.

INFO 2020 More than half of external coaches have been coaching for 15+ years.

INFO 2020 External coaches are older. Seventy percent are above 55. Only 47% of internal coaches are above 55.

INFO 2020 Nearly all of the coaches under 45 are internal coaches.

There is nothing like networking to build more business for an executive coach. Our research proves it and coaches around the world know that good business generates more business.

Fast Facts | Marketing | 2020

INFO 2020 Although opinions vary, many coaches do not think it is important at all to have a promotional strategy. Even fewer coaches this year think it is important.

INFO 2020 Ads have become reportedly less effective, with 61% describing their ad campaigns as 'only slightly effective' or 'not at all.'

INFO 2020 Most coaches do not get outside help: just 16% use a marketing consultant.

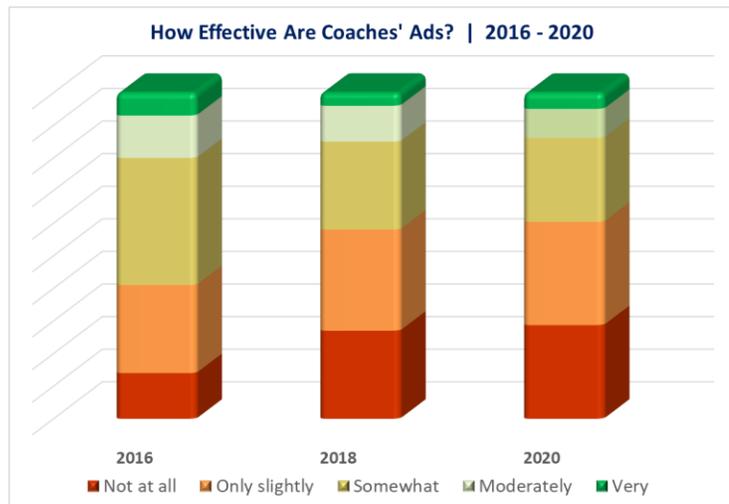
Looking back over the years, we see 3 trends:



No Promotional Strategy | Ineffective Ads | No Hired Help

Why? The answer is simple. It is the same answer we have identified in several sections of this Hindsight 2020 Report. As we look back over a decade or more of data, we see more signs of a mature industry – *with entrenched talent*. That is the key.

Marketing strategies are not needed when you are already having success. Ads do not need to be effective when most business comes from personal referral. Demand remains high, and those in the know expect it to continue.



This report is about executive coaching. You would expect most of our contributors would be executive coaches. That proves to be the case once again this year, with seven in ten respondents describing themselves as ‘executive coaches, working on business behavior’.

Coaching Survey | 2020 Respondents



■ Executive Coaches ■ Business ■ Life ■ HR ■ Others

How accurate is this survey? This year, 500+ people responded to this survey, providing a margin of error of under 4%.

The accuracy of the survey’s conclusions is also confirmed by comparison with responses from previous years, allowing the confirmation of trends over time.

Based on an ever-increasing body of knowledge, this 2020 report can share changes and trends available nowhere else.

This survey gets information from a wide variety of people. We do not control or limit who participates. There are no user-specific invitations with passwords and the like.

- Anyone who wants to participate in this research can do so.
- Anyone can invite others to participate by forwarding the invitation, unadulterated.
- Anyone can provide anonymous answers.

We always invite people who took the prior year’s survey, so our answers year-to-year reflect trends based on answers from the same people.

People share our invitations, ensuring a free flow of information and a sample that fully represents the world of executive coaching. As always, almost half our respondents come from outside our list of invitees. That ensures fresh and accurate results, year after year.