



# Debunking 5 Myths About Coaching



The pandemic has, in many ways, been a wake-up call. With burnout and stress at an all-time high, employees are calling for greater autonomy over where and when they work, and questioning whether their work matters, if they truly belong in their cultures, and if their organization's purpose aligns with their individual purpose.

"You have to run your company as if every employee has one foot out the door. It's time to ramp up your Employee Experience program, focus managers on listening and supporting people, and seriously invest in career pathways and internal growth for your staff," explains HR thought leader [Josh Bersin](#).

Leaders, along with balancing their personal response to this crisis, have discovered they need to take care of their people and organization in different ways. The heightened societal consequences of their decisions, coupled with uncertainty and rapid change, are a lot to navigate.

"The ability to simplify in the middle of complexity, inspire when there's little hope, build relationships when there is distrust, build bridges when things have fragmented, change people when people don't want to change. All those skills are not in the technical manual," shared one leader in the recent Institute of Coaching's "Leading with Humanity: The Future of Leadership and Coaching" [report](#).

As a result, more and more organizations are providing coaching to support their employees, develop their leaders, navigate change and disruption, and help transform their cultures. Despite this increased focus on coaching, there are still several myths about it that prevent both employees and their organizations from getting the most out of a coaching engagement.

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**To help you prevent leaving potential benefits on the table, let's explore some common myths.**



# 1.

## Coaching is training.

**“I was a good manager and good leader, but I wanted to become a great leader. What I lacked wasn’t hard skills, it was soft skills. Only a one-on-one focus could give me what I needed to make personal changes The other training sessions were too generic.”** – Product Leader, BioTech

Most training programs are episodic events that lack adequate or effective follow-up. Traditional training assumes that attendees will listen, learn, and apply all the new approaches on their own. However, this typically does not happen.

Coaching, especially when done consistently, is proven to be more effective in developing and reinforcing skills and behaviors over time. (And [study](#) after [study](#) finds that the skills most in-demand within organizations are behavioral or “soft” skills, such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, and a growth mindset.) While coaching can address a specific goal or initiative, a coach’s focus is to use the goal as an example for solving other problems in the future on their own.

**Coaching Tip:**

Use coaching to foster in-demand soft skills such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, and a growth mindset.



## 2.

### All coaches are created equal.

**“My coach was able to meet me where I was and deliver value in places that I didn’t even know I needed to focus on.”**

-Individual Contributor, BioTech

**Coaching Tip:**

Consider the diversity among your coaches to help foster inclusion and belonging.

There is no universal standard for coaches, which means that anyone could claim to be a coach. So it pays to do your research. When bringing coaches into your organization, [research](#) shows important factors to consider are:



**Coaches have experience coaching in similar settings (65%).**

- Do they understand your industry and/or organizational structure?
- Have they supported organizations in situations like yours?



**Coaches have strong testimonials from impressive prior clients (50%).**

- Who have they worked with in the past?
- What are past clients saying specifically about their coaching style and specialties?



**Coaches have certifications in the desired coaching method (29%).**

- What formal training and education have they received?
- Are they credentialed with an organization like the International Coaching Federation?

### 3.

## Coaching is only for top leaders.

**“Working with my coach has helped me prioritize from being an individual contributor to a leader. I have worked on which qualities I can bring into this role from my individual contributor days and, then, which I need to remove that won’t serve me as well now.”**

– Compliance Manager, eLearning

Coaching is traditionally reserved for only the very top of the leadership hierarchy and often only when there was a problem.

However, all leaders from the C-suite to high-potential employees can benefit from coaching, whether they are struggling or not.

Even employees who are not people leaders, nor will likely ever become people leaders, can benefit from coaching as they build their competence and confidence while learning how to collaborate across the organization.

As more people receive coaching in an organization, a culture of coaching is created with clearer communication, better conversations, more productive meetings, more efficient work delegation, and more focused time management across the company, which leads to true value creation for customers, employees, stockholders, and the broader community.

#### Next Generation Leaders

Subject Matter Experts and High Potential Employees build the soft skills needed to shift to people leaders.

#### Mid-level Leaders

Navigate increasing demands and responsibilities as they take on larger roles.

#### All Leaders

Effectively manage continuous change and rapid growth for themselves, their teams, and the organization.

# 4.

## Coaching is only about the individual.

**“Bringing everyone together in a safe zone during our group sessions has fostered collaboration and helped ease the divide between employees that was growing as we have been scaling.”** – Human Resources

Director, Information Technology

While it is always important to support the individual development of talent, missed opportunities can arise from deploying coaching at scale without the right framework.

Coaching a person, team, and system interdependently offers a positive benefit to the individual coachee and the organization as a whole. Combining group coaching alongside one-on-one coaching creates a framework that provides more value to all stakeholders as they move in tandem toward a common purpose and shared mission.

In their groundbreaking book, *Systemic Coaching: Delivering Value Beyond the Individual*, Dr. Peter Hawkins and Eve Turner found if you want to lead meaningful and lasting transformations, you systemically coach the entire organization. This kind of systemic approach to talent development can bridge the gap between individual experience and organizational goals.

**Coaching Tip:**

Group coaching alongside one-on-one coaching provides more value to stakeholders as they move in tandem towards a common purpose.



## 5.

## The impact of coaching can't be measured.

**“For every single person in whom we invest with coaching, we set a goal – whether it is improving their executive presence; whether it is improving the relationship between them and their direct reports; or if it’s a manager who’s struggling. And we measure at the end as well to ensure that we’ve met success.”**

– Director of Talent, Automation

Coaching is often chalked up to simply a feel-good experience for the coachee with only anecdotal outcomes. Given the monetary and time investment of coaching, stakeholders will inevitably ask tough questions about outcomes, organizational alignment, and the dreaded ROI. Thankfully, there are several ways to [measure the impact of coaching](#).

### Skills and competencies development

It's critical to set tangible goals at the onset of a coaching engagement for individual coachees, the cohort receiving coaching, and your organization. You are then able to track progress while uncovering any gaps and new development opportunities through self-assessments and 360s.

### Employee experience

Coaching at scale has the potential to transform your organizational culture because investing in your people can make them feel valued and increase their commitment and engagement to your organization. Along with tracking goals, asking coachees about their overall employee experience with their roles and the organization.

### Business impact

Take stock of business improvements in areas such as retention, performance, and productivity before and after the program. You are then able to draw correlations for an accurate picture of the impact of coaching engagement on traditional business measures.

#### Coachees

What are the individual development areas each coachee wants to build with their coach?

#### Coaching Cohort/Team

How will the group receiving coaching work together to break down silos and collaborate?

#### Organization

What kind of systemic impact will the coaching engagement have on the organization?

Coaching is one of the most effective talent development interventions for organizational change. Not only have organizations, and the world, been experiencing an unparalleled amount of change as of late, it seems safe to assume more change and disruption is on the horizon. In addition, organizations are scrambling to attract and keep talent as employees experience their own transformations.

Whether you are considering coaching for your organization or have been offering it to your employees for a while, you want to make sure you are getting the most out of your coaching investment. By understanding what coaching is and isn't, and what it can and can't do, you are better able to respond to the next Future of Work and reap all of the numerous benefits coaching offers to unleash the full potential of your people, teams, and organization.

**Interested in learning more about how coaching can support your people and business strategies?**

**Contact us for a complimentary [Culture of Coaching Blueprint](#) strategy session today.**

**BOOK A SESSION ►**

## About AceUp

AceUp empowers professionals at all levels to maximize their impact through transformational coaching enabled by technology, empowered by science, and backed by data. We combine the power of one-on-one executive coaching, group training, and behavioral technology to foster a culture of coaching within organizations that drives systematic impact.

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