



ARE THERE ANY TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO COACHING

ARE THERE ANY POSITIVE FINANCIAL RETURNS?

Survey Results

Also includes:

What made you employ a coach

The reporting process

Negative effects of coaching

Interesting quotations from the survey:

'Improved relationships with colleagues and customers via increased confidence. Fewer customer complains. Improved on-boarding of new starters which reduced turnover in first 6 months'

'Delighted, a very positive experience and far exceeded expectations'

'[Increased] confidence, self belief and handling difficult situations/conversations seem to be common themes attributed to the coaching process'

'Individuals becoming too reliant on support of a coach. Not wanting it to end'

'Clearer vision and strategic thinking, people settling into new roles more quickly'

'...the key is to get the coach/coachee relationship right'

'because we showed that we were investing in an employee the rest of the team felt better about the company'

Background

This survey was conducted by Clear Coaching from October – December 2006.

Clear Coaching approached over 50 organisations to take part in the survey. The final number of participants who completed the survey was 30.

The types of companies approached and who took part were retailers such as Tesco, Coca Cola and the Carphone Warehouse; financial institutions such as Nationwide and Portman Building Society; advertising agencies such as Ogilvy & Mather; recruitment agencies such as Recruit Media and the Bristol Community Housing Foundation, winners of the Guardian Public Service Award 2006.

All the companies had employed coaches for their employees over the years.

To be eligible for the survey the participants had to be involved in the hiring of an external coach for employees or themselves or to have been closely involved with the coaching process.

43% of the participants were part of the HR team
33% were the MD or a Board Director of the company
10% were part of the training team
10% part of personnel
3% other.

Key findings and recommendations

From the results of the survey Clear Coaching has 12 strong recommendations and key findings to companies considering using a coach.

1. The results showed that real tangible benefits do exist from coaching and were easily identifiable. Companies found that these were
 - increasing perception (63%)
 - acquiring a new skill or improving on an existing one (50%)
 - improving work relationships within a team (50%)
 - being able to see other perspectives (47%)
 - applying some clarity to work life (43%)
 - increasing motivation (43%)
 - performance approved (43%)
 - coachee seemed happier (40%)
 - enjoying a better atmosphere (40%)
 - growing into a new role (40%)
 - changing approaches to work situations (37%)
 - agreed goals were obtained. (20%)

So if you want an employee to be more motivated or increase their perception – hire a coach!

2. 23% of companies noticed an increase in sales and revenue even when it wasn't an aim of the coaching. While 63% of respondents did not see the financial return as the objective of coaching. Companies could therefore be gaining tangible financial benefits from coaching without even realising it.
3. Only 3% of companies fully understood the financial impact coaching was having. Therefore companies need to investigate ways of measuring any financial upturn following coaching as they are currently unaware of the effect it is having.

4. Coaching can have a negative impact as well as positive ones. 15% of companies reported as much. *'Individuals becoming too reliant on support of a coach. Not wanting it to end.'* was one company's experience while the cost of coaching was reported by another. Companies therefore need to be aware of this balance.
5. Only 3% of companies reported that employees using coaching to enable them to find a new career or leave. 93% of companies found that employees reward the value placed in them through coaching by performing better at work, and not by leaving.
6. Currently only 10% of companies offer coaching as part of their standard employment package. Coaching could be used as a sweetener to attract new employees.
7. Coaches are often left in the dark about the reasons they are hired. Currently less than 18% of companies give coaches clear cut reasons why they are required. Companies could greatly enhance the relationship between coach and coachee by giving more contextual information.
8. 93% of companies would hire a coach again and were on the whole an in the words of one company *'delighted, a very positive experience and far exceeded expectations'* with the coaching experience. Therefore hiring a coach could benefit companies greatly.
9. 7% of companies saw no positive effects of coaching and this usually went hand-in-hand with having no management involvement during or after the coaching process. Companies could review their reporting systems to ensure they are getting the best out of coaching.
10. Currently only 20% of companies set out clear specific goals at the outset of the coaching relationship. Companies would get more out of coaching and be able to measure those benefits more meaningfully if they were not so unclear of what they want at the start of the coaching relationship.
11. Currently less than 10% of companies let the coach and coachee meet before the sessions. Coachees need to road test the coach before committing to the relationship because *'the key is to get the coach/coachee relationship right'*.
12. By just coaching a handful of employees morale can be raised across the board because the company is seen as investing in the team. One company noted *'because we showed that we were investing in an employee the rest of the team felt better about the company'*.

Findings

Coaching is often seen as a “touchy feely” kind of discipline. A nice-to-have luxury item. But in my experience as a coach people have found it invaluable in their own personal careers and for the greater good of their company.

My thesis before I conducted the survey was

coaching had definite, tangible benefits but I needed to find out what they were

financial benefits from coaching were secondary but not measurable

the reasons for hiring a coach were always met and often exceeded

the greatest fear around providing coaching at work was people would find a reason to leave the company

people found their coaches through personal contacts and recommendations, not cold calling and ads

while a coach was hired for one person that there were benefits for more than that person.

In addition I was interested to examine if there were any negative aspects of coaching. And finally what reporting system did people use during the process.

So were any of my theories right?

The results showed that real tangible benefits did exist and were easily identifiable. Companies found that these were

- increasing perception of self and work situations (63%)
- acquiring a new skill or improving on an existing one (50%)
- improving work relationships within a team (50%)
- being able to see other perspectives (47%)
- applying some clarity to work life (43%)
- increasing motivation (43%)
- performance approved (43%)
- coachee seemed happier (40%)
- enjoying a better atmosphere (40%)
- growing into a new role (40%)
- changing approaches to work situations (37%)
- agreed goals were obtained. (20%)

These quotes demonstrate the benefits.

'[Coaching helped employees in all the ways listed in the survey] and more - confidence, self belief and handling difficult situations/conversations seem to be common themes'

'Fewer customer complaints, improved on-boarding of new starters which reduced [staff] turnover in the first 6 months '

'Better team working. Clearer vision and strategic thinking. People settling into new roles more quickly'.

Many participants noted that coaching helped the employee feel valued. By showing that the company was investing in them it made not only the employee feel good but the rest of the team they were working.

'because we showed that we were investing in an employee the rest of the team felt better about the company'

With regard to the financial benefits 63% of respondents did not see this as the objective of coaching or even as secondary.

And while 13% of respondents did see a definite increase in income and 10% saw sales go up this comment from one participant confirmed my idea that there was no way of measuring the return.

'we have not got a way of measuring the direct tangible benefit of the coaching on income.'

So were there any negative aspects of coaching? 7% felt that coaching hadn't helped them at all. Only one company had any proof of my theory that companies didn't want to provide coaching as employees might leave.

'Some people decide they want something different out of life and left the company'.

Most interestingly one negative aspect was from a company where employees enjoyed the coaching too much and became dependent on it.

'Individuals becoming too reliant on support of a coach. Not wanting it to end.'

One company felt the only negative thing was the cost. Another company saw a negative become a positive.

'The one person who asked for coaching and it was decided that it wasn't appropriate felt very neglected and it has made us revise our policy.'

My theory was right in regards to the finding or selection of a coach - it was most often done through personal recommendation from colleagues or friends. And respondents usually employed them because the rapport was right and/or they had good testimonials. One company found that this rapport was most important and appeared to let the coach and coachee meet before the sessions started.

'the key is to get the coach/coachee relationship right'

The study indicates that the most likely reason for employing a coach was to develop the potential of a particular employee (43%). And generally this was something respondents told the coach before the process.

However, more information was given in very few cases and this was highlighted by only 12% giving the coach as what one respondent referred to as

'specific development objectives'

Whatever reporting method respondents used with the coach, none seemed to want it improved: most popular was to have a written report from the coach after each session AND a discussion with the employee after all the sessions were complete. However one company thought an improvement could be made

'coachee[s] being encouraged to demonstrate/document impact where appropriate'.

while another said

'...next time we will use someone who can give us a more practical approach with goals and action plans about a particular problem or goal that fits in with our day to day work'

It does appear that those companies that did not see any benefits from coaching were also those that did not have a thorough reporting system. Therefore improving on this could change the end result of coaching.

Finally it appears that my theory that the reasons for hiring a coach were always met and often exceeded was right and was reflected in the 90% of respondents who said they would use a coach again.

To sum up the experience of coaching let me leave it to the respondents own words.

'delighted, a very positive experience and far exceeded expectations'

'scary, fun, enlightening, positive. challenging and supportive'.

Survey results in more detail

Reasons for having a coach

The study indicates that the most likely reason for employing a coach was for an employee whose potential respondents wanted to develop (57%).

Despite coaching being fairly commonplace these days only 10% of companies offered coaching as part of their standard package.

13% had heard good things about coaching and wanted to give it a try. While 7% used coaching when they had reached a stalemate with an employee and thought this was the best way to move forward.

One participant cited the reason for having a coach as

'I knew I had more in me and a coach could help me access that'

while another said

'A belief that coaching can be used as the most effective development in a number of scenarios, from high potentials and new starters to performance issues'

How did you find the coach or their company?

When trying to find a coach the personal touch was the most usual route.

Either having a personal work recommendation (33%) or a past history with the coach (23%) or a recommendation from a friend (20%).

The least popular way of finding a coach was through cold calling or advertising (3%).

Only one company appeared to have a 'tender process leading to a preferred supplier list'

What influenced your final decision to employ them?

Again when making the final decision to employ the coach the vast majority of respondents personally liked them (40%) or trusted their testimonials (33%).

17% said that it was important the coach used techniques that respondents recognised - personality testing with Myers Briggs, and NLP for instance.

While their fee might be important few respondents cited this as a reason for the final choice (10%)

Other reasons cited for selecting a particular coach were

'They made me think differently...and they scared me a bit too!!!'

Only one company appeared to include the coachee in the coach recruitment process.

'After an initial meeting, there was a good fit between the coach and the individual.'

What did you tell the coach about the coachee before coaching began?

The majority of respondents let the coach know they felt the person to be coached was a good employee and coaching could be of benefit to them (43%) but didn't necessarily add more than this.

27% let the coach know that the coachee had requested coaching and respondents were supplying it. Of these only 12% only told the coach this and nothing else.

Only 20% of respondents gave the coach the employees appraisal which included their future goals.

And in only one case was it cited that the coach was given

'Specific development objectives'

Interestingly 13% of respondents were very prescriptive and gave the coach a list of things that their employee needed to learn. However this was usually coupled with the information that they were a good employee and/or had requested coaching.

During the coaching what involvement did you have with the coach and your employee?

The involvement during the coaching with the coach varied.

Most popular was to have a written report from the coach after each session AND a discussion with the employee after all the sessions were complete

23% of respondents had a written report after each session only.

20% of respondents had a written report only after all the sessions were complete.

Only a handful of respondents had no involvement at all with the coach or the employee during the process. (10%).

Was there anything that could have been improved upon in the reporting system?

The reporting systems used seem to satisfy respondents said that an improvement could have been with

'coachee[s] being encouraged to demonstrate/document impact where appropriate'.

What feedback, if any, did employees give you about the benefits of coaching?

This comment from one company seemed to sum up the benefits of coaching.

'[Coaching helped employees in all the ways listed in the survey] and more - confidence, self belief and handling difficult situations/conversations seem to be common themes'

The benefits of coaching felt by the employees were many.

50% of them felt that *'coaching helped them acquire a new skill or improve on an existing one'*.

43% felt that 'coaching helped them apply some clarity to their work life AND helped with their motivation'

40% saw *'coaching helped [employees] grow into a new role.*

37% found *'coaching helped change the way [employees] approached work situations*

Only 7% felt that coaching hadn't helped them at all.

What positive effects, if any, did you see from the coaching? (Tick any that apply)
Interestingly while goal setting and achievement is central to coaching only 20% of respondents cited that agreed goals were obtained. Therefore suggesting that while set goals may be important the incidental effects of coaching were also worthwhile.

The many positive effects from the coaching were:

63% of respondents saw the coachee had better perception.

50% found that working relationship had improved.

47% observed that the coachee was able to see other perspectives.

43% performance improved

40% enjoyed a better atmosphere

20% saw agreed goals obtained

10% saw that sales went up.

Only 3% of respondents found there were no positive effects at all.

What other tangible business benefits did you observe from coaching?
The business benefits observed from coaching were remarkable.

One participant cited *'Fewer customer complaints, improved on-boarding of new starters which reduced [staff] turnover in the first 6 months '*

From one company who used coaching to improve internal coaching skills and to enable managers to become coaches of their teams *'71% indicate an increase in their knowledge and skills; 61% state their knowledge and skill level is now excellent or outstanding'.*

From a PR agency *'Improved vision. Wider thinking. More focussed'*

One retailer said *'Better team working. Clearer vision and strategic thinking. People settling into new roles more quickly'*

Many participants noted that coaching helped the employee feel valued and by showing that the company was investing in them it made not only the employee feel good but the rest of the team they were working with as well.

In financial terms what affect, if any, did coaching have?

63% of respondents did not see this as the objective of coaching.

However 13% of respondents did see a definite increase in income. But to quote one participant it seems that of respondents who saw either sales go up or an increase in income 'we have not got a way of measuring the direct tangible benefit of the coaching on income.'

How would you sum up your experience of using a coach?

12 respondents answered this optional question their comments ranging from

'Delighted, a very positive experience and far exceeded expectations' to 'Delivered results'.

4 respondents noted the need to have and *'clear objectives over a given timeline'.*

3 found that *'the key is to get the coach/coachee relationship right.'*

1 respondent found the experience *'Scary, fun, enlightening, positive. Challenging and supportive.'*

66% of respondents that answered this question found the experience very positive; 34% found it good.

Were there any negative affects of coaching?

5 participants responded to this question.

One participant recognised that through coaching staff can decide that their current role is not for them and leave the company. *'Some people decide they want something different out of life and left the company'.*

Most interestingly one participant saw that employees enjoyed the coaching too much and became dependent on it. *'Individuals becoming too reliant on support of a coach. Not wanting it to end.'*

One felt the only negative thing was the cost.

One company saw a negative became a positive. *'The one person who asked for coaching and it was decided that it wasn't appropriate felt very neglected and it has made us revise our policy.'*

Would you use the coach you employed again?

It appears that whatever method respondents used to find a coach it was the right one because 90% of participants said that they would use the coach they employed again.

10% were not sure.

And 90% found the experience was so good that they would even try another coach.

For further information on this report please contact Julia Marber at Clear Coaching on juliamarber@clearcoaching.co.uk

Appendix – The online survey with results

Coaching Experience Survey

Reasons for having a coach

What made you employ a coach? (Tick any that apply)	%	Total responses
An employee specifically requested this service from you.	7%	2
You had reached a stalemate with an employee and thought this was a positive way forward.	7%	2
You offer this to employees whose potential you want to develop.	57%	17
An employee specifically requested this service from you.	7%	2
You heard positive results from other companies and wanted to try it out.	13%	4
You offer this to all your employees as a standard part of their package.	10%	3
Other - There have been occasions with some individuals where it was the right option for them to work on some specific areas, and achieve results in a short period of time.	3%	1
Other - I knew I had more in me and a coach could help me access that.	3%	1
Other - leadership development	3%	1
Other - Training need	3%	1
Other - A belief that coaching can be used as the most effective development in a number of scenarios, from high potentials and new starters to performance issues.	3%	1
Other - The coach was provided as part of a year long post grad course on leadership	3%	1

Employing the coach

How did you find the coach or their company?	%	Total responses
My company had already used them.	23%	7
A colleague or work contact recommended them.	33%	10
A friend or acquaintance recommended them.	20%	6
They made contact through cold calling, direct mail etc.	3%	1
From an advert in a magazine.	3%	1
Other - Met them on a coaching course	3%	1

Other - We use internal coaches, trained internally	3%	1
Other - From my own network	3%	1
Other - Tender process leading to a preferred supplier list	3%	1
Other - The coach was associated with Lancaster Uni. (the course leaders).	3%	1

**What influenced your final decision to employ them?
(Tick any that apply)**

	%	Total responses
Personally like them.	40%	12
Trusted my recommendation.	17%	5
They had good testimonials.	33%	10
Their rate was the right level.	10%	3
My manager decided to go for them.	3%	1
I had been coached by them and knew they were right for the job.	10%	3
They used techniques that I wanted to be employed (NLP, Myers Briggs etc)	17%	5
Their website and supporting material were professional.	10%	3
Other - After an initial meeting, there was a good fit between the coach and the individual.	3%	1
Other - They made me think differently...and they scared me a bit too!!!	3%	1
Other - they had recognised accreditation such as ICF	3%	1
Other - Internally trained so specific knowledge and skills	3%	1
Other - I wasn't involved in recruitment of coach	3%	1

The coaching process

What did you tell the coach about the coachee before coaching began? (Tick any that apply)

	%	Total responses
That the coachee had requested coaching and you were supplying it.	27%	8
You gave the coach a list of things the coachee needed to learn.	13%	4
You gave the coach their appraisal including their future goals.	20%	6
That you felt they were a good employee and coaching could be of benefit to them.	43%	13
Other - I used the coach so I told him about my requirements	3%	1
Other - Context of challenges faced and encouraged co contracting	3%	1
Other - Business context	3%	1

Other - Specific development objectives	3%	1
During the coaching what involvement did you have with the coach? (Tick any that apply)	%	Total responses
I had a discussion after all the sessions were completed.	7%	2
I had a written report after each session.	23%	7
I had a written report after all the sessions were completed.	20%	6
I had a discussion after all the sessions were completed.	33%	10
None at all	10%	3
Other - I have interim discussions regarding impact and process	3%	1
Didn't answer	3%	1

During the coaching what involvement did you have with your employee? (Tick any that apply)	%	Total responses
I had a written report after all the sessions were completed.	0	0%
None at all.	1	3%
I had a written report after each session.	2	7%
I had a discussion after all the sessions were completed.	20	67%
Other - ensuring match was correct, then interim discussion on process and satisfaction	1	3%
Other - quick informal chats sporadically during the 4 month period	1	3%
Didn't answer	4	13%

Was there anything that could have been improved upon in the reporting system?

Other - Coachee being encouraged to demonstrate/document impact where appropriate

Coaching benefits

What feedback, if any, did employees give you about the benefits of coaching? (Tick any that apply)	%	Total responses
Coaching helped them apply some clarity to their work life	43%	13
Coaching helped them change the way they approached work situations	37%	11
Coaching helped with their motivation	43%	13
Coaching helped them grow into a new role	40%	12
Coaching helped them acquire a new skill or improve on an existing one	50%	15

Other - Only got feedback after all sessions complete and that it had helped them work towards appraisal goals.	3%	1
Coaching didn't help them at all	7%	2
Other - All of the above and more - confidence, self belief and handling difficult situations/conversations seem to be common themes.	3%	1
Other - improved working relationships	3%	1

What positive effects, if any, did you see from the coaching? (Tick any that apply)

	%	Total responses
Performance improved.	43%	13
Better atmosphere	40%	12
The problem we had was resolved.	27%	8
Working relationship improved.	50%	15
Coachee seemed happier.	40%	12
Agreed goals were obtained.	20%	6
Coachee had better perception.	63%	19
Coachee was able to see other perspectives.	47%	14
Coachee was more confident.	13%	4
Sales went up	10%	3
No positive effects at all	3%	1

In financial terms what affect, if any, did coaching have? (Tick any that apply)

	%	Total responses
This wasn't the objective of the coaching.	63%	19
Not sure.	10%	3
We saw a definite increase in income.	13%	4
We no increase in income.	3%	1
Other - We have not got a way of measuring the direct tangible benefit of the coaching on income.	3%	1
Didn't answer	7%	2

What other tangible business benefits did you observe from coaching? (Optional)

	%	Total responses
Helps individuals through times of change and improves performance	3%	1
Other - I think generally because we showed that we were investing in an employee the rest of the team felt better about the company even though all but one didn't ask for coaching.	3%	1

Other - Improved relationships with colleagues and customers via increased confidence. Fewer customer complaints Improved on-boarding of new starters which reduced turnover in first 6 months	3%	1
Other - personally I have found it useful to get an experienced and outsiders view of various business issues that the company faces and personal issues I face as a result	3%	1
Other - Coachee felt valued	3%	1
Other - Improved vision Wider thinking More focussed	3%	1
Other - retention + progression of key talents, impacting leadership style and further engagement with people development	3%	1
Other - 4.1 The workshops were well received and to some extent a change in behaviour has taken place. 4.2 Some business areas were more focused and positive about the purpose of coaching than others. 4.3 In addition to the Coaching The Member Experience in Retail and Coaching rollout across Operations, 7225 coaching plans have been created across the whole organisation through Development Curve; of which 3425 link directly link to Operational areas or subsidiaries. See appendices 5, 6 and 7 4.4 From the initial reactions recorded after each module 63% contained a measurement indicating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% of attendees indicate an increase in their knowledge and skills. • 61% of attendees state their knowledge and skill level is now excellent or outstanding. Refer to appendix 3. 4.5 The focus of the rollout was to introduce new behaviours with the assumption that these would lead to achieving the business initiative and improved performance. This can not be substantiated. 4.6 Employee's 2006 viewpoint results for *** Group show a reduction of 2% in Q32f "My manager takes time to coach me to learn and develop my on-job skills" compared to 2005. This may be because managers and coaches are perceived as having less time to coach. It does not comment on the time or quality of coaching received. 4.7 Results to viewpoint Q32f for the 13 business areas involved in Coaching rollout into Operations indicate similar results to the *** Group. Since the rollout commenced in 2004, 5 business areas show an increase, 6 indicate a reduction and 1 indicates no change. Refer to appendix 8 4.8 The programme has been flexible to use different modules to match the different business need. 4.9 1% of attendees have not used the coaching received.	3%	1
Other - Better team working Clearer vision and strategic thinking people settling into new roles more quickly	3%	1
How would you sum up your experience of using a coach? (Optional)	%	Total responses
Mainly good experiences but the key is to get the coach/coachee relationship right and ensure the coach has relevant experience	3%	1
Suitable choice of coach and clear objectives being identified certainly help make this an effective process to assist individuals.	3%	1
Good but next time we will use someone who can give us a more practical approach with goals and action plans about a particular problem or goal that fits in with our day to day work. i.e. getting a consultant to senior status, identifying what needs to happen and helping establish a timeline	3%	1

Provided there are clear objectives over a given timeline and a careful selection of the coach, good results can be obtained. I have inherited coaching relationships that were very unstructured and ended up closing all of the relationships on a cost benefit basis	3%	1
Positive - We have seen some fantastic results	3%	1
Scary, fun, enlightening, positive. challenging and supportive.	3%	1
so far so good but I think I may try a few as the years go by to gain a wider knowledge - in time I may go back to the best or just keep moving around	3%	1
Delivered results	3%	1
Very positive - recognise the benefit of working with an external facilitator	3%	1
Delighted, a very positive experience and far exceeded expectations.	3%	1
Brilliant!	3%	1
They add value but it needs to be within a *** Framework	3%	1

Were there any negative affects of coaching?

	%	Total responses
Dependency. Individuals becoming too reliant on support of a coach. Not wanting it to end.	3%	1
Other - The one person who asked for coaching and it was decided that it wasn't appropriate felt very neglected and it has made us revise our policy.	3%	1
Other - only the cost	3%	1
Danger that it is applied to all situations as it worked for the individual, not all situations appropriate	3%	1
Some people decide they want something different out of life and we have lost a few !	3%	1

Going forward

Would you use the coach you employed again?

	%	Total responses
Yes	90%	27
Not sure	10%	3
No	0%	0

Which of the following best describes the department your work for within your company?

	%	Total responses
Part of the HR team	43%	11
MD or Board Director of the company.	33%	8
Part of the Training team.	10%	3

Part of personnel	10%	3
Other	3%	5