



# Integrating Global Coaching for People, Partners, and Patients at AstraZeneca

Every year, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) honors organizations with coaching programs that meet rigorous professional standards. The [Coaching Impact Awards](#) celebrate the best of coaching and ICF through various categories that encompass the multifaceted aspects of the profession.

**AstraZeneca**, the global, science-led biopharmaceutical business, clinched the prestigious ICF Coaching Impact Award for Distinguished Organization in 2023. The company achieved this by wholeheartedly embracing the power of professional coaching, which led to a significant cultural shift.

The launch of a multifaceted coaching strategy across AstraZeneca was a significant, multi-year investment and global effort. It started in May 2020 with a survey of over 80,000 employees, revealing that many employees considered the company's existing Performance Management approach to be backward facing, as opposed to a more future-focused strategy built to drive professional development in line with the realities of the industry's ever-changing landscape. Coaching emerged as the solution to drive personal impact and collective success.

*"The AstraZeneca coaching integration was truly a global campaign to learn how we can have great conversations with each other—but also with external partners, stakeholders, and most importantly patients"*

*Helen Basford, Global Capability Lead for Coaching, AstraZeneca*

To keep pace with the world and meet the needs of their people, AstraZeneca leaders recognized a need for a dialogue shift to foster innovation and explore new operational goal possibilities. Previously, coaching throughout the organization was ad hoc. The introduction of a formalized and integrated coaching strategy aimed to facilitate professional development and business growth.

Coaches engaged with managers and employees through interactive workshops, experiential learning and digital assets in order to develop coaching competencies. The program's success of this phase

led to the introduction of Manager as Coach and Leader as Coach programs — customized coaching capability programs that incorporated one-to-one professional coaching with learning to coach in the everyday flow of work. Coaching is available throughout employees' working life cycle and is available for all career levels. AstraZeneca monitors participant demographics to ensure a diverse range of participants across all business areas.

The thoughtful format and strategy behind the coaching programs were as intentional as the company's everyday work. As a purpose led organization with strong values AstraZeneca strives to support patients worldwide by delivering life-changing medicines through a collaborative team effort. Employees who received coaching seamlessly integrated ICF competencies into their work and purpose. Ad-hoc coaching was replaced with accessible, impactful, and inclusive coaching;

**Global cost savings of centralizing and scaling coaching were projected at \$4M USD.**

This strategic alignment directly links business growth through innovation to unlock the potential of people, partners, and patients. There was a diligent pursuit of a coaching culture that champions inclusion and diversity to unleash the company's global talent for the greater good.

**AstraZeneca's purpose was in alignment with the function of coaching and the ethos of ICF: "To unlock the potential of people, partners, and patients."**

With its value for team collaboration and innovation, the coaching program became a necessary business priority for AstraZeneca's leaders. Supported by senior leaders and a compelling global narrative, the cultural transformation is now evident in the language used and widespread adoption of a coaching mindset as a tool to improve the company's life-saving work—one that cultivates trust in everyday interactions throughout the organization. Performance Development experiences and Leader Development programs were redesigned with these competencies at the core, allowing thousands of employees to receive

coaching and adopt a coaching approach across all aspects of their work.

**A large majority of employee participants surveyed after program installation believe that they have *improved or learned new skills (89%)* and have the *opportunity for personal development (83%)*.**

**Internal employee growth as a result of coaching is evident. The talent development *promotion rate* of program participants was noted as **34%**.**

AstraZeneca's coaching program focuses on increased employee engagement, accelerated leadership development, and improved communication skills. Across the board, managers demonstrated increased confidence in holding meaningful coaching conversations and providing "feedforward", aptly named due to AstraZeneca's forward-looking approach through capability-building engagements.

**Coaching and feedforward behavior unlocked potential in everyday conversations, resulting in a **100% increase** in self-reported coaching and feedforward behaviors.**

**A coaching approach to conversations improved interpersonal communication, resulting in **45% percent of participants reporting a positive mindset towards performance development and sense of trust and safety within their teams.****

These engagement types mirror the range of offerings in the AstraZeneca program—including coaching workshops, peer coaching forums, AI feedforward simulations, coaching masterclasses, Manager and Leader as a Coach programs,



and professional coaching engagements. The organization exclusively partners with ICF Credentialed coaches for coaching interventions, aligned with five of the [ICF Core Competencies](#).

AstraZeneca's aim is for all employees to perform as an enterprise team, participating in lifelong development, and steadfastly support DE&I initiatives. Coaching is now considered a critical success level for these ambitions. AstraZeneca's unwavering commitment to fostering growth, enabling potential, and embracing the coaching revolution positions them a true champion of coaching's capabilities.