

2023 ICF **SNAPSHOT** SURVEY

Future of Coaching
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Section 1: **Introduction**

Introduction

This Executive Summary highlights key findings from the *2023 ICF Snapshot Survey: Future of Coaching*. The study was commissioned by the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

The full report, which is the basis for this Executive Summary, is primarily focused on coach practitioners and the future of coaching including artificial intelligence (AI), digital coaching platforms, and internal and external factors impacting coaching. That 56-page document is available for free for ICF members or for purchase at a cost of \$149 USD for non-members by visiting <https://coachingfederation.org/research/global-coaching-snapshots>.

Objectives

The objectives of the *2023 ICF Snapshot Survey: Future of Coaching* were as follows:

- To understand the role of technology, specifically AI and digital coaching platforms.
- Coaches' plans to grow their business.
- Biggest concerns over the next 12 months - both internal and external.
- Biggest opportunities for coaching over the next 12 months.

Definitions

Survey respondents were first asked if they self-identified as a professional coach. All survey respondents were then asked a follow-up question to distinguish between those who consider themselves primarily as coach practitioners or managers/leaders who use coaching skills. Respondents were asked to select one of six designations to best describe what they primarily do:

- External coach practitioner.
- Internal coach practitioner.
- Both an external coach practitioner and an internal coach practitioner.
- No longer coaching at this time and do not plan to coach in the future.
- Human resources/talent development manager/director who uses coaching skills.
- Manager/leader who uses coaching skills.

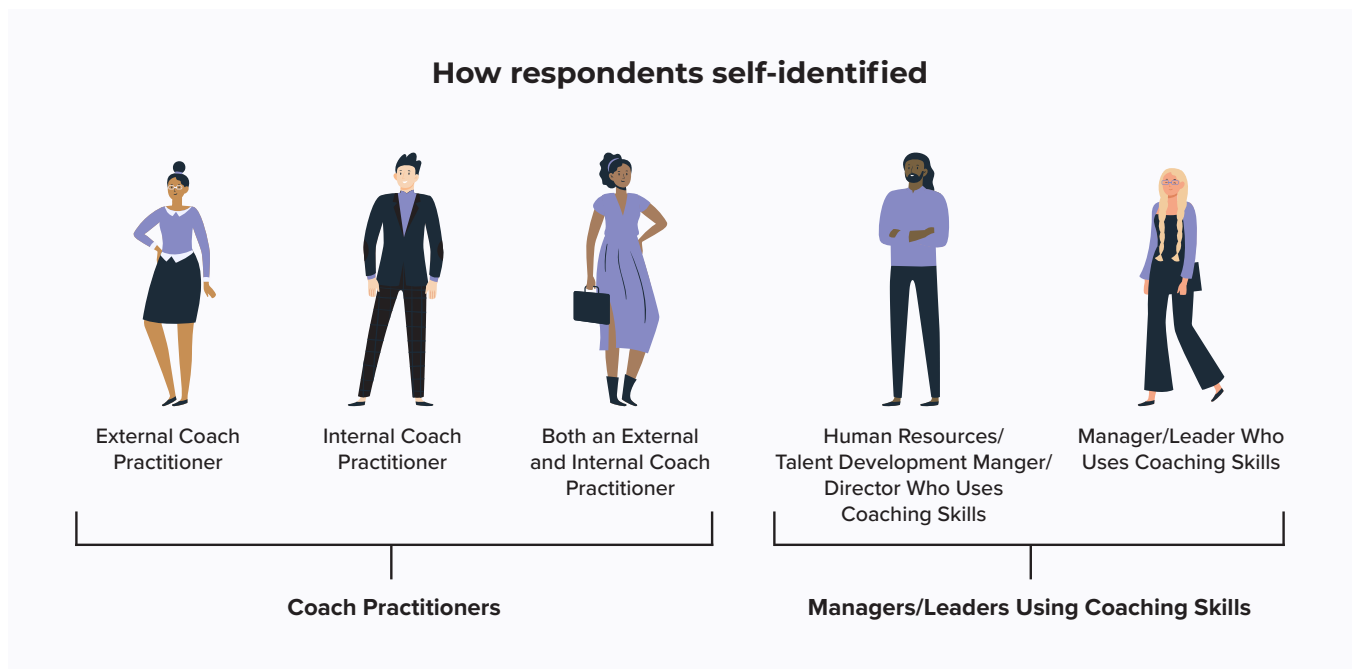
The following definitions were provided to respondents:

Coach practitioner – Someone who provides an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. The coach’s job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has.

External coach practitioner – A professional coach practitioner who is either self-employed or partners with other professional coaches to form a coaching business.

Internal coach practitioner – A professional coach practitioner who is employed within an organization and has specific coaching responsibilities identified in their job description.

Manager/leader using coaching skills – A manager or leader who works with their subordinates within the organization to create awareness and support behavior change. This is accomplished using coaching knowledge, approaches, and skills.



Respondents who said that none of the above designations describes what they primarily do were considered out of scope and screened out.

Methodology

The survey fieldwork phase commenced on October 26, 2022. The survey ran for six weeks and closed on December 2, 2022.

A number of approaches were deployed to engage worldwide with coach practitioners and managers/leaders using coaching skills.

ICF's extensive contacts lists were used to circulate personalized invitations and survey links. In addition to current ICF members, invitations to participate in the survey were sent to non-members holding ICF credentials, expired ICF members, and other databases existing within ICF, such as inquiries regarding membership, credentialing/certification, and location of ICF chapters.

ICF members were asked to share a generic link to the online survey registration site with their wider networks of coaches; the intention of which was to initiate a "snowball" effect that would attract more non-ICF coaches.

In addition, the survey was implemented to ensure that it was readily accessible to all potential respondents. Thus, the survey was made available online in nine languages (English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Mandarin, and Spanish).

The survey was designed so that it could be completed using a range of mobile devices.

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Section 2:
Coach Practitioners

Key Points Summary

The full report presents a profile of coach practitioners, under the following headings: demographics, coaching services, the client, and memberships and credentials. The following are the key findings from the profile of coach practitioners.

Demographics

- Almost one in two coach practitioners (48%) are in the Generation X age cohort, ranging from 40% in North America to 62% in Eastern Europe.
- The proportion of coach practitioners who are Baby Boomers ranges from 16% in Eastern Europe to 49% in North America. North America and Oceania are the only regions where Baby Boomers outnumber Generation X coaches.
- Globally, Millennials account for one in 10 coach practitioners, ranging from 21% in Eastern Europe to 8% in North America and 7% in Oceania.
- The female share of coach practitioners ranges from 59% in Asia to 78% in Eastern Europe.
- The vast majority of coaches hold a degree-level qualification or higher, including 30% with a bachelor's degree and 65% with a more advanced degree.

Coaching Services

- The percentage of coach practitioners with less than five years' experience is higher in the younger age groups. Almost two in three Millennials (66%) have less than five years' experience compared with 40% of Generation X coaches and 22% of Baby Boomers.
- Leadership was the main area of coaching most frequently mentioned in the 2022 survey (34%), followed by executive coaching (17%) and business/organizations (13%).
- A little under one in five coach practitioners (16%) work as both an internal and external coach. On average, they devote most of their time to their internal coaching duties (56%).
- Almost all coach practitioners (93%) offer services in addition to coaching. Most frequently, coaches also offer consulting (59%), training (58%), and/or facilitation services (55%). On average, coach practitioners offer almost three (2.8) services in addition to coaching. That is unchanged from 2015 and 2019.

The Client

- The mix of clients varies with the attributes of coaches, including the region in which they live, their main area of coaching, years of experience, age, gender, and whether they work as an external or internal coach practitioner.
- On average, coach practitioners said that 57% of their clients are sponsored (whose coaching is paid for by a third party like their employer) and 43% are primary clients (who pay for their own coaching).
- The majority of coaching clients (58%) are female.
- Clients aged between 35 and 44 years (37%) most frequently receive coaching services, followed by clients in the 45-54 age range (32%). Around one in five (21%) are aged under 35 years.

Memberships and Credentials

- The overwhelming majority of coaches (80%) agree that their clients expect coaches to be certified/credentialed, with 42% strongly agreeing and 38% somewhat agreeing.
- More than eight in 10 coach practitioners (86%) said they are a member of one or more coaching organizations.
- An increasing proportion of coach practitioners hold a certification/credential from a coaching organization. In the 2022 survey, 85% said they currently hold a certification/credential from a coaching organization.

Taking the Next Step in Your Coaching Journey

Whether you're a seasoned coach or just starting your coaching journey, an ICF credential is a valuable asset that can propel your career to new heights. **With it, comes increased visibility, a competitive edge, and more satisfied clients.** [Learn more](#) about these three reasons to be credentialed.

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Section 3:
Future of Coaching

Key Points Summary

The full report presents the findings of the future of technology and digital coaching platforms as well as internal and external factors affecting coaching. The following are the key findings from coach practitioners' views on the future of coaching.

Emerging from the Pandemic

- The evidence from the *2023 ICF Global Coaching Study* is that by late-2022, the coaching industry had not just recovered ground lost in the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic but also had gained some from the experience.
- Reflecting on the overall effects, almost three in four coach practitioners (73%) said they believe the changes in the coaching industry seen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have been positive (55%) or very positive (18%). Just 6% said the changes have been negative.
- Over the next 12 months, coach practitioners have a high degree of confidence that the industry will continue to grow. Almost one in four coach practitioners (24%) are extremely confident that the industry will expand, while 42% said they are very confident. Just 7% said they are not at all or not very confident.
- Over the next 3-5 years, coach practitioners' confidence levels in industry expansion are even higher, with 31% extremely confident that the industry will continue growing and 45% saying they are very confident. Only 4% said they are not at all confident or not very confident when thinking about the next 3-5 years.

Growing the Coaching Business

- Survey respondents were asked about actions they plan to take to grow their business over, respectively, the next 12 months and the next 3-5 years.
- Over the next 12 months, coach practitioners most frequently cited an increase in their coaching fee per hour (44%), followed by achieving more qualifications (42%) and increasing the number of services offered (39%).
- The range of actions planned over the next 3-5 years broadly mirrors the 12-month plans.

The Role of Technology

- A substantial minority of coaches take a broadly positive view of AI. Almost one in two (46%) agreed with one or both propositions that "AI will be the next disruptive innovation in coaching" and "AI will make it easier to run their coaching business." Nonetheless, with 61% of coaches saying they neither agreed nor disagreed with one or both of those propositions, coaches are more likely to express uncertainty about the future role of AI in coaching.
- Coach practitioners clearly recognize the emergence of AI as an important new technology. Just one in 10 (10%) took the view that AI is a passing trend.
- Almost two in three coaches (66%) agreed or strongly agreed that the benefits of AI for coaching are not yet established, along with a further 27% neither agreeing nor disagreeing with that statement.
- The majority of coaches (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that digital coaching platforms are good for the coaching industry.

- There is a broad consensus among coach practitioners that digital coaching platforms can facilitate and enhance access to coaching, both for people across the globe (84%) and for individuals/employees in organizations (82%).
- While recognizing their potential utility, most coaches (69%) agreed or strongly agreed that digital coaching platforms should be regulated to ensure the safety of coaches and coachees.

Coaching in the Age of AI: Embracing Innovation

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a dynamic and transformative set of tools that hold the potential to revolutionize various aspects of our professional lives. These advanced technologies are poised to redefine the landscape of numerous professions, including coaching. From client relationships to business management, AI can complement your professional practice.

However, as AI continues to advance and make its way into the realm of coaching, it becomes imperative for coaches to take an active role in shaping its integration within their field. By doing so, you not only contribute to the effort of mitigating potential biases in AI but also ensure that it seamlessly integrates as another valuable tool in your coaching toolbox. This proactive engagement will empower you to provide even better services to your clients, harnessing the full potential of AI while maintaining the personal touch that makes your coaching practice unique.

For additional insights and tips, read the following articles:

- [AI and Coaching: Embracing Opportunities Amidst Disruption](#)
- [Navigating Bias and Coaching Ethics in the Age of AI](#)

External Business Concerns

- Survey respondents were provided with a list of external factors and asked to select the three factors they are most concerned with for their business over the next 12 months.
- Globally, the factors of most concern are, in rank order, rising inflation, the reputation of the coaching profession, and increased competition from new coaches in the industry.

Internal Business Concerns

- Survey respondents were provided with a list of internal factors and asked to select the three factors they are most concerned with for their business over the next 12 months.
- Increased operating costs ranked highest with 35% listing that factor among their top three concerns. Keeping up with technological changes was cited among their top three concerns by 33% of coaches, followed by their own reputation and brand management (29%) and reduced income (28%).

Opportunities

- Increased awareness of the benefits of coaching ranks as the biggest opportunity for coaching over the next 12 months, cited by 58% of respondents, followed by increased adoption of coaching within organizations (43%), increased demand for coaching (38%), and credible data on the return on investment (ROI)/return on expectations (ROE) from coaching (34%).

Your Brand Will Benefit from These 3 Things

Your brand is the face you present to the world. It encapsulates your business, personality, and core qualities, making it crucial to invest thought and care into its creation. Elements like fonts, logos, messaging, and value propositions define your brand, making a branding kit a vital first step for new coaches. But the journey doesn't end there; building and nurturing your brand is an ongoing priority. Effective brand management enhances credibility, attracts clients, and positions your practice positively, expanding your network and making it easier for the right clients to find you.

With these three ways you can strategically build and manage your brand:

- 1. Be consistent.**
- 2. Be authentic.**
- 3. Be adaptable.**

[Find out how.](#)

Connect to Additional Resources

Free Access to Full Report and So Much More

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The 56-paged full report, which is the basis for this Executive Summary, is primarily focused on coach practitioners and the future of coaching including artificial intelligence, digital coaching platforms, and internal and external factors impacting coaching.

When you become a [member of ICF](#), you can gain free access to this research report and a multitude of other benefits, including:

- Free and discounted access to additional cutting-edge industry research designed to help you make savvy business decisions and communicate the power of professional coaching to prospective clients.
- Free access to ICF Communities of Practice, which offer rewarding learning and networking opportunities, plus enough CCE units needed for ICF credential renewal.
- Opportunities to connect with the world's largest coaching community, from local ICF chapters to global virtual and in-person events.

[Join ICF](#)

The full report is also available to non-members for a cost of \$149 USD. To access the report, visit coachingfederation.org/research/global-coaching-snapshots.

Complimentary Localized Data

If you are interested in more localized data from *2023 ICF Coaching Snapshot: Future of Coaching*, you can request a [free slide deck](#) that features key findings from one of the countries, territories, states, provinces, and other locations where more than 100 valid survey responses were submitted.

These slide decks also include data from the *2023 ICF Global Coaching Study*, which examines the size and revenue of the coaching industry worldwide, perspectives on trends, and the business and practice of coaching.

[Request a Slide Deck](#)



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