

Microsoft Customer and Partner Solutions Coaching Ecosystem Sparks Transformation



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.

Microsoft Customer and Partner Solutions (MCAPS) is a fundamental division of Microsoft, responsible for driving engagement with customers and partners globally. This business unit helps organizations leverage Microsoft technology to achieve business goals, modernize infrastructure, and embrace digital transformation.

With 70,000 employees worldwide, engagement and retention are key factors for MCAPS. The division first introduced coaching in 2019 as part of a renewed focus on culture and leadership. Sustained by dedicated funding and executive sponsorship, coaching has remained a strategic priority ever since. Over time, MCAPS has grown the program into a mature, thriving coaching culture embedded in leadership, talent development, and business strategy.

The division leadership actively models and reinforces coaching behaviors, making it a defining element of the program's success, and a catalyst for cultural and organizational transformation across the global workforce. By removing barriers and securing central funding, coaching at MCAPS has not only been a professional development resource, but a transformative force shaping careers, leadership, and business outcomes.

Coaching is available to all employees, democratizing access across all seniority levels, backgrounds, and experiences.

Coaching Access for All

In 2022, MCAPS conducted a deeper review of their talent management practices, focusing on employees' career experiences. Based on a listening strategy that included focus groups and workshops led by behavioral scientists and supported by HR data such as exit interviews, the

organization revealed that most of the coaching had been directed at senior leaders or a small group of high-potential employees. Based on these outcomes, MCAPS expanded its coaching efforts and transformed the existing programs into a more comprehensive and inclusive portfolio.

MCAPS's journey to a more multifaceted coaching culture started with a deep review of the division's talent management practices focused on employees' career experiences. The original coaching program focused on one-on-one coaching for senior leaders and small groups of high-potential employees. However, focus groups and workshops led by behavioral scientists, as well as HR data from exit interviews, made it clear that other employees were eager for coaching, too. MCAPS expanded its coaching efforts and transformed the existing programs into a more comprehensive and inclusive portfolio including one-on-one coaching, group coaching, and manager-as-coach training, with pathways for employees to develop as coaches. For all aspects of the program, MCAPS recognizes ICF credentialing as the gold standard for the profession, and requires external coaches to maintain their ACC, PCC or MCC status.

To equip managers to apply coaching skills to how they lead their teams, MCAPS provides them with structured coaching skills education so they can embed coaching competencies into daily interactions and performance conversations.

MCAPS invests in fostering its team of internal coaches by providing coaching training through a Level 1 ICF-accredited program. This training is further supported by internal skilling opportunities through CCEU-enabled learning pathways, such as quarterly coaching forums featuring guest speakers who share expertise on targeted topics. When a growing need in a specific area or language is identified, MCAPS collaborates with their coaching education provider to design dedicated classes that address those gaps.

As part of a broader learning ecosystem, external coaches strengthen the coaching culture and support alignment with ICF principles and the long-term organizational strategy.

MCAPS's multi-layered coaching ecosystem includes one-on-one coaching, group coaching, and manager-as-coach training, with pathways for employees to develop as coaches.

To support diversity, equity, and inclusion, MCAPS also partners with Microsoft's Employee Resource Groups, which serves to connect team members across identities to provide career development, networking, and mentorship. Together, they design coaching initiatives that meet the needs of marginalized groups within the work force. This ensures access is inclusive and meaningful, supporting both personal and professional advancement.

Clear Results on Employee Engagement

Across the facets of coaching modalities, MCAPS tracks progress through robust metrics including engagement, retention, internal mobility, and employee feedback. This enables the team to scale high-quality, data-informed coaching support while prioritizing human connection and ethical standards.

Coaching is now recognized as one of the top three behaviors expected of all MCAPS leaders. This cultural shift has been further reinforced by HR, which now tracks employee feedback on the quality of coaching received from their managers as part of overall satisfaction measures.

Further, HR now turns to coaching as the default approach for individuals seeking career development, and it has been embedded into the organization's performance and talent management rhythms. During performance review cycles, all employees are encouraged to sign up for coaching to better prepare for meaningful, development-focused conversations with their managers.

The coaching program delivered powerful, measurable impact and results both at individual and organizational levels. Participants showed a 34% average improvement in core career behaviors. The greatest gains were in defining career steps (+51%) and articulating goals (+37%), with meaningful increases in ambition, skill development, and network-building (all +27%). Career confidence rose

by 14%, with participants gaining greater awareness of available resources (+16%), understanding of internal options (+16%), and confidence to apply for new roles (+13%). In short, MCAPS's coaching culture has led to a work force that is more focused, proactive, and equipped to take ownership of their careers.

Relationships between managers and their teams strengthened, too. Already-strong engagement rose by 4%, reflecting increased energy, dedication, and absorption in work, and team members reported that their career conversations with their managers improved, strengthening alignment between personal aspirations and organizational strategy.

Ratings by coaching participants:

- Average 4.9/5.0 coach rating
- Average 4.9/5.0 rating on how external coaching is contributing to the employees' professional development
- 73% satisfaction on manager coaching skills

Coached employees were 17% more likely to seek internal opportunities and 14% more likely to be working toward promotion.

Building Confident, Capable Future Leaders

Coached employees were 17% more likely to seek internal opportunities and 14% more likely to be working toward promotion – aligning with a 78% uplift in actual internal mobility.

Now, coaching is actively championed across strategic areas MCAPS, with strong sponsorship from both HR and business leaders. These champions continue to play a key role in amplifying the value of coaching and driving widespread adoption. Since the launch of the overall program, coaching has become the default approach for talent growth and development. The clear positive impact of the coaching program consistently shows that coaching contributes to stronger performance, clearer career paths, and more confident,

capable leaders. Coaching is centrally funded and included as a dedicated budget line item, removing the burden from individual managers. This ensures consistency, resilience, and long-term sustainability. As a result, other parts of Microsoft are now considering adopting a similar model.

Coaching is now embedded into the way MCAPS leads, communicates, grows, and retains talent. It demonstrates what is possible when coaching is treated not just as a tool, but as a strategic investment and capability built to scale with purpose and precision. It is a model that raises the bar for organizational coaching excellence globally.



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