5 Things TD Leaders
Need to Know About

Managers
as Coaches

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Introduction

Managers play a crucial role in shaping talent outcomes, including productivity, employee engagement, and retention. Managers who are successful often coach their direct reports. By adopting a leadership style that incorporates coaching, managers can more effectively support employees in realizing their full potential.

We've created this brief report on five key research insights into managers as coaches, so you can stay informed even with your busy schedule. The key insights include:

1. Encourage managers to coach.

2. Establish the objectives of coaching.

3. Consider coaching as a managerial skill.

4. Provide training on coaching to managers.

5. Evaluate managers on their coaching abilities.

The statistics represented in this report are based on data from 164 organizations, representing a diverse range of industries and organization sizes.

1

Encourage Managers to Coach

Managers play a crucial part in one of today's greatest organizational imperatives—ensuring employees have the right skills for the future of work. To best develop their direct reports, managers must act more like coaches rather than task overseers.

ATD Research found that almost all organizations expect their managers to coach their direct reports. Eighty-one percent expect all of their managers to coach, and 8 percent expect only some to coach.

89%
of organizations expect their managers to coach.

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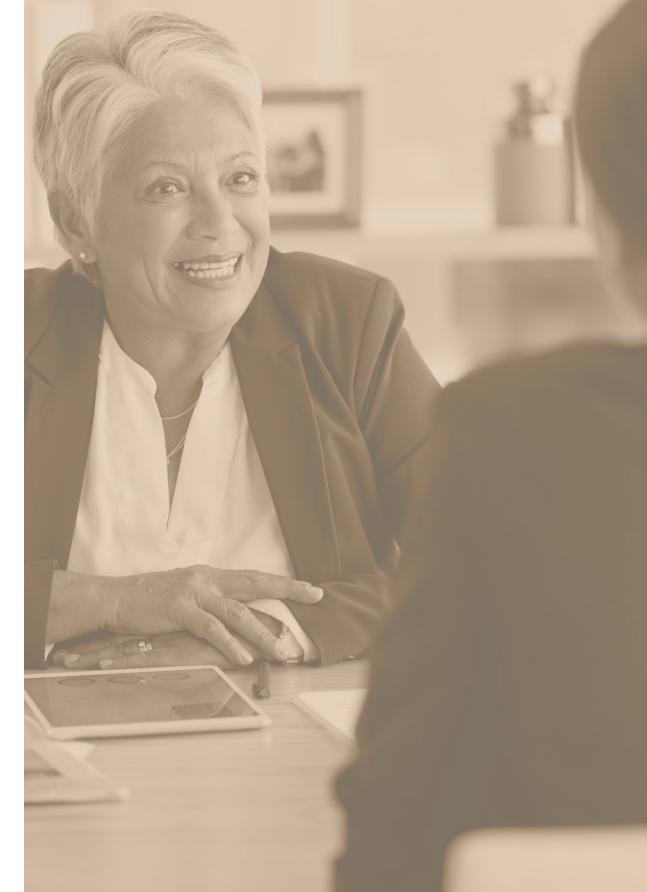
Establish the Objectives of Coaching

Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents agree that coaching by managers has led to better employee performance outcomes at their organization. Similarly, 72 percent agree that it has led to better organizational outcomes.

Coaching should always begin with establishing the desired outcomes. The International Coaching Federation recommends starting coaching engagements by establishing goals that align with "short-term objectives, long-term aspirations, and organization fit." This alignment ensures coaching leads to better employee and organizational performance.

Coaching by managers leads to better:

1. Employee performance outcomes

2. Organizational outcomes
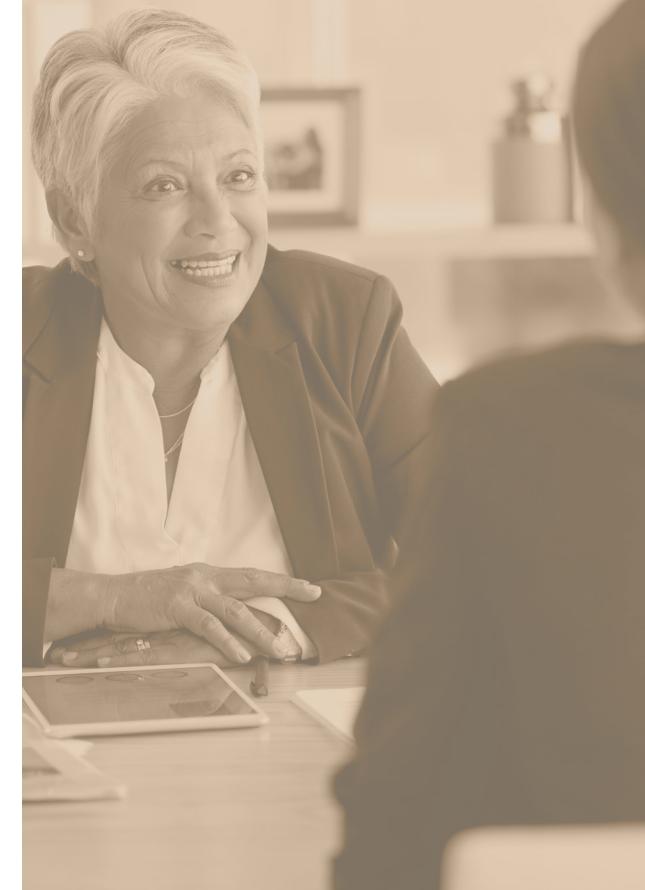
Consider Coaching as a Managerial Skill

According to [BetterUp](#) "coaching skills are key behaviors and competencies that enable leaders to guide and develop others effectively. These skills don't come naturally to most people—they require practice, intentionality, and self-awareness." They include psychological safety and trust, emotional intelligence, active listening, and other key elements.

This study found that most organizations that expect their managers to coach expect them to specifically develop coaching skills.

88%

**of organizations expect their managers to develop coaching skills.**

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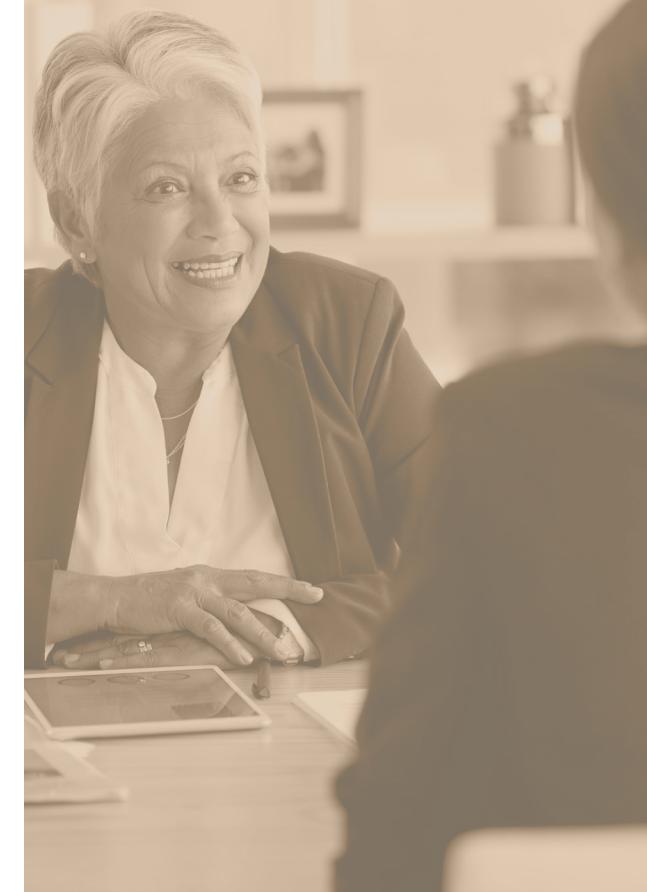
Provide Training for Managers

Eighty-two percent of organizations provide training opportunities for managers to develop coaching skills. Thirty-five percent of those organizations provide mandatory training, and 65 percent provide optional training.

Writing for *TD magazine*, Andrew Temte shares, "Injecting uniform coaching education into your company's learning agenda will lift the average manager's skill level and ensure all managers are versed in the art and science of coaching at a consistent baseline level. You don't need to train managers to be certified coaches; rather, expose them to a well-constructed coaching training program that's tailored for your organization."

82%

**of organizations provide training to managers.**

5
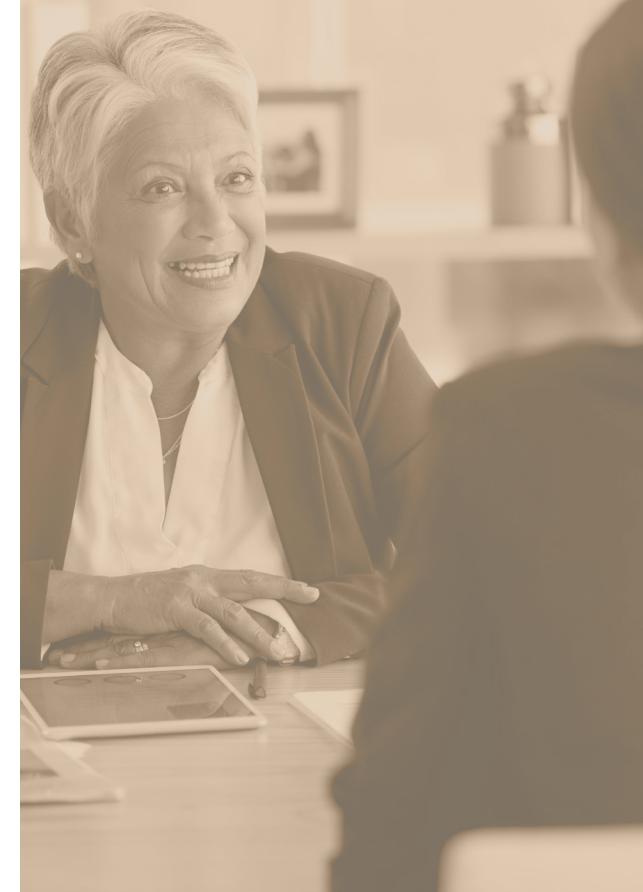
Evaluate Managers on Their Coaching Abilities

Only 24 percent of organizations evaluate their managers on their ability to coach their direct reports. Evaluation methods include assessment by a manager's direct supervisor or senior leader, assessment by a manager's direct reports, self-assessment by the manager, and assessment of the manager's direct reports' performance.

For organizations that want to start evaluating managers on their coaching abilities, previous research conducted by ATD suggests starting with assessment by managers' direct supervisors and self-assessment by managers. Both of these methods were correlated with being a high-performing organization.

24%
of organizations evaluate their managers on their ability to coach.
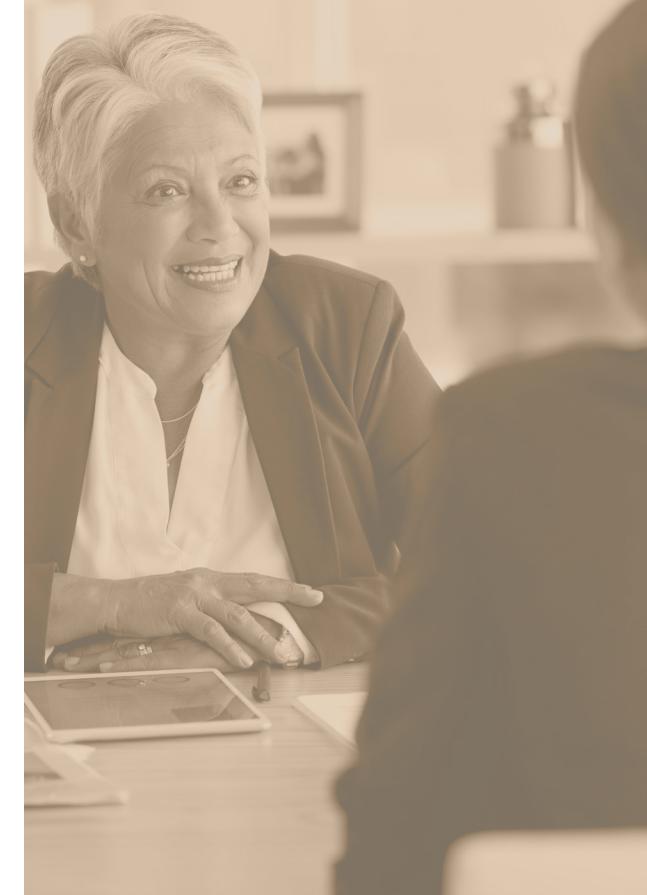
Conclusion and Next Steps

This data was intended to provide you with highlights of ATD Research's recent findings on managers as coaches.

With all the data presented in this report, you might be asking yourself these questions: "Now what? How can I use this data to empower managers as coaches within my organization?" Here are a few recommendations:

Embed coaching into leadership culture. Move beyond coaching as a mere requirement for managers and establish it as an organizational value. Have senior leaders model effective coaching to signal its value. Additionally, recognize and reward managers who excel at coaching.

Consider a variety of training methods to offer managers. Don't forget that, in addition to formal training, managers may also benefit from mentorship, peer knowledge sharing, or social learning to develop their coaching skills.

Consider using digital coaching technologies. These platforms can augment managers' efforts, enabling tailored coaching for individual employees. They also facilitate coaching across large organizations and distributed teams, making coaching scalable.

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