

5 Things TD Leaders  
Need to Know About

# Formal Coaching Programs



Talent Development **Leader**  
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ATD's Talent Development Leader communities—ATD Forum and CTDO—are designed exclusively for senior talent development executives shaping the future of learning and driving business results in their organizations. These communities offer a unique space to exchange insights, explore strategic challenges, and stay ahead of emerging trends.

If you're interested in expanding your influence and engaging with peers who understand your world, [explore here](#) to discover what ATD's TD leader communities can offer.



# Introduction

Today, it is easier than ever to offer [formal coaching](#) to employees at your organization. New technologies allow for virtual sessions, providing greater accessibility to both coaches and coachees. These technologies can also make it easier for organizations to track progress and measure impact. Finally, with a low barrier to entry to become a coach, the cost of coaching has reduced. Ultimately, organizations have flexibility in designing formal coaching programs that best suit their objectives.

We've created this short report on five key research insights on formal coaching programs today so that even with your busy schedule, you can get the latest information. The key insights include:

1. Know your "why."
2. Audit your current coaching offerings.
3. Offer flexible session formats.
4. Adopt a digital coaching platform.
5. Ensure coaches have proper training or credentials.

The statistics represented in this report are based on data from 104 organizations, representing a diverse range of industries and organization sizes.



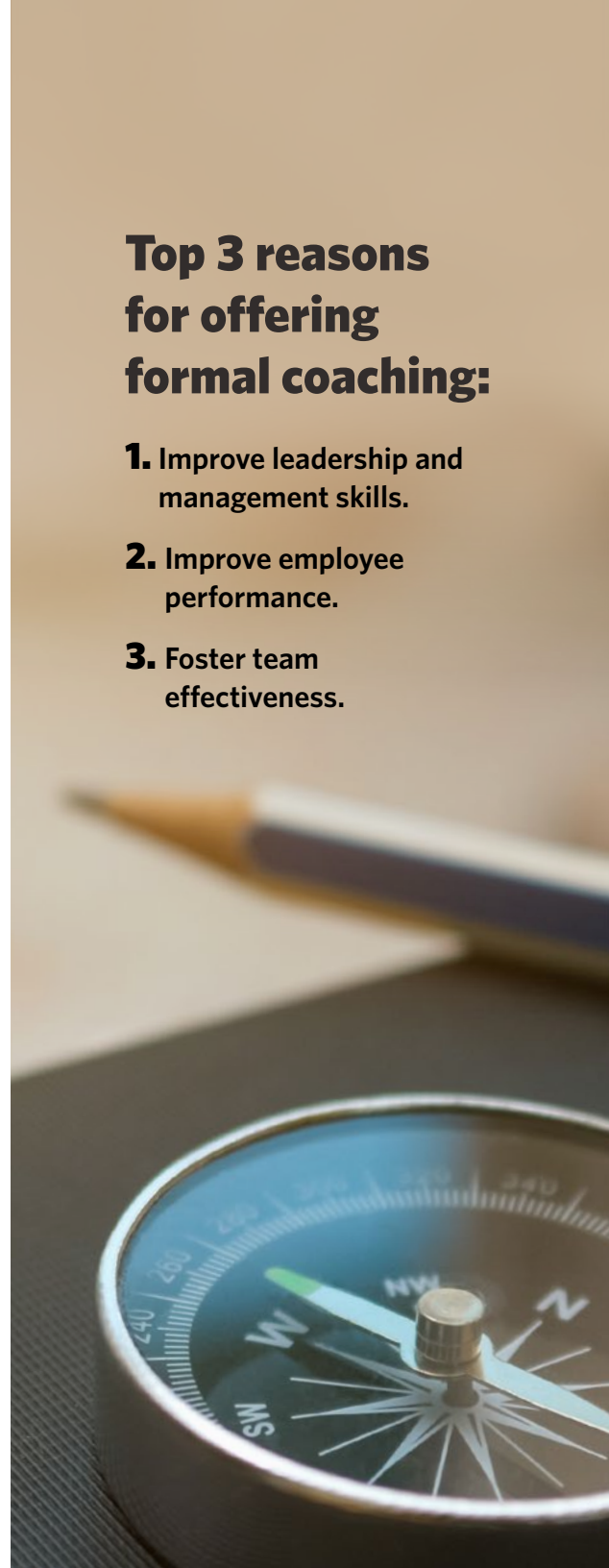
# Know Your “Why”

When developing a coaching program, [establishing its objectives](#) and aligning them with organizational goals is an important initial step. This will help your organization maintain the focus of the coaching program, maximize its outcomes, and measure impact and demonstrate value to key stakeholders.

Eighty percent of organizations said improving leadership and management skills is one of their top three reasons for offering formal coaching. Improving employee performance was also commonly cited, with seventy-one percent of organizations including it in their top three.

## Top 3 reasons for offering formal coaching:

- 1. Improve leadership and management skills.**
- 2. Improve employee performance.**
- 3. Foster team effectiveness.**



# Audit Your Current Coaching Offerings

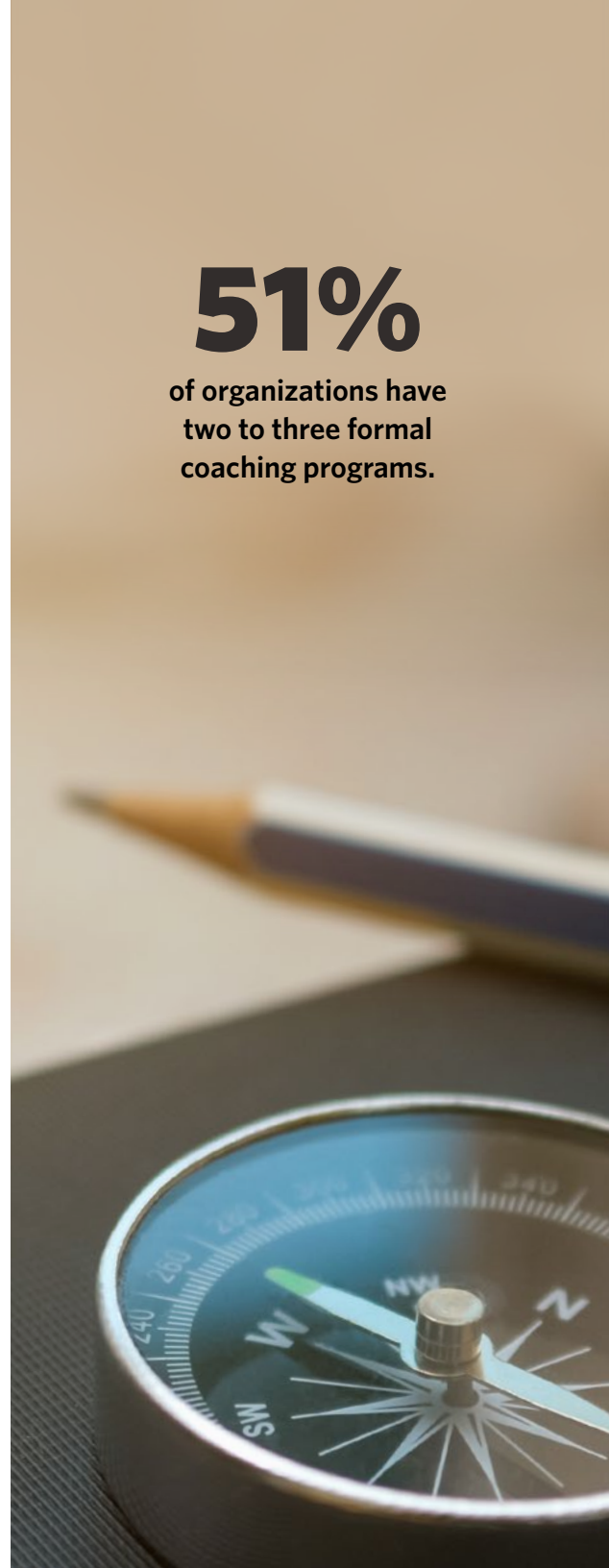
Of the organizations that offer formal coaching programs to their employees, 36 percent have one program, 51 percent have two to three programs, and 13 percent have four or more programs.

Organizations are more likely to offer formal coaching to executive/senior management or first/mid-level management.

However, there are many benefits to [providing coaching to all levels](#) within an organization, including empowering employees to prioritize growing their skills, developing a strong leadership pipeline, and improving employee engagement and retention.

# 51%

of organizations have  
two to three formal  
coaching programs.



## Offer Flexible Session Formats

Many organizations embrace a hybrid work environment. As such, fewer organizations today offer mostly in-person coaching. Forty percent offer mostly virtual sessions, and 43 percent offer a hybrid of virtual and in-person. By providing at least some virtual coaching, organizations can offer greater access and flexibility to their employees.

Coaching sessions tend to be either one-on-one or a combination of one-on-one and group coaching. Organizations rarely only offer group coaching.

One-on-one sessions provide targeted and tailored coaching for individuals who may want to improve their performance, develop new skills, and have personal time for reflection. [Group coaching](#) sessions offer a space to learn from others, and as such, can be used to promote leadership development among younger generations and effective cross-departmental relationships.

# 53%

of organizations offer one-on-one coaching.

# 43%

of organizations offer a combination of one-on-one and group coaching.



# Adopt a Digital Coaching Platform

Nearly one-quarter of organizations use a digital coaching platform to facilitate coaching programs.

If you want to offer more personalized coaching, consider adopting a digital coaching platform. Many of them [leverage AI to develop data-driven insights](#). They can identify coaching needs, recommend a coach, curate content, and more.

# 24%

of organizations  
use a digital  
coaching platform.



## Ensure Coaches Have Proper Training or Credentials

Thirty-five percent of organizations use internal coaches to provide coaching to their employees, and 19 percent use external coaches. Using both internal and external coaches is more common, with 46 percent doing so.

[Internal coaches](#) may benefit an organization that wants their coaches to have specific knowledge of the organization's processes and culture or of the job of the employee being coached. Internal coaching programs also tend to be [less costly](#).

Nearly two-thirds of organizations that use external coaches require them to have a professional certification, whereas only one-quarter of organizations that use internal coaches require professional certification.

Training internal coaches using a formal coaching model can help ensure they have skills such as managing relationships with their coachees, designing sessions and tracking progress, and maintaining confidentiality.

# 46%

of organizations use both  
internal and external coaches.

# 25%

of organizations  
require certification  
for internal coaches.



# Conclusion and Next Steps

This data was meant to highlight ATD Research's recent findings on formal coaching programs.

With all the data presented in this report, you might ask yourself, "Now what? How do I use this data to help make decisions about formal coaching programs at my organization?" Here are a few recommendations:



**Establish the business case.** Once you've established this for your coaching program, you'll have an easier time measuring its success. Providing evidence to key stakeholders can help keep your program funded in the future.



**Consider implementing a digital coaching platform.** Many are AI-enabled and can analyze large amounts of data to identify employee strengths and weaknesses, create a personalized coaching plan, and track performance and progress toward goals.



**If using virtual coaching sessions, consider using various modes of engagement.** Digital whiteboards enable visual thinking and allow employees to outline ideas or challenges. Collaborative documents facilitate the co-creation of action plans, goal-tracking, and journals.



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