



The Coaching Voice of Asia Pacific

# **5<sup>th</sup> Coaching Survey** **an Asia Coaching Benchmark, 2019**

## **TOP EIGHT TRENDS**

### **Participating Markets:**

**Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mainland China,  
Philippines, Singapore**

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## TOP EIGHT TRENDS

### 5<sup>th</sup> Coaching Survey – An Asia Coaching Benchmark, 2019

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#### 1. Growth in Coaching services – a deeper penetration in markets

Coaching services are being widely adopted in all markets and companies are increasingly becoming more open to introducing coaching services. Our survey revealed that only 2% of the companies are UNLIKELY to introduce coaching as compared to 13% of the companies in the 2017 survey. Some of the other trends are:

- **New markets:** Deeper penetration in the market is indicated as start-ups/entrepreneurs, NGO sector and educational institutions emerge as new areas for coaches to focus on.
- **Emergence of creative applications of coaching:** Creative applications of coaching are becoming more prevalent and we see the emergence of new niche specializations - spirituality, cross-culture, maternity etc.
- **Coaching opening up to all levels:** Companies are increasingly providing coaching to middle managers, high potentials, junior managers and even management trainees. This growth points to the efficacy, benefits and value-addition of coaching in human focussed development over time. However, the survey points out that bulk of coaching still happens at the senior levels.
- **Training on Coaching skills on the rise:** On an average 1 in 5 companies reported that they offer 'Training on Coaching Skills' intervention across all management levels.
- **Demand of local language on the rise:** Demand for coaching in the local language is on the rise across markets. 74% ICs say they use local language for coaching while 57% ECs coach in the local language. There may be an increase in opportunities for coaches who can speak the local language.

## 2. External or Internal Coaching – Majority of companies are using a combination of ECs and ICs

While companies are increasingly using a combination of ECs and ICs, there is a variance in the perception of the role and efficacy of internal coaches.

- **More companies are using a combination of ECs and ICs:** 69% companies use ECs and ICs to a varying range, 23% of companies engage only ECs to meet their coaching needs, while 8% of the companies are almost fully dependent on ICs.
- **Confidentiality and neutrality concerns with ICs:** While Companies find ICs more cost effective (82%) and providing better ROI (64%) than ECs, they point to confidentiality & neutrality (65%) and the level of trust (57%) issues with ICs.
- **Profile of EC and IC**  
Survey indicated that on an average, ECs are older in age, they have more overall work experience as well as coaching experience. ECs are spending more time in the professional skill development (138 hours) as compared to IC (85 hours). Larger number of ECs than ICs are members of professional bodies and are credentialed. However, 37% ICs and 16% ECs do not have formal credentials from any professional body.

## 3. General concern about IC's role not being well defined

Survey points out that while companies want to create internal capability for coaching almost half of the them say that IC's coaching role is less than 25% of their overall job responsibility. There is an opportunity for IC's role to evolve and become more specialized.

*This could mean that companies may want to assign resources to work on the job description, deliverables, rewards, tools and support and quality control for internal coaching. This could also be an opportunity for ECs and coaching companies to understand their role dynamics and efficacy vis-à-vis company needs, create alignment and design products to help companies.*

## 4. ECs are investing more in professional development with coaching supervision gaining more attention

While all coaches are leveraging multiple forms of professional development, ECs are more invested in professional development. Nearly double the number of ECs (41%) than ICs (23%) spend 60 hours per annum or more on continuous professional development

Formal coaching supervision, although a very new field, is being used by coaches (32% ECs and 26% ICs). Coaches are also using other forms of reflective practices like mentor coaching, peer network learning etc. to enhance their quality of coaching.

*However, this may point to a need to distinguish the value of formal Supervision from that of Mentor Coaching and Peer Network learning and to ensure that it enhances the quality of coaching.*

## 5. Influence of culture on the understanding of Coaching in Asia

The survey reconfirmed the observation from the 4<sup>th</sup> Coaching Survey that coaching is perceived differently in Asia. Both companies and coaches acknowledge that while coaching is primarily facilitating self help, there are elements of guidance, sharing expertise and problem-solving involved in coaching. This comes out stronger from companies.

*This may possibly be linked with the inherent cultural values of the region, also referred to as high power distance according to Hofstede's cultural dimension. The question is how can we honour the unique identity and cultural values and create a unique blend of coaching that may be relevant to Asia Pacific?*

## 6. Affirmation of coaching impact and growing sophistication in consumer expectations

- **Coaching quality:** While 6 out of 10 companies expressed their satisfaction with the coaching services rating it very good/good, 3 out of 10 respondents were undecided on quality of coaching. 7% of the respondents were not happy with the quality of coaching services. This trend remains the same compared to 2017 survey.
- **Coaching benefits:** 84% of respondent companies see some impact of coaching on their business bottom line. Coaching seems to have a strong positive impact on individual performance and employee morale/engagement while organization performance, employee retention, revenue and profitability received a moderate positive impact. Only 16% reported no impact on the bottom line. Another interesting fact emerging from the survey is that while 40% of the companies have not received the specific benefits they sought from coaching; 40% received the benefits they did not seek. 20% companies received the coaching benefits they sought from coaching

*This may imply that there is a strong need to make coaching and its benefits sharply defined and known as this is the number one reason that is stopping the companies from using coaching services.*

- **Effectiveness of coaching process:** Organisations unanimously expected the coaching process to improve. The top three areas for improvement being - clarity of coaching objectives, coachees' understanding of coaching and review of feedback at the end of coaching assignment. This remains the same top three areas as in 2017 survey data.



- **Fluid ‘boundaries’ of coaching process setup:** Majority of companies and coaches indicated that while there are joint agreements on coaching objectives, confidentiality arrangements and updates on the coaching progress from companies, they also request for coachees’ assessment results and specific coaching content from the coaches.
- **Credentialing of new coaches:** Coaching experience is still ranked as the most important selection criteria for coaches, followed by chemistry, language and credentials (in no particular order).

*The request of credentials may apply more to new entrants than seasoned coaches who have been in the field for a longer time where their coaching experience may be seen as more important.*

## 7. AI based coaching tools yet to be seen

While a majority of companies and coaches indicated openness to using some form of technology in the future, as per the survey, 88% EC and 85% IC are \*not currently using any AI tool.

*It will be interesting to see how AI may penetrate some of the areas such as:*

- *coach selection, coaching skills learning, coaching process management and actual coaching process*
- *meeting the needs of Millennial and Gen Z*

## 8. Future Outlook is positive

Companies plan to increase overall focus on coaching: They plan to build in-house capability (61%), use technology\* (31%), and increase the coaching budget (39%). While companies want to continue using external coaches, 80% say that they want to train their leaders to coach the team members and build a coaching culture in the company.

Coaches perceive a positive future outlook with increase in demand and supply of coaching offerings. ECs and ICs are predicting an increase in all types of coaching services – 1-1 Coaching, Team Coaching and Coaching Skills training.

*With the increase in demand and supply, how will the future coaching market evolve? How do coaches deepen and broaden their skills and stay ahead of the competition? How can companies capitalize on available external expertise to build on the internal resources? How can coaches play a role in creating future readiness for themselves and the clients?*

***\*The first version of the report was generated in December 2019. In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of technology and AI tools is likely to increase manifold.***



## Acknowledgement of Sponsors, Partners

We want to thank all the participants who responded to the survey.

We want to thank all our sponsors for their Financial and Distribution support  
(Refer to [sponsor section](#))

Our special thanks to **Dr. Judie Gannon, Oxford Brookes University**, for her insightful inputs and addition of questions on Ethics and Coaches' continuous development.

We would like to acknowledge the team members who worked relentlessly on the survey design, sponsorship & distribution of the survey – **Cynthia Chan, Pansy Lam, Mathilde Poirieux** (Hong Kong), **Uma Arora, Rup Kumar Sengupta** (India), **Ina Rizkie Amalia, Maria Eko, Hairil Anwar** (Indonesia) **Yanyun Yang, Abby Zhou** (Mainland China), **Julius Ordonez, Maria Althea Masangkay** (Philippines), **Taruna Aggarwal** (Singapore)

This Integrated Report is a result of several hundred hours of individual and collective effort writing, reviewing and editing by team members who analysed the data and wrote the reports.

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We thank our knowledge partner [Rescon Partners](#), a research and management consulting firm based out of Gurgaon, India for survey administration and excellent collation of data and for being patient with us through several drafts of the report. We would also like to acknowledge all the earlier team members and Rainer Schmidt for their work on the first four surveys.

Last, but not the least we would like to express our gratitude to **Dr. Anne Dolly Kuzhimadathil**, APAC President and the entire APAC EXCO for their continuous support. Our heartfelt thank you to **Mr. See Luan Foo**, founder of APAC for giving us an inspiring vision of 'being the coaching voice of Asia Pacific'.



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The figures presented in this report are based on survey responses and therefore rely on the accuracy of the data provided by the survey respondents. In some cases, the sample size is small and may not reflect the true picture, however, it is still interesting to see what data brings out.

If as a reader and researcher you would like to dive deeper into any research question presented in this survey, you are welcome to reach out to us. *We welcome your feedback and comments, please reach out to us:*

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