

IMPACT.

**Leadership, Development,
and Coaching Trends 2022**

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We feel fortunate to have been able to speak to thousands of senior leaders as they faced the unique challenges 2022 presented. We often talk about the trends we're seeing with our clients and this year we decided to share them more broadly. We hope this will be the first of many annual reviews that highlight the insights we've gathered about what's on the minds of today's leaders, how coaching helped contribute to their success, and what's next on the horizon.

2022: Impact's year in review



6500+ total hours delivered



185 programs



850 participants coached



7000 conversations with senior leaders for 360 interviews



40+ companies



40+ coaches



Global coverage (US, Canada, Mexico, UK, Europe, etc.)



95% likely-to-recommend rating



99% successful coach/client matches

Trends and constants

A few years into the pandemic, we now see that “the great resignation” was really the “great reshuffle” precipitated, at least in part, by a lack of connection and culture at work, and the “grind” of a more tactical focus with less connection to company vision and strategy.

In fairness, leaders had no choice but to be tactical; they had to keep their businesses running and ensure their companies were stable and safe. There were too many uncertainties to take major strategic risks, but the impact on the workforce has been significant and ultimately transformational.

Leadership continues to be a tougher and tougher job. The level of contribution has increased and the demands on leadership have broadened. Diversity and Inclusion were just the beginning. Now, leaders must include mental health and wellness in their toolbox, along with coaching, customizing to people's needs, managing the hybrid work environment, and balance. All while keeping the business thriving. **It's why we need more leaders now.**

Talent in the professions and financial services is still scarce and may become more so as people opt out of those environments due to high burnout. So, retention and development of top talent is still a major concern.

Leadership teams were very important, especially during the early part of the pandemic, and they continued to help keep things together over the last two years. Now, teams have significant new roles in reengaging organizations and leading them into the future. In fact, **building and maintaining strong leadership teams is going to be critical for businesses going forward.**

And leaders realize that a strong company culture is going to be critical in how their organizations address these concerns. From reconnecting to strategy and addressing the broadened demands of leadership, to managing the challenges of talent scarcity and the benefits teams can provide, culture drives it all.

“Company culture is having a watershed moment that’s redefining the relationship between employers and employees...Workers overall want to feel like their boss cares about them: LinkedIn data shows when employees feel cared about at work, they’re 3.2 times more likely to be happy at their job and 3.7 times more likely to recommend their company as a place to work.”

Mark Lobosco (January 18, 2022). “The Reinvention of Company Culture: Why It Should Be Your Top Priority This Year”. Data Insights, LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-strategy/global-talent-trends-report>

What we're hearing from leaders

We talk to thousands of leaders every year. In 2022, we saw leaders focus on everything from managing the impacts of COVID and the new, broader requirements of leadership teams, to reengaging their people with purpose and rethinking their perspectives on talent.

How the pandemic impacted leaders' talent strategies

"I feel that, without the coaching support we had as a team and as individuals, weathering this pandemic would have been a lot harder. I think we are a stronger senior management team because of this work, and we were able to pull through and pull the organization through."

Impact Coaches Client

- Organizations and teams have been more tactical for the past couple of years. Leaders have had less time to take a strategic approach or make necessary investments in talent development.
- Money was spent on compensation, but not on talent development.
- A lot of new people and new team structures came about in a short window of time, and they all need development to succeed.
- Many clients are increasing their talent assessments across the organization and down to mid-senior levels.

- **There's a reshuffling of talent.** Leaders are dealing with performance issues that hadn't been addressed during the pandemic. Some hires in the past few years were done in a tight labour market and are not working out as hoped.
- Developing high potentials was often paused during COVID. But this is a group that can truly **strengthen an organization from the inside out.**
- There's a redesign in talent systems. Organizations are developing new leadership models, and assessing and developing leaders for more complex demands and the new roles that have evolved in the past two years. There's less emphasis on training and more on group and team development using coaching (individually and in groups). Development is seen as a tool to not only train people, but also to cement cultural and personal connections.

"In white-collar industries, such as consulting and finance, junior personnel has also experienced notable levels of burnout. Such industries have had robust demand during the pandemic, obliging staff to work extremely hard without benefiting from the training, mentorship, and client interaction that previously made such jobs rewarding. Those experiences may have changed young workers' tolerance for the demands of such workplaces."

Joseph Fuller (March 23, 2022). "The Great Resignation Didn't Start with the Pandemic". Harvard Business Review

<https://hbr.org/2022/03/the-great-resignation-didnt-start-with-the-pandemic>

The biggest challenges leaders see in the current landscape

“This program really increased my own engagement with my company. You feel more engaged when you are being invested in and supported by your leadership.”

Impact Coaches Client

- As the world shifts out of the pandemic into a period of economic uncertainty, uncertainty is the new normal. Leaders are less tolerant of poor performance and are preparing their businesses for the continued economic uncertainty through rationalization. At the same time, there continues to be a lack of good talent available in the market for many roles, so **building connection** and **retaining the best talent** continue to be top of mind.
- Rebalancing **focus on both the long-term game** and short-term results is needed after a period of head-down, tactical focus. Leaders are seeing the need to **stabilize organizations** and conduct a **reset on strategy**. That’s why **it’s important for organizations to reconnect to their purpose** right now.
- **Optimization of organizational structures** is top of mind. There have been a lot of staff changes and a renewed focus on strategy. This has driven changes to leadership team structures, focus on how to lead teams, and revising business unit structures and approaches to the market.
- Hybrid looks like it’s here to stay, so **leading hybrid workforces optimally** is something else that’s on leaders’ minds. It’s driving an increased focus for leaders on enhancing team development and engagement. Leaders are doing a greater number of in person town halls, hosting more and longer leadership retreats, and placing more emphasis on connecting teams in person in a way that makes sense for the work.

“I believe this helped us keep talent that we otherwise might have lost if not for this program, and significant talent.”

Impact Coaches Client

- **Resilience. Leading through uncertainty and ambiguity. Transformation and change.** These continue to be important topics at the leadership table, especially around how organizations can use them to **align and engage their people** without compromising retention. These are complex leadership skills that require a high level of self-awareness, an openness and curiosity as a leader, and a great deal of time. Leaders are seen as coaches, more than bosses. This requires new leadership models and new ways to develop leaders.

“Leaders need to be thinking about inspiring followership, engaging people, building more leaders, and enabling people to rise and learn. Fostering a thriving culture that promotes collaboration where ideas are shared with a willingness to listen is of utmost importance. Great collaboration opens the door to great debates which can then lead to stronger innovation and creative problem-solving. A mindful practice of this that is well integrated into the leadership culture of organizations is foundational to strengthening connections and keeping people engaged.”

Sophie Tanguay, Head of Coaching, Impact Coaches

- People across all levels are **exhausted from the pandemic** and readjusting to a gradual return to the office. It has been a long two years, especially for individuals who have had little to no support. In response, leaders have introduced **more personal wellness programs and introduced greater personal agency around career progression** for their people. We saw a lot of workplaces go to four-day work weeks or shut down for a couple of weeks over the summer, for example, in an effort to give everyone in the company a break. But more needs to be done to repair and reenergize people – and **more communication and engagement is key.**
- Leaders are having to **lead in new ways to manage employees from multiple generations**, as what engages individuals from one generation might be completely different for another.

“Engaging a new generation of employees with different expectations and needs not only requires a focus on well being, it requires leaders who model this behaviour. Both are needed to influence a more balanced culture, in which employees feel supported and are thriving to bring their best.”

Sandra Oliver, Founder, Impact Coaches

Where leaders are spending their time right now

- **Engaging and reinvigorating the workforce.** Reenforcing their corporate purpose and values, rebuilding their approach to leadership, and reemphasizing and building out their culture because of a large number of new hires or people who have become disconnected, due to remote work.
- **Developing and maintaining culture in a hybrid environment,** which takes more effort and time, and requires leaders to be more intentional. Because meetings are usually hybrid, both virtual and physical aspects of meetings need extra planning – and work. Physical time in the office needs to be more intentional and better utilized for training, connection, and culture building. In addition, people who started work remotely are developing holes in their learning. There's a need to go back and evaluate staff and, in some cases, reorient and retrain them.

“Impacting culture requires everyone to align on behaviour – starting with leadership. When difficult situations come up, how do we as leaders respond? Do employees feel free to speak up and make shifts? Do they feel connected to and part of the organization as a whole? It all comes down to how we treat one another. And coaching can help with that.”

Sandra Oliver, Founder, Impact Coaches

“It has been hugely instrumental for us to go through these exercises as a team, to build that trust, to get to know each other one-on-one and communicate on that level so we’re not so siloed.”

Impact Coaches Client

- **Building leadership processes and approaches suited to the new hybrid environment** rather than relying on old approaches. Teaching leaders to be connected in broader ways on a wider variety of issues. Building better orientation and training approaches for staff. Supporting a wider variety of ad hoc teams. Staying connected with employees who are primarily or fully remote. Designing measurement tools that suit new strategies and better measure outputs is an important piece of work.
- **Developing broader leadership skills that better support people holistically** and not just at work. Leaders often feel out of their depth in dealing with issues they haven’t been trained to address, support, or help with. Building trust and showing empathy are becoming more important leadership skills. As is the need to teach leaders how to better coach, connect and engage in a deeper way with staff – in fact, **getting to know the whole person**.
- **Regaining a long-term, strategic outlook after a period of inward, tactical focus**. Telling stories, reinforcing purpose, revising strategies and structures to suit the new reality. Many businesses have seen radical changes both internally and externally including new staff and leaders, different approaches to the market, and huge swings in revenue and talent. There’s a big need to change their strategies as a result of these changes.

● **Re-energized and innovative approaches to business development.**

Purpose has shown up in business development. Clients have much tighter focus on doing the right thing from ESG, and Diversity and Inclusion standpoints. Many clients have enforced environmentally friendly policies on travel, so the days of flying for one-hour meetings are gone. Much more business development is done virtually, which requires a different set of skills and usually much more preparation and research. There are also a greater number of stakeholders involved in more of the business development work. For example, we're seeing more Chief Sustainability Officers involved, more business development work centralized under purchasing, and more partnering with service providers on a wider variety of issues.

“Leaders need to get to know their people better. Spending time, one-on-one, understanding their personality profiles, learning about their lives, what they need to be successful, what fulfills them, and what burnout looks like. Investing from the very start in getting to know their people personally, as well as professionally. It requires leaders to get comfortable asking questions about employees’ lives outside of work, sharing their own personal experiences and vulnerabilities, and building deeper relationships based on trust.”

Sandra Oliver, Founder, Impact Coaches

What leaders see as the evolution of teams

“The feedback I received helped shed light on what my team needs to function at the highest level. It’s really about understanding how I need to interact with them and what will make them successful.”

Impact Coaches Client

- **Teams are more ad hoc and less hierarchical**, and people are working together in different ways. People are used to reaching out to each other to solve problems. Leaders need to better understand these informal networks and leverage them, rather than reimposing a top-down approach to projects. These teams will need coaching, direction, and clear measurement.
- There’s a need to reinvigorate and more fully develop teams. Organizations acknowledge the importance of high-functioning teams, but also recognize that they’re harder to develop given the hybrid environment. **Building development into team processes** is a growing trend. People are being coached (and are coaching each other) as they work in team settings.
- **Aligning teams to their “purpose”** and creating really good KPIs is critical. One of the biggest risks of hybrid environments is people working hard on the wrong things. Or feeling disconnected and losing motivation.
- Many more teams now have people who live in different cities and countries. There’s a **renewed interest in leadership team retreats** – now called “onsights”. Clients are planning multiple onsights with teams throughout the year. Onsights are longer, with social activities built in, and sometimes are held in attractive locations and include bringing spouses along. This is an effort to build trust and connection, instill culture, and retain key talent. There’s an increased focus on social and personal connections in all group settings.

- There's greater focus on not just the top team, but also the teams below. Both the senior team and their direct reports (and maybe even the level below that) are important "culture carriers" in the hybrid world. There's more interest in **developing the teams below the executive team.**

"Many executive teams have transformed over the last two years because the players have changed. Teams have been so focused on keeping organizations running for so long, that there's now a desire for coming together to be strategic and really move organizations forward. And greater connection will be key. Having more deeply connected teams will help our organizations become more resilient and better able to withstand any business or economic ups and downs."

Sandra Oliver, Founder, Impact Coaches

The new role of coaching

Coaching has evolved significantly to support the needs of clients. For many businesses, it's become a highly nimble and robust tool that leaders and their teams are using to support everything from leadership development to team culture and engagement. During the pandemic and in its aftermath, coaching's versatility and adaptability in a hybrid work environment has been highly valued and has proved to be a boon to businesses looking to grow and continue to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

Why leaders are turning to coaching and assessments for themselves and their teams

- The business environment has changed and become more complex, requiring a more personalized, fulsome, and agile approach.
- Coaching and assessments are better tools than training. They can better support and develop teams and leaders in this more complex environment.

“I do see an impact. If you look at the increase in the number of relationships we have, the number of meetings we are getting, and the number of RFPs and opportunities, it’s probably increased tenfold.”

Impact Coaches Client

- Coaching is more nimble, customizable, and easier to adjust to individual differences.
- Coaching is built into the work, so it doesn’t take large numbers of people out of the office for blocks of time.
- The results of coaching and assessments are more sustainable.
- Coaching demonstrates an investment in and commitment to the individuals receiving the coaching, helping to boost engagement and retention.

From hybrid leadership development to wellness coaches

The coaching trends we’re seeing

“My boss came to me and said, “I don’t know if it was the coaching and/or the program overall, but over the past year I’ve seen a measurable difference in the way that we conduct business and the way that we got through this tough time.”

Impact Coaches Client

- A **longer-term approach to team development**, rather than one-off sessions. A demand for fewer, but **longer and more impactful employee and team development initiatives**.
- An increased **demand for more robust leadership assessments**. This includes a reset to include broader expectations that cover the more complex demands on leadership.
- Business travel continues to be limited, so the focus is on **hybrid leadership development**.

- Group coaching is replacing formal training programs. There is an increase in demand for group coaching and **developing people in group settings**.
- People are more interested in **using coaching in a variety of circumstances**. More of our clients are asking for retainers and partnering with us to develop custom solutions for talent. For example, using coaching to help with major transformations across an organization; expanding capabilities as employees contend with new roles or teams, and major structural and strategic changes; and customizing coaching and assessments to help leaders build new skills and have the confidence to take on new approaches.
- **Coaching is becoming more specialized** and there is a greater demand for coaches with varying and complementing expertise. For example, team coaches paired with CEO coaches and assessment experts to deliver comprehensive programs; wellness coaches; and coaches with industry specialization, because coaches are seen as important components of development programs and have become extensions of talent teams, in many cases.

“We take a very client-focused approach to what we do, working with clients to design and scale coaching programs to suit their needs – and evolve as their organizations do.”

Elaine Muzyczka, Chief Operating Officer, Impact Coaches

The Impact coaching programs clients are using most to help meet their challenges



Support for changes in senior leadership: new CEOs stepping into roles, succession planning, and supporting new executive leadership teams through change.



Team Programs: to develop or rebuild connections and collaboration after time apart; align teams to the organization's strategic focus or purpose; and equip teams to face challenges more sustainably.



More robust Assessment Programs: to support CEO / C-suite coaching; select individuals for key roles; assess overall fit within teams and organizations; and support onboarding strategies.



Building In-house Coaching capabilities and Coach in Residence programs to create a culture of coaching within an organization and to develop coaching skills for business development.



Comprehensive larger scale programs to support more widespread and sustainable shifts in culture and capabilities.



High-Potential Accelerator Programs that include both individual and group coaching.



Individual Programs to support leaders and high performers in achieving their personal and professional goals.

“Having the opportunity to work with a Coach at pivotal moments of one’s career is a tremendous experience. Coaching provides the platform for leaders to pause and focus on themselves. It allows leaders to share openly with someone they trust. It accelerates development because it is customized to the needs of the individual. It creates powerful change that is sustainable.”

Sophie Tanguay, Head of Coaching, Impact Coaches

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