

Coaching in L&D: The Strategic Multiplier 2025 Survey findings

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Foreword

Organisations run on people - their ideas, energy and ability to adapt. Coaching helps unlock that potential. It's not a perk; it's a way of working that enables clearer thinking, confident action and purposeful leadership.



Our survey of 47 organisations shows strong demand for coaching. Most recognise its value and use it to develop leaders, boost performance and strengthen human skills. Yet only a quarter have fully integrated it into their learning strategy.

The challenge isn't belief - it's evidence. Organisations want clarity on ROI, and those who measure it see coaching as a strategic multiplier rather than a discretionary cost.

Coaching shapes far more than skills. It transforms culture and performance. Organisations that embed coaching see higher engagement, stronger leadership pipelines and tangible savings through improved retention and reduced reliance on external consultants. Coaching turns learning into action and helps create workplaces defined by trust, wellbeing and adaptability.

In a time of rapid change, coaching isn't optional - it's a performance accelerator that compounds value across leadership, culture and growth. This report shares how organisations are using coaching, the challenges they face and the outcomes they want to achieve.

Lucy Tulloch,

Head of Education & Faculty – Global, AoEC

The coaching difference – in numbers

Research from the Josh Bersin Company demonstrates*:

- High performing companies are **5.2x** more likely to invest in coaching
- They are **12.3x** more likely to invest in group coaching than lower performing peers

Coaching is rated as **the most impactful leadership development practice** when delivered regularly and widely

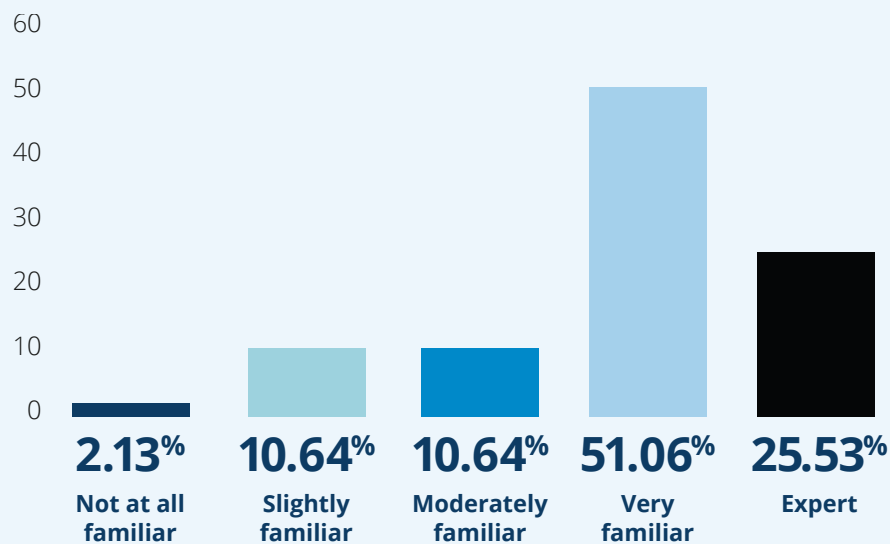
Coaching awareness and adoption: → Where are we now?

Our survey shows that awareness of coaching as a tool for learning and development is high - over three-quarters of respondents describe themselves as very familiar or expert. This signals strong recognition of coaching's value. However, when it comes to actual implementation, the picture is more mixed.

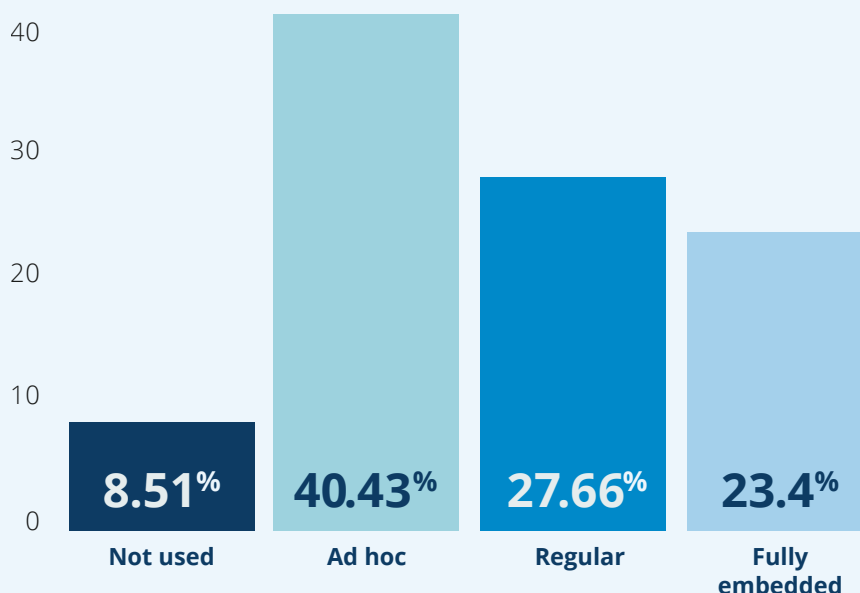
While 23% have coaching fully embedded in their L&D strategy, the majority use it only occasionally or as part of specific programmes.

This gap between understanding and practice suggests an opportunity: organisations know coaching matters, but many have yet to make it a consistent part of their development approach.

Q1 How familiar are you with coaching as a tool for learning and development in your organisation?



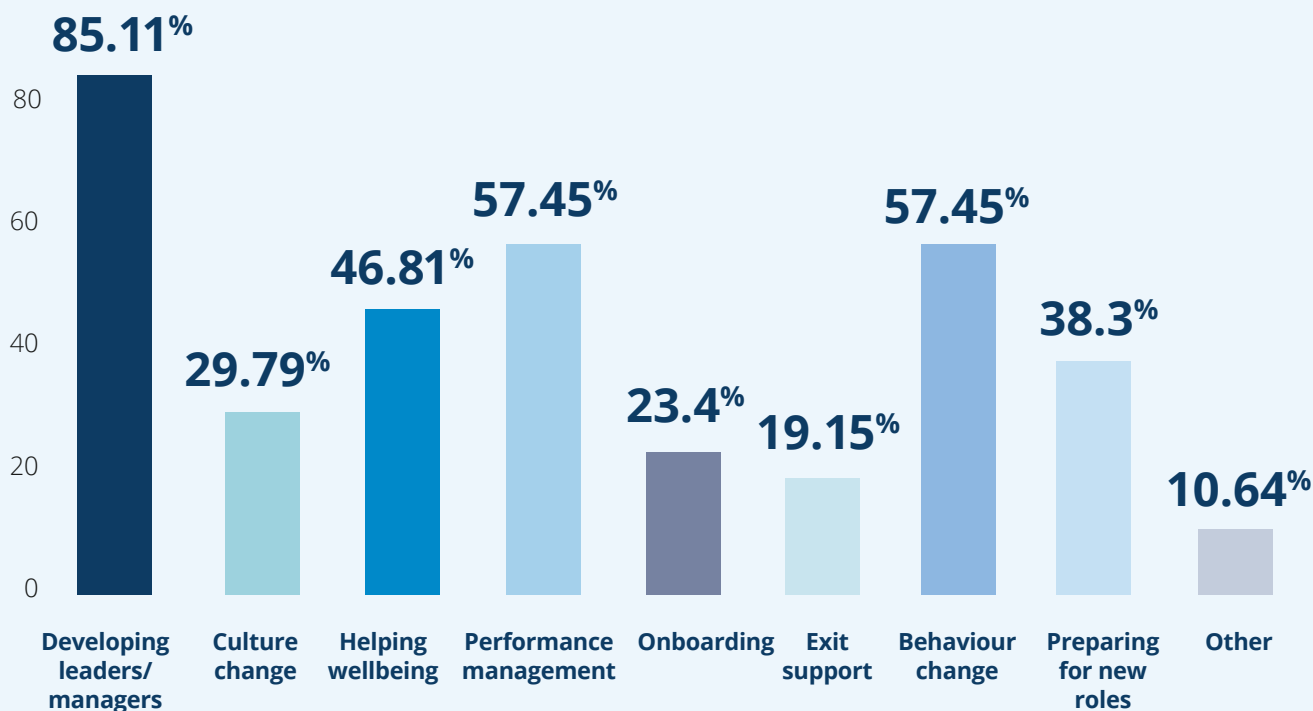
Q2 Which of the following best describes your organisation's current use of coaching in L&D?



Where coaching makes the biggest difference

When organisations use coaching, they do so at moments that matter. Our survey shows its primary purpose is developing leaders and managers, cited by 85% of respondents. This aligns with today's leadership demands for clarity, adaptability and trust - qualities coaching helps strengthen.

Beyond leadership, coaching supports performance management and behaviour change, helping people shift habits and embed new ways of working. It also plays a key role in wellbeing, culture change and role transitions, from onboarding new starters to preparing individuals for future responsibilities.



Survey insight: From telling to asking: coaching in leadership and sales

In a fast-paced logistics business, coaching is woven into leadership and sales programmes to shift behaviours and improve impact.



Our strategy is to shift mindset from telling and advising to asking questions. It is, in the end, the only way we help others solve their problems.

Regional Head of Talent and Development and survey respondent

Coaching is also embedded in management programmes, alongside action learning sets to test understanding. This approach helps leaders and teams move beyond advice-giving, to curiosity and problem-solving. In sales, the change is tangible: adopting a coaching mindset is uncovering customer needs and driving stronger outcomes.

These contexts share a common thread: they involve uncertainty, complexity and human connection. Coaching works because it doesn't impose answers - it helps people find their own, building confidence and resilience along the way. In short, organisations turn to coaching when the stakes are high and the need for growth is urgent.

Organisations that embed coaching deeply often see cultural transformation.



Case study: How CSP is embedding coaching to lead cultural change

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) is using coaching to drive a major cultural transformation.

In partnership with the AoEC, CSP has rolled out a bespoke coaching skills programme across all levels of the organisation - from senior leaders to non-managers. The initiative is building a more empowered, reflective and trust-based culture, with coaching now embedded in everyday conversations, leadership behaviours and organisational practices.

The results: Participants report **greater confidence, improved communication** and **stronger relationships**, with coaching now viewed as a **shared language for growth and collaboration**.

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Top tips for embedding coaching where it counts



Embed coaching in culture – Move coaching beyond programmes into everyday conversations to build trust and adaptability.



Equip managers with coaching skills – Train managers to coach, scaling impact and fostering reflective leadership.

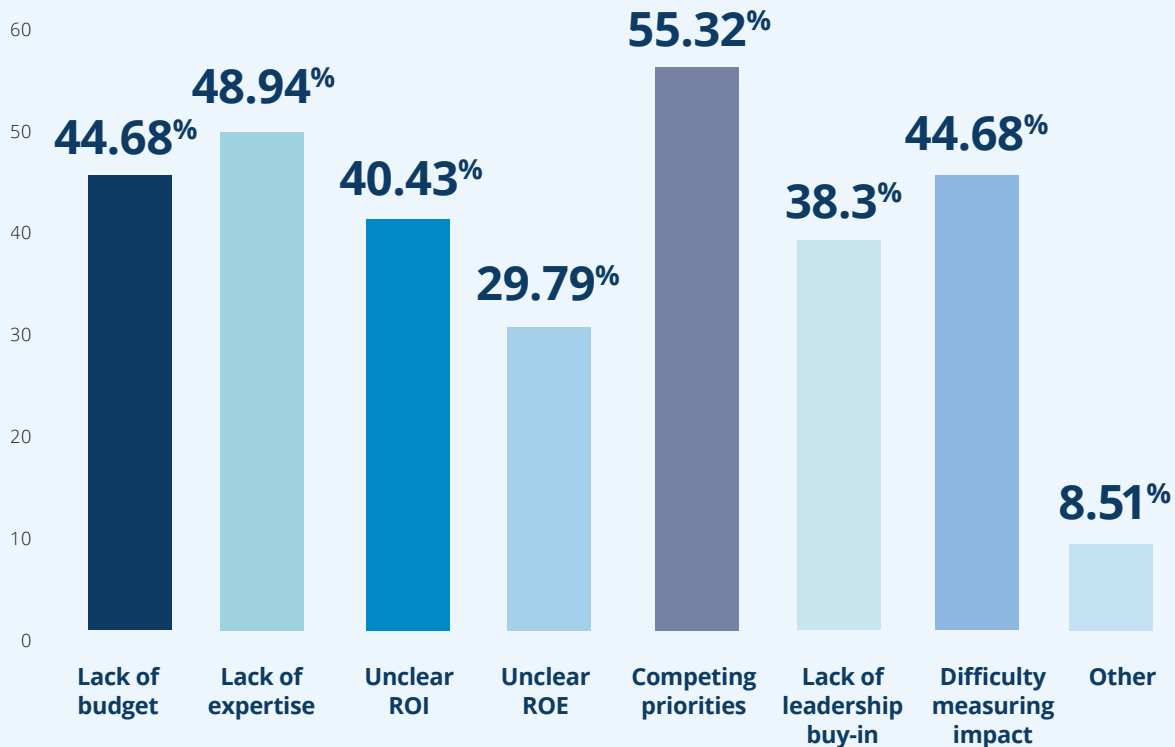


Leverage team coaching – Use team coaching to strengthen collaboration, clarify purpose and drive shared accountability.

How to make coaching stick

While the benefits of coaching are widely recognised, embedding it into L&D strategies can be challenging.

Our survey highlights the most common obstacles: competing priorities lead the list, with over half of respondents citing this challenge. Lack of expertise or trained coaches is another barrier, alongside concerns about budget and the difficulty of measuring impact.



Survey insight: Proving ROI in expanding coaching access

In one global biopharma organisation, coaching is recognised as valuable - especially for leaders who receive training to coach their teams. Extending coaching more widely, such as through peer-to-peer support, has proven difficult. The reason? ROI and a lack of leadership buy-in.

As one L&D leader explains: "It's really difficult to show that the coaching has contributed in any way to people being promoted, people doing better in their roles, people having better relationships."



The takeaway?

demonstrating value is as critical as delivering it.

Confidentiality and intangible benefits can make impact hard to measure, even though individuals who receive coaching report transformative results - greater engagement, improved relationships and career progression. Without clear metrics and leadership sponsorship, peer coaching remains limited.

These issues reflect a broader tension - leaders want evidence that coaching delivers tangible results, yet many lack the frameworks to track ROI or ROE effectively. Cultural factors also play a role, with some respondents noting limited leadership buy-in and resistance to change.

Overcoming these barriers requires clarity of purpose, strong sponsorship and practical evaluation methods to demonstrate value. Without these, coaching risks remaining an occasional intervention rather than a core part of organisational learning.

Organisations that succeed in overcoming these challenges often take a strategic approach.

Case study: How Baringa built a coaching-powered leadership culture

Since 2021, Baringa Partners has redefined what leadership looks like.

By embedding coaching at the heart of its people-first culture, the management consultancy has created a high-impact development strategy that's as good for business as it is for people.

The results: By focusing coaching investment on building internal capability, the organisation achieved an **81% reduction in external coaching spend** - while delivering greater impact, with **47% of internal coachees progressing into more senior roles**.



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Top tips for overcoming barriers

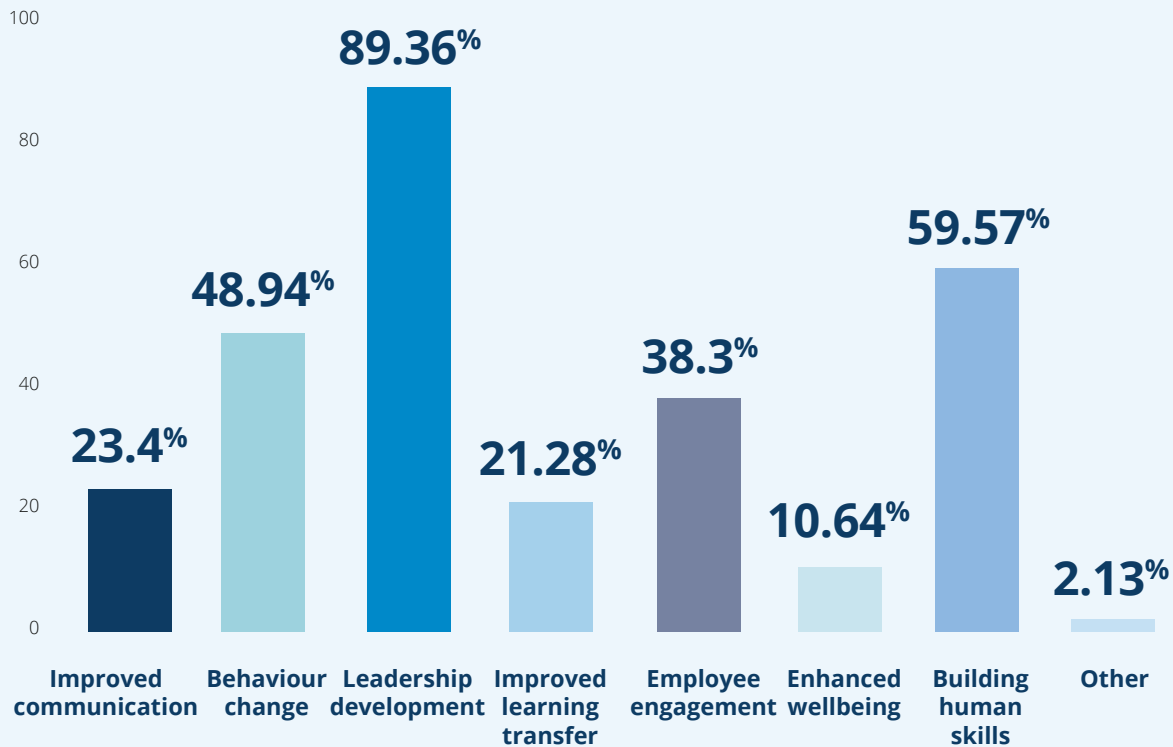
-  **Create a shared language** – Define what coaching means across the organisation to avoid confusion with mentoring or training.
-  **Measure meaningfully** – Apply Return on Expectations (ROE) alongside qualitative feedback to demonstrate value.

-  **Secure leadership sponsorship early** – Commitment from leaders is critical for embedding coaching beyond isolated interventions.

What organisations want coaching to deliver

When asked about the outcomes they most want from coaching, respondents were clear: leadership development tops the list by a wide margin, chosen by nearly 90%. This reflects a growing need for leaders who can navigate complexity with confidence and clarity.

Beyond leadership, organisations see coaching as a way to build human skills - such as empathy, adaptability and critical thinking - alongside driving behaviour change and an increase on the bottom line. These priorities signal a shift from purely technical training toward deeper, people-focused development.



Survey insight: Coaching for adaptability and learning transfer



People don't always recognise the 70 in the 70:20:10. And leaders don't automatically top and tail learning - setting people up to learn and asking what they're going to do differently afterwards, then following up. [Leaders are] too busy or don't recognise the value they can add.

Head of Leadership and Executive Development and survey respondent

In one global professional services firm, coaching plays a pivotal role in supporting leaders through transitions and reinforcing learning. However, one challenge is making learning stick.

Coaching is seen as a lever to close this gap, embedding peer coaching into development programmes to strengthen accountability and build adaptability – one key skill they see as most critical for future success.

Organisations aren't just looking for incremental improvements; they want coaching to create lasting sustainable change in how people lead, learn and collaborate.

Organisations that align coaching with strategic goals often see measurable cultural and performance benefits.

Top tips for aligning coaching with strategic goals



Develop human skills – Focus on empathy, adaptability and resilience to meet future challenges.



Democratise access to coaching – Offer coaching across all levels, not just the C-suite, to drive inclusive growth.



Link coaching to strategy – Align coaching outcomes with organisational vision, culture and performance priorities.

Understanding these priorities sets the stage for exploring how organisations can turn intent into impact.



ATG

ENTERTAINMENT

Case study: Coaching as the foundation of ATG Entertainment's learning culture and business success

ATG Entertainment has partnered with the AoEC since 2014 to embed coaching into its leadership and learning programmes.

Coaching is now central to ATG's culture, supporting inclusive growth, innovation and performance. Through initiatives like the Rising Stars programme, coaching empowers emerging leaders to reflect, grow and lead authentically.

The results: With over **800 hours of coaching delivered** and a **77% retention rate among programme alumni**, ATG's investment in coaching is directly shaping both its people and its business success.

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About the AoEC



The AoEC has never felt like a supplier of training. They've acted as a partner in delivering our ambition to develop a more effective consulting workforce through the use of business coaching.

Cap Gemini



Empowering leadership since 1999

Founded by John Leary-Joyce, the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC) has been at the forefront of coach training and organisational development for over 25 years. Our person-centred learning approach has helped thousands of leaders gain deeper self-awareness and harness their unique leadership styles to create meaningful, lasting impact across their organisations.

We believe that coaching is not just a skill - it's a mindset. One that enables leaders to navigate complexity, build trust, and lead with clarity and purpose. Our programmes are designed to transform how individuals think, act and influence, strengthening leadership at every level.



Values-driven and future-focused

As a certified B Corp, the AoEC is proud to be a values-driven business committed to positive change. We partner with forward-thinking organisations that share our belief in the power of coaching to drive performance, culture and wellbeing. Whether supporting a CEO through transformation, enhancing board dynamics, or embedding coaching across a workforce, our work is tailored to meet the moment - and build for the future.

Our goal is to take the magic of the development we offer more broadly into your organisation, helping you create the outcomes you want for your people. We welcome conversations to explore your ambitions and how coaching can support them.





Accredited excellence

The AoEC's programmes are accredited by the world's leading professional coaching bodies, including the International Coaching Federation (ICF), EMCC Global, and the Association for Coaching (AC). These accreditations ensure our training meets rigorous global standards and supports professionals in gaining recognised credentials that enhance their credibility and impact.

We assess coaching competencies against professional benchmarks, offer clear pathways for ongoing development, and provide tailored mentoring and supervision to sustain internal coaching capability. Whether you're developing new coaches or advancing experienced practitioners, our programmes support deep professional growth and organisational influence.



Coaching for organisational impact

Every organisation is different - and so are its coaching needs. The AoEC partners with businesses to deliver bespoke coaching solutions that respond to context, challenge and ambition. From one-to-one executive coaching to building a coaching culture, our work helps leaders lead better, teams perform stronger, and internal coaches grow with confidence.

We offer:

- **Executive coaching:** A confidential space for senior leaders to reflect, grow and lead with purpose.
- **Team coaching:** Support for boards and leadership teams to strengthen collaboration and collective performance.
- **Group coaching:** Peer learning that connects leaders, fosters insight and builds trust.
- **Internal coach development:** Advanced training, mentoring and supervision to stretch and sustain internal capability.
- **Workforce coaching skills:** Custom programmes that build coaching capability across employee groups, supporting culture change and everyday leadership.

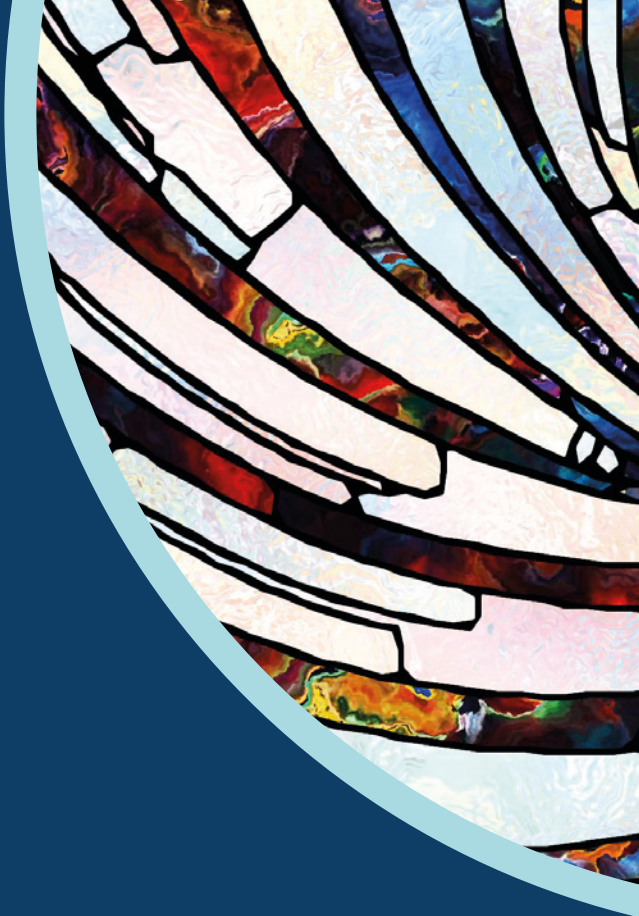


Start your coaching journey

Book a conversation with us to explore in more detail. Ahead of our conversation it may be useful to think about

- Where is your organisation's coaching maturity?
- What is your organisation's strategy and vision for coaching?
- What kind of organisation do you want to become - and how will coaching help you get there?





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The Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC) is a global provider of coach training and coaching-based development, services and solutions to organisations and individuals.



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