

# THE VOLTA COACHING INSIGHTS REPORT 2018

TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN  
COACHING IN THE US LEGAL INDUSTRY



consulting  
coaching  
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**VOLTA**

We are proud to have been awarded a Best of 2018 ranking by the New York Law Journal for:

1. Lawyer/Law Firm Business Development Coaching; and
2. Legal Outplacement and Career Transition Provider



Volta Talent Strategies LLC is certified as a Minority-Owned Business by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) and as a Women-Owned Business by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

## WHO WE ARE

Volta Talent Strategies is a leading consulting firm in the law firm talent management arena. We advise firms on initiatives and programs designed to support the recruitment, development and retention of their lawyers. We have one of the largest specialized lawyer coaching teams in the U.S.

Our team of consultants and coaches is based in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C. and Chicago. We work with over 90 law firms, including more than half of the Am Law 100, providing coaching, consulting and training services. We are certified as a women's owned and minority-owned business.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is Volta's inaugural Coaching Insights Survey Report and it is being distributed on a complimentary basis to those firms who participated in our survey. Please therefore keep it confidential and do not share it with any third parties outside your law firm. Volta intends to publish extracts from the Report separately. If you would like to quote or use any part of this report for any purpose outside your organization, please send your request to [Nicholas Jelfs-Jelf](#). This Report is intended primarily for Professional Development, Talent Management and HR professionals in law firms tasked with the procurement and management of coaching services. It is also intended for partners and senior law firm administrators who are curious to learn more about the use of coaching in law firms. We intend to update and expand our survey and report in future years.

**We welcome your feedback:** We learned a lot in conducting our first survey and will make adjustments to the survey in future years to maximize law firm participation. We welcome your ideas as well so please tell us if you have any feedback on the survey or on this report.

**Use of pronouns:** In this report, we use 'they' and 'their' instead of 'he or she' and 'his or her'.

**About the authors:** Nicholas Jelfs-Jelf authored this report with the support of Cecilia Mullan. They are both members of the Volta team and are based in New York.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The use of coaching by law firms is undoubtedly increasing. Specifically, the use of executive (and performance-focused) coaching by law firms continues to grow, having significantly lagged behind the uptake of such coaching in the corporate sector. During the recession, as involuntary attrition increased, many law firms within the Am Law 200

## KEY FINDING

*The use of executive coaching is increasing in law firms, adding to a strong base of career coaching.*

reactively adopted or expanded career counseling and career coaching as a tool to support lawyers who were being asked to leave. Since then, firms have incorporated more proactive career coaching into their talent management approaches in order to better manage their associate pipelines and align them with opportunities for firm growth as well as individual advancement and promotion. As a result, career coaching (initiated both by the firm and by the individual) has taken root in many large firms as a key talent management tool.

Law firms have realized that executive coaching is, in addition to career coaching, a valuable professional development (or PD) tool and have added it to their talent management toolkits – in some cases on an as-needed basis, in other cases on a more programmatic basis as an adjunct to (or replacement for) classroom-style training programs.

## COACHING FOCUS

Career coaching is sometimes referred to as career counseling, transition coaching or outplacement coaching and other variations on these themes. It typically focuses on identifying the coachee's career goals (based on understanding their values, interests, talents and skills) and often supports a job search or career transition (itself sometimes associated with outplacement). In this report, we use the term career coaching to cover coaching under the categories of both career transitions and career development.

Executive coaching focuses on building or enhancing the coachee's knowledge and/or skills and/or transforming the coachee's mindset and behaviors to support the achievement of professional and organizational goals. In this report, we use the term executive coaching broadly to cover coaching on topics other than career transitions and career development.

The external coaching industry within the legal sector has two main components:

1. Firm-paid coaching: the firm is the client, identifies the coach (or a choice of coaches) and contracts with the coaching service provider to provide coaching to a partner or employee.
2. Individual-paid coaching: the individual lawyer is the client and identifies and contracts with the coach directly.

Internal coaching (in its various forms) may supplement or replace firm-paid coaching with external coaches. As we discuss in our main report, "coaching" is a term that is often used interchangeably with mentoring and counseling. This report focuses on internal coaching and firm-paid coaching provided by external coaches. It does not address the number or experiences of lawyers who seek out, and pay for, their own coaches. Nor does it address the work of writing coaches.

While **law firms are at different stages in terms of creating coaching cultures** and “coaching” as a term eludes a universal definition, they are recognizing more and more that coaching is valuable across their businesses in key constituencies such as leadership (firm management and practice leaders), partners and underrepresented groups (especially in the areas of business development (or BD), succession planning and diversity-related initiatives).

**Coaching in law firms is evolving** to go well beyond career coaching and corrective or “remedial” coaching (generally reserved for partners or senior attorneys whose management and communication styles interfere with team dynamics or cause potential legal risk). That said, it continues to be used in those ways.

**Coaching is typically still one-on-one** to leverage the ability of the coach and coachee to work on an individualized basis on highly specific topics. However, group coaching, team coaching and peer coaching are also on the rise. With the move by many organizations including some law firms (e.g., Hogan Lovells and Allen & Overy) toward performance management based on ongoing real-time feedback rather than the gargantuan and inefficient annual review processes which have traditionally underpinned law firm performance management, the importance of “leader as coach” will increase.

Finally, with the **rapid development of advanced technologies** (collectively, **artificial intelligence**) we expect to see increased attempts to address coaching and career development needs through coaching apps. While various coaching apps (e.g., PocketConfidant) have been launched in the last couple of years, human coaches are still very much the norm. For the time being, coaching remains a discipline where personal service delivery is generally still viewed as essential to the experience and to the outcome.

Notwithstanding all these shifts and the increased adoption of coaching within law firms, there is, in sharp contrast to the corporate sector, a lack of commentary on the use of coaching within law firms. This is what prompted us to create our survey and this report. There has been no major survey or comprehensive report focused on coaching within law firms. A study on coaching in Am Law 200 law firms conducted in 2012 reported that 62 firms used coaching, with **14%** using internal coaches, **43%** using external coaches, and **43%** using both internal and external coaches.

This report aims to expand and update the available information on the state of coaching in law firms by offering both a summary of our survey findings as well as our own market research, experiences and observations on trends and developments. We trust that you will find it useful as you contemplate and shape your firm’s own approach to coaching.

## SURVEY AND RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Of the Am Law 200 firms (ranked by revenue), we found that no fewer than 123 use coaching including:

**22**

of the top 25

**44**

of the top 50

**36**

of those firms ranked 51 to  
100

**43**

of the second 100 (ranked  
101 to 200)

Our 54 survey respondents included:

**49**

Am Law 200 firms of whom 20  
are ranked (by revenue) in the  
Am Law top 50

**2**

Global 100 firms (not  
otherwise ranked in the  
Am Law 200)

**89%**

of survey respondents use coaching for their lawyers, and of those firms, nearly two-thirds (63%) see coaching as “extremely effective” or “very effective” in achieving organizational and individual goals.

Of our survey respondents not currently using coaching, the majority do not intend to start using coaching in the next 12 months. Reasons given for this were a lack of budget, previous negative experiences with coaching, and “our culture would not support it.” One firm noted that it is open to the idea of coaching but expects that it will take longer than a year to implement.

The majority of respondents using coaching (64%) have regular coaching programs aimed at specific groups and cohorts within the firm, with the most active focus being on business development and leadership.

Law firms’ key focus areas for coaching generally are:

1. Career transitions
2. Business development
3. Executive presence
4. Presentation skills/public speaking
5. Communication
6. Leadership

39% of firms have one or more internal coaches, although very few firms reported having coaches whose time is exclusively devoted to coaching. The majority of those who coach internally do so in combination with other responsibilities, primarily PD and talent management. Fewer than 5% of firms use internal coaching only.

**KEY FINDING**

*Group coaching is used by 35% of law firms, most commonly for BD.*

Internal coaches' efforts are generally more focused on associates and counsel, whereas partner coaching tends to be provided by external coaches.

## COACHING TRENDS

Our survey respondents identified the following trends within the legal industry:

1. Mindset shift: An increased awareness of the potential benefit and value of coaching as a tool with a shift away from the mindset that coaching is only corrective or remedial.
2. More budget: An increased willingness to devote budget to coaching.
3. More coaching: An increased use of coaching as a resource, using both external and internal coaches.
4. More internal coaches: An increasing number of firms are building or expanding their internal coaching capabilities by hiring coaches, by sponsoring the training of employees within the PD function or by teaching coaching skills to lawyers and managers in other business services teams.
5. More BD coaching.
6. More group coaching.
7. More team coaching.
8. More focus on measuring effectiveness and ROI.
9. More peer coaching.

These trends align with many of those identified in recent research outside the legal industry. This is not surprising since the corporate sector is far larger and has more evolved coaching cultures. In effect, the corporate sector provides leading indicators of what we can expect to see in law firms. We therefore looked at reports on the use of coaching in the corporate sector to understand what can be learned from the experiences of other industries.



## OUR PREDICTIONS

Based on our own research and experience over the last five years, we agree with our survey respondents in terms of the trends they identified. Overall, we believe that coaching will continue to expand and gain increasing acceptance in law firms as a professional development tool and will become the tool of choice for some firms. As a result, more law firms will adopt coaching programs and become more sophisticated consumers of coaching, whether provided by external or internal coaches. In addition, we expect to see the following developments over the next 12-24 months:

1. Coaching will expand across different levels within law firms and across both the legal and business services functions.
2. As firms' total investment in coaching increases, they will increasingly focus on measuring and monitoring the effectiveness and ROI of coaching.
3. As internal coaching capabilities expand, the role of internal coaches and their scopes of work will be more clearly defined and monitored.
4. Individual employees will increasingly expect and request coaching.
5. There will be an increased focus on coaching for high-potential employees.
6. There will be an increase in the use of coaching to further develop collaboration and teamwork.
7. Consistent with the increased adoption of coaching, there will be an ongoing increase in the use of 360 feedback and other assessments.
8. There will be an increase in the use of virtual/remote coaching (by phone or video calls).
9. Coaching apps and AI-based coaching tools will continue to be developed by commercial third-party providers and become more sophisticated as technology evolves.
10. Firms will review and test coaching apps and AI-based coaching tools and increasingly adopt them as a supplement to in-person coaching.
11. More firms will extend the provision of career coaching to their alumni networks and administrative staff.

Coaching is not simply an individual professional development tool. It has the ability to support transformative programs and initiatives in law firms at an organizational level. For example, if a firm wants to move away from a traditional command and control leadership structure to a flatter, people-centered structure where more leadership is distributed among the partners and senior administrators, then it will need more leaders. Coaching can help the firm develop those leaders both in terms of their own approach/skillset and how they support and lead their people. For firms looking to optimize their performance, coaching can help drive the necessary cultural shifts by changing mindsets and behaviors throughout the organization.

At Volta, we anticipate a bright future for law firm coaching. We are committed to being part of the ongoing development of coaching within law firms and advising and reporting on its use and impact in future years.

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## COACHING – A DISCIPLINE THAT ELUDES DEFINITION?

There is no universal definition of coaching. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as “...partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” This definition is merely a starting point and could benefit from more specificity and concreteness. However, this may reflect the fact that, in practice, the term “coaching” is applied to various different but similar and overlapping disciplines: mentoring, counseling and one-on-one consulting (and therapy). In effect, coaching is a broad umbrella term.

One of our survey respondents expressed a desire to see coaching clearly defined. However, in inviting law firms to participate in our survey, we chose not to define what coaching is. That said, for the purposes of this report, we think it important to reflect where the market currently stands with the definition of coaching. It is still an evolving modality and, while there has been a huge movement toward the professionalization and expansion of coaching over the last ten or so years, it continues to evolve. Our observation and research indicates that coaching is often used interchangeably with mentoring and counseling. This lack of clarity and consistency is further complicated by the reluctance of some firms to use the terms “coaching” and “coach,” preferring to use terms such as “career counselor” or “career advisor” to describe those who provide what is essentially career coaching.

Ten years ago, the American Management Association noted that its research<sup>1</sup> showed that “a degree of skepticism concerning coaching” existed. While a lot has changed over the last ten years, law firms still tend to have conservative business cultures and lawyers tend to have skeptical orientations.<sup>2</sup> That is no doubt why we hear from some firms that they avoid the expression coaching. In practice, misconceptions among lawyers “regarding the purpose and nature of coaching can create challenges for HR.”<sup>3</sup> A lack of experience of coaching and lack of understanding about what coaching can do for them means that some lawyers are concerned that coaching either reflects badly on their job performance or, alternatively, is appropriate only for fast-tracking high potentials. Others see it as akin to therapy. That’s why it is important to articulate clearly what coaching is (and isn’t) and to distinguish it from mentoring and therapy.

### COACHING – CONTRASTED WITH MENTORING AND THERAPY

In brief, the goal of coaching is to improve individual and organizational effectiveness by:

- Achieving a sustainable change in attitude and behavior in the context of professional activities; and/or
- Developing and sustaining new skills.

Coaching experts will tell you that coaching is not mentoring, nor counseling<sup>4</sup>, nor consulting, nor therapy.<sup>5</sup> While these disciplines undoubtedly overlap, they are different. Table 1 is a good overview of some essential differences as those disciplines relate to executive coaching:

CONSULTING		COACHING		THERAPY
Paid to come up with answers	Advises individual leaders on business matters	Focuses on the future	Paid to ask the right questions	Focuses on the past
Focuses on organizational performance	Involves management in goal setting	Fosters individual performance in a business context	Tackles difficult issues at work and home	Diagnoses and treats dysfunctionality
Strives for objectivity	Based on organizational ethics	Helps executives discover their own path	Focuses on individual behavioral change	Based on medical ethics
Provides quantitative analysis of problems	Paid for by the company		Explores subjective experience	Paid for by the individual

Table 1: Coaching contrasted with Consulting and Therapy. Source: Unattributable. Original author and publication unknown.

In broad terms, based on a foundation of trust and rapport, a coach helps an individual coachee reframe their experiences and perspectives, shift their thinking, see new possibilities, get into action and try out different approaches, overcome challenges and obstacles and achieve goals and results. However, “senior business leaders often confuse the foundational development tools of mentoring and coaching. In fact, ask any 50 employees to define mentoring, and you’ll typically get 50 definitions. There appears to be universal agreement only about the lack of a common definition.”<sup>6</sup>

While coaching and mentoring do differ, the two terms are, in practice, often used interchangeably.<sup>7</sup> There is significant overlap not just in how they are used but also in the methodologies underlying them. Nonetheless, that there is confusion does not mean that the distinction is without a difference. For example, coaching is a collaborative, future-focused and action-oriented endeavor. It is conventionally understood to be an active partnership in which the coach asks questions to help the coachee think through a situation, come up with options for action and choose which option they want to take. In contrast, a mentor is more likely to approach a mentor-mentee conversation on the basis of advice (“when I was in your position/situation, I did...” or “if I were you, I would...”).<sup>8</sup> For examples of how coaching and mentoring typically differ from one another, see Table 2.

MENTORING TENDS TO BE:	COACHING TENDS TO BE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More informal</li> <li>• Less structured</li> <li>• Open-ended</li> <li>• Long-term</li> <li>• Self-managed</li> <li>• Experience-based</li> <li>• Advice-based</li> <li>• Developmental</li> <li>• Delivered by colleagues</li> <li>• Dependent on mentor availability</li> <li>• Unpaid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More formal</li> <li>• More structured</li> <li>• Agenda-based</li> <li>• Finite and shorter in duration</li> <li>• Goal-focused</li> <li>• Technique-based</li> <li>• Inquiry-based</li> <li>• Performance-oriented</li> <li>• Delivered by colleagues or external coaches</li> <li>• More intense, more regular conversations</li> </ul>

Table 2: Mentoring vs Coaching

Therapy is less difficult to distinguish from coaching, although it is worth doing so: Coaching is neither diagnostic nor intended to be therapeutic. There is no treatment aspect (although when psychotherapists provide coaching, it is of course possible for them also to apply medical/mental health models). Therapists are licensed whereas there is no licensing requirement for coaches. In effect, coaching is legally an unregulated industry. That said, the ICF has made significant efforts with other similar bodies to create a professional self-governing foundation for coaching through a code of ethics and an accreditation system for coach training programs and credentialing for individual coaches. For more on standards and certifications, see Section 4: Selecting Coaches.

## WHAT COACHES DO – COACHING TOOLS

As with other disciplines, the theory and practice of coaching often diverge. As a result, an individual's experience of coaching may vary as and when a coach utilizes different modalities. For example, some coaches may flex and take an advisory approach. However, coaches are trained to avoid giving directive advice to their coachees. Examples of such techniques and tools include:

- Using feedback from colleagues (gathered through interviews and/or 360 assessments).
- Using assessments (such as [MBTI®](#), [DiSC®](#), [EQ-i®](#)) to identify which traits and behaviors are dominant and which could be developed.
- Helping to set goals, develop an action plan for moving ahead and anticipate and overcome potential obstacles.
- Helping to distinguish what is important from what is not.
- Asking powerful questions and listening actively.
- Challenging a coachee's assumptions, where appropriate.
- Holding the coachee accountable for actions to which they committed.
- Acknowledging the coachee's accomplishments.
- Providing an alternative and objective perspective.
- Recommending specific learning materials and resources.
- Participating in role-playing and simulations to promote skill development.
- Assigning "homework" assignments to be completed between coaching sessions.

## CASE STUDY – ICE MILLER

Based on the results of an employee engagement survey, Ice Miller launched its new career coaching program in 2017. The initiative is designed to deliver instant feedback to non-partner attorneys and to give them curriculum-based professional development coaching based on individual development plans. The coaches supporting the program are all partners (reported in *The Indiana Lawyer*, November 1, 2017).

## HOW ARE LAW FIRMS USING COACHING?

Our survey respondents use coaching in various ways:

- To develop specific, new professional skills.
- To enhance and build existing professional skills.
- To transform behaviors or attitudes that are inefficient, ineffective or counterproductive.
- To manage change or transition.

There is still a dominant focus among our respondent firms on career coaching (i.e., career development and career transition coaching). All internal coaches at respondent firms provide career development and 88% provide career transition coaching. 36% and 65% of respondent firms report using external coaches for those areas respectively.

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF COACHING

#### FOR THE LAW FIRM INCLUDE:

- Improved individual and team performance
- Increased effectiveness
- Improved matter management
- Improved BD and marketing
- Improved client relationship management
- Improved management skills, e.g., delegation and supervision
- Enhanced communication
- Higher productivity
- Improved matter profitability
- Increased engagement
- Retention of high performers
- Leadership development

#### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LAWYER INCLUDE:

- Improved individual effectiveness
- Skills development/enhancement
- Increased self-awareness/EQ
- Improved self-management
- Understanding and eliminating ineffective behaviors/attitudes
- Enhanced communication
- Achievement of professional goals
- Increased job satisfaction
- Resolved workplace issues

Table 3: Potential Benefits of Coaching (Law Firm and Individual)

Beyond career coaching, our survey respondents report that common themes emerge as to the use of coaching, covering a wide range of skills and situations including:

- Career development/transitions
- Business development
- Leadership
- Communication
- Delegation and supervision
- Diversity- and inclusion-related issues
- Executive presence
- Giving feedback
- Integration
- Interpersonal skills
- Organizational skills
- Parental leave/on-ramp/off-ramp
- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Stress management/resilience
- Teamwork/people management
- Time management
- Work-life balance/wellness

#### KEY FINDING

*The key themes of regular coaching programs and group coaching are business development and leadership.*

Situation-oriented coaching related to transitions including:

- Parental leave
- Path to partnership
- New partner
- New leadership status/role
- Succession and retirement
- Secondment (either to another country or location or to a client)

#### **CASE STUDY – ROPES & GRAY**

“The firm has two career development managers, both of whom are experienced internal coaches and former practicing attorneys. The coaches help associates manage time, people and projects; develop presence and communication skills; identify and cultivate mentoring relationships; and set and implement goals” (taken from the firm’s website).

#### **CASE STUDY – PROSKAUER**

The firm operates a new parent career coaching program, which assigns career coaches to help new parents navigate work-life balance by way of four one-on-one coaching sessions.

**TABLE 4: COACHING TOPICS PLANNED FOR NEXT 12 MONTHS (Q27)**



**CASE STUDY - WEIL GOTSHAL**

“U.S. attorneys have access to six hours per year of confidential, one-on-one external professional coaching to navigate work-life challenges. The reasons may include, but are not limited to: expecting a child; returning from parental leave; returning from medical leave; dealing with elder care or family medical issues; managing competing work responsibilities or any combination of work and personal responsibilities. This service is provided by the Firm at no cost to U.S. attorneys and their spouses/significant others” (taken from the firm’s website).

**GROUP COACHING AND TEAM COACHING**

In group coaching, a coach works with a relatively small group (typically 4-10) where the group members have some commonality (whether it be a shared role or characteristic and/or a shared challenge or goal). Group members may be independent of one another and work on their own individual issues/goals. By sharing issues and experiences, they learn from one another and may hold each other accountable. Team coaching calls for a coach to work with a group that has a common purpose. The key is that the individuals are interdependent and need to work together in order to achieve common goals. Typically, these include improved team dynamics, communication, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.

Group coaching is used by just over a third of our survey respondents. We believe that its growing popularity is because a group coaching program can reach more members of an organization at lower cost than one-on-one coaching. However, group coaching can deliver more than simply lower cost. In effect, it can drive more change more quickly. Group coaching is a very flexible alternative or supplement to classroom-style training, and it can be used to develop and establish cohorts, build internal networks, establish ongoing accountability to the group members (even beyond the end of the program) and foster collaborative relationships.

Consistent with the emphasis on BD more broadly in a law firm coaching context, this is the main focus of group coaching. The collaborative nature and goals of BD make it an ideal topic for group coaching. Table 6 illustrates that while respondent law firms use group coaching for multiple topic areas, the most popular group coaching topic by far is “Business development” (88%) followed by “Leadership” (58%) and “Presentation skills” (41%).

**TABLE 5: USE OF GROUP COACHING (Q9)**

Does your firm use group coaching?

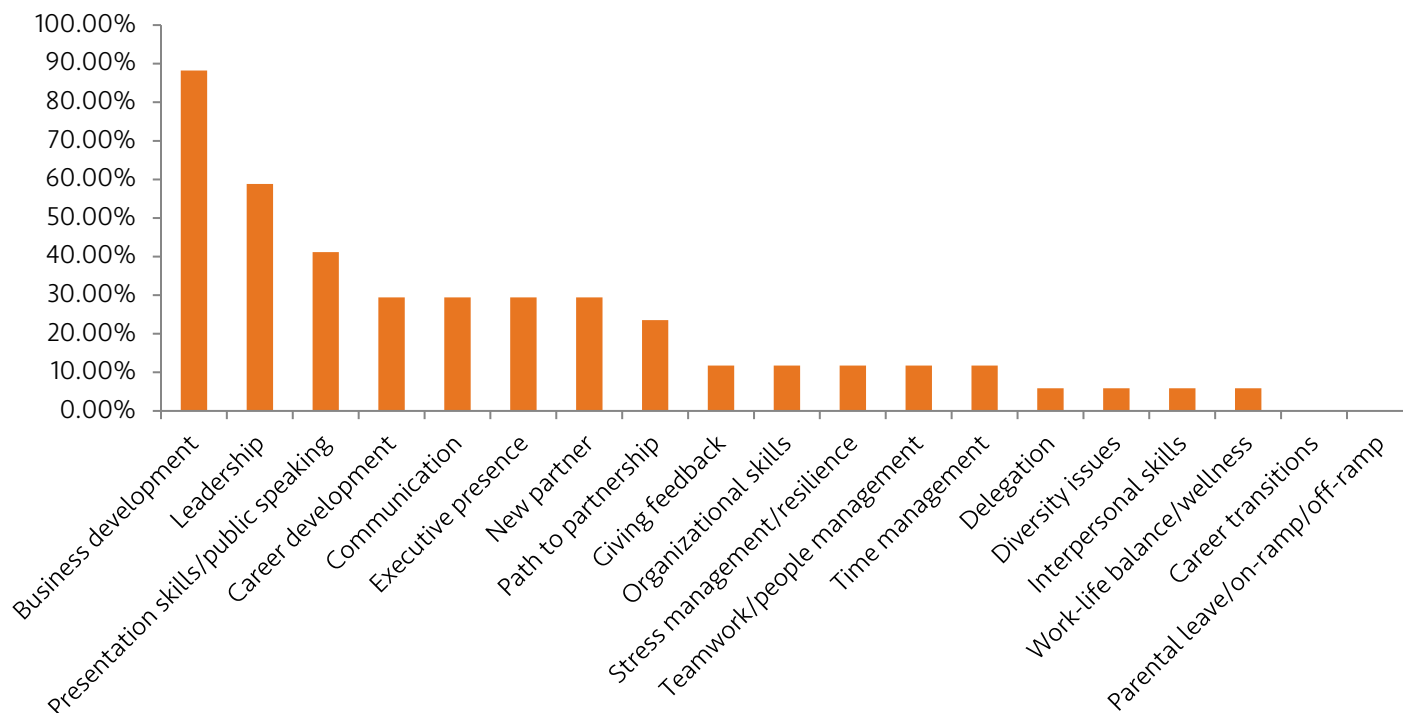


**35%** said yes

**65%** said no

**TABLE 6: HOW GROUP COACHING IS BEING USED (Q10)**

On what particular coaching areas does the firm use group coaching?





## **HOW IS COACHING MANAGED IN LAW FIRMS?**

We intentionally distributed our survey to senior professionals primarily within the professional development and talent management space since, in our experience, the bulk of coaching engagements are initiated by the PD/talent teams. However, in addition to Professional Development, other functions within law firms also manage and coordinate coaching. Typically, this is Business Development although it may also be HR and Diversity and Inclusion where these functions operate separately from the firm's Talent Management/Professional Development team. Inevitably, in some firms, coaching is also procured separately on an ad hoc basis by partners or practice groups or by special partner-led initiatives and task forces.

## WHO'S GETTING COACHED IN LAW FIRMS?

Given the energy and cost involved in coaching, it is arguably surprising that the majority of coaching activity within law firms is still focused on associates rather than partners. However, in this context, it is important to distinguish between career coaching (which is still associated in many firms with outplacement) and BD, leadership and other forms of executive coaching, which are more typically focused on partners and underrepresented groups.

Overall, there is not only an increase in the provision of one-on-one coaching for developmental purposes, but also an increase in the use of coaching to develop, support and retain certain specific groups within law firms.

Examples of this include groups that have historically been underrepresented:

- Women's initiatives (both at the partner and associate levels); and
- Diverse attorneys (especially at the associate level where the rate of attrition exceeds that of majority attorneys).

The majority of survey respondents (65%) use annual or other regular coaching programs to support such groups within the firm. At the more senior levels, the emphasis of these programs is clearly on BD and secondarily leadership: 46% of firms using regular programs do so for BD.

**TABLE 7: ANNUAL OR REGULAR COACHING PROGRAMS (Q7)**

Does your firm have any annual or other regular coaching programs aimed at specific groups within the firm (e.g., new partners, women partners, diverse associates)?



**64%** said yes

**36%** said no

### KEY FINDING

*The majority of respondents use regular coaching programs to support specific groups within their firms (e.g., new partners, women and diverse attorneys).*

### CASE STUDY – HOGAN LOVELLS

Hogan Lovells has for several years operated 'Momentum,' a program designed to support and develop high-potential senior associates who are on partnership track. One component of the program is the provision of one-on-one coaching with an external or internal coach. Based on feedback received from partners and coaches who observe the participants in group exercises, each associate works with their coach to create a personal development plan which guides the associate's career planning for the next 1-2 years through partnership consideration.

### Section 3

Firms also see the value of coaching as a developmental tool to include in programs for specific cohorts:

- Mid-level associates
- Senior associates (path to partnership)
- New partners
- New practice leaders

Of our survey respondents who use internal coaches, 100% provide internal coaching to associates and 61% to counsel. Internal coaches coach partners in only 50% of the relevant respondent firms. Very few firms with internal coaches provide coaching to their administrative staff or alumni (at 17% and 6% respectively). That said, we see evidence in the market of firms starting to focus some resources on both groups. Reported examples of firms providing career coaching to alumni include Kirkland & Ellis and Cleary Gottlieb.

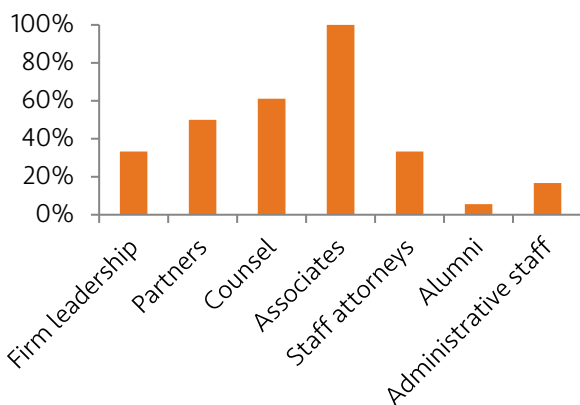
In terms of which groups are being coached by external coaches, there is much more emphasis on partners than is seen with internal coaches. Nonetheless, associates and counsel still represent significant constituencies for external coaches.

#### CASE STUDY – WINSTON & STRAWN

Winston provides its newly elevated partners with a 12-month group coaching program designed to build and enhance their business development skills. Winston is also piloting BD group coaching programs for diverse partners and counsel and for women partners, each led by the firm’s internal coach, Diane Costigan, Director of Coaching.

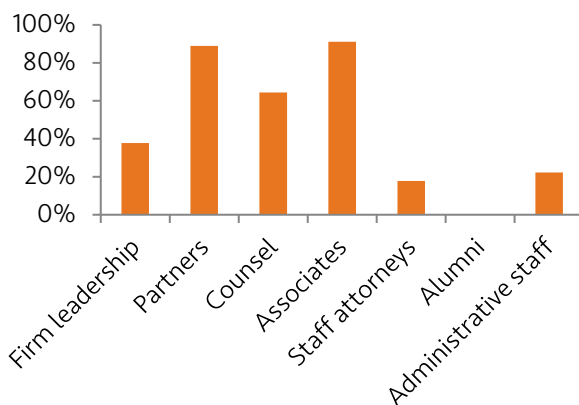
**TABLE 8: INTERNAL COACHES – CONSTITUENCIES (Q19)**

To whom do(es) your internal coach(es) provide coaching?



**TABLE 9: EXTERNAL COACHES – CONSTITUENCIES (Q25)**

To whom do your external coaches provide coaching?



## SELECTING COACHES

The majority of formal attorney coaching is still provided by external consultants and coaches, many of whom operate solo coaching practices. Increasingly, however, law firms are expanding their own counseling and coaching capabilities by hiring their own full-time coaches and/or by sponsoring the training and accreditation of members of their existing teams (especially within their professional development teams).

In a small number of cases, law firms have a specific coach on a form of retainer as an adjunct to their professional development team.

### KEY FINDING

*The number of internal accredited coaches in law firms is growing and the provision of internal coaching is on the rise.*

**TABLE 10: USE OF EXTERNAL COACHES (Q23)**

Does your firm engage external coaches?



**96%** said yes

**4%** said no

**TABLE 11: INTERNAL COACHES (Q11)**

Does your firm have one or more internal coaches?



**33%** said yes - employed by the firm

**6%** said yes - both an employee and an external coach on retainer

**61%** said no

The fact that internal coaching capabilities are being developed by law firms is the next step on their path toward a coaching culture. It is entirely consistent with the experience of other types of organizations - both corporate and professional services.<sup>9</sup> It is also consistent with the overall growth in coaching generally, as suggested by the increase in the number of certified coaches reported by the ICF.<sup>10</sup>

*As the number of accredited internal coaches continues to grow, we anticipate that more executive coaching (as opposed to career coaching), will be provided in-house, including at the partner level.*

**TABLE 12: NUMBER OF INTERNAL COACHES (Q11)**

How many internal coaches does your firm have?



**22%** one  
**22%** two  
**39%** three to five  
**17%** > five

The majority of respondent firms with internal coaches (87%) reported that their internal coaches have J.D.s. This is consistent with a general preference among law firms for J.D.s when hiring for more senior professional development and talent management roles. Coaching roles are no different as is reflected by two openings advertised in 2018. Morgan Lewis and Dechert each advertised a role for an internal coach this year. The job descriptions are included in the Appendices for reference.

### CHOOSING BETWEEN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL COACHES

Inevitably there are factors to be considered in relation to the use of both external and internal coaches. Complicating the analysis further is a distinction on various factors between internal coaches whose role is primarily coaching and internal coaches who have a “day job” or who are leaders or managers within the organization who coach and who may be supervisors in relation to the coachees.

The number of firms that have internal coaches remains fairly small. As a result, the community of internal law firm coaches is tight-knit with coaches meeting bi-monthly to discuss their respective firm coaching initiatives and to brainstorm ideas for expanding coaching within their respective firms.

#### FIRMS WITH ONE OR MORE INTERNAL COACHES INCLUDE:

- Akin Gump
- Arnold & Porter
- Blank Rome
- Cooley
- Cravath
- Gibson Dunn
- Goodwin
- Honigman
- Kirkland & Ellis
- Mayer Brown
- MoFo
- O’Melveny & Myers
- Orrick
- Pillsbury
- Skadden
- Venable
- Wilson Sonsini
- Winston & Strawn
- Womble Bond Dickinson

As internal coaching capabilities grow, it makes sense for individual firms to consider how best to “protect” their internal coaches, manage how they are perceived by colleagues and position them for success.

This includes not having coaches handle difficult performance issues or terminations, nor having them take responsibility for disciplinary conversations or policy-related issues.

Relevant factors impacting the choice of external and internal coaches are outlined in Table 13:

INTERNAL COACHES	EXTERNAL COACHES
✓ Greater understanding of organizational culture and firm personalities	✓ Greater objectivity and independence
✓ Consistency of voice and approach	✓ Experience across many organizations and business environments
✓ Built-in rapport	✓ Higher level of confidentiality
✓ Fewer barriers to adoption (cost and proximity)	✓ Broadened variety of coaching skills
✓ Scheduling flexibility and increased availability	✓ May be specialized in particular area which provides more powerful insight
✓ Cost-effective	✓ Greater exposure and current to other coaches and best practices as well as trends in the industry
✓ Can leverage firm relationships which is especially important for career coaching	✓ Choice of coaches
✓ Can perform triage	✓ Typically have gone through certification programs and/or have advanced degrees in the field
⊖ May have preconceived ideas about coachee/context/personalities	✓ Focus is solely on coachee
⊖ Real or perceived lack of confidentiality	⊖ Could entail higher cost and expenses
⊖ Competing responsibilities in the firm even if they are supposedly full-time coaches	⊖ Less familiar with firm's culture and politics
⊖ Do not always have the advanced degrees, experience or certification of external coach	⊖ Inconsistent methods and quality across pool of coaches
⊖ Limited exposure to different organizations and best practices in the industry	⊖ Less availability

Table 13: Internal vs External Coaches

In practice, internal coaches in law firms typically include:

- Experienced coaches hired or employed as such specifically to focus on coaching, e.g., providing individual coaching, designing and delivering coaching programs including group coaching and managing external coaches.
- Professionals with coaching qualifications (or experience) whose primary role is not to coach but to manage PD, BD, alumni or diversity initiatives and who sometimes provide coaching internally. They may participate in specific firm programs as coaches and/or use coaching in their day-to-day work (e.g., career development or career transition conversations).
- Client-facing lawyers who participate as coaches in developmental programs. They may have coaching qualifications but more typically have limited formal coach training.

While the majority of internal coaches are full-time employees, relatively few of them devote all their time to coaching with only 13% of them spending 75% or more of their time on coaching. Typically, internal coaches have other responsibilities being PD/talent/training/HR and diversity and, to a lesser extent, recruiting, alumni and BD. Overall, the majority of internal coaches are certified or in the process of becoming certified. Internal coaches for whom coaching is a primary role at the firm are typically certified.

Section 4

In our survey, we also asked about job titles. Among those firms that responded, few have internal coaches with transparent, coaching-specific titles. This reflects the practical reality that most internal coaches devote time to other professional development/attorney development activities in addition to coaching. Titles for those with primarily coaching-related roles include Director of Coaching, Director of Career Development, Career Coach, Career Development Advisor, Career and Professional Development Manager, and CareerLink Coach. In 2018, Morgan Lewis and Dechert were in the process of recruiting a Director of Attorney Coaching and a Career Development Coach respectively.

Whatever their titles, internal coaches cover a wide range of topics and skills, but two areas together shape the internal coaching scene: career development and career transitions. In addition, there is an emphasis on skills-related coaching. Of the respondent firms who reported that they use coaching, 96% engage external coaches. Those external coaches coach on all the topics shown on Table 14, but there is a more concentrated distribution of topics than for internal coaches (see Table 13). The most popular topic area for external coaches is BD, followed by executive presence, career transitions, presentation skills, communication and leadership.

TABLE 14: COACHING TOPICS – INTERNAL COACHES (Q18)

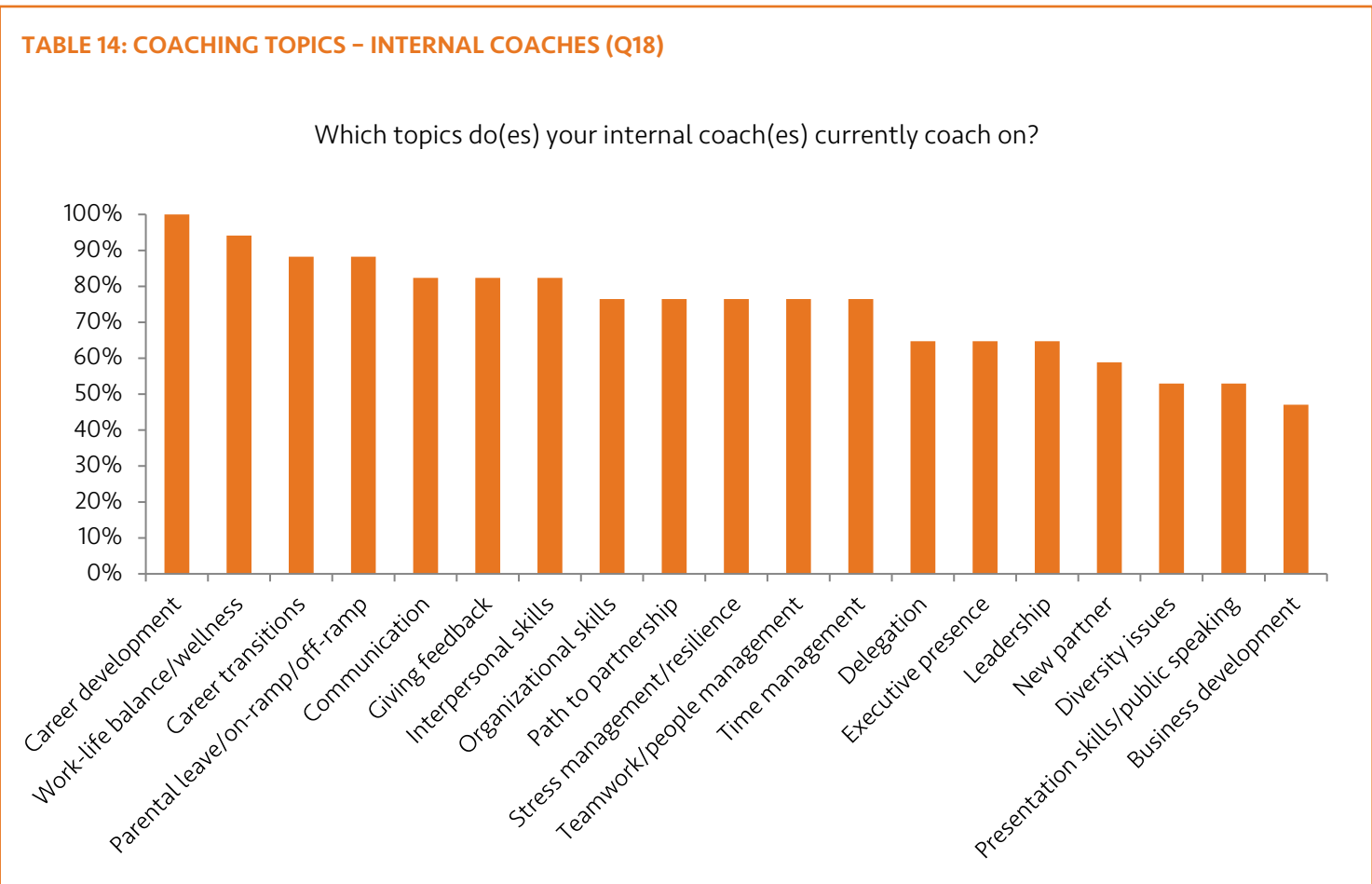
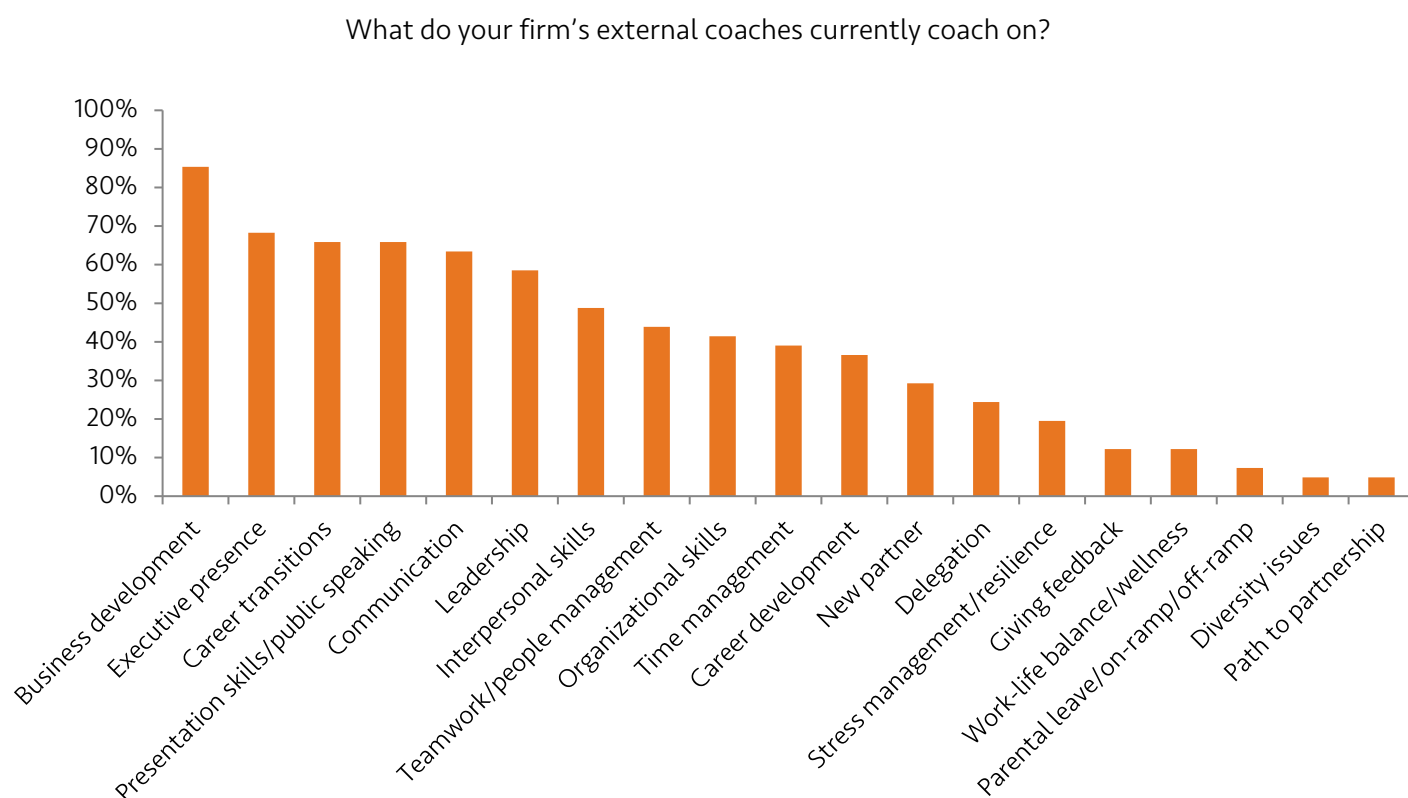


TABLE 15: COACHING TOPICS – EXTERNAL COACHES (Q24)



In interviews, some respondent law firms told us that more senior coachees are likely to work with an external coach rather than with an internal coach. There are various potential explanations for this (including easier budget justification), but there is no doubt, in our view, that within a law firm context, the power dynamic of a partner (or senior business services leader) being coached by a colleague who is an employee - and who is hierarchically subordinate - could be challenging. Additionally, we can extrapolate that partners would prefer not to experience the vulnerability, which is a feature of coaching, with employees and colleagues.

That said, everything is dependent on the personalities and experience of the coachee and coach. In other words, there are clearly some senior coachees who are willing to work with an appropriately seasoned internal coach.

#### KEY FINDING

*Internal coaches cover a wide range of issues and skills, but one area of focus is almost universal: career development/career transition.*



## COACH SELECTION CRITERIA – CHOOSING EXTERNAL COACHES

The legal industry appears to be well-served by specialist and generalist coaching and consulting firms and solo coach practitioners. Six main factors have been identified as influencing the selection of external coaches. In order of perceived importance to the organization, these factors are as follows:

1. Experience of coaching work that is similar in scope;
2. Personal capability and relevant organizational experience;
3. Flexibility (in terms of techniques and willingness to work with others);
4. Focus on delivering or improving business results;
5. Cost effectiveness; and
6. Qualifications (including membership in professional bodies).<sup>11</sup>

While expertise and personality are most commonly used to match a coach with a coachee, in our experience, gender and ethnicity may also play a role.

According to US coaching surveys in the corporate sector, accreditation is not the most important factor in the selection of a coach. Accreditation is no guarantee of quality – it is simply a guarantee that a coach has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the accrediting body that they meet the criteria for accreditation based on the competencies required by that body.<sup>12</sup> However, certification through one of the ICF-recognized coaching training organizations does have value in that it creates a baseline understanding of the coaching relationship, coaching process and methodology. Post-graduate certificates offered by universities such as NYU and Columbia are also valuable. However, both interviews and our research indicated that certification/accreditation is not a priority in the selection of a coach for the majority of law firms. More highly valued than accreditation is:

- Relevant subject matter/industry expertise;
- Years of experience;
- Familiarity with the coachee’s firm, firm culture and workplace environment; and
- Relatability.

## SETTING UP COACHING FOR SUCCESS

The conventional wisdom is that executive coaching needs to start at the top and be championed by management or a high-level sponsor within the organization but we have observed that in law firms, the foundations for the use of coaching are more typically set by initiatives such as career coaching/counseling initiatives, coaching interventions for badly-behaving partners and business development coaching. Executive coaching on issues such as leadership, executive presence, people management and skills moves up and across the organization over time. That said, we believe that a coaching culture will truly take root when there is intention, engagement and support at a senior level within a firm.

Essential to coaching success is a thoughtful coaching process that includes:

1. An initial briefing by the firm as to the issues which require coaching;
2. Transparency and clear and comprehensive communication by the firm with the coachee as to the context and reasons for coaching;
3. Clear and comprehensive communication as to the firm's expectations and the coaching objectives (identified by the firm and by the coachee);
4. Agreement as to the duration of the coaching engagement and the frequency and duration of coaching sessions;
5. A full and candid assessment of the environmental factors (team culture, personalities and preferences in the team, etc.) impacting the coachee;
6. Specificity about the nature of the engagement in terms of areas of focus;
7. Alignment of the coachee's goals with institutional goals;
8. Coachability (see page 25) on the part of the coachee;
9. Support for the process from the coachee's managers;
10. Confidentiality between coach and coachee; and
11. Review at the mid-point and at the end of the engagement.

### KEY FINDING

*When coaching is led by talent or HR teams that serve as employee relations contacts for performance management issues, there is a greater likelihood that the suggestion of coaching may be seen as corrective or negative rather than as developmental and supportive. This requires clear communication and careful management.*

Key to success is matching personalities and aligning the coach's expertise and experience with the coaching objectives and the issues involved. The importance of get-to-know-you "chemistry checks" between coach and coachee should not be underestimated.

### LEARNING FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES

Matching the right coach with the right client is associated with higher success rates. Matching people according to expertise and personality seem to be both the best and most commonly used strategies.

Having an interview with the prospective coach has the strongest relationship with reporting a successful coaching program.

## COACHABILITY

To be coachable and to maximize the likelihood of a successful coaching engagement, an individual needs to be open to the coach and to the coaching process. This includes being candid, intellectually curious, willing to be vulnerable and experience discomfort and open to, and willing to ask for, feedback.

The coaching experience will be improved by a coachee's self-awareness and clarity as to coaching objectives and when/where help is needed. Essential is the willingness to take responsibility for the coaching outcome. "To learn is a personal process that no one can manage but yourself."<sup>13</sup>

*"Self-knowledge: I know I can be short with people when I'm stressed.*

*Self-awareness: Here is a situation where I am about to be short with someone.*

*Self-management: Here's a tool I can leverage right now so that I am not short with them."*

*Diane Costigan, Director of Coaching, Winston & Strawn, explaining self-knowledge to self-management*

## CONFIDENTIALITY – PRACTICAL ISSUES

A key question that has to be addressed before a coaching engagement gets underway is what the firm's expectations are in relation to the confidentiality of the coaching process and discussions. We recommend that, consistent with the ICF Code of Ethics, all conversations remain confidential (unless the coachee chooses to share or agrees to the coach doing so). However, the firm may want to know whether the coachee is engaged in the coaching process and doing all that is required. Confidentiality concerns may however lead some coaches not to report to the firm if, for example, a coachee skips sessions or seems unresponsive to coaching. It is essential for the coach, coachee and firm to understand the parameters of what is to be treated as confidential.

Difficult scenarios in the context of confidentiality can certainly arise in some coaching engagements if the issue is not managed upfront during the engagement process. For example:

*The ICF's code of ethics requires that ICF-accredited coaches:*

*"24) Maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless release is required by law.*

*25) Have a clear agreement about how coaching information will be exchanged among coach, client and sponsor."*

1. If during the engagement, the coach concludes that the coachee is unable to achieve the coaching objectives, should the coach inform the firm? If so, how much should the coach share as to the reason(s) why? Sharing nothing may reflect badly on the coachee (or the coach) and yet, by definition, the reasons may squarely fall within the confidentiality legitimately expected by the coachee.
2. If the directional focus of coaching is initially presented by the firm as being one thing, but, during the engagement, it becomes clear to the coachee and coach that there are multiple underlying issues. Should the coach inform the firm? There needs to be clarity about this at the outset as between the firm, the coach and the coachee. In the absence of this, there is real risk that the firm may believe that its expectations are not being met should a change in coaching focus surface from the coachee.

Whether the firm should inquire of the coachee about the coaching is a matter of policy for the firm, although it needs to recognize that this may be a disincentive to some potential coachees. The firm's options include:

1. Soft inquiries – either in passing, as part of a specific, private conversation or by way of a follow-up email to ask, “how’s it going?” in relation to the coaching;
2. Hard inquiries that may involve a formal check-in (during the engagement) or debrief (at the end) and/or a standard survey including questions, such as:
  - a) What value are you getting out of it?
  - b) How is it making a difference?
  - c) Do you wish to continue?
  - d) What feedback or ideas do you have that could make the most of the experience for others?
  - e) Would you be willing to promote coaching to others in the firm?

To avoid confidentiality becoming an unnecessary issue, we recommend that, at the outset of the engagement, there be a three-way discussion (among the firm, the coach and the coachee) to address what the firm's expectations are with regard to understanding the scope, nature and outcomes of the coaching conversations and to agree how this will be handled by the coach.

# MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COACHING

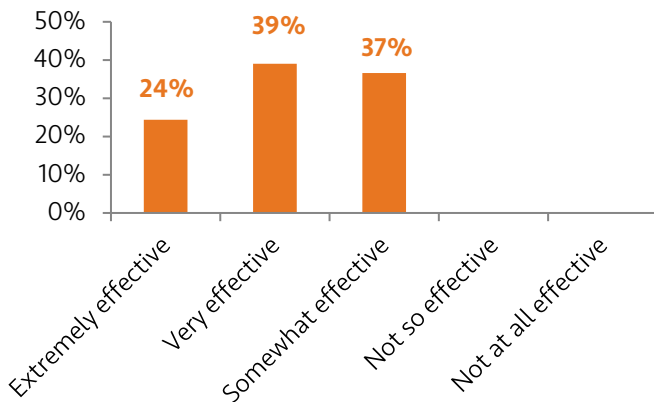
There are multiple potential obstacles to coaching. The key institutional concern is cost. The key individual concern is typically time and energy, especially when coaching engagements can run from a few sessions to a year. For both institution and individual, the question is: “Will it work? Is it worth it?” These are understandable questions and go to the heart of whether coaching is effective and whether there is a return on the investment (and, if so, how do you measure it?).

## LEARNING FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES

The more frequently respondents reported using a measurement method, the more likely they were to report success in their coaching programs.

**TABLE 16: EFFECTIVENESS OF COACHING (Q26)**

Based on your experience, how effective has coaching been in achieving organizational and individual goals?



Measuring the effectiveness of coaching is challenging. In common with other forms of professional services, the promise of coaching is the promise of a service, not of an outcome. For all sorts of reasons, there is no guarantee of results. That said, organizations understandably want to be able to measure ROI consistently and accurately. In practice, it is easier said than done.

Firms want to know whether coaching works. It certainly can, and 63% of our respondents reported that they find coaching to be “extremely effective” or “very effective”. However, whether coaching will be effective in any given scenario will clearly depend on a number of variables such as:

1. How clear and realistic the firm’s expectations are (as well as those of the coachee);
2. The coachee’s coachability (i.e., willingness of the coachees to engage and do the work); and
3. What is within a realistic range of outcomes for the specific type of coaching engagement.

The corporate sector is generally more advanced than the legal industry in how it seeks to understand the effectiveness of coaching. This started out typically being based on qualitative (i.e., anecdotal) feedback given by coachees and their managers and/or peers. Indeed, subjective evaluation in different forms (whether by the coachee or by their colleagues) remains dominant.

Options include:

1. Subjective evaluation against individual coaching objectives;
2. Using individual coachees' testimonials and/or scorecards (i.e., satisfaction scores);
3. Institutional scorecards provided by the coachees' managers; and
4. Pre- and post-coaching multi-rater feedback (360 assessments).

## LEARNING FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES

Three-way meetings (among the coach, the coachee and the coachee's manager) are effective in successfully evaluating outcomes against individual coaching objectives (from the *6th Ridler Report*).

One particular challenge with coachee satisfaction ratings is that coachees have often not experienced any previous coaching and so have no baseline for what constitutes good or effective coaching. That said, if satisfaction scores are used, it is worth checking on coachee evaluations not only immediately after the engagement but also at one or two intervals (say 3 and 6 months later) to assess whether any reported changes in behavior have been sustained.

Based on our research, if law firms use any kind of evaluation of coaching, it is still predominantly subjective/ anecdotal.<sup>14</sup> However, if the corporate sector has something to teach us, it is that over time, the assessment of coaching will evolve. Within the corporate sector it has moved toward:

1. Impact analysis such as the estimation of impact based on performance ratings, promotions and retention of those coached; and
2. Impact surveys, i.e., post-engagement surveys given to coachees and managers/peers.

*“Having the ability to better measure—and monetize—the benefits of coaching, including through ROI, is the next frontier for coaches and firms.”*

*Jennifer Rakstad, Consultant, Career Development Advisor (US), Mayer Brown*

A further refinement being used in the corporate sector is compensation tracking to determine whether the provision of coaching is correlated over time with an increase in the coachees' compensation. However, this is unlikely to assist those law firms where associate compensation is lockstep or similar.

For specific types of coaching, it is easier to determine applicable quantitative metrics, for example:

1. High potential/path to partnership – the increase in the number of promotions among, and retention of, high potential employees who have undertaken coaching.
2. Skills development/enhancement – improved evaluation scores and ratings for coachees in relation to specific skills which were the subject of coaching.
3. Business development – the increase in revenue generation, clients originated, new matters originated and matter profitability (albeit there is a distinct possibility of correlation without causation).
4. Career coaching/transition counseling – the success rate of job searches, the time to find a new job and the type of position (albeit the inability to find a new role varies depending on market conditions, the coachee's level of commitment to all aspects of the job search process and other individual circumstances, and is not, in and of itself, a reflection on the coaching).

In terms of gathering qualitative feedback on a structured and consistent basis, a firm may use a standard form questionnaire or survey to be completed at the end of each coaching engagement. This could for example cover:

- Coaching objectives identified and degree to which they are met overall;
- Specific benefits derived from coaching;
- Specific changes in behaviors resulting from the coaching;
- Relevant feedback received from colleagues (if any);
- Feedback on the coach, process, level of service; and
- Recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

## BUILDING A COACHING CULTURE

A coaching culture can be defined as a workplace environment where people regularly use a coaching style when having conversations in one-on-one as well as team meetings to promote creativity, problem solving and continuous personal and team development.

The general mindset is that, more often than not, you get the best out of people not by telling them what to do, but through engaging with them on the issues and challenges and helping them think through the choices and options for action. The organization is built on a growth mindset and a foundation of lifelong learning and development. The work environment is high challenge/high support.

A coaching culture has the ability to create an environment where people:

- Collaborate effectively;
- Help others to learn and develop;
- Give and receive feedback in real-time;
- Have open and supportive conversations that are short in length but strong in impact; and
- Develop coaching and mentoring relationships spontaneously and organically.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach in terms of developing a coaching culture. However, some typical developmental stages are:

1. Ad hoc (reactive) coaching driven by individuals, typically using external coaches;
2. Coordinated, centrally-managed (reactive) coaching provision using external coaches;
3. Leaders actively supporting coaching initiatives;
4. Developing internal coaching capacity;
5. Proactive coaching provision using external or internal coaches;
6. Integrating coaching into the firm's approach to learning and development;
7. Developing team coaching and coaching programs (e.g., BD coaching for partners);
8. Adoption of a coaching style by the PD team and some partners when managing teams/individuals;
9. Implementing coaching as a strategic tool for talent development; and
10. Choosing coaching as the preferred style of leadership/management (i.e., "it's how we do business with all our people here").<sup>15</sup>

In order to develop a coaching culture, even in the early stages of a firmwide initiative, it is important to have mapped out an implementation plan which incorporates a communications plan.

This might include communications about:

1. The benefits of coaching to the individual, to colleagues and to the firm;
2. Leadership's support for coaching;
3. Examples of how coaching is used; and
4. Examples of coaching success stories.

### BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR COACHING

A good early step toward coaching culture is to start using coaching as a component of broader training and development initiatives, e.g., where PD runs a training program and adds group or individual coaching as a follow-up to make the classroom-based learning individually-focused and stickier.



It is also essential to reinforce that coaching is a professional development tool and represents an investment by the firm in its high performers. Also, where coaching is explicitly used and modeled by senior attorneys and influencers in the firm, it will impact the broader population and underpin the importance and organizational commitment to coaching.

As a coaching culture starts to develop, it is vital that the firm reiterates the impact and value of coaching through ongoing internal communications, while also creating and supporting ambassadors for coaching and linking its use to different PD, diversity and BD initiatives.

Law firms that are developing coaching cultures (and they are still the minority) are training partners and/or members of the PD team as internal coaches.

These steps will all contribute to making coaching pervasive over time and linking it explicitly to career success at the firm. If the firm also makes it a requirement for those transitioning into leadership roles, this will be a powerful signal to the firm that coaching is seen by management as a key tool in the achievement of career success.

### CONNECTING COACHING WITH PD

Ensure that coaching is linked with related HR and talent management processes and tools. For example, if an attorney is provided coaching on a particular issue, what follow up is there to ensure that this is reviewed either through formal mechanics, such as annual or interim reviews, or informally through a structured feedback conversation with colleagues?

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## CONCLUSION

Recruiting, developing and retaining talent is a perennial issue in the legal industry. And yet, many of the challenges faced by law firms in the context of acquiring, developing and retaining talent can be addressed through the smart use of coaching. As law firms continue to look for ways to achieve greater efficiency while maintaining profitability, they are increasingly under pressure to protect the mental health and well-being of their lawyers and to achieve more through their diversity efforts. Coaching is not a panacea but it is a critical organizational and individual development tool. While the use of coaching is increasing in law firms, we believe that it is an underutilized tool given its potential to support and sustain changes in mindset and to enhance individual and team performance through the development of leadership and people and business skills.

Law firms are still in the early stages of developing their approach to coaching. We expect to see a further increase in its adoption and ongoing use. While its value is beginning to be more widely recognized, there is still a long way to go before coaching is truly woven into the fabric of law firms. Whether this will happen depends on how effectively coaches can establish, and firms can measure, that they deliver value.

### **SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

We sent our survey to specific individuals in PD roles at 212 law firms. We sent the survey to all the firms in the Am Law 200, with the exception of 14 firms within that group for whom we could not identify appropriate contacts. The overall response rate was 25%. We received survey responses from 49 firms in the Am Law 200 and from 5 firms outside the Am Law 200.

We supplemented the data obtained through our survey with our own independent research and a limited number of interviews with law firm representatives. This enabled us to gather data on additional law firms although not to the same level of detail as provided by survey respondents.

### **SURVEY AND REPORT METHODOLOGY**

Initially, we used an online survey which we created in Survey Monkey. The survey consisted of 26 questions, most of which were single- or multi-value multiple choice questions. There was one free text question: “What trends do you see emerging in relation to coaching within law firms?”

We sent our survey to target participants by email on March 21, 2018. Law firm spam filters are highly effective and we discovered from one-on-one follow-up that some of our target participants had not received our initial email. We therefore sent a second email on April 30, 2018. The survey was initially open until April 30, 2018. We followed up with firm contacts until May 22, 2018. The survey was also shared on May 22, 2018 by a member of the Professional Development Consortium with its membership.

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# MORGAN LEWIS – DIRECTOR OF ATTORNEY COACHING – JOB DESCRIPTION

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, one of the world's leading global law firms with almost 4,000 lawyers and staff in 30 offices is seeking a Director of Attorney Coaching reporting to the Senior Director, Attorney Recruiting and Professional Development. This position will reside in either the San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago office and will be responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive coaching strategy for all associates and cultivate a culture of coaching at the firm. The Director of Attorney Coaching will design innovative programming and customized services for associates at all stages of their careers.

## **Responsibilities:**

Design and deliver coaching programs at critical points in the attorney development lifecycle, including orientation and integration into the firm as well as elevation from a Junior to a Midlevel associate and a Midlevel to a Senior associate, preparation for partnership, newly elected partners, and those transitioning to and from an extended leave of absence and secondments.

Plan and launch kickoff coaching program, initially aimed at high performers but with the longer view on availability to all Traditional Track associates within the firm.

Manage outplacement coaching function including relationships with external coaches for both remedial and outplacement coaching situations.

Work with PG Leadership to understand developmental and career challenges and milestones that may be addressed/improved with coaching interventions.

Hold office hours for walk-in coaching in all domestic offices.

Build and/or enhance internal resources related to business development, stress management, goal setting, career planning, resilience and health and wellness, among others.

Work with the alumni relations leads as well as firm alumni and client networks to identify opportunities for placement; build an internal job board.

Develop an active career planning program to assist individuals through their associate years and engage clients and alumni in sharing job opportunities.

Develop and lead coaching circles for groups of individuals who share goals for developing similar skills or addressing shared challenges.

## **Experience/Qualifications:**

This job requires:

Bachelor's degree (B.A./B.S.) from four-year college or university; A J.D. or relevant graduate degree strongly preferred but not required; and

Minimum of 10 years related experience, 5 of which were in a leadership role; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

The successful applicant will also have:

- Strong leadership and supervisory skills
- High energy; self-motivated; results oriented
- Confident manner; ability to establish credibility quickly
- Ability to work comfortably in a matrix organization
- Ability to deal positively with adversity and difficult situations
- Team player who can establish trust with all levels of personnel
- Excellent organizational skills; effective written and oral communication skills
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Microsoft Project

[Retrieved from [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) on September 15, 2018]

# DECHERT – CAREER DEVELOPMENT COACH – JOB DESCRIPTION

The Career Development Coach will meet with individuals who seek out career coaching or who are referred by partners or other firm leadership to provide career development coaching.

## **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:**

Provide career coaching to individuals at the Firm.  
 Draws on expert knowledge of the legal employment market to counsel individuals regarding career development.  
 Develop, execute and implement career programs and skills workshops. Includes presenting programs relating to career development and skills.  
 Prepare monthly reports of counseling activities.  
 Assess desired Wellness and Resilience programming for the firm and acts as resource with respect to development and implementation of such programs.  
 Conduct lateral orientations and acts as resource for integration of new lawyers to the Firm.  
 Conduct Exit Interviews for departing lawyers and report trends/issues identified through exit interviews to firm leadership.  
 Prepare and present periodic exit interview reports to firm leadership.  
 Maintain knowledge of the legal employment market, current market trends on employment issues and the legal community.  
 Establish and maintain contact with groups, organizations, and individuals that offer career coaching services.  
 Be a senior member of the Legal Talent Team, collaborating on key initiatives and strategic planning.  
 Other contributions and projects, as determined.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

Excellent interpersonal, communication and counseling skills.  
 Highest ethical standards, ability to exercise discretion, confidentiality and exemplary judgment in dealing with sensitive and difficult situations.  
 Knowledge of legal processes and the inner workings of large law firms.  
 Excellent oral and written communication skills with ability to write and speak persuasively.  
 Strong public speaking and presentation skills.  
 Empathetic listener and creative problem-solver.  
 Professional demeanor and maturity.  
 Detail-oriented and organized.  
 Strong follow through.  
 Ability to multi-task.  
 Ability to prioritize projects and strong time management skills.

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:**

4+ years at a large law firm or with coaching experience (working with lawyers).  
 Undergraduate degree required.  
 JD and counseling certification preferred.  
 Previous career services and/or associate development experience.  
 Career counseling experience at large law firm preferred.

## **Location(s)**

New York

## **Time Type**

Full time

[Retrieved from LinkedIn on September 16, 2018]

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Does your firm use coaching for its lawyers?
  - Yes
  - No
  
2. Does your firm intend to start using coaching in the next 12 months?
  - Yes
  - No
  
3. On what particular coaching areas?
  - Career development
  - Career transitions
  - Business development
  - Communication
  - Delegation
  - Diversity issues
  - Executive presence
  - Giving feedback
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Leadership
  - New partner
  - Organizational skills
  - Parental leave/on ramp/off ramp
  - Path to partnerships
  - Presentation skills/public speaking
  - Stress management/resilience
  - Teamwork/people management
  - Time management
  - Work-life balance/wellness
  - Other (please specify)
  
4. We do not intend to start using coaching because:
  - We have no current or anticipated needs.
  - We lack the budget.
  - Our culture would not support it.
  - We have had negative experiences with coaching previously.
  - We don't see the value of coaching.
  - Other (please specify)

5. Does your firm have any annual or other regular coaching programs aimed at specific groups within the firm (e.g., new partners, women partners, diverse associates)?

- Yes
- No

6. Please specify group(s), frequency and topic(s):

7. Does your firm use group coaching?

- Yes
- No

8. On what particular coaching areas?

- Career development
- Career transitions
- Business development
- Communication
- Delegation
- Diversity issues
- Executive presence
- Giving feedback
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- New partner
- Organizational skills
- Parental leave/on ramp/off ramp
- Path to partnerships
- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Stress management/resilience
- Teamwork/people management
- Time management
- Work-life balance/wellness
- Other (please specify)



9. Does your firm have one or more internal coaches?

Other (please specify)

10. How many internal coaches does your firm have?

- One
- Two
- 3-5
- 5+

11. Does your firm's internal coach have a J.D.?

- Yes
- No

If more than one, please answer in relation to each coach (e.g., Coach #1, Coach #2):

12. Is your firm's internal coach certified?

- Yes - ICF
- Yes - CTI
- Yes - IPEC
- Yes - Other
- No
- Don't know

If more than one, please answer in relation to each coach (e.g., Coach #1, Coach #2):

13. Is your internal coach full-time or part-time?

- Full-time
- Part-time

If more than one, please answer in relation to each coach (e.g., Coach #1, Coach #2):

14. What percentage of your internal coach's schedule is devoted to coaching?

- 100%
- 75-99%
- 50 to 74%
- 25 to 59%
- Less than 25%

If more than one, please answer in relation to each coach (e.g., Coach #1, Coach #2):

15. If your firm's internal coach has other responsibilities at the firm, what are they?

- Diversity
- HR
- Professional development
- Talent management
- Training
- Recruiting

If more than one, please answer in relation to each coach (e.g., Coach #1, Coach #2):

16. What topics do(es) your internal coach(es) currently coach on?

- Career development
- Career transitions
- Business development
- Communication
- Delegation
- Diversity issues
- Executive presence
- Giving feedback
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- New partner
- Organizational skills
- Parental leave/on ramp/off ramp
- Path to partnerships
- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Stress management/resilience
- Teamwork/people management
- Time management
- Work-life balance/wellness
- Other (please specify)

17. To whom do(es) your internal coach(es) provide coaching?

- Firm leadership
- Partners
- Counsel
- Associates
- Staff attorney
- Alumni
- Administrative staff

18. Are there topics or groups on which your internal coach(es) focus(es)?

- Yes
- No

19. Please specify the groups and/or topics:

20. What job title(s) do(es) your internal coach(es) have?

21. Does your firm engage external coaches?

- Yes
- No

22. What do the firm's external coaches currently coach on?

- Career development
- Career transitions
- Business development
- Communication
- Delegation
- Diversity issues
- Executive presence
- Giving feedback
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- New partner
- Organizational skills
- Parental leave/on ramp/off ramp
- Path to partnerships
- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Stress management/resilience
- Teamwork/people management
- Time management
- Work-life balance/wellness
- Other (please specify)

23. To whom do your external coaches provide coaching?

- Firm leadership
- Partners
- Counsel
- Associates
- Staff attorney
- Alumni
- Administrative staff

24. Based on your experience, how effective has coaching been in achieving organizational and individual goals?

- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not so effective
- Not at all effective
- Comments:

25. Are there any areas the firm is considering providing coaching on in the next 12 months?

- Career development
- Career transitions
- Business development
- Communication
- Delegation
- Diversity issues
- Executive presence
- Giving feedback
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- New partner
- Organizational skills
- Parental leave/on ramp/off ramp
- Path to partnerships
- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Stress management/resilience
- Teamwork/people management
- Time management
- Work-life balance/wellness
- Other (please specify)

26. What trends do you see emerging in relation to coaching within law firms?

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Note: In our "Learning from Other Industries" pull-outs, we have drawn from reports on coaching on the corporate sector, including quoting from the American Management Association's report, 'Coaching: A Global Study of Successful Practices' cited above.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> 'COACHING A Global Study of Successful Practices Current Trends and Future Possibilities 2008-2018', American Management Association

<sup>2</sup> 'The Lawyer Personality: Why Lawyers Are Skeptical', November 16, 2015 by Dr. Larry Richard at <http://www.abalcc.org/2015/11/16/the-lawyer-personality-why-lawyers-are-skeptical/>

<sup>3</sup> This phrase is borrowed from the AMA's 'COACHING A Global Study of Successful Practices Current Trends and Future Possibilities 2008-2018'

<sup>4</sup> In the same way that coaching is an umbrella term, so is "counseling". The ACA (American Council for Counseling) which represents 30 major US-based counseling organizations states that counseling "is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals." That is pretty broad! Retrieved from <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/20-20-a-vision-for-the-future-of-counseling/consensus-definition-of-counseling>

<sup>5</sup> For the distinction between coaching and therapy, see CTI's 'Coaching vs. Therapy: What Are the Differences and When Do You Refer?' at <https://coactive.com/learning-hub/fundamentals/res/topics/FUN-Coaching-vs-Therapy.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> 'In Need of a Mentor, Coach—or Both?' by John T. Mooney, ACC, SPHR, Consultative Source Jun 10, 2011 Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/organizational-and-employee-development/pages/mentorcoachorboth.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Take the example of the NALP forms (Organizational Snapshots) which appear in the annual Directory of Legal Employers. These forms, completed by law firms every year, ask a series of questions related to professional development including whether the firm has a coaching/mentoring program. This is an example of how the terms are often used in ways that do not clearly distinguish them from one other.

<sup>8</sup> The traditional view of a mentor as a more senior, more experienced colleague (who plays an advisory role) is itself now incomplete given the evolution of peer mentoring and reverse mentoring.

<sup>9</sup> 'The 6th Ridler Report', published in 2016 in the UK by Ridler & Co, concluded based on data from over a hundred "blue chip" organizations including UK law firms that 70% of organizations were using internal coaching with a further 20% planning or considering use of internal coaches within one to three years.

<sup>10</sup> In its 2016 Global Coaching Study, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) estimated 53,300 professional coach practitioners worldwide - compared with 30,000 in 2007 - of whom 47,700 were estimated active.

<sup>11</sup> 'The coaching scorecard: A holistic approach to evaluating the benefits of business coaching' by M. Leedham, The Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 3(2), 30-44 (2005) as referenced in the AMA report cited above.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the ICF's core competencies: <https://coachfederation.org/core-competencies>

<sup>13</sup> Phillips, R. (1995) Coaching for Higher Development, Executive Development, 8 (7), 5-7 as referenced by 'What You Need to Know About Coaching Services' by Herb Stevenson retrieved from <http://www.clevelandconsultinggroup.com/articles/coaching-services.php>

<sup>14</sup> Rakstad reported in her article cited above that law firms "use surveys where coaching clients self-rate behaviors (before and after coaching), by tracking employee retention, and by reviewing feedback from the coach and/or other key stakeholders".

<sup>15</sup> 'Building a coaching culture: A development journey for organisational development' by Jonathan Passmore Klaudia Jastrzebska, Coaching Review, 2011