



# A measurable impact

In these unprecedented times, how can organisations get the support to navigate changes and uncertainties? Professor Erik de Haan has an answer

**T**here have been many studies that show coaching can support organisations and employees during moments of change and transition.

It's been shown that coaching, both by leaders and by external coaches, can have a measurable impact on business results and personal effectiveness.

A lot of the research over the years has been showing enhanced 360-feedback scores: peers, managers and self-scores tended to improve with coaching above those same ratings for the control group of managers without coaching. Moreover, coaching seems to produce demonstrably increased self-motivation and resilience in many studies.


I'd like to quote some of the best studies published over the last decade that aren't so well known with business managers and even some of the coaches themselves. Three of the best studies show there's a lot of evidence that coaching can help in times of stress and pressures – here are some examples from three of the best research articles, suggesting coaching can help with:

- **Efficiency:** eg, in call centres, operators who have regular coaching conversations with their supervisors, make net time savings of a couple of minutes on their 1000 calls at the end of the day, despite the additional time they need to be coached on the job (*Liu et al, 2010*). These small savings add up to considerable ones over time, making \$18 per month per supervisor over the additional cost for coaching!
- **Sales:** pharma reps gain on average 10% better goals achievement if their manager was skilled at coaching (*Dahling et al, 2016*).
- **Coping when you are in transition:** preventative coaching helps increase life and work satisfaction and also reduce absence through sickness days in the year, with an average 15% days a year (*Duijts et al, 2008*).

My own recent work has demonstrated coaching effectiveness through the eyes of senior managers, their coaches and their line managers alike (*De Haan et al, 2019*), as compared with the scores for our randomised control group. This research was carried out with senior female managers in a large pharma corporation. One of the most remarkable outcomes of the study was that when we measured personality characteristics before and after the six months of executive coaching, there were two significant and beneficial effects on personality derailers in leadership, something that's highly relevant at top levels of organisational leadership:

- Executive coaching made a progressive, significant effect on the following personality aspects. Prudence went up and Excitable overdrive patterns went down significantly with coaching and only with coaching. These are some first indications that executive coaching can have a positive effect even on personality. This result seems to say that effective coaching has a small but significant **calming, balancing, and responsibility-enhancing effect on personality.**

Taken together, these research results indicate that executive coaching makes a difference in sustaining and making the most of profound change – just like general fitness does, or mindfulness meditation. If you've been coached, you probably know this already.

But if you haven't, and your life and work have just been profoundly affected by a crisis, coaching can help make a difference. Crisis in ancient Greek means judgement, decision or turning point – traditionally a judgement made of you, that you cannot influence, eg, by the Greek gods. In my view, our only answer to such a tough situation is to rebalance, reflect and re-emerge stronger. And that's exactly what coaching can help you do.\* 

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\* This article is adapted from a recent Ashridge blog

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