

Optimising performance top reason for getting coaching, finds ICF study

By Liz Hall, Coaching at Work magazine

Enhancing work performance is the top reason for seeking coaching, according to the 2014 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study.

Following on from previous research by the International Coach Federation (ICF), the latest study provides expanded insights into the minds and motivations of coaching consumers around the globe. The survey was carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the ICF among 18,810 individuals representing 25 countries.

Among all respondents who had participated in a coach relationship, the top reason cited for seeking coaching was to optimize individual/team work performance (42 per cent), followed by expanding career opportunities (33 per cent), increasing self-esteem/self-confidence (31 per cent), improving business management strategies (29 per cent) and managing work/life balance (27 per cent). Men were more likely than women to receive coaching to expand professional opportunities, while women were more likely than men to seek to improve work/life balance.

Researchers found that although men were slightly more likely than women to participate in a coaching relationship, nearly half of women who had not been coached but were aware of the profession would consider coaching as a way to meet their personal and professional goals.

While 83 per cent of respondents who'd participated in a coaching relationship said they thought it was "somewhat" or "very" important for coaches to hold a credential, awareness of a coach's credential status varied by demographic. Consumers aged 25- 34 were more likely than older counterparts to state with certainty that their coach held some form of credential or certification. Meanwhile, regardless of age, more than half of female coaching consumers said they recognized the credentials held by their coaches. Meanwhile, awareness of coaching is highest (70 per cent) in the "Big Four" (Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US), finds the research.

Countries were categorised in the Executive Summary into three groups:

- The "Big Four" (collectively accounting for nearly two-thirds of ICF Members): Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States
- Continental Europe (excluding United Kingdom): Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey
- Remaining countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa

Overall awareness of coaching in continental European countries was low (49 per cent). However, awareness has risen by five per cent in the Big Four countries, compared to the 2010 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study.

Awareness of the ICF itself was highest among respondents in non-Big Four, non-European nations. Only 16 per cent of respondents from the Big Four countries and 14 per cent of respondents from continental Europe said they were aware of ICF, compared to 34 per cent in the Remaining Countries group. Further information about the 2014 Global Consumer Awareness Study, including data tables and a link to purchase the executive summary, can be found at Coachfederation.org/consumerstudy2014