



TRAINING | COACHING | CONSULTING | STRATEGIC PLANNING

# Unlocking Potential: Understanding Professional Coaching's Exceptional Return on Investment

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A photograph of two women in a professional setting. One woman with blonde hair is smiling and looking towards the other woman, who has short blonde hair and is seen from the back. They appear to be in a meeting or coaching session.

# Understanding Professional Coaching's Exceptional Return on Investment

## OVERVIEW

Today's business environment is defined by non-stop change, rapid technological advancement, and new expectations for employing organizations and their leadership teams by newer entrants to the workforce. As a result, professional business coaching has emerged as an increasingly popular - and powerful - tool to unlock leadership potential and drive organizational excellence.

This White Paper will explore the value of utilizing professional coaches, particularly those accredited by the International Coaching Federation (ICF), to achieve an exceptional organizational return on investment.

## CONTENTS

1. What is Professional Coaching?
2. The Benefits of a Professional Coaching Relationship
3. Understanding the Organizational ROI from Professional Coaching
4. Conclusion



# Understanding Professional Coaching's Exceptional Return on Investment

## What is Professional Coaching?

To begin, let's set the stage for what professional coaching is. The ICF defines professional coaching:

"...as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity, and leadership."

X5 Management offers professional coaching with specific target audiences in mind:

**Executive Coaching.** Designed specifically for the C-Suite or executive leader who is routinely required to make decisions which impact the overall vision, direction, and culture of an organization.

**Leadership Coaching.** Can be tailored to support the needs of any people leader, particularly the long-time subject matter expert, who is most effective when consistently displaying a mindset focused on "leading and inspiring" rather than "doing."

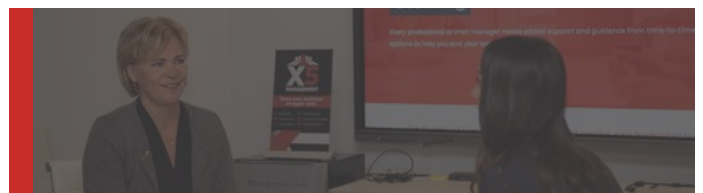
**Sales Coaching.** Is often a combination of leadership and sales growth supports to improve sales professionals' performance in a context of effective customer relationships which ensures remarkable service/customer satisfaction and encourages stronger customer loyalty.

**Business Coaching.** Is generally targeted towards the small business owner as a sounding board in the key decision-making processes that will shape the growth and development of an emerging organization.

## Why does International Coaching Federation Accreditation Matter?

Especially since the onset of the global pandemic, demand for professional coaching services has been exponential. If your organization is considering the benefits of professional coaches, the sheer volume of available options may seem overwhelming. Fortunately, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) has established a globally-recognized accreditation to assist you with your decision-making.

For many years now, the ICF has set the gold standard for coaching accreditation. The ICF's organizational values of Professionalism; Collaboration; Humanity; and Equity transparently communicate what it means to represent the highest standards of professional coaching. Further, every ICF-accredited coach is expected to adhere to the ethical commitments of Responsibility to Clients; Responsibility to Practice and Performance; Responsibility to Professionalism; and Responsibility to Society. Embedded within this ethics framework is an expectation for ICF-accredited coaches to: commit to the full confidentiality of all coaching interactions with their clients (including mindfulness of any potential conflict of interest situations); ensure all coaching interactions are undertaken in a context of ethical behaviour; be responsible for clear, appropriate, and culturally-sensitive boundaries in coaching interactions; and to execute coaching interactions in a context of fairness and honesty, without discrimination.

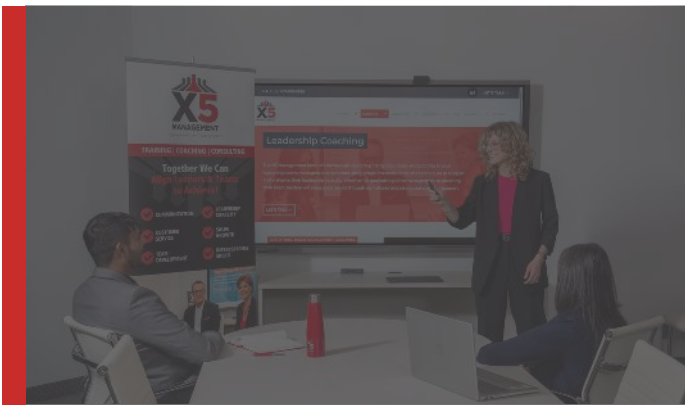




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The process of becoming an ICF-accredited coach involves comprehensive training, mentorship, and evaluation. This guarantees that coaches possess the necessary skills and knowledge to drive meaningful change.

Hiring ICF-accredited coaches ensures that organizations benefit from the highest standards of coaching excellence. The ICF offers three levels of credentials, each of which represents a progressive degree of expertise, experience, and training: Associate Certified Coach; Professional Certified Coach; and Master Certified Coach.



## The Benefits of a Professional Coaching Relationship?

With careful consideration given to the specific context of any given client's workplace and/or individual needs, the professional coaching process as governed by the ICF is designed to enhance the client's performance, leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. ICF-accredited professional coaches are trained and certified to use various tools and techniques to facilitate the coaching process, such as active listening, powerful questioning, goal setting, feedback, and accountability. Professional coaching is not the same as consulting, mentoring, or counselling; rather, it is a distinct service that empowers clients to discover and implement their own solutions.

ICF-accredited professional coaches have therefore become a vital resource to organizational leaders navigating a rapidly evolving business environment. Professional coaching offers a personalized approach to leadership development that aligns with the unique needs of individuals and organizational teams.

As the professional coaching sector continues to grow, so too, does the body of research devoted to understanding the benefits of organizational leaders engaging in professional coaching relationships with accredited coaches. A number of additional studies and surveys have sought to more clearly define the benefits of coaching from the client perspective.

Among the results to date:

- Professional coaching clients report improvements in their personal abilities to better communicate and more effectively connect with their teams; to express greater confidence in their relationships with their colleagues at all levels of the organizational hierarchy; and to ask better questions and more actively listen in support of enhanced decision-making processes (Blanchard, 2023);
- Clients of professional coaching report between a 13-24 percentage increase in their personal levels of focus, productivity, goal attainment, and overall performance (BetterUp, 2023);
- In one specific study using the backdrop of the uniquely stressful health care sector, professional coaching was found to be an effective proactive intervention to reduce the risk of symptoms of burnout in physicians (Institute of Coaching, 2023).



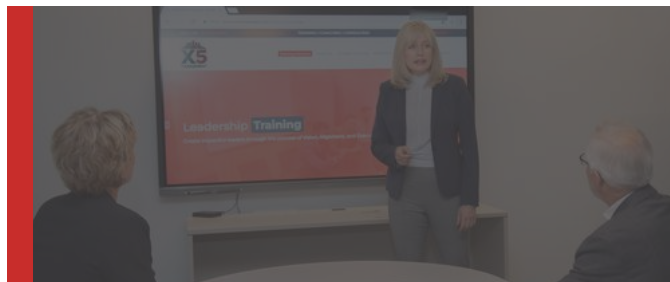
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## Understanding the Organizational ROI from Professional Coaching

There is no doubt that any individual leader can greatly benefit from the development of a relationship with an ICF-accredited professional coach. However, the benefits don't stop at the individual level. Indeed, investment in an ICF-accredited professional coach for any leader can lead to an exceptional organizational return on investment for the larger organization.

**Improved Leadership Capacity.** To begin, ICF-accredited professional coaches play a pivotal role in developing effective leaders to support the achievement of key organizational objectives. Through the personalization of the coaching process, organizational leaders gain insights into their strengths and areas for improvement, enhancing their decision-making capabilities and emotional intelligence. This, in turn, supports an elevated level of team performance. In fact, research data has indicated that teams with highly effective leaders outperform their counterparts by 52% (BetterUp, 2023).

**More Effective Teamwork.** Particularly in a post-pandemic world where hybrid and remote work has become the new normal, organizations can't be effective in achieving their goals if they don't foster a strong sense of teamwork.



Clients have attested to the positive impact ICF-accredited professional coaches have had in developing leadership skills which lead to improved communication, trust, and collaboration practices among their team members (ICF, 2009).

**Increased Employee Engagement and Retention.** Employee engagement is a critical factor in organizational success. Coaching empowers employees to take ownership of their development, increasing motivation and job satisfaction. Data indicates that organizations which invest in professional coaching services enjoy higher retention rates, as employees feel more engaged in their work and report higher job satisfaction (IPEC Coaching, 2022).

**Greater Organizational Resilience and Adaptability.** With the pace and substantive nature of changes taking place from the perspectives of human resource management, technology, and customer demands, organizations must be resilient and adaptable in order to survive and thrive. ICF-accredited professional coaches support their clients to build organizational resilience and adaptability through appreciative inquiry processes and practices which serve to support an overall organizational culture of continuous improvement and learning (CoachHub, 2024).

**Still not convinced?** Consider this – a landmark study by Metrix Global in 2001 found that professional coaching produced an organizational return of at least 529% - that translates to a minimum of a \$5 return for every dollar spent on a professional coaching service!



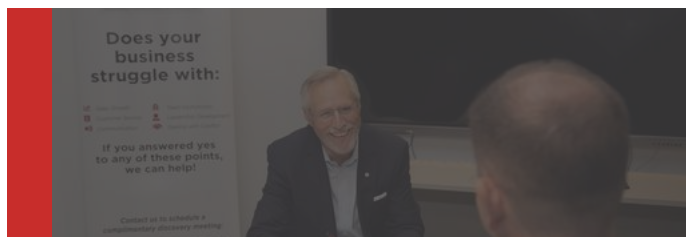
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## Conclusion

In the context of the ongoing war for talent, it is imperative for organizational leaders to enhance their key leadership skills to create workplace cultures which meet the changing needs and demands of a new workforce; and to stop the revolving door of talent. Investment in professional coaching services is one avenue which can yield significant returns in pursuit of both of these goals. While traditionally conducted in a one-on-one setting, professional coaching services can yield results that go beyond the individual and have positive, lasting impacts on the larger team.

The International Coaching Federation has established a globally-recognized accreditation system for professional coaches. Companies which choose to invest in ICF-accredited coaches can be assured of a professional coaching experience that will reflect the highest levels of training.

By investing in professional coaching services, organizations can unlock potential, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and drive excellence at all levels – and can look forward to an exceptional return on investment. The X5 Management team offers a number of professional coaches to support a tailored program of service delivery for Executive Leaders, people managers at all levels of an organization, sales professionals, and small business leaders. Please contact us to learn more about how we can Align Your Leaders and Teams to Achieve!



## About the Author: Jason Donkersgoed, Executive Coach

Jason Donkersgoed is a distinguished leader with a remarkable track record spanning over two decades across various industries. With a wealth of experience in Employee Experience & Engagement, Sales & Business Development, Business Turnarounds, and Leadership Development, Jason brings unparalleled expertise to his clients.

Throughout his career, Jason has remained steadfast in his commitment to fostering top-tier employee engagement, recognizing its pivotal role in driving exceptional service delivery and organizational growth. He champions the belief that outstanding employee experiences are the cornerstone of sustained success.

Committed to giving back to his community, Jason serves on the Economic Development Lethbridge Board of Directors; and on the International Coaching Federation's Coaching Education Global Board of Directors, providing him with a global and multicultural perspective. He has also dedicated his time to various charitable endeavours, including KidSport, Kids Help Phone, and The Boys and Girls Club.

