2022

STATE OF

AGILE COACHING REPORT

Vol. 2.0

An Analysis of the Emerging Profession of Agile Coaching

Scrum Alliance®

ICAgile
International Consortium for Agile

BUSINESS AGILITY INSTITUTE

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Preface

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Welcome to the second edition of the State of Agile Coaching report! The inaugural edition launched a journey to advance the profession of agile coaching by providing clarity on the true value agile coaches can provide to organizations, and the associated knowledge, expertise, and skills necessary to achieve that value.

This time, we honed in further on measuring the impact of agile coaching. We believe this focus serves both the organizations looking to hire coaches, and the individuals who have chosen agile coaching as a career path.

The Business Agility Institute, Scrum Alliance, and ICAgile have collaborated on this report out of a shared desire to amplify the impact agile coaches have in helping organizations achieve their desired purpose in the world.

This report shows that agile coaching remains a growing field, the demand for qualified coaches continues to increase, and coaches are making measurable improvements within organizations. Notably, coaches believe the biggest impact they are making is in shifting an organization towards an agile mindset and culture. Interestingly, they also find this to be the most challenging shift to make,

and one of the biggest impediments to agility if not achieved. Coaches also note obstacles with legacy command and control structures in addition to difficulty in engaging directly with leadership. The complexity of these challenges, as we look to promote agility more broadly across organizations, calls upon a deeper level of skill and experience than what was asked of agile coaches in earlier stages of team-based agility.

With business agility becoming the new normal and a prerequisite for survival in today's complex world, the need for coaching in support of organizational change is here to stay. This requires us to look at coaching beyond the way we've looked at it before. There is a greater need for coaches to work at different levels of the organization - specializing in leadership coaching, business coaching, team coaching, and technical coaching - and a need for coaches to work together to support an organization's journey. As these specializations emerge, it is also imperative to bring clarity to the competencies needed by the various types of coaches.

Not only does this honor the agile coaching profession through its growth, but it also helps organizations gain clarity on how they can engage coaches in support of their journey.

"Business agility is a set of organizational capabilities, behaviors, and ways of working that affords your business (or organization) the freedom, flexibility, and resilience to achieve its purpose. No matter what the future brings."
—Business Agility Institute

State of Agile Coaching

If you would like to learn more about the statistical methodology underpinning the results or see the raw statistical report, visit: http://businessagility.institute/state-of-agile-coaching.

THE FOCUS OF THIS REPORT

This year our research explored the question, "How do agile coaches (and the organizations they serve) measure impact?" Whether you are an agile coach yourself or are someone looking to hire an agile coach, you likely want to understand how much of a difference agile coaching is making to your organization's ultimate goal of delivering value to your customers.

For the purposes of this report, we define an agile coach as someone who "helps organizations, teams, and individuals adopt agile practices and methods while embedding agile values and mindsets", while also recognizing that an agile coach is more than a simple definition. It's a career and a calling.

The answer depended in large part on the experience level of the agile coach. We surveyed coaches who are just getting started (those with less than one year of experience), those who are building their expertise (one to three years of experience), those who have established their careers (four to six years of experience), those who are pushing new boundaries for themselves and their clients (six to ten years of experience), and those who are masters at the craft (more than ten years of experience). The overall findings are shown in the summary at the end of the report.

Building on the results of the first State of Agile Coaching report, one of the core questions that this research sets out to answer is, "*What is the value of an agile coach?*". The good news is that 98% of respondents reported that coaching had a measurable impact on one or more factors in the organization.

Nature of impact by number of respondents
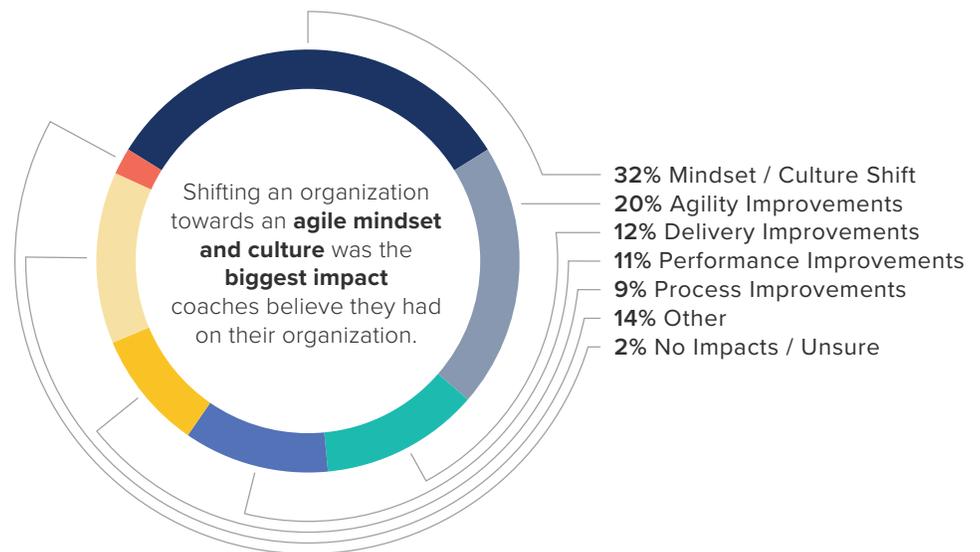
Shifting an organization towards an **agile mindset and culture** was the **biggest impact** coaches believe they had on their organization.

32% Mindset / Culture Shift
20% Agility Improvements
12% Delivery Improvements
11% Performance Improvements
9% Process Improvements
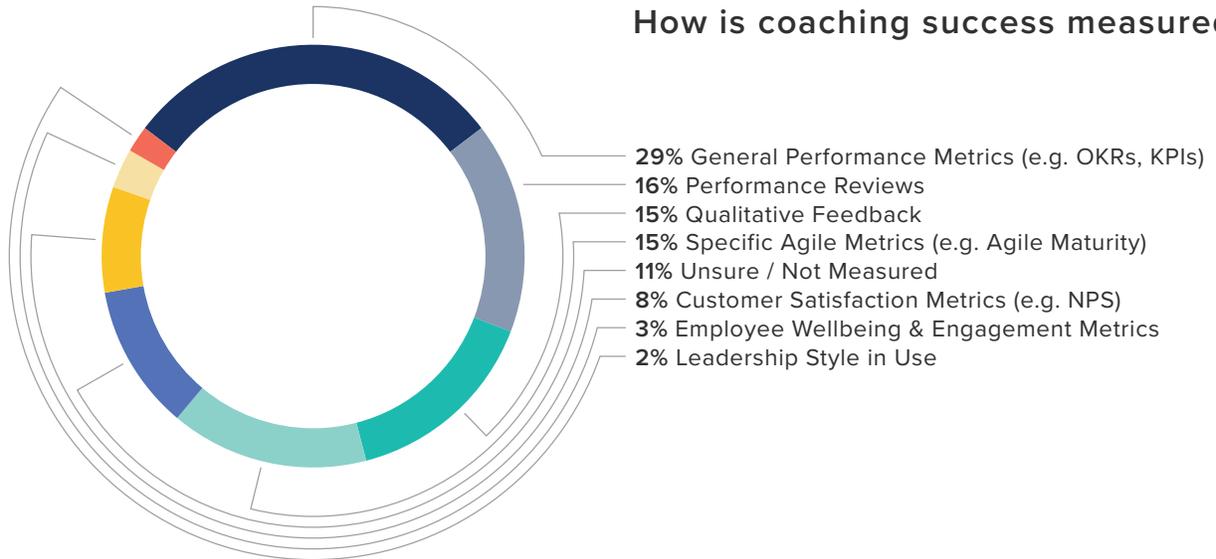**14%** Other
2% No Impacts / Unsure

Shifting an organization towards an agile mindset and culture was the biggest impact coaches believe they had on their organization. This holds true whether the coach was measured with Individual, Team, or Organization level metrics. Coaches measured on overall Product improvement, however, tended to believe they had greater impact on improving delivery or operational processes than mindset.

Continuing the trend from last year, rather than specialized agile metrics (e.g. agile maturity), most coaches were measured against overall organizational performance metrics (e.g. business unit OKRs). A surprisingly high number of coaches (11.3%) were not measured against any performance metrics. The majority of them had been working for organizations that were less than three years into the agile journey.

Coaches measured on overall product improvement tended to have a greater impact on improving delivery or operational processes.

How is coaching success measured?

29% General Performance Metrics (e.g. OKRs, KPIs)
16% Performance Reviews
15% Qualitative Feedback
15% Specific Agile Metrics (e.g. Agile Maturity)
11% Unsure / Not Measured
8% Customer Satisfaction Metrics (e.g. NPS)
3% Employee Wellbeing & Engagement Metrics
2% Leadership Style in Use

Regardless of how a coach was measured, their overall perceived impact on the organization remained consistent. However, there was a clear upwards trend in a coach's perceived impact the more years of coaching experience they had.
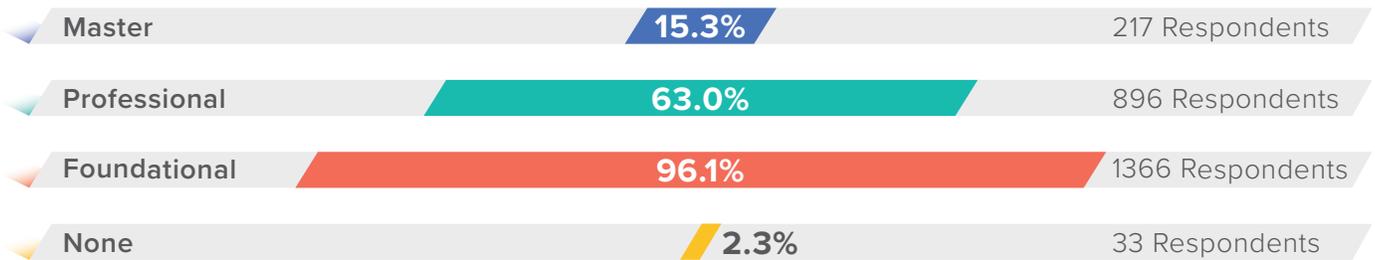
Agile and Coaching Certifications

Agile coaches were asked to list all the certifications they have obtained; both pertaining to agile coaching as well as broader agile certifications. 98% of respondents reported holding one or more agile certifications, including foundational, professional, and master-level certifications. While only making up 5% (4.5%) of total certifications held, 15% (15.3%) of respondents hold at least one master-level certification.

19% (19.1%) of respondents hold at least one dedicated coaching certification (e.g. CEC[SM], ICP-ACC, or ICF-MCC). These credentialled coaches were also nearly three times as likely to have earned master-level certifications as those who have not pursued coaching-specific certifications (24.4% vs 8.3%).
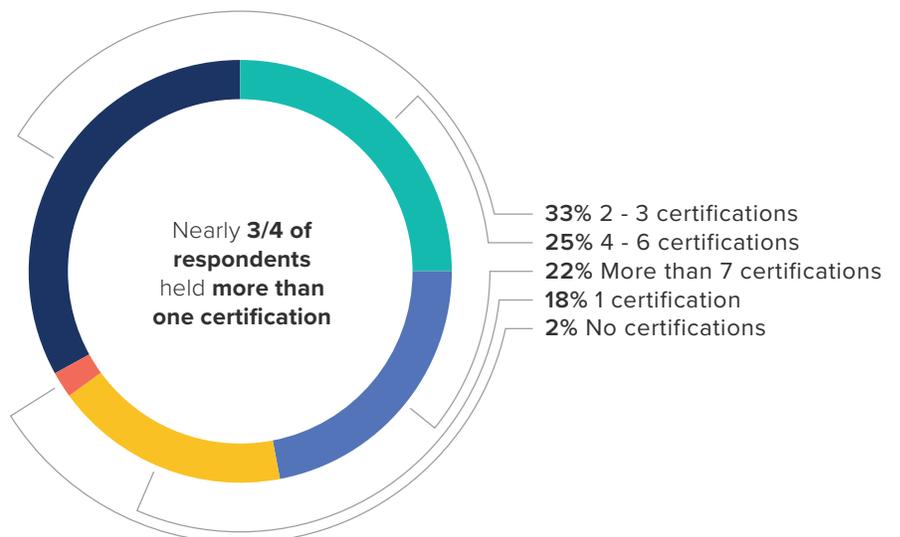
Definitions for these certification levels can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.
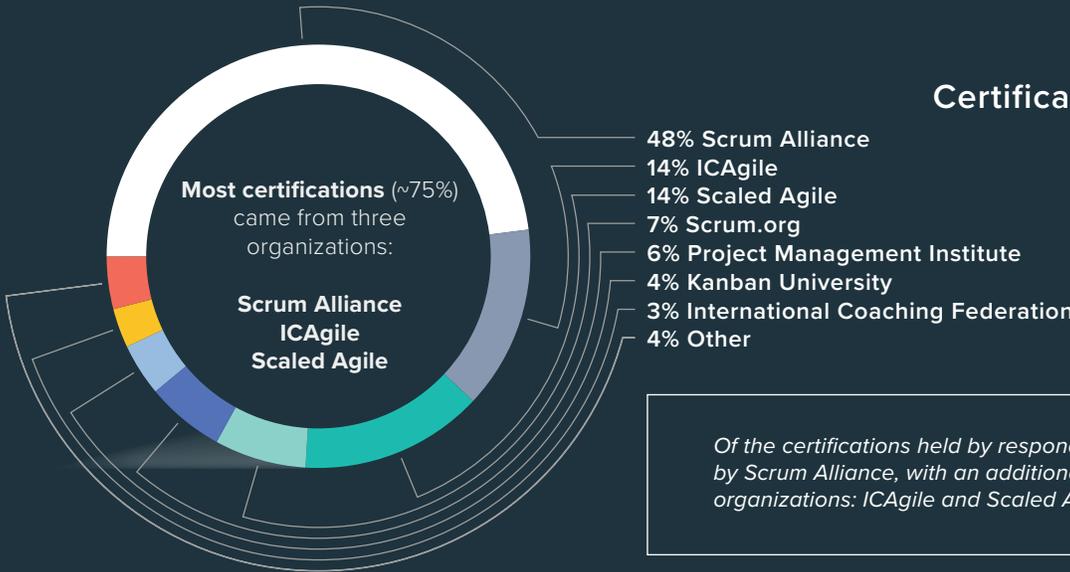
Number of certifications by level

Level	%	Respondents
Master	15.3%	217 Respondents
Professional	63.0%	896 Respondents
Foundational	96.1%	1366 Respondents
None	2.3%	33 Respondents

* Note: Respondents were able to select multiple certifications.

Number of certifications held

Nearly **3/4 of respondents** held **more than one certification**

- **33%** 2 - 3 certifications
- **25%** 4 - 6 certifications
- **22%** More than 7 certifications
- **18%** 1 certification
- **2%** No certifications

Certifications by provider

Most certifications (~75%) came from three organizations:

Scrum Alliance
ICAgile
Scaled Agile

48% Scrum Alliance
14% ICAgile
14% Scaled Agile
7% Scrum.org
6% Project Management Institute
4% Kanban University
3% International Coaching Federation
4% Other

Coaching certification by affiliation and level

When looking specifically at coaching certifications; the International Coaching Federation has the only foundation-level certification (ICF-ACC). ICAgile offers 85% of the professional-level certifications through their ICP-ACC, ICP-ATF, ICP-CAT, and ICP-ENT certifications. With both the CEC[SM] and CTC[SM] certifications, Scrum Alliance has the largest number of Master-level certification holders.

93% of all Coaching Certifications are offered by the **International Coaching Federation, ICAgile,** and **Scrum Alliance**

12%
Beginner Level Certifications

72%
Professional Level Certifications

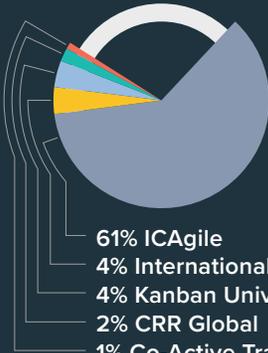**16%**
Master Level Certifications

12% International Coaching Federation

0% ICAgile
0% Scrum Alliance
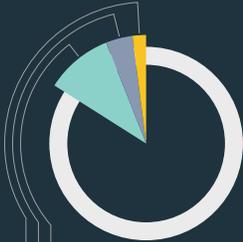0% Kanban University
0% CRR Global
0% Co-Active Training Institute

61% ICAgile
4% International Coaching Federation
4% Kanban University
2% CRR Global
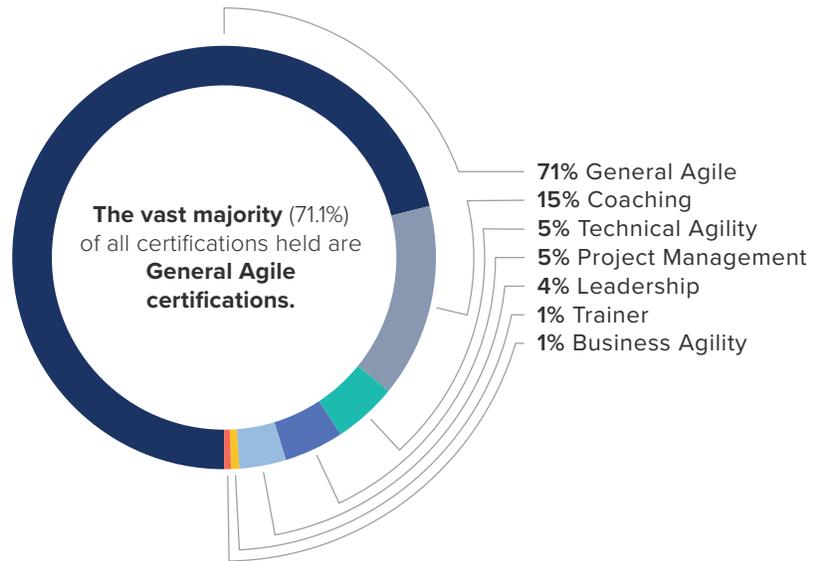**1% Co-Active Training Institute**

0% Scrum Alliance

10% Scrum Alliance
4% ICAgile
2% International Coaching Federation

0% Kanban University
0% CRR Global
0% Co-Active Training

Certifications by subject

The vast majority (71.1%) of all certifications held are **General Agile certifications.**

71% General Agile
15% Coaching
5% Technical Agility
**5%** Project Management
4% Leadership
1% Trainer
1% Business Agility

More broadly, the vast majority (71.1%) of certifi-cations held are General Agile certifications, with nearly 70% of these coming from the CSM® (Scrum Alliance), CSPO (Scrum Alliance), SA (Scaled Agile), ICP (ICAgile), and SPC (Scaled Agile) certifications.

Days spent per month in professional development

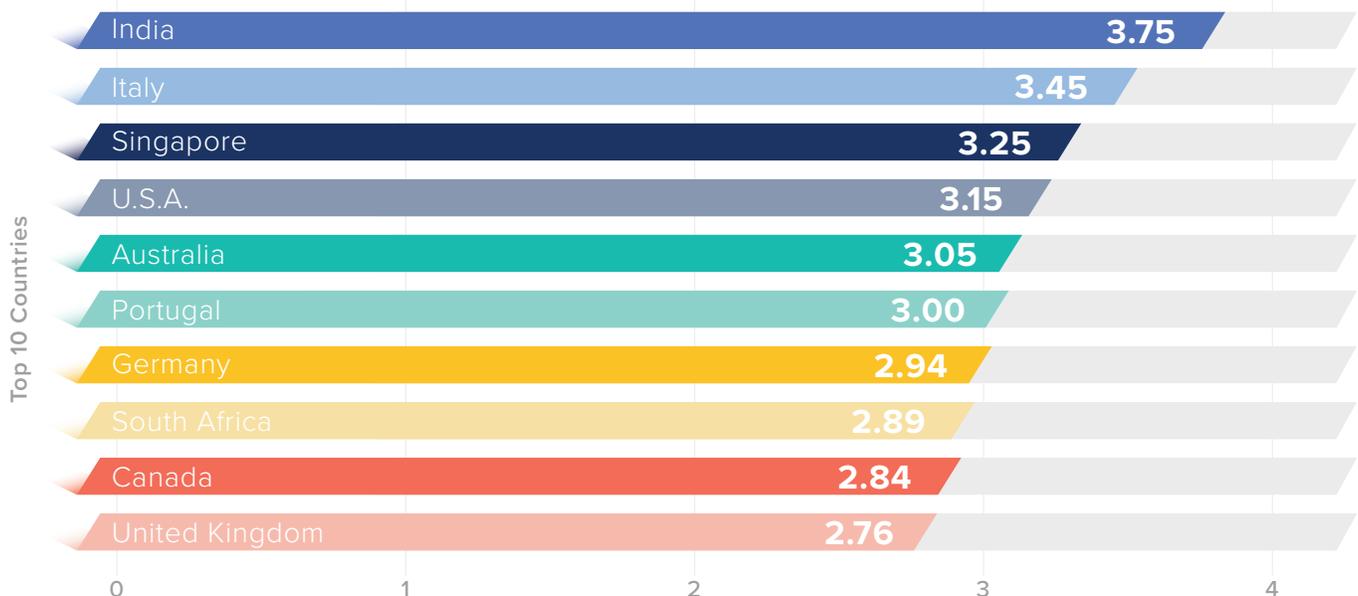| Category	Percentage
5+ Days	18%
3 - 5 Days	29%
1 - 2 Days	39%
<1 Day	13%
0 Days	1%
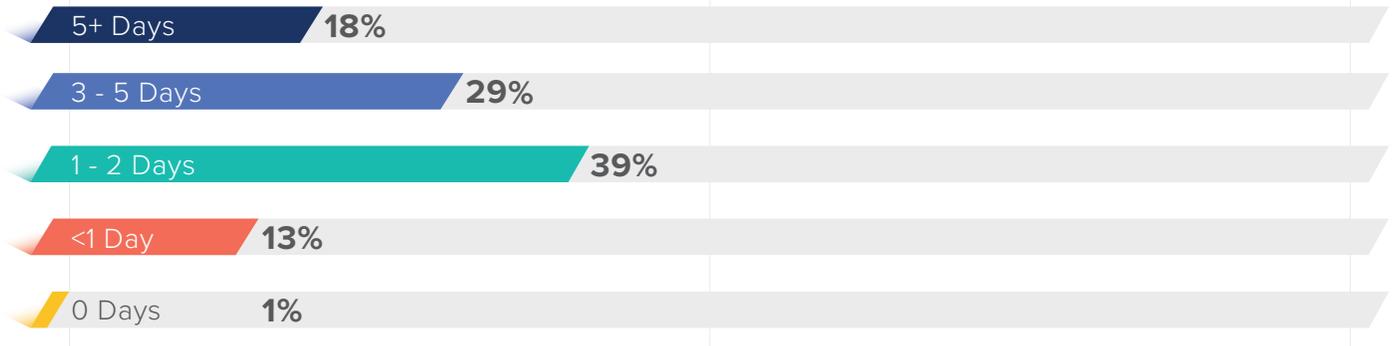
The majority of coaches report investing at least two days in professional development per month.

Continuing the trend from the first State of Agile Coaching report, contractors and consultants report spending the most time in professional development (three or more days a month on average) compared to on-staff employees (less than two days a month on average). This goes against the assumption that employees would have more opportunities to invest time in professional development.

Nearly half (47%) of agile coaches invest in learning three or more days per month.

Days of professional development per month by top-10 countries

Top 10 Countries

Country	Days
India	3.75
Italy	3.45
Singapore	3.25
U.S.A.	3.15
Australia	3.05
Portugal	3.00
Germany	2.94
South Africa	2.89
Canada	2.84
United Kingdom	2.76

State of Agile Coaching Report

Days of professional development per month by top-10 countries

Of the top ten respondent countries, Canada and the UK had the lowest time invested in ongoing professional development. The United States jumped from 10th to 4th in comparing last year's survey to this one.

We asked respondents to select all of the types of learning they invest in. The two largest types of learning have to do with "Other knowledge and skills to better serve the wider organization", and "Professional coaching skills", followed closely by "Broader and deeper knowledge of agile, frameworks, methods, and practices".

Education goals

50% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve the wider Organization
50% | Professional coaching skills
36% | Broader and deeper knowledge of agile, frameworks, methods & practices
24% | Facilitation skills
24% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve the Product Owner & Business
24% | Teaching and mentoring skills
21% | Consulting skills
19% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve Teams

* numbers add up to more than 100% as respondents could select multiple answers.

Engagement Types

65%
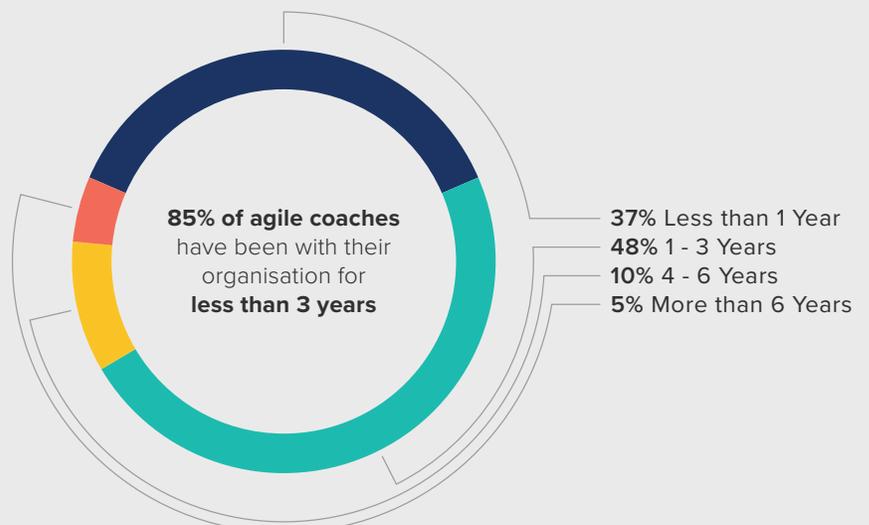Employee

17%
Independent on
direct contract

18%
On assignment from my employer
(e.g. a consultancy)

Compared with people who are just starting out and building their agile coaching expertise (zero to three years), coaches with at least four years experience are four times more likely to be a business coach and nearly 50% more likely to be consultants. By ten years, they are ten times more likely to be business coaches, and three times more likely to be a consultant.

Coaches with at least four years experience are four times more likely to be a business coach and nearly 50% more likely to be consultants.

Employment / Engagement Longevity

85% of agile coaches have been with their organisation for **less than 3 years**

37% Less than 1 Year
48% 1 - 3 Years
10% 4 - 6 Years
5% More than 6 Years
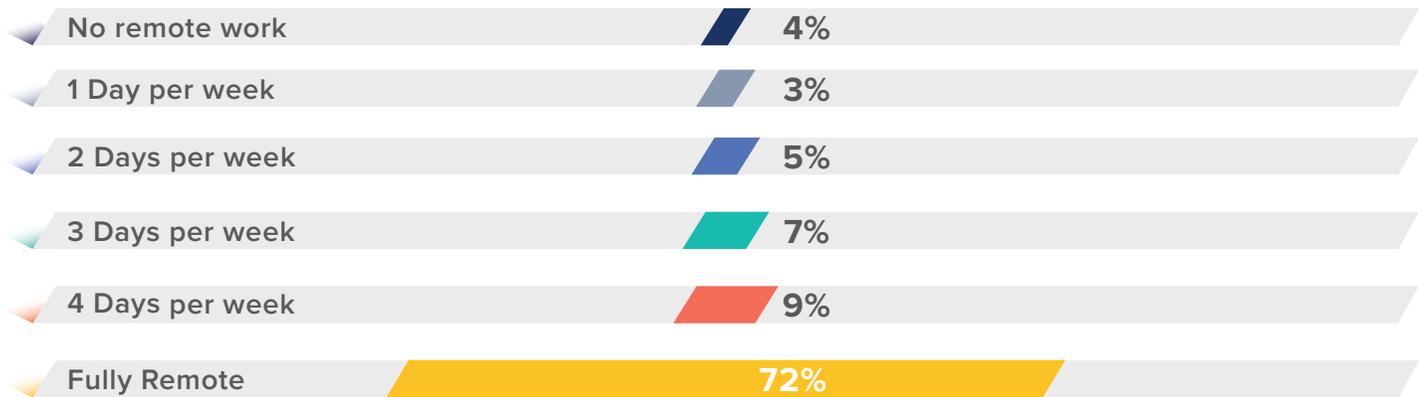
State of Agile Coaching Report

Employment / Engagement Longevity

Location-wise, China and Finland have the highest engagement longevity: 17% and 13% of respondents in these countries report working for the same organization for more than six years. No other region gets above 10%, with most of the rest sitting just under 4%. Japan has the highest turnover, with 60% of agile coaches working with their current organization for less than one year.

The Effects of Remote Work (COVID-19)

No remote work	4%
1 Day per week	3%
2 Days per week	5%
3 Days per week	7%
4 Days per week	9%
Fully Remote	72%

Given the impact of COVID-19, it is of no surprise that over 70% of respondents are fully remote at present. This is actually down 9% from the first report showing that (during 2021) more coaches were starting to work back in the office. However, the necessary shift to remote work has created additional issues with over 70% of coaches (70.9%) reporting a moderate to severe impact on their coaching effectiveness with the move to remote work.

Finding Work

Regardless of employment type (on-staff vs contract), agile coaches responded that they were most likely to find work from word-of-mouth referrals. The next most-likely channels to find work aligned to expected employment types: consultants (on assignment) through their sales team, employees through public job boards, and direct contracts through public job boards and placement agencies. There is almost no change from the 2021 State of Agile Coaching report.

Agile coaches are **more likely to find work** through **word of mouth.**

45% Word of mouth or referral
29% Public jobs boards (i.e. LinkedIn jobs)
10% Through an agency
8% Sales team within consultancy
8% As an associate of a consultancy

State of Agile Coaching Report

To fully understand the agile coaching industry, respondents were asked to voluntarily and anonymously share their overall income levels, whether an annual salary (employees) or a daily rate (contractors & consultants).
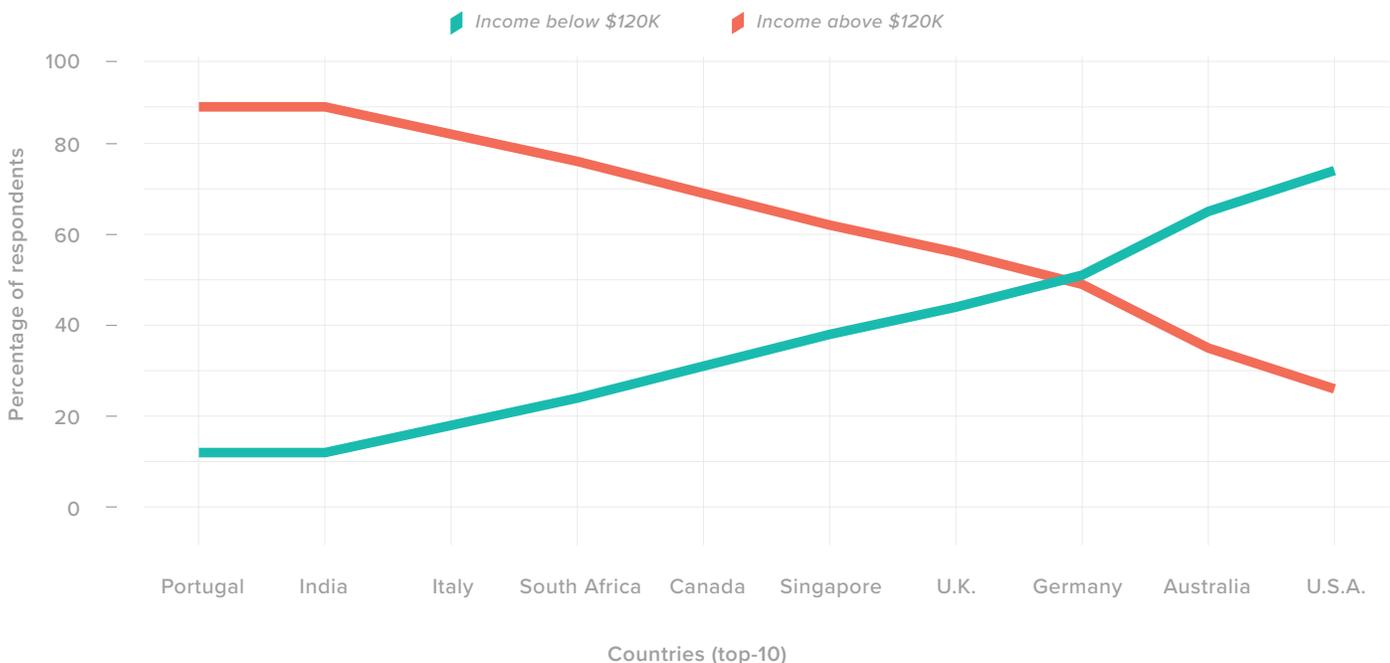
The sweet spot for compensation is 300-1500 USD per day or 50-200K USD per year. Only 3% report earning 300K or more.

Income per year	Income per day	Percentage	
Less than $20,000 USD per year	$120 USD per day	5%	
$20,000 - $50,000 USD per year	$120 - $300 USD per day	11%	
$50,000 - $120,000 USD per year	$300 - $800 USD per day	31%	
$120,000 - $200,000 USD per year	$800 - $1,500 USD per day	37%	
$200,000 - $300,000 USD per year	$1,500 - $2,500 USD per day	13%	
$300,000 - $500,000 USD per year	$2,500 - $4,000 USD per day	2%	
More than $500,000 USD per year	$4,000 USD per day	1%	

The majority of respondents report earning between $50,000 USD and $200,000 USD per year (or $300 USD to $1,500 USD day rate). A small number of respondents, mostly from Latin America and the Indian Subcontinent (5%), report earning less than $20,000 USD per year ($120 USD per day). An even smaller number of respondents (3%) report earning more than $300,000 USD per year, most of whom come from the USA, India, or Sweden.

Income levels by country (top-10)

Income below $120K   Income above $120K

Percentage of respondents

Countries (top-10)

State of Agile Coaching Report

Those with more than four years experience are more likely to earn 120K+ USD

Legend: Income below $120K, Income above $120K

Y-axis: Percentage of respondents (0 to 100)
X-axis: Years of agile coaching experience — Less than 1 year (just getting started), 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 6-10 years, 10+ years

Income levels by coach type

Legend: Income below $120K, Income above $120K

Y-axis: Percentage of respondents (0 to 100)
X-axis: Coach type — Single-Team Coaching, Technical Coaching, Multi-Team Coaching, Leadership Coaching, Business Coaching

Continuing the surprising trend from the 2021 State of Agile Coaching report, there is a significant relationship between income level and the length of time a company had been investing in their agile journey. Companies who had only just begun their agile journey (less than one year) paid measurably less for the same experience and number of certifications held by a coach. Conversely, companies who were further advanced in their agile journey were willing to pay at a higher rate.

The more experience a company has with agile, the more they pay their agile coaches

■ *Income below $120K*   ■ *Income above $120K*

Percentage of respondents

Started less than 1 year ago (just getting started)   Started 1-3 years ago   Started 4-6 years ago   Started more than 6 years ago

Years on Agile Journey

No other attribute emerged as a significant predictor of income level, including any of the three certification variables (the highest level of certification held by the respondent, the number of certifications held, and the number of different organizations they held certifications from). However, when North American data was analyzed in isolation, there was a borderline significant relationship between master-level certifications and income level, which will be further investigated in future iterations of this report.

CHALLENGES

39% Difficulty changing culture / mindset
28% Organisational structure not suited to agile
18% Resistance from management / leadership
11% Not enough time allowed for agile transformation
4% Working remotely / COVID19
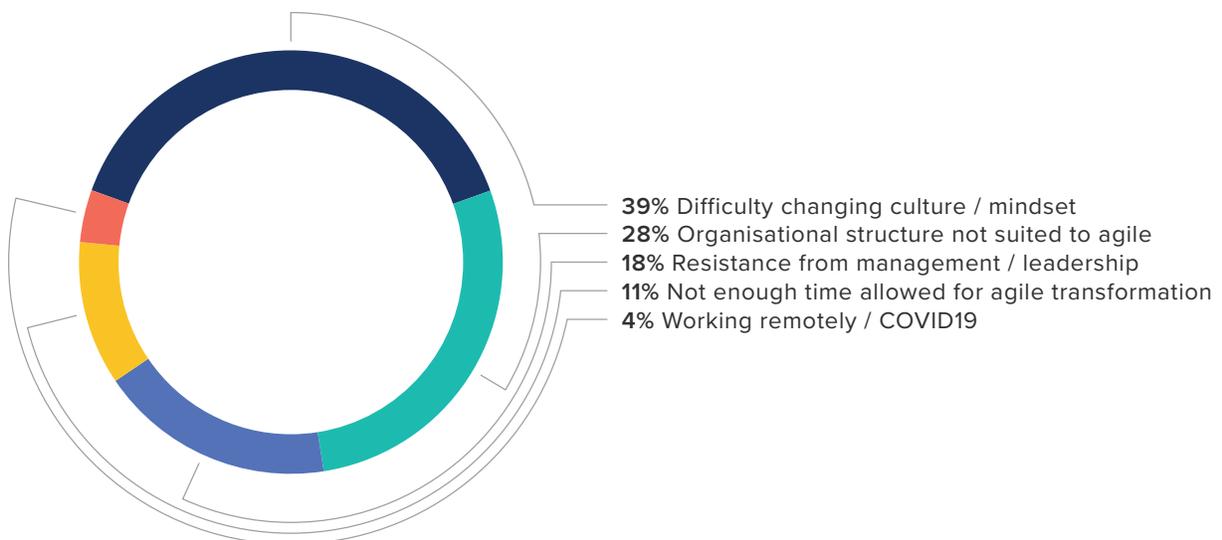
01

> "Culture and mindset shift is the greatest challenge, especially with higher levels of leadership, due to a lack of direct engagement."

Difficulty Changing Culture /Mindset

While coaches believe their biggest impact is on shifting an organization towards an agile mindset, they also felt it was the biggest challenge, regardless of the type of coaching (team, multi-team, business, or leadership). Existing mindsets were not seen as conducive to overall agility, and were also often coupled with resistance to change from those who adhered to them — especially when they were in leadership positions.

Respondents also commonly identified a lack of alignment around agility as a cause of their issues with changing culture and mindset. This included a lack of alignment throughout the organization, a lack of top-down modeling of agile practices, and a lack of overall vision for the agile transformation.

> "Management has difficulty retaining an experimental mindset in the face of challenges."

> "Legacy mindset and behaviors are still being rewarded / tolerated impeding organizational transformation."

> "The command and control structures are deeply rooted and it takes patience and time to mold individual mindsets."

> **"The org structure is a traditional hierarchy focused on delivery. When delivery pressures rise, the ability for teams to learn and mature in their agility gets left behind."**

02

> **"Too many generals. Too many north stars."**

Organizational Structure Not Suited to Agile

While culture and mindset are, overall, the greatest challenges facing most agile coaches, it is not unanimous. **Of particular note, respondents who held 1 or more Master-level certifications reported greater challenges in the suitability of the existing organizational structure for agility.**

> **"It's a classic Project to Product challenge in this company. Everything is tied to annual budgets and every single feature has its own line item funding."**
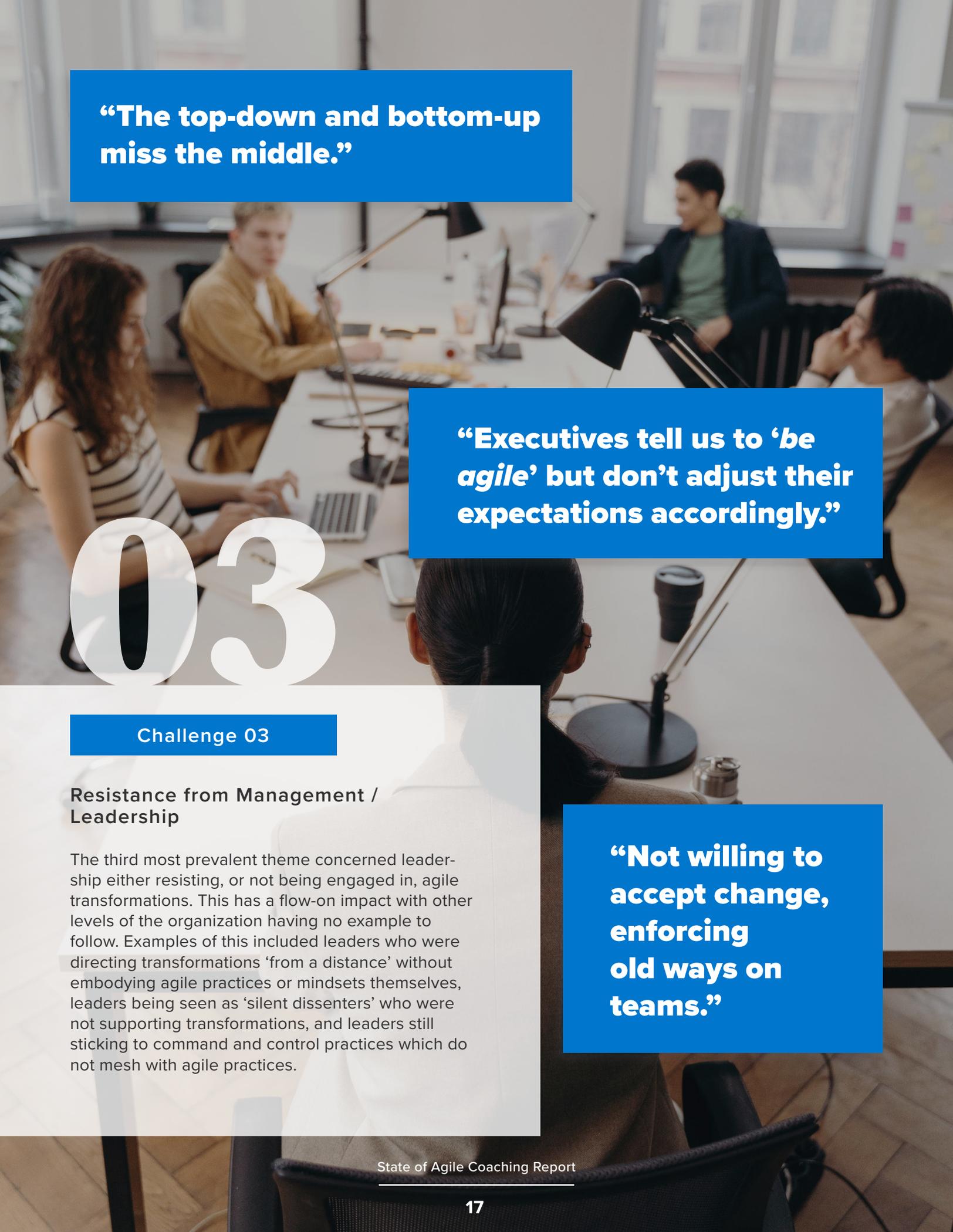
"The top-down and bottom-up miss the middle."

"Executives tell us to '*be agile*' but don't adjust their expectations accordingly."

03

Challenge 03

Resistance from Management / Leadership

The third most prevalent theme concerned leadership either resisting, or not being engaged in, agile transformations. This has a flow-on impact with other levels of the organization having no example to follow. Examples of this included leaders who were directing transformations 'from a distance' without embodying agile practices or mindsets themselves, leaders being seen as 'silent dissenters' who were not supporting transformations, and leaders still sticking to command and control practices which do not mesh with agile practices.

"Not willing to accept change, enforcing old ways on teams."

Demographics

From December 2020 to November 2021, 2130 agile coaches from 82 countries shared their insights and experiences into their coaching work, and the broader industry.

Types of Coaches Responding

Respondents reported coaching at all levels of the organization; from individual teams through to executives, and across business functions.
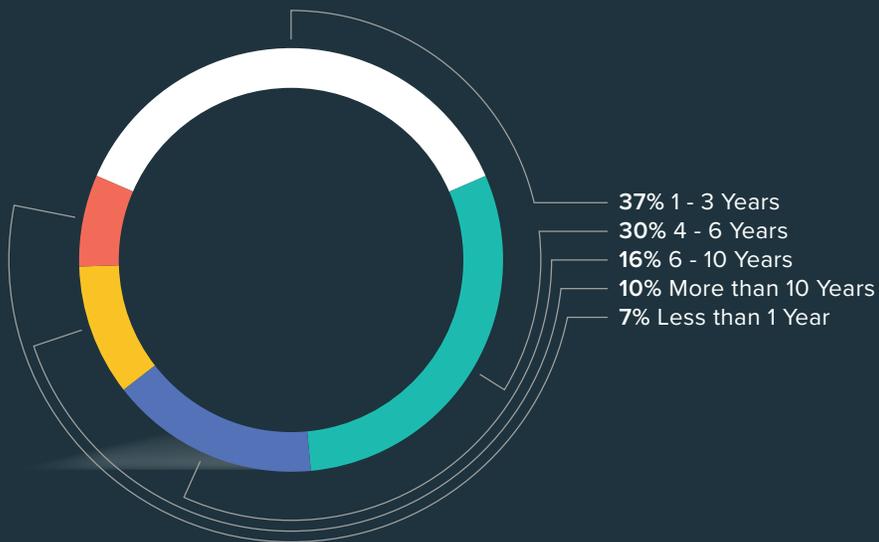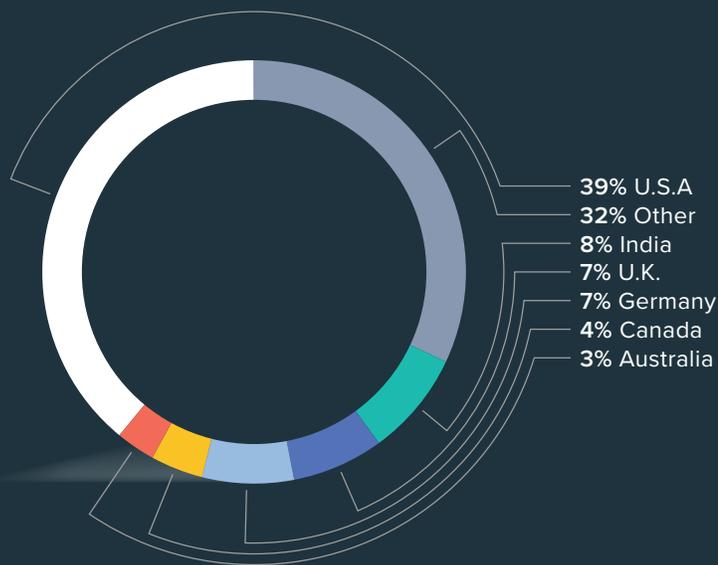
Respondent by type of coach

50% Multi-team coach

17% Single-team coach

20% Business coach

10% Leadership coach

3% Technical coach

Respondent by type of coach

36% Improving the delivery of a product or service
28% Organizational transformation
17% Improving business processes
11% Coaching leaders and executives
8% Improving software craftsmanship
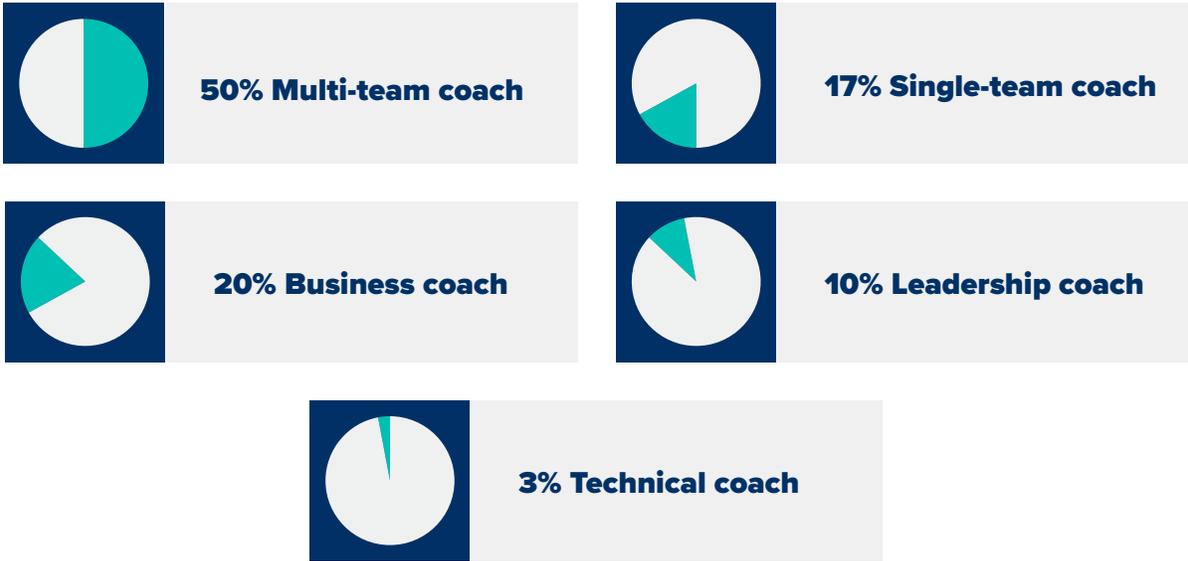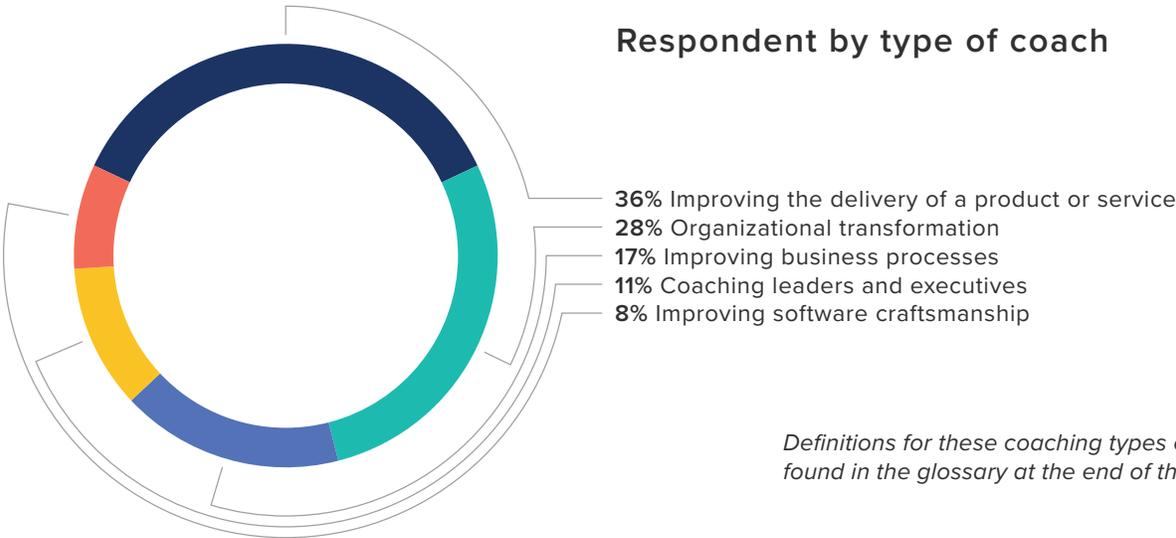
Definitions for these coaching types can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

**Respondent by years
of experience**

37% 1 - 3 Years
30% 4 - 6 Years
16% 6 - 10 Years
10% More than 10 Years
7% Less than 1 Year

92% | **OF AGILE COACHES HAVE HELD OTHER AGILE
ROLES PRIOR TO THEIR CURRENT ONE**

Respondent by country

39% U.S.A
32% Other
8% India
7% U.K.
7% Germany
4% Canada
3% Australia

NOTE

*Agile coaches from 82 countries respond-
ed to the survey. More than 50% of them
came from the United States, India, and
the United Kingdom.*

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Company size

Agile coaches from large and small companies responded to the survey.

37%
15,000+*

13%
501 - 1,500*

9%
1 - 50*

7%
51 - 150*

18%
5,001 - 15,000*

10%
1,501 - 5,000*

7%
151 - 500*
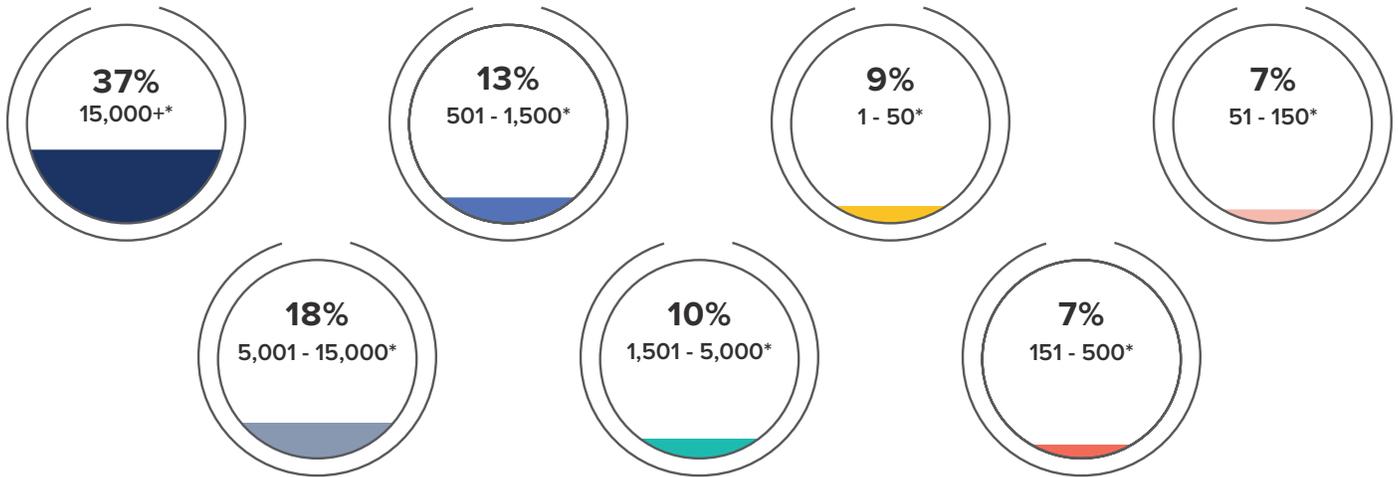
Number of people in the company

Company Industry

While technology firms are, by far, the largest recipient of agile coaching, more than half of the respondents work in a diverse range of industries.
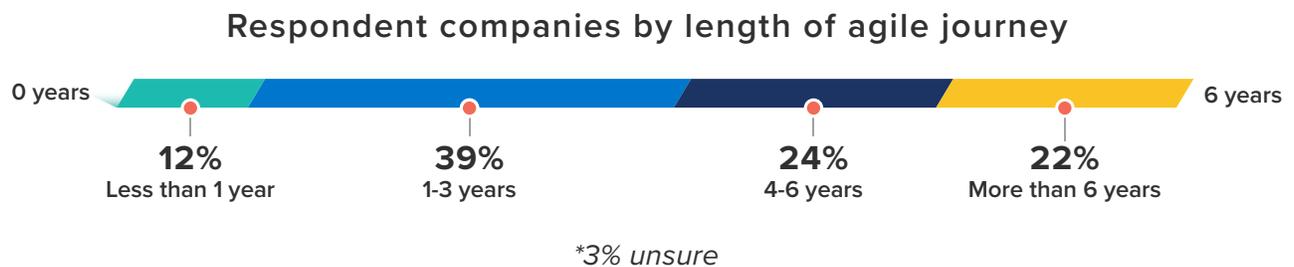
39% Information technology
20% Financial services
12% Consulting
7% Healthcare
7% Insurance
7% Government / public service
6% Auto / manufacturing
2% Mining / utilities

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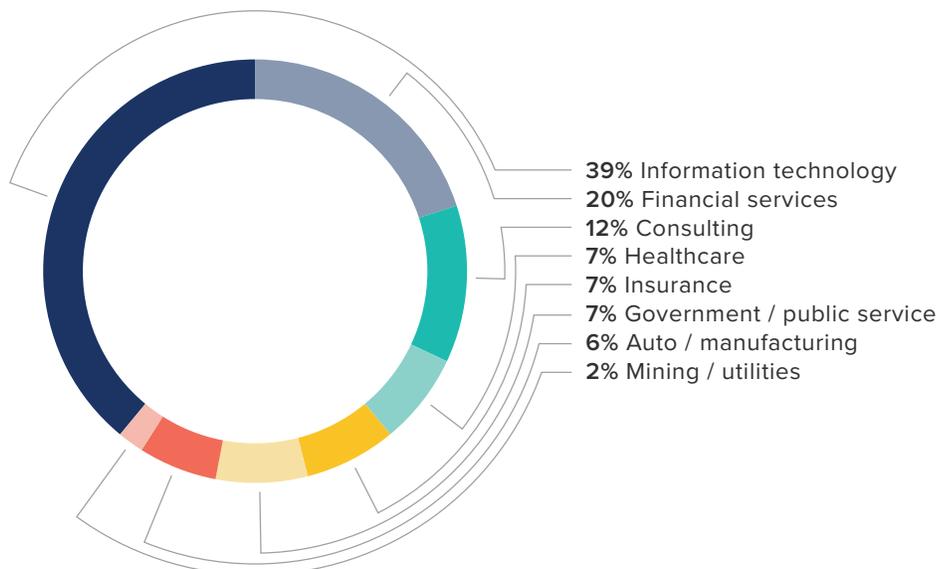
Size of coaching team

In general, survey respondents were part of a larger team of agile coaches, with only 12% of respondents working alone in their organization.

31% 20+ coaches
30% 2-5 coaches
17% 1 (only me)
13% 6-10 coaches
9% 11-20 coaches

Respondent companies by size of coaching team
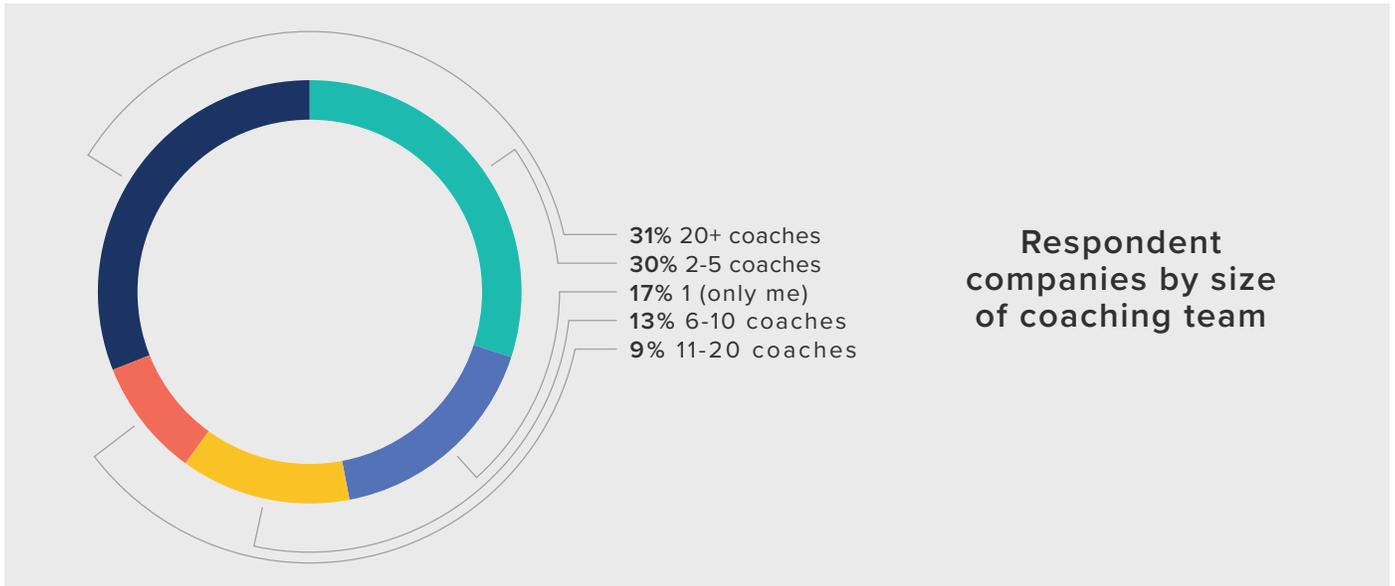
Companies' agile journey maturity

The majority of companies reported having been on the journey for between one and six years.

Respondent companies by length of agile journey

0 years

12%
Less than 1 year

39%
1-3 years

24%
4-6 years

22%
More than 6 years

6 years

3% unsure

2022 AGILE COACHING REPORT SUMMARY

	STARTING	BUILDING	ESTABLISHED	EXPANDING	MASTERING
Years of Experience	<1	1 - 3	4 - 6	6 - 10	10+
More likely to be Coaching	One Team	One Team OR Multiple Teams	Multiple Teams	Multiple Teams	Multiple Teams OR Leadership
Most likely to be Improving	The delivery of a product / service	The delivery of a product / service	The delivery of a product / service	Organizational transformation	Organizational transformation
Most common Foundational Certification	CSM	CSM	CSM	CSM	CSM
Most common Professional Certification	No data	CSP-SM	CSP-SM, ICP-ACC	CSP-SM, ICP-ACC, SPC	CSP-SM, ICP-ACC, SPC
Most common Master Certification	No data	ICE-AC	RTE	CTC, RTE	CTC, CEC
Average # of people coached	22	60	290	378	446
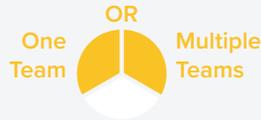
	STARTING	BUILDING	ESTABLISHED	EXPANDING	MASTERING
Most likely to be Working as	Employee	Employee	Employee	Consultant	Consultant
Average Day Rate (Consultant / Contractor)	$526	$619	$898	$910	$1,316
Average Salary (Employee)	$56,000	$103,000	$160,000	$161,000	$291,000
Success is Measured by	Performance Reviews	Performance Reviews	General Performance Metrics (e.g. OKRs, KPIs)	General Performance Metrics (e.g. OKRs, KPIs)	General Performance Metrics (e.g. OKRs, KPIs)
Business Impact of Coaching	None / Unsure / Delivery Improvements	Mindset / Culture Shift	Mindset / Culture Shift	Mindset / Culture Shift	Mindset / Culture Shift
Days of Professional Development / Month	3 - 5	1 - 2	1 - 2	1 - 2	3 - 5
Learning Goals	Broader & deeper knowledge of agile frameworks, methods & practices	Professional coaching skills	Professional coaching skills	Other knowledge & skills to better serve the wider organization	Other knowledge & skills to better serve the wider organization
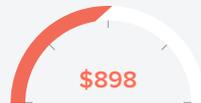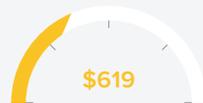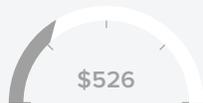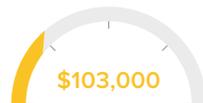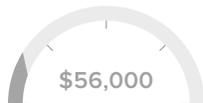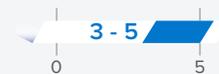
Glossary

In attempting to analyze the agile industry for the purpose of this report, several common concepts have been defined and clarified using standard language. While there may appear to be a hierarchy in some of the definitions, this is not intended as a value judgment. We are not saying that any coach or certification is better than any other. Rather, each fulfills a necessary, and often independent, role.

For the purposes of this report, we will use the following definitions:

[Single] team coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role with a single team. This role primarily focuses on coaching a team to improve the delivery of a product or service. Depending on the skill level, this may include Scrum Masters.

Multi-team coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role across multiple teams. This role primarily focuses on coaching teams to improve product/service delivery or business processes. This role would fill the commonly used definition of an "Agile Coach."

Leadership coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role specializing in supporting business leaders, managers, and executives through the broader transformation.

Business coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role with authority across the organization. This role primarily focuses on leading an organizational transformation or coaching business functions (including non-IT functions) towards agility. These are sometimes referred to as Enterprise coaches.

Technical coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role with a specific focus on software craftsmanship. This role primarily focuses on coaching teams to improve their technical skills, including DevOps, XP, or similar approaches. Please note that, due to the limited number of responses from technical coaches, this role is not included in any of the analysis in this report.

Foundational certifications

This refers to those certifications generally taken at the start of a learning journey. For example the Scrum Alliance CSM®, ICAgile ICP, International Coach Federation ACC, or ScaledAgile SA certifications.

Note: It does not imply that someone with a foundational certification is always a beginner. An accomplished Scrum Master with 15 years of experience might actually be more advanced than a freshly certified agile coach.

Professional certifications	This refers to those certifications reasonably able to be taken once an agile professional has achieved a moderate level of experience. For example the Scrum Alliance CSP®, ICAgile ICP-ACC, International Coach Federation PCC, or ScaledAgile SP certifications.
Master certifications	This refers to those certifications that require a significant demonstration of competence and experience at the peak of someone's career. For example the Scrum Alliance CTC^{SM} or CEC^{SM}, ICAgile ICE-AC, International Coach Federation MCC, or ScaledAgile SPCT certification.

Methodology

The State of Agile Coaching Survey 2022 (SOAC) is a survey jointly distributed by the Business Agility Institute, Scrum Alliance and ICAgile intended to determine the state of the agile coaching sector. The 2022 report is the second iteration in an ongoing series that will document changes in the industry over time.

Overall, 2130 members of the global Agile and Business Agility communities, from 82 separate countries, responded to the survey, which contains a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering demographics, qualifications and experience, salary and rate, and the self repSorted measures, impacts and challenges of respondents. These items required the use of a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.

The key hypotheses outlined in this report were verified by performing statistical analyses on the 2021 data and trends with the previous year's findings (2020).

Click here to learn more about the statistical methodology underpinning the results.

Next Agile Coaching Survey Is Live

Take the survey

The agile coaching survey has been refactored based on learnings from the inaugural survey and is live. Results from the new survey will be published in Q1 2023.

Participants

Survey respondents were recruited via the networks of each of the distributing organizations. Of these responses, 11 were removed due to containing outliers beyond reasonable range, being test responses, or due to missing data.

State of Agile Coaching Report

stateofagilecoaching.com