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Coachee Survey Report

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Janet Benson
Ilse White



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1. Survey Approach

The Coachee Survey was developed from a Jobs-to-be-Done workshop conducted in Learnovate as part of the Personalised AI Coaching project.

A persona of the coachee (a person who receives coaching) was developed along with the 'jobs' they are trying to get done with a human or AI coach (or both).

The outputs from the workshop formed the basis of the survey which was shared via Survey Monkey.

While only 15 responses were obtained, the qualitative data in relation to the open-ended questions in particular proves interesting.



2. Cormac | Our Coachee Persona



Job:	Product Manager in a large tech company
Age:	42
Education:	Undergraduate degree & CIPD Lots of work experience
Technology:	Zoom/Teams LinkedIn Company tech systems Experimenting with GenAI/ChatGPT Uses some social media (limited)

2. Cormac | Our Coachee Persona



Personality:

Ambitious & interested in self-development – he wants to keep up with the (increasingly) fast pace of change at work

Curious about new tech but is time-poor & is working long hours – would like to improve his work/life balance

Wants to be a good leader & wants to learn

Would like to improve his skill set

2. Cormac | Our Coachee Persona



How he buys

- References from colleagues/friends
- Sourcing expertise privately perhaps through listening to podcasts/audiobooks on his commute
- Company access e.g., wellbeing programs or professional development offered by HR
- Tools he can access for free

His influencers

- Family, friends & peers & his manager
- Online communities or discussion forums/social media/LinkedIn
- Conferences
- He may know a coach or a professional in this space

3. Jobs-to-be-Done (ranked)

Cormac needs to:

- upskill to remain relevant & to feel more secure about his future as well as doing his job better
- build his confidence & trust to improve his career prospects & potentially be promoted
- be seen as someone who is continuously improving while developing in areas like collaboration & time management
- be viewed as innovative/trendsetting and not to appear outdated
- better manage his work/life balance while focusing on the valuable work & reducing stress - he wants his work life to have meaning



4. Survey Questions from JTBD Workshop

1

Upskilling and Development

Exploring how you learn, grow and feel about your future



Q1 How often do you actively upskill (e.g. courses, reading, training, coaching)?

Multiple choice

- Never
- Once or twice a year
- Every few months
- Monthly
- Weekly or more often



Q2 What are the main ways you currently upskill (e.g. internal/external resources, types of activities, topics you focus on)?

Open text



Q3 How secure do you feel about your future (career, role, employability)?

Multiple choice

- Very insecure
- Somewhat insecure
- Neither secure nor insecure
- Somewhat secure
- Very secure

2

Role, Confidence and Productivity

Exploring how you feel in your role and what helps you perform



Q4 Do you feel as if you could be more productive in your role?

Scale 1–5

1 = Not at all 5 = Very much so



Q5 What one or two changes or supports would most help you to be more productive?

Open text



Q6 How confident do you feel in your current role?

Scale 1–5

1 = Not at all confident 5 = Extremely confident

3

Coaching

Exploring your experience, openness and what builds trust



Q7 Have you ever worked with a human coach (internal or external)?

Multiple choice

- Yes
- No



Q8 (If Yes) What aspects of previous coaching experiences worked particularly well for you?

Open text



Q9 (If Yes) What aspects did not work so well or could have been improved?

Open text



Q10 How open are you to working with a coach in the future?

Scale 1–5

1 = Not at all open 5 = Extremely open



Q11 What helps you to trust a coaching process or relationship (e.g. confidentiality, expertise, recommendations)?

Open text

4. Survey Questions from JTBD Workshop

4

AI and Coaching/Development

Exploring your familiarity, use and views on AI-supported development



Q12

How familiar are you with AI tools (e.g. chatbots, recommendation systems, AI assistants) in general?

Multiple choice

- Not at all familiar
- Slightly familiar
- Moderately familiar
- Very familiar
- Extremely familiar



Q13

Have you ever used AI tools to support your work or development (e.g. for learning, planning, feedback, coaching-like support)?

Multiple choice

- Yes, regularly
- Yes, occasionally
- I have tried them once or twice
- No, but I am interested
- No, and I am not interested



Q14

How comfortable would you feel using an AI-based tool as part of a coaching or development process?

Scale 1–5 1 = Not at all comfortable 5 = Extremely comfortable



Q15

What would you like an AI-based coaching or development tool to help you with? (e.g. goal setting, feedback, reflection prompts, practice, accountability)

Open text



Q16

What concerns, if any, do you have about using AI in coaching or personal development? (e.g. privacy, accuracy, lack of human understanding)

Open text

5

Wellbeing and Meaning

Exploring your balance, resilience and what gives your work purpose



Q17

How satisfied are you with your current work/life balance?

Multiple choice

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied



Q18

What helps you to manage stress related to your work?

Open text



Q19

How important is it to you for your work to have meaning?

Scale 1–5 1 = Not at all important 5 = Extremely important



Q20

In what ways does your work currently feel meaningful or not meaningful to you?

Open text

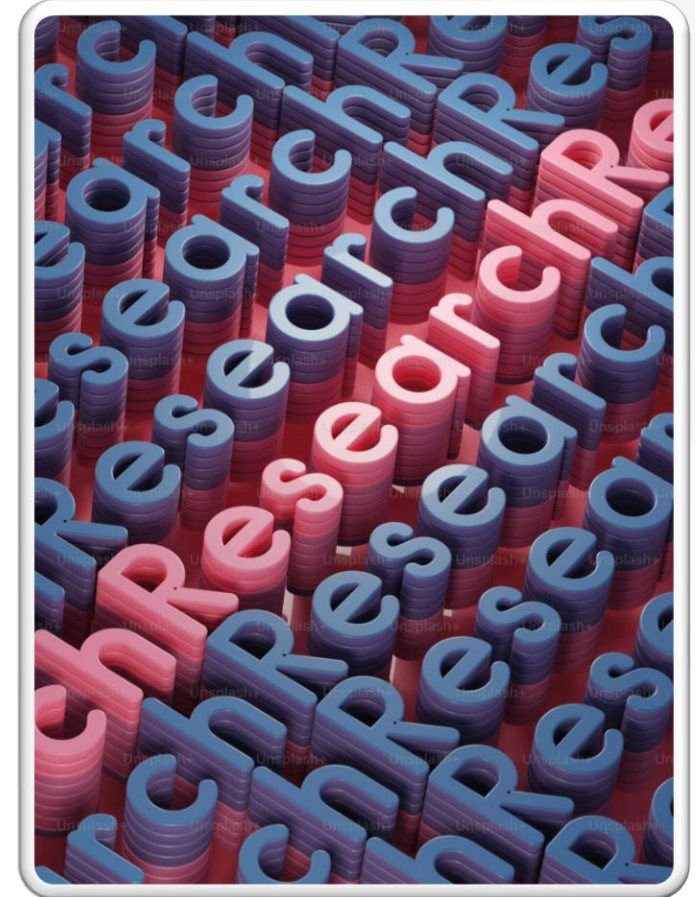
5. Key Survey Findings

1. Previous coaching experiences are predominantly positive.

Respondents repeatedly describe effective coaching in terms of **trust**, **being listened to**, **feeling understood**, **personal connection** and **having the coaching adapted to their needs**.

2. The human relationship appears to be central to coaching effectiveness. The strongest positive comments aren't simply about the coach providing answers. They concern the quality of the relationship: *feeling heard and seen*, *a judgement-free coach*, *a 1-to-1 human connection*, and a coach who develops an understanding of the individual's needs.

3. Good coaching needs to preserve the coachee's agency. An interesting theme emerges around the distinction between **coaching** and **advice-giving**.

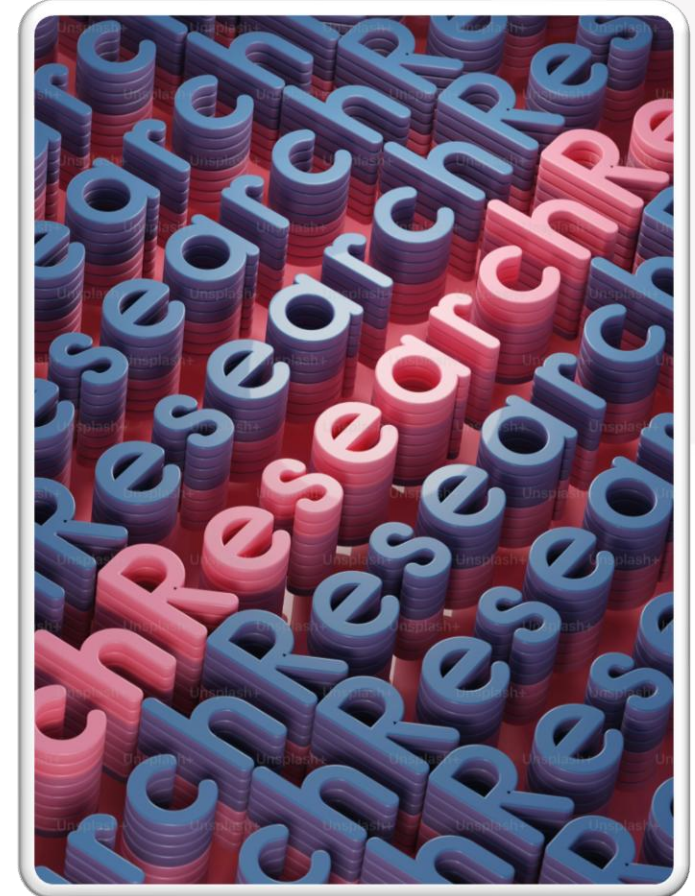


5. Key Survey Findings

4. Trust depends on both credentials and relationship quality. Respondents mention **expertise, qualifications/accreditation, recommendations and relevant experience**, alongside softer relational factors such as confidentiality, rapport, active listening, personal connection and shared values.

5. There is very strong appetite for future coaching. Of the 13 previous coaching recipients, **10 (77%)** are "very open" to working with a coach again, while the remaining **3 (23%)** may be open to it. None of this group rejected future coaching.

6. Continuity and accessibility are potential weaknesses in traditional coaching. Respondents mention coaching being **short-lived**, availability and conflicting priorities, time restrictions, and not having coaching support available when it is most needed. One respondent specifically noted difficulty maintaining the benefits once regular support ended. This points towards a potential opportunity for **between-session support and ongoing reinforcement**.



5. Key Survey Findings | Overall Findings

1

Previous coaching experiences are predominantly positive.

Respondents describe effective coaching in terms of trust, being listened to, feeling understood, personal connection and having the coaching adapted to their needs. Several also value practical outcomes such as actionable steps, follow-up and increased confidence.



Trust



Being listened to



Feeling understood



Personal connection



Adapted to my needs



Actionable steps



Follow-up



Increased confidence

2

The human relationship appears to be central to coaching effectiveness.

The strongest positive comments aren't simply about the coach providing answers. They concern the quality of the relationship.

"I felt heard and seen."

"A judgement-free coach."

"A 1-to-1 human connection."

"A coach who develops an understanding of my needs."



5. Key Survey Findings | Overall Findings

3

Good coaching needs to preserve the coachee's agency.

Respondents value coaching that helps them think through and generate their own solutions. Negative experiences included coaches becoming overly directive, trying to “rescue/tell/help”, challenging the person’s role too much, or taking agency away from the coachee.



What works well

- ✓ Helps me think through options
- ✓ Supports me to generate my own solutions
- ✓ Respects my autonomy and decision-making
- ✓ Encourages reflection and ownership



What doesn't work

- ✗ Overly directive
- ✗ Tries to “rescue/tell/help”
- ✗ Challenges my role too much
- ✗ Takes agency away from me

4

Trust depends on both credentials and relationship quality.

Respondents mention expertise, qualifications/ accreditation, recommendations and relevant experience, alongside softer relational factors such as confidentiality, rapport, active listening, personal connection and shared values. Membership of professional bodies such as ICF or EMCC was also mentioned.



Credentials and credibility

- Expertise
- Qualifications/ accreditation
- Recommendations
- Relevant experience
- Membership of professional bodies (e.g. ICF, EMCC)



Relationship quality

- Confidentiality
- Rapport
- Active listening
- Personal connection
- Shared values

5. Key Survey Findings | Overall Findings

5

There is very strong appetite for future coaching.

Of the 13 previous coaching recipients, **10 (77%)** are “very open” to working with a coach again, while the remaining **3 (23%)** may be open to it. None of this group rejected future coaching.



None of this group rejected future coaching.

6

Continuity and accessibility are potential weaknesses in traditional coaching.

Respondents mention coaching being short-lived, availability and conflicting priorities, time restrictions, and not having coaching support available when it is most needed. One respondent specifically noted difficulty maintaining the benefits once regular support ended. This points towards a potential opportunity for between-session support and ongoing reinforcement.



Short-lived engagements



Availability and conflicting priorities



Time restrictions



Not available when most needed



Opportunity: between-session support and ongoing reinforcement.

5. Key Findings | The Voices of the Coachees

1

The value of coaching is strongly relational

People remember how coaching made them feel, rather than the information provided.

"Feeling heard and seen."

"Space to think. Someone to truly listen. Challenging my perspective of myself."

"A real understanding of my needs."



KEY INSIGHT

The core value is a trusted environment for reflection, challenge and personalised thinking.

2

Agency is fundamental

Coaching is most valued when it helps people think through and generate their own solutions.

"When my agency was taken away from me."

"Their need to rescue/tell/help."



"It stays in non-directive coaching territory and respects my agency and ability to think through and generate solutions."



KEY INSIGHT

AI should support thinking, not provide answers. Preserving coachee agency is essential.

3

There is a continuity gap in traditional coaching

Coaching is often short-lived, with limited ongoing support.

"It was short-lived even though it was good... the support on a regular basis is no longer there."

"Sometimes when you need coaching the most is out of hours."



KEY INSIGHT

There is a clear opportunity for between-session support and ongoing reinforcement (e.g. through AI).

4

Practical and specific AI use cases are attractive

Respondents see real potential for AI to complement coaching in practical ways.

"Setting out the plan and then tracking milestones and nudges to help me reflect on what worked well."

"To keep better track of my development than I can and nudge me to keep up with things I want to improve on."



"I think just complementing the in-person experience really."



KEY INSIGHT

AI has potential as a coaching support layer for goal setting, accountability, reflection, practice, progress tracking, nudges and administrative support.

5. Key Findings | The Voices of the Coachees

5

There are clear boundaries to AI acceptance

Not everyone wants AI involved in coaching, particularly for sensitive topics.

"I don't want an AI-based coach. They're so sycophantic, unreliable and biased. They miss the whole point of feeling understood, heard and seen."

"I would use it for professional development in my career. I wouldn't use it at a more personal level."



KEY INSIGHT

Acceptance of AI isn't binary. People may be comfortable with AI while setting clear limits on where it should be used.

6

Privacy is a key concern

Respondents have specific and thoughtful questions about data governance.

"Where the data is stored and who owns it."

"How is my data going to be used in the future?"



"How do I know that what I am telling it isn't training it and other AI out there on things that could be very personal?"



KEY INSIGHT

Privacy and data governance should be central to the user experience, with clear, accessible information about storage, ownership, access and use.

7

Productivity needs are often organisational, not personal

Barriers to productivity are frequently linked to organisational conditions.

"More time and fewer meetings!"

"Clearer strategy, role and responsibility allocation."



"The work environment, a good work culture."



KEY INSIGHT

Coaching should consider both individual development needs and wider organisational barriers.

8

Meaningful work matters

Meaning is linked to impact, values, contribution and challenge.

"It is aligned to my values and strengths."

"I feel like I'm contributing to positive changes."



"Being able to show a finished product that you helped to produce."



KEY INSIGHT

Purpose, progression, challenge and impact are important outcomes for coaching, alongside productivity and performance.

6. A Wider View of the Coachees

1

A confident group.

All 13 describe themselves as somewhat or very confident in their current role.



8 (62%)
Very confident

5 (38%)
Somewhat confident



0 respondents indicated low confidence in their current role.

2

Most see room to be more productive.

10 out of 13 believe they could be more productive to at least some extent.



10 (77%)
Could be more
productive to
some extent

3 (23%)
Already as
productive
as they need to be



Coaching needs are not necessarily driven by low confidence or poor performance, but by a desire for development, reflection and progression.

3

Meaningful work matters.

All 13 say meaningful work is at least somewhat important, with 8 describing it as "extremely important."



8 (62%)
Extremely important

5 (38%)
Somewhat important

Meaningful work is associated with:



Helping others



Making an impact



Alignment with personal values



Contributing to positive change



Seeing tangible results

6. A Wider View of the Coachees

4

A powerful hybrid coaching model.

The data points towards a strong opportunity to combine the strengths of human coaching and AI support.



Human coach

The irreplaceable human element.

- Relationship
- Empathy
- Challenge
- Trust
- Nuance
- Deeper conversations



AI support

A valuable coaching companion.

- Reflection
- Practice
- Goal tracking
- Nudges
- Accountability
- Between-session continuity

5

The key opportunity.

Rather than replacing the coach, AI can extend the coaching relationship between human interactions.



The design challenge

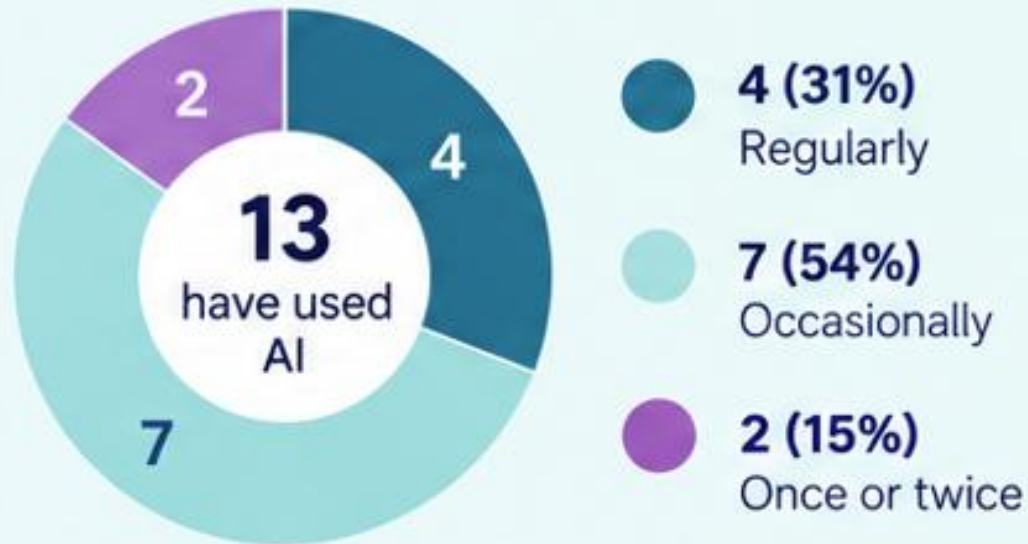
"How can AI preserve and extend the benefits of human coaching without undermining trust, agency or human connection?"

7. AI & Coaching

1

All have used AI for work or development.

13 out of 13 have used AI, with varying frequency.



2

Most are familiar with AI.

8 describe themselves as very familiar and 5 as somewhat familiar.



7. AI & Coaching

3

High comfort with AI-supported coaching.

11 of 13 (85%) are moderately or very comfortable with an AI-based tool being part of a coaching/development process.



11 (85%)

Moderately or
very comfortable

2 (15%)

Not at all comfortable

4

Most attractive AI use cases.

Respondents see the greatest potential in practical applications that can support (not replace) the human coaching relationship.



Goal setting



Accountability



Tracking progress
and milestones



Reflection
prompts



Feedback



Practice /
rehearsal



Nudges



Reducing
administrative
work

7. AI & Coaching

5

Key concerns and barriers.

Two main concerns emerged repeatedly.



Privacy and data governance

- Where would my data be stored?
- Who owns it?
- How would it be used?
- Could personal information be used for AI training?



Lack of human understanding

- Concerns about AI's lack of emotional intelligence
- Cannot replicate human rapport and connection
- May lack flexibility
- Less able to understand personal context and nuance

“I would use AI for professional development, but wouldn't use it at a more personal level.”

Survey respondent



8. Potential Next Steps for our Research

1

Conduct qualitative interviews



Explore the “why, when and how” behind people’s coaching experiences, trust, agency, AI boundaries and when support is most needed.

2

Define the human–AI boundary



Identify which activities people are comfortable delegating to AI and which should remain with a human coach. Establish clear “Human / AI / Hybrid” design principles.

3

Map the coaching journey



Explore the full journey – before session, during session, between sessions and follow-up. Identify gaps and pain points, particularly around continuity and support after coaching ends.

4

Test specific AI use cases



Prototype and test the most attractive use cases identified in the survey, such as goal setting, reflection prompts, accountability, progress tracking, nudges, practice/rehearsal, feedback and reducing administrative work.

5

Research trust & privacy requirements



Explore what users need to know about data storage, ownership, access, confidentiality, AI training and deletion to feel comfortable using AI-supported coaching.

6

Prototype a hybrid coaching model



Design and prototype a model that combines the strengths of human coaching (relationship, empathy, challenge) with AI support (continuity, practice, nudges and accountability).

7

Pilot with real coachees



Run an 8–12 week pilot with coachees, comparing traditional coaching with human coaching + AI support to understand what works in practice.

8

Measure effectiveness



Track engagement, goal progress, behaviour change, productivity, self-efficacy, coaching satisfaction and continued use to determine the real impact of AI-supported coaching.

8. Potential Next Steps for our Research

Three key research questions

- 1 Where does AI add value to human coaching?**
Which parts of the coaching journey benefit most from AI support (e.g. between sessions)? 
- 2 Where should AI not be used?**
What topics or situations should remain with a human coach (e.g. personal or emotionally sensitive)? 
- 3 What creates trust in hybrid coaching?**
What do users need to feel confident about privacy, governance, transparency and control? 

From research to reality

A suggested roadmap



The bigger opportunity



How might AI preserve and extend the benefits of human coaching without undermining trust, agency or human connection?

“From insight to impact — coaching for greater potential.”



Thank you!

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