2021

STATE OF

AGILE COACHING REPORT

Vol. 1.0

An Analysis of the Emerging Profession of Agile Coaching

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BUSINESS **AGILITY** INSTITUTE

Scrum Alliance®

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Preface

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The idea for this report was born out of a sense of frustration and necessity. We had just read an article from Anand et al on McKinsey.com, "Growing your own Agility Coaches to Adopt New Ways of Working." The authors wrote something that gave us pause:

> **"While the role [of agility coach] has exploded on LinkedIn and many profiles claim to be agility coaches, there is no degree or accepted global accreditation that provides comfort around the skills and experience needed for the job."**

First of all, that's not quite right. We know of at least two globally accepted certification programs for agile coaching: the Scrum Alliance® Certified Enterprise Coach℠ and Certified Team Coach℠; and ICAgile Expert in Agile Coaching from ICAgile®. Each of these certifications require a proven combination of agile education and experience. Fifty percent of the agile coaches who answered this survey had some level of certification from one or both of these certifying bodies.

What's valid about the McKinsey statement is that it captures the real struggle companies face when they want to hire an agile coach: It's difficult to know what experience and certifications to look for, what services to expect, what a reasonable rate should be, and how to measure their success. In other words, what does "good" look like?

So, in collaboration with each other and the support of the agile coaching community, we set ourselves the goal to answer these questions.

The one question this survey doesn't answer is *What is an Agile Coach*, so let's address that upfront. We did some research on what definitions currently exist. Answers ran the gamut from "those who help people face unpleasant things about themselves and their circumstances..."[1] to those who "help train corporate teams on the agile methodology and oversee the development of agile teams..."[2].

Here's how we define it. An agile coach helps organizations, teams, and individuals adopt agile practices and methods while embedding agile values and mindsets. The goal of an agile coach is to foster more effective, transparent, and cohesive teams, and to enable better outcomes, solutions, and products/services for customers. Agile coaches are no longer just responsible for helping technology teams, they also help the company embrace agile as a culture shift. An agile coach doesn't advocate for one particular method over others, but instead empowers people to work smarter, faster, and with less risk.

The profession of agile coaching needs clarity on the true value of an agile coach and the associated measurable knowledge, expertise, and skills. This report is the first step toward achieving that goal.

[1] Adkins, "I am a Certified Scrum Coach and I am Not Nice," LyssaAdkins.com, September 25, 2010

[2] Sarah K. White, "What is an agile coach? A valuable role for organizational change," CIO.com, August 8, 2018

Key Findings

The State of Agile Coaching survey launched in November 2020 to establish and follow the trends of the agile coaching profession. Designed for anyone who refers to themselves as an agile coach, the survey attracted

681 respondents from 56 different countries

The 2021 Volume 1.0 results, therefore, are a snapshot from a variety of professionals around the world; they serve to establish baseline information about the profession of agile coaching. Future surveys and reports are planned.

This inaugural State of Agile Coaching report is presented by Business Agility Institute (BAI), an organization committed to helping members develop their skills as business agility professionals and build capabilities within their organization, and Scrum Alliance, the only not-for-profit certifying body and professional association of agile and Scrum experts and enthusiasts.

The following are 7 key findings from this first-of-its-kind report.

01 The vast majority of people who consider themselves agile coaches do not hold master-level agile or coaching certifications.

Master-level certifications are defined as those that require a significant demonstration of competence and experience. Examples include the Scrum Alliance CTC℠ or CEC℠, ICAgile ICE-AC, International Coach Federation MCC, or ScaledAgile SPCT certification.

○ 86% of all respondents reported holding one or more agile certifications, with 19% of those being master-level certifications.

○ Only 33% reported holding at least one coaching certification. Of those coaching certifications, only 18% are master-level certifications.

Percentage of coaches with agile certifications

Out of that 86% only **19%** have a master level certification

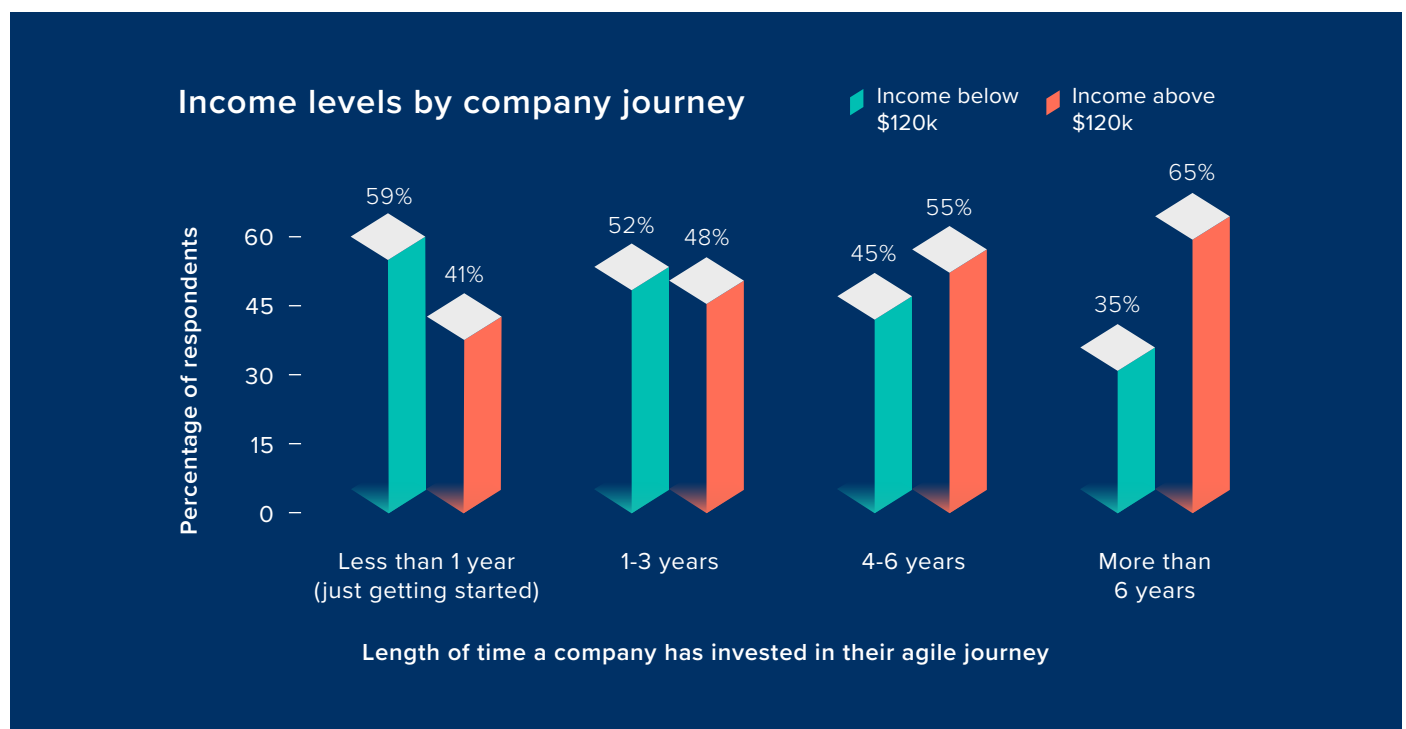**86%** of those who identify as agile coaches have an agile certification
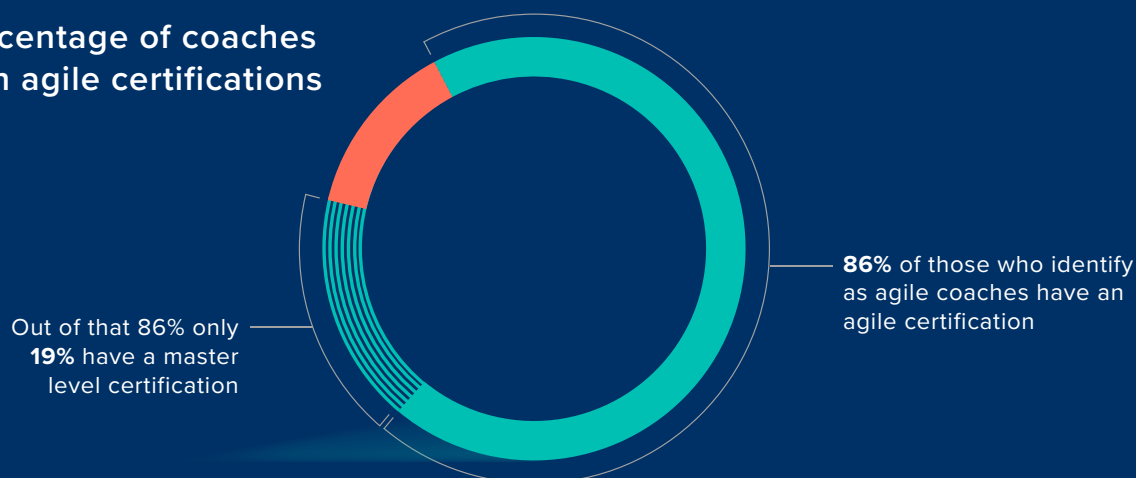
02 Coaches with the same experience and certifications can expect to make less at companies new to agile than they can at companies who are further along on their agile journey.

The report found a significant relationship between reported income level and the length of time a company had been investing in their agile journey.

○ 59% of coaches at new-to-agile organizations reported making less than $120K USD annually. Conversely, 65% of coaches at organizations who had been on the agile journey for 6 years or more reported making more than $120K USD.

○ Overall, 50% of respondents report salaries that range between $120K - $300K USD, followed by 31% who report annual income between $50K and $120K USD.

Income levels by company journey

Income below $120k   Income above $120k

Percentage of respondents

	Less than 1 year (just getting started)	1-3 years	4-6 years	More than 6 years
Income below $120k	59%	52%	45%	35%
Income above $120k	41%	48%	55%	65%

Length of time a company has invested in their agile journey

03 Experienced coaches and those holding master-level certifications are most often contract hires or consultants rather than full-time employees.

○ The most experienced coaches (those with 6 years experience or more) are nearly 50% less likely to be full-time employees than less experienced coaches.

○ Those with a master-level certification were two times more likely to be contract hires than employees.

○ The most experienced coaches are also twice as likely to be business coaches (those working with leaders and managers, or coaching business functions, also known as an enterprise coaches).

Experience & Employment Type

More experienced coaches

Less experienced coaches

2x more likely to be full-time employees

2x more likely to be contract hires and business coaches

04 Most agile coaches invest in a lifelong learning journey.

○ Agile coaches regularly dedicate time for professional development. All coaches reported investing at least one day each month to professional development.

○ A sizable portion, 22% of coaches, reported investing more than 21 hours each month in learning activities. Experienced agile coaches invest just as much time in continuous learning as those just starting out.

Hours spent in professional development

3.5% | 1-3 hours
13.6% | 4-7 hours
29.8% | 8-10 hours
31.4% | 11-20 hours
16.0% | 21-40 hours
5.7% | 41+ hours

State of Agile Coaching Report

05 Clients select coaches based on their experience and reputation, as well as for their ability to provide specific services, such as agile coaching and agile transformation.

○ When asked for the main reason clients called them, coaches responded strongly regarding experience and reputation as well as high demand for specific services in agile coaching and agile transformation.

○ Employees and consultants (coaches on assignment) most frequently found work through word-of-mouth referrals. Contract agile coaches found work most often through placement agencies.

CLIENTS CHOSE COACHES BASED ON:

Experience, Transformation

Reputation, and Trust

06 Agile coaches make an impact by helping organizations improve in 5 areas:

○ Agility across the organization

○ Individual, team, and organizational metrics

○ Communication, collaboration, and transparency

○ Management mindset

○ Delivery, speed, and quality

> **"I have helped the teams begin to trust the process and more fully invest in the events that lead to quality and transparency."**

07 An agile coach's success is often measured based on the performance of those they coached rather than by specific coaching metrics.

○ Coaches who used team outcomes to measure success cited overall team success, team agility, and team behavior.

○ Most coaches who reported measuring success at the customer/client level based their level of success on customer satisfaction.

○ Business (enterprise) coaches are far more sure of how their impact and success were being measured than those working with a single team.

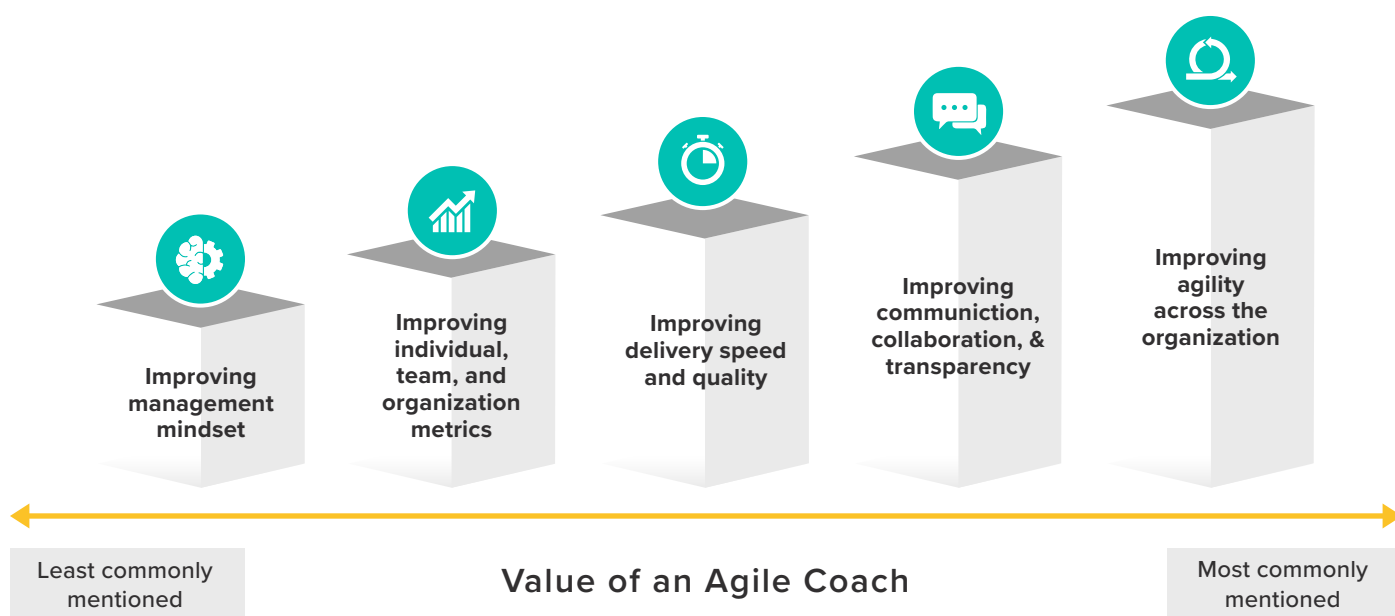"I've increased transparency and collaboration significantly."

State of Agile Coaching

One of the core questions that this research sets out to answer is, "What is the value of an agile coach?" While it will take several iterations of this report to more fully answer that question, responses to the current survey were analyzed thematically to understand the business impacts of an agile coach as well as how companies measure coaching success. This information will also be used to generate new hypotheses for future surveys.

Improving management mindset

Improving individual, team, and organization metrics

Improving delivery speed and quality

Improving communiction, collaboration, & transparency

Improving agility across the organization

Least commonly mentioned

Value of an Agile Coach

Most commonly mentioned

No matter what value they were delivering, many agile coaches report having an impact across multiple levels of the company, from organization-wide, to team-level, to customers, and products. Other respondents, while achieving positive impacts at the individual or team level, were unable to introduce agility more generally across the organization. A variety of reasons were given for this, including a lack of access to leadership, leadership resistance, and the perception of agile as being for "IT only."

VALUE #1: Improving agility across the organization

"Cultural change, change existing process, motivated employees"

Of no surprise, one of the most prominent themes that emerged was that coaches had helped teams and organizations to improve their overall agile maturity. This included increased trust in agile, improved team self-management, better alignment of value streams, and wide-spread adoption of agile processes. A number of coaches also reported having impacted a change in organizational culture toward an agile mindset and behaviors.

VALUE #2: Improving communication, collaboration, and transparency

"Transparency, collaboration, customer centricity"

Many coaches report an improvement in the level of communication, collaboration and transparency in their organizations and teams, with this being seen as a key benefit and enabler of agile, and an important part of breaking down silos.

VALUE #3: Improving delivery speed and quality

"[Faster] alignment and more predictable delivery"

A number of coaches reported having increased the speed of delivery and reduced lead times, while also bettering the quality of products delivered. Respondents mostly attribute this to developing better processes to facilitate delivery and a shift in focus towards delivering value.

VALUE #4: Improving individual, team, and organization metrics

"Generate new business and shorter time of development"

Coaches reported seeing their impact on agility translating to success at all levels from individuals, through teams, and up to the organizational level. Some reported general success, while others were more specific, citing increases in business development, customer satisfaction, and productivity, among others.

VALUE #5: Improving management mindset

"I now have [the support of] a director level manager… and my influence… continues to spread throughout the enterprise."

Coaches reported mixed success when referring to management. The majority found middle and upper management were a hindrance to the implementation of agile for reasons including lack of access, old mindset and culture, politics, "kingdoms," and general resistance to change. However, some coaches reported having had a positive impact on managers and leaders in their organization. This was due, in large part, to having influenced changes in the mindset of leaders toward more agile thinking and culture as opposed to command and control or waterfall methodology.

Team coaches struggle to know their impact.

Based on initial thematic analysis, 14% of team coaches, 9% of multi-team coaches (coaches working across multiple teams), and 9% of business (enterprise) coaches reported having little impact, no impact, or were unsure of their impact. However, there is some ambiguity in these findings and future iterations of this report will analyze them.

Definitions for these coaching types can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

HOW AGILE COACHING PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED

Agile coaches reported a wide range of success measures, which can be grouped into organization wide, team level, individual level, product level, and customer/client level. The most prominent overarching theme was that agile coach success was often measured based on the performance of those they coached as opposed to performance metrics specific to coaching. There was also a clear distinction in the responses between those coaches being measured against generalized informal feedback versus those measured against specific formal metrics.

Respondents whose success was measured based on the performance of their teams generally gave clear and specific measures and metrics. In this group, the most common measures were based on overall team success, team agility, and team behavior.

Respondents whose success was measured based on organizational outcomes were generally not specific about how that success was measured.

Examples of responses include:

"based on organization success...," "organizational metrics," and "outcome to the organization."

Lastly, those who reported measuring success at the customer/client level most often based their level of success on customer satisfaction; some based their success on a measure of their customer's performance.

Responses were somewhat equally divided in how formally their success was measured, with two themes emerging: one that concrete metrics were used to measure success (e.g. "OKRs," "maturity assessment," and "customer feedback") and another indicating that success was measured by informal methods such as qualitative feedback and intuition (e.g. "qualitative feedback," "informal feedback," and "team agile maturity scores"). Only a few respondents indicated that they experienced a mixture of the two.

More specifically, a number of respondents also reported having their success indicated by improvements in product delivery and processes.

Example responses include:

"increased delivery," "delivery of value to customers," and "successful team delivery."

And, like the responses to the question on impact, there were a number of respondents (9.5% of team coaches, 6% of multi-team coaches, and 5% of business coaches) who indicated that their success was not measured, or they were not aware of how their success was being measured.

In both questions (impact and measures), business coaches were far more sure of how their success was measured than team coaches.

Agile and Coaching Certifications

Agile coaches were asked to list each of the certifications they have obtained; both pertaining to agile coaching as well as broader agile, and agile-related. Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents reported holding one or more agile certifications, including foundational, professional, and some master-level certifications. Nineteen percent (19.3%) of certifications held were reported as master level. Thirty-three percent (33.4%) of all certifications were coaching certifications, and eighteen percent (17.6)% of all coaching certifications were master-level.

Definitions for these certification levels can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.
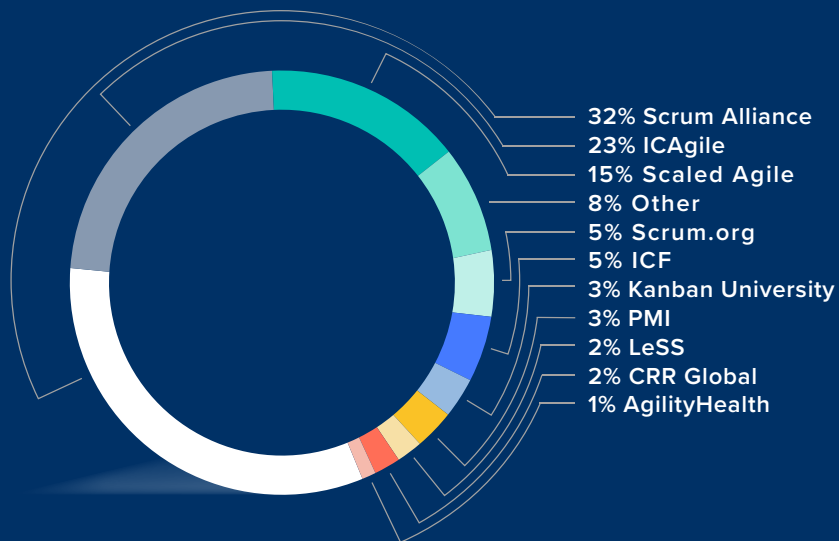
Number of certifications by level

Level	Count
Foundational	327
Professional	418
Master	200
None	93
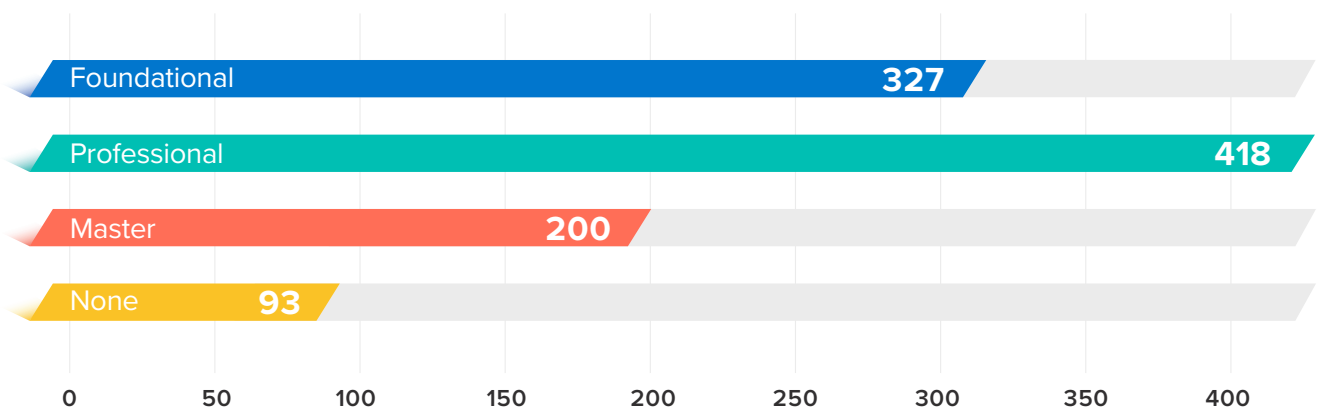
* Note: Respondents were able to select multiple certifications.

Number of certifications held

95 | 0 certification
177 | 1 certification
221 | 2-3 certifications
129 | 4-6 certifications
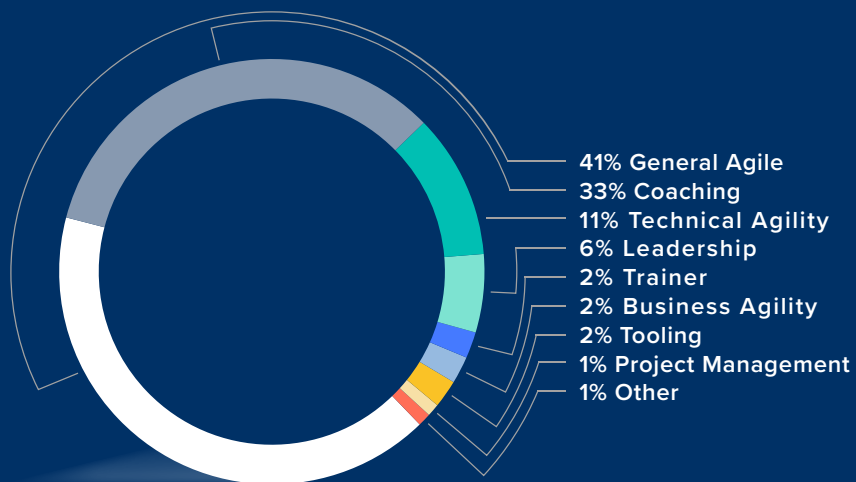33 | 7+ certifications
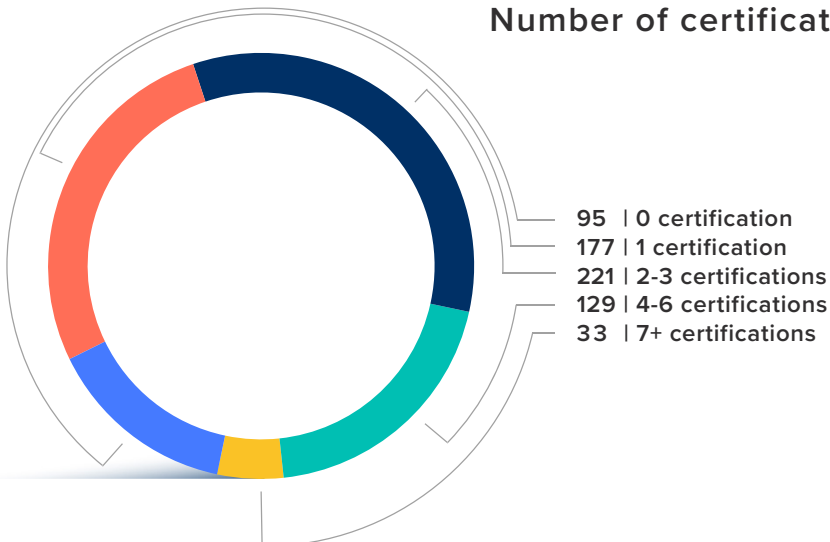
Note

As many respondents reported only their highest level certification, the count of foundational-level certifications is incomplete. Ostensibly, every professional and master-level certification holder would have started with a foundational-level certification. By extrapolation, the count of foundational-level certifications should be closer to 600.

Certifications by provider

- 32% Scrum Alliance
- 23% ICAgile
- 15% Scaled Agile
- 8% Other
- 5% Scrum.org
- 5% ICF
- 3% Kanban University
- 3% PMI
- 2% LeSS
- 2% CRR Global
- 1% AgilityHealth

Note

Of the certifications held by agile coaches, over 50% come from two organizations: Scrum Alliance and ICAgile.

Certifications by subject

- 41% General Agile
- 33% Coaching
- 11% Technical Agility
- 6% Leadership
- 2% Trainer
- 2% Business Agility
- 2% Tooling
- 1% Project Management
- 1% Other

Note

When breaking down the data into type of certifications, only 33% of respondents reported holding one or more coaching certifications.
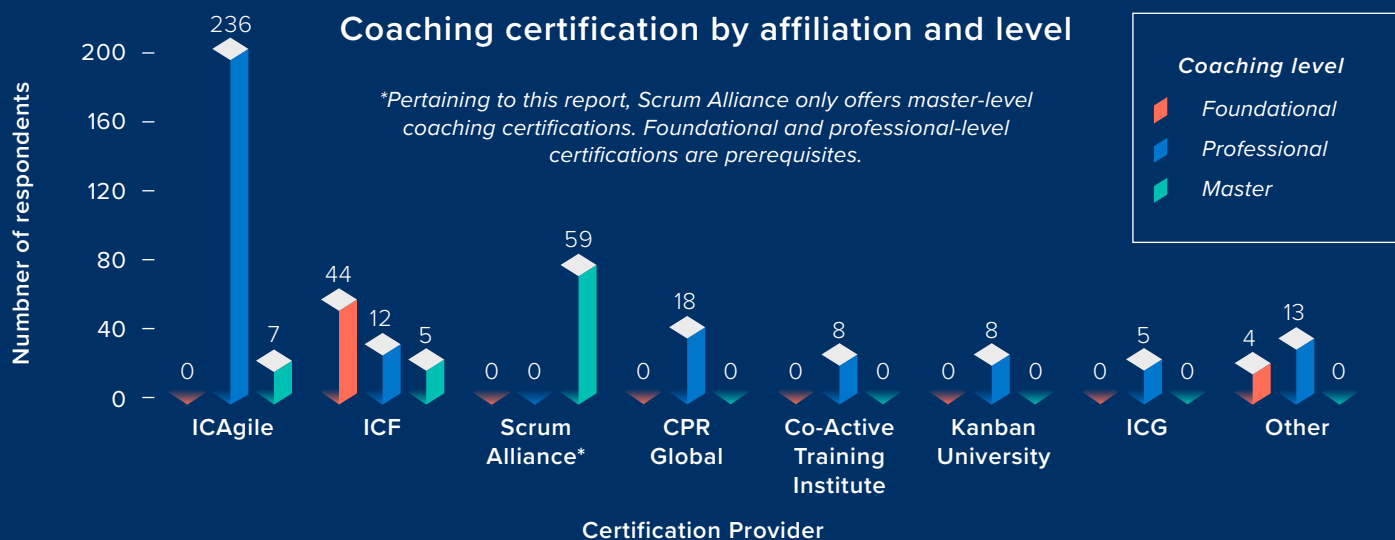
Coaching certification by affiliation and level

Pertaining to this report, Scrum Alliance only offers master-level coaching certifications. Foundational and professional-level certifications are prerequisites.

Coaching level
- Foundational
- Professional
- Master

Numbner of respondents

Certification Provider	Foundational	Professional	Master
ICAgile	0	236	7
ICF	44	12	5
Scrum Alliance*	0	0	59
CPR Global	0	18	0
Co-Active Training Institute	0	8	0
Kanban University	0	8	0
ICG	0	5	0
Other	4	13	0

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## Coaching certification by affiliation and level

When looking specifically at coaching certifications held by respondents, ICF has the majority of foundational certificants (ACC), ICAgile has the majority of professional certificants (ICP-ACC, ICP-ATF, and ICP-CAT), and Scrum Alliance has the majority of master-level certificants (CTC[SM] and CEC[SM]).

It should be noted that, while this analysis only includes dedicated coaching

certifications, it is recognized that coaching skills are introduced in many other certifications (including some foundational-level certifications, like CSM[®]). However, as these certifications have a broader intent than to develop agile coaches, they are not included in this analysis.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hours spent per month in professional development

Hours	Percentage
1 - 10 hours	47%
11 - 20 hours	31%
21 - 40 hours	16%
41+ hours	6%
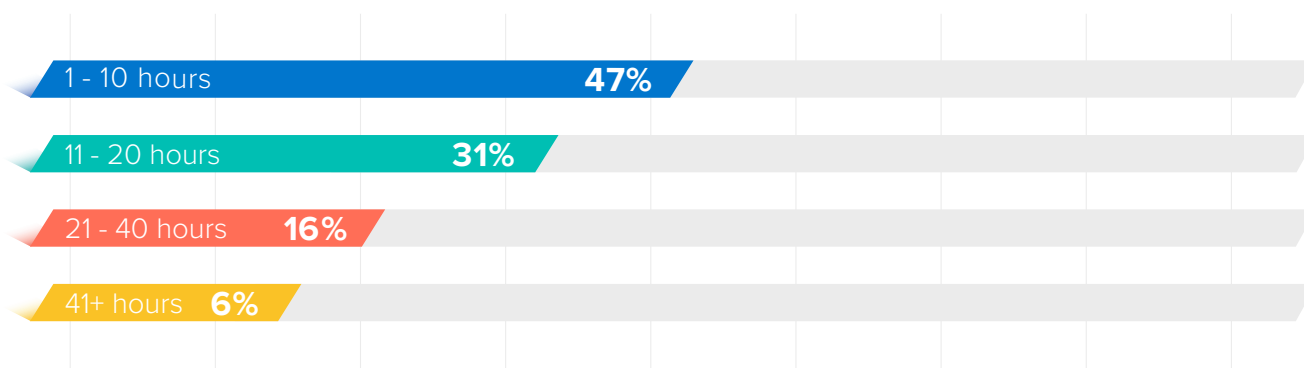
The majority of coaches report investing at least two days (16 hours) in professional development per month. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents spent 1-10 hours per month in professional development. Thirty-one percent (31%) reported spending 11-20 hours per month, 16% spent 21-40 hours per month, and 6% spent 41+ hours (more than one business week) per month in professional development activities. There is a small trend in the number of hours spent compared to the type coach, where team coaches average 15.6 hours per month, multi-team coaches average 18.9 hours per month, and business coaches average 19.4 hours per month.

It was interesting to discover that respondents with more than six years of agile coaching experience spend as much time in professional development as those just starting out. Unexpectedly, there was an overall reduction in time spent in education for respondents with between one and six years of experience.

Contractors report spending the most time in professional development (21.2 hours per month on average) compared to on-staff employees, who came in at 17.8 hours. While this is a small difference, it goes against the initial hypothesis.
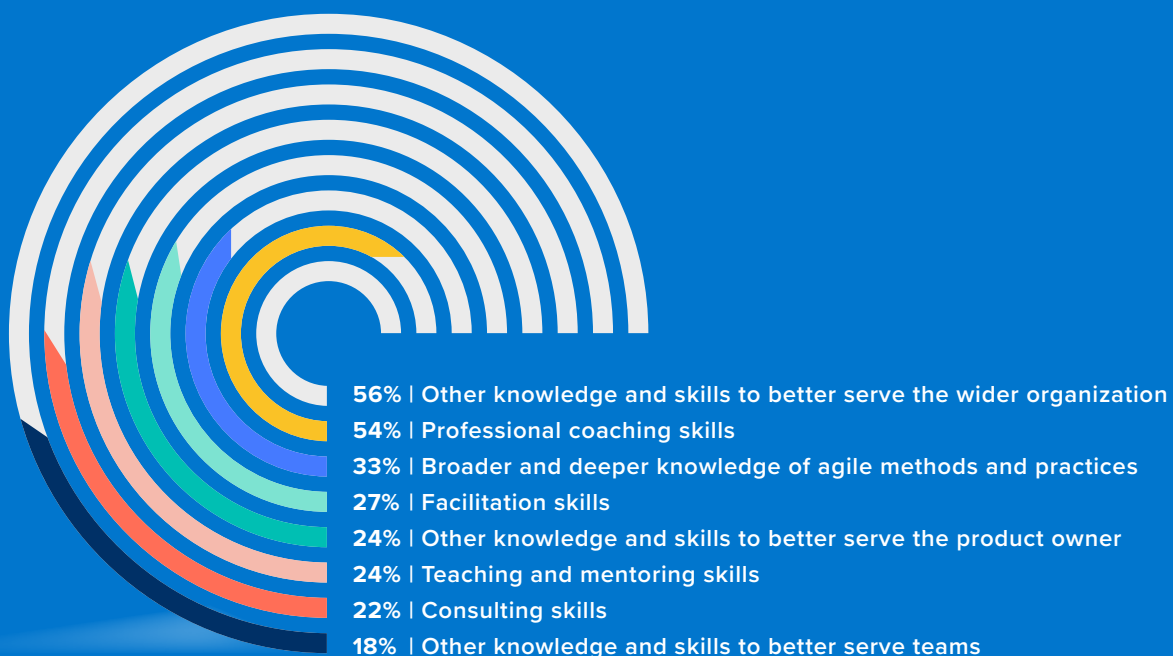
Hours of professional development per month by top-10 countries

Country	Hours
Sweden	30
Denmark	25
China	22
Germany	21
India	20
France	19
Australia	18
Canada	18
United Kingdom	17
U.S.A.	16
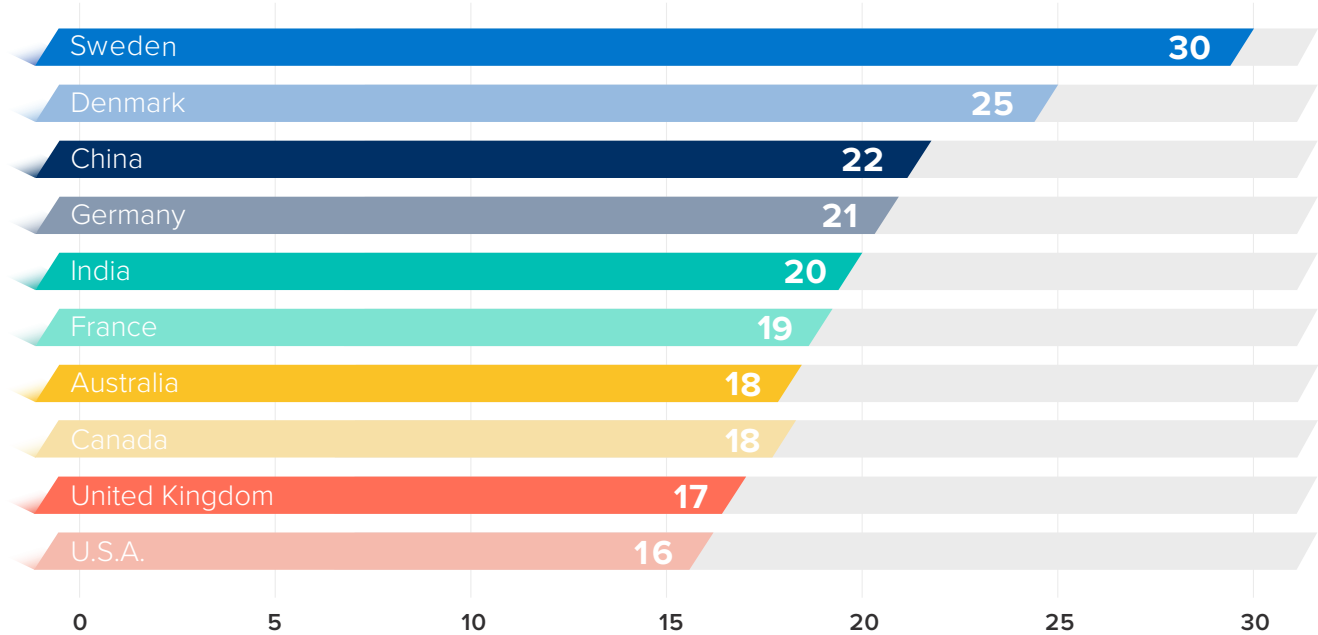
Countries (top 10 only)

* Note: Of the top 10 respondent countries, coaches from the USA and UK had the lowest time invested in ongoing professional development, nearly half that of those from Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark.

Education goals

56% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve the wider organization
54% | Professional coaching skills
33% | Broader and deeper knowledge of agile methods and practices
27% | Facilitation skills
24% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve the product owner
24% | Teaching and mentoring skills
22% | Consulting skills
18% | Other knowledge and skills to better serve teams

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

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56% Employee

26% On assignment from my employer (e.g. a consultancy)

18% Direct Contract

Coaching certification by affiliation and level

Matching the initial hypothesis, people at the start of their agile coaching career (between one and three years of experience) are 3.5-4.5 times more likely to be employees than contractors or consultants. They are also three times more likely to be team coaches than business/enterprise coaches. The ratio shifts at six years where people are two times more likely to be business/enterprise coaches and nearly 50% less likely to be employees.

Similarly, there was a significant relationship between respondents' employment type and their highest level of certification. Those on direct contract were more often at a master level than employees (39% versus 21%), and those on assignment (consultants) were more often at a master level than employees (39% versus 21%), while employees were more often at a foundational level than either those on assignment or those on direct contract (28% versus 20% and 16% respectively).

There is also a strong regional variation, with only 25% of Australians and 28% of Swedish respondents likely to be an employee compared to 82% of Indian respondents.

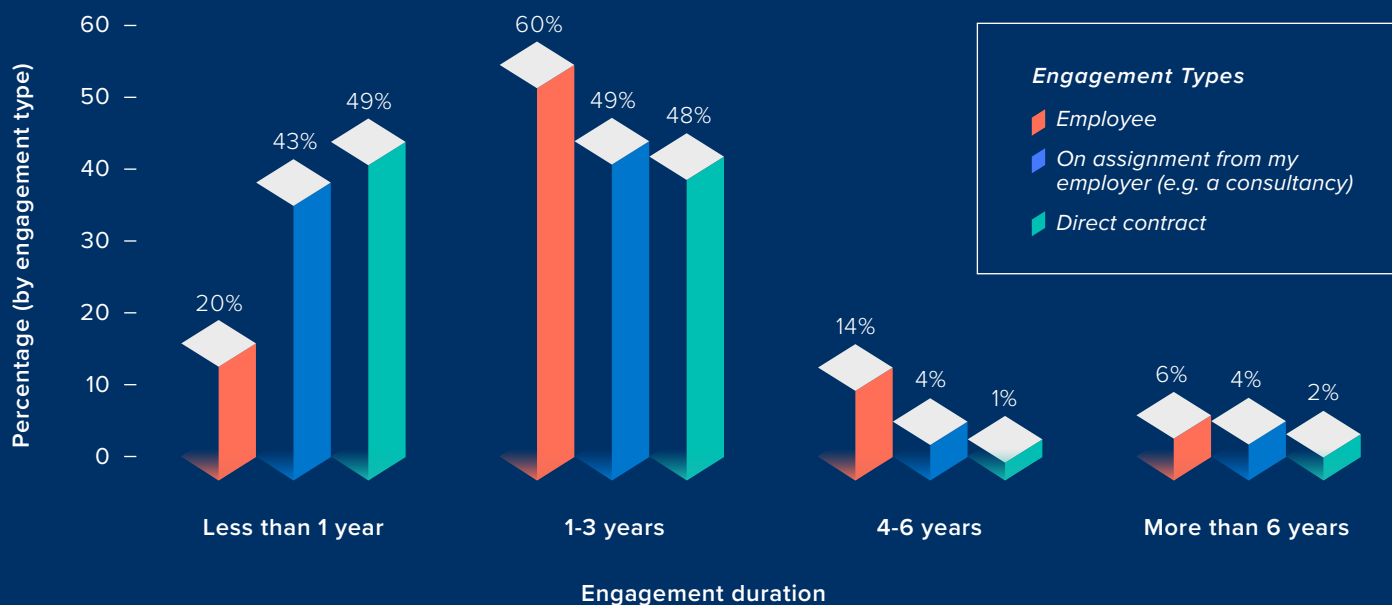### Employment/Engagement Longevity

Location-wise, France and China have the highest engagement longevity, at 17% of respondents in both countries working for the same organization for more than six years. No other region gets above 9%, with most of the rest sitting just under 5%.

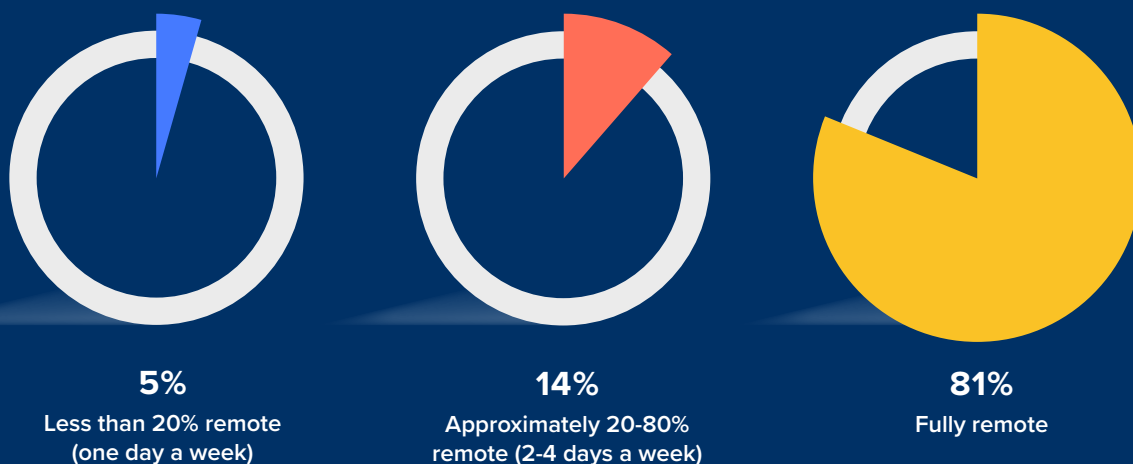There is also a direct correlation between engagement longevity and engagement type, with on-staff employees being anywhere from 1.5 to 11.8 times more likely to be engaged for four or more years. This is compared to consultants (on assignment) and direct contract who are 2.1 to 2.5 times more likely to have been engaged for less than one year.
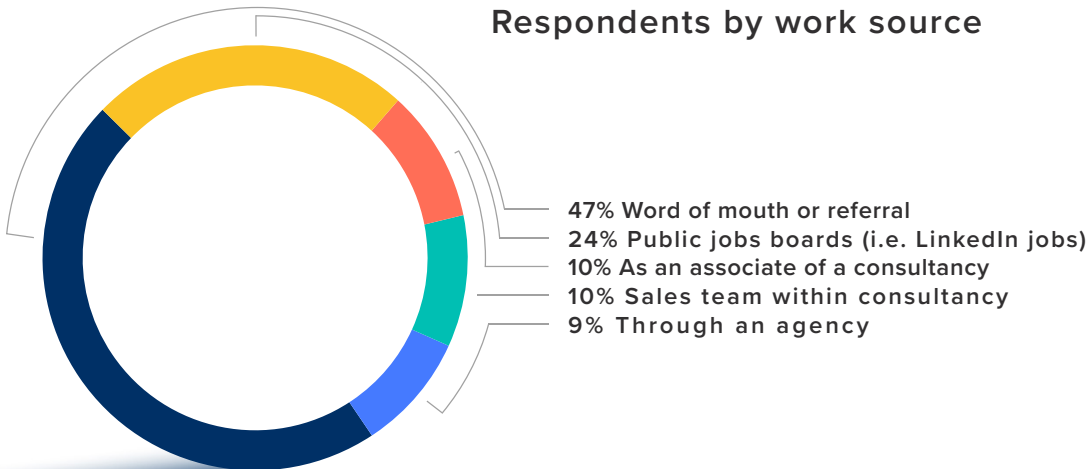
Percentage breakdown of engagement durations

55% | 1-3 years
9% | 4-6 years
5% | More than 6 years
32% | Less than 1 year
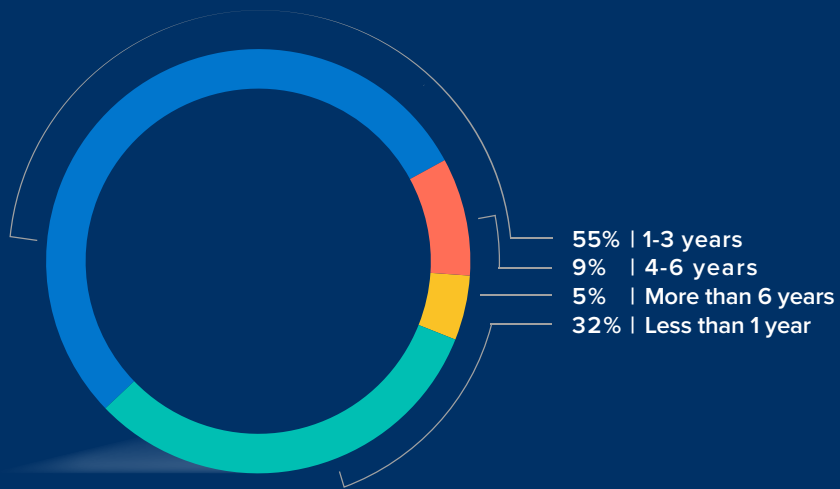
Engagement duration by engagement types

Percentage (by engagement type)

Engagement Types
- Employee
- On assignment from my employer (e.g. a consultancy)
- Direct contract

Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	More than 6 years
20% / 43% / 49%	60% / 49% / 48%	14% / 4% / 1%	6% / 4% / 2%

Engagement duration

Percentage of Remote Work (COVID-19)

5%
Less than 20% remote (one day a week)

14%
Approximately 20-80% remote (2-4 days a week)

81%
Fully remote

Finding Work

Respondents by work source

47% Word of mouth or referral
24% Public jobs boards (i.e. LinkedIn jobs)
10% As an associate of a consultancy
10% Sales team within consultancy
9% Through an agency

Regardless of employment type (on-staff versus 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.

When asked for the main reason clients called them, coaches cited experience and reputation as well as high demand for specific services in agile coaching and agile transformation.

INCOME LEVELS

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).

Percentage breakdown of income levels

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 and $200,000 USD per year (or $300 to $1,500 USD day rate). A small number of respondents, mostly from India and Latin America (4.6%), report earning less than $20,000 USD per year ($120 USD per day), with a very small number (less than five people) from the USA and Europe at that level. An even smaller number of respondents (3%) report earning more than $300,000 USD per year, all of whom come from the USA or Sweden.
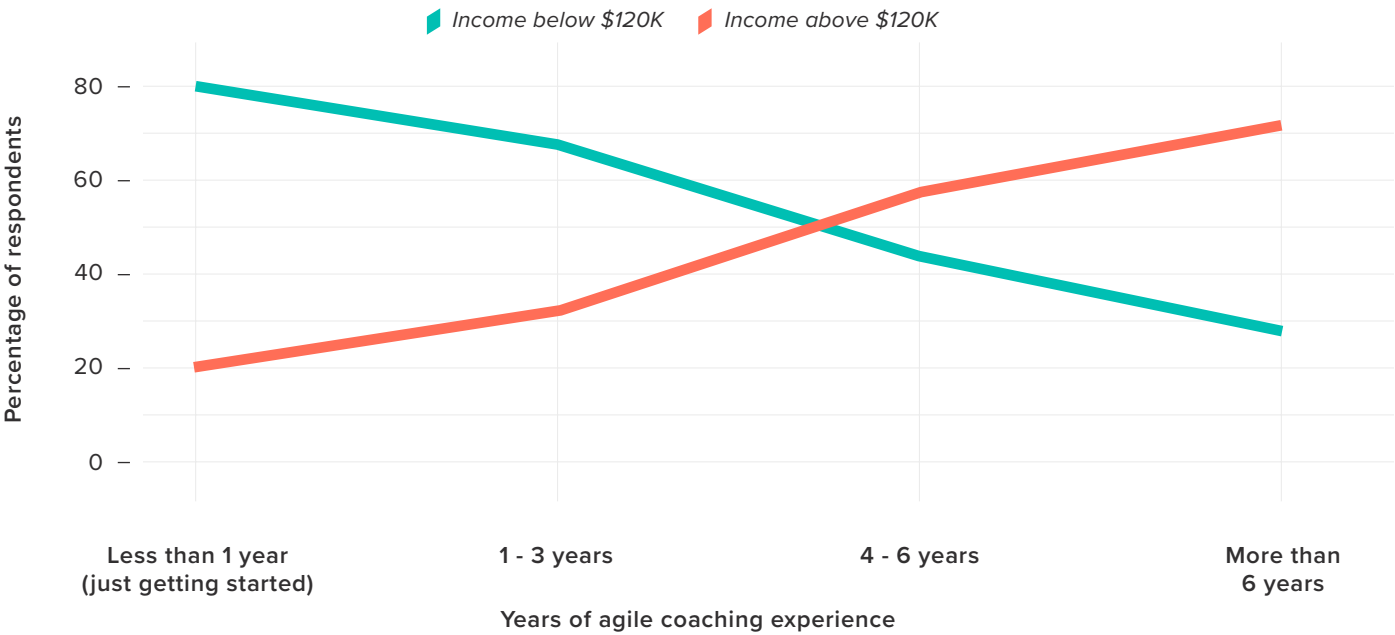
During the statistical analysis, five attributes emerged as significant predictors of income level: region, years of agile experience, engagement type, coaching role, and length of time a company had been investing in their agile journey. The first four predictors aligned closely with expectations.

Income levels by country (top-10)
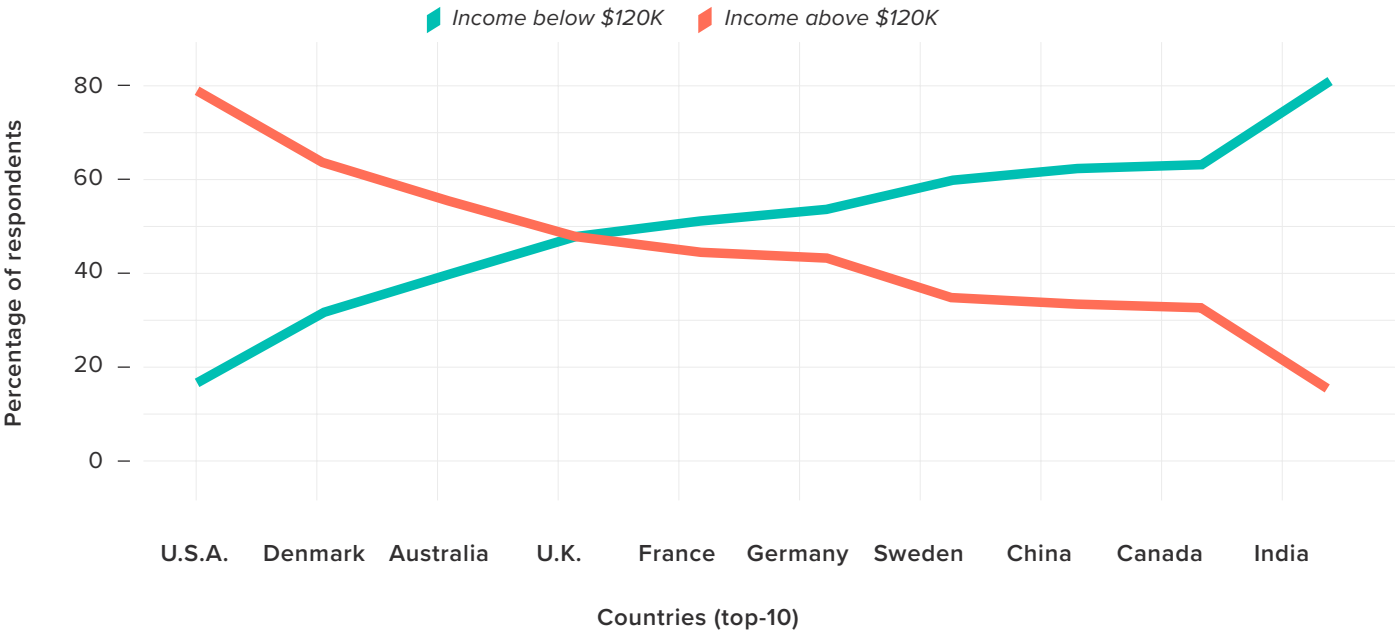
Income levels by experience

Income levels by engagement type
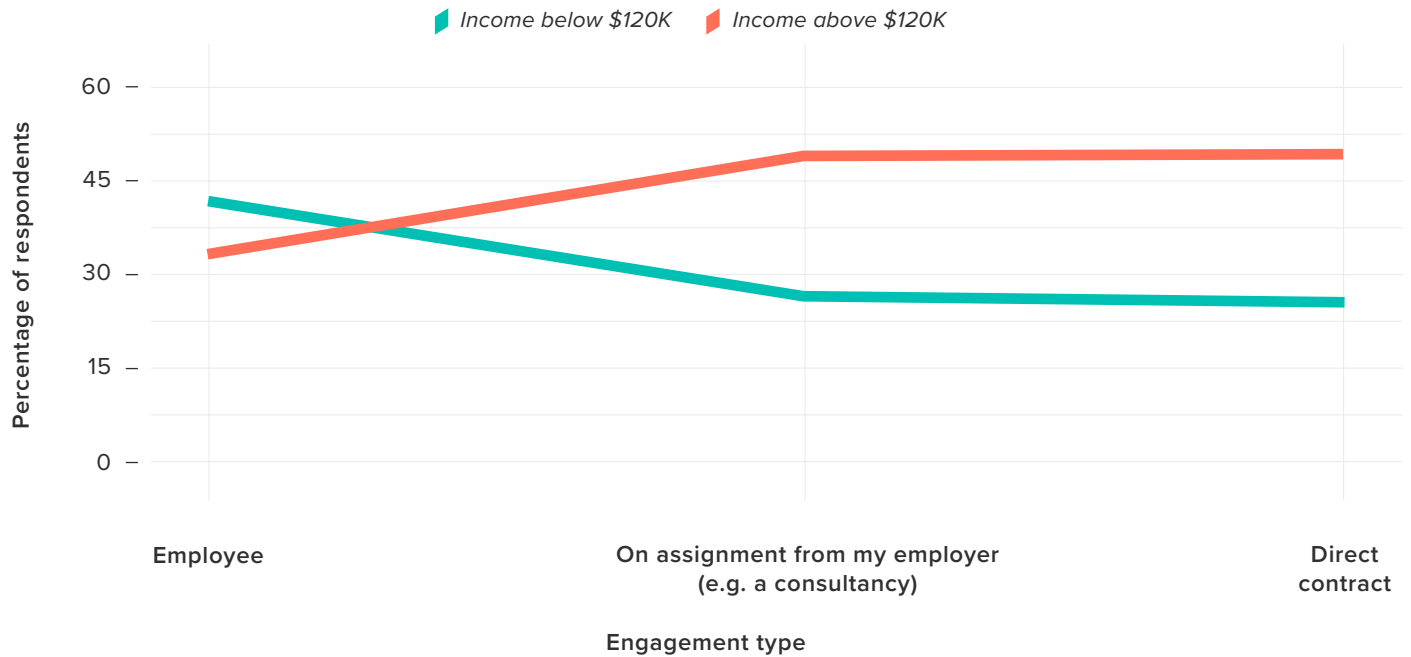
Income levels by coach type
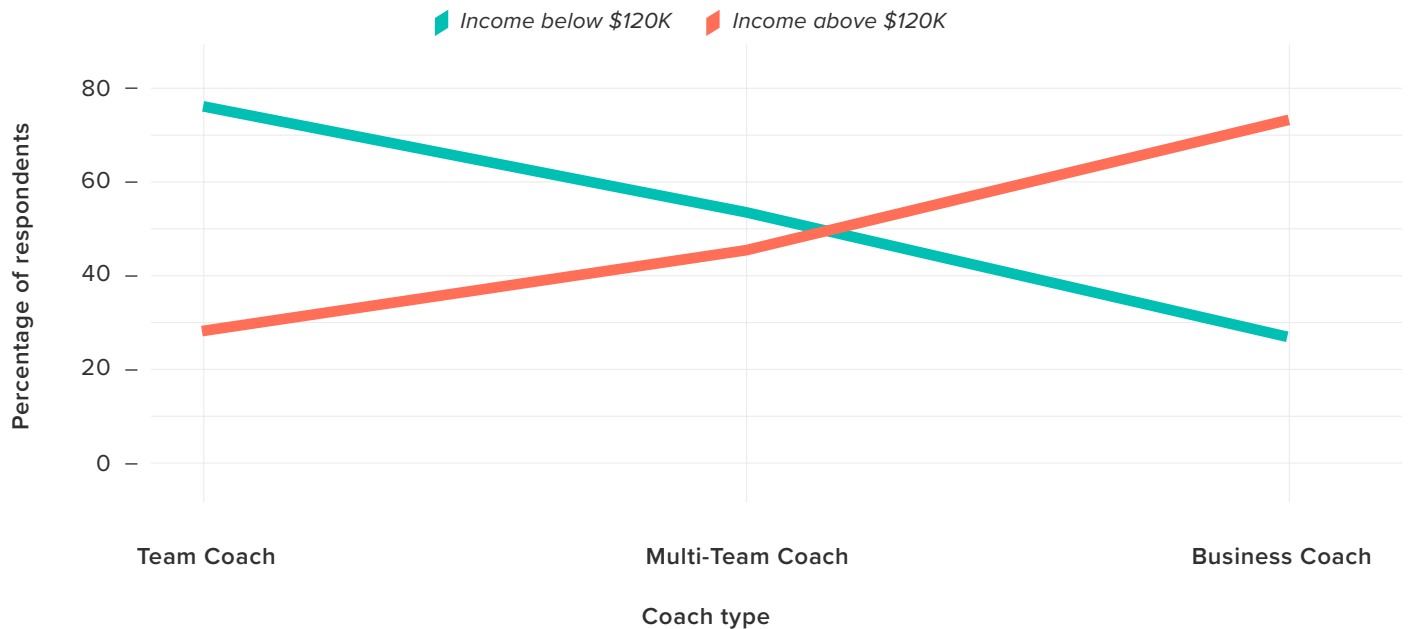
The only surprising predictor was the significant relationship between income level and the length of time a company had been investing in their agile journey. Companies who had only just begun their agile journey (less than one year) paid measurably less for the same experience and number of certifications held by a coach. Conversely, companies who were further advanced in their agile journey were willing to pay at a higher rate.

Income levels by company journey
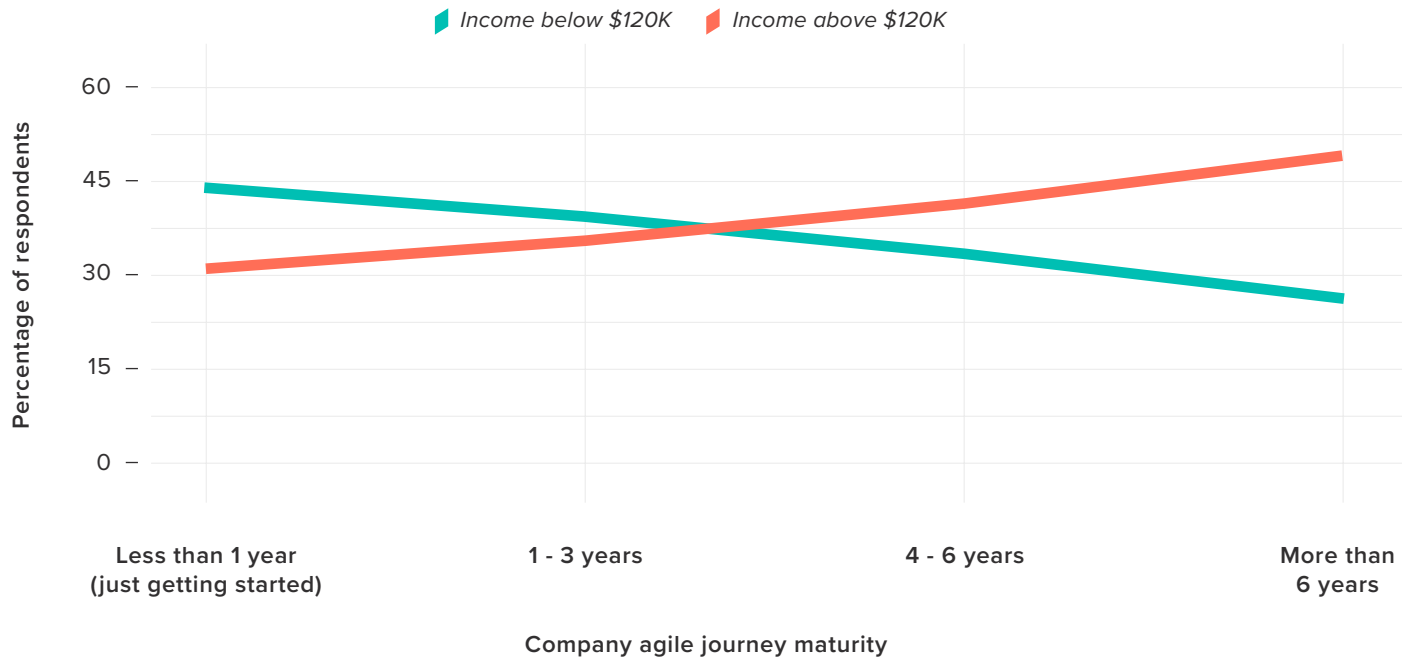
No other attribute emerged as a significant predictor of income level, including any of the three certification variables (the highest level of certification held by the respondent, the number of certifications held, and the number of different organizations they held certifications from). However, when 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

Agile coaches were asked to share the biggest challenges they faced in their role. These were thematically analyzed to identify common patterns and issues.

Although there was some variation among types of coaches, four themes were common across all respondents and are shown below.

01 Leadership as a barrier to implementing agility

02 Resistance to change from legacy structures, culture, and mindsets

03 Lack of understanding about agile

04 Remote working and COVID-19

01

## Leadership as a barrier to implementing agility

The most prevalent challenge that agile coaches reported was that leadership and management tended to be a barrier to agility. They cited a variety of reasons, including lack of buy-in and support, resistance to change, having a mindset that was not conducive to agility, being rooted in older management styles, lack of understanding, and a lack of alignment between agile teams and leadership.

There were also some more nuanced responses, which indicated that some coaches found leaders approaching agile as "for their staff, not for them," as well as leaders having competing priorities which hindered organization-wide adoption of agile; for example, wanting to retain control.

It should be noted that there were a number of respondents who cited improvements in management and leadership among their business impacts (refer to page 09). This indicates that, while management is generally a point of difficulty in adopting agile, there are instances where leadership *has* been brought on board and become part of the transformation.

> "Lack of leadership buy in, many stuck in the old ways"
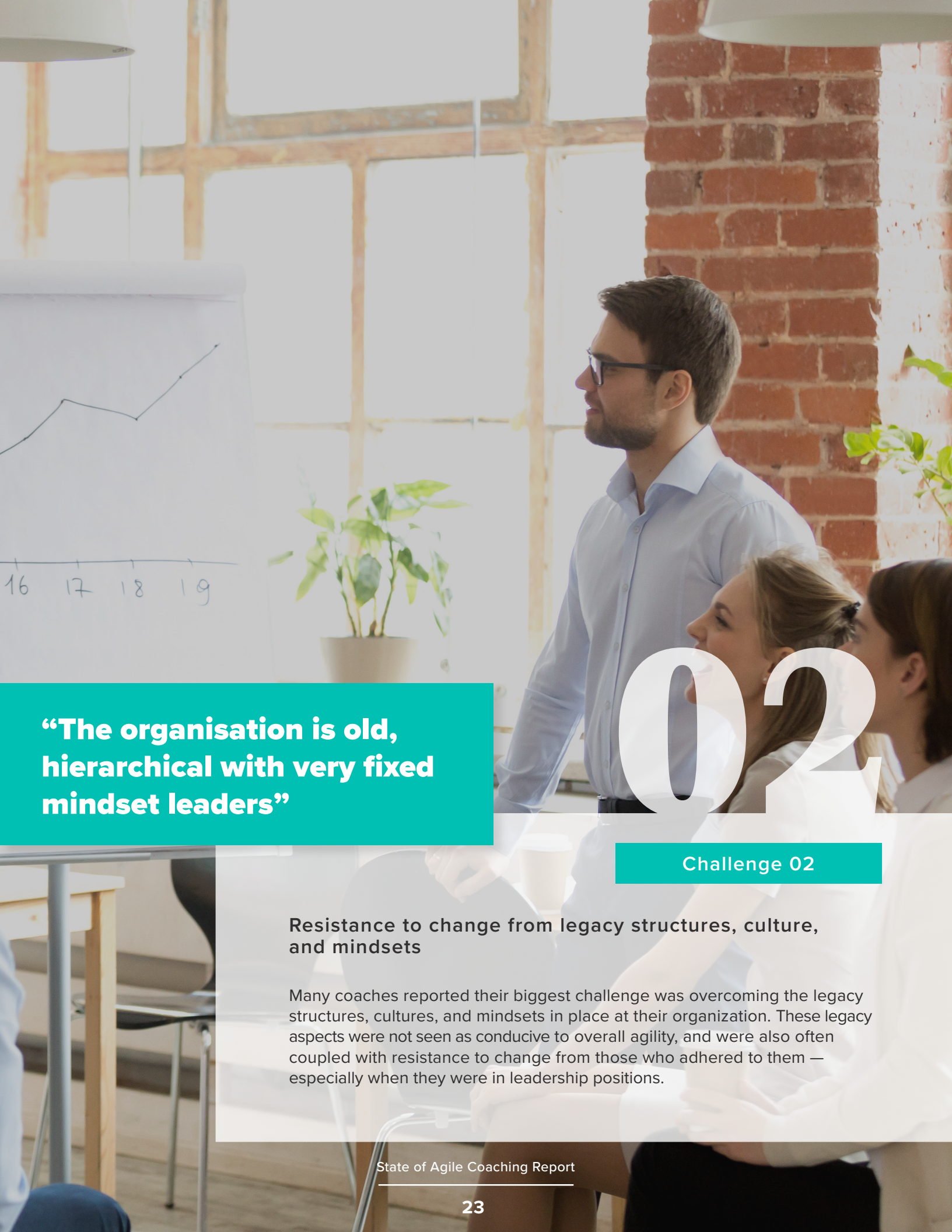
"The organisation is old, hierarchical with very fixed mindset leaders"

02

Challenge 02

Resistance to change from legacy structures, culture, and mindsets

Many coaches reported their biggest challenge was overcoming the legacy structures, cultures, and mindsets in place at their organization. These legacy aspects 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.

03

"Misunderstanding of agile coaching & lack of agile professionals"

Challenge 03

Lack of understanding about agile

A number of coaches reported their biggest challenges stemmed from the organization's lack of understanding of what agile is, how it's implemented, and their roles as agile coaches. Much of this misunderstanding was cited as coming from leadership and middle management.

04

Challenge 04

Remote working and COVID-19

Lastly, a number of coaches cited the need to coach remotely in the current environment as their biggest challenge. The challenges associated with remote work include difficulty aligning across multiple time zones and backslides in coachee organizations.

"Attend to everyone remotely given time zones"

Demographics

From October to December 2020, 681 agile coaches from 56 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 to executives, and across business functions.

Respondent by type of coach

52% Multi-team coach

36% Business coach

11% Team coach

1% Technical coach

Note

As there were only four respondents who classified themselves as technical coaches, this information has been removed from analysis. Definitions for these coaching types can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

Respondent by years of experience

42% More than 6 years
23% 4 - 6 years
28% 1 - 3 years
7% Less than 1 year

## 95% | OF AGILE COACHES HAVE HELD OTHER AGILE ROLES PRIOR TO THEIR CURRENT ONE

Respondent by country
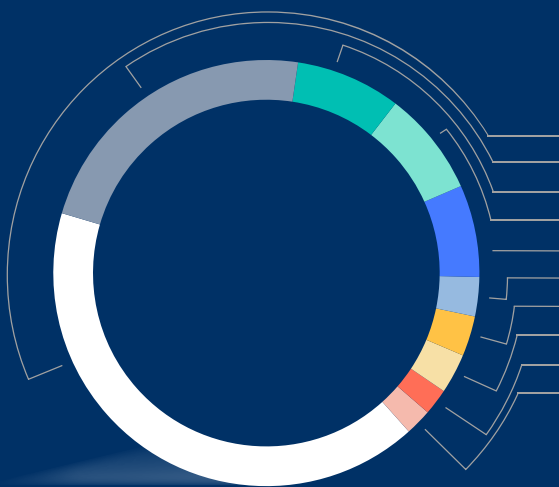
41% United States
23% Other
8% India
8% United Kingdom
7% Germany
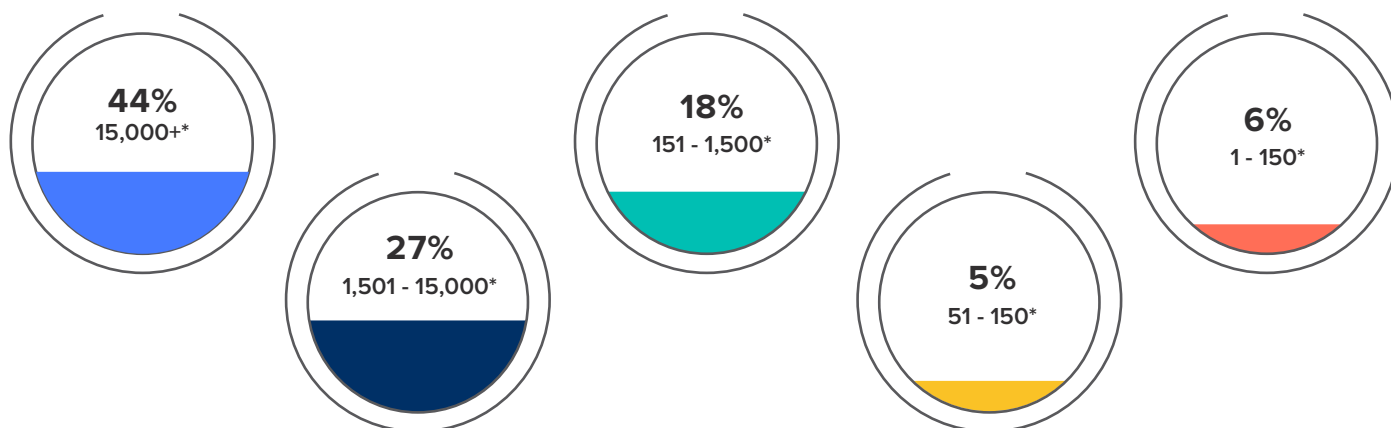3% Canada
3% Australia
3% France
2% Sweden
2% China

Note

Agile coaches from 56 countries responded to the survey. More than 50% of them came from the United States, India, and the United Kingdom.


State of Agile Coaching Report
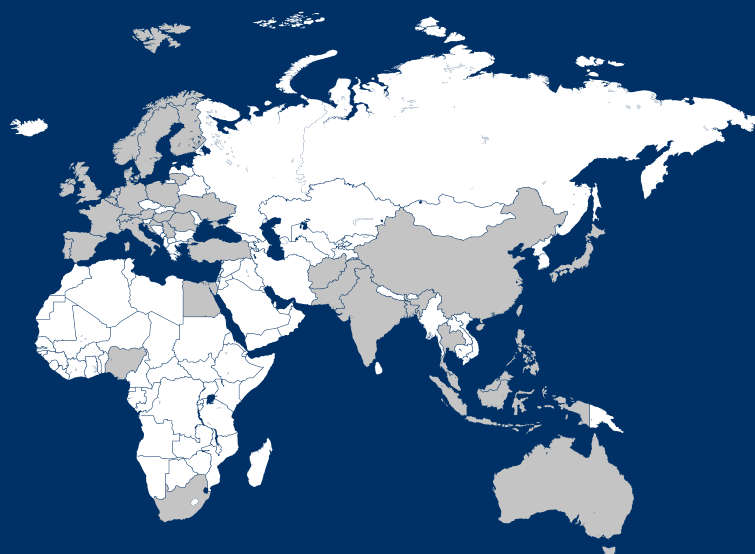
Company size

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

44%
15,000+*

27%
1,501 - 15,000*

18%
151 - 1,500*

5%
51 - 150*

6%
1 - 150*
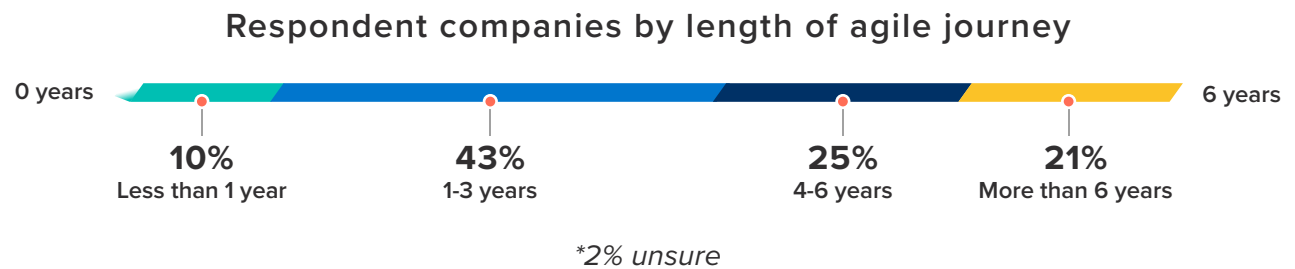
Number of people in the company

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.

12% 1 (only me)
29% 2-5 coaches
17% 6-10 coaches
8% 11-20 coaches
34% 20+ coaches
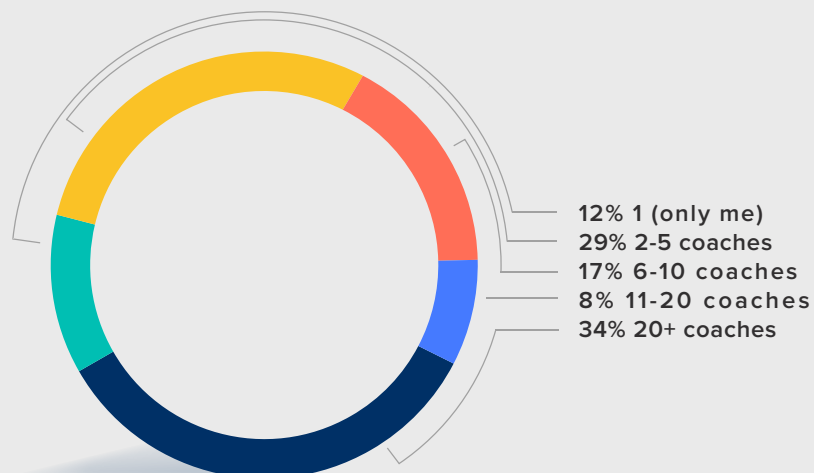
Respondent companies by size of coaching team

Company 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   6 years

10%
Less than 1 year

43%
1-3 years

25%
4-6 years

21%
More than 6 years

*2% unsure

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 judgement. We are not saying that any coach or certification is better than any other. Rather, each fulfills a necessary, and often independent, role.

Team (or team-level) 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 (or multi-team-level) coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role across multiple teams. This role primarily focuses on coaching teams to improve business processes. This role would fill the commonly used definition of an agile coach.

Business or (business-level) coach

These are individuals who fill a coaching role with authority across the organization. This role primarily focuses on coaching leaders and managers, 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 that require an agile professional to demonstrate a moderate level of experience, for example, the Scrum Alliance CSP®, ICAgile ICP-ACC, International CoachFederation 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 2021 (SOAC) is a survey jointly distributed by the Business Agility Institute and Scrum Alliance and is intended to determine the state of the professional agile coaching sector. The SOAC 2021 will form the first step of ongoing iterations that will document changes in the industry over time.

Overall, 681 members of the global agile and business agility communities from 56 different countries responded to the survey, which contains a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering demographics, qualifications and experience, salary and rate, self reported measures and 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 2020 data and trends with the previous year's findings (2018-2019).

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 the next State of Agile Coaching report.

Participants

Survey respondents were recruited via the networks of each of the distributing organizations. Of these responses, 42 were removed due to containing outliers beyond reasonable range, being test responses, or due to missing data.

State of Agile Coaching Report

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