

Peer-Reviewed Study of 686 Executives Validates AIIR Consulting's Executive Coaching: Leaders and Organizations Change

Peer-reviewed research analyzes 1,130 open-ended responses from 686 executives and finds coaching through the AIIR Method creates meaningful business impact.

BALA CYNWYD, PA, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Companies invest billions of dollars a year in [executive coaching](#) and leadership development. And, the question they rightly ask are: "Does coaching actually change leader performance?" and "How would we know?"

A new peer-reviewed study offers an answer. Published in the [European Journal of Training and Development](#) (Emerald Publishing) and co-authored by AIIR Consulting Founder and CEO Dr. Jonathan Kirschner and Prof. Nicky Terblanche of Stellenbosch Business School, it is one of the largest qualitative examinations to date of the impact of executive coaching on leadership.

The study analyzed 1,130 open-ended survey responses from 686 executives across more than 300 global organizations — predominantly Fortune 500 companies. Every engagement was delivered using the AIIR® Method (Assessment, Insight, Implementation, Reinforcement), [AIIR's proprietary four-phase executive coaching methodology](#) for creating sustained behavioral change. Executive coaching was delivered by 158 coaches across North America, EMEA, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America.

Team leadership emerged as the no. 1 area where executives reported coaching directly benefited their leadership — evidence that coaching pays off where it matters most to the business: in how leaders run, engage, and develop their teams. Executives most frequently reported that coaching improved:

- Team leadership (24.2%) — managing, delegating, engaging, and leading teams more effectively
- Communication (16.4%) — communicating clearly and influencing stakeholders
- People development (16.0%) — mentoring, growing, and empowering others
- Executive presence (15.7%) — increased confidence and visible leadership authority

Critically, the changes leaders reported in themselves were echoed by the people around them. When asked what feedback they received from colleagues, executives most often cited team

engagement (27.4%), executive presence (17.5%), and communication (13.8%) — a convergence suggesting that coaching produces coherent, observable behavioral change, with team leadership acting as the central mechanism through which that change becomes visible across an organization. Leaders also reported tangible organizational impact, describing improvements in business outcomes, culture, and operational performance.

"I developed the AIIR® Method in 2009 to bring psychological rigor to the executive coaching industry," said Dr. Kirschner. "Seventeen years later, peer-reviewed science confirms what we've experienced across thousands of coaching engagements: Leaders coached using the AIIR® Method don't just feel more effective, the impact is seen and felt by their teams, their colleagues, and their organizations. That's a triumph for businesses seeking to increase the effectiveness of their leaders, teams, and organizations."

The article, "Executive Leaders' Perspectives on the Impact of Executive Coaching on their Leadership Development," is published open access (CC BY 4.0) in the European Journal of Training and Development, Vol. 50 No. 10, pp. 127-145, and is available for free at <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-03-2026-0066>.

About AIIR Consulting

Founded in 2009 by Dr. Jonathan Kirschner, AIIR Consulting is a global executive coaching and leadership development firm trusted across the Fortune 500 and by organizations around the world. Fusing its unmatched understanding of leadership, proven AIIR® Method, AIIR® Leadership Framework, business experience, and expertise, AIIR delivers tech-enabled, human-centric solutions that increase the performance of leaders, teams, and organizations. Learn more at www.aiirconsulting.com.

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