



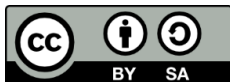
**BUSINESS AGILITY**  
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# State of Agile Coaching

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

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Business Agility Institute, 2020

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# Results: Descriptive Statistics

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681 respondents from 56 different countries responded to the State of Agile Coaching 2020 survey. Descriptive statistics for the survey will not be reported here, with the exception of those that directly pertain to this analysis.

## Quantitative Analysis

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Higher levels of certification, or higher number of certifications, and a wider variety of certification providers will result in higher salaries.

The results of an Ordinal Logistic Regression analysis, controlling for all available covariates<sup>1</sup> indicated that there was no significant relationship between 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 providers they held certifications from) and their Rate/Salary.

Significant Predictors of Rate/Salary were: Region (All were lower than the USA except Australia), Years of Agile Experience (those with 6+ years was significantly likely to be in a higher Rate category than those with < 1 year), Company Agile Journey (those engaged with companies 1-3, 4-6 and 6+ years into their Agile journeys were all significantly likely to be in a higher Rate category than those <1 year in), Engagement Type (Direct Contract, and Consultants were both significantly likely to be in a higher Rate category than employees), Coaching Role (Enterprise level coaches were significantly likely to be in a higher Rate category than Agile or Team level coaches) (See Table 1 for summary of significant findings).

### For Interest - Not Recommended for Inclusion in the Report:

When North American data was analysed in isolation, there was a borderline significant relationship ( $p = 0.054$ ) between Certification Level and Rate, with those that had Master level

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<sup>1</sup> Years of Agile Experience, Coaching Role, Monthly Professional Development Hours, Region. Industry Group, Company Size, Coaches in the Organization, Number of Coachees, Length of Company Agility Journey, Engagement Type, EngagementLength, and Percentage of Time Spent Working Remotely.

certifications more likely to be in a higher Rate bracket than those with only Beginner level. Based on this finding, it is recommended that this relationship is explored in future surveys.

### **Full time employees will have lower levels of certification than contractors.**

The results of a Chi Square test of independence/association indicated that there was a significant relationship between respondents' employment type and their highest level of certification ( $X^2 = 27.7$ ,  $P < 0.0005$ ). From visual inspection of the data, Those on direct contract were more often at a Master level than Employees, and those On Assignment (consultants) were more often at a Master level than Employees, while Employees were more often at a Beginner level than either those On Assignment or those on Direct Contract (**See Table 2**).

### **Employment type and methods to find work will be linked**

The results of a Chi Square test of Independence/Association indicated that there is a significant relationship between how respondents reported typically finding work and their Engagement type ( $X^2 = 120.8$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ). Visual inspection of the data indicated that Employees most frequently found work through Word of Mouth referrals and Public Job Boards, while Direct Contracts, while also most often finding work through word of mouth and public job boards, were far more likely than employees to find work through Agencies. Consultants (on assignment) were most likely to find work from word of mouth referrals, followed by through the sales team at a consultancy and as an associate of a consultancy.

### **The proportion of coaches who don't know how success is measured or how they impact their organization will be different between classes of coaches.**

Given this hypothesis involved a quantitative outcome variable (type of coach) and a qualitative predictor variable (self-reported uncertainty of success measures/impact), the relationship between the variables could not be directly verified statistically, therefore qualitative responses were used to create subsets based on those that had responded with the words "Not, Unsure or Uncertain" to the "success measures" item. Based on these subsets, 9.5 percent of Team level Coaches, 6 percent of Agile level Coaches, and 5 percent of Enterprise level Coaches were unsure of how their success was measured. The results of a chi square goodness of fit test indicated that these percentages were not significantly different to chance ( $X^2 = 1.1$ ,  $P = 0.51$ )

This approach was then applied to the Impacts item, with a chi square goodness of fit test indicating that the percentages of coach of each type did not differ from chance ( $X^2 = 0$ ,  $P = 1$ ).

# Qualitative Analysis

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Respondents who indicate a high level of impact will also receive a higher average salary

Given this was a hypothesis regarding the relationship between a qualitative predictor (self-reported impact) and a quantitative outcome (Rate/Salary) it could not be investigated statistically with the current dataset. **See Recommendations Report.**

There will be a relationship between the themes identified in both Impacts and Challenges.

The relationship between these items could not be verified statistically, however, comparing the themes identified during qualitative analysis indicated that Impacts and Challenges had a number of related themes. These included the themes of Team Level Agility, Agility Mindset, Organisation-level Agility, and Leadership Level Agility.

The most prevalent theme in Challenges was leadership as a barrier to Agility, which differed from the most prevalent theme in Impacts, which was an improvement in team Agility and success, however, there were a number of respondents who cited improvements in management and leadership among their impacts. This indicates that while management is generally a point of difficulty in implementing Agile, there are instances where leadership has been brought on board and become part of the transformation.

Different types of coach will report different types of challenges

Given this hypothesis involved a quantitative predictor variable (Type of Coach) and a qualitative outcome (Challenges), the relationship between the two variables could not be verified statistically.

Therefore, to investigate this question we conducted separate qualitative analyses for Team, Agile, and Enterprise level Coaches and found:

- The most prevalent challenges for **Team Level Coaches** were around Leadership, management, and the need for improvement.
- The most prevalent challenges for **Agile Coaches** were around Management, Teams, Organisational Challenges and Mindset challenges.
- The most prevalent challenges for **Enterprise coaches** were around Agile challenges, Change issues, management, and Coaching related challenges.

*Note: it is recommended that this finding be treated as hypothesis generating, and investigated in future iterations of the SOAC report, rather than being seen as hypothesis confirming in and of itself.*

## Exploratory Qualitative Analyses

Three survey items were analyzed thematically in order to generate hypotheses and items for future surveys, as well as gain a deeper understanding of how success is measured for agile coaches, what impacts they are having, and what challenges they are facing.

### How is your success measured?

#### Success measured differently at different levels

Agile coaches reported a wide range of success measures, which can be grouped into organization-wide, team-level, individual coachee-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.

*"Teams working better, achieving their goals..."*

*"Team's Agile Maturity, plus value to the customer and the organization"*

*"The success of the team"*

The largest group of responses related to those whose success was measured based on the performance of their teams, who reported being measured based on overall team success, team agility, and team behaviour.

*"Developing high performance teams"*

*"Agile team success, Agile team feedback"*

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

*"Based on organization success..."*

*"Organizational metrics"*

*"Outcome to the organization"*

Those who reported measuring success at the customer/client level most often based their level of success on customer satisfaction, with some basing success on their customer's performance.

*"Customer satisfaction"*

*"Happy customers"*

*"Customer success metrics"*

#### Success measured with concrete metrics compared to feedback

Responses were somewhat divided in how formally their success was measured, with one theme emerging that concrete metrics were used to measure success, while another emerged indicating that success was indicated by informal methods such as qualitative feedback and intuition, while a few respondents indicated that they experienced a mixture of the two.

*"OKRs"*

*"Maturity assessment"*

*"Customer feedback"*

*"qualitative feedback"*

*"informal feedback ... team agile maturity scores"*

There was a related theme around the use of outcome-based measurements for success.

*"Outcomes achieved"*

*"Outcome based"*

*"Outcomes for the Client's business and staff"*



**Success measured based on Product and Delivery** *"Increased delivery"*

A number of respondents reported having their success indicated by improvements in product delivery and processes. *"delivery of value to customers"*

There were also a number of respondents who indicated that their success was not measured, or that they were unaware of how their success was being measured. *"successful team delivery"*

*"It's not"*

*"Not clear yet"*

### What impacts have you had?

**Coaches have had impacts at a number of levels within their organizations** *"Cycle time, customer experience, and agile maturity improvement"*

A prominent theme that emerged was that coaches reported having an impact at one or more levels, from organization-wide impacts, to team-level impacts, to customer and product impacts. *"Moved the organization up the Agile maturity scale"*

*"1 in 3 teams are high performing"*

*"Team morale and performance has improved"*

**Coaches improving Agility at all levels** *"I have helped the teams begin to trust the process and more fully invest in the events that lead to quality and transparency."*

A second prominent theme was that coaches had helped teams and organizations to improve their agile maturity overall, this also included increasing trust in Agile, team self-management, alignment of value streams, and adoption of Agile processes. *"Moved organization towards 60% Agility"*

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

*"more alignment and transparency across development value streams/programs"*

**Improvements in Communication, Collaboration and Transparency** *"I've increased transparency and collaboration significantly"*

Many coaches reported seeing 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. *"transparency, collaboration, customer centricity"*

*"We've made problems visible, introduced empirical decision making, driven collaboration at the team, program and executive levels. It's led to effective management of teams and clients."*

*"improving communication across multidisciplinary teams and removing silos"*



## Improvements at lower levels of the organization that have not generalized

A number of coaches had seen impacts at the individual or team level, however, for a variety of reasons including lack of access to leadership, leadership resistance, or the perception of Agile as 'IT only' they had been unable to introduce Agility more generally.

*"Impact with individuals & teams = very impactful. With Leadership valuing the impact = very little"*

*"Little because management buy-in has not been successful for the organization yet"*

*"Moderate at the individual and team levels, some at the program level, little if any at the enterprise level"*

## Improvements in Delivery Speed and Quality

A number of coaches reported having increased the speed of delivery/reduced lead times, improved the quality of products delivered and the processes in place to facilitate delivery, and facilitated a shift in focus toward delivering value.

*"I've helped teams realize value from R&D investments faster"*

*"Higher throughput of value"*

*"Alignment, faster and more predictable delivery"*

*"36% cut in lead time, no drop in NPS"*

*"faster delivery of software with improved quality"*

## Success at Individual, Team, and Organization level

Coaches reported seeing their impact on Agility translating to success at all levels from individual, through team and up to organization. Some reported general success, while others were more specific, citing increases in business development, customer satisfaction, and productivity among others.

*"The past two years have shown 22% growth in staff, 200% increase in profitability, significant increases in employee engagement, 242% increase in velocity on team 1 and 165% increase in velocity on team 2."*

*"20% increase in productivity"*

*"1 out of 3 teams are high performing (33%)"*

*"A lot of impact on individuals"*

*"Generate new business[,] shorter time of development"*

## Management level impacts

Coaches reported mixed success among management. While 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 and 'kingdoms', and general resistance to change, there were some coaches who reported having support from leadership, and having had an impact on managers and leaders in their organization.

*"low [impact] due to resistance in the middle management"*

*"Very little so far as leadership is not onboard"*

*"Senior Leader Confusion"*

*"This year, strong impact. I now have a director level manager who is behind me, and my influence has spread and continues to spread throughout the enterprise"*

*"Executives in area im coaching are reported by others to have noticeable have changed behaviour towards servant leadership"*

*"Relied on as a strategic partner with executive leadership through working teams"*

## Mindset and Culture change

A number of coaches reported having influenced changes in the mindset of leaders and teams, as well as having impacted a change in organizational culture toward more agile thinking and culture as opposed to command and control or waterfall.

*"increased an agile mindset"*

*"Most management decisions align with Agile mindset"*

*"Changing the organisations mindset by comparing Waterfall to Agile."*

*"Cultural change, change existing process, motivated employees"*

## Little/No Impact

Some coaches reported having little impact, no impact, or being unsure of their impact.

## What is the main challenge you face?

### Leadership as a barrier to implementing Agility

The most prevalent theme that emerged in response to the question 'what is your biggest challenge?' was that leadership and management were a barrier to the implementation of Agile. This was for a variety of reasons, including lack of buy-in and support, resistance to change, having a mindset that was not conducive to Agile, being rooted in older management styles, lack of understanding of Agile, 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 power.

*"Leadership support and their understanding of Agile."*

*"Leadership mindset"*

*"Lack of Leadership buy in, many stuck in the old ways"*

*"Access to Executives or Leadership"*

*"Leadership unable to change their style of working to empower, enable Agile teams effectively"*

*"Political infighting and power struggles between senior leadership where kingdoms are effected"*

*"Leadership stance that sounds like 'Agile coaching is for them not for me. I am natively agile'."*

### Legacy Structure, Culture and Mindset, and Resistance to Change

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 Agility, and were also often coupled with resistance to change from those who adhered to them - especially when they were in leadership positions.

*"Legacy culture and process that people feel they cant break away from"*

*"Opposition from those with a legacy mindset"*

*"Traditional mind-set, Resistance to change specially from middle management, Impatience to seeing results"*

*"The organisation is old, hierarchical with very fixed mindset leaders",*

*"Organization culture"*

## Misunderstanding and lack of understanding around Agile

A number of coaches reported their biggest challenges arising out of a lack of understanding of what Agile was, how it was to be implemented, and what their roles as Agile Coaches were. Much of this misunderstanding was cited as coming from leadership and middle management, with many coaches also reporting a general lack of understanding, or a lack of consistent, unified understanding of Agile practices.

*"leadership don't understand the essence of Agile. But react that they all know."*

*"Misunderstanding of Agile Coaching and lack of Agile Professionals"*

*"A complete lack of understanding of what a coach and does (which impacts how our management values us) combined with beliefs about 'agile is a process to get better results'."*

*"everyone [has] their own definition and understanding of agile"*

## Remote Working/COVID

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 general issues with remote working, the difficulty aligning across multiple time zones, and the impact of remote work causing backslides in coachee organizations.

*"The challenge of effectively engaging with teams and individuals on a remote work setup."*

*"Effective remote coaching"*

*"Everything is remote, hard to get to know the teams and organisation"*

*"Attend to everyone remotely given time zones"*

*"Right now, business performance and remote working issues have led to 'backsliding' to old mindsets and ways of working in our organizations."*

**Table 1.** Significant predictors of Rate

Predictor	Value	Std. Error	T Value	P Value	Adjusted P
Years Experience: More than 6 years	1.4	0.40	3.5	0.0004	0.0021
Role: Enterprise or business-level coach	1.2	0.33	3.5	0.0004	0.0021
Region: Europe	-1.5	0.21	-7.11	0.00000	0.00000
Region: Asia	-2.8	0.32	-8.9	0.00000	0.00000
Region: South America	-3.9	0.53	-7.45	0.00000	0.00000
Region: Africa	-2.9	0.69	-4.15	0.00003	0.00001
Number of Coachees	0.001	0.001	2.39	0.017	0.046
CompanyAgileJourney:1-3 years	0.74	0.31	2.4	0.016	0.046
CompanyAgileJourney:4-6 years	0.95	0.34	2.81	0.017	0.0049
CompanyAgileJourney:More than 6 years	1.29	0.38	3.39	0.0007	0.003
EngagementType: Direct contract	1.05	0.25	4.26	0.00002	0.00012
EngagementType: On assignment from my employer (e.g. a consultancy)	0.69	0.23	3.07	0.0079	0.0021

**Table 2.** Certification Level by Employment Type

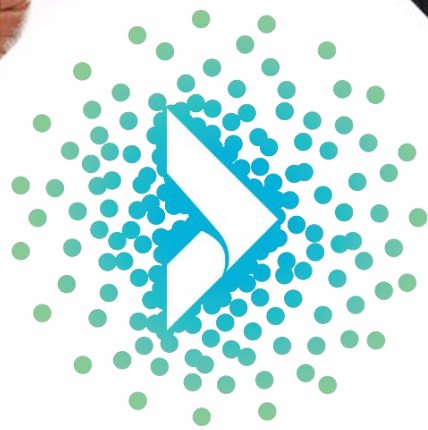
	Beginner	Professional	Master
Employee	101	182	74
Direct Contract	18	53	45
On Assignment	32	67	63



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