

*Unlocking Impact:*  
Shaping the Future of  
*Workplace Mentoring*  
*and Coaching*

**abm**

associationofbusinessmentors.org





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# Foreword by *Georgina Waite*, CEO, and *Pete Wortley*, Head of Workplace Services, at the Association of Business Mentors



## *Shaping the future of workplace mentoring and coaching*

The world of work is evolving at extraordinary pace. From the rapid adoption of new technologies, to the growing focus on wellbeing and inclusion, organisations today face a profound challenge: how to equip their people not only to perform, but to thrive. In this context, the role of mentoring and coaching in the workplace has never been more vital.

### *The changing workplace landscape*

Over the past two decades, mentoring and coaching have started to shift from being seen as 'nice to have' initiatives, reserved for senior leaders, to becoming recognised as essential tools for unlocking potential at every level of an organisation.

This is evidenced by the number of organisations implementing their own mentoring and coaching programmes, with our research finding that 97% of medium and large businesses now have a programme in place for their employees.

And businesses are seeing the results. Research consistently shows that employees who have access to mentoring or coaching are more engaged, more productive, and more likely to stay with their employer.

These interventions build confidence, develop leadership capacity, and enhance wellbeing. At the organisational level, they foster resilience and adaptability, qualities that are increasingly necessary in uncertain times.

We are also seeing a cultural shift. Mentoring and coaching are no longer confined to remedial or corrective purposes; they are now understood as proactive, developmental practices that fuel performance and growth of individuals and the business itself.

The rise of hybrid working, the demand for diverse and inclusive leadership pipelines, and the importance of purpose-led organisations all amplify the need for structured, professional support to guide individuals through complexity and change. And of course, the increasing role of AI in shaping workplace practices.

This is the new landscape of workplace mentoring and coaching – one rich with opportunity but also requiring consistent quality and credibility to deliver on its promise.

### *ABM's role in driving excellence*

That is where the Association of Business Mentors (ABM) plays a critical role. As the UK's professional body dedicated to raising standards in business mentoring, we are committed to ensuring that organisations can access

support of the highest calibre and have the culture and conditions in place to maximise its benefit.

Our mission is to unlock potential through the power of business mentoring, but it extends beyond just advocacy. We set rigorous professional standards, provide training and accreditation, and build a community of mentors and coaches who are dedicated to measurable impact.

We believe that excellence in workplace mentoring and coaching is not optional – it is the foundation on which real and lasting outcomes are built. For both employees and the business itself.

### *Why this report matters*

This report reflects our commitment to shaping the future of workplace mentoring and coaching. It presents new research which highlights the positive impact these practices are already having in the workplace and explores the opportunities to extend that impact further.

Alongside evidence, it brings together insights and practical examples that show how mentoring and coaching transform individuals, teams, and organisations. But it also points to the challenges we must address – from widening access to professional mentoring and coaching, to embedding them more deeply within organisational culture.

## *A call to action*

Our purpose at the ABM is clear: to champion the real impact of mentoring and coaching, connecting business owners and professionals with the support, expertise, and inspiration they need to succeed. We want to see a future where every business and every employee can benefit from the power of high-quality mentoring and coaching. By raising standards, sharing knowledge, and working collaboratively with employers and policymakers, we can ensure that these practices are not only valued, but embedded as a core part of the UK's workplace landscape.

We invite you to explore the findings of this report and to join us in shaping this future together. Mentoring and coaching are proven drivers of performance, wellbeing, and growth. The opportunity before us is to harness their full potential – and in doing so, to build workplaces where people and businesses can truly flourish.

# Executive Summary

Workplace mentoring and coaching have rapidly become essential components of how organisations support, develop, and retain their people.

Aiming to provide a pulse check on the role workplace mentoring and coaching is playing in businesses in 2025, this report brings together new quantitative research, undertaken with HR and People Directors from medium and large businesses across the UK, with qualitative research, undertaken through focus groups with workplace mentors and coaches. In doing so, the report seeks to understand the current state of workplace mentoring and coaching, and to establish what the sector needs to do ensure that its benefits are felt even more widely

## Key findings from the research we conducted include:

- Businesses are seeing a host of benefits from their workplace mentoring and coaching programmes - from enhanced employee retention to the attraction of new talent and also improved employee wellbeing.
- A substantial majority of the businesses also strongly believe that their workplace mentoring and coaching programmes have improved overall business performance, highlighting the potential of these initiatives to contribute to wider business and economic growth.
- Businesses are rapidly adapting to the growth of AI, with the majority now using it to support

their mentoring and coaching programmes. Most commonly, businesses are employing AI to support on tasks such as matching mentors and mentees, creating personalised learning plans, and analysing feedback to track progress.

- There are challenges to the benefits of workplace mentoring and coaching being more widely felt. Issues identified include securing adequate leadership buy-in, company culture, and programmes having dedicated resources. Accurately measuring and assessing the return on investment of programmes was also highlighted.

This report is divided into two sections. The first looks at the mentoring and coaching landscape today - how businesses are using the two at present and the experiences of mentors and coaches in delivering workplace mentoring. The second section looks at the benefits businesses are seeing from workplace mentoring and coaching and also reflects on some of the challenges to these benefits being felt more widely.

Finally, we outline several areas that we believe merit further exploration in order to support the continued growth of workplace mentoring and coaching. These include the potential impact of a new accreditation of workplace mentoring and coaching programmes on businesses, as well as proposed measures to expand the benefits of workplace mentoring and coaching to a wider number of businesses. And crucially, we will work closely with business and boardroom leaders to instil a mentoring and coaching culture where every single employee feels the value and positive impact of the programmes.

## In numbers:

Of the medium and large businesses we surveyed...

**92%** had a workplace programme that encompassed aspects of both mentoring and coaching

**70%** strongly agree that workplace mentoring and coaching has positively impacted overall business performance

**61%** strongly agree that workplace mentoring and coaching has improved employee wellbeing in their company

**66%** strongly agree their workplace mentoring and coaching programme had positively impacted employee retention and attracting new talent

**92%** believed their workplace mentoring and coaching programme to be part of the company's diversity and inclusion efforts

**98%** would recommend establishing a workplace mentoring or coaching programme to other organisations



# The state of the *workplace mentoring and coaching* landscape today

Our research aimed to take a pulse check on the role workplace mentoring and coaching is playing in businesses today, particularly in those large and medium-sized businesses where we know anecdotally that take up of workplace mentoring and coaching is higher.

To do this, we asked a series of questions to HR and People Directors about whether they had a workplace mentoring or coaching programme, the origins of the programme and the role it plays within their company.

The research found that more than nine out of ten (92%) of the businesses surveyed had a workplace programme that

encompassed aspects of both mentoring and coaching, while just 5% only had a mentoring programme, and 2% only had a coaching programme.

However, we also found huge variety in the specifics of what those 92% of businesses were delivering within their workplace mentoring and coaching programme. Career development coaching was the most frequently cited specific (by 70% of businesses) but other deliverables included skills-based coaching, executive coaching, group mentoring, peer-to-peer mentoring, one-to-one mentoring, cross-functional mentoring and reverse mentoring.

Interestingly, only just over a third of businesses surveyed said that their workplace mentoring and coaching programme included external mentoring, whereby employees are paired with mentors from outside their organisation to provide impartial guidance, fresh perspectives, and development opportunities beyond internal networks. This suggests that there is perhaps the opportunity for organisations to garner further benefits from their programmes by increasing the extent to which they draw on external expertise.

Our data also indicates that appetite for workplace mentoring and coaching programmes is high among employees, with three-quarters of businesses we spoke to reporting high take-up of their programmes.

## *Motivations behind workplace mentoring and coaching*

Our research also sought to understand why businesses have introduced workplace mentoring and coaching programmes, and what the objectives for those programmes are.

*“We want our employees to feel their voices are being heard. We can’t always guarantee mentoring will lead to a promotion or a pay rise, but we want our staff to feel valued.”*

- Marc, Focus Group participant

The clear top three reasons the HR and People Directors we spoke to gave for introducing their workplace mentoring and coaching initiatives were a desire to support employee development and progression (59%), a keenness to enhance business productivity (59%), and an ambition to improve overall business performance (56%).

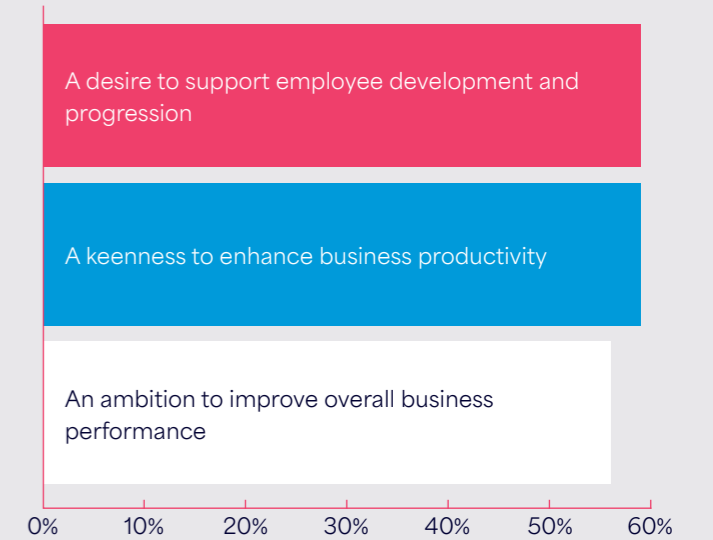
This chimed with objectives outlined for the programmes, with increased productivity, talent development and business performance cited as the three primary goals – though with increased productivity (59%) substantially higher than talent development (51%) and business performance (37%).

It is also worth noting that virtually all the businesses surveyed (92%) believed their workplace mentoring and coaching programme to be part of their company’s diversity and inclusion efforts.

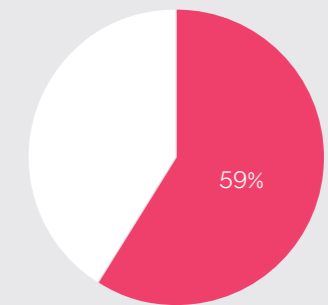
*“We’re about looking after our people, and we want our people to always feel they can bring their authentic selves to work.”*

- Amanda, Focus Group participant

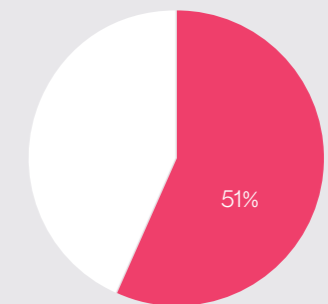
## *Reasons for introducing their workplace mentoring and coaching initiatives*



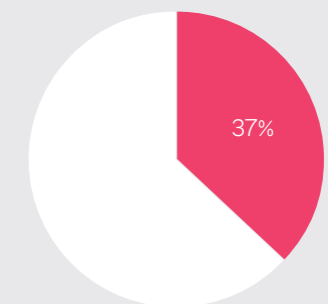
## *Objectives for workplace mentoring and coaching*



Increased Productivity



Talent Development



Business Performance



### Challenges facing workplace mentoring and coaching

Our research also looked to explore the challenges facing workplace mentoring and coaching today. We know that running an effective programme can be challenging but were keen to understand in more detail the barriers the medium and large businesses we spoke to are facing.

HR and People Directors at those businesses cited a lack of time and availability as the biggest roadblock to successfully implementing a workplace mentoring and coaching programme. This was highlighted by almost half (47%) of respondents.

*“I’m only one person. I want to give as much as I can, but I must balance giving my time to others, with doing my day job. That limits my abilities.”*

- Jo, Focus Group participant

Alongside these resource barriers, budgets were also raised as an issue with more than a third (38%) stating that limited budget and resources represented a major challenge for them. Other issues identified included challenges with matching mentors and mentees (39%) and measuring outcomes or impact (37%).

*“What you want and what you need is sometimes different. In a successful mentoring partnership, there has to be healthy challenge and conflict to drive results.”*

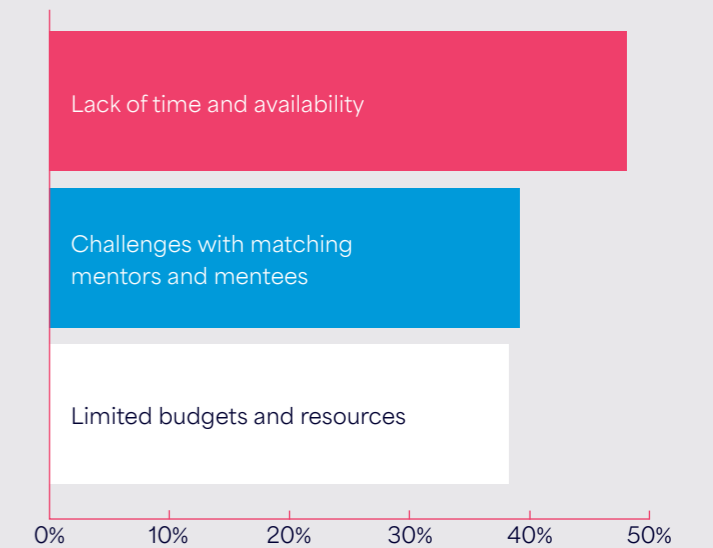
- Rhonda, Focus Group participant

*“We worry that if we publicise the programme too much, we won’t have enough resource to meet a big increase in demand.”*

- Lola, Focus Group participant

These findings resonate with what we heard in our focus groups with mentors and coaches, who told us that getting dedicated resources for workplace mentoring and coaching plans can be a real challenge. This was highlighted to be especially the case at smaller businesses where resources are tight.

### Top three challenges facing workplace mentoring and coaching



*“Training is always an easy thing for businesses to cut when resources are tight, it all depends on who’s in those leadership positions and how much effort and resource they want to give to it.”*

- Jeremy, Focus Group participant

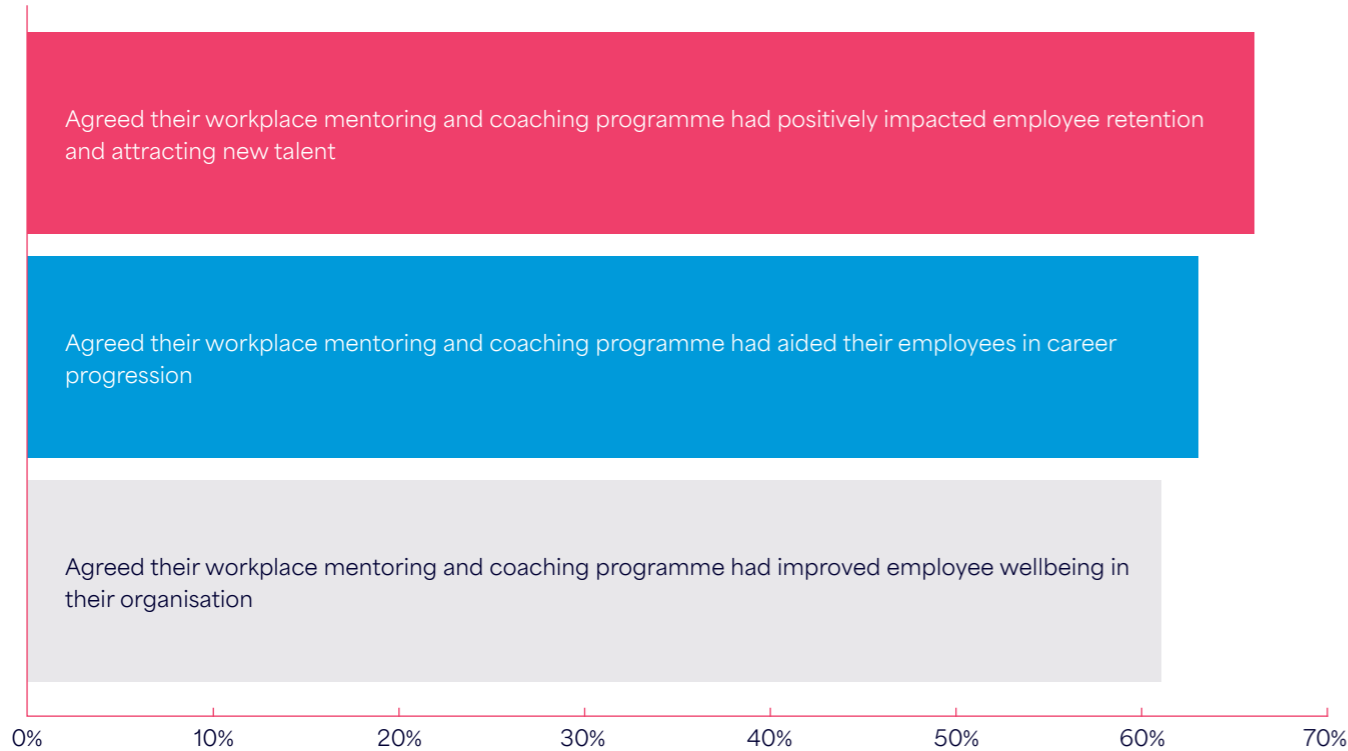
However, our research also sheds light on the ways businesses are attempting to tackle some of these resource issues. The majority of businesses surveyed (77%) said that they are now using AI within their mentoring and coaching programmes. Most commonly, businesses cited using AI to support with tasks such as matching mentors with mentees, creating personalised learning plans, and analysing feedback to track progress.

# The benefits of *workplace mentoring and coaching*

As well as looking at the overall workplace mentoring and coaching landscape, we also wanted to understand in more detail the benefits that businesses and their employees are getting from the work they are undertaking in this area. Anecdotally, we have always heard positive stories about impact - but to date limited data has been collected in the United Kingdom.

Our research with the HR and People Directors of medium and large businesses in particular revealed that these businesses are seeing a substantial positive impact. 70% stated that they strongly agree that workplace mentoring and coaching has positively impacted overall business performance, suggesting a direct link between this work and value on the bottom line for businesses.

## *How workplace mentoring and coaching is moving the needle for employees in their organisations*



The respondents also spotlighted how workplace mentoring and coaching is moving the needle for employees in their organisations. 66% strongly agreed their workplace mentoring and coaching programme had positively impacted employee retention and attracting new talent, another 63% stated it had aided their employees in career progression and 61% cited it as having improved employee wellbeing in their organisation.

***“Mentoring works if it’s embedded into performance, you have to be reporting back on the long-term success of the programme and assessing its ROI.”***

- Philippa, Focus Group participant

These findings were supported by anecdotes from our focus groups, though participants did note some challenges with measuring return on investment across different organisations which often have different goals and may be using different measurement metrics depending on what those objectives are. A large part of this focused on the need to embed mentoring within a business’ understood set of KPIs in order to identify the effect it is having on business performance.

***“You need to understand the business you’re operating in, benchmarking progress towards a mentoring culture only works within the specific nuances of each business.”***

- Amanda, Focus Group participant

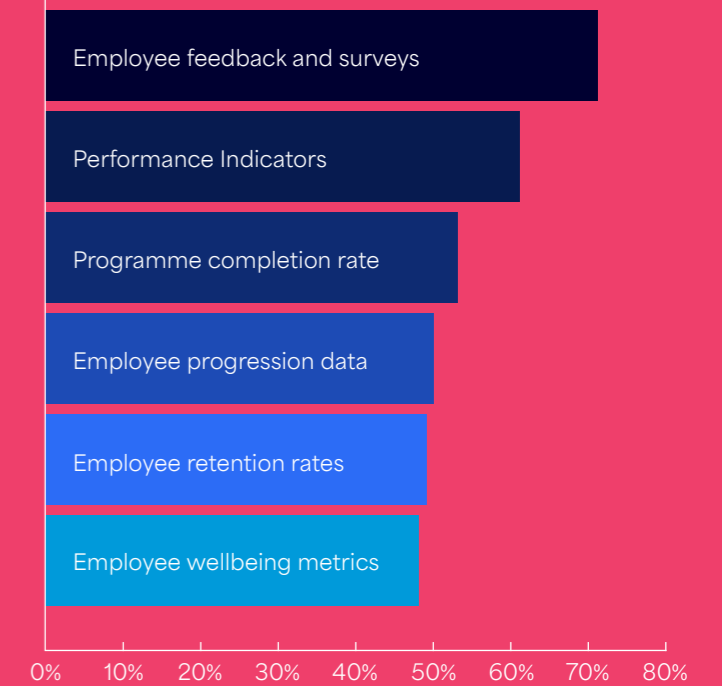
Our survey also picked this up with HR and People Directors reporting a range of measures used for measuring the success and effectiveness of their programmes including employee feedback and surveys (71%), performance indicators (61%), programme completion rates (53%), employee progression data (50%), employee retention rates (49%) and employee wellbeing metrics (48%).

This challenge of inconsistent measurement is perhaps why our research participants outlined such strong support for the concept of some form of external accreditation for workplace mentoring and coaching programmes, with 95% saying they believed it would be valuable.

Perhaps the most ringing endorsement of all came from the medium and large businesses we surveyed - an almost unanimous number (98%) said they would recommend establishing a workplace mentoring or coaching programme to other organisations.

This all suggests that businesses are seeing substantial benefits from workplace mentoring and coaching - with the key task now being to ensure these benefits are felt across as many businesses as possible.

## *How businesses are measuring the success and effectiveness of their mentoring and coaching programmes*



***“Accreditation would go a long way, especially amongst younger employees who want to know the culture and values of their employers. By accrediting that culture, we can attract greater talent who will be more engaged.”***

- Beth, Focus Group participant



# Conclusions and recommendations

Our research has found strong evidence that workplace mentoring and coaching is having a positive impact across businesses in the United Kingdom. This is particularly true for the medium and large businesses surveyed, but anecdotal evidence also suggests that when small businesses can dedicate resources, they also feel the benefits.

The task facing both the ABM and the wider workplace mentoring and coaching community is to determine how we can create a landscape where the impact of this work continues to grow, challenges and barriers facing the sector are addressed, and the quality and credibility of mentoring and coaching are upheld through clear standards and best practice.

From challenges in relation to adequate resourcing of programmes to issues around consistency in measurement, there are several ways in which more can be done to ensure that workplace mentoring and coaching can thrive.

On our part, there are several pieces of work that the ABM will be taking forward in relation to this report.

## *These include:*

- We will be launching a method for businesses to accredit their workplace mentoring or coaching programme. The aim for this will be to promote consistency in standards across organisations.
- We believe government should work closely with businesses and the workplace mentoring and coaching community to understand how the benefits of workplace mentoring and coaching can be felt across a greater number of businesses.
- We will continue to identify ways to support workplace mentors and coaches in growing their skillsets and ensuring consistency in standards for the delivery of external workplace mentoring and coaching.
- We will work with businesses to instil a culture of workplace mentoring and coaching, whereby all employees see and feel the value of these programmes, from the boardroom to new and junior employees.

It is clear that workplace mentoring and coaching are playing a substantial role in supporting the growth of businesses and the development and wellbeing of employees. But there is now an opportunity to broaden its reach, bringing the benefits of mentoring and coaching to a wider range of employees and helping more organisations unlock their full potential. Now is the time to continue that work in order to seize this opportunity.



# Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 251 UK HR and People Directors from medium to large businesses (100+ employees) (aged 25+) currently have a coaching or mentoring programme/250 UK HR and People Directors from medium to large businesses (100+ employees) (aged 25+). The data was collected between 28.08.2025 - 02.09.2025/18.09.2025 - 23.09.2025 Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is also a member of the British Polling Council.

The focus groups were conducted by the ABM between 1.09.25 - 18.09.25 gathering insights and opinions from ABM members and HR and L&D professionals on the benefits and challenges they face in delivering effective mentoring and coaching.