

INFO 2021



CORPORATE CULTURE SURVEY

The 16th annual industry review from Sherpa Coaching

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38%

Corporate
Culture

80%

Team
Culture

57%

Women in
Leadership

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Corporate Culture: An Introduction

If you have a job, then you experience corporate culture. It's the way we think, feel and act in relation to our workplace. The word 'corporate' refers to the collective body that makes up an organization. Corporate culture includes the symbols, stories and traditions that we share with each other and pass on to new colleagues as they join our organizations.

This idea applies to many organized groups: corporations, governments, schools and universities, nonprofits, churches, social clubs or your neighborhood fitness center. This applies to you – and it applies everywhere you go. You are likely a member of several 'bodies' and subject to several different corporate cultures. The term "organizational culture" is sometimes interchangeable, when used in the same way, to refer to non-corporate organizations.

In this, our sixteenth annual survey, we again ask training professionals and business leaders to tell us about their working environment. Through a series of nine questions, we touch on all the facets of corporate culture that executive coaching is designed to enhance: communication, cooperation, openness and empowerment.

Although there's room for improvement, the survey indicates that workplace cultures are often open and encouraging. Many organizations are emphasizing the *whole person* – not just the *results* of their efforts.

In addition to responses from business leaders we also receive comments from executive coaches. One coach in Wilmington, Delaware sees great strides in the adoption of coaching: "It's part of corporate culture now. Individual clients continue to utilize coaches effectively." A South African executive coach pointed out that "the benefits of executive coaching are cultural. The coach needs to understand the impact culture and values differences have on organizational effectiveness."

This is our seventh year of research specific to corporate culture. The questions and model for measuring corporate culture are copyright by Sasha Corporation in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, holding company for Sherpa Coaching LLC.



Summary and Overview

This report will serve three main purposes:

- In part, it aims to share our unique knowledge and data collected over 15 years of annual surveys and research. Specifically, in this report we present global data on corporate culture and talk about how to understand it in **three dimensions**: Control, Communication, and Coaching. How do organizations, HR professionals, business leaders, staff, managers, coaches and consultants evaluate themselves and their organizations in terms of corporate culture?
- Additionally, to understand and contextualize this global data, we will present real life examples of “corporate culture gone wrong.” We hope to demonstrate how an organization is broadly affected by leaders, managers, and staff struggling to confront different aspects of damaged or underdeveloped corporate culture.
- The third goal of this report is to identify specific steps that an organization or individual can take to address areas of concern within their corporate culture. Can one-on-one coaching help fix the problem? What should be the focus of coaching and who needs coaching? Or would team development or company-wide training programs address our problems? What about an organization that knows it needs to work on corporate culture, but isn’t sure where to start?



This report, structured around the Three Dimensions of Corporate Culture, will answer those questions, provide exclusive data, and connect the data to real life outcomes and a positive impact on business.

Where do we stand *overall* in terms of corporate culture? In other words, what global results do our surveys yield? Our queries involved statements that respondents could answer as occurring in their organization: Always, Usually, Sometimes, or Never. We can categorize ‘always’ or ‘usually’ as *positive* results, and ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ as a *negative* result.

❖ For example, here’s a taste of what we see this year:

64% of people responded positively to the statement, “People in my organization are encouraged to ask questions.” Only a third answered ‘always.’ Is that good enough? How would your company fare?

A majority (71%) said that “People in my organization are allowed to challenge management’s judgement.” Would employees, staff, managers, and executives in your organization say the same thing?

Here’s a valuable question: Can confrontation be seen in a positive way? If so, solutions can truly be hammered out in a back-and-forth, open-minded culture. Our survey for 2020 found that 18% of organizations ‘never’ see confrontation as a positive. That seems like major room for improvement.

Three Dimensions of Culture

Are there ‘good’ and ‘bad’ corporate cultures? Of course. Organizations that lack awareness and make no efforts to improve their culture are typically lacking in this area. Their corporate culture will likely remain sour. People in those organizations are probably less likely to respond to this survey. Those who take part in this survey are interested in coaching and leadership, and our results reflect that.

Our questions are designed to examine three dimensions of corporate culture:

Command and Control Communication and Cooperation Commitment to Coaching

This report will look at each dimension of corporate culture and analyze three aspects of these dimensions – height, width and depth.

Think of height as *vertical* – up and down, from management to lower levels of an organization.

Width runs *horizontally* – across peers and colleagues’ relationships.

Finally, depth allows us to look at just how *deeply ingrained* that aspect of culture is.

So, for each aspect of corporate culture, this model gives us 3 questions designed to probe the following:

interactions <i>from top to bottom</i>	(height)
interactions <i>between</i> peers	(width)
the <i>ingrained nature</i> of that aspect	(depth)

Here are the questions; three questions about each dimension in corporate culture:

Dimensions of Culture	Height (Vertical)	Width (Horizontal)	Depth (Applicate)
Command and Control	Our leadership is democratic, not autocratic.	People are allowed and encouraged to question management’s judgment.	Low level employees make independent decisions.
Communication and Cooperation	I see communication between every level of management.	People cooperate across department lines.	People are encouraged to ask questions.
A Commitment to Coaching	Confrontation can be a positive thing.	Business behavior is as a daily topic of conversation, along with skills.	Coaching and management are distinctly defined.

When Culture Goes Wrong

When corporate culture goes wrong, how bad can it get? What's right and wrong with the culture at your workplace? It's hard to form a clear value judgment on something you live with every day, but a diagnostic survey can help. What happens when poor organizational culture permeates a company?

Here are a few symptoms:

If managers are not proficient at setting expectations, addressing conflict, communicating effectively, and creating a positive culture:

- Then, expectations are not clearly set for all employees.
- Employees fill the void with what they believe to be the expected/desired behaviors.
- Often, these behaviors are not aligned with desired behaviors.
- Managers are disappointed with performance results.
- Managers hold employees accountable for missed performance.
- Employees are frustrated that they did not know what was expected.

What's the result here?

- Employees complain about communication with their managers.
- Employees feel there is constant change in direction or confusion on goals.
- Managers micro-manage.
- Performance reviews are a dreaded exercise for both managers and employees.
- Employees are often surprised at performance scores and frustrated at the result.
- Goals are set, then not discussed again till review time.

Finally, what's the impact on business?

- Employee turnover is high.
- Customer complaints are high.
- Trust in management is low.
- The bottom line continues to erode.



Next, let's look at 3 different examples of how this might play out in the real world. Let's meet Sam, Alicia, and Duane.

Meet Sam – Chief Financial Officer for an auto parts maker in Shawnee Mission, Kansas



People who work with Sam will tell you that he is incredibly talented, but he's as cold as ice. The guy never says *Hello*. Sam walks from the parking lot straight to his office and closes the door, only opening it to bark his next demand: *Kerry, get in here; Mike, where's that report?* Everyone shudders when they hear the door open. Here's how Sam describes his style:

- *It's my way or the highway. I know my ideas are going to be the best, so what's the point of trying to hear every voice? I hire people to do the work. I'll do the thinking. Even so, I'm surrounded by incompetence. If everyone just does what I tell them to do, that's the recipe for success. I don't care if they understand me, as long as they do the work and do it right. I don't need people asking "What about this? What about that?" I know what I am doing!*

Meet Alicia – Project Manager at a call center in Beaumont, Texas.



Alicia's office is immaculate, spotless, everything is practically glued to the desk. It's that perfect. If you move something, she'll put it right back in its place. Alicia recently took four months to complete an important project that could have been done in half the time. She had her reasons. Her boss didn't really know enough to contribute, according to Alicia, and her front-line staff just need to go and do their work. Let's hear what Alicia has to say:

- *I focus best when things are predictable. This new project is not going so well. It's due this afternoon and I'm not sure I covered all the angles. I get a lot of heat when things are late, but I'll take it because I really want it to be right. It's important to make sure things are done properly. That usually means I have to do it on my own. Nobody can really reach my standards: not marketing, not finance, not human resources. It's not finished until everything is perfect.*

Meet Duane – Director of Marketing at a midsize clothing company in Hollywood, Florida.



He gets excited about Miami Beach International Fashion Week. Duane's employer makes clothes for the tourists, placed in boutique shops with high prices. Duane has quite a few personal friends working with him, and he's never fired a single person in all his years at this company. Instead he might just move a difficult employee to another department. Any type of conflict makes Duane shut down. Here's what he says about himself:

- *I thrive in my comfort zone. To me, it's just not worth it to confront people. So what if I don't like to deal with a difficult situation? At least people like me. And I like them. I strive to keep the peace, and confrontation is basically another word for fighting. At least no one will dislike me. No need to get too deep into opinions and attitudes and seek out new and different people. I like to hire and work with people I know, people I like. It's easy. And when I must face an issue head on, it's easier to just send an email than meet face to face.*

When Culture Goes Right

- What tools can we use to measure, assess and evaluate corporate culture?
- How can we diagnose and reevaluate it?
- How can we tell what's wrong and how can we fix it?

After meeting Sam, Alicia, and Duane, we have a small glimpse into some attitudes and behaviors that can significantly impact corporate culture – in a negative way. On the following pages we'll look closely at each of the 9 survey questions and how they penetrate an organization's culture in a diagnostic way.

We will take a close look at Sam's, Alicia's, and Duane's comments and behaviors, and show how they correlate to the different dimensions of organizational culture.

Taking that close look, compared with real survey results and data, will help us answer the questions above. Finally, it will allow us to paint a new picture: a picture of *When Culture Goes Right*.



This survey is based on a research model that analyzes and quantifies three dimensions of corporate culture. The Corporate Culture Survey uses nine targeted questions to establish baseline statistics. Now everyone can measure their own corporate culture against an objective standard.

The First Dimension

Command and Control

Command and Control	Our leadership is democratic, not autocratic.	People are allowed and encouraged to question management's judgment.	Low level employees make independent decisions.
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Who 'calls the shots'? Who makes the rules? Does everyone have a voice, or will decisions always be handed down from 'on high'?

When a decision gets passed down from above, is it OK to criticize or question it? Must we always stay quiet and accept the mandate?

These questions are all about 'command and control' in corporate culture. We investigate how leadership makes decisions and how much input they welcome from lower levels.

In addition to questions about management, we also want to know how independently all employees are encouraged to act. What happens when someone has a great idea? Can they take initiative and run with it, or would that independent enthusiasm get squashed from above?

Let's examine the first dimension of corporate culture – 'command and control' – by looking at its height, width, and depth:

- ☐ Height: How open is leadership control and influence: up and down the organization or clustered at the top?
- ☐ Width: Do people feel free to question management's judgment from all sides?
- ☐ Depth: Are individuals trusted to make decisions independently? This can create a deep, positive attitude that saturates the fabric of the corporate culture.

To investigate these areas and find out what it's really like in the working world, we asked for comments on these 3 statements:

- ☐ Our leadership is democratic, not autocratic
- ☐ People are allowed and encouraged to question management's judgment
- ☐ Low level employees make independent decisions

As we analyze global data in this section, we will also look closely at Sam. Keep his style in mind as you go through each dimension. Remember, Sam keeps his office door shut unless he's shouting out demands. He's the one who says: "I hire people to do the work. I'll do the thinking."

Command and Control

Height: Our leadership is democratic, not autocratic.

A democratic mindset is part of an overall corporate culture – a set of shared rules and norms developed over time. It may not be required for an organization's success, but from most typical employees' perspectives, a general sense of democracy is a good thing. People want their voice to be heard.

The 2020 survey data shows a highly positive result in this area. Respondents described their organizations as very democratic, with three quarters saying 'always' or 'usually.' Only 4% said 'never.'

Question	2020
Our leadership is democratic, not autocratic.	
a. Always	50%
b. Usually	26%
c. Sometimes	20%
d. Never	4%



Remember Sam, the CFO with a *my-way-or-the-highway* approach? How would his employees describe their company's culture? Sam says things like, "I know my ideas are the best." and "People just need to do what I tell them to do." This clearly creates an undemocratic perception, driving down morale, and resulting in employees who don't feel passionate about their work. Sam might do well to learn that:

- People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

What steps can an executive like Sam take to remedy the broken culture created by these attitudes and actions? How can someone even convince Sam that there's a problem at all? He might not listen to his employees on a day to day basis, but maybe he would be more open to trusting an anonymous diagnostic survey of in-house corporate culture.



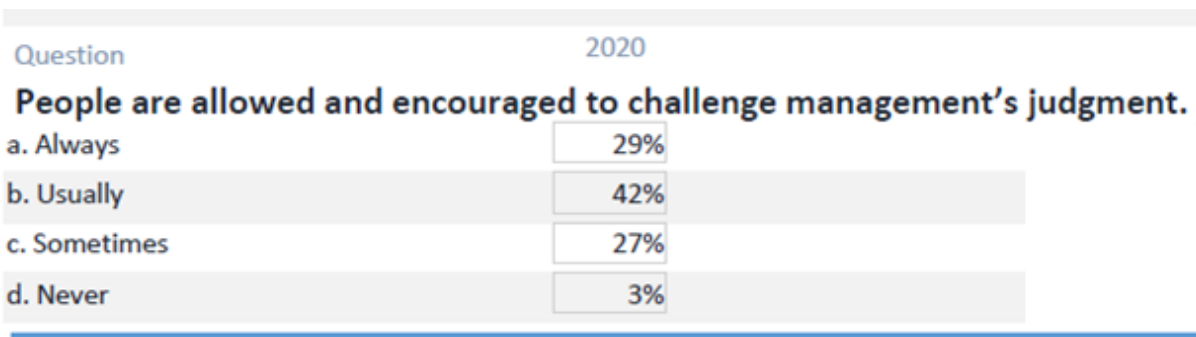
§ *One-on-one coaching affects an organization and its culture. As an executive coach from San Francisco, California, USA tells us: "Coaching is increasingly seen as part of the leadership development "suite" of activities."*

Command and Control

Width: People are allowed and encouraged to challenge management's judgment.

Have you ever had to tell your boss that they're wrong? It's usually not something people look forward to. But if our business organizations function democratically, then high-level executives are like "elected representatives." They should hear the collective voice of "the people" (all the employees). How often does this happen in corporate culture?

Our survey this year reveals a generally positive perception in this area. Over 70% of respondents answered positively.



Remember when Sam said the following? *"I don't need people asking 'What about this? What about that?'" I know what I'm doing!"*

You could imagine a lot more than 3% of people at his company answering this question with a 'never.'

What's the point of hiring talented people if you don't use their talent? In terms of impact on business, how do you expect to keep that talent if you don't let them challenge the opinions of people above them?



Sam doesn't have to be this way. It's possible to make permanent, lasting, effective changes to his business behavior.

§ A coach in Washington, DC, USA says: "The baseline knowledge, awareness and consciousness of the average professional person has increased exponentially in the last decade."

Command and Control

Depth: Low level employees make independent decisions.

In any working environment, employees at all levels face turmoil, change, and unpredictable outcomes. Do leaders truly allow front-line staff to make independent decisions? Looking at the third measurement, the *depth* of ‘command and control’, we see an area that shows room for improvement.

We asked how often “low level employees make independent decisions” and a fifth said ‘*never*’ while most said only ‘*sometimes*.’ These numbers have been fairly consistent going back to 2016.

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Low level employees make independent decisions.					
a. Always	8%	5%	6%	8%	4%
b. Usually	16%	15%	43%	20%	16%
c. Sometimes	57%	64%	29%	53%	63%
d. Never	20%	16%	22%	19%	18%

Is this an area that requires change in the future, or does it simply reflect the nature of the work at most organizations? Remember Sam’s recipe for success? “All these people have to do is what I tell them to do.” Not all organizations and businesses need lower level employees making a lot of decisions on the fly, but that doesn’t mean people shouldn’t feel empowered when applicable.

Sam’s industry – auto parts – requires precision and repetition, not creative choices on the assembly line. But what happens when something goes wrong – when that precision and repetition slips or fails? Are employees in a position to make a quick decision – a decision that could potentially help the bottom line? Perhaps more importantly, do they *feel like* they’re in that position, whether it happens or not?



Is Sam actually creating a negative impact on business by taking away everyone else’s ability to truly think on the job?

§ A coach from Stockholm, Sweden tells us: “Awareness about coaching is slowly growing, more often even employees lower in the hierarchy offered possibility for personal development through coaching.”

The Second Dimension

Communication and Cooperation

Communication and Cooperation	I see communication between every level of management.	People cooperate across department lines.	People are encouraged to ask questions.
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Cooperation and communication help individuals and organizations act on the best available information. But do people talk to each other effectively? Do they talk to each other at all?

When someone needs to know something, does the corporate culture encourage them to ask?

How often do colleagues break down barriers of communication and talk with people *outside* their immediate circle of influence?

When it comes to communication and cooperation, every industry and business environment would like to see high scores.

As we did with 'command and control', let's examine 'communication and cooperation' in these three ways: height, width, and depth:

- ☐ Height: Communication *up and down* the hierarchy between every level of management
- ☐ Width: Wide cooperation *across* department lines
- ☐ Depth: An atmosphere that *encourages* clear communication

We asked respondents to comment on these three statements about cooperation and communication:

- ☐ I see communication between every level of management.
- ☐ People cooperate across department lines.
- ☐ People are encouraged to ask questions.

Keep Alicia in mind while reading analysis of the Third Dimension. Alicia is the perfectionist and insists on doing everything herself. "It must be done right, and it must be done properly," says Alicia. "And that means I'm the one who needs to do it, even if it's late. No one else can meet my standards."

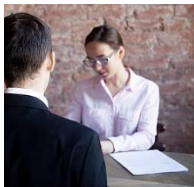
Communication and Cooperation

Height: I see communication between every level of management.

Many organizations suffer or thrive, depending on their ability to communicate (and cooperate) internally. Communication travels in different directions between teams and groups. Management (at all levels) must effectively communicate in order to send clear messages and expectations throughout an organization.

What we see in 2020 and years past is a neutral result: about 50-60% positive and 40-50% negative. Is 'sometimes' good enough? Are businesses struggling in general to create effective channels of communication? What can they do about it?

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
I see communication between every level of management.					
a. Always	18%	16%	9%	14%	22%
b. Usually	42%	32%	40%	41%	38%
c. Sometimes	32%	47%	43%	38%	36%
d. Never	8%	5%	8%	6%	3%



What happens when Alicia, the perfectionist, takes on the whole project herself? Is she having a positive or negative impact on business by shutting others out and "owning" too much of the work? Remember, Alicia assumed her boss didn't know enough to contribute and told her staff and supervisors to focus on their own daily work routines.

How do you think those supervisors and staff would answer this question about their workplace culture? They certainly wouldn't say they see a lot of communication between every level of management.

What can her company do about it? How can they build trust between leaders and teams, between managers and staff? What can they do to create the necessary culture of communication where everyone can thrive?



The bottom line would be better served if they took the time to focus on making those improvements to organizational culture.

§ A coach from Boston, Massachusetts, USA offers this: "There are more people in the workforce and less management time to develop them, however, change is a constant."

Communication and Cooperation

Width: People cooperate across department lines.

Let's look at the *width* of 'communication and cooperation' – cooperation *across* department lines. It's probably a matter of survival that departments within an organization work together. But to what degree do they cooperate?

We see broadly consistent numbers here from year to year rather than a trend up or down. Responses are evenly spread in 2020 but tilt toward the positive, with 57% saying 'always' or 'usually' and 43% answering 'sometimes' or 'never.'

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
People cooperate across department lines.					
a. Always	23%	18%	15%	15%	24%
b. Usually	34%	31%	45%	38%	42%
c. Sometimes	31%	40%	24%	37%	32%
d. Never	12%	12%	16%	9%	2%

Alicia and the people working with her would likely answer on the negative side of this question. She describes herself as having a high standard, one that only she can meet. "Nobody can really get this up to my standards," she said, "not marketing, not finance, not human resources."

Is it possible that Alicia's apparent high standard reveals a lack of trust? It doesn't seem like a good environment if a manager in one department can't expect excellent results from employees in another department.

Can Alicia learn to trust others and let go of some of the work? What tools, training, or programs could she implement to reverse the damage caused by their flawed culture? She may not even be aware that a problem exists because she is too lost in owning every detail of the work.



An effective diagnosis of the symptoms, though, would lay everything out in black and white, and allow them to create a plan to change those behaviors.

§ An executive coach in Sweden says: "Coaching is now an established method known to work well in leadership and business development as well as on all levels in organizations."

Communication and Cooperation

Depth: People are encouraged to ask questions.

When we analyze the depth of Communication and Cooperation, we want to know whether a positive attitude of communication and cooperation permeates the organization. Are people *encouraged* to ask questions? This is a no-brainer. If people can't ask questions, how can they be held accountable? How can expectations be set effectively, let alone met successfully, if there isn't a culture that encourages questions?

Zooming in on just the current year's data, we see broadly positive responses. A third of organizations '*always*' encourage employees to ask questions and another third '*usually*' do. That doesn't seem too bad, but why isn't it better?

Question	2020
People are encouraged to ask questions.	
a. Always	34%
b. Usually	34%
c. Sometimes	27%
d. Never	6%

How does Alicia's organization measure up in this area of Communication and Cooperation? Remember, she likes things to be predictable and perfect. She struggles when things get out of place, out of order, out of sync.

Is she afraid to ask questions in a situation like that? What about her direct reports and their staffs – does Alicia encourage them to speak up when they have a question? Is there too much eroded trust for people to feel confident asking a question when they need to?



You could imagine a more open, trusting, and communicative culture would help things run more efficiently and have a lasting positive impact on business.

§ An executive in Denver, Colorado, USA says: "I feel as the younger generations begin to step into upper management positions, demand for executive coaching will increase, because two of their generational totems are self-improvement and teamwork."

The Third Dimension

Commitment to Coaching

A Commitment to Coaching	Confrontation can be a positive thing.	Business behavior is a daily topic of conversation, along with skills.	Coaching and management are distinctly defined.
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Every culture has some level of commitment to *'the way we do things around here'*.

When an organization makes a commitment to coaching, however, they agree to work on improving business behavior. They closely examine *'the way we do things around here'* and strive to improve it. It's a big commitment, but if you're *in*, you should be *all in*.

As we investigate this area of corporate culture, we look at the way organizations handle confrontation. We also examine what attitude a business takes toward improving behaviors and whether or not coaching is clearly defined.

With that in mind, let's look at the three measurements for 'Commitment to Coaching':

- ☐ Height: Individuals within an organization can *stand up* and confront issues and differences head on, regardless of rank or status.
- ☐ Width: Everyone *throughout* an organization discusses business behavior. This creates a *wide* range of interactions and a *wider* range of options.
- ☐ Depth: Coaching must *drill down deep*, establish clear definitions and expectations, and permeate the organization

We posed these statements to analyze the height, width and depth of 'Commitment to Coaching':

- ☐ Confrontation can be a positive thing
- ☐ Business behavior is as a daily topic of conversation, along with skills
- ☐ Coaching and management are distinctly defined

Think about Duane, the Director of Marketing who avoids confrontation, as we proceed to analyze the Third Dimension of corporate culture: a commitment to coaching. Duane has never fired anyone. He emails instead of talking face-to-face, and prefers to hire friends, even if they aren't great for the job.

Commitment to Coaching

Height: Confrontation can be a positive thing.

Confrontation does not necessarily mean *conflict*. Confronting a potential conflict might even prevent it. Disagreement doesn't necessarily imply argumentation. Open discussion about differing ideas and perspectives often brings out the best in people. This helps the overall organization. A corporate culture that encourages calm, rational behavior allows people to share ideas without becoming adversaries.

The business world has a widely established set of norms when it comes to managing differences of opinion. We've seen consistent results over the years, with an uptick towards the positive in 2020. Interestingly, results in this area don't vary much by country or other demographics. Although plenty of respondents described their organization in a positive way here, nearly a fifth answered '*never*,' which seems problematic. Is that typical in your organization?

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Confrontation can be a positive thing.					
a. Always	23%	15%	14%	12%	14%
b. Usually	31%	28%	47%	35%	24%
c. Sometimes	28%	37%	21%	39%	51%
d. Never	18%	19%	17%	15%	12%



With a leader like Duane, who considers confrontation to be the same as fighting, does a business thrive or suffer? Duane says he wants to “keep the peace,” but is he actually doing that, or is he just moving the problems down the line? Is he ignoring important issues, instead favoring an approach that just sweeps problems under the rug?

How do employees feel when they get an email rather than a direct conversation? What about when Duane hires a friend, and that person doesn't live up to the job? Do other employees feel comfortable confronting the issue? Are they able to address Duane directly when a problem arises? If not, the impact on business is demonstrably negative, and the bottom line suffers.

This attitude – avoiding confrontation – can be addressed and changed, in both individuals and organizations as a whole. It takes time, effort, and work, but positive behavioral change can happen.



§ A coach from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania says: “The ripple effect continues -- more and more people are getting coached, realizing great results, and they're spreading the word/promoting the process as one of the most effective methods for positive behavioral change.”

Commitment to Coaching

Width: Business behavior is a daily topic of conversation

The goal of executive coaching is to change business behavior. But how often do people even discuss it? Business behavior is important, but often neglected, in favor of focusing on skills and knowledge. However, positive skills combined with positive behavior yields the best overall impact on business.

This area of corporate culture consistently tilts toward the less positive side of the spectrum. Less than half of survey respondents answered in the positive, with 57% indicating just ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’.

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Business behavior is part of daily discussion, along with skills.					
a. Always	10%	12%	13%	11%	19%
b. Usually	33%	26%	47%	37%	32%
c. Sometimes	43%	53%	27%	44%	41%
d. Never	14%	10%	13%	8%	8%

We know, through years of research on executive coaching, that its credibility and perceived value are higher than ever. But if that’s true, what is the coaching focused on, if not business behavior? Why aren’t more businesses, executives, and managers doing the necessary work to improve this area?

Remember what Duane does? He hires friends. He shuffles problematic employees to other departments. He avoids, rather than, addresses the problems. What would happen if Duane and his colleagues introduced a culture of coaching, development, and training, to learn how to face these issues better?



SIDE STAT For several years, our Executive Coaching Survey has seen new programs ‘starting’ or ‘under development’ to teach coaching skills to managers. However, the number of organizations with ‘established programs in place’ hasn’t budged from year to year. This suggests that the new programs ‘starting’ or ‘under development’ are failing. There’s a great opportunity here for creative, practical, process-based instructional design.

§ A coach in the USA says: “Leaders face constant disruption, chaos, and an environment that’s fraught with polarities. Coaching provides a safe harbor for strategic thinking.”

Commitment to Coaching

Depth: Coaching and managing are distinctly defined.

Coaching is a hot subject, a modern-day ‘buzzword’ that means different things to different people. When we talk about coaching, we’re not always talking about the same thing. (See **Defining the Industry** on the following pages).

When asked whether coaching and managing are distinctly defined, about half of our respondents (48%) answered ‘*always*’ or ‘*usually*,’ landing this topic on the positive side of things, which is lower than in recent years.

Question	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Coaching and managing are distinctly defined.					
a. Always	24%	18%	17%	19%	25%
b. Usually	24%	39%	51%	34%	25%
c. Sometimes	39%	35%	25%	37%	31%
d. Never	13%	8%	8%	10%	19%

Although the definition of coaching is becoming clearer, why are so many organizations still unable to provide a good, clear explanation of what coaching is? If they know the value of it, why isn’t there more of a focused commitment to coaching?

Duane says he doesn’t need to get deep into peoples’ opinions and attitudes. He doesn’t need to go beneath the surface level. That’s why he emails a message instead of talking directly. But doesn’t that send a message to employees that those things aren’t important? What’s the impact on business when things are left loose and open, when things go unaddressed? Is it possible for someone like Duane to change their perspective and gain a better understanding of why focusing on behavior and attitude can really help the bottom line?



§ A coach in Frankfurt, Germany observes: “Today’s organizations face additional challenges and their leaders need support when handling these challenges.”

Assumptions You Should Avoid

And now a word from your sponsor: As they say on TV: “Don’t try this at home.”

If you were to conduct an in-house survey of corporate culture in your organization, you would come up with a series of numbers. Some might be high, some might be low. But what would they actually mean? Can you extract any useful results out of these numbers? Not really – because you don’t have anything to compare them to.

Perhaps scores in one area, let’s say collaboration, are lower than in other areas. Does that indicate a problem or not? How can you tell?

- One way is to look at a set of global benchmarks to compare your data with. You need to see how your scores line up against general scores throughout the business world.
- Another way is to make in-house comparisons by running diagnostic surveys once or twice a year for a period time.

Remember, as we said earlier, there aren’t necessarily ‘good’ or ‘bad’ answers to certain questions. It’s more of a relative thing. Responses as quoted herein are global averages. If you can compare your in-house results with a national or global sample, you can make insightful conclusions that you couldn’t otherwise reach.

For example, maybe your scores seem low in one area, but are still relatively high compared to other organizations. You might realize you deserve more of a pat on the back than you thought! On the other hand, perhaps you feel confident in a particular area of corporate culture, but survey results indicate otherwise. You might discover an area in which you need improvement.

Sherpa Coaching works with major corporate clients on enhancing corporate culture. This effort draws from sixteen years of market research and process-based coaching, and offers curricula which have been endorsed and offered by ten major universities.

One aspect of culture is the role of women in leadership. Do women’s opinions of their corporate culture differ from men’s? For three of our questions, their answers are significantly different. Gender breakouts from this 15th annual survey are available to corporate clients interested in developing women in leadership roles.

For further information, or to arrange a research project, call the publisher per the contact information on page 26.

Defining the Industry

Coaching is an important part of a corporate culture. Executive coaching is the best tool for changing business behavior, the foundation of culture.

Not everyone clearly understands what executive coaching really is. Let's draw some distinctions. People refer to two general fields of coaching: '*executive coaching*' and '*business coaching*'. This chart lists the differences between the two:

	Executive Coaching	Business Coaching
Discipline	Business behavior	Strategy, tactics, operations
Emphasis	Soft skills	Hard skills
Focus	Communication	Finance
Examples	Executive presence	Technical training
Training	Non-academic programs written specifically for coaches.	Academic, degree-based business courses, plus industry-specific experience.

In many ways the term 'business coach' overlaps with the term 'consultant'. According to Wikipedia, "many business coaches refer to themselves as consultants, a broader business relationship than one which exclusively involves coaching." (Wikipedia, 2014)

We ask survey respondents to identify themselves as one of the following:

- business coaches (working to develop a client's specific knowledge and skills)
- executive coaches (working to permanently enhance business behavior)

This allows us to produce a clear distinction between coaching, training, consulting and other professional positions.

Let's focus now on what executive coaching truly means.

We need a clear, academically sound definition of the role. It can't be a promotional definition or guarantee any specific results. When the field was new, for example, definitions of executive coaching would claim to: "... produce extraordinary results" and "... enhance the quality of life".

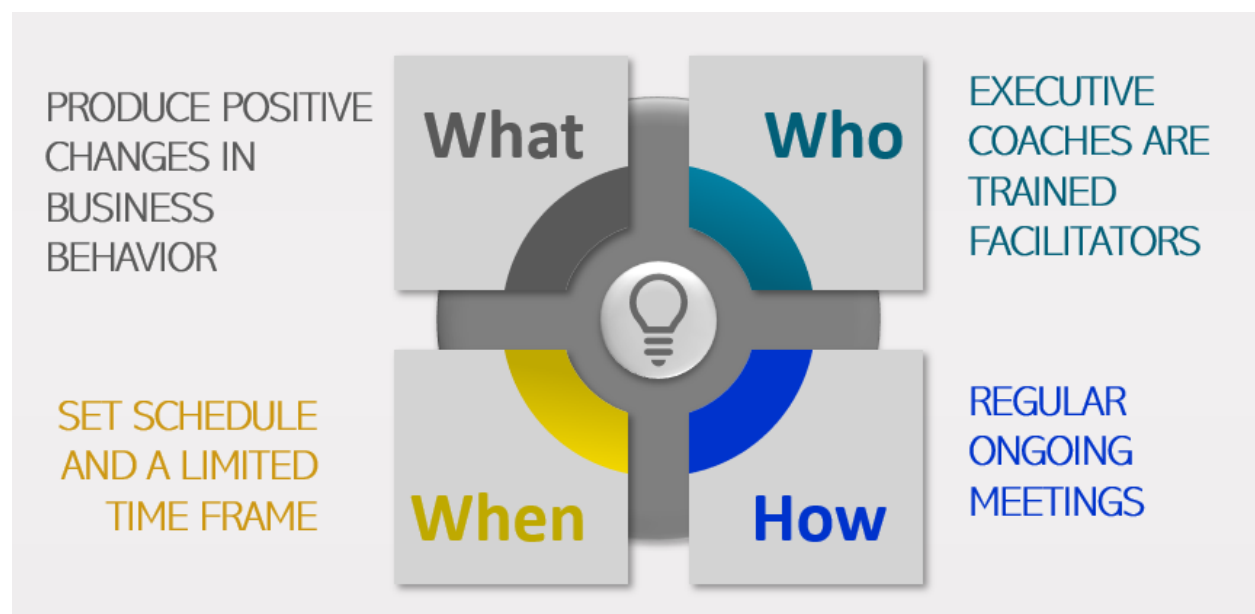
That subjective language didn't last long!

Here's a more current and widely-accepted definition:

"Executive coaching means regular meetings between a business leader and a trained facilitator, designed to produce positive changes in business behavior in a limited time frame." *

This definition of executive coaching clarifies:

- Who coaches are: trained facilitators
 - What coaches do: produce positive changes in business behavior
 - When things happen: on a set schedule within a limited time frame
-



* Definition from 'The Sherpa Guide: Process-Driven Executive Coaching' (Thomson 2005)

A Shared Definition

Over the last fourteen years, this definition has been adopted by numerous trade associations and universities. This annual survey, including this definition of executive coaching, has been disseminated or promoted over the years by countless organizations and publications, including:

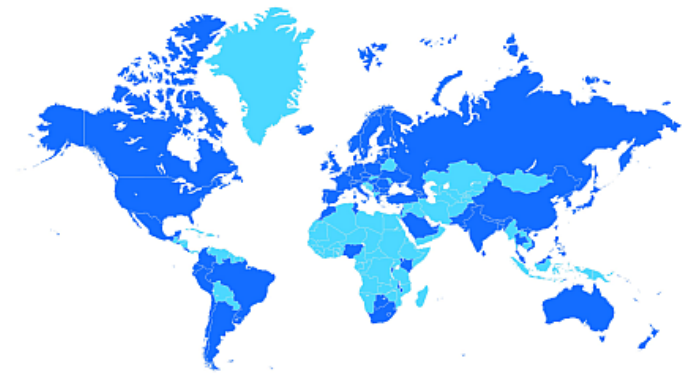
Trade Associations Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches Association for Coaching Association of Corporate Executive Coaches COMENSA South Africa European Mentoring and Coaching Council Institute of Coaching at McLean Institute of Learning Practitioners Australia International Coach Federation South African Org. Development Network	Publications and Resources Atlanta Journal Constitution Business Week Choice Magazine Coaching at Work Magazine Coaching Commons Coaching News Dallas Morning News European Foundation for Mgmt. Development Fort Worth Business Press HR Executive Magazine Leading Coaches Center Library of Professional Coaching National Public Radio (USA) Organization Development Journal USA Today Wall Street Journal World Business and Executive Coach Summit
Universities Howard University Kent State University Miami University Penn State University Sociedade Brasileira de Coaching Southern Illinois University Stellenbosch University Texas Christian University University of Cincinnati University of Georgia University of Louisville University of Pretoria Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam Xavier University	Businesses Action Coach American Management Association Change Partners South Africa Hudson Institute Human Capital Institute Leadership and Management Wales Lee Hecht Harrison Legal Watch

Global Involvement

Global Results

Over the years, the Corporate Culture Survey has received responses from over 65 countries, representing the vast majority of the world's population.

65 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



Argentina	Greece	New Zealand	Spain
Australia	Hong Kong	Northern Ireland	Sweden
Austria	Hungary	Norway	Switzerland
Bahrain	Iceland	Peru	Taiwan
Belgium	India	Philippines	Thailand
Botswana	Ireland	Poland	Trinidad & Tobago
Brazil	Israel	Portugal	Turkey
Bulgaria	Italy	Puerto Rico	UAE
Canada	Japan	Romania	Ukraine
Cayman Islands	Kenya	Russia	United Kingdom
Chile	Korea	Saudi Arabia	United States
China	Latvia	Scotland	Vietnam
Denmark	Malaysia	Serbia	Wales
Ecuador	Mauritius	Singapore	
France	Mexico	Slovenia	
Germany	Netherlands	South Africa	

Your Publishers

Sherpa Coaching



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Karl created this annual Corporate Culture Survey, the largest and longest-running survey of its kind.

The Sherpa Leadership Institute



Joe Valeri recently has been a researcher under multiple grants for Project LISTEN in the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University. During 15 years of academic technology projects, he designed research studies to test the effectiveness of automated Reading Tutor Software. Joe worked closely with experts in neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and elementary reading education. He joined the Sherpa research team in 2015.

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