



Case Study

Metropolitan Transportation
Authority

**When leadership
and coaching combine**

Pilot Program
Report

The Company

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The MTA is a public benefit corporation in New York State responsible for public transportation in the New York City metropolitan area. It is the largest public transit authority in North America, serving 12 counties in Downstate New York, along with two counties in southwestern Connecticut under contract to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, carrying over 11 million passengers on an average weekday systemwide, and over 850,000 vehicles on its seven toll bridges and two tunnels per weekday.

- **Industry**

Urban Transit Services

- **Company size**

70,000 employees

- **Headquarters**

New York, NY

- **Specialties**

Transportation, Engineering, Construction Management, Architecture, Procurement, System Safety, Project Management, Mechanics, Electricians, Ironworkers, Sheet Metal Workers, HVAC, Elevator and Escalator Mechanics, Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Masons, Carpenters, Logistics, Warehousing, Transportation Management, and Information Technology

The Challenge

Building leadership capabilities in a time of change and transition

The MTA partnered with Erickson Coaching International to deliver a leadership development pilot for select leaders. The **aim** was to **enhance individual leadership capacity, increase organizational effectiveness**, and **explore the wider potential impact of coaching** across the agency.

The MTA, operating under ongoing pressure and systemic transition, needed to equip its leaders with tools for deeper self-awareness, decision-making, and effective leadership. Leaders faced challenges such as:

- Managing change and organizational uncertainty
- Sustaining personal and team performance
- Navigating a high-demand work environment without adequate space for self-reflection or development
- A safe, external, and confidential space was needed to help leaders step back and examine their own leadership styles, strengths, and priorities.

The Need

INSIGHT FROM THE LEADERS participating in the project:

Based on the onboarding interviews conducted with the leaders participating in the project, MTA's requirements from organization coaching included:

- "I would like to gain skills to drive better performance and engagement of my team, address aversion to risk and change, and reward strong performance."
- "Helping me to build upon my strengths and weakness, and to learn how to manage myself under pressure, ensuring a healthy working relationship with my manager and direct reports."
- "I expect a coach to be able to help set general goals that I then accomplish and provide resources regarding skills or techniques I may be lacking."



The Proposal

INSIGHT: Leadership in the transportation sector presents unique challenges that require adaptability, collaboration, and strategic decision-making. By emphasizing these qualities, transportation leaders can navigate the complexities of the industry effectively.

Erickson recommended that each participating leader engage in six one-on-one coaching sessions with a certified Erickson coach.

Using a solution-focused coaching model, the emphasis of the sessions would be on introspection, clarity of vision, and alignment of personal and professional goals.

Participants were later invited to rate the experience and its effects using a rigorously weighted average model, allowing us to measure both individual impact and organizational outcomes.

Additionally, leaders were asked to provide qualitative feedback and testimonials, reflecting on their coaching experiences and the impact thereof.

The Results

Impact On Leaders

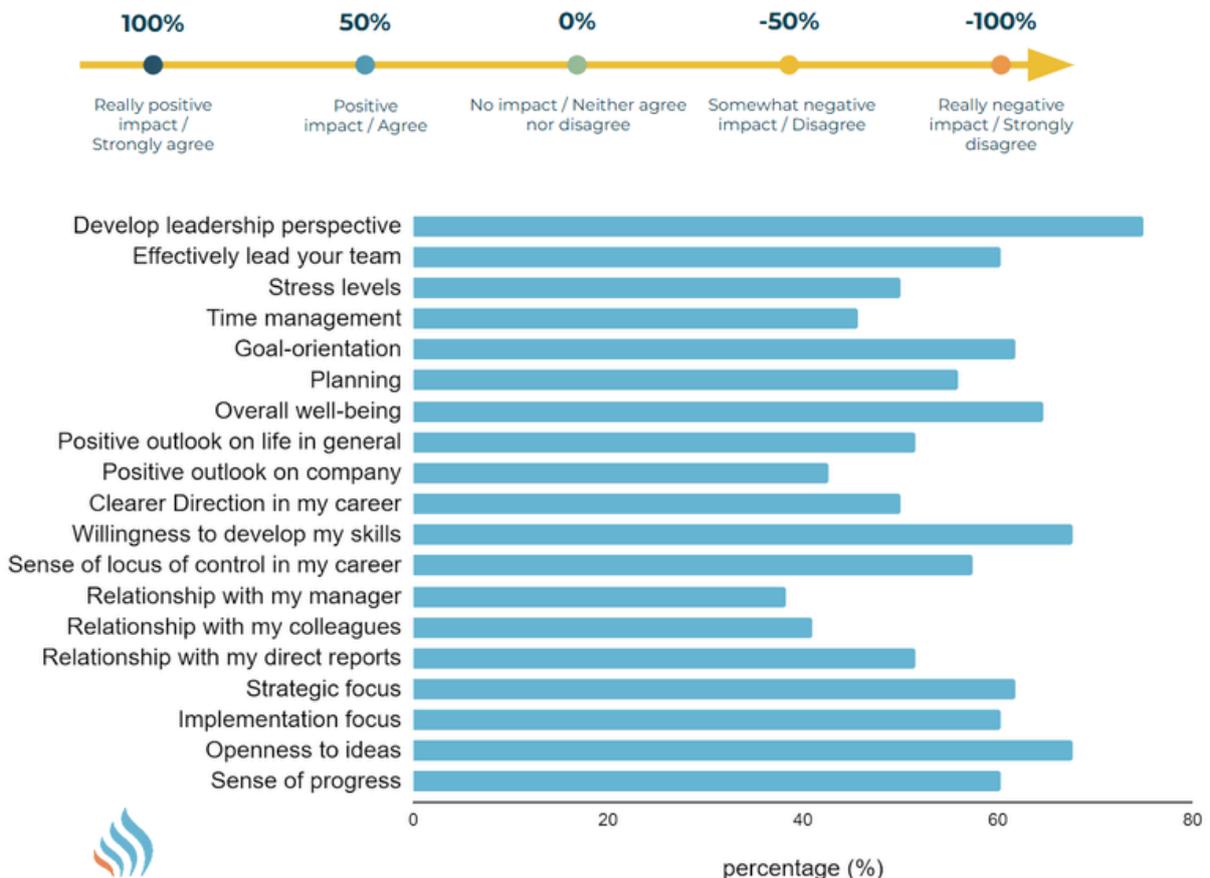
Leaders indicated **coaching enhanced MTA's culture, alignment, and overall effectiveness.**

Significant improvements were cited in personal insights, work-life balance, clarity of purpose, and strategic thinking.

Highlights:

- **88%** of leaders said that coaching developed their **leadership perspective**
- **83%** said **coaching improved their goal orientation and planning**
- **75%** reported that **coaching helped them lead their teams more effectively**

Figure 1: Each leader was asked what impact coaching had on their performance in the following areas, using the following rating scale:



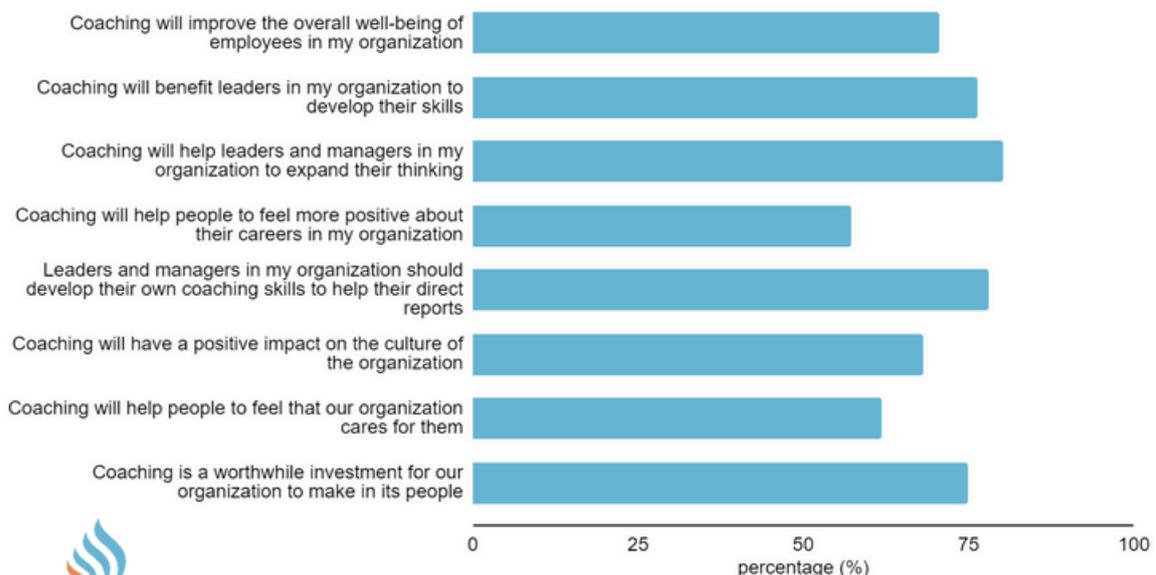


The Results

Impact On The Organization

- **70%** of participants **agreed that coaching improves the overall wellbeing of the organization.**
- **75%** agreed that **“coaching is a worthwhile investment** for an organization to make in its people”.
- **74%** said that **coaching benefits the leaders in the organization to further develop their skills.**

Figure 2: Each leader was to evaluate their perspective on the impact of coaching on the MTA, based on their own experience, using the same rating scale outlined on the previous page.





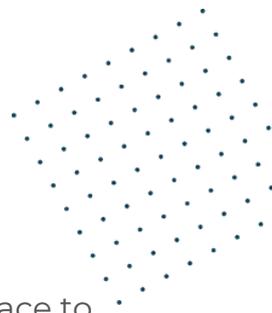
Testimonials

“I was able to articulate a better vision for myself and define my priorities to achieve greater work and home-life balance, which was having a great impact on other aspects of my life. I have experienced what I can describe as exponential internal growth after my sessions with Jess.” - **Kadien Bartlett, MTA Talent Acquisition & HR**

“My coach, Darrell Farrow, was tremendously skilled at teasing out the root issues creating work challenges and helping me identify tactics to take them head on. I never ended a session without new and energizing ideas. While coaching me to do difficult things she was also very supportive and encouraging - reminding me not to be too hard on myself. She really helped me create space and motivation to keep working on improving things while recognizing it's hard work!” - **Leah Flax, MTA Senior Director, CBD Tolling Program**

“The coaching engagement was a valuable tool in helping me come to realizations about myself and my leadership style. It helped me better understand where my strengths lie and where I can be more effective in my decision making and the resulting actions that I take. In a time of change and transition, in which the organization is still settling and finding its way, and everyone is pressed for time, it was of great value to me to make the time to focus on myself, my strengths, my thinking patterns and behaviors and to explore where I can become more effective in my role.” - **Elizabeth McAuliffe, MTA Direct - Talent Planning & Succession**

Key Learnings



Coaching Drives Self-Awareness: Leaders benefited from having space to reflect on behavior, mindset, and values.

External Coaching Builds Trust: Neutrality enabled a safe space for honest introspection and growth.

Sustained Impact Needs Planning: Leaders need strategies to maintain momentum after the coaching ends.

Quantitative + Qualitative Evaluation Works: Using ratings and testimonials captured the full coaching impact.

POST-PROJECT LEARNINGS FROM THE LEADERS participating in the project:

- “It would be very advantageous for more of our leaders to be able to take advantage of this program. Highly recommend it for Metro-North/MTA.”
- “I have been with NYCT for 27 years and I can say this was the best thing they could have offered me, I wish I knew about this sooner. In my personal opinion I think this should be a mandatory program for all employees of NYCT, everything about it was positive.
- “Coaching helped me find my voice and confidence, which will help me to inspire the people around me.”
- “The culture impacts billion-dollar projects. Coaching is a very small investment that could have a tremendous impact.”
- “Introspection and self-awareness; work/life balance; resilience; more effective collaboration with others; increased self-efficacy., enhanced communication, and mental health self-check awareness. Coaching has exposed me to new concepts to use towards my personal and professional goals.”





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