

THE EFFECT OF CONNECTION

How Strong Relationships Improve Engagement, Performance, and Retention

 **CoEffex**
Driven by Data. Powered by People.





INTRODUCTION

How Strong Relationships Improve Engagement, Performance, and Retention

Team members in today's workplace increasingly value collaboration, support, and rapport with their manager and fellow team members. Yet many managers remain overwhelmingly focused on tasks, metrics, and day-to-day execution. As a result, they often underinvest in the coaching behaviors that build trust, interpersonal connection, and long-term effectiveness.

Building relationships that engage trust and interpersonal relationships is not just a byproduct of good coaching. Instead, it is a behavior that drives measurable business outcomes and driver of performance. Our **Coaching Effect Survey (CES)** data aligns with decades of leadership research showing that engagement, performance, and retention are all directly impacted by the coaching behaviors of leaders. These findings consistently underscore how building Connection with team members is a high-impact behavior with quantifiable business outcomes.



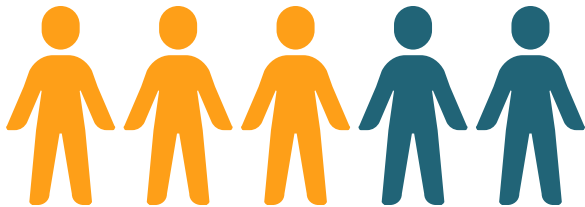
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HOW MANAGERS ARE PERFORMING TODAY

CES data shows that **61% of team members report their manager is strong in the Coaching Effect theme of Connection. Another 19% say their manager is adequate, while 20% rate their manager poor in this area.**

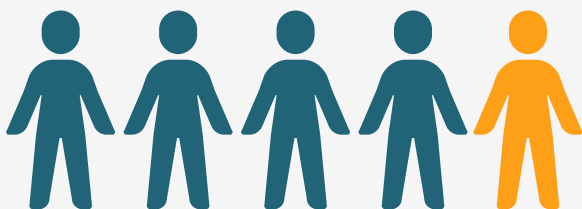
In other words:



3 in 5 team members currently experience the benefits of a manager who excels at building interpersonal connection. They **benefit from the trust, growth, and support that comes from a manager** who puts intention behind this coaching skill.



Another 1 in 5 experience only moderate connection coaching from their manager. These managers are good enough to **maintain basic management connection** but fall short of the deeper behaviors that promote greater outcomes.



The last **20% of teams** report to a manager who struggles to create meaningful connection. This gap can activity undermines team member engagement, performance, and retention. They **miss critical opportunities to build discretionary effort and understand individual strengths and performance.**



THE MEASURABLE IMPACT OF CONNECTION

When leaders are strong in the Connection theme, their team members are:

3.6x

more likely to see themselves working at their organization for at least a year.

This reduces turnover-related costs in recruitment, onboarding, and training.

Avoiding turnover also preserves institutional knowledge, stabilizes team dynamics, and maintains and strengthens client and partner relationships.

15x

more likely to feel they have grown in their job abilities because of their leader.

Skill growth increases productivity, enhances the quality of work, and builds an internal talent pipeline for teams.

Team members who are encouraged to develop new skills are more engaged and motivated to contribute to organizational goals.

25x

more likely to indicate their manager excels at leveraging their best skills & abilities.

Team members supported in using their strengths produce higher-quality work, infuse innovation in their roles, and experience greater role satisfaction.

Aligning strengths with responsibilities also improves team cohesion and reduces burnout.

WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

Connection reflects the depth and quality of respect, engagement, and rapport a manager builds with each team member. Strong relationships create the trust necessary for leaders to understand individual needs, remove barriers, and support their people in ways that directly impact outcomes.

TEAMS LED BY MANAGERS WHO ARE STRONG IN CONNECTION:

- + Create a more engaging and enjoyable team environment
- + Operate more productively and effectively
- + Produce results with fewer friction points



WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

Building stronger connections is not just a kind gesture or bonus leadership trait. Instead, it is a highly effective management skill that directly drives results. CES data shows that teams with strong Connection scores are **more than 2x as likely to achieve or exceed all their measurable performance goals**. This is a clear indication that Connection is not just a pleasantry but a strategic organizational strategy. When managers understand their people on an individual level, they can coach better, align strengths to roles, and create the conditions that drive high performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Executive Vice President of Research
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As part of her role, she leads all research initiatives, the creation of coaching performance assessments, and was instrumental in helping CoEffex translate coaching into a series of measurable metrics.

She helps clients discover actionable insights surrounding coaching effectiveness that allow them to achieve the highest levels of performance. Her research discoveries now provide leaders with a never-before-seen view of team performance that is changing how teams are coached, led, and managed.

CONNECTION

BEST PRACTICES

WHAT IS CONNECTION?

Connection is the depth and quality of respect, engagement, and rapport between a leader and their team members. When connection is strong, leaders build greater trust with their teams, respond to needs more quickly and effectively, and foster a more positive, productive team environment.

HOW TO INCREASE CONNECTION

BUILD TRUST



- **Show vulnerability** – Be open about yourself, your goals and your mistakes, as your vulnerability helps team members see you as more genuine
- **Be consistent** – Doing what we say we will do lets team members know they can count on us and sets a good example for team members
- **Demonstrate expertise** – Having expertise for your position is essential to team members knowing they can count on you, your ideas and your advice

CREATE INDIVIDUAL RAPPORT



- **Learn about individuals** – Take the time to learn about a team member's unique personality, interests, and goals to show you value them as a person
- **Listen actively** – If you want your team members to be more open with you, show that you care about what they have to say by being a great listener
- **Read unspoken cues** – Pay attention to team members' non-verbals for additional insights into their thoughts, feelings and needs

FACILITATE TEAM RAPPORT



- **Encourage peer relationships** – Model the importance of peer connections by creating them yourself and actively supporting your team in building strong relationships with one another.
- **Drive team collaboration** – Match up team members to work together toward a common goal to increase their relationships and collaboration
- **Create fun at work** – Intentionally build a positive and engaging work environment to increase retention and improve the overall work experience