

## Can Coaching Reduce the Incidence of Stress-Related Absenteeism?

*Jan Ramsøy and Sigrid Stover Kjeldsen*

CoachConnect, a company that specializes in brokering certified coaches towards Norwegian businesses, believes this is a relevant and vital question to ask. This spring they, in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, have completed a research project showing that coaching reduces stress an average of 18% after a short three-month period. Some of the participants experienced a reduction as high as 47%!

"These results by themselves do not give an absolute answer to the question proposed above, but do help illustrate the issues related to the incidences of insufficient leadership and a fast pace in the workplace draining employees on all levels of an organization," says Sigrid Stover Kjeldsen, co-president of CoachConnect. She and her partner, Jan Ramsøy, are both the initiators of this project and have been responsible for the practical execution of it. They selected the 14 qualified coaches, as well as the 111 participants (or coachees).

"We have seen many examples that coaching often provides a definite positive impact for the employee, team, leaders and even company owners," she continues. "Now that we can attach a numerical effect to the process, we can give coaching a new face and an opportunity to reach and help even more people."

The project lasted for a period of three months in which 111 coachees underwent eight to 10 coaching sessions with a professional coach. Sixty percent of the participants had some form of leadership responsibility in their current jobs.

The results showed that the respondents felt an increase in social support from their colleagues, superiors and family. This support was documented to have a significant effect on reducing their stress levels and something that motivated some of them towards going the extra mile.

"Perhaps this means there is an efficiency benefit hidden behind the results of the project?" Stover Kjeldsen says. "Satisfied and happy people should be able to produce at a higher level? This is of course not yet researched and so is too early to speculate on, but will be looked at in a separate study next year."

In addition, the results also indicated that people going through a period of coaching experience fewer role conflicts at work, experience less work pressure, and more control over work intensity.

"We know that continued states of stress lead to wear and tear in a person, regardless of where that stress comes from—either from one's work situation or private life," Stover Kjeldsen reports. "It is often most likely a combination of both. Some people call it 'not having enough time in the day.' I choose to see it as an imbalance in one's daily life. With the coaching process and its commitment to both increased awareness and the taking of action for change in one's life, many of our clients have reported that this imbalance either disappears or becomes more manageable."

Stover Kjeldsen continues, saying: "If an organization or company with 100 employees can reduce stress related absenteeism by 1%—that can equate to a savings of one man's labor per year. If the employees feel valued and take responsibility for their own development, it is also natural to assume that they would stay in the company for a longer period of time. A company would then save on various employee costs such as job advertisements, and recruiting and training costs, in addition to having healthy and satisfied employees."

There remains much research to be done in the coaching field addressing the results of coaching as well as its limitations, but so far we see a clear tendency. Coaching is a good and solid process for many people. Clients come to coaching wanting to find an everyday balance and to

release their inner potential so that their jobs and private lives are richer and more meaningful. Plus, coaching is clearly very often a win-win situation for both companies and their employees, and is also a positive influence on our social economy.

Of the 16 coaches in the project, 13 of them were CTI-trained Co-Active coaches. Those who were not, were NLP coaches who adhered to the Co-Active coaching philosophy and ICF ethics and core competencies.

A few interesting finds can also be mentioned:

- 72% said that through coaching, they have learned to prioritize their time better.
- 79% said that they feel better equipped to make decisions based on what is truly important to them.
- 81% said that through coaching, they have gained a deeper understanding for the thoughts and actions that stand in their way.
- 85% said that the coaching has made a significant impact on them and has helped them make various necessary changes in their day-to-day lives.
- 74% said that coaching has provided them with tools and perspectives that help them tackle stress better.
- 87% said that they could definitely imagine continuing with a coach either now or at another point in their lives.

**Jan Ramsøy** is a CTI-trained coach who has been through the Leadership program. He has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Economics. He has held positions as sales manager, key account manager, service level manager and CEO in various different organizations. The years before becoming a coach, he worked with major service level agreements in outsourcing of IT systems and hardware. He is the co-founder of CoachConnect, Norway's first coach brokerage firm, and is the President of the Co-Active Coaching Network in Norway. Recently, he was the Master of Ceremonies for the 2005 ICF European Coaching Conference. He can be reached at [jan@coachconnect.no](mailto:jan@coachconnect.no), mobile +47 91 77 11 66, or visit the CoachConnect website at [www.coachconnect.no](http://www.coachconnect.no).

**Sigrid Stover Kjeldsen** is CTI-trained and will hopefully be a CPCC by the end of this year. She also holds a BS in psychology/sociology. She says, "My choice to become a professional coach was made in order to combine my personal values and my natural competencies. I am passionate about promoting and developing the coaching profession so that people regardless of job position, level of education, or place in life can have the chance to improve their quality of life. Coaching is my way to contribute positively to the world I live in." She can be reached at [Sigrid@coachconnect.no](mailto:Sigrid@coachconnect.no) or by mobile phone at +47 922 34 836.

[Top of Page](#) | [Back to Previous](#)