

Newsletter: May 2007

Dear colleagues

Welcome to our new name and the first online newsletter for McCarthy Mentoring. In response to many requests we are producing this quarterly newsletter to connect our dynamic mentoring community and provide some resources and discussion.

In this edition we present some Feedback from last year's consultation with mentees and mentors. It is truly inspiring to read these comments.

Our In Conversation section provides a more personal profile on two of our most experienced mentors, Tony Williams and Barbara Cail AM. Both have been mentors with the business since its early days a decade ago and their contribution has been most valuable.

The Client's perspective is our Feature in this edition. Nicole McKenna, Director, Partner Development with Allens Arthur Robinson (AAR) talks about why Allens introduced a mentoring program for women.

I encourage you to check Suggested Reading for some of the latest books and research on mentoring. David Clutterbuck's books are particularly insightful.

My daughter Sophie McCarthy has joined McCarthy Mentoring and will bring a Generation X perspective to the business. She has a background in communications, project management and research and has worked in the corporate, government and not-for-profit areas. During the past three years she has worked with the State Government agency, NSW Office for Science and Medical Research.

We look forward to bringing you our new McCarthy Mentoring website in coming months.

I hope this newsletter can bring our mentoring community closer together at least online ... please send us any articles, comments, issues that you would like to see in future editions.

Best wishes, Wendy

Suggested Reading



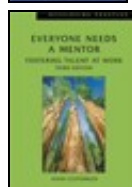
Coaching the Team at Work
David Clutterbuck



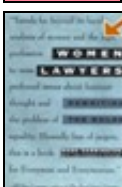
Implementing Mentoring Schemes
Nadine Klasen with David Clutterbuck



I Don't Know How She Does It
Allison Pearson



Everyone Needs a Mentor
David Clutterbuck



Women Lawyers Rewriting the Rules
Mona Harrington



CEO Kit for Attracting and Retaining Female Talent
Chief Executive Women



[Techniques for Coaching & Mentoring](#)
David Megginson & David Clutterbuck



[Work / Life Initiatives - The Way Ahead 2007](#)
Managing Work Life Balance International

Click the publication titles or cover images to order online.

The Way We Work

On 5 March Wendy was one of four panellists on ABC TV's [Difference of Opinion](#) program hosted by Jeff McMullen.

The panel and live audience discussed the social, political and economic implications of the way Australians balance life and work. The debate focused on three key questions:

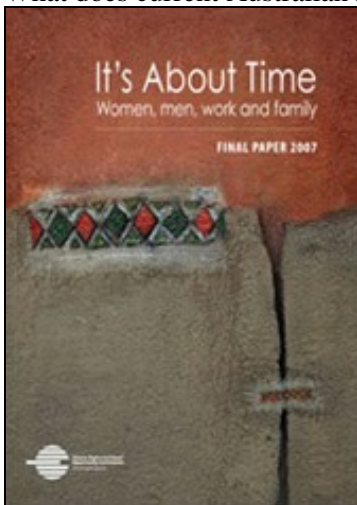
- **Working to live or living to work?**
- How can we bring the balance back toward 'life', and create a better workplace?
- What are the big challenges facing our future workforce and the way we work?>/li?



Click the image to view one of the video grabs

[Click here to view more video and read the transcripts](#)

What does current Australian research tell us about how we work, how we live and how we balance it all ... or not?



[It's About Time: Women, men, work and family](#)

[Australian Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission](#), released 7 March 2007.

This is the final paper in a project examining the relationship between family responsibilities and paid work. One of the key findings is the issue of time. People claim that they still don't have enough time balance paid work with family and

carer responsibilities. *It's About Time* draws on material provided through 181 submissions from individuals and groups and 44 consultations and focus groups held around Australia throughout 2005 and 2006.

"Despite a decade or more of economic growth and prosperity, many Australians say they are not living the lives they want. They feel pressured, stressed and constrained in the choices they can make, particularly at key points in their lives."
[Download the report.](#)

In Conversation with Tony Williams



Tony Williams has enjoyed a career of more than 30 years in the international pharmaceutical and health care fields and is currently the Chief Executive of CEO Circle Pty Ltd in NSW and Qld.

Why did you agree to become a mentor?

Following my introduction in 1998 to the concept by Wendy McCarthy, I felt my then 30 years of executive experience might continue to be useful/helpful to younger execs.

What are the key issues your mentees seek your advice and support on?

Career development/progress; reporting relationships both up and down and working relationships laterally and through the matrix; we frequently discuss work/life (im)balance and discuss the competing priorities of job/travel and family.

Have these changed in the past decade?

Hard to say, but some meetings have been intensive and mentees have expressed gratitude for time and attention given, whilst at other times the role of mentor and sounding-board has been disdained.

Do you think you've made a difference?

Slightly, in some circumstances, but cannot recall any "startling revelations or insights". The relationship is more one of careful listening and cautious questioning, to untangle emotion from logic and provide a timely view or interpretation.

What have you learnt from the experience?

Looking across four decades in business I would probably say "the more things change, the more they stay the same", with issues and questions in the minds of rising executives remarkably consistent and repeated. Therefore their needs for external, independent, personal mentors and in addition for in-the-business, career-supporting mentors are important and valuable resources.

Are there benefits from this program for both the mentee and the organisation?

For the organisation there is the continual need to offer competitive employment conditions to retain key staff. For the mentee it can be helpful to have access to an independent, experienced supporter and advisor, with whom ideas and attitudes can be canvassed and interpretations can be discussed.

In Conversation with Barbara Cail AM



*Barbara is Chief Executive and major shareholder of Rala Information Services Pty Ltd, a *Business to Business Magazine Publishing* company with an international audience.*

Why did you agree to become a Mentor?

I had reached an age and stage in my career where I was seeking ongoing mental stimulation after having been the creator and MD of a Business Press publishing company for the past thirty years. My son had taken over the day-to-day operations of my business and while I still mentor and coach him on a small scale, the mentoring role offered by Wendy McCarthy seemed to be a perfect fit.

I also knew that I was quite over sitting around board room tables wrestling with egos.

And so I felt my long and wide experience in business and government roles would provide a substantial frame of reference I could share with a younger generation.

What are the likely key issues your mentees seek your advice and support on?

Work life balance, a philosophical world view to compare and broaden their perspective on the world as they see it in their present role. A sounding board: What is your opinion on how I am thinking on this issue? Requests for my opinion range from the political and cultural environment within their organization to the personal relationships with partners and family and how each part of their lives interacts. In being asked for my opinion, I am deeply conscious of having to create an indirect method of response by continuing to question them so they provide their own answers.

Have these changed in the last decade?

The essence of mentoring has remained the same with similar issues. However, I am seeing an increase in mental stress by an increased demand for "productivity" linked to shareholder value and similar corporate speak. This new productivity culture results in longer hours and creates a prevailing low level of anxiety - keeping all the balls in the air to include family responsibilities . Salary levels have increased and there seems to be a psychological compensation model that if there is more salary, that this represents greater recognition and status. This is becoming a key driver. Yet there remains a yearning for more personal time and a larger meaning from life. I have had mentees claim that while they are with their families on weekends, their blackberry remains on: they are physically present but their mind is still in the office.

Do you think you have made a difference?

I feel confident in saying that I do think I have made a difference. Only one mentee didn't work out for me. He was a senior executive from my generation and seemed to resent having a mentor. He didn't believe he needed one. By contrast, all my other mentees in the past decade seem to have valued the experience from a personal development and growth angle. I believe I have provided a wide angle lens on the world and this can only be supplied from experience, indicating that senior years are valuable as a resource for insight and wisdom.

What have you learnt from the experience?

I believe it is a privilege for me to have access to the thinking of a new generation of executives and being able to see the world through their eyes. Their view, meshed with the global aspects of technology and trade require a different response to day to day activity. However, I have learned that the fundamentals of life, away from the office, and the need for owning a strong value system does not change. The yearning for community, connection and meaning still remains a constant.

Are there benefits from this program for both the mentee and the organization?

I think this is a given. There is no one within the mentee's organization who will invest in listening to their thinking, their ideas and their frustrations for a two hour block of time - the time I spend with each mentee. Mentoring is a trusting and non judgemental environment in which the mentee can feel free to express themselves. No one has the time to listen anymore. Listening to someone with a total focus on themselves for two hours, is extremely rare. Listening is wanting to hear! Being listened to is a luxury. For the mentee to have the freedom to vent within the confidential and trusting environment of a mentor- mentee relationship, acts as a shelter against the storms of commercial reality.

My feedback from some of my mentees relates to feeling refreshed , gaining some extra insight , dumping their anger , being understood , very grateful for having someone just listen to them , and even being inspired . Through

trust one another. It has the capacity to meet the very specific individual needs of mentees, which invariably change over time. The mentoring relationship benefits mentees by providing them with a dedicated person, typically with more experience of life and work than themselves, who is there to guide and support them as they navigate their way through their career. In many ways, a mentor gives a mentee permission to indulge in a serious discussion about themselves, their aspirations and fears, in an environment where they will not be judged and are safe. As a firm, we benefit greatly from these relationships, as they help our women to think strategically about their careers and professional development. It may sound clichéd, but we really do see the program as an investment in our most precious assets - our people.

How does the organisation measure success from this kind of program?

We measure success from the feedback we receive from women who have participated in the program and their stories of how they have benefited from their mentoring relationship. We also measure success by observing the way internal relationships have been enhanced internally among women who previously didn't know one another very well but now do because of their shared experience as mentees. Of course, it's also very satisfying to see women who have participated in the program being promoted to partner.

Has the mentoring program met its objectives?

The mentoring program is just one of the initiatives we have implemented as part of our Women@AAR Project, albeit a very important one. While we are pleased with the results so far, we are ever conscious that there is still a lot of work to do to help ensure that our women realise their potential as leaders within the firm, including more of them progressing to partner.

Your Feedback

At the close of 2006 we asked our mentees and mentors for some general feedback on their mentoring experience. Here are some of the responses. We hope you will enjoy sharing the experiences of others in the program.

Mentors

"I have found it to be amongst the most rewarding work I have done because it requires me to integrate all the professional skills I have developed and to bring the best of myself to the service of a single other person. I have learned to be a secular godmother. "

"That we can make a significant difference in the lives of mentees and that our advice and listening is a tremendous comfort and fallback when they have doubts. It has saved employees from being too hasty to accept another offer from a competitor."

"The greatest learning experience has been first hand exposure to how this generation of young women are trying to balance their professional and family lives."

"I am particularly aware of the narrowness that may be forced upon senior executives in large organisations. I am aware from other discussions that the constant drive for performance can reduce an individual's focus to being overly dominated by business. I'm sure one of the values we bring as mentors is to broaden the focus and ultimately provide for better performance on all aspects of that individual's life."

"Learning and training myself to listen more. "

"To date, the most important experience has been seeing how much the process depends on listening rather than talking (from the mentor's point of view). It took a couple of meetings for me to realise that it's actually better to back off a bit rather than risk being too directive."

"It has reinforced my understanding of the importance of personal communication and performance reviews. I have been surprised at the lack of direct feedback that my mentees get from their managers."

"Current matchmaking is superb..... a rare skill. And the freedom and clear understanding is built in for both parties should it not work. If there are differences both parties can seek counsel from Wendy."

"I find the mentoring role a privilege and absolute pleasure. ."

"I really enjoy mentoring. It is personally rewarding as well as gratifying seeing the mentee get very tangible benefits from mentoring sessions."

Mentees

"Our business has gone through a major transformation and growth in the past two years. The list of challenges has been very long and it has been very valuable to be able to talk them through with an independent party."

"I have found the program of great value and am very grateful to be part of the program and to have been provided with such a wonderful mentor."

"An excellent program. "

"In terms of personal and professional development, this has been the best for me in my 19 year financial services career."

"The mentoring program has done wonders for my self esteem and I will be always grateful for that. "

"The program has assisted me enormously and has made a significant impact on my professional life. Your efforts are much appreciated. "

"The main benefit is that I have a much more heightened awareness of steering my own career, rather than just waiting for things to happen to me. "

"It has helped to build my confidence and helped to articulate what it is that motivates and inspires me personally and professionally."

"It provides a balanced, non biased view and encourages me to broaden my thinking."

"It has been beneficial because it has given me the opportunity to get an objective opinion from a person I respect, on matters that can range from work to family. "

"I have found it invaluable in supporting me through some very difficult times in my career."

"I admire how my mentor has managed to juggle work and family, carry out her work with integrity and remain a kind and caring person."

"It has made me stop and evaluate my personal skills and failings. I now feel more confident undertaking my day to day work. I look at each task more strategically and identify my strengths and what I can do well and am more open and honest with myself about bringing in others who have the skills I lack. I remain amazed at how appropriate the match is, both in a business and personal sense."

Next Edition: The business case for mentoring

Mentor Workshops were held in Melbourne and Sydney during April. We will report on this next edition.

Hatches, matches, dispatches ... - please send us your news for the next edition

Please send your comments and suggestions for our newsletter to sophiemccarthy@mcgrath.com.au.

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