

Starting a mentoring program?

BEST PRACTICE TOP TIPS

We know it can be a powerful professional development tool to drive change, engage staff and develop leaders but it has to be done well. Following best practice guidelines will help to achieve an effective program. Drawing on our research *Managing Power, People and My Career* as well as our experience in designing successful programs, here are our top five tips.

- 1 DEVELOP A MENTORING CULTURE AND IDENTIFY CHAMPIONS** Mentoring programs are most successful in organisations which foster a development culture and whose leaders are champions of mentoring. Mentees must feel participation is highly valued by the organisation and it is a reward and recognition program to aspire towards rather than a remedial initiative.
- 2 CONSIDER QUALITIES OF MENTORS AND MENTEES** Consider the qualities of the participants chosen and train them to get the most out of the relationship. Mentors need to be good listeners, encourage trust and be generous in sharing their experiences. Great mentors stretch and challenge. Mentees need to take initiative, be open and drive the relationship.
- 3 MATCH CAREFULLY** The match is arguably the most crucial element of success. It needs to be based on the mentees goals, ambitions, expectations as well as experience. Where possible mentors should be outside of current network or function area to bring fresh perspectives and encourage discussions that they can't have with their manager or colleagues. Both have to be committed to the relationship and there needs to be mutual respect.
- 4 CLARIFY PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS** The program needs to be formalised with all parties understanding the purpose, expectations and goals of the program. Establish clear objectives and guidelines at the beginning and ensure they are well communicated. Set a clear timeframe for the program to keep participants focused and outcomes can be assessed.
- 5 EVALUATE** Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program against the goals of the program and key business performance indicators. Communicate the results to senior leadership, participants, managers and mentors.



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