

# ONE 2 ONE

## MANAGING POWER, PEOPLE AND MY CAREER

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AUSTRALIAN EXECUTIVES SHARE THEIR MENTORING STORIES

SOPHIE MCCARTHY 2012



MCCARTHY MENTORING

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank three special women for their contribution to this report as part of our project team.

Arancha Alvarez, our former work colleague, for reviewing the literature, writing Chapter Two, and conducting and transcribing the majority of telephone interviews. Arancha started her career with McCarthy Mentoring which sparked her passion for development. Since then she has worked for NAB Private Wealth and is currently a Group Learning and Organisational Development Advisor for Boral Limited. Arancha finished university in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts Psychology and Bachelor of Human Resource Management from Macquarie University.

Amelia Gerrard, our calm and very able Executive Assistant, for locating many mentees who had changed roles, countries and names, completing the remaining interviews, presenting all demographic data and providing me with a constant sounding-board on all aspects of this report. Amelia is a commerce graduate of the University of Western Australia and worked at Macquarie Bank before joining the McCarthy Mentoring team in 2010. She is currently studying Health Sciences (Food & Nutrition) by correspondence at Charles Sturt University and plans to open her own practice.

Wendy McCarthy, founder of McCarthy Mentoring, boss, mother, mentor, not in that order. Thanks for keeping us laughing and focused on finishing.

I would also like to thank the mentees who participated in the survey and their mentors, (who were not interviewed) who have affected their lives in special and significant ways.

Thanks also to our many clients, the employers of mentees, who trust us to manage the mentoring relationships.

Sophie McCarthy  
General Manager, McCarthy Mentoring  
April 2012

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established by Wendy McCarthy, McCarthy Mentoring has been providing independent mentors to people in leading companies across the Australian business, government and not-for-profit sectors since 1998. We offer formal, structured mentoring relationships for senior executives, high potential employees and individuals who choose to engage a mentor privately. Our distinct offering is that the mentors are external to the organisation and are matched by McCarthy Mentoring.

We have organised over 600 mentoring relationships in the last 14 years and our published resources are sold nationally and internationally and assist many companies to run in-house programs. While we have been encouraged and engaged by annual evaluations from each client, we wanted to assess the value and quality of these relationships from the mentees' perspective.

We designed our survey to identify those aspects of mentoring which are most valuable to mentees. We were also curious to see where our mentees are now and whether, on reflection, they thought mentoring was of value to their professional and personal development.

## THE STUDY

We interviewed people from a range of organisations who had participated in our mentoring programs over the past 14 years.

- 32% of mentees interviewed were CEOs or members of an executive team.
- 50% were senior managers, including heads of departments or business units, assistant general counsel and chiefs of staff to Members of Parliament.
- 14% were senior associates at law firms.
- Over 60% of the mentees worked in finance or law.

Mentees' expectations of the mentoring relationships were met and often exceeded. They anticipated a confidential sounding-board, someone more experienced than them in business and life, someone prepared to challenge them and to share their experiences of success and failure. The broad range of objectives that mentees identified for their mentoring relationships indicates the range of situations that can benefit from having this form of support. Some sought advice on how to reach a leadership position, others wanted tips on how to be a working mother, some looked for cultural insights to help them manage moving to Australia and becoming part of a professional team, some were assigned a mentor to support them to establish a philanthropy program in an arts organisation.

Mentees discussed their career paths, definitions of success, managing the transition to leadership, combining work and family commitments and developing strategies to deal with a range of workplace problems and issues.

Some of the questions they sought advice on were: How do I position myself for a leadership role? How can I handle situations better? How can I claim recognition for my role? How do I interact better with my peers and my boss? How do I negotiate a pay review?

These are recurring issues that cause people anxiety and stress in today's workplace. Learning how to manage them can make a dramatic

improvement to people's lives. Some questions demand practical and strategic advice, but often people are just looking for confidence and reassurance to help them implement their own approach. Being able to test your ideas in a trusted one-to-one relationship helps you find your way and find your voice.

The Australian executives interviewed for this project reported that having a confidential mentor with whom to share, reflect and discuss life's quandaries and opportunities is highly valued and enhances self-esteem and confidence. It can be the reason people stay in organisations and learn to manage change, rather than fleeing to another company. It is a tangible and efficient way of rewarding highly-motivated emerging leaders while assisting them to grow professionally and personally and to better understand the external world.

In line with the best practice model of mentoring, getting the match right is critical. A highlight of this survey is the positive feedback about this aspect of our practice. The mentees were very positive about the rapport with their mentors, their skill, discretion and the relevance of their personal and professional experiences.

In addition mentees spoke of the enduring impact of mentoring or 'the voice in my head' that continued to guide them on significant decisions years after the formal relationship had concluded. Networks have continued to grow and many have initiated mentoring programs in new workplaces.

Almost 90% of mentees have become mentors themselves within their organisation or for an industry group. This demonstrates the long term impact of a small investment.

Compared to other professional development programs mentees felt that mentoring was unique and complementary to other more formal structured programs in that it was highly personal, practical and self-directed and for people in leadership roles this is often preferable.

Finally, this survey offers some insights into best practice for people developing a mentoring program or assessing its value as a development tool.

## **INSIGHTS FOR BEST PRACTICE:**

### **1 DEVELOP A MENTORING CULTURE**

Ensure mentoring is supported by the leadership team and programs are promoted. 90% of mentees surveyed have become mentors in their organisation or for an industry group. To maximise the investment in your program, ensure that mentees are encouraged to become mentors in-house. It will have multiple benefits for them, your organisation's culture and future mentees.

### **2 MEETING THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE MENTEE**

Our model using external mentors is particularly valuable for mentees who seek one2one support from an experienced professional around a range of personal and professional issues. It offers a confidential and self directed program, which offers new networks and a broader perspective. For people navigating the transition to leadership roles—senior executives and emerging leaders—mentoring provides a unique development opportunity.

### **3 MATCHING**

This is critical for a mentoring program. Our approach has been successful and is guided by people's personality, interests, experience, goals and the organisation's brief. The distinct advantage with our model is that we have access to a wide range of experienced professionals who choose to be mentors. This is not always the case within an organisation and explains the demand for external mentors.

### **4 PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS**

Develop an organisational goal for the program. This can include a broad range of factors such as retention of talent, developing emerging leaders, promoting female leaders and succession planning. Provide guidelines for behaviour and one2one resources to assist the mentoring relationship.

### **5 EVALUATE**

An annual review is important to monitor change and progress. The measures may include mentee feedback, focus groups, or harder metrics such as monitoring changes in salaries, rates of promotion and retention.



A

INTRODUCTION



Over the past 14 years McCarthy Mentoring has organised almost 600 mentoring relationships in Australia and globally. During this period we have established programs for people working in the arts, aviation, law, investment banking, architecture, media, advertising, retail, health and rural services, police force, academia, welfare organisations and senior public sector agencies.

**THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF OUR MENTORING PROGRAM IS THAT THE MENTORS ARE EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANISATION AND ARE MATCHED BY US.**

In the majority of cases the mentoring programs are established to retain and improve the capability of employees identified as 'talented'. The mentees are emerging leaders, CEOs or part of the executive team. An external mentor is an investment in the employee and is offered in recognition of their high performance. It is also a sign of trust in that individual. We select the mentor based on their skills, experience, integrity and personality. Getting the match right is critical to the program's success.

The mentor's role is to be a trusted advisor and sounding-board for their mentee. Their discussions range from career planning, managing workplace issues, to clarifying professional and personal goals. The sessions offer time for reflection and strategic planning.

Our programs require a two-hour monthly meeting for a minimum of 12 months. Mentoring relationships are then reviewed. In our first five years many mentoring relationships continued for up to three years. Recently, 12-18 month programs have become more common.

The mentoring programs we have developed with clients reflect a range of organisational goals. In 2006 we established a Mentoring for Philanthropy program with Artsupport Australia for over 25 major performing arts companies and indigenous arts companies, where mentoring helped philanthropy managers to increase revenue. For other clients mentoring is a strong component in diversity programs, for example where women are offered mentoring to support their path to leadership and senior management roles. Other programs we deliver include mentoring to assist succession planning at the executive level and offering advice to people seeking directorships or who are first time non-executive directors.

The literature on mentoring and its value reports that people find mentoring relationships give them increased confidence, greater self-awareness and exposure to the external environment and increased capacity to seize opportunities and take risks with their careers.

However, much of the literature focuses on workplace relationships where the mentor is a more senior person in the same organisation as the mentee. Given our different approach of using external mentors, we sought to survey a sample of our mentees to identify the aspects of mentoring that were most valuable to them. Secondly, based on these insights we sought to identify how mentoring programs can be used most effectively in organisations to retain and develop talented people.

**B**

CONTEXT

This chapter presents the current research that applies to our external model of mentoring.

## **MENTORING DEFINITIONS**

A mentoring relationship is one where a wiser and more experienced person assists another person to grow and learn. The mentor's primary role is to be a sounding-board and a transitional figure in an individual's development, by providing career advice and support. Mentoring is a holistic professional development approach that includes coaching, facilitating, counselling and networking.

## **TYPES OF MENTORING PROGRAMS**

Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal and are either within or external to an organisation. McCarthy Mentoring provides formal mentoring relationships using mentors outside the organisation. The programs are initiated by the mentee's organisation, the mentee, or offered by industry organisations to their members. Examples of the latter model include the Medical Technology Association of Australia's Emerging Leaders Development Program, and in government, the Australia Council for the Arts' Executive Mentoring Program for Major Performing Arts Companies. The broad aims of these programs are to retain and develop employees or members, offer them an opportunity to learn from someone with greater experience and knowledge, and plan their careers more strategically.

Formal mentoring programs often have specified parameters around the duration of the relationship, contracted goals and program evaluation. In contrast, informal mentoring relationships refer to those formed by the mentoring partners in an ad hoc way and based on a personal relationship. They are not governed by a third party in relation to timelines, goals or outcomes.

## **BENEFITS OF MENTORING**

Mentoring has a number of benefits for the mentee, the mentor and the organisation.

Effective mentoring gives mentees increased confidence, greater self-awareness and the capacity to pursue career opportunities. By having regular contact with a mentor, mentees are able to develop and apply strategies to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. Hence, individuals who have been well mentored often report increased salaries, greater rates of promotion, and higher perceptions of career success. Additionally, the studies show that the majority of senior leaders acknowledge the presence of a mentor as an important part of their success.

In external mentoring programs, mentees have the additional benefits of a broader perspective, complete confidentiality, increased networking opportunities and greater exposure to the external environment. Mentors also receive benefits as they become a role model and trusted adviser for both the mentee and organisation (Douglas 1997, Williams 2005, Anderson 2003).

For organisations, well-developed mentoring programs contribute to a culture of continual learning and high performance. They can benefit from the mentees' increased confidence, focus, and exposure to broader networks and perspectives.

## WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

Research has shown that organisational culture can negatively impact the success of a mentoring program. For a mentoring program to be successfully implemented, organisations must be committed to employee development, respect confidentiality and support the mentoring relationships. Inconsistencies in expectations and understanding of the aims of mentoring from the organisation, mentee and mentor may hinder the success of the mentoring program.

## BEST PRACTICE

The literature on successful mentoring programs and our experience of running programs for 14 years provides these five guidelines to implement an effective mentoring program.

### BEST PRACTICE 1:

#### DEVELOP A MENTORING CULTURE

Mentoring programs are most successful in organisations which foster a development culture and whose leaders are champions of mentoring. Mentors and mentees need to perceive organisational support for the mentoring relationship. Organisations should ensure that mentors and mentees have the opportunity for frequent interaction and are also held accountable for their participation.

Mentees should be encouraged to have candid, confidential conversations and feel that the organisation is committed to this learning experience, whilst mentors should know how to give appropriate feedback and support. In our programs the chair, CEO or a member of the senior management provides a brief to mentors within the first few months of a program. This brief should include information about the program, why it has been conceived and who the mentees are. What challenges and opportunities is the organization experiencing? What is the company's expectation? Is the mentoring one part of a broader leadership program? Are they hoping to promote the mentees? What is the timeline?



**BEST PRACTICE 2:****QUALITIES OF VALUABLE MENTORS AND EFFECTIVE MENTEES**

There are certain qualities that mentors and mentees require to ensure the optimum mentoring experience. A valuable mentor creates the learning environment and helps build a culture of trust by encouraging, advising and guiding the mentee. A mentor is available and committed to the success of the relationship. A good mentor listens, is a strategist, trusted adviser, role model, leader, nurturer, teacher, supporter and challenger. The best mentor has many different working styles and will adopt a style that suits both the situation and the mentee.

The ideal mentee takes initiative and drives the relationship by setting the pace and the goals. An effective mentee is open and candid, has realistic expectations and is open to feedback and different perspectives.

**BEST PRACTICE 3:****CONSIDERED MATCHING**

Ensuring the mentor is a good match for the mentee is critical to the success of a mentoring relationship, and it is essential to establish a clear exit mechanism for relationships that are not working.

The elements of interpersonal compatibility, mutual engagement, respect, authenticity and empowerment are key to the success of a mentoring relationship. Hence, mentees and mentors should have some input or decision-making ability when it comes to the matching.

Careful consideration of mentor status, expertise, knowledge, experience and seniority are also important.

**BEST PRACTICE 4:****PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS**

The primary objective of a workplace mentoring program is to develop the capability of the employees. If all parties have a clear understanding of program purpose, goals, expectations and obligations, this will ensure mentoring programs are rewarding for all involved. Establishing clear objectives and guidelines at the beginning protects the interests of both the organisation and the participants.

Mentoring programs should have clear guidelines around the parameters of the relationship including duration, meeting frequency, goal-setting, accountability and evaluation. This may involve briefings or workshops on the nature and goals of mentoring, to establish clear expectations and enable each party to understand their role in the mentoring relationship.

**BEST PRACTICE 5:****EVALUATE**

Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the mentoring program against the overall goals of the program is also critical in demonstrating program effectiveness. This can be done via qualitative analysis using mentor/mentee surveys, interviews and focus groups. Alternatively, organisations can measure goals and outcomes by metrics such as analysing the number of participants or promotion rates after the conclusion of the program, or by comparing retention rates between employees on the mentoring program and those that are not.

Given the dearth of research on external mentoring programs and the growing interest in them, we felt it was timely to survey our mentees about the impact and value of their mentoring experience.

We hope this survey will contribute to the growing body of research in Australia, provide our mentors with comprehensive feedback and our clients with greater insights into the impact of mentoring on their valued employees.

Quota sampling was used to select people for interviews in order to obtain equal representation with respect to gender and time elapsed since mentoring commenced. A third consideration was to select people from a range of sectors. (See Appendix 2)

Two people conducted telephone interviews with the mentees from October 2011–January 2012 using the questionnaire in Appendix 1. All the interviews were then transcribed for analysis.

The interviews collected socio–demographic data about each person and asked questions about their mentoring experience and its impact. The responses to these questions were then analysed and the key themes identified under the respective headings. As this is a qualitative survey we aimed to report the range of responses and not the frequency of the comments.



**THE STUDY**

## THE MENTEES—WHO ARE THEY?

A sample of 28 mentees were interviewed for this project, 71% female and 29% male. This gender ratio reflects our larger database as many of our mentoring programs have been for women only.

We divided the database into three groups to ensure we spoke to people who were mentees across the 14 years: those that commenced mentoring before 2005, between 2005–2007 and from 2008–2010 (see Appendix 2).

The majority of the mentees were aged between 30–40 when they participated in the mentoring program. This is representative of our mentees, who are commonly first time CEOs, new members of executive teams or emerging leaders identified as valuable employees that an organisation wishes to retain.

In terms of their positions at the time of the mentoring relationship:

- 50% were senior managers, which included heads of departments or business units, assistant general counsel and chiefs of staff to Members of Parliament.
- 32% of mentees were CEOs or members of an executive team.
- 14% were senior associates at law firms.
- 4% were consultants.

Over 60% of the mentees worked in finance and law, which in this instance refers to corporate law firms, retail and investment banks, and companies providing insurance and back office financial services. The remaining 40% of participants were from a range of sectors including the arts, rural services, education and training, fast-moving consumer goods, government, health, retail, aviation, human resources and energy. In addition, the organisations where the mentees work include statutory authorities, not-for-profit organisations, listed companies, partnerships, industry organisations and government agencies.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents were mentored for two years or more, and over half lived in NSW (mostly Sydney and some regional centres), a quarter in Melbourne and the remainder in Canberra and Perth.

A large, bold, pink letter 'D' is positioned on the left side of the page. The background is a solid, vibrant orange color.

## FINDINGS

The data gleaned from the interviews is presented in 12 key areas.



I THINK I WAS SELECTED BECAUSE I HAD BEEN WITH THE COMPANY FOR ABOUT 5 YEARS AND I WAS SEEN AS SOMEONE WHO HAD SOME PROMISE.

# 1

## Mentoring—was it offered or initiated?

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We were interested in how people came to be on the mentoring program; whether they had been selected by their employer or had initiated the mentoring themselves.

Responses fell into four categories.

- Selected as part of a talent program for emerging leaders
- Selected as part of a talent program for women
- Initiated by new CEOs
- Actively sought by motivated people in organisations



## 2. Mentoring—was it offered or initiated?

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### **SELECTED AS PART OF A TALENT PROGRAM FOR EMERGING LEADERS**

I was recommended through the Major Performing Arts Board. Look it was pretty clear it was my first role as GM at a major performing arts company and I was still 31 at that point. It was a big step up in my career and the MPAB has a good history of supporting companies and their senior staff. **FEMALE, ARTS**

It was identified as a development need and mentoring was identified as a way to help me progress my career and more forward. I was identified as an emerging leader. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

It was about selecting people who were high performers who are showing senior leadership qualities that we want to progress through the company. **MALE, AVIATION**

### **SELECTED AS PART OF A TALENT PROGRAM FOR WOMEN**

The external mentoring program was part of a wider group initiative for senior women, a retention strategy the bank was using to keep senior women within the group. **FEMALE FINANCIAL SERVICES**

My boss thought it would be good for my development because there wasn't anyone internal that would have been able to provide the same development, skills and sounding board, and I think it was also a reward. **FEMALE, LAW**

The responsibilities of the Branch Manager at the time were increasing so my manager saw a benefit in me working with an external mentor as opposed to working with an internal mentor. I was identified as an emerging leader. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **INITIATED BY NEW GEOS**

Actively sought. I thought it might be useful in terms of supporting me in my role and it was my first time in a CEO role so I needed an experienced CEO to act as a sounding board and give me some guidance in the directions I was going and some of the things we were doing. **MALE, ENERGY SECTOR**

I actively sought it because at the time I was a fairly new CEO and I was having issues with my board and so was keen to resolve those.

**FEMALE, EDUCATION & TRAINING**

### **ACTIVELY SOUGHT BY MOTIVATED PEOPLE IN ORGANISATIONS**

I sought it, I asked for it...I had heard about it from other people in the organisation and it looked like a good program to be involved with.

**MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS SOMEONE WITH  
20, 30, 40 YEARS OF GENERAL EXPERIENCE  
BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL WAS  
SOMETHING I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO.

## 2

### Expectations

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A key element of a successful mentoring program is clarifying the program's purpose and expectation. We asked mentees what their expectations of the mentoring relationship were. Their responses provide some insights into how the program is positioned and communicated within the organisation. The benefits are greater for mentees and the organisation when the program is openly championed by an organisation's leader.

McCarthy Mentoring has always positioned its programs as a professional development strategy for talented people that organisations wish to develop and retain. We encourage a senior member of the organisation to brief mentors at the commencement of a program on the organisation, its future challenges and reasons behind the mentoring initiative. This demonstrates their commitment to the program and its participants.

Mentees' expectations fell into two categories: first, they expected a confidential independent adviser, someone more experienced to provide advice on specific career and workplace issues.

Second, they felt it would be a valuable experience and assist them to have discussions, seek advice and make decisions about their work and lives. Some were thankful for the opportunity to work with mentors who were successful executives, external to their organisation that they would not otherwise meet.

- Confidential independent adviser
- Someone more experienced to provide advice on personal and professional issues

## 2. Expectations

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### **CONFIDENTIAL INDEPENDENT ADVISER**

That I could have a confidential and somewhat removed relationship in which I could safely discuss personal and professional issues.

**MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **SPECIFIC CAREER ADVICE**

To be able to access someone with 20, 30, 40 years of general experience both professional and personal was something I was looking forward to. I went into it to give as much of myself so I could get as much out of it as possible so I set some high expectations of myself and the program. **MALE, AVIATION**



THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO MAKE ME MORE AUSTRALIAN-FRIENDLY, I KNOW IT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS BUT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT. I NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND HOW AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS WORKS AND THE DYNAMIC SO THAT WAS MY OBJECTIVE TO MAKE ME MORE COMPATIBLE.

# 3

## Objectives

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Mentees were asked whether their mentoring relationship had a specific objective, as research suggests that having a purpose and a goal is integral to a program's success.

Almost all mentees reported that their relationship had an objective and these included individual objectives, such as developing leadership skills and managing workplace issues as well as organisational goals, such as establishing a philanthropy program.

The diverse range of objectives listed below highlights the many purposes of mentoring programs.

- To develop my leadership skills
- Confidential sounding-board
- Cultural assimilation
- Personal issues
- Managing workplace issues
- Transitioning to becoming a working mother
- Career development and promotion
- Establishing a philanthropy program
- Having an external voice

An important element of our program is that the agenda is set by the mentee not the mentor and therefore we recommend that one2one cards are used in the second session to set 10 goals for the 12 month mentoring relationship that can be revisited and checked at the conclusion of the program.

### 3. Objectives

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#### **TO DEVELOP MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

It was about growing as a leader, dealing with the transitions that were happening in the business at the time and the responsibilities that brought to me.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Yes the objective was to prepare me for performance reviews and to help me clarify the next steps. I met this objective as I transitioned into my current position as Special Counsel from a Senior Associate role.

**FEMALE, LAW**

#### **CONFIDENTIAL SOUNDING BOARD**

I needed a sounding board, I needed somebody to be able to give me a sense of where my thinking perhaps needed to change and how to deal with a series of relatively challenging situations associated with dealing with a dysfunctional board and I needed somebody who I knew was going to be quite honest with me and direct. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

#### **CULTURAL ASSIMILATION**

The objective was to make me more Australian-friendly, I know it sounds ridiculous but it was very important. I needed to understand how Australian business works and the dynamic so that was my objective to make me more compatible. **FEMALE, RETAIL**

#### **PERSONAL ISSUES**

Personal development at the time was the objective. I was working full time and my wife was and we had young kids at the time so it was about how we balance the career objectives with the home objectives of two professional career people. **MALE, AVIATION**

#### **MANAGING WORKPLACE ISSUES**

I think one of the things that you struggle with when working for a big company (global finance) is the internal politics and the matrix reporting. It is more around that side of things and how to best manage that. But not only that, I saw it as a way to develop from my career perspective. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

I had a few things in mind, one was issues of strategy and staffing so sort of practical CEO things that I was looking to have a sounding board. And career planning. **MALE, RURAL SERVICES**

The issues I was experiencing at the time were about how I could work with different personalities and mentoring was an opportunity to learn from someone who had been there and done that.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

#### **TRANSITION TO BECOMING A WORKING MOTHER**

The first meeting I had with my mentor I had just found out I was pregnant and the mentoring relationship really worked around me telling people at work I was pregnant and then going on mat leave and then coming back to work part time. So for me the objective was around the transition to becoming a working mother. **FEMALE, LAW**

It was really a mixture of work and personal things but with the personal it was more about how they related to work because when I came onto the mentor program I had just had returned from maternity leave so it was how to kick start my career even though I was off being a mother. **FEMALE, LAW**

#### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION**

We set the objectives ourselves—around working out my next career step and also how to be more effective within the organisation and as a leader.

**MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

#### **ESTABLISHING A PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM**

To assist in a start-up of a fundraising program for the organization so I was setting up this philanthropy program and his (mentor) job was to help in setting up that program. **FEMALE, ARTS**

#### **HAVING AN EXTERNAL VOICE**

It was a time of extreme transition and the external voice was very helpful. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

I FEEL THE WAY THAT I AM MANAGING  
MY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BOARD HAS  
CHANGED PROFOUNDLY. IT HAS DEFINITELY  
CHANGED THE WAY I GET THINGS DONE.

# 4

## Did you meet the objective?

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We asked mentees whether they had met the stated objective of their mentoring relationship and the unanimous response was 'Yes'. Success from the mentees' perspective encompassed a broad range of factors and demonstrates how mentoring programs can be used successfully to fulfil a range of development needs when best practice is observed and implemented.

The range of achievements is diverse and includes:

- Securing a leadership position
- Career planning
- Managing careers and family responsibilities better
- Acquiring leadership skills
- Encouraged me to be more ambitious
- Managing the board more effectively
- Learnt to manage challenging workplace issues
- Great experience

## 4. Did you meet the objective?

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### SECURING A LEADERSHIP POSITION

Yes I got the job as CEO. **FEMALE, HEALTH SERVICES**

Within 12 months of working with my mentor I was a GM and I am still a GM but it's a significantly larger role and it has much more breadth and responsibility, so I see her as helping me get two promotions.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### CAREER PLANNING

Yes absolutely. I was in the Operations & IT division and I wanted to break out of that division into Commercial management and so having the external mentor was a big part of fulfilling that goal and within 12 months a combination of various actions and one of those was having the mentor. I was able to take a role in the credit cards business. You know one thing led to another and now I am running the business in Australia. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Not formally but yes. We didn't write down a 5 year plan but we spoke about what sort of things were important and a number of those things were pursued and pursued successfully. **FEMALE, LAW**

### MANAGING CAREERS AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES BETTER

Yes I would like to say that I have. I am still here and still extremely aligned to the people who run the organisation and at home I think we are doing a lot better in managing our careers and our responsibilities as parents as well. **MALE, AVIATION**

Yes I guess when I took on the mentoring for the last 12 months the company had been pressuring me to take on a position overseas and I had just come back to Australia so I wasn't sure I wanted to or not. So part of it was working out whether I would move again.

**FEMALE, FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS**

### ACQUIRING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Yes I believe so. It just gave me leadership skills to do those sorts of things; it enabled me to be more balanced at how I looked at the organisation and how I performed. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### MANAGING THE BOARD MORE EFFECTIVELY

I feel the way that I am managing my engagement with the board has changed profoundly. It has definitely changed the way I get things done. It is powerful because it does get lonely and there are not many people you can talk to, you know so she has been fantastic and it has had an enormous subject range.

**FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

### ENCOURAGED ME TO BE MORE AMBITIOUS

It was very, very encouraging because I was watching how he set up businesses and then went and did something else and then took bolder steps and did something else again so he made it look very exciting and very easy so it opened up my mind and my ambitions and so encouraged me to put my ambitions a little bit higher than before.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### MANAGING CHALLENGING WORKPLACE ISSUES

Yes, in the end I learnt how to manage difficult people and the situations at the time.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### GREAT EXPERIENCE

Yes I definitely did, it was a really great experience for me I think I was really lucky in that Wendy made a really good match. The evidence is that she (mentor) is someone who I still see regularly. She has become an important professional person in my life. **FEMALE, LAW**



**BUILDING CONFIDENCE WITHIN MYSELF,  
LEARNING TO WORK IN AN ENVIRONMENT  
WITH A LOT OF CRITICISM, WORK/LIFE  
BALANCE AND UNDERSTANDING WHAT  
OTHERS ARE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED BY.**

# 5

## Issues commonly discussed

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To ensure we captured as much information as possible about the discussions in mentoring relationships we asked mentees about the issues they most commonly discussed.

Mentees' responses fell into four main areas:

- Managing the transition to CEO
- Career development
- Strategies to deal with workplace issues: managing the board, navigating office politics, improving negotiating skills, how to raise your profile or reposition yourself.
- Combining work and family commitments

These responses highlight a significant need for executives in a range of industries and professions to have offline conversations about their careers, families and a range of workplace issues.

Navigating the unwritten software of senior executive life can be confronting and perplexing for many who have no informal mentors, friends or associates to assist. In addition, confidentiality becomes a very real concern for people at a certain level of seniority and mentees feel they have limited sources they can trust and seek advice from. External mentors with experience in leadership who offer a confidential sounding board have successfully fulfilled this role.

2012 statistics on the contemporary lives of working Australians paint a picture of stress, long working hours, ever decreasing leisure time and a constant juggle of work and family commitments (Pocock, Skinner & Williams, 2012). The difficulty in combining work and family commitments was a common focus of discussion at mentoring meetings for men and women.

Employers of choice have recognised this need and are providing mentoring programs to retain and attract the best employees.

## 5. Issues commonly discussed

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### **MANAGING THE TRANSITION TO CEO**

We talked about a lot of specific things but it was more about the shift in role than anything. We spoke about being the head of an organisation and the responsibilities and being the host of the organisation on opening nights. We also talked a lot about change management and succession planning for the organisation. **FEMALE, ARTS**

How I behaved as a leader and the sort of things that I needed to do as a leader. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

It was a chance to focus on your career, life and where you are headed and any gaps and how you might fill those and also personal development and how that fits into broader life goals. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

### **STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH WORKPLACE ISSUES: MANAGING THE BOARD**

Relationships with the board and issues with the board and some of the challenges I was facing in fulfilling my role as CEO. I am now reporting to a board for the first time what are the sorts of issues? We spoke about broader corporate governance and what was important to the CEO and how the CEO goes to the board. Discussed things like when some of the board micro-managed and tried to do my job. So we tossed around ideas around that type of thing. That is where I got the value, in the context of the board. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH WORKPLACE ISSUES: NAVIGATING ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS**

Building confidence within myself, learning to work in an environment with a lot of criticism, work/life balance and understanding what others are politically motivated by. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Strategy issues and I mean that in a very practical sense, different ways of interacting with your chief executive, a lot of different practical strategies that I had never really thought of. **MALE, ENERGY**

Figuring out how men think and how to communicate to ensure they understood what I was saying because there weren't many female senior leaders or partners, it is a very male dominated area. **FEMALE, LAW**

### **STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH WORKPLACE ISSUES: NEGOTIATION SKILLS**

We discussed how to approach things like performance reviews and pay reviews and how to formulate my career. All the mentors were successful women in their own right so you got to meet very inspiring women and you got to find out how they had done it. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH WORKPLACE ISSUES: RAISING PROFILE**

Managing up and managing my profile within the organisation and my own self-confidence. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **COMBINING WORK AND FAMILY COMMITMENTS**

We discussed the juggle between managing work and family commitments and sort of maintaining your professionalism and maintaining the reputation you built up while you are going through that changing period. **FEMALE, LAW**

It was good to talk to somebody about the logistics of childcare and all those things and to have someone who had been through it was good. **FEMALE, LAW**

Sometimes we would focus on the work life balance and my mentor was really good at helping me and coaching me. I guess they can't give you a solution, but it was helping me arrive at a place where I was happy about the decisions I made. It's very difficult to solve work/life balance but it's about reaching a place where you think this is a choice I have made in my career and there will be pros and cons but I am going to be okay with that. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

I WAS STILL YOUNG, DEVELOPING AND AT A FORK IN THE ROAD WITH MY CAREER AND TO BE QUITE HONEST I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WOULD BE WITHOUT IT TODAY.

# 6

## Timing

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We asked mentees about the timing of the mentoring relationship and whether it was a good time to have a mentor. There were two common responses; firstly, it is always a good time to have a mentor and access to that level of support. Secondly, the mentor offered support through a difficult period personally and professionally and it helped them make important decisions about their careers and lives as I was 'at a fork in the road' or 'at a crossroads'. All mentees were very positive about the timing of the program.

- The mentor supported me through a critical decision
- Anytime is a good time to have a mentor

Our experience and the research indicates that mentoring is particularly valuable for people in times of transition, such as starting a new role, moving into a leadership position, returning from maternity leave, working in a different culture, planning your exit from a company or the workforce.

This has implications for our clients and how they select people to participate in mentoring programs. Mentees need to be consulted and see the value in the program. Where there is an organisational goal for the program that also needs to be clearly communicated to potential participants.

## 6. Timing

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### **MENTOR SUPPORTED ME THROUGH A CRITICAL DECISION**

I don't think there is ever a bad time to have a mentor ...I was kind of at a crossroads with a couple of things so timing was perfect as it could have been because I had some topics which I wasn't sure in which way to go on at the time. **MALE, AVIATION**

I was still young, developing and at a fork in the road with my career. To be honest I don't know where I would be without it today. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

I was 51 and I think that the window was narrowing... making a move there will set you up for I think the next step...the timing was spot on. **MALE, ENERGY SECTOR**

I do not think I would have gotten through that period in my career if I hadn't had it. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **ANYTIME IS A GOOD TIME TO HAVE A MENTOR**

Anytime is a good time to have a mentor, I have been very fortunate throughout my life to have mentors but I believe it is never too early or too late to have a mentor. **FEMALE, FINANCE**

I think anytime is a good time to have a mentor really. I don't think there is any bad time to have it and I was certainly going to take it when it was offered.

**FEMALE, LAW**



OH PERFECT MATCH. THAT'S THE MOST IMPRESSIVE THING...THAT IS WHAT MAKES MCCARTHY MENTORING VERY SPECIAL AND I FIND THAT MATCHING IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL.

# 7

## Matching

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Getting the match right has always been critical to our mentoring programs and research on best practice supports this. At its simplest, partners in mentoring relationships need to respect and like each other to want to work together. The research suggests that interpersonal compatibility, mutual engagement, respect, authenticity and empowerment are essential elements for all mentoring relationships (Atterton, Thompson & Carroll, 2009; Dawson & Watson, 2007; McDowall-Long, 2004).

Our approach to matching is guided by chemistry, personality, relevant experience, the mentee's request and the organisation's brief and objective for the program. All parts need to be addressed for it to be successful.

Mentees were asked 'Was the mentor a good match?' The responses are very positive and demonstrate how important this aspect is for a successful relationship. Comments like 'she got me', 'we clicked', 'good chemistry' and 'it was an ideal match' indicate that people felt a strong rapport, easy communication and a high level of trust with their mentor.

Mentees also made reference to how smart their mentors were and how they had great respect for them. Selecting mentors who have a wide range of skills and experience and have achieved a high level of success is an important consideration for this program.

Others felt they benefited from being challenged by someone who provided a different perspective, as many mentees work in professions where their colleagues have similar skills and experience. Difference can offer a new kind of learning.

In contrast, one mentee claimed that his mentor's 'currency' with his experience could have been better, so the match only rated a 7/10. This highlights the very personal nature of what constitutes success in mentoring and the importance of listening carefully at the initial interview as to what the real brief entails.

- Ideal match
- Challenged me
- Common interests, experiences and personalities

## 7. Matching

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### IDEAL MATCH

She got me I suppose, I really felt that she was someone I could learn from and I don't think she taught me how to do my job better or what I would call business coaching explicitly but what she did teach me is to how to identify what I wanted as a person and how to get that for myself. **FEMALE, RETAIL**

Yes (mentor) is a smart lady, she had worked in the same area and had children and married a successful man, she had dealt with the same issues, her personality and chemistry was spot on. It felt really comfortable. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Yes a really good match. I think she is really smart and she was a very reflective and intuitive person so she thought deeply about things and that was a good match for me. I probably realised that later more than I did at the time. **FEMALE, LAW**

Yes I do I think she was a very good match, she was very good at giving me perspective and enabling me to look at how I operate in a strategic way. Yes definitely a good match in terms of personality and chemistry. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Ideal match. It was a very sort of gentle relationship if I can put it that way. The ideas were put on the table certainly in ways I would have considered. It was a really supportive relationship. **MALE, ENERGY**

Oh perfect match. That's the most impressive thing... that is what makes McCarthy Mentoring very special and I find that matching is absolutely critical. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### CHALLENGED ME

There were a lot of similarities, but in many ways we were quite different and that really challenged me. I think that was really important because the last thing you want in a mentor is someone who is going to think like you and agree with you. You want someone who is going to challenge you and...challenge you to think about things from another perspective. **MALE, FINANCE**

Yes, the mentor's experience was a great match and I really appreciated that experience. She had done tough jobs, therefore had great insights and she was very different to me which was also good as she provided me with a different perspective. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### COMMON EXPERIENCES, INTERESTS AND PERSONALITIES

I hope he doesn't mind me saying so but he was a middle aged man with a wealth of experience both professionally and personally. He had been an MD of a company and he had been on boards and he had managed to have a successful personal life in terms of wife and children and so I was able to access his experiences. I think yes we were well suited I think there was also common interests like sports so yeah I think it was good chemistry, he was easy to talk to, I felt an easy ability to be quite honest and open. **MALE, AVIATION**

Yeah excellent. Quite similar personality types and it was very friendly, open, it was like having a friendship but it had that formal element to it and I looked forward to catching up. We had a strong bond I think. **FEMALE, LAW**

AN ABILITY TO LISTEN AND TO LEAD PEOPLE  
DOWN A PATH WITHOUT DIRECTING THEM, SO HIGH  
INFLUENCING SKILLS AND ABILITY TO REFLECT  
WITH HUMILITY FROM THEIR OWN CAREER AND THEIR  
OWN LESSONS IN LIFE.

# 8

## Important attributes of a mentor

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A best practice model of mentoring defines valuable mentors as people who are good listeners and teachers who can support, advise and challenge their mentees. To ensure that we are meeting the needs of mentees in our selection of mentors we asked them if they could identify the most important attributes of a mentor with respect to their mentoring relationship.

‘Be a good listener, honest, challenging and be trustworthy’.

This quote from a female mentee working in the law encapsulates the responses of all mentees. Other attributes identified by mentees included the ability to guide not instruct, hold confidence, offer a different perspective, encourage reflection and to be non-judgmental.

This showed a clear understanding of a mentor’s role and the definitions that underpin our approach to mentoring programs.

One important finding in this survey was the value attributed to the mentor’s relevant professional experience not necessarily in their industry but ‘someone who had walked some decent miles themselves’.

This could include managing teams, working with a board, agonising over challenging situations and ethical dilemmas, moving to another country, failing to get that promotion. Broad life experience, high self-awareness and empathy are all important qualities for a mentor.

- Listening
- Someone to guide not instruct
- Confidentiality
- Wealth of experience
- Someone to challenge you
- Offer support
- Encourage reflection
- Be non-judgmental

## 8. Important attributes of a mentor

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### **LISTENING**

Genuinely listening to you and what your issues are. (Mentor) did more listening than speaking and he was very specific about wanting to do that. He was very good at not trying to be prescriptive but instead tried to work out what I needed and how I might adapt my own skill set to the sorts of things that I needed to be doing and I think really that is vital. **FEMALE, ARTS**

### **SOMEONE TO GUIDE NOT INSTRUCT**

An ability to listen and to lead people down a path without directing them, so high influencing skills and ability to reflect with humility from their own career and their own lessons in life **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

He never told me what to do but when I actually went to deliver my strategy I was more clear and more open minded and I was listening more. **FEMALE, FINANCE**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

I had absolute confidence in the confidentiality of it so I didn't worry that what was being said was being reported back to somebody else. **FEMALE, LAW**

### **WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE**

I think that one of the most important ones is that they have walked some sort of decent miles themselves. I worry about all those people who advertise themselves as life coaches and these are 30 somethings who haven't been around that long. If you are after a mentor you are after someone who is a seasoned performer. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

### **SOMEONE TO CHALLENGE YOU**

You need to be prepared to have challenging conversations with them. I think you have to be reasonably self-confident yourself to have those conversations with someone. **FEMALE, LAW**

### **OFFER SUPPORT**

I guess I needed a bit of an empathetic ear and someone to feel like they were on my side but she wasn't like that all the time and sometimes I have to say that I found her a little confronting but she did it in the nicest way. **FEMALE, EDUCATION & TRAINING**

### **ENCOURAGE REFLECTION**

Having the discipline to work to set goals and then to encourage reflection and review and having some wisdom and some content and contribution to make to the topic. **MALE, RURAL SERVICES**

### **BE NON-JUDGMENTAL**

Approachability, to listen and not to be judgmental. So I think for somebody to be open to accept that you are coming from different places and not to judge but to listen. Also, they need to be inspiring. **FEMALE, RETAIL**



SHE HELPED ME MORE THAN MANAGE THE ISSUES EFFECTIVELY. SHE HELPED ME DEVELOP MY OWN APPROACH TO MANAGING THE ISSUES.

# 9

## The impact of mentoring on your work, career and life

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The Australian executives surveyed for this project identified a number of benefits from mentoring. These include growing confidence and self-esteem, greater self-awareness, improved career-planning and greater capacity to manage workplace situations.

In addition, mentees have identified the mentors' valuable professional advice ranging from high level strategy to wardrobe tips for a board meeting. Mentees nominated how the mentoring assisted them to be better at their roles, position themselves as strategic thinkers and leaders in an organisation, achieve a promotion, make a career move, and manage change and difficult situations.

Again, mentees referred to the value of mentoring as giving them time to reflect, discuss the juggle of work and family and the support of 'having someone on their side'.

- Greater self-awareness
- Career-planning
- Managing workplace issues
- Growth in self-esteem and confidence
- Better understanding of the external environment
- How to position myself as a strategic thinker
- Provided strategic business advice
- Having someone on your side
- Somebody to discuss family, kids, time
- Tips on presentation
- Gave me the opportunity for reflection
- Letting off steam

## 9. The impact of mentoring on your work, career and life

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Given that 32% of mentees interviewed were CEOs or members of an executive team, these findings indicate that mentoring can be particularly valuable for senior executives.

These findings support the annual evaluations we do for each client. The organisations clearly benefit from having a more confident, focused employee who assumes responsibility for his or her own career.

To measure the organisational impact of mentoring, many organisations we work with monitor developments in mentees' career paths, performance, retention rates, salary levels and responsibility. Often these changes impact in the years following mentoring.



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### **GREATER SELF-AWARENESS**

I think I am very self-aware, but it definitely helped me grow in terms of how people perceive me and the areas I have to focus on and a big part of that was how you interact with other people—you know, talking the talk and really focusing and spending time on that.

**MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Greater self-awareness definitely and being able to look at myself and how I operated so helping me be able to take a step back rather than being stuck in the moment. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **CAREER-PLANNING**

I believe the relationship was a very positive contribution to my next career move. In terms of my career development it has lifted me from a narrow specialist role into a broader corporate role.

**MALE, ENERGY SECTOR**

I always thought I was going in a certain direction but because of the mentoring I was able to think a lot bigger and took the opportunity to go to an organisation that I normally would not have gone to. I learnt that you have got to take those big steps. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **MANAGING WORKPLACE ISSUES**

I think it was how I dealt with issues of disagreement and I think I was definitely able to deal with it in a less confrontational way and more proactive way.

**MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

My mentor has a great moral compass and I think when you work in a commercial organisation and it is all about the bottom line it is good to have somebody who has a commercial business themselves who has that moral compass to be able to discuss what is right and wrong because some decisions are not always the easy ones. **FEMALE, RETAIL**

### **GROWTH IN SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE**

I look at myself now and look at myself five years ago and it's almost like I am a different person in understanding and respecting my gut feel and the confidence that I run the business but you know I have a new level of courage in the way I run the company and don't listen to my own bullshit you know before I did what most girls do and think "no no this can't be right" and now I just don't listen to that and go with the instinct. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

Certainly confidence and the biggest thing for me was having a sounding board, having someone to bounce your ideas so even now I could ring him up and say what do you reckon and he would say maybe not. It's a safe environment to test ideas. **FEMALE, ARTS**

### **BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

One thing that I got out of the mentoring relationship is that it gave me a wider perspective in that it opened me up to the whole wide world not just my firm.

**FEMALE, LAW**

Some unexpected benefits I got from it was exposure to some of the community based and sort of industry association areas that (mentor) was involved in—Australia China Business Council and East Timor Council, broadening my horizons in terms of perspective of Australia in the Asia Pacific area. So less specific to my role and more specific to my general education. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

## 9. The impact of mentoring on your work, career and life

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### POSITIONING MYSELF AS A STRATEGIC THINKER

That was the key development need—making sure I was positioning myself as a strategic thinker and learning how to operate in a boardroom environment and that sort of thing and really growing that leadership disposition. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### PROVIDED STRATEGIC BUSINESS ADVICE

Because the nitty gritty stuff I could do myself it was more the higher level thinking and thinking about the future that it was really helpful with. **FEMALE, LAW**

### HAVING SOMEONE ON YOUR SIDE

It sort of felt like you have someone on your side, so if something went wrong you had someone who was non-judgmental that you could talk to and I found that like a backstop. Quite often I found myself in a situation where I would think ‘well I wonder what my mentor would say’, so it felt like you had another arrow in your armoury, and that psychological backing almost helps you stay true. I think it’s a really fantastic program and it all comes down to chemistry and the objectives set. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Just hearing how somebody has done things before. And more than anything else hearing you know someone who has been incredibly successful tell you about the difficulties they had faced and a lot of the time it is about being given permission to feel a little bit lost every now and then. **FEMALE, ARTS**

### SOMEBODY TO DISCUSS FAMILY, KIDS, TIME

Yes definitely it was good to talk to somebody about the logistics of childcare and all those things and to have someone who had been through it was good. **MALE, AVIATION**

### TIPS ON PRESENTATION

Most of the time we would talk about the strategy behind the business, how to strategically place the business in the market, or what would happen if someone was to buy us out, and then we end up talking about how I need to change my clothing style when I am in a board meeting and this is the thing about successful women, unless you have got corporate parents, you don’t necessarily get feedback like that when you need it. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

### GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION

It gave me the opportunity for reflection. It is a discipline to know that your mentor is going to see what happened since last time. So it puts some rigour in things. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### LETTING OFF STEAM

It’s an opportunity to vent in a safe environment, sometimes you need to let off steam and you know there are times and places to do that. **MALE, FINANCE**

It gave me somewhere to vent particularly when you are higher up and you don’t have colleagues on your level and it would be wrong to talk to anyone below you. Debating issues with someone else was extremely useful. It’s just the confidence in knowing that you can have a conversation with somebody and it doesn’t go anywhere. It’s particularly important in a small country where industries overlap and when home life and work life also overlap. **FEMALE, RETAIL**

I HAVE CONTINUED THAT GROWTH MOMENTUM AND I THINK THAT MENTORING WAS REALLY PART OF SETTING UP THAT FOUNDATION SO IT'S BEEN AN ONGOING PROCESS AND THAT [MENTORING] WAS REALLY THE START OF ALL OF THAT.

# 10

## Ongoing benefits

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To explore whether mentees felt there were any ongoing benefits from mentoring we asked: Have you seen other changes years later that you would attribute to the mentoring relationship?

Their comments were extremely positive and point to the lasting nature of effective mentoring.

- Mentoring was the first step in managing my career
- Look at things from others people's perspective
- Increased confidence and performance
- Extended networks and opportunities
- Broader focus
- A voice in my head
- Ongoing friendship

Another measure of the impact of mentoring is to look at the roles the mentees now occupy, 2–12 years after their mentoring experience.

All senior associates in law firms (except one who left the firm to be a full-time parent) had been promoted to partnership, special counsel or senior counsel in a public company.

54% percent of mentees have been promoted, and a third of those promotions were into senior executive teams or CEO roles.

14% stayed at the same level or in the same role following their mentoring, half of those were already CEOs.

21% are now working as company directors or have started their own businesses.

11% moved into a new sector entirely, for example, education to healthcare, finance to disability services.

## 10. Ongoing benefits

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### **MENTORING WAS THE FIRST STEP IN MANAGING MY CAREER**

I would say it would have still happened (moving jobs) but probably would not have happened as thoughtfully and strategically, without the discipline of the mentoring relationship. **MALE, RURAL SERVICES**

I have continued that growth momentum and I think that mentoring was really part of setting up that foundation so it's been an ongoing process and that (mentoring) was really the start of all of that. **MALE, FINANCE**

### **LOOK AT THINGS FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE**

I moved into a CEO role after I left (bank) and I certainly looked at things from other people's perspective. Ultimately I introduced mentoring into (company) as a result of the experience I had at my previous company because I found it so useful. I was very much a positive advocate of mentoring. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND PERFORMANCE**

The change in confidence and the difference in how I behave when information is presented and my engagement at board level is so different and in quite profound ways. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

### **EXTENDED NETWORKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Really lovely to have someone at the other end of the phone—that has continued. The other thing that was quite unexpected was that (mentors)'s next mentee is also a mate now. He said to this person look go have a chat to (mentee) it has sort of broadened my networks in a way I was not expecting. **FEMALE, ARTS**

One thing that came up from the mentoring relationship and this is from the promotion front is that as a result of a suggestion from my mentor I joined an external board which I am still on and that has been a good learning experience and a good opportunity to meet some new people so that is external but still a very good experience. **FEMALE, RECRUITMENT**

Yes I went onto a not for profit board and my mentor was instrumental in that, I will not be pursuing a career as a non-executive director just yet but being on a board has been extremely valuable and my mentor was absolutely instrumental in my appointment. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **BROADER FOCUS**

I am better at stepping back and looking at the wider picture, rather than getting caught in the moment. I think it has been more general in how I view things. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **A VOICE IN MY HEAD**

Certainly I think I became a lot more comfortable and confident throughout the period of the mentorship and to a certain extent I would have done that anyway. But I certainly think it helped and there are some things that (mentor) said to me that I still think about on a regular basis now and it is wonderful to have those prompts and pieces of advice. **FEMALE, ARTS**

She is like a voice in my head now so it's like I think a bit differently. I would think the old me would approach this one way and now I would approach things very differently so it's like having a challenging voice in my head so even when she is not available to talk to I know what actions I should take. **FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **ONGOING FRIENDSHIP**

Well because that relationship is still a relationship that I have, it hasn't really stopped, so now it is a friendship rather than a mentoring relationship. I definitely think I look at some things differently as a result of that relationship, so I have to attribute it to that person being in my life and I think they would say the same thing about me. In some ways we both give something to one another. **FEMALE, LAW.**

I THINK IT'S BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE OF ANY PROGRAMS I HAVE EVER DONE. CERTAINLY THE ONE THAT SEEMS TO HAVE THE GREATEST LASTING MEMORY AND IMPACT, BECAUSE IT WAS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND IT WAS VERY TARGETED.

# 11

## Comparisons

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In many organisations there is a suite of professional development programs offered to employees. The participants in our program are commonly emerging leaders or members of the executive team.

When asked how mentoring compared to other professional development programs or courses, the overall consensus was that mentoring is very different, unique and can be complementary to other more formal leadership courses. Mentoring is valued due to its highly personal nature, tailored to the individual, one on one, not theoretical, offers practical guidance, less structured and focused on self-improvement.

These insights can provide human resources executives who recommend a range of development programs with a better understanding of the benefits of mentoring and for whom it would be useful.

- Unique and personalised program
- Practical guidance
- Mentoring is about self-improvement
- Self-directed and reflective

## 11. Comparisons

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### **UNIQUE AND PERSONALISED PROGRAM**

In my experience it's one of the best things that I did, it was a good use of my time. It was personalised, it was relevant and a really very useful program. It was having the full attention of another person who is interested in your career and they are there for you.

**FEMALE, LAW**

The mentoring program was a far more personal program I would raise much more personal issues than I would in any other professional development course. The mentoring is complimentary to formal training, much more one on one and less structured.

**FEMALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Mentoring is so unique, it's very focused on you as an individual. The leadership programs...are going to be more at a generic level whereas mentoring is a very dynamic...where you can start off in a mentoring relationship on one path and six months later you can have completely altered that based on how things have transpired. It is an individual thing, what are my needs and you can't get that in a leadership course forum. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE**

Look it's the difference between reading a book and having someone give you the real facts. It's personalised, its honest. I guess it's inside tips.

**FEMALE, FINANCE**

I think it's been the most effective of any programs I have ever done. Certainly the one that seems to have the greatest lasting memory and impact, because it was over a period of time and it was very targeted I found it the most valuable executive development I have done. **MALE, FINANCIAL SERVICES**

### **MENTORING IS ABOUT SELF-IMPROVEMENT – HOW TO MANAGE YOURSELF**

I saw it as more of a soft learning process that was not based on hard facts and figures, more about personal growth that can help you in a professional way. **MALE, AVIATION**

### **SELF-DIRECTED AND REFLECTIVE**

Completely different because mentoring really is self-directed and reflective whereas nearly all those other things are externally directed, for example, executive development programs. **MALE, RURAL SERVICES**



IN MY EXPERIENCE IT'S ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THAT I DID, IT WAS A GOOD USE OF MY TIME. IT WAS PERSONALISED, IT WAS RELEVANT AND A REALLY VERY USEFUL PROGRAM.

# 12

## Have you become a mentor?

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People who have been well mentored are often effective mentors themselves.

46% of mentees surveyed have become mentors themselves in an informal capacity within their organisation and 43% have formally become mentors in their workplace or in other industry programs. The remaining 11% expressed interest in becoming a mentor but have not had the opportunity.

This is an important and positive outcome for companies and a wide range of industry groups that establish mentoring programs.



**E**

CONCLUSION

The Australian executives interviewed for this project reported that the key impacts of mentoring were gaining the confidence, courage, skills, strategies and advice to manage personal and professional challenges and find the life and career they want. They value having time to reflect, discuss, gain other insights and to be challenged in a safe and confidential environment.

Participants' expectations of the mentoring relationships were met and often exceeded. They anticipated a confidential sounding-board, someone who was more experienced than them in business and life and a person who was prepared to challenge them and share their experiences of success and failure.

The broad range of objectives that mentees identified for their mentoring relationships indicates the range of situations in which people can benefit from having this form of support. Some felt it would help them reach a leadership position, others wanted advice on how to be a working mother, others looked for cultural insights to help them manage moving to Australia and becoming part of a professional team, some were assigned a mentor to support them to establish a philanthropy program in an arts organisation. A few, however, stated that there was no specific objective, just a monthly meeting to discuss issues that were important to them.

The focus of mentees' discussions with their mentors included career paths, definitions of success, managing the transition to leadership, how to combine work and family commitments and strategies to deal with a range of workplace problems and issues. Common work concerns were: How do I negotiate for a pay review? How can I handle situations better? How do I position myself as a leader? How do I interact better with my peers, my boss and my board?

In line with the best practice model of mentoring, getting the match right is critical. A highlight of this survey is the positive feedback about this aspect of our practice. The mentees were very positive about the rapport with their mentors, their skill, discretion and the relevance of their personal and professional experiences.

Mentees spoke of the enduring impact of mentoring or 'the voice in my head' that continued to guide them on significant decisions years after the formal relationship had concluded. Networks have continued to grow and many have initiated mentoring programs in new workplaces.

Almost 90% of mentees have become mentors themselves within their organisation or for an industry group. This demonstrates the long term impact of a small investment.

Compared to other professional development programs mentees felt that mentoring was unique and possibly complementary to other more formal structured programs in that it was highly personal, practical and self-directed and for people in leadership roles this is often preferable.

Finally, there are some insights for our clients and others who are involved in establishing external mentoring programs.

## **INSIGHTS FOR BEST PRACTICE:**

### **1 DEVELOP A MENTORING CULTURE**

Ensure mentoring is supported by the leadership team and programs are promoted. Provide opportunities for mentees to become mentors if they meet the criteria for your program.

### **2 MEETING THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE MENTEE**

Our model using external mentors is particularly valuable for mentees who seek one2one support from an experienced professional around a range of personal and professional issues. It offers a confidential and self directed program, which offers new networks and a broader perspective. For people navigating the transition to leadership roles—senior executives and emerging leaders—mentoring provides a unique development opportunity.

### **3 MATCHING**

This is critical for a successful mentoring program. Our approach has been successful and is guided by people's personality, interests, experience, goals and the organisation's brief. The distinct advantage with our model is that we have access to a wide range of experienced professionals who choose to be mentors. This is not always the case within an organisation and explains the demand for external mentors.

### **4 PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS**

Develop an organisational goal for the program. This can include a broad range of factors such as retention of talent, developing emerging leaders, promoting female leaders and succession planning. Provide guidelines for behaviour and one2one resources to assist the mentoring relationship.

### **5 EVALUATE**

An annual review is important to monitor change and progress. The measures may include mentee feedback, focus groups, or harder metrics such as monitoring changes in salaries, rates of promotion and retention.

## **INSIGHTS FOR MENTORS**

Listen.

Our findings support all the research on what makes a good mentor. The most important attribute is the capacity to listen. People want to be heard and to find their own voices, and this is the promise of mentoring.

Mentees reported that the most valuable mentors were good listeners, had a wealth of experience to share, were supportive, non-judgmental, trustworthy, challenged their opinions, offered another perspective, and perhaps most importantly allowed space for them to reflect and come to their own conclusions about issues and problems.



**MENTEES SPOKE OF THE ENDURING IMPACT OF MENTORING OR 'THE VOICE IN MY HEAD' THAT CONTINUED TO GUIDE THEM ON SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS YEARS AFTER THE FORMAL RELATIONSHIP HAD CONCLUDED.**

# APPENDIX 1

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Please identify your age bracket: 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60+
- What position were you in when the mentoring began?
- What is your current position?
- What was the year in which you had a mentor?
- How long did the mentoring relationship last?
- Were you selected for the program or did you actively seek to obtain a mentor?
- Why do you think you were selected for the mentoring program?
- What were your expectations?
- Did your mentoring relationship have an objective?
- What issues did you most commonly discuss?
- Was the mentor a good match?
- Did the mentoring help you manage workplace issues and people more effectively?
- Did the mentoring help you manage personal issues?
- Did the mentoring help you to plan your career more strategically?
- What other impacts can you identify?
- In hindsight was it a good time for you to have a mentor?
- Could anything have been done differently to improve the experience of mentoring for you?
- Have you seen other changes years later that you would attribute to the mentoring relationship?
- What other professional development have you done?
- How did mentoring compare to other professional development programs or courses you have participated in?
- Have you maintained a relationship with your mentor?
- Have you become a mentor?
- What do you think are the most important attributes for a mentor?
- Were there any other aspects of the mentoring relationship that you found valuable that we haven't discussed?

# APPENDIX 2



## CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTEES INTERVIEWED

GENDER	MALE	FEMALE
MENTEES (%)	29	71

AGE	50–60	40–50	30–40
MENTEES (%)	7	18	75

MENTORING COMMENCED	2008–2010	2005–2007	BEFORE 2005
MENTEES (%)	29	32	39

DURATION OF MENTORING	LESS THAN 12 MONTHS	3+ YEARS	1 – LESS THAN 2 YEARS	2 – LESS THAN 3 YEARS
MENTEES (%)	11	25	29	35

STATE	WA	ACT	VIC	NSW
MENTEES (%)	7	11	25	57

INDUSTRY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
MENTEES (%)	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	7	21.4	39

- |                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| A – AVIATION                   | G – HUMAN RESOURCES |
| B – EDUCATION & TRAINING       | H – RETAIL          |
| C – ENERGY                     | I – RURAL SERVICES  |
| D – FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS | J – ARTS            |
| E – GOVERNMENT                 | K – LAW             |
| F – HEALTH                     | L – FINANCE         |

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