

6.0 BEST PRACTICES APPROACHES TO MENTORING

This chapter draws upon international literature to inform best practice on mentoring on a number of different levels; guidelines for mentoring relationships, requirements of the mentor, the terms of engagement between the mentor and mentee, the success criteria for a mentoring programme, and existing quality standards. This has been combined with elements of best practice identified in individual programmes in the previous chapter.

6.1 Guidelines for mentoring relationships

Before undertaking any mentoring, whether it is part of a programme or conducted on an individual basis, it is vital to establish some ground rules to ensure that both parties are clear in terms of what is expected of them before entering into a relationship. We believe that by establishing these ground rules, it minimizes the mismatch of expectations, particularly by the mentee, and allows the greatest opportunity for learning and development.

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council³⁰ (EMCC) has developed an ethical code which sets out what the clients and sponsors can expect from the coach/mentor, and that should form the starting point for any contract. The code of ethics can be found in Appendix 4.

Drawing on the work of EMCC and others a summary of the key guidelines is presented below:

- At the outset, the roles of mentor and mentee should be agreed.
- The mentor's role is to respond to the mentee's developmental needs. The mentor must not impose his/her own agenda.
- Both parties should take equal responsibility for progression of the mentoring partnership.
- Where possible (depending on both parties' geographical location) the frequency and length of meetings should be mutually agreed, along with the means of contact between meetings for minor issues.
- Any matters discussed between the mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential.
- The mentor should not act on behalf of the mentee. The mentor and mentee should be open and truthful with each other and in connection with the relationship itself at all times.
- The mentor and mentee should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
- The mentor should provide constructive feedback to the mentee, while the mentee should attempt to tackle any areas for development.
- Both mentor and mentee must be happy with the location of meetings giving due regard to safety, security, mutual well being and travel arrangements.
- The relationship should last for a mutually agreeable time period, whereupon it can be continued or terminated.

- Both mentor and mentee should share responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship once it has achieved its purpose and agreed timeframe
- Either party may terminate the relationship after first discussing the matter, ensuring mutual respect and a clear understanding of the conclusion.

6.2 What makes a good mentor?

What's the difference between a good and a not-so-good mentor? There is great deal of literature surrounding mentoring and the competencies required to be an effective mentor.

"Mentoring, like management, is a function, not a title – one earns the label by our deeds, and not just what we call ourselves"²¹.

We believe that one of the key problems both in selecting mentors for a programme and in matching individual mentors with mentees is that the answer varies according to the context and the specific needs of the mentee. We would argue that it is possible to develop mentor competence, but only with those who possess a platform of existing or potential interpersonal skills that provides the basis for further development.

Figure 3 provides a list of best practice on what mentors 'do' and 'do not do' drawn from a mentoring manual produced by Business Link Somerset.

Figure 3: Mentoring dos and don'ts

A mentor does:	A mentor does not:
Listens, listens, listens!	Prejudge the business viability of the clients ideas - remember the "dot.com" companies?
Guides	Counsel. The mentor is not there to deal with deep-seated emotional problems
Explore, suggest options	Tell someone what to do
Empower, shows client how to do things for themselves	Do things for the client
Offer expertise, information, suggest ways of finding out	Have to be expert in everything
Support and encourage	Get too emotionally involved with their client
Give realistic advice	Create false expectations
Listen to, explore client's issues	Make assumptions
Present an open and accepting attitude	Adopt a judgmental attitude
Use their own experience in a positive way	Involve client in their own problems

Source: Business Link Somerset: Handbook for Business Volunteer Mentors and Mentored Clients

The WMC report³² states that you should look for the following attributes in a mentor: the ability to establish and build a rapport, listen actively, have a positive mental attitude, ask insightful questions, provide feedback, signpost to other sources of help, and promote commitment to action to achieve agreed goals.

Mentor Requirements from the SME focus group

There was a lively discussion on the attributes participants would expect from a mentor. The most prominent attribute was having experience of working successfully in the same sector as the mentee. One participant commented:

"I don't know if anyone who's unrelated to my business would be of any help to me"

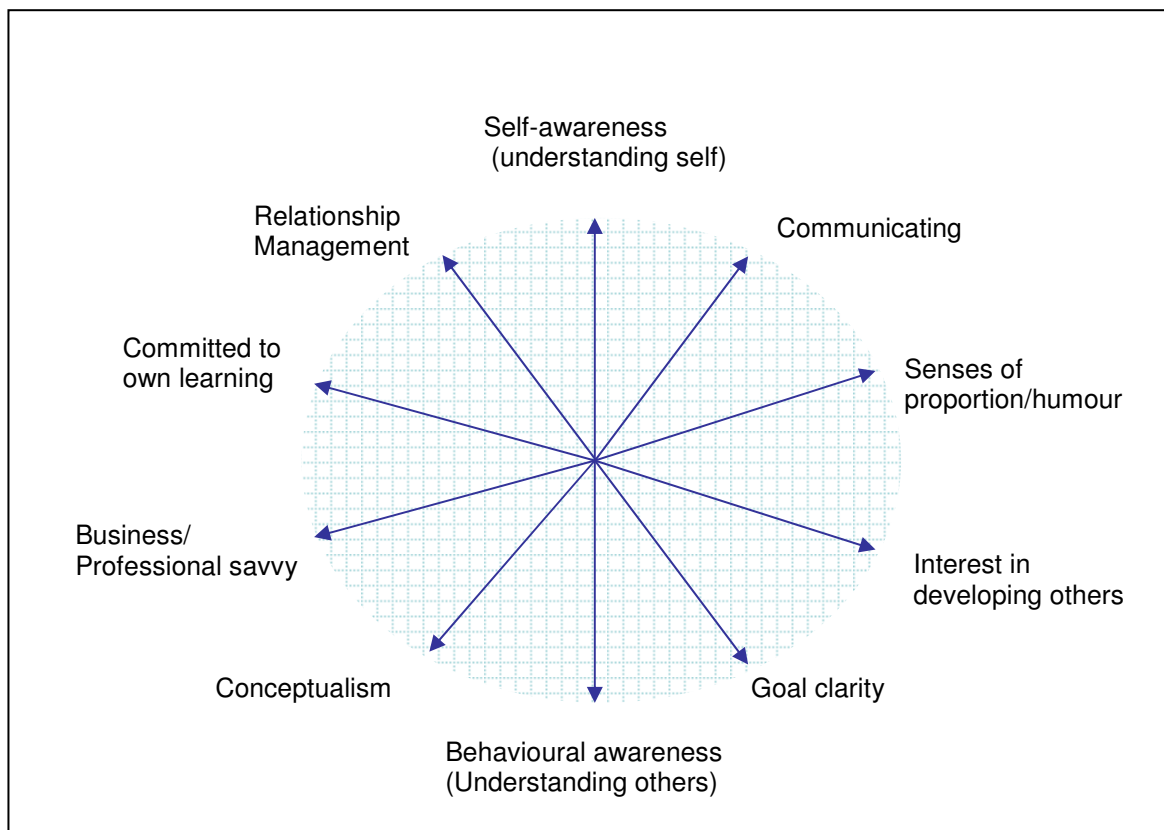
Other attributes that participants suggested a mentor should have included:

- Breadth of expertise i.e. finance, personnel, the law etc
- Demonstrate how to delegate effectively.
- Provide help and advice
- Challenge ideas
- Open doors/ provide networking opportunities
- Chemistry and rapport

These comments reflect the differing views on what mentoring is.

Specific mentor competencies have been defined by Clutterbuck³³ and are illustrated in Figure 4. However, it is to be noted that mentoring is not a prescriptive process, and therefore the skills required will vary by situation and context.

Figure 4: Mentor Competencies



Source: Clutterbuck³⁴

Mentee expectations and credentials

As one would expect, individuals entering into a mentoring relationship will have different expectations of what their mentor can do for them. A survey of mentees from the coaching and mentoring network³⁵ cited the following attributes in a mentor:

- Organised, patient and understanding
- Enthusiastically persuasive
- Down to earth and realistic
- Able to make you feel relaxed, by showing they understand your perspective

It is interesting to note that the majority of these attributes reflect 'people-centred' skills rather than specific experience.

To help maximise the success of a mentoring relationship it is important to give consideration to the desirable attributes of a mentee. Research from Cranwell Ward et al³⁶ cite the following suggested mentee qualities:

- Motivated
- Articulates expectations and own objectives
- Meets commitment
- Accepts feedback and acts on it
- Listens
- Self-aware
- Open
- Trustworthy
- Understands programme objectives/processes

6.3 What makes a successful mentoring programme?

According to Clutterbuck³⁷, research into successful mentoring programmes indicates that they are normally:

- Relatively formal in overall organisation, but with a great deal of flexibility and informality in the relationship
- Focused on clear learning objectives
- Supported by initial training of mentor and mentee
- Seen to benefit the mentee, the mentor and the organisation

The focus group conducted with Welsh SME managers supported the desk research in that there was no consensus on what individuals would require from a mentoring service as to a certain extent some of this would be unknown and would vary according to circumstances. However, the majority felt that they would expect a mentor to have experience of working in their sector. For example, one SME manager commented:

"Because we all want different things out of a mentor because we're all in different phases of our business life and therefore we need different requirements. This scheme is going to have to meet those different requirements...if you just come along and say here's your package, take it or leave it; it's not going to work. It's going to have to be tailored".

Another key finding was that the majority of participants would be prepared to pay for a mentoring service. However, it is unlikely that this group is representative of all SMEs, given that this group of people have all recently invested in the LEED Unit's strategic leadership development programme 'Sustaining Profitable Growth'. Some participants suggested a tiered approach and that costs should vary according to:

- Turnover
- Level of person to be mentored
- Stage of growth of business

Others suggestions included:

- A 'broadband' approach with different pricing according to the level of service required.
- Free taster sessions
- First sessions free
- Graduated payments
- Flexibility to get out if it's not delivering results
- "It's a market issue isn't it in the end. If you want people who are going to do this well....you're not going to get that for £10 an hour"

The focus group generally concurred with the desk research in that everybody has a different viewpoint on mentoring and their expectations of a mentor. However, some common factors emerged as being regarded as important in a potential mentoring scheme:

- Affordability
- Availability of information
- Flexibility, ability to be tailored in accordance with the mentee's particular needs

The International Standards for Mentoring Schemes in Employment developed by Clutterbuck³⁸ have identified six key elements of successful and well-managed schemes. These are:

- Clarity of purpose - for both the scheme and each mentoring relationship
- Stakeholder training and briefing
- Processes for selection and matching
- Processes for measurement and review
- Ethics and pastoral care
- Programme administration and participant support

6.4 Designing a mentoring programme

From a review of existing literature, designing a mentoring programme requires an investment of resources upfront for programme planning and development. As a minimum this should provide clarity on; how the programme should be launched, who it is aimed at, the methods for evaluating success, and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee.

There are number of stages involved in the design of a mentoring programme. The critical stages are set out below:

- Marketing the scheme
- Defining the mentoring process and planning
- The matching process
- Training the mentees and mentors
- Maintaining and developing a scheme
- Evaluation and review of the scheme

The information presented below has largely been drawn from Mentoring: A Henley Review of Best Practice. It has also been informed through our own discussions with programme managers and stakeholders as well as the desk research.

Marketing the scheme

Considering who and how to market mentoring is an important first step in generating interest in a programme. The culture of the potential participant organisations plays a vital role in determining how to market a programme.

In an ideal world a 'learning culture' would already exist in the organisation and mentoring would be a natural fit. Research³⁹ suggests that, for various reasons, a learning culture does not exist in the majority of SMEs.

There are a number of tools that have been used effectively to market mentoring programmes (to mentors and mentees). This includes the production of booklets and flyers covering the objectives, benefits, the mentoring process, roles, and further support available. It is imperative that the language used is appropriate to the target market. For example, a small business employing five people with no real knowledge of mentoring would have different needs and require a different approach to that of an established business with its own functional departments including human resources.

Other marketing tools used include mentoring websites, which provide a useful information point including general information about the process, case studies, useful models, FAQs etc. It can also be used as a gateway to applying to become a mentor or mentee.

Information and taster workshops can be used as a recruitment tool, giving people the opportunity to find out more about the programme and meet the people involved. Where possible these workshops should include individuals

who have experienced mentoring and can act as champions for the programme.

In terms of recruiting mentors, research shows that a personal approach can be very effective. It is flattering and allows the targeting of people believed to be a good mentor⁴⁰. See recommendations on how to target mentors.

Defining the process and planning phase

Once the go-ahead has been given to run a mentoring scheme, there are a number of key operational processes and procedures that need to be put in place to enable the scheme to run smoothly. These include who the scheme is aimed at, who the mentors will be and where they will be drawn from, and more detailed guidance about how the programme will operate. This could be conducted 'in-house' or consultants with relevant expertise could be used to design and/or deliver the programme.

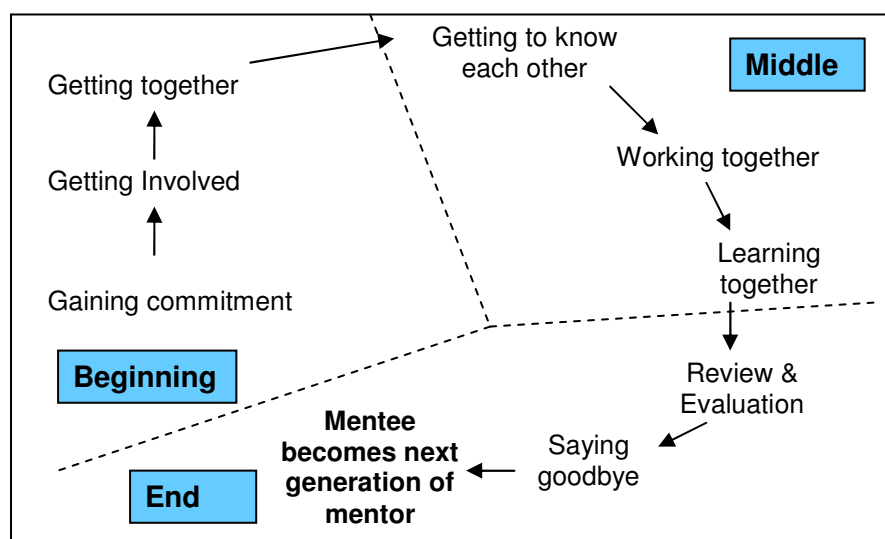
A key aspect of any mentoring relationship is confidentiality between mentor and mentee.

The key planning steps are set out below:

- Identification of mentors
- Recruitment of mentors
- Mentor training day(s)
- Recruitment of mentees
- Matching mentor with mentee
- Facilitating first mentoring session
- Progress review

Cranwell Ward et al⁴¹ argue that an effective mentoring relationship will follow a lifecycle, whereby the outcomes and objectives of the participants are achieved. The lifecycle model they have developed is presented below.

Figure 5: The mentoring lifecycle



Source: Adapted from Cranwell Ward et al⁴²

The desk research and consultations have identified a number of core documents which are produced by mentoring programmes at the planning stage. These documents help support the process and ensure quality assurance at all stages of a mentoring programme from recruitment of mentors and mentees, the pairing process and evaluating the impact of mentoring, both at an individual and programme level. Typically, a combination of these documents will be used by different mentoring schemes depending on the nature of the individual schemes and how they are funded. Some examples of these documents, drawn from existing mentoring programmes are provided in Appendix 5.

It is important to note that both the desk research discussions with mentees and programme managers stressed the ***importance of keeping the paperwork to a minimum***. They suggested that participants in many cases felt stifled by the bureaucracy that the documents represent and consequently do not always use them.

Key documents for a mentoring programme include:

- Mentor application form – required to assess mentor’s suitability for role and document relevant experience required for pairing process
- Mentoring/ Learning Agreement - drawn up by mentor/mentee
- Learner diagnosis - identification of needs of mentee and expected outcomes, where possible
- Learning log - useful as evidence of impact and provides useful reflection on progress for mentee
- Post-mentor review sheet - conducted at an agreed time after the mentoring relationship has ended
- Mentor review sheet – to be completed by mentor and mentee
- Code of ethics

Careful consideration needs to be given to the *purpose* of collecting data. The learner diagnosis and learning log are likely to be sensitive documents. Mentees and mentors may wish to keep these confidential.

Other general documents which have proved useful in the development and marketing of a mentoring programme include:

- Guidelines on meeting frequency, length and location
- Suggestions for first meeting, and ongoing discussion topics
- Qualities to look for in mentors and mentees
- How matching will be done, and what happens if relationships do not work out
- What training will be required (for mentor and mentee)

In addition to this, it is important to define the roles and responsibilities of the staff involved in managing the scheme, as well as the mentors, mentees and other key stakeholders.

The Matching Process

The matching of mentor to mentee is one of the most important parts of a mentoring programme but can also be one of the most problematic. There are a variety of approaches used including searchable databases and exploratory meetings. The criteria used will vary but may include a combination of the following; similar or different experience/backgrounds, knowledge wanted vs. knowledge offered, location, profiling of personalities, for example the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), learning styles, cross-functional, gender and tenure. Some mentees are assigned a mentor, whilst others are offered a choice. A programme manager may also use his/her judgement to determine appropriate pairings.

Various software packages are available to facilitate the matching process based on relevant criteria tailored to each individual scheme. Some packages claim to account for the complete mentor-mentee lifecycle from initial registration into the programme to matching mentor and mentee, as well as verifying and validating candidates and tracking and reporting of meetings. Examples of the software packages available are presented in Appendix 6.

Training of Mentors and Mentees

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that formal training of mentors and mentees has been an important component of a number of successful mentoring programmes.⁴³ Training helps manage expectations of both parties, thus maximising the chances of a successful mentoring relationship and programme.

Good practice suggests that training should not just be provided at the outset for mentors, but should be built into the programme as part of continuing professional development to ensure mentors are kept up to date with the latest developments in mentoring. According to Clutterbuck⁴⁴, programmes introduced without any training, rarely result in more than 33% of relationships delivering any significant benefits to the participants. Training the mentor can double the success rate to 66%; training the mentor and the mentee, plus ensuring that the line managers also understand the purpose of the programme and its benefits to them, pushes the success rate to over 90%.

A number of people who become mentors are 'successful' business people. However, these highly skilled and experienced individuals may not have acquired or be competent in the skills needed to mentor effectively, i.e. communication skills and interpersonal skills. These are skills which can largely be taught.

Due to the increasing popularity of mentoring and coaching, there has been a huge increase in the number of courses and accredited training available in mentoring. The training available varies from a one-day course in effective coaching and mentoring to a two year full-time Masters in Mentoring and Coaching Practice. Full details of the different types of courses can be found in Appendix 7.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the courses currently offered combine mentoring with coaching. There are very few courses just on mentoring, whereas there are a number of courses on coaching.

Some mentoring programmes have their own bespoke training course developed for their mentors. Training is a key factor in ensuring that mentors know how the programme works and what is expected of them. At a programme level, research shows us that training should include the following⁴⁵:

- Purpose of the programme
- What is mentoring/what makes a good mentor?
- Mentoring benefits
- Mentoring process – goal setting, action planning, reviewing/progressing action plans, difficult situations
- Mentoring in action
- How to get the most from each stage
- How mentors help others
- How do people learn
- Key mentor skills
- Ethics

Through the desk research and consultations supervision of mentors has emerged as an important part of the mentoring process. This may take the form of facilitated meetings or action-learning sets for mentors. The main benefit of providing supervision to the mentors is that it provides a learning environment where mentors can share their experiences in a supportive environment. Providing mentor supervision can also help the quality assurance process ensuring the standard of the mentors is consistent and remains at an appropriate level and it can provide networking opportunities for the mentors.

Maintaining and developing a scheme

Maintaining a mentoring programme requires the programme manager to support the mentees, mentors and line managers. It is important that effective lines of communication are established at the outset, including regular contact and feedback from mentors and mentees.

Evaluation and review of the scheme

It is important that an evaluation framework is established at the outset. This will allow the impact of the programme to be measured. Evaluation should be measurable and undertaken at different levels including; benefits gained from individual relationships, take-up levels for the service, attitudes and motivation of mentor and mentee, impact on the participant organisations and the wider economy. Any lessons learned should be documented to allow for continuous improvement. (See Appendix 5 for examples of outputs collected from a mentoring programme)

6.5 Standards

A well run mentoring programme can make a substantial impact on personal and organisational learning and development. Conversely, a poorly run programme can have a devastating impact on a business. A vital component of any mentoring programme is the quality assurance process. This will ensure objective, credible and reliable support is provided for the mentees.

A considerable variety of coaching and mentoring frameworks, codes of practice and standards currently exist within the industry, including:

- Academy of Executive Coaching - Academy Information Document
- Clutterbuck Associates - Mentoring Programme Standards
- European Mentoring Centre - Accredited Mentoring Certification Programme
- International Coach Federation
- Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring
- University of North London and others: Mentoring: Draft Occupational Standards
- National Occupational Standards (NOS) for mentoring
- International Standards for Mentoring Schemes in Employment (ISME)

These existing frameworks vary considerably in quality, scope and their level of adoption. Of those listed the NOS and ISME are of greatest interest and further information is provided below.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) for mentors

The Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI) has developed new NOS for mentors, in conjunction with the Business Volunteer Mentors scheme, Prince's Trust and Prime Cymru, which covers issues such as developing mentoring skills and building relationships with clients. A copy of these standards can be found in Appendix 8.

International Standards for Mentoring Schemes in employment (ISME)

The ISME developed by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and Professor David Clutterbuck in 2003 provide gold, silver and bronze awards for mentoring programmes. Programmes are assessed against the five areas set out below:

- Clarity of purpose - for both the scheme and each mentoring relationship
- Stakeholder training and briefing
- Processes for selection and matching
- Processes for measurement and review
- Ethics and pastoral care
- Programme administration and participant support

6.6 Case Studies

We have developed several case studies, looking at good practice and lessons learned. The case studies feature the broader benefits of mentoring to different types of organisations, as well as specifics regarding the financial impact of the programmes. There are also examples of how a programme should be structured, mentor credentials, and, importantly, examples of failed mentoring relationships.

Some of the case studies classify their programmes as 'coaching'. However, they have been included as they come under the definition of mentoring for the purposes of this report (outlined in Chapter 3).

The implications for adaptation by DELLS in Wales are discussed in the next chapter.

CASE STUDY 1: SME - Benefits of Mentoring: Public vs. Private sector providers

The Company

Company X was set up 2.5 years ago in Bridgend, South Wales by Karen and her business partner. They regard themselves as a small local company who are NICEIC approved, providing electrical services throughout South Wales. The company has continuously expanded over the past 2.5 years and currently has 20 employees. Company X prides itself on offering a first class service, with commitment to customer satisfaction.

With very little business experience, Karen and her business partner were keen to seek advice from someone who had a wealth of business experience, someone preferably with knowledge of their market and the knowledge of the difficulties they face. Initially they had no idea where to source such a service.

Mentoring Relationship

Approximately 2 years ago Company X approached a local Enterprise Agency and was allocated an advisor/mentor. They were very disappointed with the quality of the advice received. The advisor/mentor did not meet their expectations and as a result the relationship quickly broke down.

Private Sector Mentoring

Approximately 7 months ago they were approached by a private sector mentor/consultant from Icon Business Solutions. They engaged his services for 1 day per month for 6 months. Due to the value placed on the mentor, the agreement has recently been increased to 2 days per month.

Benefits of the Relationship

Prior to their mentor's input the management team only focused on the short term day to day tasks of the company. They had no clear vision or direction and as a result they were continuously moving from one crisis to another.

Their mentor worked with the management team to develop their managerial roles within the company. He concentrated their attention on

- **Management and administration**
- **Marketing**
- **Company structure**
- **Human resources**
- **Cash flows**

The Mentor is currently working on the personal development of the 2 senior managers.

Benefits for the Company

The management team are now very clear about what they want to achieve in their business. Their mentor has helped them focus on the most important elements. Karen claims that the company is now in a much stronger position to expand. As a direct result of the mentoring intervention they are now more focused or aware of the importance of

- **Cash flow forecasts**
- **A company vision which everyone buys into**
- **Human resource policies**
- **Regular board meetings**
- **Effective communication throughout the company**
- **A motivated workforce**

CASE STUDY 2: SME – Example of a Failed Mentoring Relationship

The Company

A long established family business in North Wales involved in the production of flapjacks and cereal bars. Prior to undertaking a publicly funded mentoring programme the company had been expanding rapidly, which brought many new challenges and problems. Steve Jones and his management team identified the need to implement major changes to cope with increasing sales. Contact was made with the mentoring organisation approximately 5 years ago.

Programme aims

When questioned about the aims of the programme Steve Jones felt that the mentor attempted to concentrate on both his personal development and the overall development of the company.

The Mentoring Relationship

An effective rapport was never established between the mentor and Steve Jones. This caused the relationship to break down within approximately 6 months. Steve Jones referred to the mentor as "a failed businessman trying to pass off as an experienced mentor." Reflecting on the experiences Steve Jones felt that the mentor added very little/no added value to his company. When asked did he think he received value for money, he claimed that no money was paid for this service, however due to the time scale he could not be certain.

Thoughts on Future Mentoring Programme

Steve Jones agrees strongly with the theory behind Mentoring, however due to his personal experiences, he has very little confidence in the ability of the organisation to provide an effective programme. When asked if he would ever reconsider a programme he suggested that it would need to be radically improved with the emphasis on quality.

Within the past 2 years Steve Jones has employed a part time director (similar role to a Non Executive Director) who is involved in the business 1 or 2 days per week. This director has a great deal of business experience and has greatly strengthened the management team. His role within the company is very similar to the role of an experienced mentor. The management team are now focusing on the strategic issues that affect their business, and as a result they are able to drive their business forward.

CASE STUDY 3: SME – A Mentor’s Perspective: Perceived Credentials

<http://www.businessboffins.com/pdfs/Evaluation%20of%20M2SB%20Project.pdf>

The Programme

M2SB was a one-year exploratory mentoring project involving 5 MBA graduates, Business Boffins Ltd (consultancy company), Oxford Brookes University and the South East England Regional Development Agency. The project took place in 2003. The MBA graduates were provided with training on mentoring small businesses and were allocated between 20 – 25 small businesses each to mentor. The MBA mentors were also provided with information relating to business support and training packages aimed at supporting small businesses over the first 3 years of their business life.

The objects of the evaluation were as follows

- **To assess and evaluate the face to face mentoring aspect of the M2SB programme.**
- **To assess and evaluate the M2SB programme from the point of view of the MBA graduates.**

Method

Data was collected from approximately 150 small businesses involved in the project, through semi-structured interviews and was analysed at 3 different levels; the MBA Mentors, Senior Business Analysts and the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officers at Business Boffins. The aim of the project was to explore perceptions and expectations of the knowledge, skills and understanding required by small business mentors.

Evaluation Findings

The MBA mentors identified a key shift in terms of their understanding of what SMEs wanted from a mentor. Initially, they thought that SMEs had a ‘need for their knowledge’ and ‘skills’ developed through the MBA. However, they soon recognised they were lacking in ‘on the job’ experience and understanding of the SME sector. Other more applied characteristics such as inter-personal skills, listening, time management, presentation skills and team working were considered to be more important requirements of a mentor than a formal business qualification.

Throughout the programme the MBA mentors emphasised the importance of their own motivation in enabling them to do the job well. By the end of the 12 month programme, each mentor was aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses as a small business mentor.

The Senior Business Analysts at Business Boffins initially identified strongly with the skills and knowledge associated with MBA graduates, perceiving that SMEs require a solid grounding in the ‘academic’ aspects of business. These perceptions evolved over the year reflecting the realities of mentoring SMEs. Skills, knowledge, understanding of individual sectors were considered essential along with other business issues, such as why businesses fail. Over the term of the evaluation the emphasis shifted from a need for academic qualifications in favour of ‘empathetic qualities’. Importance was also placed on very individual characteristics associated with aptitude and attitude, willingness for the mentor to learn and a commitment to maintain regular contact with their mentees.

The Chief Officers expectations of the knowledge, skills and understanding required by mentors altered less over the year. Technical competence, communication and leadership skills were perceived important throughout the programme.

Early evaluation of the programme highlighted a number of negative issues which resulted from lack of clear guidelines and expectations of the mentors and the programme as a whole. For example, differing perceptions of the role of the business mentor, programme structure and organisational communication strategy. These negative issues resulted in initial feelings of low motivation amongst MBA graduates. Motivation improved as the programme progressed and the context became apparent and as individual mentors grew more confident.

CASE STUDY 4: Different Approaches for Mentoring Social Enterprises

<http://www.renewal.net/England/eastofengland/Search.asp>

The Company

This report looks at the various benefits of mentoring programmes available to Social Enterprises in the UK.

Social Enterprise Support Needs

Social enterprises share many of the same constraints faced by SMEs, especially those operating in deprived areas. However because they have social (as well as financial) aims and because they have different management, ownership and financing arrangement, they can experience different kinds of challenges and problems.

Elements of Mentoring Programmes that worked well

Mentoring was identified as just one element of a range of support activities required by Social Enterprises, other elements identified included guidance, training, workshops, networking, etc. Mentors could be drawn from a range private and public organisations, established social enterprises, universities and collages. Various forms of mentoring were suggested as being beneficial to the social enterprises, face to face meetings, telephone conversations between mentor and mentee, secondments to social enterprises, mentoring programme embedded with a broader learning programme, telephone links and e-mentoring.

The report identifies a number of existing programmes which provide the above mentioned deliverables.

Partners in Leadership with Community Enterprise (PILCON)

This is the largest national mentoring scheme for social enterprise. Run in England and Wales by Business in the Community. The programme sets up mentoring relationships between social enterprise leaders and people from business. The objects of this programme are

- **Share expertise and experience**
- **Develop or refine leadership and management skills from two different perspectives**
- **Access different skills, build new networks, raise awareness and increase the understanding of the business and community enterprise sectors**
- **Ultimately contribute to improvements to the local community**

Mentoring partnerships involve around 6 meetings for approximately 2 hours over a one year period. Meeting are also supplemented with telephone conversations and emails. The programme is funded by Jaguar Cars Ltd and the DTI's Phoenix Fund.

Prime Timers

This programme pairs community sector organisations with experienced business and professional executives who have been made redundant or taken early retirement and who wish to gain experience in the not-for-profit sector. Through secondment, they help to build capacity and improve performance and sustainability by providing free expertise and access to high level skills and the latest business approaches to management.

Regen

This is a 'learning through sharing' programme which is structured around a course and support system. It is aimed at people engaged in regeneration and renewal projects in the UK. The programme involves 20 days spread over approximately 9 months and includes residential, workshops and mentoring support. After the 9 month period, mentors are available via the telephone for a further 6 months. Mentors are drawn from well established community projects or enterprises and are able to pass on the benefit of their experience, including advice on funding, finding premises, employing staff and business management.

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)

A learning programme aimed at promoting and supporting social entrepreneurs. Its core product is a year long action learning programme which is delivered with the help of expert witnesses (people who work in the sector), facilitated project visits, action learning sets, tutoring and

mentoring. The emphasis is on helping participants to gain new confidence, skills, know-how and contacts to enable them to succeed with their projects.

Key Messages:

The key components for a successful mentoring project were assessed as being:-

- **The role played by the social enterprise mentee. In order to derive maximum benefit from the process, the individual social enterprise needs to drive the mentoring relationship.**
- **The mentoring dynamic and the importance of the two way learning benefits that can be derived from business mentoring activities that match business executives with managers of social enterprise.**
- **Both mentor and mentee are provided with the opportunity to meet with, and learn from, someone who has parallel but independent experience.**

Success of a programme depends on number of factors ranging from how it is managed to how the mentors relate to and empathise with the aims of the social enterprise. For an effective mentoring programme the following criteria was identified

- **A mentoring programme requires good co-ordination and the time and resources to enable it to happen.**
- **Clear objectives from the outset to enable effective relationships to develop and to evaluate success.**
- **Mentors and mentees need to understand their respective roles and to be supported in order to review the relationship and the progress made.**
- **Mentoring qualities include**
 - **Good listening**
 - **The ability to relate to others**
 - **Being supportive**
 - **Having a non-judgemental approach**
 - **Knowing when to call in specialist help**
 - **Being confident about the development of the relationship**
- **Good mentor training will help both parties benefit from the relationship**
- **Mentoring programme should have an evaluation process built into them from the start, i.e. when setting objectives, the information provided by evaluations can then be used to make programmes more effective in the future.**

CASE STUDY 5: Financial Impact of Mentoring

Ref: Maximizing the Impact of Executive Coaching: Behavioural Change, Organizational Outcomes, and Return on Investment. The Manchester Review Volume 6, Number 1 2001

Ref: Executive Briefing; Case Study on the Return on Investment of Executive Coaching, Anderson, M.C. November 2001 Matrix Global

The case studies provide examples of the financial impact of 2 unrelated programmes that deliver executive coaching to business executives in the USA. The companies described within the case studies were large companies, many of which were Fortune 500 companies.

The programmes aimed to identify the tangible and intangible benefits of executive coaching. Coachees were recruited from throughout the USA and Mexico and ranged from high level executives to department managers with potential for promotion to a senior level.

Programme 1:

Impact

100 executives were recruited onto the programme between 1996 and 2000. All coaches were typically PhD or MBA graduates with at least 20 years experience as organisational practitioners. The coaching process typically ranged from 6 to 12 months.

- **86% of the coachees indicated that they were very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the coaching process.**
- **Coachees considered 73% of their goals had been achieved very effectively or extremely effectively**

The research also considered factors which may have detracted or enhanced the effectiveness of the coaching experience. The following factors were reported:

Detracted

- **44% - Coachee time constraints**
- **25% - Communication issues**
- **25% - Organisational support**
- **13% - Coachee's commitment**

Enhanced

- **87% - Coach/coachee relationship**
- **62% - Quality of feedback**
- **57% - Quality of assessment**
- **51% - Participant's commitment**
- **43% - Manager's support**

Return on Investment

Pinpointing the return on investment was one of the most difficult aspects of the study. The return on investment (ROI) was conservatively calculated at 5.7 times (570%) the initial investment in coaching. The ROI calculations were based on increased sales, profitability, efficiencies and staff retention.

Conclusions of Programme 1

The programme has produced strong evidence of the effectiveness of executive coaching. The relationship between the coach and the coachee is of paramount importance, stakeholders are advised to pay close attention to the pairing process. They found evidence that organisational support, in particular that of the coachee's manager was very important to the success of the coaching. The way the programme was communicated within the organisations was also regarded as a critical factor. One of the HR departments overcame the negative perceptions by positioned the programme to be for high performers i.e. there was a status associated with being chosen to participate on the programme.

Programme 2:

43 coachees were recruited onto an executive coaching programme between 1996 and 2000.

Impact

Coaching proved to be very effective development tool for leadership development, producing financial and intangible benefits for the business. Decision making, team performance and the motivation of others were enhanced.

77% of coachees indicated that coaching had significant or very significant impact on one of nine key performance indicators

60% of coachees were able to identify specific financial benefits as a result of their coaching

60% of coachees felt there had been a favourable impact on productivity and 53% on employee satisfaction.

50% of coachees were able to document annual financial benefits

53% of coachees felt there had been a favourable impact on customer satisfaction

30% of coachees felt their work output had increased

40% of coachees felt work quality had increased

Programme costs were tabulated for all 43 coachees in determining the return on investment. A 529% return on investment was produced by the coaching process (excluding the benefits from employee retention).

CASE STUDY 6: Mentoring to Support Financial Investment

Evaluation by EKOS Consulting

<http://www.ekos.co.uk/>

Introduction

South Yorkshire Investment Fund (SYIF) was created as part of the Objective 1 programme to offer loans and equity investment to businesses in South Yorkshire. SYIF can provide loans and equity linked investments ranging from £15k - £2.5m to businesses in, or planning to move into South Yorkshire.

The SMEs are encouraged to take mentors through financial incentives. Rebates of up to 80% of interest paid on debt finance and a 50% subsidy towards the fees of the mentors are available to encourage the uptake of mentors (up to a maximum of £6,000).

Programme Overview

A comprehensive study of the SYIF Mentorbank programme was carried out by EKOS Consulting during the early part of 2005. The study examines the extent to which the use of a mentor has added value to the business and has contributed to the effectiveness of the SYIF investment, whilst at the same time benefiting the sub-regional economy. The ethos of the Mentorbank programme is based on the thought that SMEs provided with finance (loans) will make better use of that finance if they have sufficient management capabilities. The Mentorbank component seeks to put mentors or non-Executive Directors into businesses taking South Yorkshire Investment Fund finance to address that issue. The study considered the views of 58 companies, 12 mentors and the SYIF Fund Managers. Mentors predominantly provide general business advice and not mentoring as the name suggests, according to the study mentors spend 74% of their time providing general business advice.

Mentors are recruited on to the programme via a combination of word of mouth and referrals from the SMEs who have the option to identify the mentor they would like to work with. All mentors must meet a predetermined criterion (not known) which ensures mentors have the appropriate skills and a track record to perform the role. Mentors are typically paired via an electronic database using a shortlist of 3-5 potential mentors. However in approximately 20% of cases the programme manager uses his own judgement to match mentor and mentee.

The report claims that limited amounts of initial induction training and ongoing support were previously provided and more recently this has declined as a result of restrictions on the resources required to offer this level of support. The majority of the mentors surveyed had not been provided with formal training.

The vast majority of mentees claimed very high levels of satisfaction, in areas such as, ability to see the bigger picture, ability to take a strategic look at the company, and just being there to provide advice. Knowledge of specific sectors was viewed by only a small number of mentees as being important and financial advice was viewed as being the most important element.

Qualitative benefits for the business:

Nearly 50% of the companies surveyed said the mentor support had helped them increase their profit margins. A similar number claimed that the presence of a mentor had helped to reduce costs and 40% claimed the mentor helped them secure sales growth. The role of the mentor in helping to avert problems was cited by 50% of the companies surveyed.

Conclusions and recommendations of the report

The overall conclusion of the review is that the model for discounting loan repayments and offering subsidies to SMEs to take a mentor is extremely effective. The review also concludes that the effects of taking a mentor are, on the whole, extremely positive for the businesses.

The report recommended that mentor training and support was reinstated and that additional consideration was given to the pairing process, suggesting that 'meet the mentor' sessions could take place prior to the first meeting.

CASE STUDY 7- Womens One-to-One Mentoring

Organisation: **Business Gateway, Scotland**

Programme: **Business Mentoring Programme**

Company Involved: **The Nail Lounge**

Material source and reference: <http://www.scottishbusinesswomen.com/ie/online/casedetails.asp?id=94>

The company:

The Nail Lounge was set up by Gaynor Nichol who previously worked in the insurance industry. The business which could be classified as a lifestyle business specialises in manicures and nail extensions, but also provides a whole range of beauty and well being services for women in Paisley, Scotland.

Gaynor felt she needed some extra inspiration and approached Business Gateway for assistance. She was assigned a mentor to help her focus and grow the business. The mentor, Jenny runs a personal development company in Ayrshire.

When Gaynor first heard about business mentoring she thought she would just go along and have a chat, and if she couldn't get anything out of the relationship she would terminate it immediately. After initial scepticism Gaynor found her mentor to be a great help in growing and developing the business.

What happened:

The mentor was able to focus Gaynor on the bigger picture providing support enabling Gaynor to delegate less important day to day tasks. The mentor felt that Gaynor had a great number of ideas but didn't make the best use of her time and energy. She helped Gaynor to focus on specific ideas and further develop them.

Gaynor claims: "mentoring has shown me why I should delegate more. I was really bad at delegating and she told me I should get on with the main job of running the ship. She has made me sharpen up how I look at the business and my time management. I really had to move my business forward and Jenny (mentor) gave me the push I needed".

Results:

The mentoring process provided by Business Gateway has proved to be a vital element of the Nail Lounges success and growth. By focussing on the strategic issues that drive the BUSINESS Gaynor was able to plan for growth. Gaynor is now opening a second store and plans to expand her business throughout the UK.

Case Study 8 Mentoring to Develop the Skills Base

Background

Set up in 1997, company A has grown to become one of the South West's leading digital communication agencies. The company offers a range of technical consultancy, software design and build services. Clients include leading names as well as small businesses throughout the region. The company is on the national register of approved consultancies for Business Link.

Scope

Following a merger in September 2004, company A's staff numbered 15 with its turnover approaching £750k. The company boasted a team of highly skilled programmers, web and multi-media designers and developers, creating both enhanced business opportunities and additional pressures for the management team. The coachee, creative director and an original founder, was valued for his extensive senior IT experience and creativity, but he was keen to improve his management skills, particularly in relation to delegation and motivation of staff. "As a founder, I have watched the business transform in line with constant change and speed of innovation demanded of the digital market," said the coachee. "I have been instrumental in many aspects of our growth, but recognised that I needed to step back and review how skills and experience were being utilised in the organisation and what value I could bring in the future."

Method

The coachee met with a Business Link Somerset coach, to focus on how management demands were changing, based on the size and culture of the organisation, and what he would require in order to 'let go' of his old way of working. Coaching sessions were held every two weeks, over a three month period, under the 'Coaching for Impact' programme which is project managed by Business West. Key focus for the sessions was given to redefining his role and assessing the skills that added the most value to the business. To support this, staff completed an anonymous survey to give an external perspective on his weaknesses and strengths. Time was also spent assessing the value of mentoring, which would release him to focus on business growth and product development and help the company to achieve Investors In People (IiP) status.

Options and Recommendations

The process of redefining the role of the creative director also led to an assessment of skills across the organisation and the effectiveness of different pathways of communication. "I would refer to the coaching as 'business therapy' as it provides a safe outlet for you to logically explore, with an independent third-party, key aspects of your business which may be holding you back," said the coachee. "Not only did I gain an understanding of my role, but many other business aspects were explored which impacted on the whole team from time management to cross-departmental communication."

Results

The coachee has found the coaching provided extremely valuable. Through increased delegation, he is able to focus on product development, customer service and cross selling - all of which have shown marked improvements. The company has also achieved IiP status through its demonstrated commitment to staff development.

Further Actions

Company A is set to continue to work with the coach, with coaching being cascaded down to other members of staff.

Case Study 9: Programme Structure

Manufacturer of industrial electrical motors, drivers and generators

Background

Company B is the UK division of a multinational company. It provides advanced, high quality motion control products for diverse industrial applications. The company manufactures industrial electric motors, drives, multi-axis motion controllers and generators. Company B also produces custom motors to meet specific customer requirements and prides itself on manufacturing them in the shortest lead times in the industry.

Scope

The aim was to help three members of company B's senior management team: coachee A, general manager, coachee B, manufacturing manager and coachee C, European finance director, to redefine their roles and where they fitted in the six-strong management team. The three coaches also recognised that there were some elements of their performance where they wanted to improve including management techniques and interpersonal skills.

Method

A diagnostic session was booked with Business West to ascertain company B's coaching needs. The matching process was then undertaken to find the best coach for the company. After being advised of three suitable coaches the coaches selected one and were introduced. The coach has significant sales, business development and team performance management experience and has been coaching for around four years. After the selection had been made the coach worked with each coachee to generate an agreement. The individual agreements determined which objectives were to be achieved in accordance with their skill requirements. Each objective was set out in a quantifiable way to be measured before and after the coaching process. The coachees each received nine one hour sessions, which took place every ten days. Each coachee is still to receive their final three sessions, talking the total to 12 sessions each. In each meeting the coachees discussed different issues and objectives with the coach before agreeing outcomes and planning actions to be taken forward during periods in-between the sessions. In these periods the coachees reflected on what they had learnt, planned how they would implement this and then progressed the agreed next actions, which were then reviewed at the next meeting.

Options and Recommendations

During the coaching sessions options were generated by each coachee with assistance from the coach who encouraged each coachee to discuss a range of possibilities and examine all possible outcomes. Coachee B commented: "One of the best things about coaching is that it allows you to develop on both a business and personal level. The coach is anonymous so you can use them as a good sounding board without feeling they are a threat to you or the business. They are a good outside third party with whom you can discuss personal and business issues, but you know you are guaranteed confidentiality. They don't tell you the answers, they try to get you to self develop by exploring what you actually already know to ensure that you come up with the best solutions."

Results

Although the coaching programme has not yet been completed, the coachees are already seeing the results. Coachee A has experienced an increase in motivation and finds this also motivates his colleagues. He now feels more confident and he feels that his team is more confident about his leadership skills. He said: "Coaching has measurably improved the business - it has helped me work on a number of areas has given me a new found enthusiasm for a challenge.

Further Actions

The coachees are looking into ways to maintain the benefits that coaching has bought the company, including continuing to have coaching sessions every few months. Coachee B has also identified an advance supply management course, which all six senior managers at company B are due to attend over the next few months.

CASE STUDY 10: SME – WCVA, example of support to mentors

Magic of mentoring, part one of an evaluation for WCVA

Stakeholder Consultation with Kate Thomas & Wendy Gilbert Wales Council for Voluntary Action

The Wales Council for Voluntary Action recently completed a mentoring programme; the first part of this evaluation was to determine the success of mentoring within the voluntary sector. Magic of mentoring was part funded by ELWA/DELLS through its Skill Development Fund and was to be used as a tool to develop the managerial skills within the voluntary sector.

10 mentors were recruited onto the programme and provided with a 2 day training event which focused on mentoring skills. An additional one day training event was also organised half way through the programme to support the mentors. The mentees on the programme were not provided with any training. However it was acknowledged that future programmes should incorporate mentee training. One of the outcomes of the project was the publication of a mentoring support manual – The magic of mentoring. This manual provides practical tips and techniques for voluntary sector managers and was supplied to each mentor.

Mentor support

The mentors interviewed felt they had received the support necessary to participate effectively in the project. The most important element of the support was assessed as being the training courses, with a number of mentors commenting on the usefulness of the publication, The magic of mentoring. In addition to this the WCVA commissioned a specialist consultant to facilitate an action learning set (ALS) for mentors. This provides mentors with the opportunity to talk through issues and exchange ideas with each other. To enable the maximum benefit to be gained from the facilitated ALS, mentors may need to get a few mentoring sessions under their belts. In addition, it was suggested that it would be useful for the WCVA to review the benefits of the ALS option for mentor support in the future.