



THE MENTORING MANUAL

Teresa Boughey reveals how to establish an effective mentoring scheme in your business

All too often, people blur the distinctions between mentoring and coaching, or interpret both of these learning interventions to be the same. However, it's important to be aware that there are subtle differences. Both are very valuable, especially for creating an inclusive workplace, but coaching and mentoring have different roles to play.

Mentoring is more of a long-term relationship; as opposed to coaching where, once the goal has been reached, the coach is no longer required. While

coaching is usually task-focused or to help a staff member transition into a new role, mentoring can be used to support the overall personal growth of an individual – not only for their current role but for their future career path.

Mentors role-model behaviours for their mentee and share not only their successes but also the mistakes they have made over their career – a valuable lesson for anyone looking to excel in their industry.

Here are some top tips to establish an effective mentoring

scheme in your business and incorporate mentoring seamlessly into other areas of your business.

Encourage career progression

Research suggests that some women may not feel confident enough to put themselves forward for promotion or a new role unless they feel they are already equipped with the necessary skills. This can place a significant barrier upon their career progression, especially if there are not opportunities easily accessible for women to widen their skillset while in their current role.

Mentoring could therefore be offered at the commencement of employment as a means of enabling every employee to feel confident and supported enough to take the leap into their next career progression within their current organisation, rather than feeling like they must leave in order to progress.

Not only does the mentee benefit here, but the mentor can also gain valuable insight into the career aspirations of the mentee so they can offer the relevant guidance to support the attainment of career aspirations.

Consider the purpose and scope

When setting out your mentoring scheme, make sure everyone is clear on what you want to achieve and who is going to be involved in the process. Here are some questions to consider which should help you refine what you are setting out to do:

- ▶ How can you tie the mentoring scheme in with other established development and talent support that you offer?
- ▶ How will mentoring help you to retain and grow great talent?
- ▶ In what way will mentoring help your organisation become more inclusive?

There are many different levels at which mentoring could be introduced – consider exactly who will be involved from the offset. Piloting your scheme with a small group in your chosen area will allow you to test its effectiveness and make any amendments necessary before rolling out the scheme to others.

You could offer mentoring to all new starters as part of their induction programme. Having a wide scope will allow a diverse range of experiences to be shared and the benefits can be felt by as

many people as possible. But whichever route you choose to take, ensure that your programme is inclusive and gives equal opportunities for all at that level.

Clearly promote the programme

A note of caution: quite often, those who would benefit most from a mentoring scheme may not put themselves forward. They might not understand what it is, how it works, or feel confident enough to step forward. If the programme is clearly explained and displayed in the workplace, accompanied by success stories that other employees may relate to, more people will be encouraged to get involved.

The scheme should be displayed in a place for all to see in an accessible format, so no one is excluded from the start. Make sure that the scheme itself is promoted clearly, but that you also



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include information such as how it works, who it is aimed at, how to apply and the benefits it will bring to both the mentee and the mentor. This will help attract more participants, but also serves as a mechanism that shares the successes of colleagues who have been involved in previous programmes.

How do you select and match mentors to mentees?

Recruiting effective mentors to take part in your scheme can be tricky, especially as there may be many employees who would make great mentors but wouldn't put themselves forward or see themselves in such a way.

You could adopt an approach in which you accept anyone who offers to participate, or you could invite people to apply; both options have merits. Either way, ensure that those who are accepted are not just the same people who always volunteer for extra roles. A mentoring scheme is a perfect chance to give those who may not usually be heard a chance to share their knowledge with others and celebrate a diverse range of experiences.

Everyone involved in mentoring should receive training so they can

carry out their role more effectively. Training for mentors should be ongoing, similar to that of coaching supervision, and include an element whereby mentors are encouraged to share how they have found the scheme so it can be improved upon in the future and so the scheme remains relevant.

When matching the mentees and mentors, it's important to consider things such as style and relationship chemistry. A poorly matched mentee relationship can have a detrimental effect for both parties. By taking time to ensure the mentee and mentor are well-suited will provide a foundation for them to learn as much as possible from each other.

While you will have defined the broad scope and purpose of the scheme, it is important both parties agree more of the finer details this

is likely to include, such as locations and frequency of meetings (too many could impact other important tasks, but too few could hinder the effectiveness of the scheme). Whatever is decided should remain within the parameters of the scheme you initially established. Similarly, make sure that both parties are held accountable for the tasks they agree to complete so the scheme is beneficial for all.

The mutual benefits of mentoring mean the mentee is invigorated with self-confidence and encouraged to pursue their career aspirations, while the mentor can learn from someone, they may not have had contact with otherwise and share their diverse experiences. It really is a great way to increase the inclusivity of your organisation from all angles. **TJ**

*Teresa Boughey is CEO of Jungle HR and a member of the Women and Enterprise APPG and the Women and Work APPG. Her new book, *Closing the Gap – 5 Steps to Creating an Inclusive Culture* (Rethink Press), is out now. Learn more at www.junglediversity.com*