

# **The Benefits of Mentoring: a literature review**

for

## **East Mentor's Forum**

supported by

## **The East of England Development Agency**

prepared by:

Dr Bob Garvey & Ruth Garrett-Harris

The Mentoring and Coaching Research Unit

Sheffield Hallam University

Stoddart Building

Howard Street

Sheffield

S1 1WB

T: 0114 225 3819

E:[r.garvey@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.garvey@shu.ac.uk)

# The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

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# **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

## **Executive summary**

This report was commissioned to identify the benefits of mentoring across all sectors and it will form the basis of further evaluations of mentoring in the EEDA region for EMF. It also offers a framework of the core conditions, which enable people to benefit from mentoring.

## **Research questions**

This research is driven by the following questions:

- What are the benefits of mentoring across all sectors?
- Which stakeholders benefit directly from mentoring activity?
- What are the core conditions that enable the benefits to be realised?
- Does mentoring contribute to economic prosperity and social well-being?
- Is mentoring worthwhile?

## **Approach**

The report is based upon a systematic review of academic and practitioner articles in four databases. It investigated:

- Large businesses
- Small private businesses
- The Public sector including health care and education
- The 'social' sector

The report represents 25 years of research into the benefits of mentoring.

The balance of the sources used is as follows:

US based articles	55% of sample (approx)
UK and Europe based articles	41% of sample (approx)
Other (Japan)	4% of sample (approx)

Over 100 studies were used to compile this report. These include: evaluations, case studies and research projects. Ninety five percent of the

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

studies used in this report are of live mentoring schemes in a range of organisations. Therefore, they are of practical significance.

### **Definitions of mentoring**

Definitions of mentoring vary however, the meaning of mentoring is broadly agreed and includes the following description:

*'Mentoring is a learning and developmental relationship between two people It depends on essential human qualities such as commitment, authenticity, trust, integrity and honesty. It involves the skills of listening, questioning, challenge and support.'*

All articles selected for this study relate to this description.

### **The findings**

Across all sectors and all articles the benefits of mentoring for all stakeholders break down into percentages of the total number of citations as follows:

- Motivational Benefits - percentage of total citations 33%
- Performance and Policy Implementation benefits - percentage of total citations 30%
- Knowledge and Skills Development benefits - percentage of total citations 24%
- Managing Change and Succession benefits - percentage of total citations 13%

The percentage of the total number of cited benefits for each stakeholder is as follows:

- Benefits for the mentee 40% of total number of citations
- Benefits for the business 33% of total number of citations
- Benefits for the mentor 27% of total number of citations

### **Specific sectors**

#### **SMEs**

- Improved job creation and business performance
- Increased business activity, sales and networking
- Successful transfer and development of skills and ability to cope with problems

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

- Increase ideas generation and knowledge enhancement
- Enhanced confidence, CVs, professional identity and job satisfaction
- Successful completion and achievement of objectives

### **E-Mentoring small business to small business**

- 75% of mentees and 57% of mentors described their e-mentoring experience as positive.
- 89% of the mentors in the scheme and 50% of the mentees indicated that they would participate in a similar programme again.

### **Youth Justice**

After approximately 12 hours mentoring over a month:

- The onset of drug use was significantly lower than in a non-mentored control group
- The onset of alcohol use 27% less
- 32% less frequency of hitting
- Slightly improved educational attainment
- Significantly reduced truancy
- Improved relationships with family
- Slightly improved friendships with peers

### **Health Sector**

Benefits for mentored nurses include:

- Enhanced thinking, risk taking and self-esteem
- Job enrichment and professional development
- Improved wisdom, commitment, growth, power, political awareness and job performance

For Doctors as mentees:

- Improved reflection skills
- Support for dealing with specific problems
- Developing strategies
- Confidence building in decision making
- Improved self-worth and job satisfaction

Doctors as mentors:

- Increased motivation and job satisfaction

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

- Satisfaction for playing a role in developing talent
- Improved relationships with patients, colleagues and family members
- Improved problem solving abilities

### **Education**

- Improved management of the transition to 'big' school
- Increased self esteem and confidence
- Support with study skills
- Develop 'key skills' in mentors
- Contribution to spiritual, health, and moral education (PSE)
- Enhancing anti-bullying strategies
- Improved social and interpersonal abilities
- Improved learning and attainment
- Improved behaviour in the classroom and around school

### **Conclusions**

Most writers agree the benefits of mentoring.

There are numerous benefits of mentoring for the mentee, the mentor and the organisation (broadly defined) across all sectors.

The benefits for the mentee are greater in number than for the other two stakeholders.

The motivational benefits of mentoring are cited most frequently. Performance, knowledge and skill, change and succession follow closely behind.

### **What are the benefits of mentoring across all sectors?**

#### **Mentee**

- Improved performance and productivity (performance is broadly understood)
- Career opportunity and advancement
- Improved knowledge and skills
- Greater confidence and well-being

#### **Mentor**

- Improved performance
- Greater satisfaction, loyalty and self-awareness
- New knowledge and skills

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

- Leadership development

### **Organisation**

- Staff retention and improved communication
- Improved morale, motivation and relationships
- Improved learning

### **Which stakeholders benefit directly from mentoring activity?**

All stakeholders. Development Agencies benefit by individuals realising the benefits outlined above they contribute to:

- The development of the region
- Strategic change
- Facilitating partnerships
- Problem-solving
- Innovation and change
- Project management

### **What are the core conditions that enable the benefits to be realised?**

- Voluntarism
- Training
- Ongoing support
- Matching
- Establishing reviewable groundrules
- On going review
- Whose agenda?
- Evaluation and monitoring

### **Does mentoring contribute to economic prosperity and social well-being?**

Yes, by:

- Benefiting all stakeholders
- Improving motivation among participants across all sectors
- Improving performance in a range of social, educational and business activities
- Enabling policies to be effectively implemented in all sectors

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

- Developing knowledge and skills in all sectors
- Facilitating and managing change
- Developing leadership and enabling succession planning

### **Is mentoring worthwhile?**

Yes, but subject to certain conditions and don't expect 100% success 100% of the time!

### **The authors**

The Mentoring and Coaching Research Unit at Sheffield Hallam University represents the most substantial collection of mentoring and coaching researchers in Europe. It is leading the way in mentoring and coaching research.

# **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

## **Introduction**

This report was commissioned to identify the benefits of mentoring across all sectors. While no investigation of this type can claim to be comprehensive, this is probably the most substantial study of its type done to date.

This report will form the basis of further evaluations of mentoring in the EEDA region for EMF.

This report presents substantial research and evaluative evidence of the benefits of mentoring across all sectors. It also offers a framework of the core conditions which enable the benefits of mentoring to be realised.

## **Research Questions**

This research is driven by the following questions:

What are the benefits of mentoring across all sectors?

Which stakeholders benefit directly from mentoring activity?

What are the core conditions that enable the benefits to be realised?

Does mentoring contribute to economic prosperity and social well-being?

Is mentoring worthwhile?

## **Approach taken**

The report is, in the main based upon a systematic review of practitioner and academic articles in four databases:

- Business Source Premier
- Emerald
- Ingenta
- Swetswise

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

These databases cover between 20 - 25 million business and social science articles. We searched for articles on mentoring across all sectors including:

- Large businesses
- Small private businesses
- The Public sector including Health Care, Education and Youth Justice

Additional material from the researchers own resources was also employed.

Overall, more than 100 sources were used to compile this report and it is important to note that the benefits of mentoring translate across all sectors.

The articles date from 1979 to 2005. Seventy seven percent of them come from the period 1995-2005. This illustrates the rise of the popularity of mentoring as a developmental intervention during the last 10 years and in total represents 25 years of research into the benefits of the phenomenon.

We used a combination of Boolean algebra search strings with the following key words:

- Mentor
- Benefit
- SME
- Entrepreneur
- Small business
- Social

### **Mapping the research**

The articles and studies were broken down in the following way:

- Type of article [T=theoretical; O = opinion underpinned by theory; R= research]

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

- Purpose of article/research
- Methodology of research
- Findings [research]
- Benefits for mentee
- Benefits for mentor
- Benefits for the organisation (*organisation is broadly understood – it may be for example a School, the Youth Justice System and SME or a large business*)

We conflated the benefits into four broad categories:

- Motivational Benefits – benefits for the mentor and mentee
- Performance and Policy Implementation Benefits – being able to do things better and to implement policies aimed at improved performance (*performance is broadly understood and may relate to, say, business performance, reduced re-offending rates or improved behaviour in school. We put Performance and Policy Implementation together because we assume that by implementing policy effectively, performance improves. The literature suggested this conflation to us.*)
- Knowledge and Skills Development Benefits
- Managing Change and Succession Benefits

We counted the benefits cited in the literature and have expressed them as percentages of the total sample and the categories. 427 benefits are cited in the sample of articles.

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

### **About the sample**

Approximately, 95% of the articles chosen relate to practical, 'live' studies with less than 3% of the articles being theoretical and less than 2% based on opinion.

The majority of papers are evaluative research.

In the main, we actively selected double-blind peer reviewed research. This is recognised internationally as the gold standard of research.

We also actively selected authors with substantial reputations and experience people in mentoring research in order draw upon the most authoritative work currently available. Other authors are represented.

Although the majority of research on mentoring is US based, the balance of the sources used is as follows:

US based articles	55% of sample (approx)
UK and Europe based articles	41% of sample (approx)
Other (Japan)	4% of sample (approx)

### **Comment about methodologies employed in mentoring research**

In research, there are two broad positions on the choice of methods – quantitative and qualitative. While, we are not going to debate the various philosophical and practical issues involved in these two methodologies, it is important to have some understanding of what these approaches represent.

Much of the mentoring research in the US is quantitative. US researchers tend to value large survey approaches that generate statistics (although notably the best known US researcher in the field, Prof. Kram uses a blended approach). European mentoring researchers tend to favour either qualitative approaches or blended approaches.

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

Quantitative researchers tend to make claims that their approach offers a scientific reality based on cause and effect. Whereas qualitative researchers tend to claim that their work is descriptive, insightful and relevant to the specific social context and is therefore more valid.

However, it is a fact that no one methodology applied in the area of social research can make any substantive claims to be the definitive *'truth'*.

In looking at the benefits listed below, it is clear that some are indeed quantifiable and some are qualitative. We believe that this is inevitable with such a deeply human process as mentoring.

There can be little doubt that mentoring is a complex phenomenon and taking a simple cause and effect view without considering its complexities is a flawed perspective. Because of the complexity of mentoring, it is probably impossible to isolate the variables in true scientific tradition and make a direct causal link to its effects. Further, with mentoring, control group studies raise difficult ethical questions. Overall, this is why many modern approaches to mentoring research often involve blended methods. In this way, one method informs the other which results in a more holistic perspective.

There are many stories in the literature of the benefits of mentoring. One paper (Rix and Gold 2000) actually uses the technique of narrative analysis as an evaluation instrument. We believe that the use of narrative analysis and case study research are appropriate methodologies for the study of 'soft systems' such as mentoring (see <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/summary/summary.php?id=rr219>).

With reference to mentoring evaluations, these are best done using multi-methodologies and as an ongoing process with the involvement of all stakeholders. In this way, evaluation becomes an ongoing developmental process that improves mentoring practice for the participants.

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

### **Definitions of mentoring**

There are many different definitions of mentoring available. This is because it is essentially a deeply human and humane activity and the variations of form in human relationships are considerable. However, whilst definitions vary their meanings remain broadly consistent. We present the meaning of mentoring as:

*'Mentoring is a learning and developmental relationship between two people. It depends on essential human qualities such as commitment, authenticity, trust, integrity and honesty. It involves the skills of listening, questioning, challenge and support.'*

All articles selected for this study relate to this description.

### **The findings**

#### **All articles and sectors**

Across all sectors and all articles we categorised the benefits under the following broad headings and broke them down into percentages of the total number of citations as follows:

- Motivational Benefits - percentage of total citations 33%
- Performance and Policy Implementation benefits - percentage of total citations 30%
- Knowledge and Skills Development benefits - percentage of total citations 24%
- Managing Change and Succession benefits - percentage of total citations 13%

These broad categories relate to the three main stakeholders, mentee, mentor, the business (broadly understood, this may be public sector, private sector or SME). The percentage of the total number of cited benefits for each stakeholder is as follows:

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

- Benefits for the mentee 40% of total number of citations
- Benefits for the business 33% of total number of citations
- Benefits for the mentor 27% of total number of citations

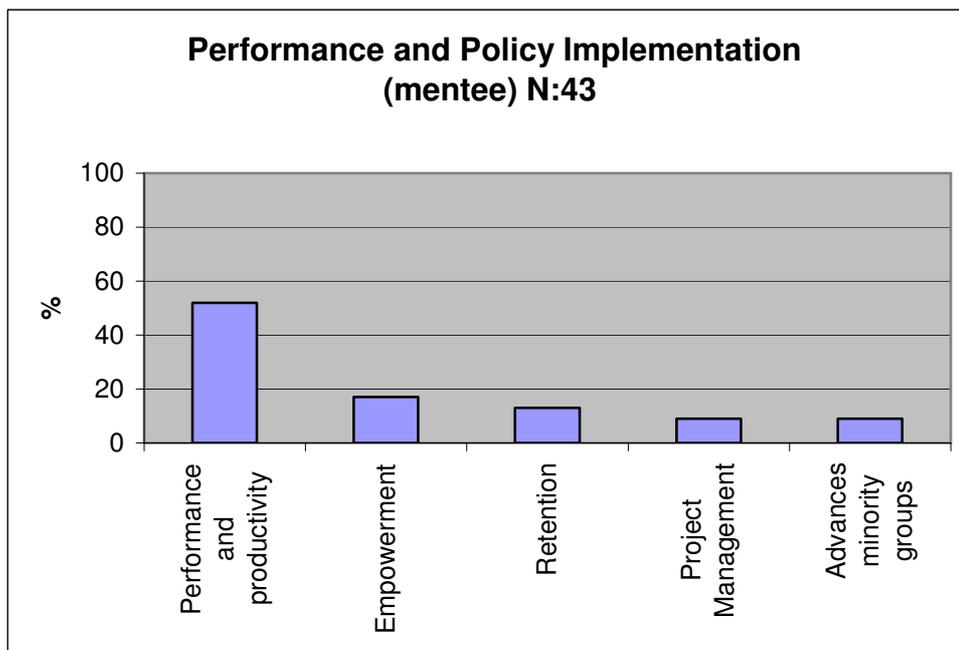
The methodology employed in the articles studied is indicated as - quantitative, qualitative or a blended approach.

The percentage of the total number of citations within each category is also indicated.

### **Benefits for the mentee** (N= the actual number of citations per category)

#### **Performance and Policy Implementation**

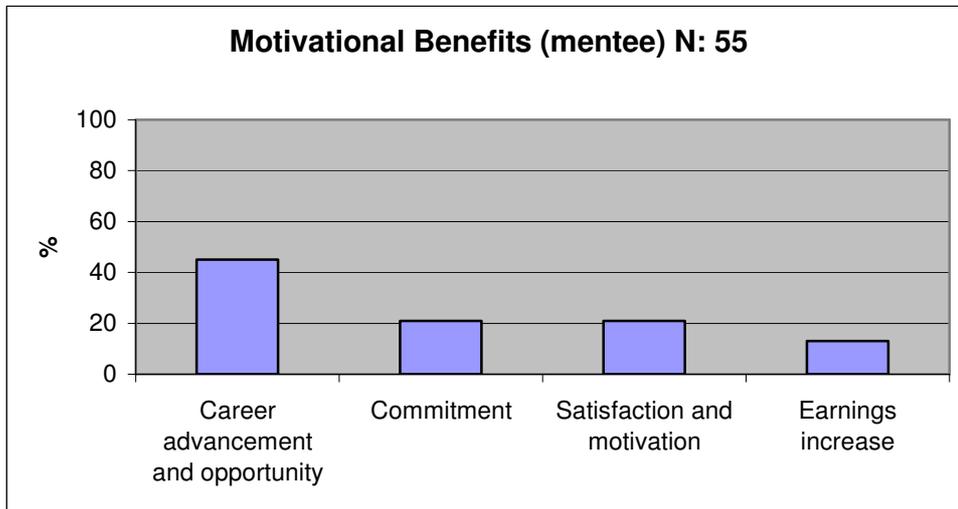
- Improved performance and productivity (quantitative) 52%
- Improves empowerment (qualitative) 17%
- Greater staff retention rates (quantitative) 13%
- Crucial contribution to successful project management (qualitative) 9%
- Advances minority groups and improves diversity management (blended studies) 9%



#### **Motivational Benefits**

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

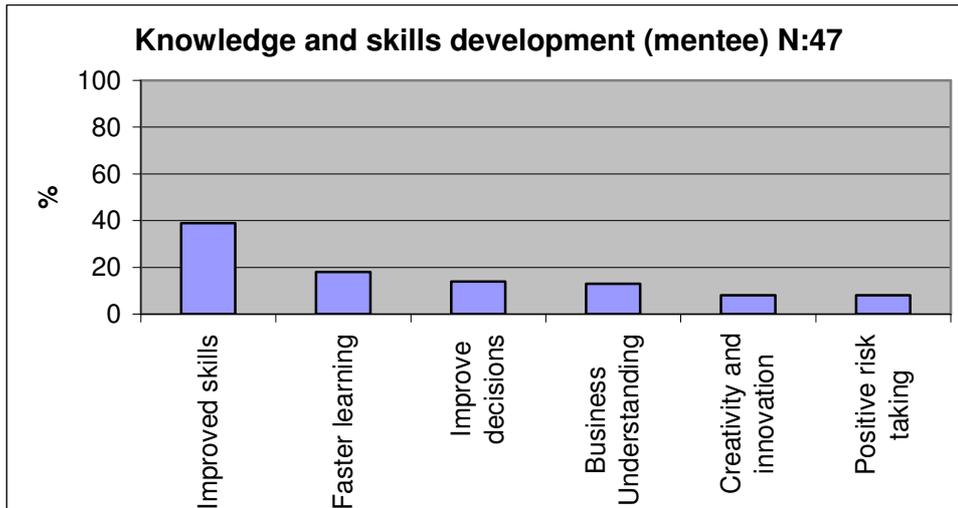
- Improved opportunities for career advancement (quantitative) 45%
- Improved commitment to business (qualitative) 21%
- Improved job satisfaction and motivation (blended studies) 21%
- Higher salaries and increased income (quantitative) 13%



### Knowledge and Skills Development

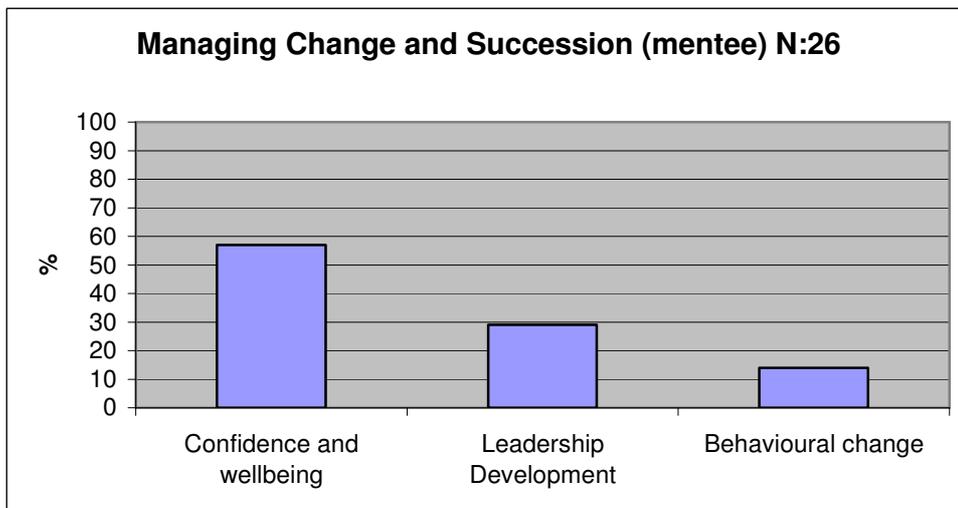
- Improved abilities and skills (blended studies) 39%
- Faster learning (blended studies) 18%
- Enhances decision making skills (qualitative) 14%
- Improved understanding of business – politics, policies, products and customers (qualitative) 13%
- Improved support for creativity and innovation (qualitative) 8%
- Encourages positive risk taking (qualitative) 8%

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review



### Managing Change and Succession

- Greater confidence and well-being (qualitative) 57%
- Develops leaders and leadership abilities (qualitative) 29%
- Supports behavioural change (qualitative) 14%

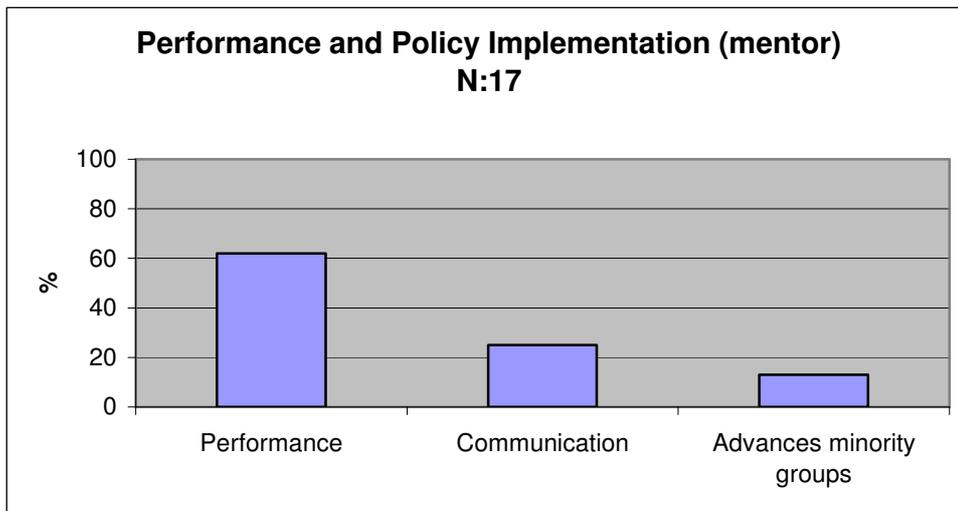


### Benefits for the mentor (N = total number of citations per category)

#### Performance and Policy Implementation

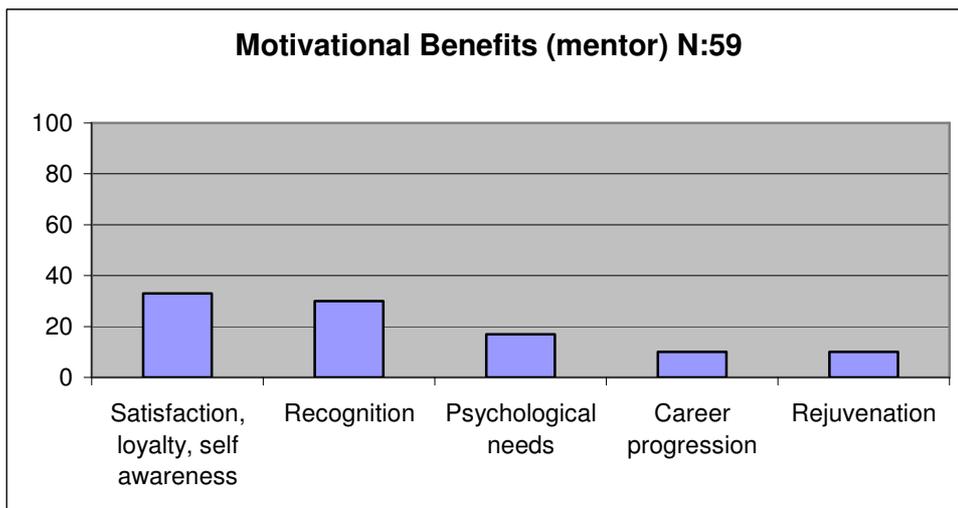
- Improves job performance through enhanced understanding and knowledge (blended studies) 62%
- Improves communication (blended studies) 25%
- Advances minority groups and improves diversity management (blended studies) 13%

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review



### Motivational Benefits

- Improves self-awareness, job satisfaction and loyalty (qualitative) 33%  
Improved recognition for spotting and developing talent (qualitative) 30%
- Fulfilment of core human psychosocial needs (qualitative) 17%
- Advances career and opens up new job opportunities (blended studies) 10%
- Rejuvenation and improved motivation (qualitative) 10%

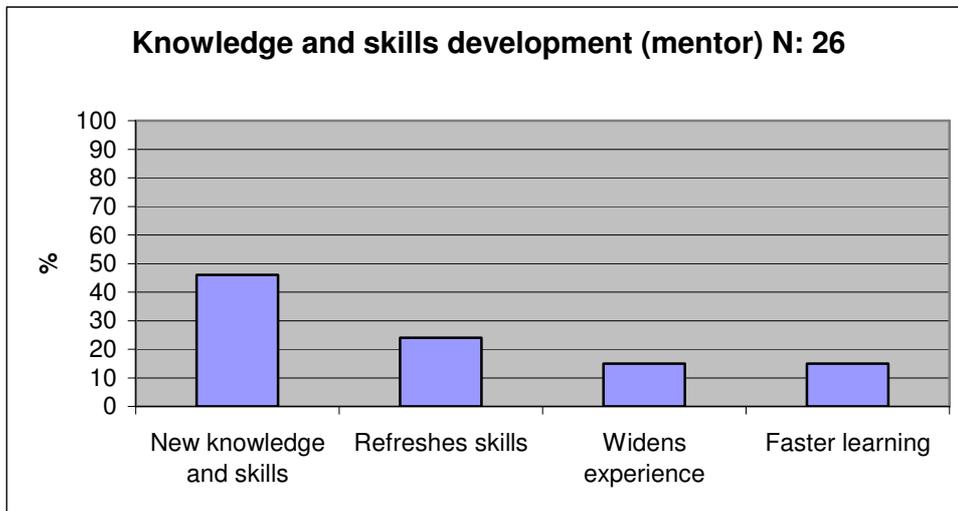


### Knowledge and Skills Development

- Develops new knowledge and skills (qualitative) 46%
- Refreshes skills (qualitative) 24%

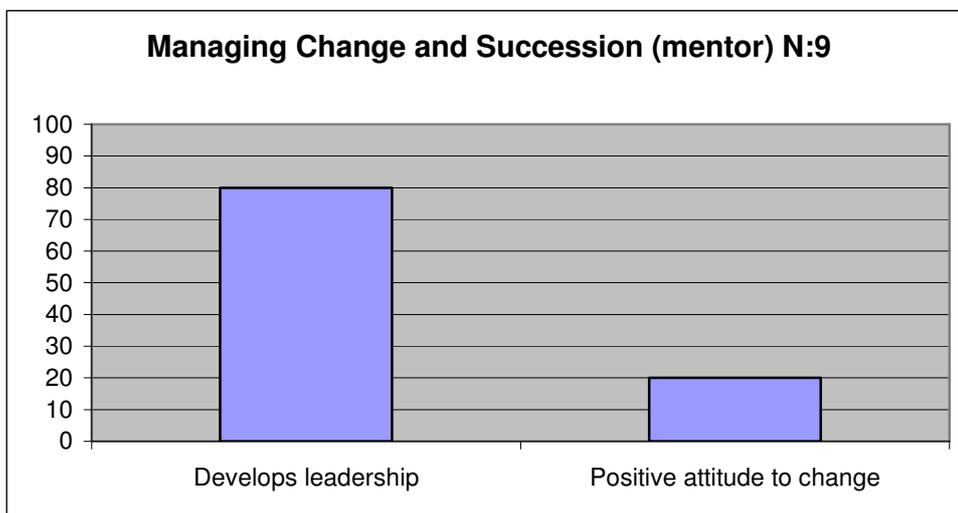
## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

- Widens experience (qualitative) 15%
- Faster learning (blended studies) 15%



## Managing Change and Succession

- Develops leadership abilities (qualitative) 80%
- Develops positive attitude to change (qualitative) 20%



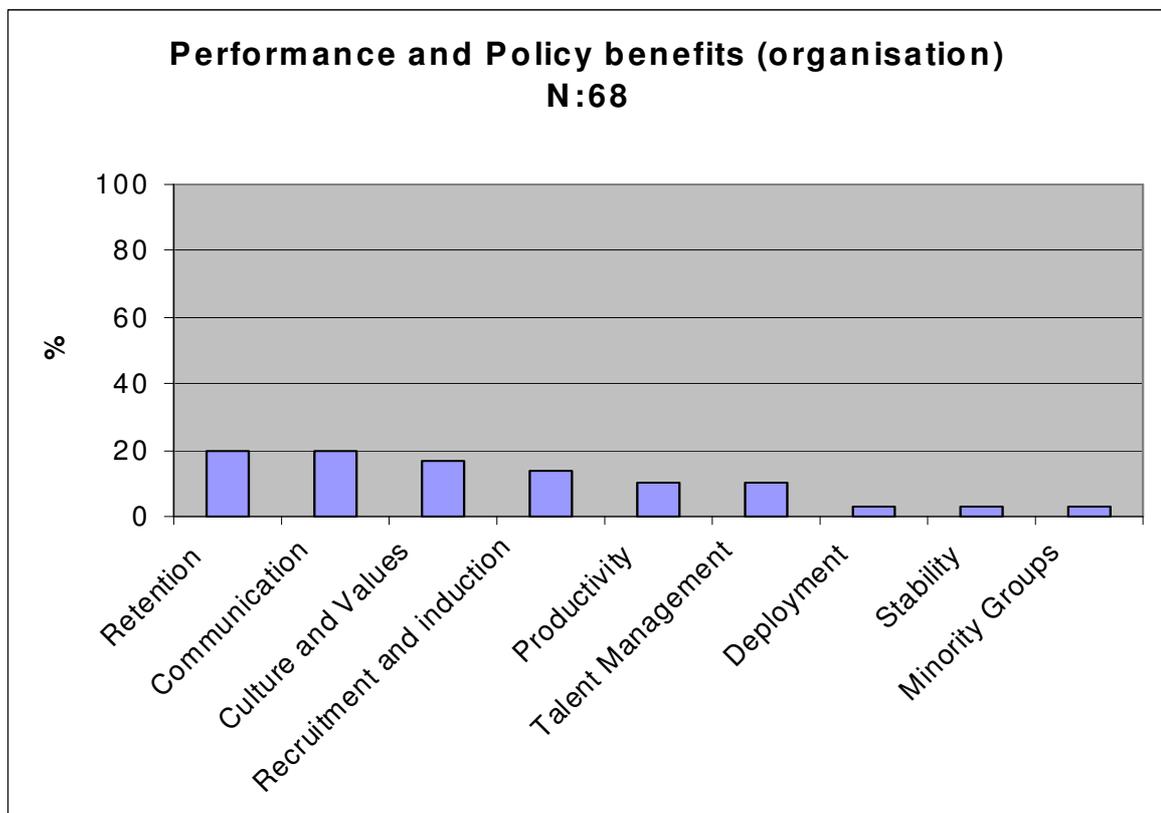
## Benefits for the organisation (N = total number of citations in each category)

### Performance and Policy Implementation

- Reduces staff turnover and improves retention (quantitative) 20%
- Improves information flow and communication (blended studies) 20%

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

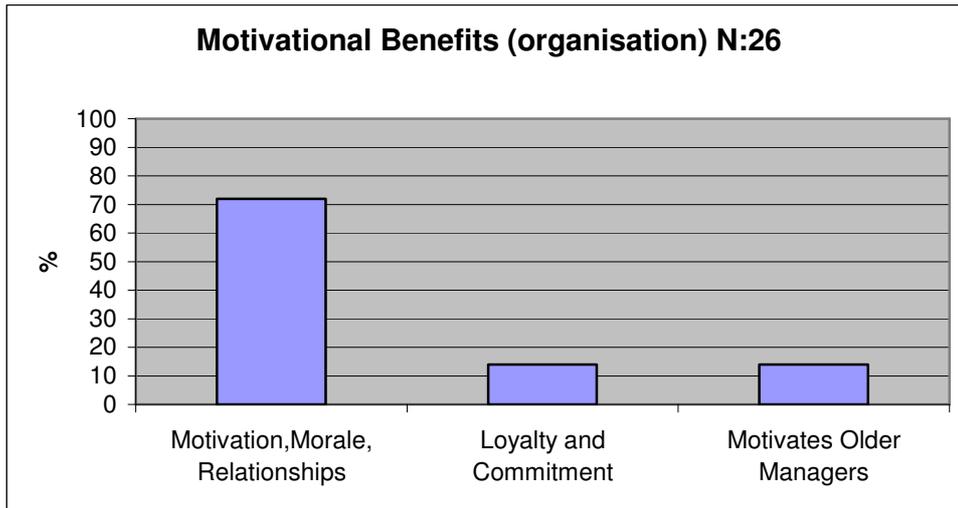
- Helps disseminate business values and develop culture (blended studies) 17%
- Supports recruitment and induction processes and reduces associated costs (blended studies) 14%
- Improves productivity (quantitative) 10%
- Helps manage talent (qualitative) 10%
- Improves use and deployment of people (qualitative) 3%
- Improves business stability (blended studies) 3%
- Advances minority groups (quantitative) 3%



### Motivational Benefits

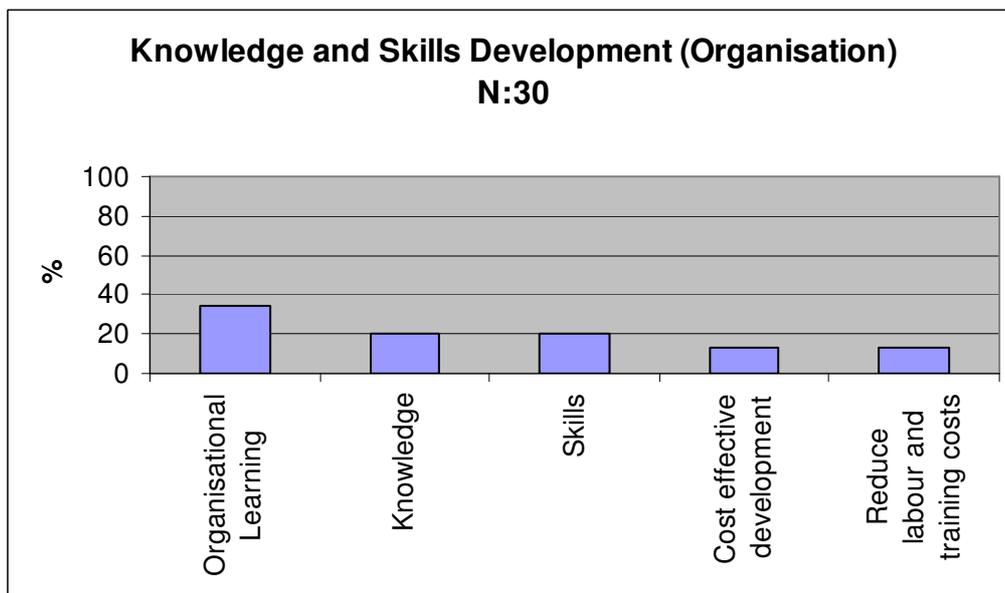
- Improves relationships, morale and motivation (blended studies) 72%
- Cultivates loyalty and commitment (qualitative) 14%
- Motivates older managers (blended studies) 14%

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review



### Knowledge and Skills Development

- Improves business learning (qualitative) 34%
- Improves knowledge of business politics, policies, products and customers (qualitative) 20%
- Ensures effective and efficient skill transfer (quantitative) 20%
- Provides cost effective development (quantitative) 13%
- Reduces labour and training costs (quantitative) 13%

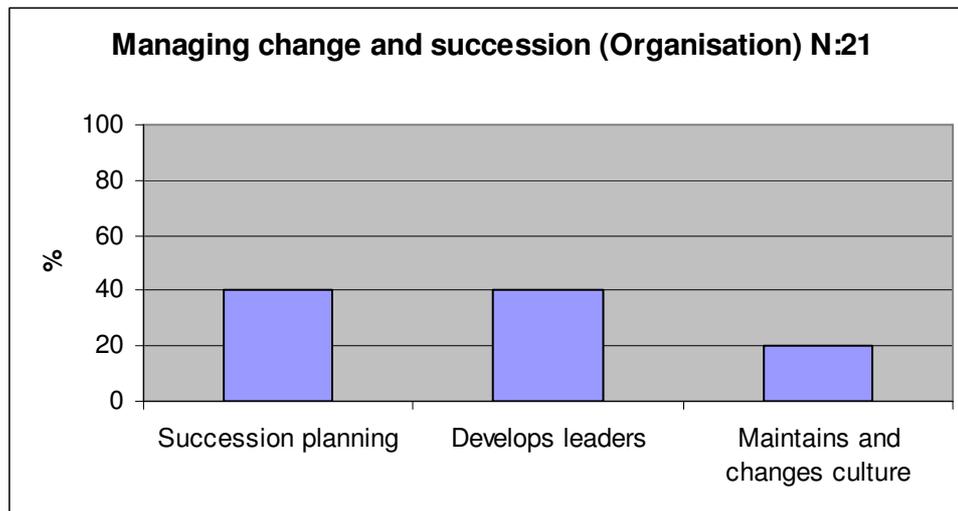


### Managing Change and Succession

- Improves succession planning (blended studies) 40%

## The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review

- Provides effective leadership development and identification of potential leaders (qualitative) 40%
- Change and culture change more easily managed (qualitative) 20%



## Some findings in specific sectors

### SMEs

Ten percent of the literature reviewed referred to SMEs. The benefits highlighted in research in this sector include:

- Improved job creation and business performance
- Increased business activity, sales and networking
- Successful transfer and development of skills and ability to cope with problems
- Increase ideas generation and knowledge enhancement
- Enhanced confidence, CVs, professional identity and job satisfaction
- Successful completion and achievement of objectives

One study stated *'there needs to be some form of support for smaller businesses which acknowledges their different needs and situations and, most importantly, gives them value for money'* (Porter, S. 2000:244)

Another (Sullivan, R. 2000) suggested, *'the added value of mentors is longer-term and that the ability to provide help just-in-time is a key factor in providing*

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

*greatest added value.'* (P166) and *'it could be argued that since the personal chemistry between the two individuals is so important then any attempt to pre-select or force a mentor/client relationship is likely to be unsuccessful.'* (P.170)

### **E-Mentoring small business to small business**

Approximately 5% of the literature studied was focussed on E-mentoring.

In one study (MCRU, Sheffield Hallam, 2003)

- 75% of mentees and 57% of mentors described their e-mentoring experience as positive.
- 89% of the mentors in the scheme and 50% of the mentees indicated that they would participate in a similar programme again.

Overall, feedback from participants was broadly positive for example:

*'I found the project rewarding in that it gave me an opportunity to improve my communication skills in imparting my knowledge and experience.'*

*'I think it is a worthwhile thing to do, as both parties can benefit.....'*

*'This has been a valuable learning experience for me.'*

*'Great idea, great service, helped with my isolation.'*

### **Youth Justice**

Only two studies were consulted for this sector, however, the results of these controlled studies are very impressive. Tierney, J.P. et al (1995) shows that after approximately 12 hours of work over a month with a volunteer mentor:

- The onset of drug use was significantly lower than in a non-mentored control group
- The onset of alcohol use 27% less
- 32% less frequency of hitting
- Slightly improved educational attainment
- Significantly reduced truancy
- Improved relationships with family
- Slightly improved friendships with peers

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

In Benioff, S. (1997) control group study, nearly three quarters of those in the mentored group who left the project moved into full-time education, training or employment and re-offending reduced by an impressive 60%.

### **Health Sector**

Four papers were analysed in the Health sector. Mentoring promotes the growth and development of nurses who will become future leaders in the profession. In a study (Madison, 1994) benefits for mentored nurses included:

- Enhanced thinking, risk taking and self-esteem
- Job enrichment and professional development
- Improved wisdom, commitment, growth, power, political awareness and job performance

In the UK a Department of Health study 'Mentoring for doctors' (2004) the benefits cited for doctors participating as mentees are:

- Improved reflection skills
- Support for dealing with specific problems
- Developing strategies for dealing with and resolving:
  - major crises in professional life
  - major change in ways of thinking and acting
  - significant changes in direction
- Confidence building in decision making
- Improved self-worth and job satisfaction

And as mentors:

- Increased motivation and job satisfaction
- Satisfaction for playing a role in developing talent
- Improved relationships with patients, colleagues and family members
- Improved problem solving abilities

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

Some mentoring doctors suggested that the concepts, principles and skills of mentoring provide them with a generic approach to practice which pervades all that they do.

### **Education Sector**

Two papers were consulted in the UK Educational Sector. There is mentoring for all levels of teacher and various arrangements for pupils. These include:

- Volunteering adults to mentor youngsters in school
- Peer mentoring schemes where older pupils mentor younger pupils
- Learning mentors – paid adults working in mainly inner city schools

In peer mentoring among pupils, some of the benefits include:

- Improved management of the transition to 'big' school
- Increased self esteem and confidence
- Support with study skills
- Develop 'key skills' in mentors
- Contribution to spiritual, health, and moral education (PSE)
- Enhancing anti-bullying strategies

### **And some of the youngsters say:**

*"I was really scared when I came to big school but my mentor was really friendly and helped me find my way around."* Year 7 Mentee

*"Even if I'm down they come over and ask me how I'm doing."* Year 8 Mentee

### **And some of the teachers say:**

*"Mentors give an insider's guide to school life."* Teacher

*"Youngsters now have a stake in their own school."* Form Teacher

### **Learning Mentor Schemes**

Cited benefits for pupils include:

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

- Improved self esteem in youngsters
- Improved confidence in youngsters
- Improved social and interpersonal abilities
- Improved learning and attainment
- Improved behaviour in the classroom and around school

### **Comments from Learning Mentors**

*“The teachers are under too much pressure and don’t have time to properly deal with some issues. We deal with stuff outside of the classroom. Sometimes if a youngster is late one morning, we can deal with that straight away, find out what it’s all about. This can set the youngster up for the rest of day and make all the difference.”*

*“One of my mentees was on ‘report’ and we talked about that and by the end of the week he had three ‘excellents’. He came to me and said ‘now then mate, we’ve done it.’ I said, no, you’ve done it, I’m just a part of it.”*

*“The young person benefits, the school benefits, the community benefits and future employers benefit by the youngsters being ready for work and, of course, the mentors gain a great deal of job satisfaction.”*

*“Talk to anyone associated with that young person, they will notice the difference.”*

### **Volunteer mentoring**

**The benefits cited are:**

#### **For the school:**

- Provides individualised support for pupils
- Can support pupils at all stages of development
- Assists in developing career plans
- Enables the school to focus on educational issues
- Supports achievement of school goals and targets

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

### **For the mentee:**

- Having a positive role model
- Builds confidence and self-esteem
- Builds problem solving skills
- Introduction to the world of work
- Helps develop self-awareness

### **For the mentor:**

- Making a contribution to the community
- Develops questioning and listening skills
- Increased awareness of diversity issues
- Enhances personal self esteem and motivation

### **For the businesses supplying volunteer mentors:**

- Raises the corporate profile
- Selling point in recruiting new staff
- Improves staff retention
- Builds interpersonal skills in the organisation

## **Examples of good practice evaluations in the SME sector**

### **The Mentoring for Export Programme**

The mentoring pilot was established as part of the wide array of services offered to organisations developing the international trade aspect of their business. The mentoring pilot was implemented and operating over a twelve to fifteen month timeframe between 2002 and June 2003 involving 11 mentoring partnerships.

An initial set of notes was produced to support agreed processes within the scheme subsequent to a meeting with scheme organisers.

The research is based on focus group sessions; telephone interviews with a cross-region sampling of advisors and ongoing communication with the Passport operational team. The themes that came out of those interactions

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cover issues such as mentors' abilities and competence; recruitment and timing issues; aspects that contribute to a dynamic mentoring relationship; and issues of commitment and buy-in to the process from everyone involved.

Overall feedback from International Trade Advisors (ITAs) and participants in the scheme have been broadly positive, with constructive comments about how the mentoring scheme can be implemented with even greater effectiveness as illustrated by the following:

*'My mentor was appropriate in terms of business sector, experience and commitment'*

*'I think mentoring is a great idea'*

*'I received unexpected but extremely useful advice and it wasn't directly to do with export'*

*One advisor commented: 'I see mentoring as a way of lightening my work load while adding to the services delivered'*

### **Summary of key success factors**

1. Participant (ITAs, mentee and mentor) commitment to the programme and prioritised attention given to mentoring relationship
2. Mentoring phase of overall programme customized to mentee's need
3. The importance of appropriate matching
4. The setting of specific goals of the mentoring relationship - established by individuals within relationship
5. Ongoing support to sustain motivation within mentoring relationship - possibly from ITAs
6. The importance of co-ordinating recruitment, participant development and matching interventions

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### **Recommendations for the mentoring scheme from focus groups**

#### **Features to be continued:**

1. To follow the guidelines for the recruitment and selection of mentees and mentors as agreed.
2. It would be advantageous to the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship if the mentor was explicit (with the mentee) about their expectation of benefits about participating in the scheme
3. Participants in mentoring relationship to have clarity about the overall programme's success factor measurements (expected outcomes)
4. Participants in mentoring relationship to agree success factors (outcomes) of relationship
5. Continue to build on the ITA's role in mentoring recruitment and selection process by:
  - increasing their understanding of what mentoring is and isn't
  - assisting them to understand where their role differentiates from the role of mentor and how the two roles dovetail
  - ITAs should assist the mentees to clearly understand that specific expert mentoring is not just a 'nice to have' but is critical to their business success

#### **Features to be developed:**

1. Timing of the mentoring relationship must be appropriate to specific needs of individual mentees
2. Action needs to be taken to ensure that there is sufficient buy-in from ITAs
3. Identification of 'satisfied customers' who can help to promote the scheme

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### **Evaluation of business to business e-mentoring**

The overall effectiveness of the BL4L/Prevista programme can be judged by the positive responses to the post-programme questionnaire. Some of those findings were as follows:

- 75% of mentees and 57% of mentors described their e-mentoring experience as a positive one. It is an indication that participants felt more than less positive about their experience.
- 89% of the mentors in the scheme and 50% of the mentees indicated that they would participate in a similar programme at some time in the future.
- Over 60% of mentees and over 55% of mentors cited convenience, flexibility and ease as the major benefits of email-based mentoring while as many as 75% of mentees (and over 20% of mentors) indicated there was an element of impersonality about this type of communication.

Overall, feedback from participants has been both broadly positive as well as explicit about the benefits as illustrated by the following:

*'I found the project rewarding in that it gave me an opportunity to improve my communication skills in imparting my knowledge and experience.'*

*'I think it is a worthwhile thing to do, as both parties can benefit.....'*

*'This has been a valuable learning experience for me.'*

*'Great idea, great service, helped with my isolation.'*

### **Key success factors**

One of the purposes of this report is to identify key success factors in running e-mentoring programmes for SMEs. The key success factors are as follows:

- 1 The importance of appropriate matching
- 2 The degree of desire that participants have to be involved in such a scheme in the first place
- 3 Establishing programme goals at the outset - mentee lead
- 4 Programme duration of at least 6 months

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- 5 Pre-programme training which helps participants to manage their expectations
- 6 Setting a communication plan at the outset of the programme and regular contact between mentoring partners
- 7 Supplementing email-based communication with other modes of communications
- 8 Assisting mentees to sustain motivation - e.g. frequent facilitator's messages of prompts and encouragement
- 9 Participant commitment to programme and making the effort to give some priority to the relationship
- 10 Establishing a good mentoring relationship (e.g. rapport and trust)

## **Recommendations**

### **Features to be continued**

1. Positive benefits were reported and the scheme could usefully (with specific and detailed attention to the above critical success factors) be rolled out.
2. The critical success factors outlined above be a focus of attention in all future schemes.
3. *'Providing options'* and *'evoking discover, insight and action'* are key skills developed by mentors that are valued by mentees. *'Listening effectively'* along with *'non-judgemental behaviour'* were also skills valued highly by mentees.
4. Using the business plan as a framework for discussion is considered valuable by some. It should be included as an option.
5. Frequent multi-mode, mentee-centred learning approaches need to be encouraged in future schemes to maximise benefit to mentees

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6. The mentee's level of satisfaction with the mentor's support along with their sense of enhancing business knowledge/acumen is strongly linked with their sense of benefiting from their programme participation, along with the mentor helping to establish trust and showing concern for their welfare. This is a useful reminder to mentors in future schemes to pay attention to the mentee's needs - both professionally and personally.

### **Features to be developed**

1. Many respondents would have preferred longer than 3 months. It is recommended that the scheme be set up for at least 6 months, with a review of progress made by the mentoring pair at 3 months.
2. A longer term evaluation of the pilot groups to see if business competitiveness and growth was influenced by the scheme in the perception of participants.
3. The opportunity to discuss issues/questions not available within a mentee's existing network could possibly be developed by using other modes of communication such as designated times for online chat with mentors and/or online chat with other mentees in the scheme.
4. More opportunities are needed for mentors to receive development. This could come from reviewing their practice with a master mentor or from networking among mentors. It would also be beneficial to review ongoing specific mentee feedback.
5. A process for involving the pairs in setting goals for their work should be more clearly established.
6. Establishment of a communication plan was linked to:
  - (i) mentees feeling that participating in the programme would help them develop professionally
  - (ii) a sense of moving towards their programme goals
  - (iii) the establishing of trust between them and their mentor. Therefore, more encouragement could be

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given to the importance of creating a communication plan at the start of the programme.

### **Conclusions**

Most writers broadly agree the benefits of mentoring. This suggests that there is a weight of *'truth'* in the literature.

There are numerous benefits of mentoring for the mentee, the mentor and the organisation (broadly defined) across all sectors.

Often these benefits are similar in nature for all three stakeholders whereas, sometimes they relate to one specific stakeholder i.e. the mentor, the mentee or the business.

The benefits for the mentee are greater in number than for the other two stakeholders. This is not surprising as mentoring is *for* the mentee.

The motivational benefits of mentoring are cited most frequently with performance, knowledge and skill, change and succession following behind.

**What are the benefits of mentoring across all sectors?** Overall, as follows:

#### **Mentee**

- Improved performance and productivity (performance is broadly understood)
- Career opportunity and advancement
- Improved knowledge and skills
- Greater confidence and well-being

#### **Mentor**

- Improved performance
- Greater satisfaction, loyalty and self-awareness
- New knowledge and skills
- Leadership development

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### **Organisation**

- Staff retention and improved communication
- Improved morale, motivation and relationships
- Improved learning

### **Which stakeholders benefit directly from mentoring activity?**

Across all sectors, the three main stakeholders, the mentee, the mentor and the organisation. Development Agencies benefit by individuals realising the benefits outlined above they contribute to:

- The development of the region
- Strategic change
- Facilitating partnerships
- Problem-solving
- Innovation and change
- Project management

### **What are the core conditions that enable the benefits to be realised?**

While it is the purpose of this literature review to examine the benefits of mentoring, it should also be noted that some writers mention some potential problems with mentoring.

These problems include:

- Fostering elitism
- Excluding the socially different
- Replicating management behaviour rather than changing it
- Maintaining the 'status quo' based on 'accumulation of advantage'
- Replicating and sustaining exploitative hierarchical systems
- Manipulation and social engineering
- A power and control relationship
- Mentee dependency

Some research suggests that these problems manifest under certain conditions and in certain types of organisation. For example, in 'fast tracking, career oriented schemes' in large organisations, some of these negative

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effects are more likely. These effects are less likely in 'developmental mentoring' environments.

The variable conditions we have identified in the course of this work are:

- The social context (culture, climate, type of business, values etc.)
- The purpose of the mentoring
- The skills of the mentor and mentee
  
- Attitudes and values of the mentor and mentee
- Training and support for the mentor and mentee
- Formal schemes vs Informal, natural mentoring
  
- Amount of time given to mentoring and length of relationship
- Scheme design
- Human 'chemistry'
- Stakeholders' understanding of the mentoring process
- Recognition within the 'organisation' of the legitimacy of mentoring
- Recognition that learning is important
- Evaluation/research methodology

It is therefore important to consider the combinations of elements that contribute to effective mentoring in any research or evaluation.

### **Conditions for Success in Mentoring**

There is broad agreement in the literature as to the conditions needed to realise the benefits of mentoring. In particular, the following model, derived from Kram (1985), to improve the mentoring process is particularly helpful.

- Agreeing the scope and purpose of the mentoring
- Identifying the factors that will support mentoring and those that will inhibit it
- Addressing these issues in an implementation plan
- Ongoing evaluation

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This can be applied before the mentoring starts or to improve an existing scheme.

In addition, the literature suggests a range of issues that need to be considered as follows:

**Voluntarism** – mentoring is essentially a voluntary activity. The degree of voluntarism will depend on the situation and the circumstances. In some cases, putting people together and asking them to contract for a specific number of meetings (i.e. 3) before they review the relationship can be helpful. It can also assist the process if both parties agree on a ‘no fault divorce clause’ as a safe guard.

**Training** – both the mentor and the mentee will need some orientation towards the scheme. This may involve a skills training programme for both mentors and mentees. Sometimes this can be done with them together in the same programme.

**Ongoing support** – Mentors often need support. This may take the form of a mentor support group or one to one mentoring supervision – a mentor to the mentor. There is also benefit in mentors from different sectors coming together to share practice and experiences. The purpose of bringing mentors together is to discuss mentoring process issues, debrief mentors, develop skills and to improve understanding.

**Matching** – It is important to have a clear matching process to which the participants subscribe. It is also important to establish a ‘no fault divorce clause’ after say, the first 3 meetings.

**Establishing reviewable groundrules** – It is important to clarify the boundaries of the relationship at the start. Garvey’s (1994) ‘Dimensions Framework’ is helpful here.

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**On going review** – Recent research from the US (Neilson et.al. 2003) concludes that the most important factor in successful outcomes to mentoring is regular feedback and review within the relationship about the relationship. Establishing groundrules at the start can facilitate this process.

**Whose agenda?** – Mentoring is for the mentee. The research suggests that attempts to impose the agenda within mentoring on the mentee result in manipulation and social engineering. The benefits of mentoring to all stakeholders result from broadly following the mentee's agenda.

**Evaluation and monitoring** – Ongoing evaluation of the scheme is important also. There is little point in evaluating the scheme after say, two years, to unearth problems, which could have been resolved at the time.

### **Does mentoring contribute to economic prosperity and social well-being?**

From the evidence present here, mentoring contributes to economic prosperity and social well-being by:

- Benefiting all stakeholders
- Improving motivation among participants across all sectors
- Improving performance in a range of social, educational and business activities
- Enabling policies to be effectively implemented in all sectors
- Developing knowledge and skills in all sectors
- Facilitating and managing change
- Developing leadership and enabling succession planning

### **Is mentoring worthwhile?**

The answer must be 'yes' but subject to certain conditions and don't expect 100% success 100% of the time.

## **The Benefits of Mentoring: A literature review**

### **About the authors of the report**

The Mentoring and Coaching Research Unit at Sheffield Hallam University represents the most substantial collection of mentoring and coaching researchers in Europe. It is leading the way in mentoring and coaching research. Members of the Unit are actively engaged in:

- The design and practical application of mentoring and coaching schemes in range of organisational settings
- Mentoring and coaching individuals
- Mentor and coach education and training through accredited and non accredited programmes
- Mentor and coach supervision
- Mentoring and coaching research and consultancy
- Writing and publishing on mentoring and coaching

The members of the Unit are active in the European Mentoring and Coaching Council and participate in EMCC research projects, edit the International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching and help organise the EMCC's annual conference.

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