



ART of
MENTORING
SPOTLIGHT

The Practice of Mentoring

Benchmarking Companies 2017





Mentoring programs provide for an effective means of transferring technical and cultural knowledge in an increasingly transient and casualised workforce. As baby boomers prepare to head for the hills, there has never been a more crucial time to capture and impart their learnings, so a new generation can lead us confidently into the future.

In 2016, we surveyed hundreds of private sector companies and industry associations to delve into the benefits, roadblocks and practical aspects associated with mentoring programs. The report was so well received that we surveyed again in 2017, and will continue to monitor these trends in the years to come as mentoring shapes itself.

Let us delve into the details.



Do they or don't they?

It appears companies have the desire for mentoring programs but lack the drive, the driver or the roadmap.

Two-thirds of respondents currently offer no mentoring program to their employees. Despite this, 68% see a need for mentoring but have not yet implemented a program due to a lack of clarity on where to start, other initiatives taking precedence or insufficient funding.

As employees begin to demand mentoring programs, companies without them will be left behind in the race to become an Employer of Choice. They run the risk of losing valuable intellectual property and high potential talent within their organisation.

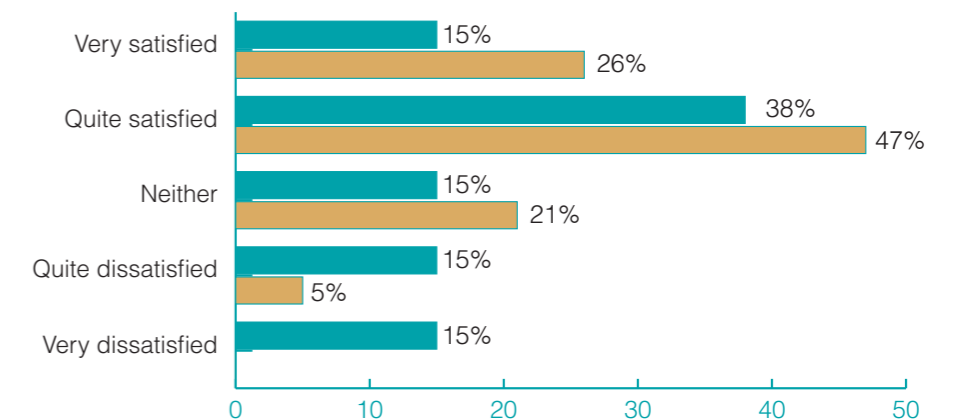
Why our company currently has no mentoring program?

Want to initiate program but not sure where to start	29%
On list of "things to do", other initiatives taking precedence	21%
Ran program in the past but not very successfully	14%
Employees interested, but not sufficient budget	11%
Not enough employee interest	7%
Employees interested, but not sufficient people-power to initiate/manage	7%
Never thought to offer a mentoring program	7%
We don't think employees will be interested, but not verified	4%

Are we satisfied?

The 2017 data reveals a worrying decline in program satisfaction, usually a good indication of program effectiveness. This can largely be explained by the corresponding drop in benchmarking scores outlined below.

Level of satisfaction



Core Standards of Best Practice

The International Standards for Mentoring and Coaching – ISMCP (www.ismcp.org) provides a framework for best practice in mentoring programs. Our benchmarking is based on the degree of alignment in program structure, implementation and delivery with each standard. Scores of 5 or less suggest a real shortfall against best-practice design.

- 1 Clarity of purpose**
2016 8/10 2017 9/10 ↑
- 2 Stakeholder training and briefing**
2016 5/10 2017 5/10 –

- 3 Processes for selection and matching**
2016 6/10 2017 4/10 ↓
- 4 Effective processes for measurement and review**
2016 5/10 2017 5/10 –
- 5 Maintains high standards of ethics and pastoral care**
2016 4/10 2017 4/10 –
- 6 Supports participants through the process/systems of program administration**
2016 8/10 2017 5/10 ↓

A standout feature of company mentoring programs is their clarity of purpose. But unfortunately that's where it stops. There is much room for improvement against what is being achieved across other industry segments and their corresponding satisfaction levels.

Why so glum?

Program structure, implementation and delivery

Program structure differs significantly from company to company. As noted, one thing companies are getting right is they know why a mentoring program makes sense. Perhaps the biggest mistake made is pushing through a mentoring program that has not been properly thought through and has no key executive sponsors, project owner or implementation strategy.

The study in 2017 revealed that program structure is linked to program satisfaction. The programs with a formal, well-developed framework reported higher levels of satisfaction than those of more casual programs. It stands to reason that the more planning, resources and time invested into any program, the greater its chance of success.

Compare these...

A Casual Program Response – Neither satisfied or dissatisfied with program

“There has been a soft launch with materials available online. With additional resourcing, there is an opportunity for greater participation and outcomes. This is an opportunity area for the business. We do not have adequate tracking and monitoring at this point, largely due to financial and human resource prioritisation.”

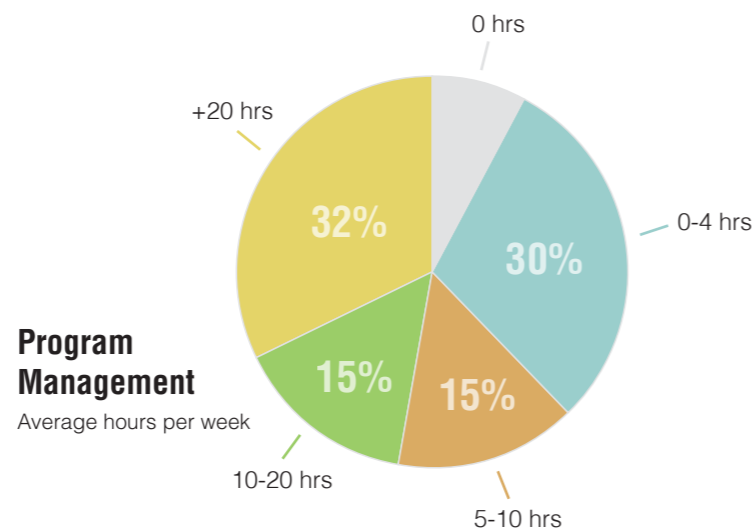
A Formal Program Response – Very satisfied with program

“We did a huge amount of research around what made for a successful program and why so many programs failed. From there we designed our own program and aim to be best-in-class. Evaluation results: 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program was working for them, their match was good, their knowledge and skills were improving in their identified learning areas, and the program was worth the time and effort. So far, results have been very positive.”

Resourcing

Effective mentoring programs need to be adequately resourced to handle the promotion, application and matching process, participant liaison, training, communications and problem solving.

Most program managers and stakeholders underestimate the time required to run an effective mentoring program.



Less training leads to lower satisfaction levels

With less than half of companies represented offering training to their mentees and mentors, it stands to reason that participant engagement will fade with mentors ill-equipped to provide support, and mentees unclear of their rights and responsibilities.

“Most mentors and mentees cannot and do not maintain contact. Time constraints are an issue, as well as a misunderstanding of why the mentee even submitted the application.”

While time constraints appears a feasible explanation on the surface, why is it that some program participants find the time and others do not?

We can gain deeper insight from those who were most satisfied with their program. This study reinforces past findings indicating a direct correlation between the level of training received by mentees and mentors and the level of overall program satisfaction.

Mentors need training in the skills to offer quality mentoring support and mentees need training on how to make the most of their mentoring experience.

Self-matching often doesn't work

One of the most important aspects of program success is good mentor and mentee matching.

Self-matching is inadvisable for a range of reasons, including:

- Pick Me** High profile mentors are likely to be in highest demand, putting them in a position of having to choose out of many mentees and potentially be seen as “playing favourites”
- Sideline** Mentees who are introverted or lacking confidence will not be attracted to a program where they need to approach the mentor directly to ask for guidance
- Mini Me** Mentees are likely to choose mentors based on personalities similar to their own, whereas the perfect mentor may be someone whose style is quite different to the mentee
- Popularity Polariser** Self-matching can cause discord due to mentoring choices being seen as a popularity poll amongst the executives/senior managers volunteering as mentors

Wise Move Mentees are likely to want mentoring from the most senior mentor available, whereas, the best mentor for them is one who may be one or two career steps ahead of them

With 31% of companies represented in this research having a self-matching program framework, it should not be surprising to see lower satisfaction levels with program outcomes.



Measuring Success

We observed in 2016 that companies could do a great deal more in program measurement, and this has not changed in 2017. Most companies are using participant satisfaction and goal attainment as the only indicators of success. We would like to see more use of such measurements as return mentor rate, and correlation of program participation with employee engagement and retention.

A program with purpose

The purpose behind company mentoring programs broadly fell into five key categories:

- > Provide early career development
- > Develop and retain high potential talent
- > Leadership development
- > Support change management strategy
- > Support diversity program (e.g. women in leadership)

TREND ALERT

Mentoring is moving up the priority list into a must have!

Respondents told us that of their mentoring programs:

- 63%** believed mentees increased their **productivity**
- 54%** felt participants have **higher engagement** with the company compared with non-participants
- 45%** believe their program has helped them **retain** valued employees
- 36% thought mentees tended to improve their work **performance**
- 27% felt mentees secured a **promotion/secondment/transfer** as a result of their participation
- 18% agreed mentors have built their **leadership** capacity
- 9% believe that participants have secured a **salary increase** as a result of their participation
- 9% were unclear what benefits have been delivered

The benefits delivered by their programs were consistent with published research evidence that mentoring programs deliver multiple outcomes. They can help engage, attract and retain employees, build a desirable corporate brand and strengthen leadership capacity within the organisation.

Did you know?

38% of respondents' programs are targeted at high potential talent

Convenient Connecting:
39% of participants connect virtually



Pride & Privilege

In 2017, we witness a trend towards lower satisfaction levels in mentoring programs, fuelled by a lack of structure and resource investment. Where programs have been formally initiated and managed, there are valuable outcomes to be had at all levels of an organisation. In essence, ensuring a strong framework is in place for your program, will enable you to foster a sense of privilege and commitment amongst mentees and pride in mentors.

Our recommendations on the key themes from this report are:

High dropout rates

High dropout rates are caused by lack of structure. Increase program completion rates by:

- > ensuring expectations of participation are clear and agreed to
- > providing training to equip mentors
- > allowing preparation time in work plans
- > getting line manager buy-in
- > linking participation to KPIs
- > ensuring that participants opt in to the program

Matching management

Administrator matching is best managed by an objective third party person or panel, based on:

- > developmental needs of mentoring and strengths of mentor
- > a gap of 1 or 2 career steps
- > a match that will stretch and challenge the mentee to reach full potential
- > mentor's track record of effectiveness

Learning from standards

Best practice standards create quality mentoring programs by having:

- > a formal application process and program code of conduct
- > a dedicated mentoring program manager
- > formal program start and close dates
- > regular reviews and evaluation processes



At Art of Mentoring we believe mentoring enriches people's lives and strengthens their communities, and that every person, no matter where they are, deserves a chance to enjoy the rich benefits of mentoring done well.

We combine evidence-based mentoring expertise with the latest technology to enable companies to develop and deliver high-quality, cost-effective mentoring programs.

We service clients around the world from our base in Australia.

To learn more about mentoring, download free resources and find out how to make mentoring work in your company, please visit our website.

 www.artofmentoring.net



info@artofmentoring.net



www.artofmentoring.net



**ART of
MENTORING**

Thank you to all the people who took the time to respond to our survey. By sharing your experience, you have helped us support the continuous improvement of mentoring program delivery in the company sector.