

Ten key issues to make a mentoring programme work

1. Clarity of purpose

Why have a mentoring scheme? What aims? What will happen differently and better as a result? Are mentors or mentees the primary focus?

2. Top Management support

Are enough senior managers aware, of, and really supportive of the scheme? How are they involved? Do they see it as adding value?

3. Integrate and link

Ensure the mentoring programme connects with other relevant initiatives, and that it is anchored on organisationally significant issues and needs.

4. Work with volunteers

Have a mentor specification, and make known what the role involves. Don't just accept volunteers, select with care.

5. Resource and funding

Are enough resources - time and budget especially - committed? Are time frames sensible? Don't expect too much too soon.

6. Support and reward

Recognise the value of the mentors - find ways to reward them - accreditation of their efforts, or perhaps payment of professional fees?

7. Publicise and market

Make sure the scheme is promoted, and that all with an interest get to know about, and are given a chance to play a role.

8. Be ready for challenges

Don't expect a completely smooth ride. Maintain control, but this shouldn't mean over-intervention. Anticipate and expect issues that need attention.

9. Monitor and evaluate

Mentoring should not be any different to other development efforts, so establish objectives that are then reviewed and successes identified.

10. Claim the payoffs

Attribute changes for the better to the mentoring programme - take every chance to properly claim organisational benefits that result from the scheme.