

Appendix A: Survey Findings

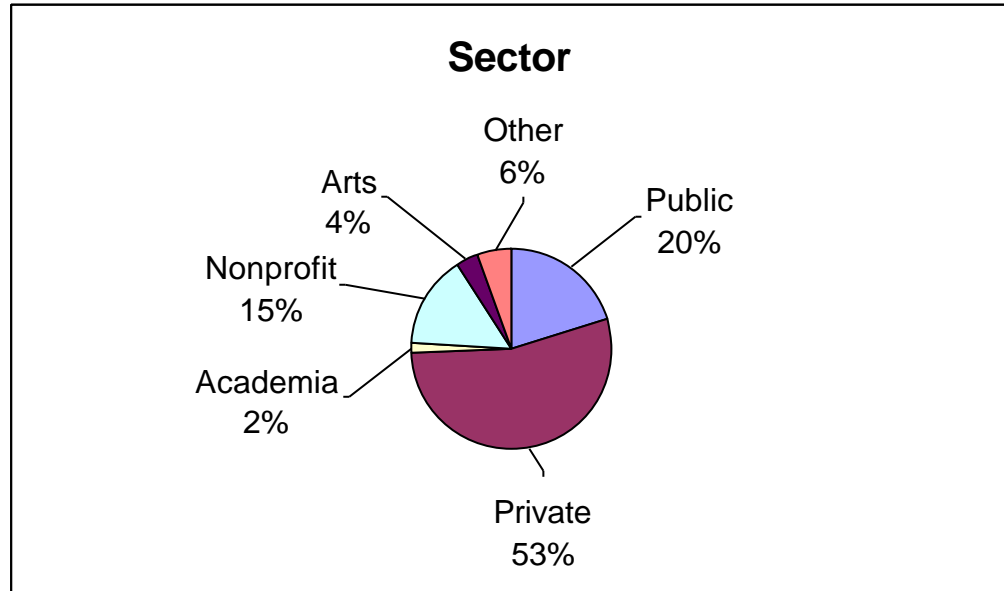
In this appendix, we present findings from a survey on the topic of mentoring in Manitoba organizations. The survey was conducted during the summer of 2001. We present the findings in two ways:

- Quantitative Results – We present graphs that depict statistical results from the survey. These survey findings are based on 110 respondents.
- Qualitative Results – We present respondent comments and anecdotes transcribed verbatim from the completed surveys.¹

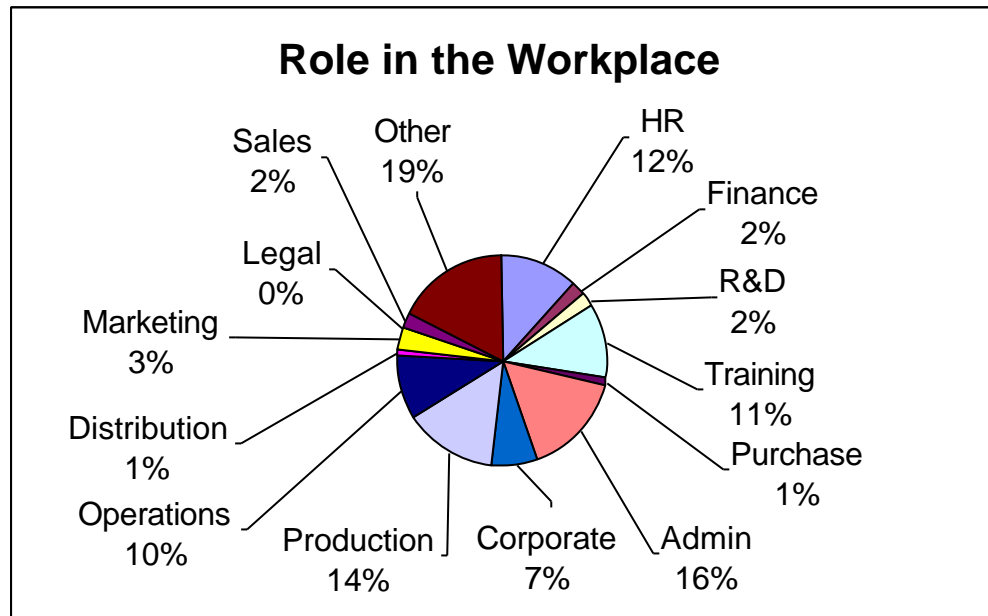
We also include the survey that we sent out at the end of Appendix A.

General Information

Quantitative Results

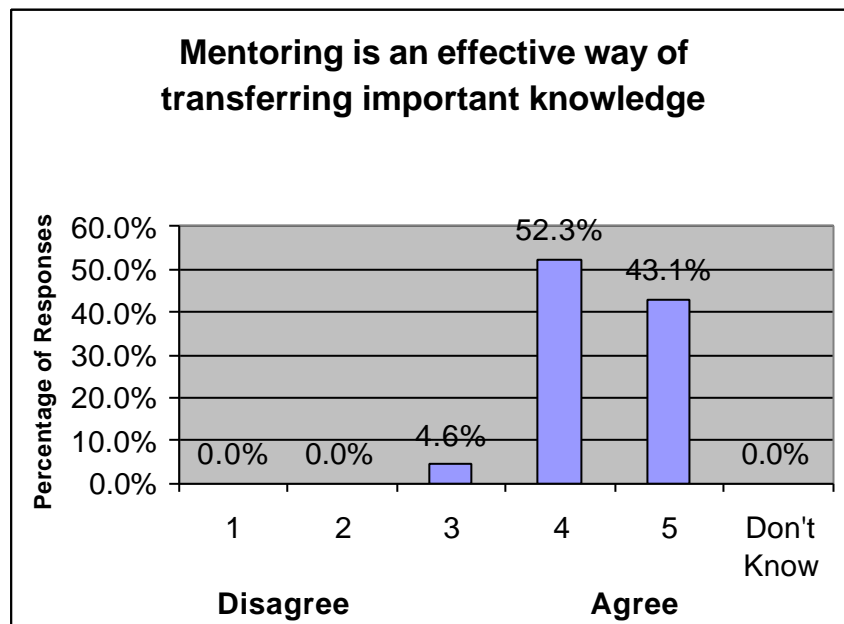


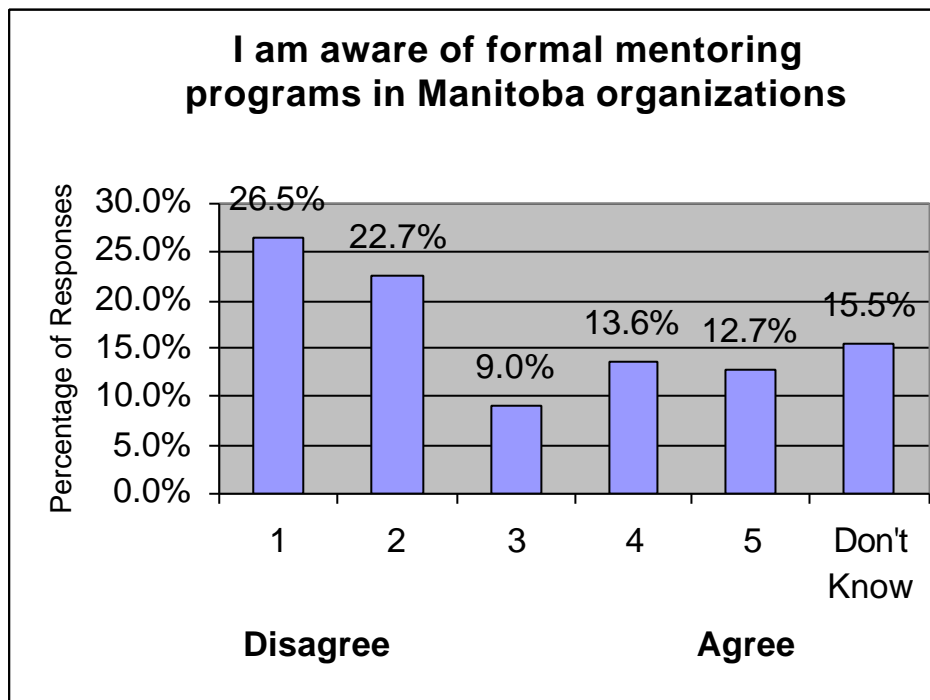
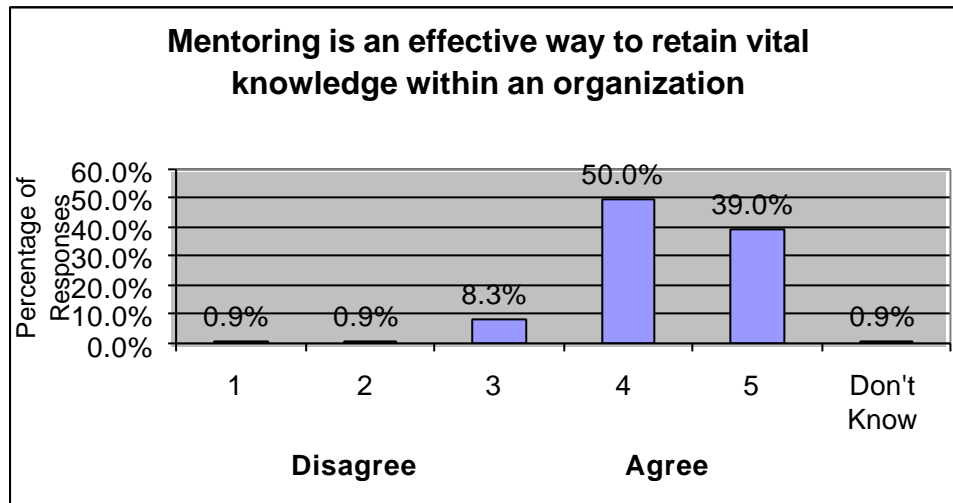
¹ To improve the readability of the comments and anecdotes, we have made minor revisions in terms of correcting spelling, grammatical errors, and sentence structure without changing the meaning of the comment or anecdote. We omitted one comment due to illegible handwriting.

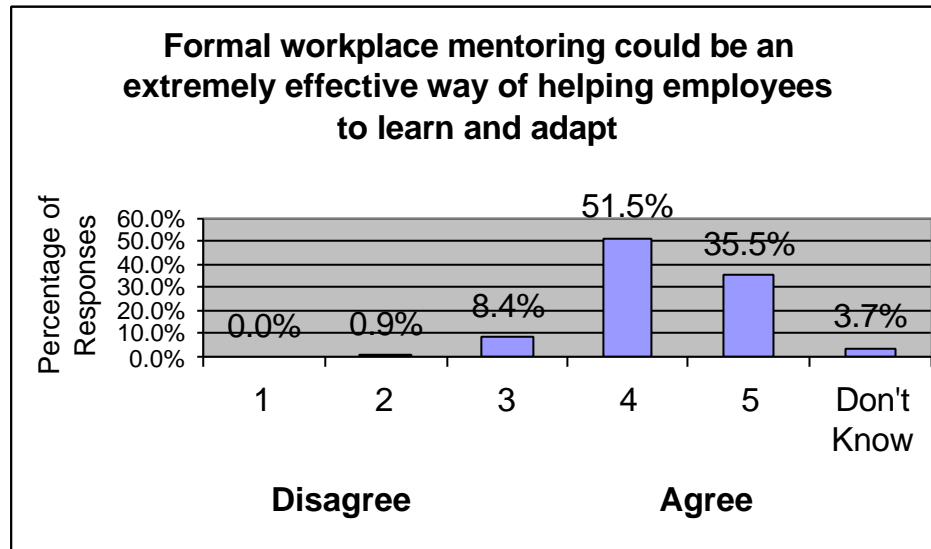
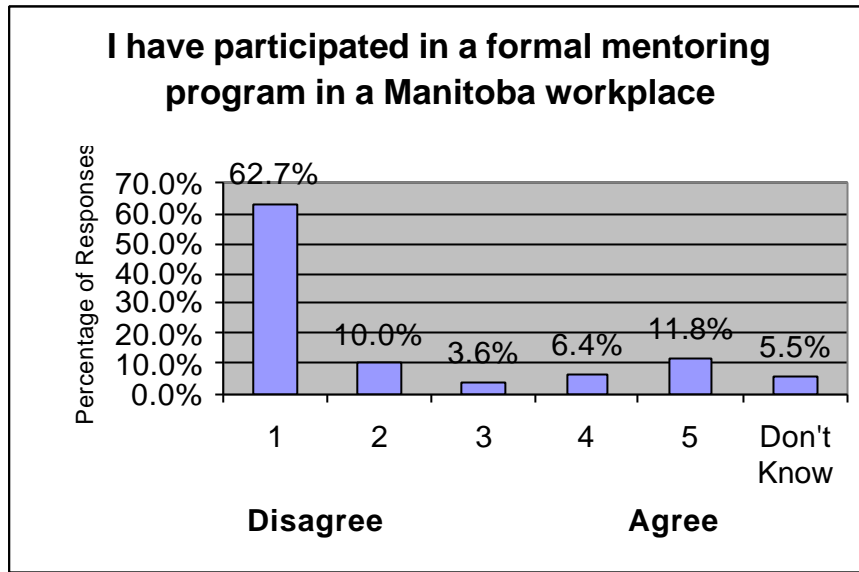


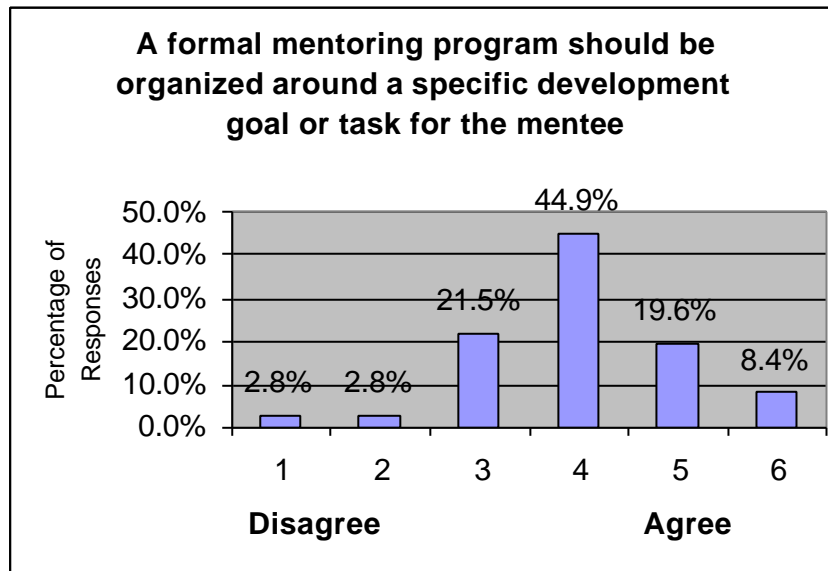
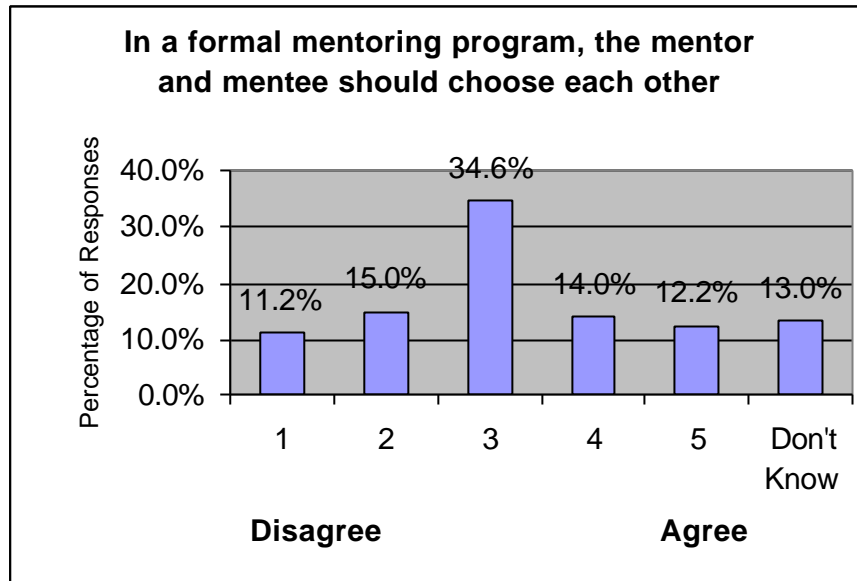
Section I: Have you had experience with formal or informal mentoring in your current workplace?

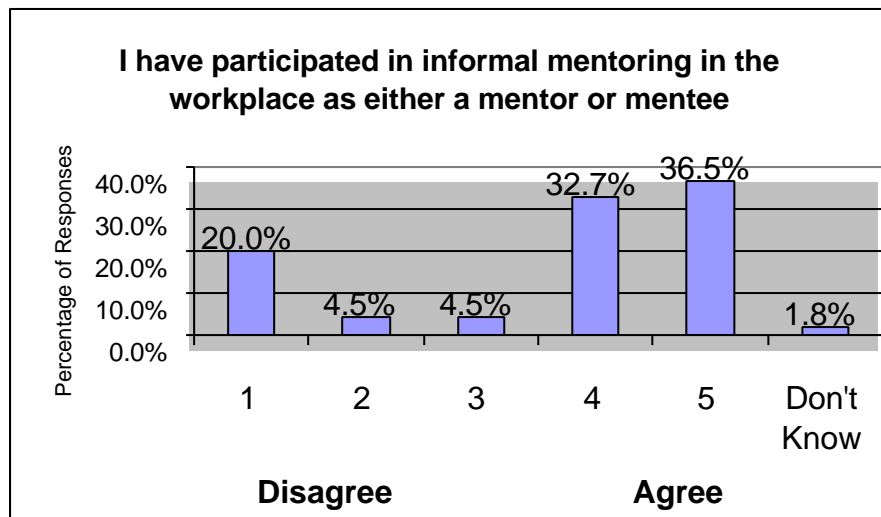
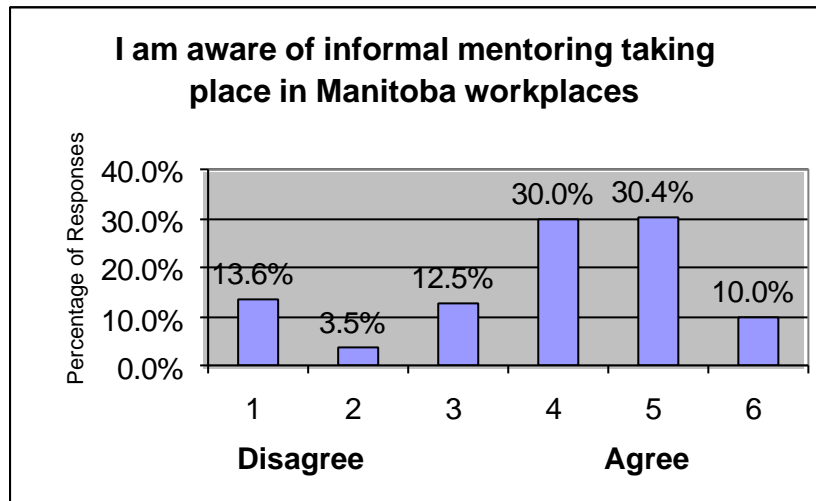
Quantitative Results

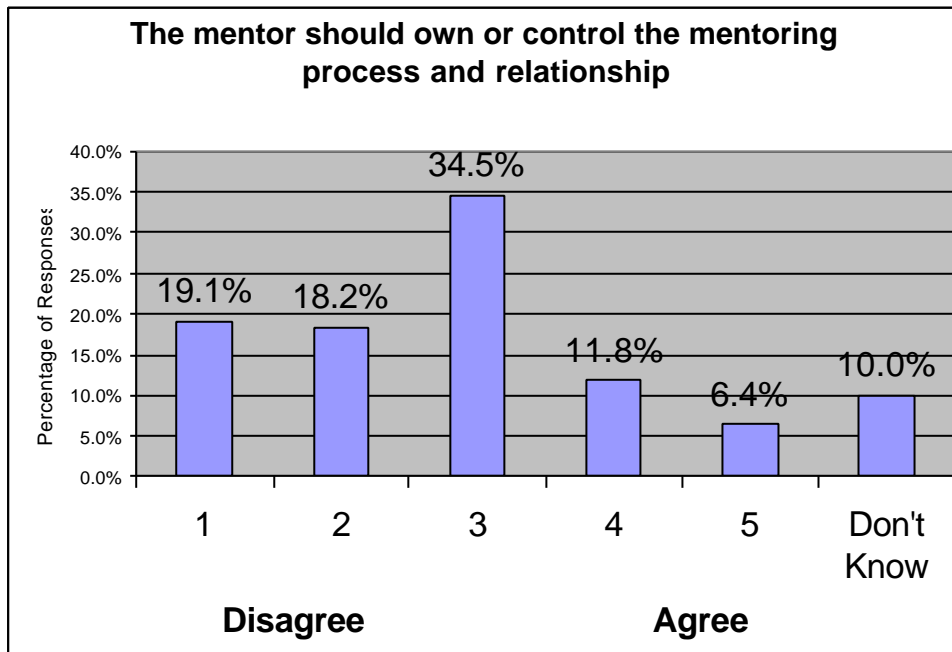
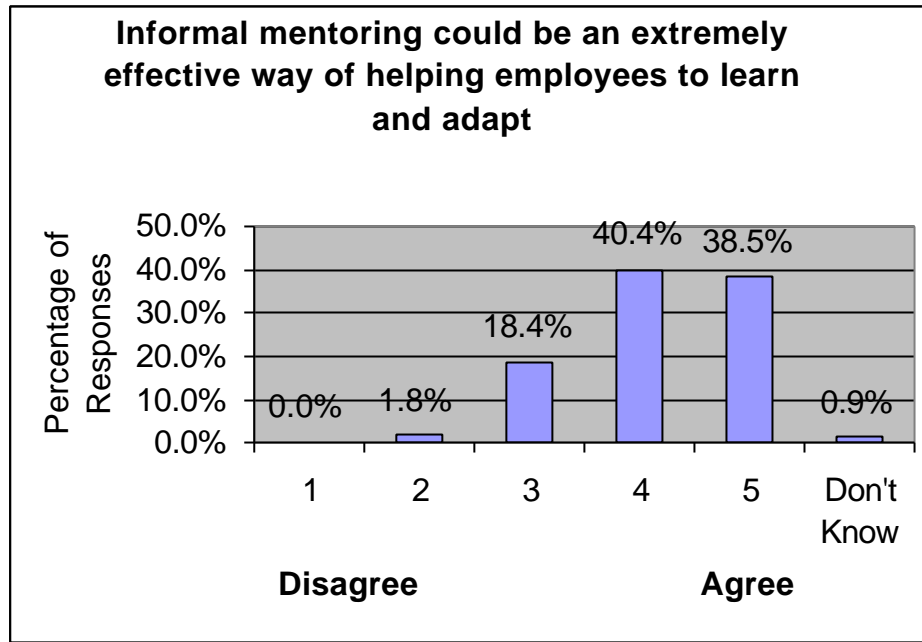


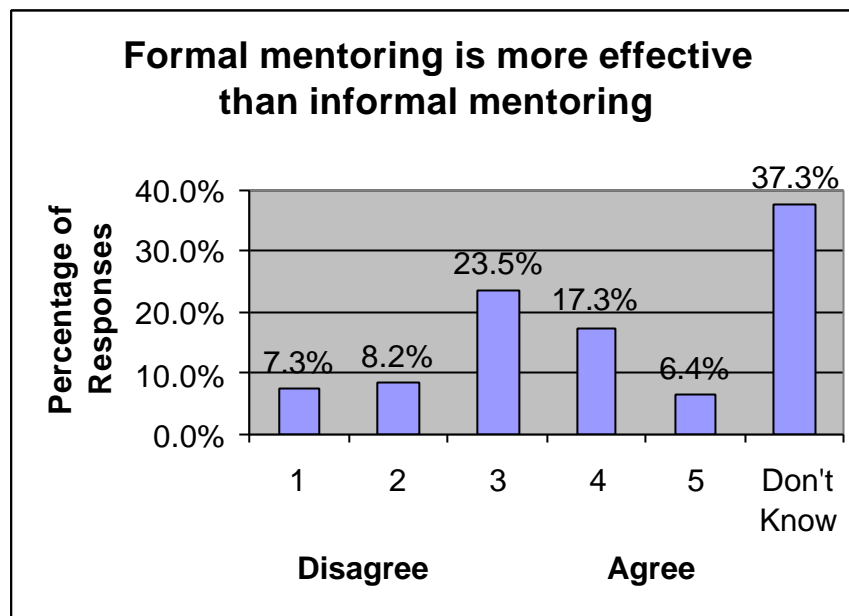












Qualitative Results – Respondent Comments on Section I

Is there anything you would like to add about your experiences with formal and informal mentoring in the workplace?

- Effective mentorships only achieve successful conclusions if clear objectives and procedures are developed and then accepted by both the mentor and mentee.
- Mentoring helps benefit one's career with another's experience and knowledge.
- No experience with formal mentoring other than through my educational experience.
- Informal mentoring can be very valuable when the right people are in place or one has access to a mentor.
- I have noticed in certain organizations that mentoring women is a challenge simply because typically there are fewer female mentors available in higher positions. In some cases, and to some people, being mentored by someone of the same gender is important (e.g. "primary caregivers" can relate better to one another).
- Informal and formal mentoring are both extremely valuable. The development of a personal rapport enables the mentee to ask questions they may not normally feel comfortable asking. There seems to be a positive feeling amongst those involved. It can help with career exploration addressing difficult situations like discrimination in the workplace.
- I have only been involved in informal sessions between myself and my staff, and myself and colleagues.

- I have coordinated mentoring experiences, but have not been a mentor. There should be specific objectives, etc. if you are going to use the mentoring model.
- The mentoring program I participated in took place over the first year after I was hired. At the time, I felt that it would have been beneficial to extend it beyond the one year.
- Both formal and informal mentoring contributed substantially to my development while working for a large corporation. Being a mentor in a formal arrangement was highly developmental for me as well. Recently, as a consultant, I enjoyed a formal mentorship arrangement with two experienced and established consultants (through the process of attaining the CMC designation). It was through this arrangement that I learned so much. More so than the formal courses in consulting. There is no doubt in my mind that this mentorship contributed to the success of my practice.
- I have used informal mentoring just by learning from others.
- Most of my mentors were senior people with a lot more experience than myself. In most cases they provided advice regarding how to handle situations, what works and what doesn't. Later, as a senior person myself, I was able to advise new employees, encourage them, and help them develop their skills within the organization. Several went on to become directors in their areas and to be more senior than myself.
- Mentoring is valuable in succession planning, "train the trainer" opportunities, and overall staff development for both the mentor and mentee.
- While informal mentoring has many benefits, it does not ensure consistent feedback and guidance. Formal mentoring ensures the accountability of the mentor and mentee, and encourages more frequent and consistent guidance. Formal mentorship also opens the opportunity to establish documentation requirements (e.g. learning journals) which will further facilitate learning in the organization.
- I still have a relationship with my mentor from 25 years ago.
- Mentoring must be tied in with training after conducting a training needs analysis. Timetables must be arranged that suit both the mentor and mentee. Mentoring must be structured.
- It helped me adjust to my work and helped me deal with people in the organization better because it gave me the background.
- I've felt that QNET could have a role in putting together mentors and proteges, either informally through a directory or through formal introduction. I would participate in such a venture.
- My main experience has been with the Apprenticeship program, which was very effective at knowledge transfer. However, you still need additional classroom or other instruction to ensure all knowledge is covered completely and consistently, as each mentor has their strong and weak points and may not possess the knowledge in a particular area.

- Face-to-face communication is better than e-mails, faxes, letters. etc. The information is easier to pass on as well as receive.
- I have only done informal mentoring in the workplace and found that one-on-one training is more effective for learning new skills and/or refreshing old skills.
- I believe in the process, however I have not seen it formally introduced in my place of employment.
- I have experienced informal mentoring both as a mentor and mentee and found it to be extremely valuable in the field of child welfare. Our work has a significant emotional component. Having a mentor can help in coping with the emotional aspects of the job.
- The mentor must be carefully selected based on their ability to address and deal with variables of the current workplace and not on just performance. We learn from past experiences.
- Programs often suffer from being poorly organized and having no specific goals. Training is haphazard at best, often reduced to a collection of anecdotes.
- I have the opportunity to be mentored by two of my formal supervisors and one colleague. I have found this to be very helpful.
- Some people feel experience sharing to be an intrusion on their time. Yet, I find those same people end up relying on that shared information.
- Large learner groups require the consistency and standards delivered through “formal” on-the-job training.
- No experience in mentoring, but I’ve heard of it elsewhere and I believe it’s an excellent idea.
- Not all of the staff who might wish to become mentors should be allowed to do so. Mentoring requires a relatively unique skill set and not all staff in the work place are equipped to do it, regardless of their expressed interest. One should also recognize that there has always been informal mentoring in the workplace, unfortunately it is not always the mentoring that leads to productive employees.
- Informal mentoring occurs in all organizations. At New Flyer this is especially the case. It would be interesting to see what a formal mentoring program would do.
- No direct experience with mentoring.
- Mentoring may not always work. It’s like a story being passed from one person to the next. You may end up with something different by the end of the story. Procedures need to be followed.
- The Manitoba Writers’ Guild has offered an Emerging Writers’ Mentor Program for fifteen years. It has proven to be an extremely important program for beginning writers. Our program has also been a model for several other arts groups.

- Within a unionized workforce, the mentoring process is more difficult; I believe it suggests favoritism or unfair advancement opportunities for the mentee. I also felt uncomfortable with identifying a specific mentee without knowing what other staff members might also be interested.
- Very effective way of learning in the workplace and developing your skills as you can see and be shown. It has enabled me to succeed at what I do!
- With regard to informal mentoring, I think it tends to be haphazard unless one (if not both) of the partners in the mentoring process desire a specific outcome. I really think mentoring has to be a process of respect and exchange. It would not work if there were resistance or no mutual understanding of the outcome.
- I believe many informal mentoring activities take place in the workplace. Many more than people recognize.
- Having specific developmental goals and giving the mentor ownership of the process is like giving someone two bosses – lots of opportunity for conflict and confusion for the mentee.
- The person who most needs to understand the role and purpose of mentoring is the mentor. There is a need for training programs for mentors.
- Mentoring is effective when used in conjunction with other training methods and documentation. Partnering the right people is incredibly important.
- I don't consider mentoring to be a new concept.
- Formal mentoring is more specific and goal directed. In this way, the results of the program are more likely due to the clarity of communications as little is left to chance.
- I have generally positive feelings about mentoring, but it depends on the "chemistry" between the mentor and mentee.
- I have never had a mentor nor mentee, but I've observed mentoring partnerships. It seems to be good for both parties, but only if both are excited about it and equally involved.
- We have a semi-formal mentoring program for new CSR's. This is sporadic, as it only occurs during training.
- Mentoring in our workplace is very informal to non-existent. There would be tremendous opportunity to develop a mentoring program.
- I think common interest in learning and sharing is important. A focus on what is to be learned or transferred is important. This can be very narrow (i.e. a specific job or function) or very broad (i.e. management skill and techniques). Regardless, tools, focus, objectives and goals, and specific targets should be set. Some measure of the success, suitability, and effectiveness of the mentors would improve the process.

- Many other factors come into play when one considers a mentoring process: personalities of the individuals, type of work involved, and differing work styles, etc.
- I have had the opportunity to be mentored by two of my formal supervisors and one colleague. I have found this to be very helpful.
- I have taken training on coaching and mentoring skills in another province, as well as had experiences with informal mentoring in another province.
- As a person who has had many experiences, young people look to you for guidance in their choices.

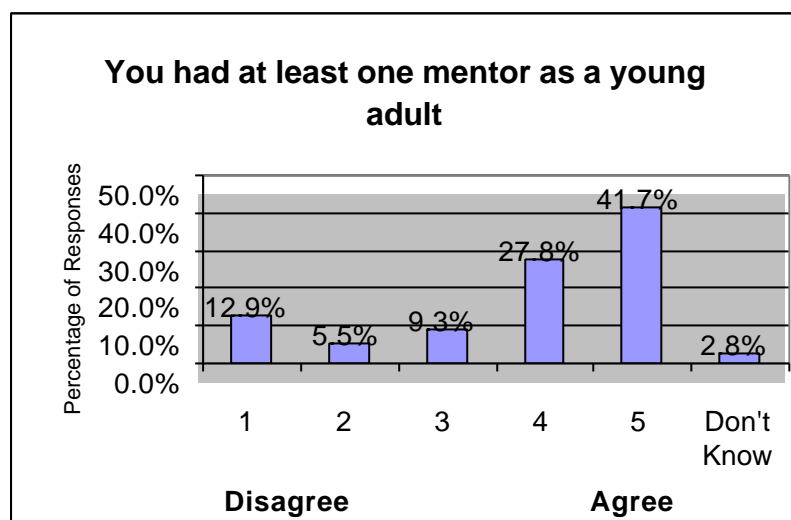
Other Comments or Anecdotes

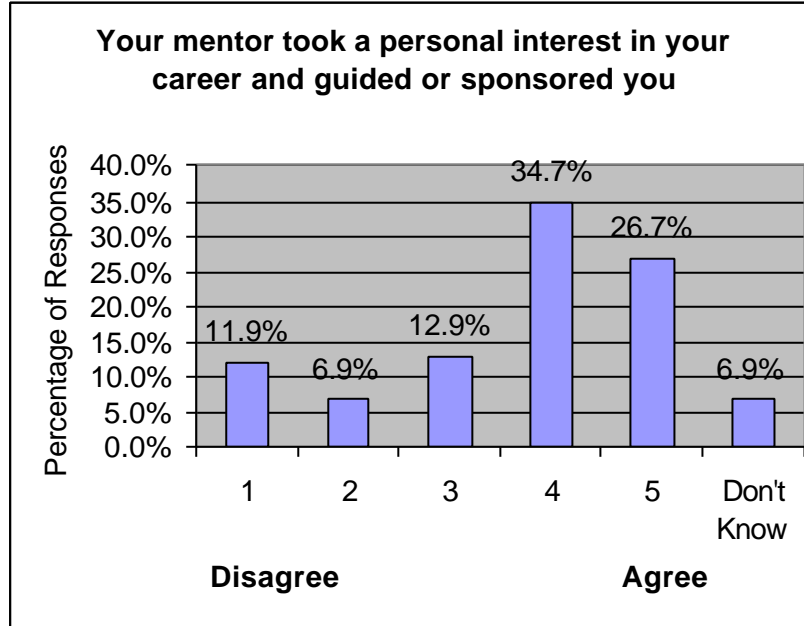
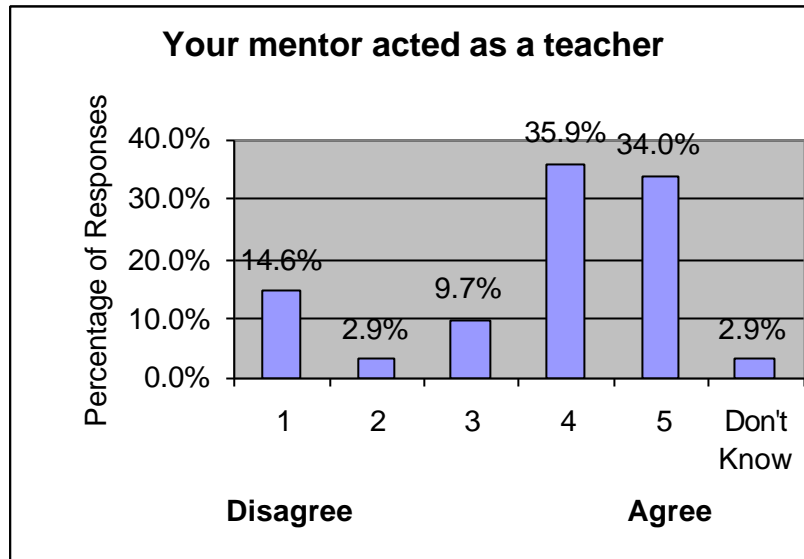
- Mentoring is a good idea. It needs to be developed as many experienced people have a lot to offer.
- Mentoring programs that provide youth with the opportunity to shadow or mentor someone in the workplace are a great way to get individuals interested in certain occupations. For example, there are few aboriginal research biologists in North Canada. Environmental companies could give presentations at schools about a career in research biology and then take on mentees.
- I was assigned to a mentor and it was a good match. I do not know what criteria were used in selecting my mentor.
- How does an informal mentorship differ from a regular “supervisor to new employee” relationship (i.e. learning tasks from someone who’s done them before)?
- For question 7, “should be both for mentee and the mentor.”
- The mentee/mentor relationship should benefit both. Mentors should not think that they are the mentee’s boss.
- Our agency recently developed a formal mentoring program.
- In regards to Question 6, I think there needs to be a mechanism to help mentors and mentees easily find each other. If that mechanism were in place, they could make the final decisions.
- In order for mentoring programs to be supported in the workplace the benefits must be shown in business and financial terms (i.e. you must be able to quantify the results of your program).
- A mentoring program will only be as successful as the expectations that would be laid out prior to the start of the program. Both informal and formal mentoring programs can be of great value to a new “leader.”
- Sharing knowledge is an extremely challenging task. It requires the correct culture, incentives, and technology to be truly effective. Mentoring is just one method to share knowledge.
- I wouldn’t be as advanced in my skills and knowledge as I am today without a mentor.

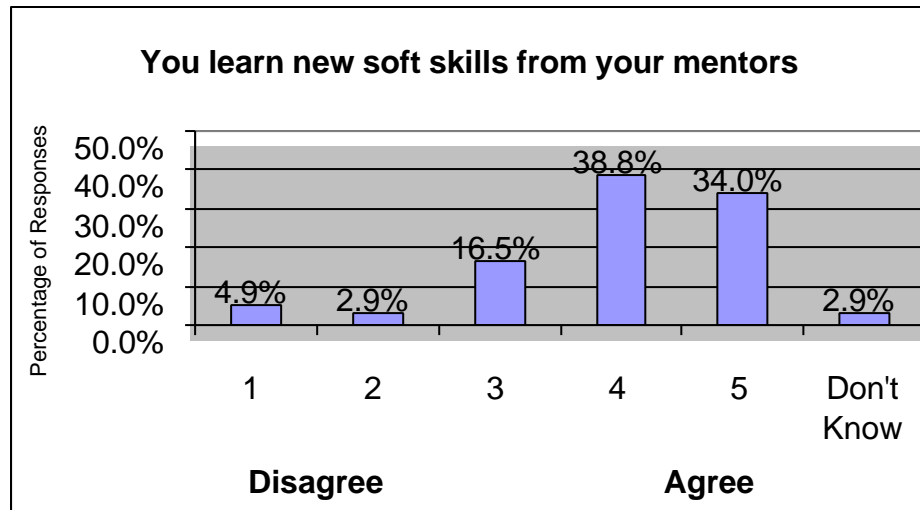
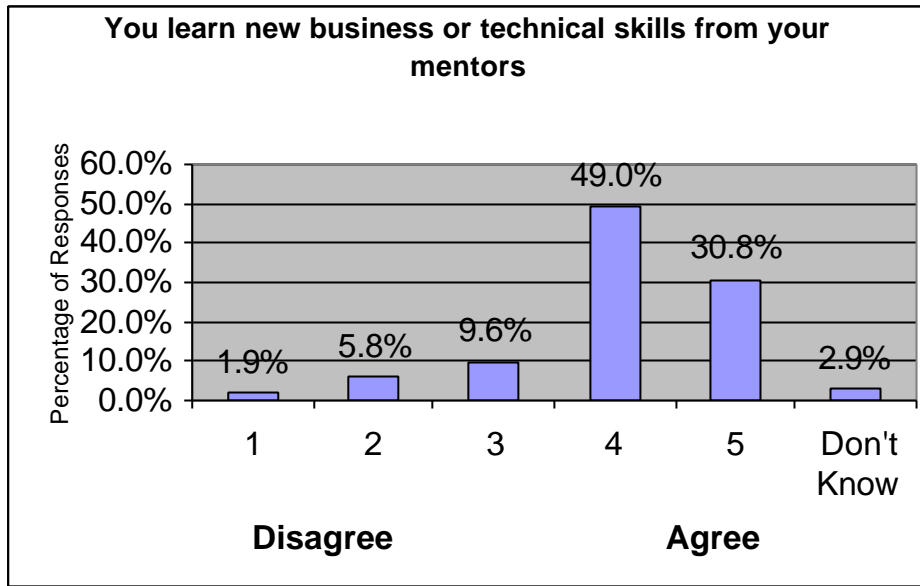
- Question 6 – Mentoring is not always possible with new employee since they don't know other employees.
- Question 12 – Depends on the objectives of mentoring.
- I have seen incidents where valuable knowledge was lost due to the lack of mentoring taking place in an organization. The key to superior knowledge management and employee development can be a good mentoring program.
- I think it's important to find out commitment levels of each party before beginning.
- Although we have no formal mentoring program, I feel that we can offer our young "up-and-coming" leaders some valuable leadership experience by being a mentor to newer employees. Mentoring could easily be worked into our new Leadership Development Program, which is to be rolled out in 2002.
- Mentoring is something the federal council has encouraged with the support of some federal departments. Marilyn Hay, Director of HRDC, is a good contact for this program.
- I have known mentoring to work very well, and I have also seen mentoring disasters. Like any kind of personal relationship, fostering a mentoring environment takes work from both parties. If the personality styles are compatible, that will help foster a positive mentoring environment.

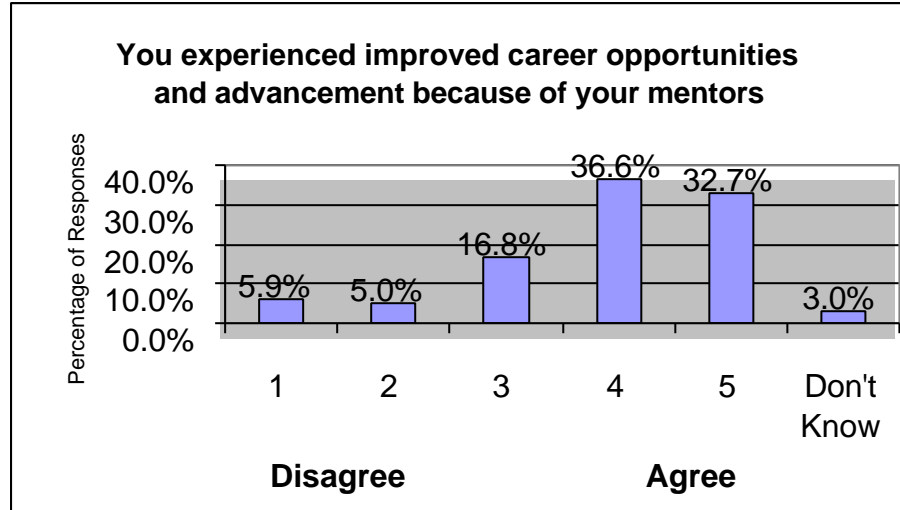
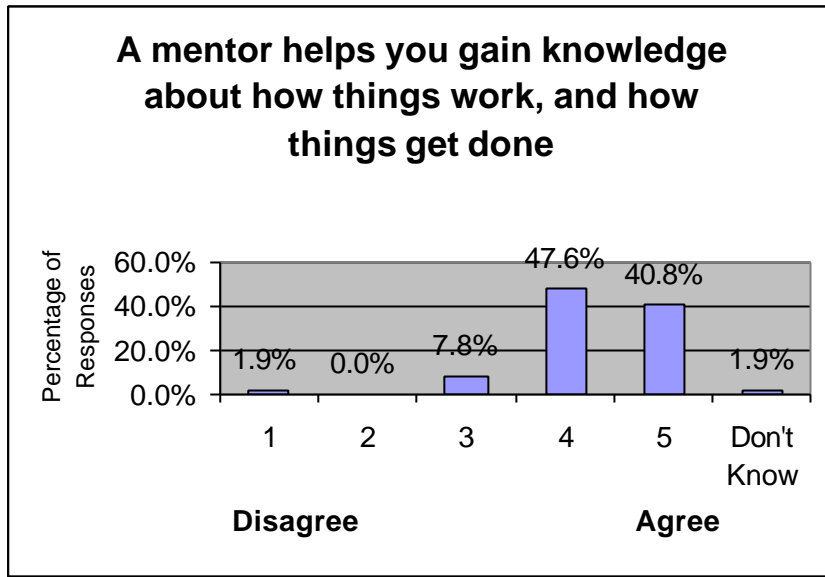
Section II: Have you ever been a mentor or had a mentor?

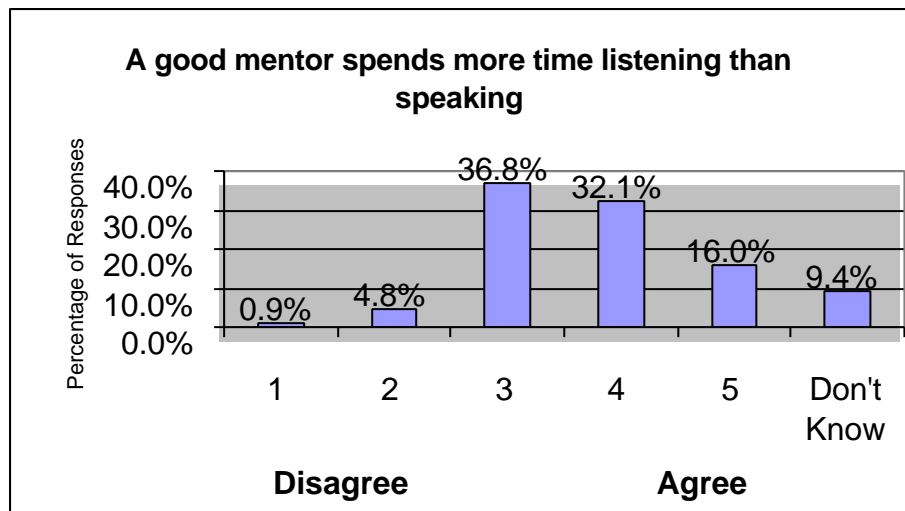
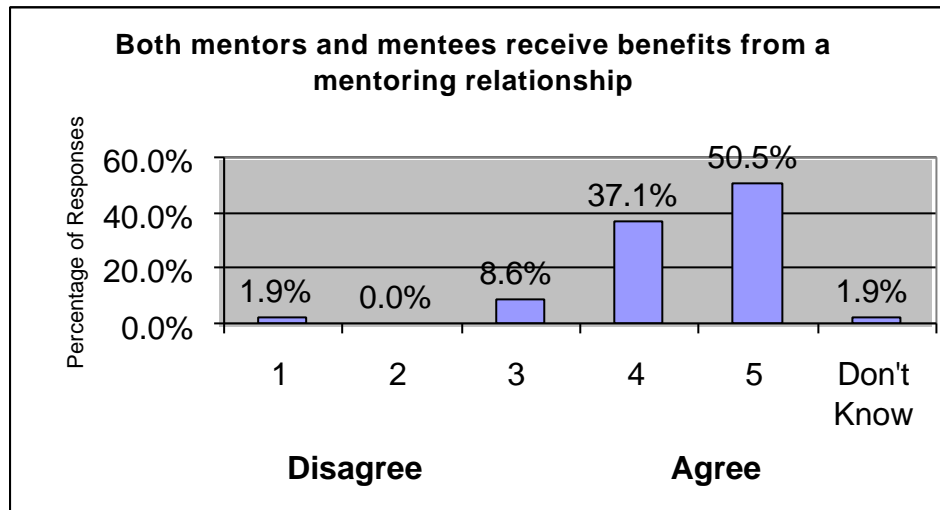
Quantitative Results

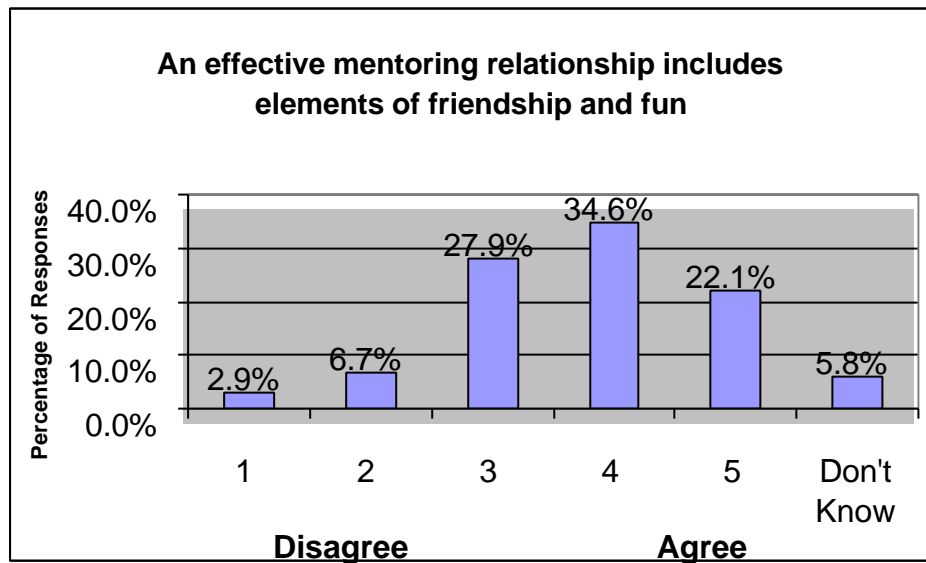
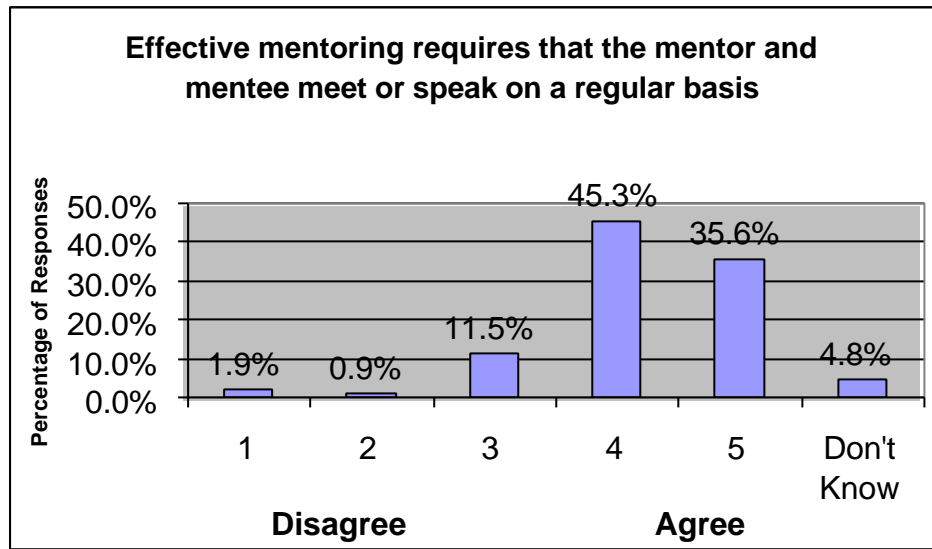


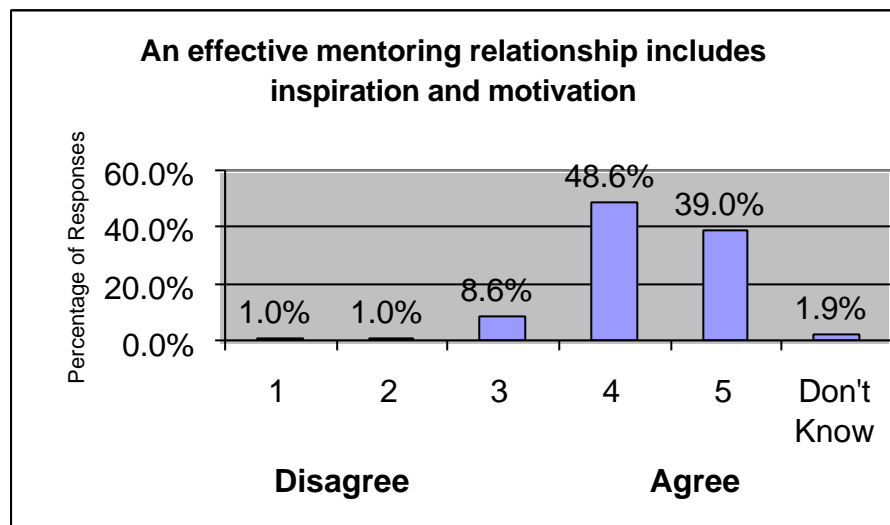












Qualitative Results – Respondent Comments on Section II

In your experience, what are the most common barriers to effective mentoring relationships?

- Unclear expectations and goals.
- Time.
- Commitment.
- Focus.
- Lack of procedures or defined structure.
- Lack of communication.
- Finding people that are able to be effective mentors and that care enough to take the time to share their knowledge and experience.
- Finding time in a culture that demands excessive hours to be worked.
- Unwillingness to share information.
- Inability to schedule time.
- Lack of time! People are unaware of the expectations to fulfill their roles.
- Lack of time to establish the program.
- Failing to recognize the value of mentoring.
- Lack of knowledge about mentoring.
- Organizational culture that does not value learning.
- Time is the biggest barrier – blocking off bi-weekly or monthly meetings is difficult but necessary for successful mentoring. Another barrier is a lack of structure or guidance on how to effectively engage and manage the relationship.

- Competitive situations or positions.
- I believe mentoring may take place without people knowing it. Just learning from others and following others' examples is a form of mentoring. A barrier may be not taking the time to listen to others.
- Barriers include: No time to communicate, not considering other ways of doing things, not willing to accept new ideas or old ideas, and an unwillingness to change.
- Personality issues, unset, unclear goals and objectives, and insufficient time allotted for sessions.
- Lack of time.
- Attitudes and lack of respect for each other.
- Not planning to meet on a regular basis.
- Not enough time.
- Time and availability vis-à-vis business and travel demands.
- Conflicting personalities.
- Competitive work environment will discourage "true" sharing of information.
- "Buy-in" by the participants – If participants do not see the value of a mentorship, they will not be motivated to seek the potential benefits.
- Generation gaps and the fact that the mentor and mentee often both think they know the best way to do everything.
- Time pressures and organizational lack of interest.
- Ineffective communication, poor or ill-defined job expectations or job descriptions, different skill levels and knowledge, lack of teaching experience, and ineffective people skills.
- When the mentor acts as a boss. Ordering that their advice is best and should be followed. I think the mentee should be able to assess whether the mentor has given them good advice or not.
- Too busy to schedule.
- Lack of time and expense of the program.
- Lack of knowledge in an area.
- Lack of commitment by the mentee.
- Poor interpersonal skills by participants.
- The information shared must be short and to the point when possible.
- Ensure that both parties are allowed to share their input.
- A person's work ethic or attitude towards their job. They need to have a desire to learn and work at things.
- Poor communication skills.
- Lack of documentation.
- Time, there is never enough time.

- Time and nature of the work do not allow for relationships to develop.
- Some stigma associated with “needing” a mentor.
- Time constraints. Good mentors will be successful; they’re in high demand.
- Making the time required to become an effective mentor a top priority.
- Personality differences between the mentor and the mentee.
- If it is not an organized and supported program, mentoring is often given very low priority.
- Time constraints.
- Improper match-ups within the relationships.
- When the mentor does not have patience or is not willing to listen to your goals.
- One barrier to effective mentoring is that the mentor might feel threatened by the mentee (young “up and comers”).
- Lack of time.
- Formal training on how to implement a mentoring program.
- Compatibility of the mentor and the mentee.
- Organizational culture that does not support mentoring.
- Inappropriate mentor (i.e. the mentor and the mentee have nothing in common out of workplace).
- In regards to question 5 – although my co-workers do not realize they are playing a role of mentor when I observe them, I try to learn from what they are doing.
- Company policy and practices do not support mentoring.
- Lack of communication.
- Language (body and verbal).
- “Technowledgy.”
- Personalities.
- Speed of teaching.
- Not understanding each of the roles and responsibility.
- Sustaining the process over time is very difficult.
- Training mentors to understand their role and responsibility.
- Clarifying expectations for both mentor and mentee.
- Mentors may be too busy or not interested; Mentees may be shy or not interested.
- Although our workplace professes to support mentoring, the workload is too onerous for the mentoring process to be productive. In that case, mentoring is just really on-the-job training.
- Lack of time, we are currently very busy at our workplace.

- Lack of trust. Trust must be present for the mentor and mentee to share information and knowledge. Both the mentor and mentee must feel comfortable.
- Time commitment.
- Lack of structure.
- Lack of support.
- Lack of time.
- Personality conflicts; mentors developing the criteria for teaching without consulting the mentee.
- Staff turnover and changing circumstances, which disrupt or block the mentoring process.
- The mentor sometimes feels threatened (i.e. job wise) by the mentee (i.e. knowledge is power).
- Lack of time. In most cases the mentor and mentee are not given time to develop a relationship. You need time to develop trust and respect.
- Not being able to communicate well with each other.
- Age barriers (too much of an age gap).
- Personality clashes.
- Time and commitment constraints.
- Personality clashes.
- Lack of mutual understanding of the goal.
- Lack of time to devote to mentoring.
- There must be a willingness on behalf of both parties to participate. Formal programs can increase the likelihood of creating successful matches.
- Mentor not spending enough time with mentee.
- Lack of clear objectives to work towards.
- As an individual “moves up” within an organization, there are fewer mentors for them.
- Inexperienced mentors; fear of failure by the mentee; assumptions by the mentor; failure to confirm the mentee has grasped the intended message; lack of patience by mentor.
- Time arrangement. Objective not set, lack of focus re: development.
- The mentor is not willing to share hard-earned “secrets.”
- Time involved in mentoring.
- Organizational climate not favorable to mentoring.
- Lack of time.
- Obtaining a good mentor is more luck than anything.
- Communication.

- Mentor being too much in control.
- Time away from the mentor's work.
- Distance – In our company, our locations are spread out across all of Western Canada.
- Finding the right mentors, who are willing and capable of being good coaches.
- In my case, “mentoring” was called on-the-job training and I was paired with a more “experienced” person to “learn the ropes”. The person had no mentoring or training skills. The objectives were fairly clear, however, no assessment of the skills/knowledge transfer were done. Also, sometimes the rationale for “this is the way we do things” was lost.
- Differing personality styles.
- An unstable workplace environment.
- Lack of adequate time.
- Lack of specific purpose.
- Control – The Mentor needs to feel secure enough to share knowledge and information with the mentee.
- Lack of time.
- Formal training on how to conduct a mentoring program.
- Compatibility of the mentoring participants.
- Lack of time.
- If the mentee does not participate in the selection of their mentor, they may not have respect for the mentor.
- Willingness to tell the truth. People are unwilling to hurt people with the truth.
- Compatibility of the mentoring participants and lack of time.

Is there anything that you would like to add about your own experience as a mentor or a mentee?

- Being thorough is effective.
- It's rewarding to be a mentor, it feels good to help someone.
- It is also very helpful to be a mentee and learn from people who are knowledgeable in your field.
- It's very enjoyable and extremely rewarding to be a mentor. It helps with the overall understanding of operations within an organization.
- Having clearly articulated goals and roles at the outset as check-in points to discuss progress contributes to a successful mentorship experience.
- In my career I have learned a lot from my superiors. It would be considered informal mentoring.
- Mentoring is time consuming and can be very frustrating.

- Mentoring experiences have to be enjoyable and both mentor and mentee should have something in common so they can relate to each other.
- Progressive steps were paced slowly and seemed to occur naturally.
- A good mentor (formal or informal) can boost your self-confidence, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and help you make the right decisions.
- Being a mentor builds self-confidence.
- Being a mentee ensures you get the information you need and are allowed the time to ask the questions you want and get responses.
- A good mentor can make a huge impact on one's own work ethics or attitudes.
- My mentoring experience occurred while I was in the military. I found it to be very effective!
- Mentoring is very helpful early in one's career or after a major career change.
- As a mentor to quite a few individuals the requirement for me is seeing people take responsibility for their lives and "lead" their lives, not just manage them.
- Question #9 – Mentors must be good listeners, but they also need to be skilled in explaining things.
- Mentoring programs must be organized! Both the mentor and mentee must fully understand their role. Specific objectives are required.
- Mentoring is not always business or workplace related.
- Mentoring is very rewarding for the mentor and very encouraging for the mentee.
- A mentor and mentee should celebrate success together.
- A good mentor creates an environment that promotes ethics, values, and a will to succeed. If a workplace has never been involved in formal mentoring programs it may be quite some time before the fruits of those efforts are recognized. The benefits are very real but the organization must be patient.
- Having a good mentor in business can really help you and almost protect you in tough times. As a mentee I've been thankful for all that I've learned.
- I didn't have a mentor until well into the workforce.
- In regards to Question #1 – Mentoring is co-operative not direction or ordering. As a young adult in the early 60's I received direction, but not mentoring. Looking back, I doubt any of the people I worked with had a hot clue as to the meaning of mentoring. One relied on making friends and hoping they would help you "learn the ropes". There was a risk of making "the wrong friends" without realizing it. I'm glad things have changed and continue to change.

- Mentoring can be very time consuming, so it needs to be seen as an investment.
- I've enjoyed both aspects of mentoring. It is rewarding and made me a more knowledgeable and effective employee.
- I did not receive enough mentoring early in my career. That is one of the reasons why I have developed mentoring as a training and development tool.
- One can be a mentor and not be aware of it. Sometimes mentorship teaches what not to do as much as effective methods of career development.
- As a mentor I gained immense personal satisfaction as the mentee grew, developed, and progressed. I believe that I had a life-long impact on the person.
- In regards to Question 5 – I'm not sure what "soft skill", means. If it refers to "people skills", they are hardly soft, because they are so difficult to acquire and use. Plus, people skills are critical to success.
- I am going to be mentored in the fall and am looking forward to learning many things.
- We have one sales supervisor who is taking an active role in the development of a new sales representative. The results are very good – the new sales person is quickly adapting to his new role on the road.
- As a mentor, most activity was very focused on "need to know in order to do" a particular task or duty. Again no comprehensive "mentoring" of a broad nature for a prolonged period was set up.
- Fun and friendship are certainly important but the mentor needs to always be cognizant of the fact that the mentee also has their own life to lead and the business-personal barrier should be acknowledged and respected at all times.
- The mentor believed in my potential and, as a result encouraged and helped develop me as a person, not just an employee.
- Attitudes, respect for each other.
- As a mentor – commitment to help someone that is usually outside their "job."
- Being a mentee is a terrific experience when a senior person takes time and shows interest in you.

Other Comments or Anecdotes

- I answered Question #1 for all of section 2 as I have never had a mentor.
- If you answer no to Question #1, Questions 2-7 should be skipped.
- These questions appear aimed more at the protégé.
- For a mentoring program to be successful Human Resources must speak the language of business. The program must show the financial benefits.

- In Section 2, Questions 3 and 4 were hard for me to answer because all mentor/mentee relationships are different. I gain different things from different people and I'm sure it's the same for most people.
- I believe that the roles of mentor/mentee do switch back and forth. It's not just that only the mentor has all this knowledge to share.
- In this context I understand mentoring to be a business strategy leading to staff development, which is consistent and productive with the organization's continued growth and with a culture of continuous learning. Mentoring, in this context is more business-based rather than friendship/personal-based.
- Mentoring is so personal that it must be face-to-face. It cannot be done at a distance. Both parties should be 100% willing to participate. Anything less than total commitment won't be effective.
- MPA has only mentored one student so I don't think we have enough information to impart. Next year, we will probably know more.
- I think it is essential that both parties decide on joint goals and outcomes for the mentoring process – these can evolve, as time goes on but the “same page” principle needs to apply.

Mentoring in the Workplace Survey

- The Manitoba Quality Network and WORKFORCE Manitoba have undertaken a study of mentoring in Manitoba workplaces. For the purpose of the study, mentoring is defined as “*A formal or informal pairing of two people, one with more knowledge and experience than the other (the mentor), with the purpose of having the less knowledgeable person (the mentee) grow and develop toward a specific objective.*” The objective of the study is to compare mentoring best practices to current mentoring practices in Manitoba organizations. The final report will provide a framework for mentoring and make recommendations for next steps. The project will also include the delivery of a workshop to share with industry the findings, which will include frameworks that can be used to improve or develop mentoring practices.
- To assist us in carrying out this study, please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire.

Instructions on Filling Out the Questionnaire

- Most questions in this questionnaire ask you to rate a statement on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. Please use a pen or pencil to circle the number that most closely corresponds to your reaction to the statement. If you do not have enough information to answer the question, or if you do not have an opinion on the statement, check the “Don’t Know” box on the side. If you wish to add comments to your answer, please do so in the space provided at the end of the section and reference the question number. **Comments and anecdotes would be very much appreciated.**
- The following is an example of someone who agrees that mentoring is an effective way of sharing tacit knowledge.

Statement	Disagree			Agree		Don’t Know
Mentoring is an effective way of sharing tacit knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

General Information

Name (optional) _____

Organization (optional) _____

Do you work in:	Public Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Academia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nonprofit	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate the role that you play within your organization.

Human resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research & Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchasing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Production	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

Section I: Have you had experience with formal or informal mentoring in your current workplace?

Statement	Disagree					Agree					Don't know
1 Mentoring is an effective way of transferring important knowledge from one person to another in an organization	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Mentoring is an effective way to retain vital knowledge within an organization	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 I am aware of formal mentoring programs in Manitoba workplaces	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 I have participated in a formal mentoring program in a Manitoba workplace	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Formal workplace mentoring could be an extremely effective way of helping employees to learn and adapt	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 In a formal mentoring program, the mentor and mentee should choose each other	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 A formal mentoring program should be organized around a specific development goal or task for the mentee	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	Disagree					Agree					Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
8 I am aware of informal mentoring taking place in Manitoba workplaces	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
9 I have participated in informal mentoring in the workplace as either a mentor or mentee	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Informal workplace mentoring could be an extremely effective way of helping employees to learn and adapt	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
11 The mentor should own or control the mentoring process and relationship	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Formal mentoring is more effective than informal mentoring	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>

- Is there anything you would like to add about your experiences with formal and informal mentoring in the workplace?

- Other comments or anecdotes:

Section II: Have you ever been a mentor or had a mentor?

Statement	Disagree					Agree					Don't Know
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
1 You had at least one mentor as a young adult	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Your mentor acted as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Your mentor took a personal interest in your career and guided or sponsored you	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
4 You learn new business or technical skills from your mentors	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	Disagree					Agree					Don't Know
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
5 You learn new soft skills from your mentors	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
6 A mentor helps you to gain knowledge about how things work, and how things get done	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
7 You experienced improved career opportunities and advancement because of your mentors	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Both mentors and mentees receive benefits from a mentoring relationship	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
9 A good mentor spends more time listening than speaking	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Effective mentoring requires that the mentor and mentee meet or speak on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
11 An effective mentoring relationship includes elements of friendship and fun	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>
12 An effective mentoring relationship includes inspiration and motivation	1	2	3	4	5						<input type="checkbox"/>

➤ In your experience, what are the most common barriers to effective mentoring relationships?

➤ Is there anything that you would like to add about your own experience as a mentor or a mentee?

➤ Other comments or anecdotes:

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group on the subject of mentoring on Thursday August 23 from 1 PM to 4 PM? (If “yes,” please provide contact information.)

Would your organization be willing to host a half day visit by the mentor study team to discuss how mentoring is used in your organization? (If “yes,” please provide contact information.)

Thank you for your assistance.

Please return your questionnaire no later than August 21 by:

- Faxing it to Mentoring Survey at 949-4990
- Mailing it to:
IDT Inc.
Suite 500, 283 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3B2

Appendix B: Focus Group Findings

Initial Contexting Activity and Conversation

James Conklin led the participants in the focus group through the following exercise in which he asked them to:

1. Make a list of all of the people who have been your mentors during your life. Try to include one person who mentored you in a work or employment situation.
2. Put a star beside the two or three most important mentors you had.
3. Now, tell us about one of those most important mentoring relationships. Was it a formal or informal arrangement? How did it come about? What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements to you attribute to the relationship?

Discussion as follows

For informal mentoring relationships, participants stated the following benefits and achievements that they attributed to informal mentoring relationships:

- attitude
- life skills
- encouragement
- wealth of experiences to offer

For formal mentoring relationships, participants stated the following benefits and achievements that they attributed to formal mentoring relationships:

- workplace knowledge on a broader and deeper level
- individual and organizational growth
- personal growth
- learning from mistakes
- ability to apply shared knowledge to their own working style

Formal Mentoring Conversation

James Conklin led a facilitated conversation in the focus group on a series of questions about formal mentoring.

Discussion of first question

This was the first question:

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

6 ½ out of 15 responded yes to this question (for an explanation of the ½, see the fourth bullet in the list of examples immediately below).

Participants described formal mentoring programs in their organizations. There was a broad range of programs, with some just in the beginning or definition stages and some well-established and successful ones.

Some examples include:

- One organization used to have a program designed primarily for mentoring. It linked older, successful entrepreneurs with budding entrepreneurs. The program lasted for over 25 years. The mentor and mentee were matched according to business problems that the mentee was encountering in their entrepreneurial project. There were nominal fees for the mentee, which were paid to the mentor. Some problems developed within the organization and the program is now cancelled. However, in the successful cases long-term relationships were developed. (This was not really an internal program; it was a service provided to clients.)
- A government organization has a formal mentoring program for middle managers. They have a program manual and a committee made up of the participants that governs the program and coordinates the matching of mentors and mentees. The mentor/mentee team work out the objectives and work towards them. They complete a form for what they accomplished. The participant told us that it is an excellent program. The next step is to cascade the program down to the lower levels – middle managers mentoring junior managers.
- One government agency has a brand new (6 months) mentoring program designed for approximately 500 new front-line staff with more senior front-line staff as the mentors. There have always been some informal mentoring relationships, but now this is a new initiative to make it more formalized. In addition, the organization underwent some reorganization

several years ago and there was some loss of personal contact among staff. The new program is an attempt to get this contact back. The participant told us that one factor in the slow adoption of this program might be the potential stigma experienced by newer workers requesting a mentor. The main objective of this program is to increase the job retention rate as the job involves a high burn-out factor.

- A manufacturing organization has a mentoring program that the management labels as formal, but really they've just paired mentors and mentees. (This is the ½ from above.) The organization has recently expanded and see this program as a way to lessen the learning curve for the new employees

Other comments include:

- Relationship is the key word in a mentoring program. Most people can identify with that. The mentor and mentee have to get along personally and trust one another.
- The two parties have to have the right “chemistry.” Their personalities must “fit”.

Discussion of second question

The second question in the facilitated conversation was:

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Discussion points are as follows:

- Because of the demographics in one organization, there will be a huge void in 7-8 years due to retirements. More junior people are trying to “get into shape” for the upcoming opportunities. There were 100 mentees in the program in the initial cycle and 75 in the second cycle in Manitoba. The mentee/mentor ratio is high, but it is working very well. The mentors have lots of experience to offer. The organization sees the program as time well invested. They are measuring the benefits via surveys, etc. Everything points to the organization benefiting from the program.
- A key factor is buy-in as time demands are high.
- An important point is to look at what the mentee is looking for. That's what you have to measure against in order to measure success. Matching up mentors and mentees is hard due to people's different personalities and viewpoints. The two parties have to work together and there has to be some way to monitor the whole process.

Discussion of third question

The third question the focus group considered was:

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

Participants stated the following barriers that exist in their organizations that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed.

- obtaining buy-in from staff and management
- identifying the right mentors
- implementing a program across a geographically dispersed organization
- determining the cost value of time (i.e. investing time into a mentee who may or may not stay with organization vs. spending time with clients, etc.)
- finding the time and resources to implement a program
- identifying an easy and effective method of monitoring the program
- identifying mentors within a flat organization as everyone is in similar roles, mentors may be perceived to be in a superior role
- overusing the same mentor leading to burn-out
- implementing reward or recognition as part of the program

Discussion of fourth question

Here is the fourth question that focus group members considered:

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

Participants stated the following benefits that mentoring might bring to their organization.

- shortening the learning curve for new staff
- enhancing formal training
- understanding the organization (i.e. diplomacy, bureaucracy, and hard skills too: “street smarts”, “what is the system?” “How to get things done here?”)
- avoiding mistakes, less reinventing the wheel
- promoting stronger relations and strengthening the organizational culture
- facilitating Knowledge Management
- increasing loyalty to the organization
- enhancing an organization’s succession planning strategy

- enabling information accountability
- increasing job retention (i.e. the mentee is accountable to the mentor in terms of learning and progressing in the organization)
- challenging mentors to rethink and change their own assumptions (i.e. mentees may ask why?)
- linking theory and practice for the mentees (i.e. bridge the gap between conceptual knowledge and reality)
- challenging mentors to keep an open mind (i.e. mentees may not understand what can't be done)
- keeping people active in the organization, especially for the more senior staff, the organization and economy as a whole benefit as well
- helping produce more well-rounded workers leading to higher productivity and continuous challenge
- learning to cope with emotional response in preparation for the job
- experiencing how to approach sensitive issues and problems
- decreasing learning curve as availability of labour decreases with lots of retirees coming up (i.e. organizations are hiring staff at a younger age for higher positions and have to fast track them. Mentoring is good for this.)

Discussion of fifth question

As a follow-on question, participants discussed:

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be the key features or components or steps?

Participants stated the following key features, components, and steps involved in a formal mentoring program.

- Recognition that program is a valued part of the job (i.e. It has to be integral to the mentor's job and included in their job description.)
- recognized accomplishments and rewards
- apprehensive mentor candidates (i.e. can someone be forced to be a mentor?)
- recruiting good mentors (i.e. a good mentor has to be someone who wants to do it, a volunteer)
- screening for match-making (i.e. Who picks whom? – “dating service on computer.” There should be a third neutral and unbiased party. Either can say no. Shared expectations. The same person monitors progress of individuals and the outcome. Look at hard skills, soft skills, or career plan. Can someone be mentored by their boss? Some say yes and some say no: informal – yes, formal – no. It also depends on culture in the

workplace. Who gets picked to be a mentee? Could this lead to resentment?)

- imposing of expectations and objectives from the top down (This may not be a good idea, maybe they should go to the staff and ask them what they want to get out of it.)
- monitoring the success of the program not just the success of the individuals (i.e. ROI).
- balancing between production and relationship (Relationship-building is key to organizational success. Maybe volunteers will not do as good a job as someone you appoint because you know they will do a good job.)
- recruiting volunteers for mentors
- understanding the potential of mentoring
- sharing successes (i.e. change the way of gaining organizational buy-in)
- enabling people who like to help to become mentors
- re-labeling “formal mentoring” as “coaching” (i.e. “formal mentoring” is two concepts colliding)
- decreasing any stigmas associated with participating in a mentoring program (e.g. University of Manitoba has mentoring program for students, but there is very low participation. Maybe students see a potential stigma if they use the program.)
- making use of Internet technologies to facilitate mentoring over a distance (e.g. chat groups, etc.)
- making continuous improvement part of the program
- making the program “employee-owned” with a steering committee composed of both mentors and mentees to guide the program

Informal Mentoring Conversation

James Conklin also led a facilitated conversation in the focus group on a series of questions about informal mentoring.

Discussion of first question

The first question considered was:

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

- One participant told us that there has been a lot of recent growth in the organization. It would be impossible for informal mentoring not to take place under these circumstances. People come in the job and latch on to

- someone. It has become part of the organizational culture. They see the opportunity and ask “Where do I want to go?” and speak to those people.
- sometimes it is hard to get people to participate because of the organization’s culture. We have to define mentoring.
 - a lot of mentoring occurs within cultural groups within an organization.
 - informal mentoring is not a substitute for training.
 - informal mentoring has its uses but you have to know its limits (i.e. how to build a product?). It’s an addition to standardized training.
 - some industries “train” this way with apprentice programs (e.g. plumbers, etc.)
 - what about the mentors that have a bad attitude? They don’t usually volunteer to be a mentor though. Damage could occur before the relationship ends.
 - if you begin with informal mentoring or take an existing informal mentoring program and move it into a formal one then you can have objectives.
 - standardized training can be influenced and enhanced by mentoring.
 - opportunity for role modeling of how to interact with people.
 - observe mentor handling the situations that you are going to face.

Discussion of second question

Here is the second question related to informal mentoring:

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Participants stated the following comments on increasing the practice of informal mentoring within their organizations.

- It is the quality not the quantity with informal mentoring; adding hours is not the answer.
- make informal mentoring part of your organization’s overall objectives and strategy (i.e. change the corporate culture). Promote informal chatting and social functions.
- organizations need to determine whether they are currently practicing informal mentoring as sometimes they do not recognize that they are.
- heighten peoples’ awareness and communicate the benefits of informal mentoring. This is a more subtle approach.
- participants of mentoring programs may ask “What is the priority of informal mentoring in my job?”

- it should be a by-product of an organization's overall communication strategy.
- don't ignore positive reinforcement.
- senior management buy-in is key.
- informal training isn't just at the executive level, but also within unions and the rest of the organization.

Discussion of third question

Here is the third question participants considered:

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

Participants stated the following comments on the similarities and differences between the benefits of formal mentoring and informal mentoring.

- Informal mentoring is more beneficial than formal mentoring for me; benefit depends on the level of interaction.
- it could be more difficult to recognize the benefits of informal mentoring.
- it depends on what you're looking for and what you want to get out of it?
- in some cases, mentees support each other too.
- in successful cases, the relationship continues after the "formal" part of the program ends.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

James Conklin also led a discussion with focus group participants about mentors and mentees.

Discussion of first question

This was the first question considered by participants:

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Participants stated the following traits of a good mentor.

- Willingness to listen and empathize
- great counselors
- positive
- good balance between work and life
- good listeners
- perceptive (i.e. see value and potential in the mentee)
- willing to share
- ability to influence, teach, and communicate
- maturity (but not necessarily older)

- need to like their job and have enthusiasm
- successes and mastery in their job
- demonstrated success and competence
- good at explaining things
- draw new thinking from the mentee
- encouraging
- inspirational
- motivating
- not threatened by mentee's potential
- constructively challenging, get mentees to rise to the challenge (maybe it's like raising children and the big break is where the mentee outgrows the relationship)
- encourages mistakes, if there are no mistakes then nothing is happens, mistakes are a basis for growth

Discussion of second question

This is the second question the focus group looked at:

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Participants stated the following traits of a good mentee.

- open minded
- willingness to learn
- positive attitude
- recognize the debt (i.e. understand the significance of what the mentor is sharing with them)
- value their own contribution to the relationship
- encourage their mentor sometimes
- respect for their mentor
- ability to apply learning (i.e. an organization's capacity to absorb new learning. will it fit? willingness to apply learning in different ways)
- understands the objectives of the mentoring relationship

Workshop Questions

The focus group also looked at questions related to holding a mentoring workshop.

It appeared to us that the main point from the Focus group is that participants were more interested in learning about informal programs than formal programs as indicated by their votes and comments. We also thought a panel could include someone from the federal program, and possibly JP Parenty to represent informal mentoring.

Discussion of first question

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

- 11 out of 15 indicate yes
- When asked if they had rather learn about informal mentoring– 10 out of 15 indicate yes
- When asked if the workshop should include topics on both formal and informal mentoring – 13 out of 15 indicated yes

Discussion of second question

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

- informal mentoring
- self-selection vs. imposed partners
- what is the difference between formal and informal?
- effective coaching (i.e. effective formal mentoring sounds very prescriptive)
- what is mentoring? How to encourage mentoring in an organization. How to work mentoring into an organization's culture, reduce barriers, etc.
- working examples of what mentoring program look like (e.g. stories, etc.) including local organizations and contact information for those organizations
- specialized mentoring programs
- a panel discussion or speaker
- how to facilitate mentoring in an organization
- trial role-modeling, exercises, etc.
- facilitated process to learn the subject matter, an interactive process, have people share their experiences
- maybe some preparation homework
- how to gain buy-in within an organization

Appendix C: Site Visit Findings

This section compiles findings from site visits where we talked to representatives of organizations that had implemented mentoring programs on what their experience was like. This appendix is divided into sections on the public sector and the private sector.

Public Sector Social Services Environment

Questions For Line Managers and HR Managers

We spoke with the organizers and coordinators of the mentoring program of a public sector social services organization. The following section provides background on this program, and then the additional sections are responses to questions we posed in our on site visit.

Background

One interviewee told us that the original idea for the mentoring program came from a series of events that occurred last winter. Those events brought home to them that they are experiencing a very serious staff retention problem. Last fall they had seventeen vacancies in the agency. Every month, four or five people transferred or resigned.

They determined that due to the challenging and difficult work performed by their staff, they were facing a staffing crisis.

At the same time, this individual was taking a course in compensation and benefits, and on how services are provided to staff. During this course there was some discussion of mentoring, and she followed up by researching the topic. In a management meeting when strategies for retention were discussed, management asked her to design an approach and the management team would review it to see if they saw merit in it.

One component of the approach that this person subsequently designed was mentoring.

Mentoring seemed like a valid strategy for retention, in part because research says people who receive support and who have access to somebody to help them learn

the network, shortcuts and relationships perform better in their jobs and also enjoy work more. This translates into commitment to the organization, and retention of staff.

The other reason for putting a mentoring program in place was to keep senior staff, and to retain their knowledge after they transfer into other programs. The idea was to access the experience and strategies that allow experienced staff to stay with the job for an extended period of time, and thereby provide a return on their investment in these staff. The message to experienced staff is that “you are valuable and can make a contribution,” and this will enhance their feeling of commitment. Mentors felt there was a benefit to participating in the program.

The mentoring program applies only to one of the organization’s programs. This program is the entry point for new hires in the agency. Front line protection services are provided by this program – it is an intake area that is very stressful and workers need to be very sensitive. So the work is very difficult.

Is mentoring an important way for you to develop members of your team?

Mentoring is not as critical as traditional training when you are dealing with learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge. They are not using mentoring to do away with their current supervisor role. Mentors focus on new hires, and present themselves as someone the new hires can connect to outside of the unit, and bounce ideas off – and much of the advice and counselling is not work related. They want the mentors to help the mentees to learn how to handle the stress of the job, and to handle the time management demands of the job. All mentors come from outside the person’s unit.

The mentors are not concerned with helping the mentees to develop skills. Social workers should already know how to listen, solve problems, and empathize. But some aspects of the work are complex – for example, what are the shortcuts, and how do you survive? This organization has more than 500 employees in many programs.

Most people view this field as a starting point in their careers, and later in their careers they usually expect to move on to something else. Most social workers want to help others through their jobs. The image of their work [in this agency] does not really seem helpful, and can cause a lot of stress and confusion [note: in some situations the agency social workers need to remove children from their families].

What results or outcomes do you expect to receive from mentoring?

Staff retention is the major goal. They want mentoring to help them retain both their long-term experienced people, and new people.

The interviewees feel that statistically they will be able to find out if the program is helping. If retention numbers improve, particularly for the mentees, they will believe they have made progress. They also intend to measure organizational commitment and job satisfaction – do people feel better about what they are doing?

How does the mentoring work?

Currently they are doing a pilot project. They have just been through it once, and in fact the pilot is not yet complete. They sent out information via e-mail to all staff saying that they were looking for people to act as mentors. Criteria were set out in writing. They heard back from a few people, and these people were asked to apply. They hoped to find ten mentors. Applicants had to name a supervisor and peers who would act as references. That was basically the entire recruitment process. They did not have a sufficient response this first time, and one of the interviewees then contacted supervisors and asked for longer term staff to participate.

The agency is replacing their existing geographic model with a program model (you work in a geography which applies all programs, or you work on a program that supplies service to all geographies). This is one reason why people were leaving (because it was easier to transfer).

Many supervisors said everyone is training new people in the unit already, so they are too busy to take on this new mentoring role.

They held an orientation for the ten mentors, once they had identified them. They spent an entire day explaining what would be expected (the two interviewees did it together), and demonstrated that the mentoring program was an important initiative. The agency's CEO came and supported this point. The mentors talked about how they felt about their work. The feedback they received on the day was that many mentors may not volunteer because their humility makes them doubt that they have anything to offer; but the orientation day was a big success, and made the mentors feel positive and encouraged.

They then obtained a list of new hires, and one interviewee went through the list and called supervisors and asked about the new people to see if any of them would be good mentee candidates. They looked for brand new, inexperienced people. They wanted needy people, the greenest. A lot of mentees stepped forward and asked if they could participate. There were lots of inquiries from people who wanted support.

When they had the list of mentees, one of the interviewees made arbitrary matches based on people who were fairly close together geographically.

Confidentiality was a requirement, and that was one reason for having them from different units. Also, they did not want to drain the mentors by setting up a situation where the mentee might “pester” them.

They only had one cross-gender mentoring arrangement (everyone else was female). There were no gender issues.

The matching went forward in May, and things got started. Mentees received a letter; and the mentors were asked to contact the mentees. The coordinator meets with the mentors every month, as a group, at a lunch meeting, and they talk about how things are going.

The program runs from three to six months, and then it ends. Beyond that, the mentors and mentees can continue on an informal basis if they wish.

At the end of the program, they will do some evaluations. There are monthly contact sheets that are filled by both mentors and mentees. These sheets track the kind of interaction, how often it occurs, themes and issues for the interaction, and the sorts of things you are working on. (The interviewees noted that people are not filling them in.)

Also, there is an evaluation form for the three month mark, and another for six months. These have not been used yet. The idea is to get a sense from mentors and mentees, and the supervisors of mentors and mentees, of whether mentoring is making a difference. Is the agency support there? Is there backlash from colleagues and supervisors? Are people enjoying the roles? Have they developed relationships with other mentors? And from mentees, does it help cope with the job, understand the agency, and feel supported and connected. And for supervisors, they want to know if it is worthwhile for the mentor and the mentee?

They borrowed standardized tests from books to evaluate job commitment and job satisfaction. They administered these tests as pretests (there was a great return rate), and will also administer the tests at the end of six months.

They will almost certainly continue with another intake when this program is finished. There have definitely been ups and downs, and they lost some mentors and mentees, but they will see how everybody feels about continuing.

Who are the best mentors?

They have five or six matches going well. In these successful arrangements, the mentors are positive about their jobs, and are experienced. They are still happy choosing to stay with the agency. They enjoy their jobs and can talk about the positive aspects of the job.

Also, the best mentors are part of a strong team that focuses on the positive aspects of the work. Each of the best mentors is on a very positive team, where most people in the unit are positive and happy. That adds to their job satisfaction – associating with positive people, and feeling supported. This may give them the emotional energy to support someone else.

Who are the best mentees?

The best mentees seem to have to be able to “go with the flow,” and just want the relationship rather than something concrete. They see the benefit of networking and relationship, and don’t need concrete results.

The mentees who dropped out felt they know things already and don’t need a mentor. They tended to want something concrete. They were unable to relax and develop a relationship, and focused too much on the possible immediate results that mentoring could produce for them.

The interviewees wonder if they should provide orientation for the mentees.

The mentee-mentor relationship needs to be voluntary – you cannot force the relationship.

What problems have arisen?

One problem has been mentors leaving the agency (not the mentoring program), which ends a mentoring relationship. But nobody has simply abandoned the mentor role (though some have left the agency).

The biggest problem was where the pair met once, and then the mentor phoned and the mentee did not return calls. The mentor finally got the mentee on the phone, but the mentee said she couldn’t talk, and again didn’t call back. The mentee formally withdrew from the program; and never told the mentor.

Another big issue is time – the meetings are on worktime, and this is understood, and there is no problem with this. Usually they meet twice a month, over lunch or late in the day (3:30).

Is it possible to measure outcomes from mentoring?

Did not ask.

Would you consider a formal mentoring program in your organization?

Did not ask.

What features would a formal mentoring program need to have for it to succeed in your organization?

The whole program is a big innovation for the agency.

They have had very clear and strong support from executive management and from accounting – this has been very helpful.

The mentor orientation was very helpful. They now believe that they should do something similar for mentees, too (maybe not as elaborate, but something).

(Do you have mentors today?)

No. One interviewee had one in the past; the other interviewee said no.

Questions for Mentors – Sept 10

How does a mentoring relationship come into being?

They are matched through the HR department. New employees are matched with people who have offered to be mentors. The mentors apply to be mentors. There was a general invitation or recruitment process for mentors, but not enough people applied, and they were then approached and recruited individually.

The mail memo just didn't grab them. The personal call was the motivation. They felt flattered to be singled out and asked.

Do you have objectives for the mentoring relationship?

The mentors said "not really." This is more relationship-based, and qualitative. The mentors generally support someone navigating through their initial experiences with the agency. The goals might tend to be around how to find and use resources in the system. But although they may set some goals, this was not over-emphasized. One person mentioned that she wanted things very informal, loose and carefree.

One mentor had been with the agency for five years, another for four years, another for 17 years, and the fourth for 8.5 years.

James Conklin noted that the mentors seemed quite young, late twenties, early thirties.

Who chooses whom?

They are paired by the coordinator.

There was no real opportunity to say yes or no.

What are the qualities of a good mentor?

A good mentor makes the mentee feel like they are not alone, that somebody is walking beside them through this tough period. The mentor provides backup for the mentee.

It also depends on the relationship. The mentee is new to the agency, but has lots of experience. There are not a lot of specific objectives to set, so they set broad objectives – such as keeping employees with this agency. The mentees know that this is the objective of the program.

A good mentor is available – that is an important point.

A good mentor has good interpersonal skills. They need to be outgoing; and not shy.

A good mentor is a good listener.

What are the qualities of a good mentee?

The mentee needs to volunteer, and not be coerced or forced to join. They need to know that they will get something out of the relationship.

Some mentees may have felt that it was not voluntary and they were expected to participate, and this may have caused some issues.

Good mentees should be good communicators and good listeners.

Good mentees are flexible. They should be flexible when setting up the time for interactions.

What do you have to offer a mentee?

Hope. The hope that things can work out in this difficult job, and the mentor is living proof. With the right approach, it is possible to do this job.

A second thing the mentor can offer is experience. The mentor can show the mentee that there are good days and bad days, and they balance out over time. And moreover, it is okay to have a bad day – in other words, having a bad day does not mean that you are doing something wrong. The mentor can acquaint the mentee with the reality of the job, and show that it is possible to have a career in this field that spans two decades.

A mentor can also offer support, if this support is not available from somewhere else (for example, your supervisor or team). The mentor is somebody else to turn to.

The mentor can offer good times and a sense of humour. The mentors I spoke with said they often meet their mentees for a drink or snack after work, or for supper or lunch. One said that she was planning to go for a facial with her mentee. They suggest creating the relationship in a fun setting, and to enjoy being with each other.

The mentors told me that they often meet over lunch (at an outside restaurant at The Forks, for example), or they meet first thing in the morning on a Monday in a donut shop. The meeting is something to look forward to.

What does the mentee get out of the relationship?

The mentee gets the things we already discussed – hope, optimism, and support.

The mentee receives a different perspective on things, or a second opinion on things. Mentoring offers a reality check, and access to options.

The mentee also is able to put a human face on the work. With a mentoring relationship in place, the work is not just textbooks, policies, etc. The mentor can demystify the work experience for the mentee.

The mentee also gets a relationship, which in part is a connection or doorway into a network of other contacts. And the relationship is equal, with no supervisor, no risks, and no judgements being made.

What achievements or accomplishments can you assist a mentee in pursuing?

The mentors may be able to help mentees remain with the agency, and this is an achievement.

The mentor also can help the mentee to pursue other educational opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and professional development.

***** *facilitator “led” them here* *****

The mentor can help mentees to construct a life consisting of this work, and of all sorts of other things. These mentors had trouble setting concrete goals, although they were supposed to; they struggled with it and setting specific goals was not successful.

What does the mentor get out of the relationship?

The mentor gets a chance to reflect. They receive a refreshing look into what they do. Mentoring is a chance to stop and talk about work with a keen audience, and the mentoring relationship helps to create meaning and personal reflection. The mentor reflects on the meaningfulness of her career and life to date.

Mentoring also gives you a new audience for your stories.

Mentoring brings satisfaction for the mentor. You are committed to the agency, and it feels good to encourage a good social worker to stay here.

One person said she was mentored by a great person for three years, and she feels a strong desire to do the same thing for someone else. Her mentoring relationship was informal, although he knew he was mentoring her.

Mentoring also gives the mentor a relationship with a new person, and a break from the routine.

Mentoring also helps the mentor to realize how much she knows. It builds confidence.

What are the biggest mentoring challenges you have faced?

One person said she wishes she had more to offer the mentee, because she does not have lots of experience and knowledge herself yet. Another person agreed. They both wished they could help more.

Another person said the mentee gets good support from her team, so she tries not to be redundant. Her challenge is to find something useful to offer.

The mentors tended to agree that the match is everything. The people who really need mentoring are people from teams that are not supportive, or who do not have great supervisors.

The match – one person thought there would be a lot of issues because her mentee is older than her, and it was intimidating, but then they became comfortable with each other and it was fine. But bad matches can happen and this can be a challenge.

Today the matching system is quite informal, and is based on location for convenience. The mentors thought that perhaps personality should be considered, too.

What are the mentoring moments that you are proudest of?

The mentors mentioned some little things. A mentee saying thanks for your support. A mentee saying that she was looking forward to seeing her.

Another mentor said it was very satisfying to see the relationship take shape and become positive.

Other points

The mentors pointed out that other external factors can be supportive to mentoring relationships. Having a supportive team, or experiencing organizational change, could be examples. It is important that the supervisors of mentees support the program, and that the organization be supportive of the program.

Questions for Mentees – four women.**How does a mentoring relationship come into being?**

The mentees told me that they were paired by the organizers of the mentoring program. They received a confirmation letter welcoming them to the mentoring program, saying it was a new initiative. Essentially, the letter said that you are in the mentoring program, and there was no indication of choice.

Some of the other mentees, however, said that she was invited to participate and felt that she ought to accept because her employment was probationary to begin with and she felt that she should do whatever she was asked to do. So she felt there was some pressure. Three of the mentees agreed with this.

In another case, one mentee had already been on the job for one month, and was invited to participate. She accepted, and did not feel pressure.

But essentially, the relationship was assigned. There was no choice on the part of the mentee. They were matched. There was no option to say no, this person isn't right for me. The only option was offered informally by office colleagues, saying that you could call the coordinator and say it isn't working out.

Do you have objectives for the mentoring relationship? Who sets them?

The mentees told me that objectives could be things like getting to know the organization, the policies and procedures, information about the organization. Other objectives included consultation about specific cases in their caseload.

Another person said her mentor loves her job, and she wanted to learn some stress management techniques and strategies for coping with the tough part of the work. This was set as an objective.

Another mentee said she thought about all of the objectives, things related to stress and to learning about the organization, and her mentor wanted her to provide written objectives. She said no, I have enough paperwork to do. This mentee said she wanted a social network and to meet people from different offices. She wanted the relationship to be more social, not formal, and the mentor seemed to be okay with it. However, they have only met three times over five months, so the relationship has not really taken off.

Another person said that to create written objectives, or at least plan some objectives, she found that her mentor was flexible. Her mentor said that if she came up with written objectives, great, but advised her not to worry about it. The mentor advised her to just try to think about what she was going to get out of the relationship. Her mentor acted as a sounding board. The mentor is outside of the unit, but on the same floor.

Who chooses whom?

The mentees said that the pairing is handled by a third party, the organizers of the program.

The mentees did not meet the organizers of the program, and the mentees told us that they would have liked to meet them. They know that the mentors received an orientation to the program, and the mentees wish they had had something like this. They would have liked more solidarity – we are all new, and lets connect through this program. Two of the mentees mentioned this to their mentors, and they feel that the mentees could form a network too. As it turned out, they felt somewhat excluded. They would like to receive an orientation, at the end of which the organizers could invite them to participate in the program.

I asked them how often they met with their mentors, and the four mentees said seven times; once, three times, and twelve times (though this person's mentor left the agency two weeks ago).

One person said her supervisor is not too communicative, and the mentor filled in the gap.

What are the qualities of a good mentor?

Flexibility.

Interpersonal skills – being able to reach out to the mentee, being proactive about organizing the meetings. Also, being open, nonjudgmental, and supportive.

Listening is a key skill.

Being knowledgeable about the agency, and able to answer questions. A good mentor can offer resources such as information and ideas for clients

A good mentor is objective and nonjudgmental. The objectivity extends to listening objectively and dispassionately to the mentee, and validating the mentee's feelings and responses.

Each unit seems to work differently within the agency, and the mentor should reveal this to the mentee. This means that the immediate team needs to mentor you, too. One person is getting all of her mentoring from her team – another person agreed, but she is also getting some value from the mentoring.

One mentee wondered if the goal of improving employee retention would be better served by training, not by mentoring.

What are the qualities of a good mentee?

A good mentee should have questions and be willing to ask them.

A good mentee should be open. The mentee should trust the organization to not lash out at them for the questions and concerns they raise – they need to trust, and in a bureaucracy this is not always easy.

The mentee should be organized so you can respond to the mentor's schedule. The mentee should be flexible.

Mentees need to feel they were given a choice to participate. Today, some people feel they had no choice, and that the mentoring program has been a burden.

What does the mentor get out of the relationship?

Meetings and free lunches.

One person said that her mentor said it is good to know about mentoring, and it looks good on her resume.

The relationship allows the mentor to refresh their memories about what it is like to just start out. They have to go over things they haven't thought about for a while.

Different people can bring different perspectives to situations, and it could be helpful for mentors to receive the views of the mentees.

Of course, if the mentor and mentee click – you get a relationship and a friendship.

One mentee speculated that to be at a point in your life where you can teach and help a junior colleague – that this must feel good.

What achievements or accomplishments can your mentor help you to pursue?

One person said that one day she would like to mentor somebody, and she has learned from her mentoring experience. She thinks she will be a better mentor because of this experience. A second person agreed with this.

Another person said she learned how important it is to make new people feel welcome, and to provide support and help.

Another person said that one achievement would be to become organized with your caseload. She did not know the best way to organize her work, and this has been a helpful aspect of her mentoring relationship.

Also see the objectives above – getting to know the organization. Mentoring did help her achieve this, at least in part.

Can you suggest a very concrete accomplishment that your mentor helped you with?

Did not ask.

What are the biggest mentoring challenges you have faced?

Finding time to meet. Fitting it into the schedule. One person said her mentor has been on holidays most of the time. Time pressures have been challenging.

Geography can also be a challenge. The mentors are in different offices, so it is an added complication. The mentee who met the most often with her mentor is located in the same office as the mentor.

Another challenge for one person is that the mentor was quiet all the time and the mentee did all the talking, and the silences were awkward. It was almost like pulling information out of a client, and the meetings felt like a lot of work and were not fun. They usually met over lunch, and the meetings were awkward.

And she (the mentee) ended up having to pay for two of the three lunches they had.

Personality glitches were another problem. One person said she liked her mentor, though she still doesn't know her, but this mentor is just not available.

Personality and chemistry are very important –another person says she gets on well with her mentor, and that plays a factor in their relationship – a friendship is taking shape. Another person said the same thing.

Having no orientation information was a drawback. It would really have helped to have received an orientation to the mentoring relationship. Two people said their mentors gave them their orientation notes, and this was really helpful. The mentees could have used an orientation too.

The mentoring coordinators did not acknowledge information from mentees, or meet with mentees. They would have liked personal acknowledgements from the program organizers.

Also, interaction with other mentees would have helped too. The mentees would have liked to get to know the other new people.

The mentees suggested that you should be careful whom you pick as mentors. The wrong people can be bad mentors, and perhaps harm the mentee.

Private Sector Manufacturing Environment

Questions For Line Managers and HR Managers

Is mentoring an important way for you to develop members of your team?

Yes. One interviewee has been with the company for about three and a half years, and he has noticed that the company has strong informal mentorship in place. Many of the leadership team are people who started in entry level positions, and who were taken under the wing of an experienced person and then rose through the ranks. For example, many plant managers started at the bottom of the company and then moved up over 20 years, largely by working with a more experienced person.

This tendency is not so strong now, because today they tend to hire more experienced people rather than always promoting from within. But informal mentoring remains an important part of the culture.

The company's president wants to see these types of mentoring relationships taking shape among employees.

What results or outcomes do you expect to receive from mentoring?

Retention is a serious issue at the company right now, and mentoring is seen as a way to alleviate this issue. The company is having trouble recruiting new people, and is also having trouble getting these new people to stay with the company. The thinking is that perhaps it might be more worthwhile to invest in current employees, rather than bringing in new people. They will show existing employees opportunities for advancement, and hence improve their retention rate. Mentoring is also a way to build on their current skill base – in other words, rather than train new people about their processes, they will promote people who already have this knowledge and who therefore do not need this basic training..

So in a nutshell, the outcomes are to do with retention, and promotion.

How does the mentoring work?

Haphazardly.

When considering the employees he has talked to about their development, he concludes that mentoring has been based on random selection. An employee happens to hit it off with a supervisor or manager. The employee is seen as promising, and a relationship takes shape. The employee receives coaching and support, receives extra duties, and is promoted.

So mentoring tends to be hit or miss. Two people form a relationship for whatever reason, and the mentoring gradually takes shape.

At this company, the mentor tends to be the manager or supervisor (usually a supervisor). Most employees are in the production area, so it is production supervisors who tend to fill the role of mentor.

Over the years, this company has come to rely more on a job posting policy. In the past, they hand-picked people for promotion and new roles. Now this practice is diminishing, and they are trying to provide an open, fair competition for promotions. The company is evaluating the job posting procedure now, and is considering whether all employees realize that this is the standard route to advancement. Some employees may still think that the old mentoring or hand-picked approach prevails.

The company does have one initiative that might be called a formal mentoring program. The *Management Development Program* is a new initiative in which they have hired seven candidates, and for two years they will move from division

to division to get an informal sense of the whole company, and then they will work in three six month blocks in different departments. This will be the company's most formal mentorship program to date, because the individuals are assigned to work with a specific experienced person, and in some cases the experienced person will be expected to provide considerable individual guidance and coaching.

Who are the best mentors?

The best mentors are people who have a real sense of security about themselves and their position, and who are willing to give extra time. Lots of the mentoring happens during breaks, or before and after shifts – in other words, during informal communication time periods.

Mentors also tend to be the more loyal employees who plan to remain with the company for a long time.

When I asked the interviewee, he said that good mentors are not good communicators.

Who are the best mentees?

This company is very diverse, and the mentees are often quite different. Some of them are ambitious people who want to progress rapidly; others are more methodical and not as fast and want a broader range of understanding. Both types can be mentored successfully.

Good mentees tend to be open to learning, and to be willing to take direction. Conflict would destroy the relationship, so they have to be open to instruction.

A good understanding of English usually means that the mentee is more likely to be successful, too. The company offers a Literacy for Leadership program, and some tutoring is available, so hopefully that will help potential candidates who face a language barrier.

What problems have arisen?

Language and cultural barriers can be an issue.

But most of the problems they have encountered have been when they forced mentorship on people. In one case, they were trying to get somebody from another culture into their leadership group. The person was eager, but the mentoring did not work well. In retrospect, they needed to give him more specific help and spend more time and give more training. They offered mentoring, but on its own it was not sufficient – in this case, the biggest issue was the language barrier.

In the past, with long term employees mentoring has been easier – a supervisor stays in the role for a long time, and brings people along as needed. Now, however, there is growth and a larger turnover, and new roles need to be filled, and people need to be cultivated and moved to take on these new roles. With the high rate of change, mentoring is not being as successful. Turnover is too high and fast, and there is insufficient time to invest in the relationship. Without the time, you set mentees up for failure. You need to invest the time and develop a person’s potential; and you also need to be sure that the person has the potential that warrants a mentoring relationship.

Is it possible to measure outcomes from mentoring?

Not right now, because it is so informal.

The interviewee acknowledges that he is not aware of all of the mentoring relationships in the company, so he does not know what to measure.

You could look at the leadership people and ask them about their mentoring experiences – that could be a way of doing some form of measurement.

HR does not do a lot of measuring of anything right at the moment; they are just now looking at measurement systems. The HR management role was recently split – employee development is one role, and HR administration is the other role. The interviewee told us that he would like to look at the development of existing people, and mentoring could be part of this, and he would look at measurement as they further define these programs.

Would you consider a formal mentoring program in your organization?

Semi-formal, yes, given the culture and the people. There are people who have been with this company for 30 years and who know the founder of the company, and who identify with the company. The interviewee thinks they need to keep the mentoring informal, so it is seen as unthreatening.

By semi-formal, he means that he would like to see a “behind-the-scenes” structure for the mentoring program, but to make the actual mentoring seem extremely informal. The purpose would be to identify people who are solid candidates for advancement, and then to put them in trainee positions with a mentor to assist them in acquiring the new skills and knowledge. Today, they are tending to use job postings for advancement and promotion; the mentoring approach would be different, and would involve a supervisor saying “Let’s move you into this new role as a trainee, and this will prepare you for the next step in your career.” The mentoring would involve creating a relationship between a candidate and an experienced person to prepare the mentee for the new job. The program would not be formal, it would not have a binder or anything, but it would include a structured system behind the scenes for identifying candidates. The

structure would allow you to provide a logical explanation of why certain people were picked and others were not picked.

What features would a formal mentoring program need to have for it to succeed in your organization?

Formal mentoring is not a workable solution for this company; however, the fairness and openness of formal mentoring, where candidates might apply for a mentor, makes it somewhat attractive. But the interviewee is not pursuing this option right now. He is not ruling formal mentoring out completely, but he wants to start with a semi-formal approach. Fairness and openness for employees is something that formal mentoring might bring, and in time this company might go that way. But for now he wants to start with something less formal and overt.

Anything else

The only other thing that the interviewee thought to mention is the time commitment involved in mentoring. How much time will a mentor be able to devote to a mentee? They have internship and coop programs for people who come in for work terms, and they do not always devote the time needed to make the term successful for the student. If mentors have not committed to provide the needed time, it can easily fall apart – and he has seen students walk away disappointed because of this. The same issue applies to employees who are being mentored.

Questions for Mentors – a line supervisor

How does a mentoring relationship come into being?

Mentoring is useful for helping an employee prepare for a leadership role, which involves encouraging them to take on the role of group leader, cell leader, and (finally) supervisor. The HR Manager has 20 people in his leadership stream, and some of them need mentoring while others take responsibility for developing their own abilities for their new leadership role.

One line supervisor devotes his mentoring time to people in the leadership stream.

People enter the leadership stream by applying for the position. They are interviewed and selected, and once they are in this new role the mentoring begins.

Do you have objectives for the mentoring relationship?

Yes, definitely.

The objective is to make them into the best leader that they can be. The line supervisor has cell leaders who came up through the ranks, and he wants them to

advance and achieve a leadership level that allows them to make decisions on their own and to have the necessary confidence. Some of his current people have been in the role for only two months, and they already are showing tremendous progress.

Developing confidence – this emerged as an important theme in my conversation with the line supervisor.

Who chooses whom?

See above.

What are the qualities of a good mentor?

Honesty is very important – this, in fact, is the most important trait.

A good mentor must also be a good role model.

And a good mentor is a good listener and communicator, so the person knows where they stand.

What are the qualities of a good mentee?

They have to be willing to be mentored, and they should be a good listener. And they should have ambition.

The mentee should realize that they are doing this for themselves, and they really want to attain the objective for themselves. They don't just want to please the mentor; they want to become better for their own sake.

What do you have to offer a mentee?

Experience. In his case, he has been with the company for 22 years. He has already faced most of the issues that the mentee is facing. He has learned from his mistakes, and can share this with the mentees.

The line supervisor likes to involve the lead hands, the cell leaders and group leaders, in decisions, so they can learn from experience. Up to a certain point he will delegate dealing with issues; beyond this, he will get involved too.

What does the mentee get out of the relationship?

Theirs is a very multicultural work environment, and some people are new to Canada and just want to do a job and not say anything because they don't feel that they have a contribution to make. But after they have crossed this hurdle and get a leadership role, they usually gain more confidence.

They come to appreciate their own potential and confidence.

They hired 16 people two months ago, and many of these people have turned out to have enormous potential that was not initially recognized.

Self-esteem is improved.

And the line supervisor said that he experienced the same thing when he started.

What achievements or accomplishments can you assist a mentee in pursuing?

The line supervisor felt that he had already mentioned these things. He repeated self-esteem and confidence.

A mentor can also help mentees move on to new positions and greater responsibility in the company. They seem to learn more and faster and to grow, and it is wonderful to experience this and to observe their development.

About 80% of new hires are immigrants who are shy and are not sure if they will get a chance to advance, and they really take off when they are given a chance.

What does the mentor get out of the relationship?

Good workers and a good team, and this makes his job easier. A happier workforce.

The line supervisor also gets personal satisfaction. He was in the same situation here when he started, and there was no method like this 22 years ago. Now your success with the company doesn't hinge on what country you are from, and this gives him enormous satisfaction. He feels good knowing that he is helping people who are deserving, and seeing them succeed.

Also, the mentoring process minimizes conflict. Respect is paramount on his team and in the company, and this is important to Walter and to the mentees as well. He coaches them on this – to treat people with respect, and this seems to be part of the culture of his team. No conflict, lots of respect.

He is also happy to know that he is creating great people for the company. He is creating a great resource for the company. This makes him more confident and happy.

What are the biggest mentoring challenges you have faced?

Multicultural barriers. Some people just see things differently, and you have to be aware of this and find ways to get around. They had a lead hand who spoke very

softly, and people could not hear him. But people from his home country talk like that, so it was a cultural thing. He went to ESL and they worked on encouraging him to speak louder, and they had to deal with his. People thought of him as a softy, but it wasn't true. This was a barrier.

What are the mentoring moments that you are proudest of?

The line supervisor told us that when he came into the supervision situation in this building, and there were big problems at that time. This was a big challenge in this one department that he had moved into. To start with he selected cell leaders, and the working relationship has been excellent. He set rules, including honesty and trust, and using that as the foundation helped a lot. When they meet he tries not to just make unilateral decisions, but instead the five of them reach consensus and they learn together, though he takes accountability. They have now been together for years, and one guy backs the other guy up. He is very proud of this achievement.

The line supervisor says that ..., a local leadership trainer they use, has been a very big help and has mentored a lot of people there.

Questions for Mentees – A cell leader with only 5 or 6 months in the role; became a group leader and now cell leader

How does a mentoring relationship come into being?

He started on the packing line and knew nothing about assembly, and then he moved to assembly, and after four months he began to work on parts supplying and this meant that he needed to know more about the overall company. His mentors showed him the tricks of the trade and various things. They both do their job well and have their own styles (one of them is by the book and the other is a shortcut person). The mentoring relationship just kind of took shape – when he struggled, they came to help him, and sometimes he asked for help, and so the relationship just took shape.

Do you have objectives for the mentoring relationship? Who sets them?

He said that it is kind of a half-half situation. He is willing to learn on his own and is also willing to learn with their help. They have provided help, and have pushed him to do better. The point is to help the company be successful to secure his job. In time, he would like more responsibility and advancement with the company.

Who chooses whom?

See above.

What are the qualities of a good mentor?

They care about their jobs. They are not indifferent; they want more bonus money. They are willing to work hard. For example, the line supervisor will get down and do the job with the rest of the guys; he doesn't just sit in his office. He will pitch in when he needs to. They are committed.

Another big thing is that he gets along with the three of them, and they are willing to cover for each other. So they have a good working relationship. Willing to help each other.

They are very positive people, and this helps.

The mentee likes to learn by doing. And the various jobs all tie together. These guys have climbed up that way, and can tie various parts of the job together, and then can think of how to make things easier for each other.

What are the qualities of a good mentee?

It is up to the mentee. If the mentee wants the help and want to succeed, then they will succeed. Positive people seek each other out and help each other out and help each other to succeed.

What does the mentor get out of the relationship?

They want to see the mentee succeed. If he succeeds, they will be happy and feel that they did a good job.

Also, it helps the department out. It helps the company succeed financially, and that results in bonuses.

What achievements or accomplishments can your mentor help you to pursue?

The mentee said there is nothing specific right now that he is working on. They have probably taught him most of the things he needs to know, and he is happy where he is right now (he is 25 years old and has come a long way). If something opens up, great. But he is not pursuing anything specific right now.

Can you suggest a very concrete accomplishment that your mentor helped you with?

See above.

What are the biggest mentoring challenges you have faced?

The mentee told me this story. When he first became a cell leader, one of his mentors took him aside and advised him that as a cell leader you need to realize that work is work, and friends are friends. You come to work not to make enemies, but also not to make friends. You have to get your people motivated and working. Your people might be upset with you, and that can be part of your job. You have to do your job, and realize that work and friends do not always mix for a supervisor. You have to treat all employees equally, and not favour your friends. This was tough for him to get used to. His former work pals now work for him, and he cannot be buddy-buddy or play favourites. One of his mentors knew that he needed to hear this, and so he made sure that he got the message.

Appendix D: Interview Findings

This appendix includes summaries of interview findings with individuals in Manitoba organizations in a number of different environments, both public sector and private.

Manufacturing Environment Interview (with two people)

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

One interviewee says she had a mentoring relationship with her former director, before he was the director. She was a training administrator, and she got along better with him than she did with her manager. So it was an informal mentoring relationship that continued for several years, until he became a director, and then it became more formal in that she met with him regularly. So he just checked with her on things, and their conversations covered matters that were both work related and personal. He was often a good sounding board, the voice of reason. He had a lot of experience, and had been around the block a few times, and had seen what worked and didn't work. She didn't always agree with him, because he was very structured, more than she is, and she found that she learned to present information in the way he liked to see it. He shared a lot of experiences and challenges, including family issues, what worked and what didn't; and as she expressed an interest in moving toward management or toward the training specialist stream, they would discuss the pros and cons of each from time to time. He would share his own experiences and acted as a sounding board. (He has now moved to Montreal.)

He helped her to focus on her career, and helped her to make better career decisions; and he also reaffirmed and validated decisions.

Another interviewee's first mentor was his most important one, right out of engineering school. This supervisor was a good man, and they connected. He respected the mentee, and that was important. They joked around together. The

mentee recognized his abilities and intelligence. They almost had too much fun together. His mentor was a friend as much as anything else. This relationship set the tone for his professional life, and as a result he doesn't take himself too seriously.

The mentee managed to build his sense of confidence through his interactions with this man. He worked with his mentor for three years, and the mentor helped him to become established in the profession and in the career. The mentor provided feedback and a sense of confidence and direction.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

No.

They are close to having a program, but nothing is in place right now.

They have set the stage for launching a program at the high-tech manufacturing firm, but the program is not going to be formal in the sense of having a binder and documented procedures. One interviewee told us that she has part of the program developed. The managers will be the mentors in this case. There is no binder.

She noted that forcing a mentoring relationship will not work. She recalls her first manager, and how a mentoring relationship with him would not have worked. Her mentor was not her manager. So there needs to be some flexibility built into the program, so mentees have some say in the relationship.

The interviewee also pointed out that some people have the ability to mentor, and others may not.

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Yes. One is in the works.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

Nailing down the level of structure that should be in the program. How formal should it actually be? What should the program material be? Should we have contracts? She is still wrestling with this issue.

Another challenge is to go through a process to get to know people better, so they can figure out how to do the matching. Could be DISK (a psychological program they currently use), or Myers Briggs, or something along those lines.

Another interviewee noted that the organization needs to be careful in watching how mentoring may influence or inhibit the company's team oriented culture. There is an open door policy, and they don't want to damage it. The mentoring program has to be consistent with the culture.

The organization also needs to avoid the perception that some people are being favoured over others.

I asked about time, and they acknowledged that time could definitely be an issue for some people. The company is growing fast, and most people don't have time to mentor people to help them move into important new roles. And yet on the other hand, they do not have the time to do the job properly.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

Transfer of knowledge and experience is one major benefit. The demographics of the workforce has changed – it is much younger than it was a few years ago. But for the company, there is no big retirement issue coming up here.

They are growing, and they need young people to advance, and the young people may not be prepared adequately for new management roles.

Mentoring can also bring intangible benefits. If you mentor people who are off the rails, you can help them become productive rather than getting into a difficult employee situation (which could result in dismissal). Mentoring can therefore be a problem-solving process, heading off potential issues before they escalate.

Also, when an organization grows, mentoring can help people advance and perform faster than otherwise might be the case.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

A formal mentoring program needs to have enough structure in place to identify outcomes and objectives.

They need to be able to measure the results of the program.

They need to recognize participation in the program, and realize that the program is based on ability and is fair.

A formal mentoring program must fit with the organization's culture.

Need to be able to integrate or implement the program quickly, and ensure that it is dynamic. They need to be dynamic and serious in how they implement the program, showing that they are serious about doing it and that it is important to the organization.

The program needs some degree of visibility. The successes must be visible, so people see a benefit to getting involved in the program. The benefits should be aimed at both mentors and mentees.

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Interviewee "A" thinks there is. Just from observing, she has seen people bond. Interviewee "B" has mentored some people; Today interviewee "A" mentors some people. She sees the same thing in the HR department.

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Yes, perhaps through some type of awareness training. So show people what mentoring is and how it works, and this might motivate some people to seek mentors or mentees. Or they may recognize their relationships as mentoring already, and work on those some more.

Another interviewee thinks that mentoring is growing in the company just because of all of the new people coming in. You need to mentor your new employees so they can offload work from you.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

One interviewee thinks that formal mentoring would have more benefit.

Another interviewee thinks that formal mentoring is a good thing. Informal mentoring wouldn't happen as often, but the people who set these up may form longer bonds and get more benefits.

With more structure you can direct and try to get specific results, specific new skills. Overall for the organization, the results may be better from formal than informal mentoring.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Listening.

Empathy.

Sense of humour.

Sense of caring.

Generous and willing to share knowledge and experience, and don't expect you to have to learn the hard way.

Not be overly competitive – the opposite, collaborative.

Person is secure and confident.

Respected in the organization.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Open minded about the job and about people.

Humility.

A desire to succeed and do a good job.

Be somewhat independent, so they don't just do things the mentor tell them.

Willing to learn.

Patient.

Willing to be part of a team and work with people.

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

Yes!!!

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

One interviewee would like to see programs that have worked for different organizations. She called several large Winnipeg organizations a few years ago to find a mentoring program, and she couldn't find any.

Theory, concept, and design; and ESPECIALLY implementation (dos, don'ts, experiences, success) – 50% on implementation.

Followup and networking so people can get advice as they move forward.

Feedback loop or audit system to tell you how effective it has been. How to measure it.

Private Sector Broadcaster

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

The best mentor I ever had was a patient and passionate person. He passionately cared about what he was doing and what his work was, and this was really clear. It is not enough to have skills and to learn the mechanics of something. A great mentor has to translate a passion for the job. If they don't love it, you won't pick it up.

In this interviewee's case, not only has she maintained a relationship with her mentor – she ended up marrying him.

She also pointed out that not everyone can mentor. Leaders are good mentors; managers may not be. Managers and administrators (“drill down” people) may not be effective teachers, and for a mentor you want a teacher.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

No.

This broadcaster does not have one. The mentoring here is casual, independent, and not mandatory.

At the foundation, however, they mentor through some of their professional training and development programs. In fact, within their industry they play a leadership role in mentorship outside of the office. They advocate and advance issues around mentorship outside of the organization, in other broadcasting outlets.

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Yes.

In terms of the foundation...

The foundation does not really pair women with mentors. There is no formal program, but they go to some length to connect younger women with older women. They have a girl's TV camp in various provinces, and this year they have them in Halifax, Ottawa, and Vancouver. The camp is all about mentorship. The girls at the camp are around 12 to 14 and are taught by women from the industry. These mentors are 30 to 40 and have lots of experience in the industry. They could be making more money at work, but instead spend two weeks teaching at the camp for a much reduced wage.

The purpose is to get girls excited about the trades and technology of television. Girls will not choose careers if they do not see themselves in those careers, so something like this camp and the mentoring is needed for girls to consider the technical trades of television as a career. Girls are introduced to women who are like them. If half of the group is aboriginal, then half of the staff is aboriginal – they really try to ensure role models are present. All of the girls participate on an Internet listserv, and they chat with each other and can access staff after camp is over, and they come in on Saturdays throughout the year and continue the camaraderie and their learning, and interact with women who are mentors and leaders.

A second program is called the Women's Technical Internship. In this program they take young women graduating from college and help them get a job by

paying for 50% of their salary for six months (the interns cannot work at the broadcaster).

A third program is the organization's endowment program. This involves women already working who find that technology is passing them by. They cannot get time on the new equipment and are afraid of losing their job. The endowment allows them to get money for retraining.

They bring these program people together and the various teachers and mentors for a diversity workshop once each year, and they talk about the value of hiring women and the challenges. One piece of this is mentorship. All the women come together for a "meet and greet" afternoon, and they get to show what they are working on. As part of this day the foundation delivers a mentorship lecture – covering topics such as how to mentor, the value of mentoring, and why you ought to do it. They encourage endowment winners to find a young intern, get the e-mail address, and then formulate a relationship. But they do not monitor or followup on the relationships.

The interviewee believes that there has to be a natural connection between mentor and mentee. You cannot foist the relationship on two people and derive benefits from it. The foundation provides some training about how to mentor. Many women feel they are not good enough to be mentors, so they try to help them get over this lack of self-confidence.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

The barriers in the organization would be the same as in other workplaces – the busyness of the workday. Until the value is placed on mentoring, there won't be priority on it.

But in the case of this organization, there is already be a lot of camaraderie here, and so there may be no need for a formal mentoring program. Instead, a strong support network and relationships already exist.

And there is no turnover problem at the organization. People stay.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

Mentoring could be part of a retention policy. This would make a good business case for mentoring – spend less energy finding and replacing staff. It also makes for a healthy workplace and happier staff.

An organization called Canadian Women in Communication did some research on women in management. They are a national organization that is funded with money from broadcasters to advance women in management in broadcasting. They have a mentoring program, with support chapters across the country. They did research on women in management (where they are and are not), and women on boards of directors. This research was telling. Women do not leave jobs because of money; they don't leave jobs because of the office, or furniture, or respect; they leave jobs when they did not get mentoring.

Employee retention might actually get served by hiring more women.

The Conference Board of Canada did a research piece along the same lines, and they learned that women leave jobs even if they are given a raise. This research also showed that mentoring was an important factor in retaining female employees.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

Like an arranged marriage. There has to be time to ensure that the match is a good match. There needs to be someone fairly skilled at the helm doing the matchmaking. This organization places women in jobs all over the country, and this can lead to a bad experience if the right support is not present.

There should also be some education for participants.

[The interviewee told me about her views on mentorship and corporate responsibility – the Trimark mentorship award. The program no longer has a sponsor. Trimark created the award because they were looking for new investment clients, and discovered the new market is women. They did research on women and investment, and found that what is really valuable to women is mentoring. You could nominate your mentor – people who had mentored women. Trimark was sold to another firm, and the program was abandoned.]

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Informal mentoring relationships are taking place all the time at this organization. It is probably more here than many other places, because most staff are women. It is a more common or natural thing to happen here. They also find that with girl's TV camps – girls learn better when it's just girls, and a girl-friendly approach is used.

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Yes. With food. Get people together informally around food. This makes things casual. If you are trying to advance informal interactions, then food could be a good way to encourage this. Or more generally, offer social activities.

They are also doing more casual training now, offering training on some computer programs. “Each one, teach one” plans.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

This probably depends on how successful the formal mentorship is. Success will depend primarily on proper pairing. The interviewee has been mentoring throughout her career.

She pointed out that at the Trimark awards ceremony, everyone who received awards described mentoring as a two way street. The mentors learn as much as the mentees. There is significant value for the mentors.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Patience and passion for the craft or skill or workplace.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Probably the same. They won't learn everything immediately. Mentees need to understand that there is a maturation process. Give the job a year.

The mentee should also have a passion for the work. They have to really care about what they are delivering.

She mentioned how young people are not as engaged in work as their parents were. Mentoring may help with this, along with creating diversity in the workplace.

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

Someone from this organization would.

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

Gender and diversity issues.

Mentoring women and how that is different than men.

Mentoring aboriginal women and how that might differ from mentoring white women.

Nuances change with gender and culture. Recognizing that.

Nonprofit Arts Organization

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

The interviewee can think of three people who informally mentored her over her career. One of the most important things she learned from her mentors was the history of the writing and publishing community. She needed to learn a lot about the culture and history of the community, and her mentors helped her with this. It is important to learn the “how-to” aspects of the job, too, but these broader areas were more important.

She also learned how to do things (marketing, grant applications, business proposals) – her mentors helped her to adjust to the job.

So mentors were helpful by giving the interviewee somebody to talk to who had written proposals and grant applications. It also gave her the confidence to locate new potential sources of funds such as foundations etc.

Her mentors were generous with their knowledge and were willing to share. They realized that she did not know certain things, and they were willing to donate their time to explain things and help her take on the new role.

She remains in touch with all of these people today. She might still go to these people for an opinion, to run ideas by them. These relationships developed into

good friendships. She spends time with them outside of work. She often partners with them on projects, too.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Yes, this organization offers a formal mentor program. They pair five emerging writers with five established writers, and the pairs work one-on-one together for five months. The experienced writer offers advice on being a writer – they talk about grants, jobs, publishing, and so on. And the emerging writer shows work to the established writer, to get feedback.

There is a process for selection. They send out information every fall, and they ask both mentors and apprentices to submit applications. They pair people up through a jury, and the relationship gets going in January. The mentor and apprentice sign a contract agreeing to 10 meetings at least. There is no charge to the mentees; and the mentors do get paid for participating (\$1,000).

What criteria are used for selection? The jury reads all of the applications. They usually start with the mentor applications, and part of the jury responsibility is to select the mentors. They look for experience in working with emerging writers, teaching experience, and professional credentials (publishing credits, experience with an editor, etc.). The jury picks the mentors, and then they go through the apprentice applications (usually about 40) and they make a shortlist of up to 15 applications. The jury then sends these 15 applications to the mentors and the mentors pick the apprentice with whom they want to work.

The apprentice used to be given some choice or influence in the pairing, but today, the apprentice has no say. The apprentice can refuse the pairing if they want to. Leaving the apprentice out of the pairing process has never presented any problems, as far as the interviewee knows. The apprentice knows that the writer selected them, so they tend to feel flattered, excited and honoured.

Often the apprentice ends up launching their career through the mentoring relationship. Often a friendship develops (not always, but often).

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Did not ask.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

I asked what the challenges have been?

The necessary time commitment is one of the big challenges. Everyone knows that a time commitment is required, and they are required to meet at least ten times and to do the necessary work.

Sometimes a mentor or an apprentice has a crisis or event in their life, and are unable to commit the time. She has occasionally received a phone call from a mentor or apprentice expressing concern.

A second challenge is personality conflicts. There have been no serious problems of this sort, but there are clearly various degrees of bonding between program participants. There has never been a case of people not getting along or of withdrawing because of personality conflicts; but there have been cases of people paired who have different styles, and this can raise some relationship problems. She emphasized that this has not been an overly serious challenge. Nobody has withdrawn from the program because of this.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

There are benefits on both sides of the relationship.

The apprentice gets access to a professional writer. The five month period functions like a creative writing tutorial. Apprentices can shape the program for their own purposes. The apprentices get to decide what they want to achieve, and how often they want to meet. They get evaluations, feedback, suggestions. And they get access to somebody's knowledge and experience about grants, publishers, editors, etc.

The mentor gets some money. And also, mentors get to experience writing and the writing process in a different way. Usually the apprentice is younger, and so the mentor gets to experience the youthful excitement about writing. Mentors also probably learn through the teaching and through answering the questions that are asked.

One story involves ... She used to be a mentor in the program, and she worked with a young writer named ... They became very close, and when the mentee went to college they continued to correspond and the mentee showed her mentor her work, and she married and the mentor offered her own wedding dress, and the mentee wore the dress at her wedding. And they are still very close. The mentee is now a published writer, and considers her mentor a lifelong writing mentor. And it is likely that the her mentor now sees her as more of a peer now.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

Did not ask.

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Yes, she thinks so. The organization does workshops and blue pencil sessions, and they have a lot of members who also teach, and they often notice a teacher showing up with students. It seems as though friendship and mentoring relationships are taking shape.

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Did not ask.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

Formal mentoring is known and evident – there is a contract. With informal mentoring, the apprentice may ask questions, but there may be some constraints and shyness. The outcome in this formal relationship is probably more significant than the informal relationships.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Patience.

Kindness.

Experience in the field.

Being encouraging.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Thick-skinned (to take the feedback).

Openness.

Appreciation of the mentors.

Willing to learn.

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

Did not ask.

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

Did not ask.

Manufacturing Organization

To start with, the interviewee told me that his first experience in mentoring was during his 23 years spent in the British army. The British army has a good mentoring system. During his 23 year career in the army he was mentored, and he has acted as a mentor. This is a significant part of army life – you are always placed with somebody when you first enter the army, and when you move to a new location or a new job.

At the manufacturing organization, the publications department uses mentoring for new employees. The interviewee was a technical writer and then he became a senior project coordinator in the publications area. As part of their formal induction process for new employees, they assign a mentor for new employees. After a week they interview the new employee again to make sure that everything is fine. The new employee is paired with an experienced employee for a week. The coordinator speaks to the new employee and to the mentor first, and then pairs them. The new employee is shown the ropes (usually for a week). The overall induction system lasts six months. After a week, two months, and six months, the new employee is interviewed. These interviews look for skill gaps and personality clashes.

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

His first-ever mentor was the best. He was a private in the British army, and his mentor was a corporal, and was both a crew commander and a mechanic (as was the interviewee). He learned more from his mentor (because of his experience) than he learned in the entire six months of basic training. The mentor was nine years older. He was well-respected by everybody, and that made the interviewee feel good. The mentor was also a great guy, and became a very good friend who he could confide in on all issues, not just work issues. And the interviewee did confide in him about all sorts of different things.

He also had a fantastic sense of humour. For the interviewee, this was important, and he appreciated the sense of humour. This gave him some of the techniques he used when he became a mentor.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

There are no documented mentoring programs. The one he described above is informal, although they always do it (but there is no manual, no formal objectives, no monitoring and measuring). They do ask for feedback from the employees on the mentoring relationship to find out whether the mentoring was useful.

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Yes. The reason that formal mentoring is feasible is that the employees possess specialist skills, and those skills could be measured. They could measure performance and progress, and use mentoring to develop and improve skills.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

None in this department.

They are not doing formal mentoring now because of time constraints. They are under a tight schedule in production. The best employees would tend to be the mentors, but these same people need to be available to the production work. On the other hand, the interviewee realizes that if they did do formal mentoring, the manufacturing organization would probably over time get better results – but there would be a transition period in which results might fall off temporarily.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

Speed: time to productivity is the big benefit.

The mentees get to know the systems fast, and they understand the people fast. Mentoring also allays some of the fears of new employees, so they feel comfortable faster.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

They would need to consult with the training department and tie the program in with training needs. They would need to set measurable goals. The mentors would need some training. Sometimes the existing mentors may not be well-suited to be mentors – the best employees are under the most pressure, and a mentoring assignment adds to the pressure.

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Yes. [Already answered.]

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Yes. They would try to encourage more involvement by project coordinators, not just people on shop floor. They could improve the informal mentoring process by measuring it using a structured, standard questionnaire. They could extend the mentoring practice to include people who are going to be promoted. The interviewee told us that he moved up two levels in one jump, and had very little time with the outgoing person, and this created challenges. He was left floundering, and this caused time delays.

He added that the existing informal mentoring program is generally well-accepted by staff, especially by the ones who have solid people skills.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

The interviewee believes that there is a difference. With informal mentoring, at the end of the mentoring period you cannot say to the mentee that we have measured performance and the mentee is qualified to do this job. With formal mentoring, you could measure performance and evaluate a person at the end of the process.

The manufacturing organization could also use a formal mentoring program in conjunction with their employee personal development program. In setting goals for the next year, you could establish mentoring relationships intended to improve employee performance; and then you could track the employee over time and see if performance goes up or down. This would help with a root cause investigation of problem areas.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

A good mentor needs to be approachable.

Good mentors are able to explain things simply.

Good mentors are patient.

Good language skills are important. This company has employees from all over the world (Bosnia, Romania, Philipines, etc), so English skills are important.

A sense of humour can be helpful.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

A good mentee should be a good listener.

A good mentee accepts ideas and doesn't go off on their own tangent. At this company they have set way of doing things that must be followed.

Mentees should offer suggestions – how can we improve. They should be proactive, not just reactive.

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

Yes.

It should be a one day workshop, not two days.

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

People skills. Listening and communicating.

Different scenarios that have been played out in mentoring situations.

How to measure performance after the mentoring.

Setting realistic goals.

Timeframes. How long should mentoring continue to qualify somebody for a task.

Mentoring skills – how to present information, and how to explain things.

What sort of package should be given to mentors and mentees before they start the mentoring relationship.

Social Services Organization (Provincial Crown Agency)

Background

This organization has about 250 employees. About 75% of their effort continues to focus on alcohol problems; they are also seeing more dual addiction problems, and gambling problems.

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

His experience with mentoring is based on informal rather than formal programs. Some people would say these “informal” experiences are in fact formal, because his early mentors were supervisors, and so there was an element of formality in the relationship. This is especially true when you look at it from the viewpoint that a good supervisor helps an individual understand what they are looking for in a job, in a career, and in their future direction. A good supervisor also helps an individual look at themselves in terms of performance (helps with self-evaluation without it being a fearful experience). Examining where you are and what you want, and your strengths and weaknesses – this is the essence of mentoring.

To be effective for an organization, mentoring should involve somebody assisting an individual, and helping them to see their future with the organization and the “big picture” of how the organization works.

For the interviewee, supervision is not just administration. It is working with people. His background is social work.

After these introductory comments, the interviewee turned to his own experiences. He can think of a couple of good supervisor/mentors, and spoke about one of them. This man’s sense of interest in him and his future was a key element of the relationship. The mentor’s genuine interest in him was the impetus for him to take on the role as his mentor. He was one of the interviewee’s first supervisors. He helped the interviewee to understand how he functioned – the workplace, and what was expected of him. He also helped the interviewee to understand the bigger picture of the organization, and this was vital because the interviewee told us that he needs to see the big picture and then to work down to the detail. The interviewee told us that he is a processor more than an action person. He helped the interviewee understand what his strengths would be in this job. It was informal mentoring, consisting of casual conversations, and the supervisor might not have even seen himself as a mentor.

Another person here is acting as his mentor today, and this man is explicitly interested in mentoring. They have confidence in each other, and they can express fears and doubts and anxieties, and they both know that it will be kept confidential – there is no worry that the man will “tell” on the interviewee. It is safe. He collaborates with the interviewee on a relationship that allows him to talk through things and learn; in a funny way, he probably uses the interviewee as a mentor, too. The relationship is probably best thought of as a form of peer-to-peer mentoring.

We discussed the benefits of these two relationships – the first one gave the interviewee an experience of good supervision. The interviewee told us that he looks at supervisors in his organization, and in other jobs, and sometimes he thinks that it is a shame that these people have not had the chance to experience a really good supervisory relationship. This relationship helped the interviewee develop his focus, and to see his strengths and what he does best. The mentoring helped the interviewee to understand how to deal with the systems of the workplace. He also helped the interviewee to understand his own place in the workplace, and to see the value that he has to offer the organization.

Mentoring is not about weaknesses; rather, it is about how his strengths can contribute to his organization, and about understanding the purpose and functioning of the organization. The mentor helped him to understand the web of relationships in a social work organization.

The peer-to-peer mentoring that he is experiencing today offered a different benefit – mostly the ability to process thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. The interviewee can question things openly, and express dark thoughts and talk things through in a way that allows him to process it and reach a decision about action.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

No.

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

Yes, it is probably feasible.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

There are some major roadblocks that might be tough to deal with.

For example, a formal program would require that mentees be identified and then mentored toward a goal, most likely new responsibilities or a new position. It happens that this organization has many one-of-a-kind positions, or positions that are filled by just a few people. The interviewee's point is that he does not know how a formal mentoring program could fit with the collective agreement process, wherein they are required to have an open competition to fill vacant positions. So how can you identify and mentor somebody to fill a position, but also remain consistent with the collective agreement process that does not let you just promote the persons who seem like the best candidates (and who have been mentored for the promotion).

The interviewee added that the collective agreement does not preclude a formal mentoring program; but there could be some issues here. It might be summed up as a fairness issue versus mentoring.

There is one other major barrier – how do you identify who should be mentored? How can we find out who is interested in advancing in this particular direction, and be sure that we have identified all of the potential candidates, including the candidates with the most potential? Managers may simply not be aware of people's dreams. How can you be fair in offering the right mentoring opportunities to people? Do you just send out a notice? What if some people don't respond, for whatever reason?

And the interviewee added later that the matching of the two people is really the most important thing – the two people have to be well matched, and who “fit” together in a good way. Myers Briggs and techniques such as this could be useful for helping make the matches.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

The succession process could be well-served by mentoring. This can be a serious problem today, and working on this would help identify who is interested in particular areas and what their abilities are.

Mentoring could broaden our understanding of the richness of our staff resources. It could give us some very obvious continuity in the organization that is often lost when people come and go. If people have *not* been mentored within a program, they might feel much easier about leaving for another job; but if they have been mentored for promotion, they may be more aware of internal opportunities, and would probably be inclined to stay. The overall quality of individual people on staff would probably be substantially improved.

Mentoring should show the value of people, and how that value can help the organization.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

Fairness of access.

Openness of decision making. Transparency.

The program would have to be open or available to all staff in all classifications in the organization, and not available only to a few select people.

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

Yes, absolutely.

There are a few people he knows who have mentoring relationships within the organization. These would tend to be relationships characterized by a more junior person seeking advice, help and assistance. The interviewee told us that he does not mean that these relationships focus on day-to-day issues, but rather on more intangible things that are happening in the workplace, and how the mentees should handle or respond to these intangible issues. One man is using a senior counsellor to help him understand what he needs to do to advance in the organization, and to recognize his strengths and limitations.

These relationships involve informal interaction, and include only some people in the organization.

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Yes, he could see it being expanded and improved.

If the managers (meaning supervisors and up) talked more openly about mentoring, and had some training on mentoring and how it works, then people might start looking for and getting involved in mentoring. People might then begin to see themselves taking on a mentoring role.

They are currently doing team building work, and this could help to encourage a mentoring environment in the organization. They have some self-directed teams, and in this type of team environment, you probably need a lot more peer-to-peer mentoring.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

There are definitely some differences between the two.

Informal mentoring is much more flexible. In some ways, for those involved it might be more effective because both parties want to be in the relationship. The informal nature of the relationship implies an appreciation for the individual you are working with – you like him, you have confidence in him, you trust him. If that is there, you are more likely to use the relationship.

In a formal program, you may not have the same degree of confidence and trust. The relationship might be more controlling, and less flexible.

Formal mentoring, however, could be broader based and fairer; but it may not produce the same great results as informal mentoring does.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Good listener.

Honesty.

Able to elicit confidence from others.

Be perceived as fair.

Leadership qualities.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Needs to be open with the mentor.

Willing to share.

Willing to take a risk.

Willing to change.

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on how to establish an effective formal mentoring program in the workplace?

Probably.

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

What is mentoring (definition).

Discussion of the qualities of a mentor.

How mentoring works.

Cursory look at benefits and possible disadvantages (people probably already believe in the value, so no big sell needed).

Formal versus informal mentoring.

Why would you look at mentoring? What issues could mentoring help you to address? What kind of workplace would you be creating. If your organization functions this way, here is how mentoring would affect your organization. How would it fit within the structure, the authority level, the unionized environment, etc.

Hotel / Restaurant Complex

Initial Conversation

Tell us about one of your most important mentoring relationships in a work setting. What was it about the mentor that made the relationship great. What was it about the relationship itself that you valued the most? What benefits or achievements do you attribute to the relationship?

The interviewee's most significant mentor was her 83 year old boss.

The interviewee learned that many of the principles of business are simple. Her mentor had a grade 8 education and had been in business all his life. He was a Jewish man who was on his own from age 13. He taught her to keep a certain amount of money in the bank, to never over-extend the debt at the hotel. He was able to speak to these things from experience, and he dealt from the heart. He was interested in mentoring, and he was willing to share.

She thinks that you are either a mentor or you are not. She is an ENFJ Myers-Briggs type, which means that she is inclined to be a teacher/mentor, and she loves working with other people who are her personality type. The right person has to have the role of mentor. Her boss was the right person for her, even though he was 43 years older than her. She learned an enormous amount from.

And she is still in touch with him. The mentoring does not continue so much any more. But there was definitely a friendship and in fact a loving connection with him.

Formal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **formal** mentoring arrangements or programs in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

The hotel has a career mapping program. Within the first 6 months or less, they do the Myers Briggs on new employees and try to find out the career route that the employee wants to follow in the hotel: guest services, customer services, sales and marketing, management track, or behind the scenes. And then they put together the educational components. So for a few years there is education, and they help people to move up the ranks. Department heads do much of the mentoring. The hotel follows a strong promotion from within policy – they have only hired from outside into management once in the last eight years. Instead, they promote from within. Every employee has a career map; and every few months they review where everybody is supposed to be going, and they make sure that the career mapping is staying on track for the employees. They want to build a teacher/mentor culture from the ground up, and this can be hard in shift environments. Department heads cannot be at the hotel for all shifts. They try to hold meetings at night and during weekends now and then.

They don't hide anything, and there is informal mentoring. All employees have access to anyone for learning. They share as much knowledge about what the management team does as they can. Share knowledge – this is part of their culture. They don't hide it or hide opportunities. Everyone gets the same mentoring chance.

Is a formal mentoring program feasible within your organization?

They have a distinct, family culture, and always ask questions of their employees, to the point of being a bit intrusive. In fact, they do not differentiate between personal and work lives – so for example they raise funds for heart surgery for someone; when an employee's marriage is in trouble, they try to provide the needed support. And they discuss these things at management meetings. This is their culture. To address all components of the self. And so you have to have an informal mentorship program, because being mentored is about gaining knowledge and personal development.

What barriers exist in your organization that could make it difficult for a formal mentoring program to succeed?

Did not ask.

What benefits might a formal mentoring program bring to your organization?

Not relevant, given the culture.

How would a formal mentoring program work? What would be key features or components or steps?

Not relevant, given the culture.

Informal Mentoring Conversation

*Are you aware of any **informal** mentoring arrangements or relationships in your organization? If so, tell us about them.*

See above.

They use their career mapping program, and they also have a culture of mentoring. They try to work on the employee's physical and mental health. If she has a really busy day, they hang a sign on her door saying that the doctor is in – all people need support, and mentoring is just one way of providing support. One desk clerk with good potential for mentoring has just been diagnosed with diabetes, and they need to help to understand this illness. They want to work on physical and mental health, and when this is secure they turn quite naturally to mentoring. This is a really caring business, and mentoring is just naturally part of this.

They get taken advantage of sometimes.

Might it be possible to increase the amount of informal mentoring that takes place in your organization? How?

Yes.

Mentoring needs to go on all the time. Department heads miss deadlines, and the department head says we had these development tasks (mentoring tasks) to attend to, and so we set priorities accordingly and missed the deadline – and when this happens, management does not penalize the department heads.

Mentoring is a discipline, and time has to be made for it. You need to keep people, and you do that by mentoring them (or somebody else will take them). Everybody wants to be the best they can be – and you achieve this through mentoring.

Note – the interviewee did not have a mentor through her twenties; and so nobody recognized her talent and she was slotted into the secretarial pool; and then somebody recognized her talent.

In her mentoring, she worked on her strengths. They work on their strengths here – we go with what we feel we are good at. Strengths, not weaknesses. She told a funny story about her talent for communicating – she was told to stop talking in class, and her teachers did not recognize her ability to communicate as a talent.

Would the benefits of informal mentoring be the same as or different from the benefits of formal mentoring?

She has learned that there is a risk factor with informal mentoring. Some people get left out. Those who are quiet, or who work awkward shifts, may tend to conceal their potential – so maybe a formal program would be more equal in treatment. But she tries to limit this through other techniques, including using e-mail to keep in touch with people. There could be benefits to formal mentoring; but for her the essence of mentoring is the right fit between mentor and mentee.

Mentor and Mentee Conversation

What are the most important traits of a good mentor?

Mentoring is a way of life.

Interest. Genuine interest in helping.

Ability to be in the role in the first place.

Personality type – a gregarious and less thoughtful person (of their impact on the other person) might cause harm.

Patience. Not everybody does things your way, so you need to accept this.

Effective communicator.

Good listener.

What are the most important traits of a good mentee?

Genuine willingness to learn.

Not be overly defensive.

Desire to participate and to be a mentee (not be a know-it-all).

Workshop Questions

Would you attend a workshop on mentoring?

Yes.

If it is tactical, they might send mentors. If it is higher level, the HR person.

What topics should be covered in this workshop?

Understanding the role of a mentor.

What makes a good mentor.

What barriers get in the way of good mentoring.

Appendix E: Resources and Bibliography

Books and Articles

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Web Resources

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