

STEP 3 – “WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MENTORS, PROFILE OF MENTORS AND MENTEES? HOW DO WE CARRY OUT SELECTION, MATCHING, BRIEFING AND TRAINING?”

PROJECT PLANNING

DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE MENTORS



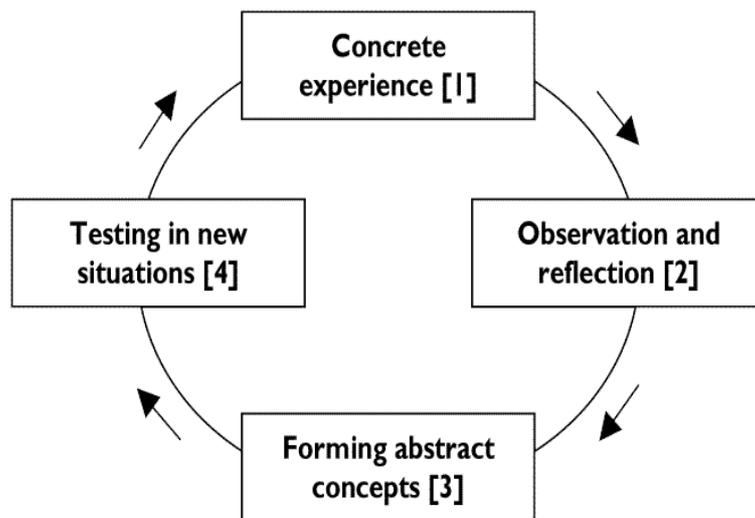
The role of the mentor will largely be determined by the purpose of the program.

Different possible tasks of a mentor:

- *Enabling and encouraging the new employee by giving the right proportion of direction and emotional support.*
 - The mentor supports the social integration of the new employee: Gives required information, translates professional jargon, answers practical questions, transfers standards and values and informal habits, helps the mentee to get to know the organisational culture, encourages the mentee to network in the organisation, explains what is expected of the mentee in their new role, encourages them to ask questions, facilitates the integration of the newcomer to the team.
 - Gives on-the-job training (knowledge and skills necessary to perform according to the standard required and/or monitors the evolution of the training plan of the new employee).
- *Coaching a mentee to develop a specific skill.*
 - Support development of a specific skill by stimulating the mentee to go through the KOLB’s adult learning cycle. KOLB presents a cyclical model of experiential learning: the actual practical learning experience, reflecting on what happened,

studying the theory, planning the next learning experience -
action plan to apply the new theory in practice - in order to
learn/change behaviour.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1975)



- *Helping the mentee to learn from practical experiences by supporting and challenging them:*
 - Active listening and empathizing with the mentee. Being alert for what the mentee says, both explicitly and implicitly.
 - Enabling the mentee to step back and look at their experiences.
 - Not proceeding too rapidly to judgment, recommendation, action.
 - Asking reflective questions, starting discussions for further exploration of different approaches to problems/situations and not proceeding too rapidly to judgment, recommendation or action.

- Stimulating the mentee to make links with other experiences.
 - Stimulating the mentee to reflect on consequences of their behavior.
 - Helping the mentee to get an insight in their feelings and motivations.
 - Giving feedback on the behavior of the mentee and the way others experience this behavior.
 - Helping the mentee to become aware of the situation/ focus on the real problem.
 - Opening new horizons, playing devil's advocate, developing hypotheses, stimulating reflection on alternatives.
 - Questioning unconscious assumptions.
 - Sharing their own experiences, telling stories, and showing their own vulnerability by being open about their feelings, doubts and lessons learnt from the past.
 - Directing the discussion from problem to solution.
 - Challenging the mentee and investigating options.
 - Looking for possibilities to put what has been learned into practice.
 - Encouraging the mentee to experiment, to develop new insights and ways of acting.
- *Assists the mentee to identify areas for growth and development, gives vision, supports the learning in the frame of career development, provides psychological support, counseling and advice*
- Being a role model
 - Person to talk to about career decisions, future at the organization.

- Making the mentee aware of opportunities.
- Encouraging risk taking in learning.
- Providing appropriate and timely advice.
- Confronting negative intentions or behaviors.
- Guiding in the culture and practice of the organization.

Role of the mentor

Examples from partner countries:

More experienced person who knows company practices very well and has positive life experience and attitudes. (Turkish big company)

In case of new drivers, the mentors will bring out an evaluation regarding the employment of the new driver. (SME, Belgium)

Experienced person who has worked in the company for a longer time, knows the priorities, habits, and know-how specific to the company, and is loyal to the company. (Slovakia, big company)

The mentor acts as the mentee's personal trainer. Their role is not only to facilitate the training but to do it in a personalized way. (Slovakia, big company)

Advisor, teacher, trainer/coach. (Polish SME)

Delegation (use proper skills to aims, monitoring and observation, common conclusions) (Polish SME)

To determine strengths and weaknesses in negotiating skills and work with these (SME, Slovakia).

Experienced employees give less experienced colleagues new insight, assisting them to improve their potential development, their qualities, and

to help them create a new value for the company. (SME, Slovakia)

In general, it is about supporting and helping the mentees to see the value in themselves, and to help them make their own decisions and define their own path. In business, it was more about facilitating and sharing information (almost coaching in some respects). One of them (SME) had all the skills, most of the knowledge but just didn't have the confidence to take the first step. (Brass Bands, UK)

A mentor is someone who gives advice to employees when there are matters that can't be discussed with their managers. They function as a beacon in the storm (SME, Belgium)

A mentor is an advisor who gives support to the mentee in their development within the organization. The mentor's role is to help the mentee in the apprenticeship process showing the paths, and accompanying them along those paths. (Portugal, SME)

Mentors are anchor points in the organization or team. Primary to mentorship is that they are easy to approach, make time and are available. Team leaders are mentors and have an extra leading function. (Belgian SME)

DEFINING THE PROFILE OF EFFECTIVE MENTOR



Profile of an excellent mentor for each role (skills, attitudes):

- *Role: induction of new employees*
 - Has the necessary substantive knowledge and skills (credibility))
 - Knows the work area of the newcomer.
 - Is able to be patient with people with less experience.
 - Listens to the difficulties of the mentee.

- Is able to teach knowledge and skills.
- Checks if a message is understood.
- Gives feedback in a constructive way.
- Is a respected bearer of desired company culture (e.g. function).
- Shows a people-oriented attitude.
- Wants to train new employees.
- Understands diversity.
- *Role: helping to learn from practical experiences*
 - Has coaching skills: asks reflective questions, listens actively, gives constructive feedback and structured instructions, and is able to motivate the mentee.
 - Is self-confident.
 - Is optimistic.
 - Is open, prepared to share and listen.
 - Has a positive view of others that greatly increases how much learning can be transferred.
- *Role: working on growth, helping to achieve the long-term development goals of the mentee*
 - Is honest and reliable.
 - Reflects the organization's values and culture.
 - Has good communication and interpersonal skills
 - Shows maturity in work and life.

- Is a high performer. They should be known throughout the organization as being successful, someone whose opinion is asked.
- Knows the organization goals, behavior lines, functions and decision processes of the organization.
- Has a good amount of common sense, a positive attitude, and a friendly personality.
- Has a network of contacts and influence.
- Is open enough to take risks.
- Is open for new ideas and learning opportunities.
- Is willing to spend the time necessary to transfer skills and knowledge.
- Is a good motivator.
- Is accessible.
- Is willing to share experiences.
- Shows commitment to the mentoring program.

Profile of effective mentor

Examples of partner countries:

Managing skills and communication skills, handle the young newcomers or people from different departments without knowledge of sales. (Slovakia, big company)

The most important competencies are responsibility and communication skills. Furthermore they have to be enthusiastic about the project. (SME, Belgium)

The mentors are familiar with the topic they are mentoring. They could

give succinct answers related to their expert topic but could also direct the mentees to other expertises if the topics discussed are unfamiliar to them. (Slovakia, big company)

Patience, charisma, experience and authority (Polish SME)

Professional, experienced in the topic and able to relate to various skills of other individuals (SME, Slovakia)

Qualities: patience, ability to explain things in simple way, ability to express the idea accurately, ability to advise, ability to communicate just the most important things, ability to provide new insight to the mentee, to have general overview about the company process, company business. (SME, Slovakia)

The mentors have been selected by both HR Programs and the manager.

They need to be proactive, helpful and willing to listen! (SME, Belgium)

If we understand mentoring to be supportive coaching of one person by another, personal qualities like empathy and adaptive communication skills are key in most cases. Not everyone can learn to be an effective mentor if they don't naturally have these skills. People can learn to behave as an effective mentor – for example in a line manager situation – but a vital connection easing the relationship is missing. (Brass Bands, UK)

For us, mentors have to be more experienced, and often older, members of a team. This SME has several project leaders. For each project there is a Dutch and a French speaking project leader. These couples are called 'binomen'. Binomen are mostly chosen to be mentors. (SME, Belgium)

The mentor was selected according to the competences which needed to be conveyed to the mentee (Portugal, SME)



What is the profile of a good mentee (focus on growth)?

- Has a clear idea of what they want to achieve through the relationship.
- Voluntarily enters and remains in the relationship.
- Assumes responsibility for their own development.
- Dares to examine themselves critically.
- Is honest and open to express their feelings and thoughts/ideas.
- Is prepared to share failures.
- Shows openness to feedback and learning.
- Drives the relationship with their mentor.
- Listens to the advice of the mentor, takes sufficient time to consider everything, and asks questions.
- Goes, with the aid of the mentor, outside their own comfort zone.
- Tells the mentor which advice helped and why.
- Does not make value judgments concerning the experiences and choices of the mentor.
- Respects the time and other responsibilities of the mentor.
- Is reasonable in their own expectations.
- Says when the expectations are not met.
- Maintains the confidentiality of mentoring conversations.
- Gives something to the mentor.
- Is loyal.
- Is talented

- Could be a future manager.
- Understands the goal of mentoring.
- Is open to guidance.
- Is willing to work on personal and professional development.
- Is willing to create additional value for the company

Profile of a good mentee

Examples from partner countries:

An open mind and mentality. Prepared to accept the directions of more experienced people. (SME, Belgium)

Talented, generally young and has good career prospects e.g. future managers. Good attitude to the company, seeking fast development and promotion (Turkish/Slovak big company).

The mentees have an overall understanding of the goal of the mentoring session, and therefore pay full attention throughout. (Slovakia, big company).

Lack of experience, but the desire to acquire new knowledge and fit into the team. Willing to take a fresh look at their problems, and a desire to partake in the program. (Polish SME).

Basic qualities. (Polish SME)

Experienced in their job, understand what is required from them. (SME, Slovakia)

We hope they are open to inspiration. (SME, Belgium)

No specific qualities. (SME, Belgium)

Open to guidance. Willingness to work on own personal and professional development and willingness to create an additional value for the company. (SME, Slovakia).

The mentees needed help from the mentor to value themselves. They had a lack of confidence or just needed that extra voice; In other ways they were very different. They needed someone to listen, they needed support and guidance (Brass Bands, UK)

Very interested in learning, dynamic, responsible, good level of facility in acquiring new skills.(Portugal, SME)

SELECTING PROCESS



How to select the mentors?

- Good candidates are usually already performing the role of mentor in a more informal way!
- First communicate the goal of the mentoring project, the role and requested profile of the mentors, and how the mentors will be supported (they will get the necessary time, training, support from HR etc.) before asking for volunteers.
- Call for volunteers and select suitable applicants (inform the unsuccessful candidates why they are not selected or prepare with them a development plan to become a mentor later on).Call for manager's nominations (the line managers knows his people the best)



How to select the mentees?

- The primary consideration for selecting mentees should be that they are motivated to develop different or greater competencies through an intensive relationship with their mentor.

How to select the mentors

Examples from partner countries:

Within the company (Turkish big company)

By the regional managers of sale (Slovakia, big company)

According to their experiences (Slovakia, big company)

The first and key mentor is the owner and chairman of the board/at the same person/, because he's the most experienced person (Polish SME)

We take into consideration experiences and position in organization structure (Polish SME)

All experienced colleagues are involved in the role of mentor. They share the responsibility and knowledge. It is also a way of training for them (SME, Slovakia)

It is my job, I volunteer (Brass Bands, UK)

PAIRING PROCESS (MATCHING)

How to pair mentors and mentees?

- One can go in search for either similarities or differences. Mentoring relations offer the largest learning opportunities when the 'correct gap' in experience is found. When the difference in experience is too small, the mentor and mentee will have to tell too little to each other. If the gap is too large then there is a danger that the experience of the mentor will not be relevant for the mentee.
- There are several approaches to bringing the different players in a mentoring relationship together: You may match pairs objectively as the programme leader or allow a group to pair up themselves (perhaps at an introductory event, where mentors and mentees can meet and approach each other).

- Mentors of new employees (a more experienced colleague of the same department) are generally designated.
- When the focus is on growth of the mentee (when it is the intention to create long-term relations, where the degree in which mentor and mentee like each is other very important) a process will be started up where the different parties themselves select their partner. If in practice potential mentors and mentees insufficiently know each other to reach a founded choice, then one should impose the matching, however, one will regularly evaluate and build in the possibility for modifications in the composition of the partners.
- Trust is very important within a mentoring relation (for this reason one chooses at individual coaching, where a friendly relation is aimed at, rather than people who stand in a direct hierarchical relation with each other. The mentee cannot be dependent on the mentor, if there is likely to be competition between them).
- When choosing a mentor one should always take into account the specific personal development goal of the mentee.
- In smaller companies one must work sometimes with the people which one has.
- When the mentoring system is for example aimed at career development, the mentor is generally a manager from another part of the organization. A line manager wants to obtain the aimed for results for his/her department. It might be possible that this objective is not compatible with the objective of the mentor to help the mentee develop their own potential, certainly if this means that the person will leave the department.

Matching of mentors and mentees

Examples from partner countries:

Depending on their technical conformance firstly. Then, their positions/department/functional similarities are prevailing (Turkish big company)

HR invites the selected mentor to assess if he/she wants to accept the mentorship. (SME, Belgium)

By their sales conformance and understanding of the procedures firstly (Slovakia, big company)

The mentors and mentees are matched according to the job description and responsibilities (Slovakia, big company)

There's no enough experienced mentors, so these challenges rest on managers of departments. (Polish SME)

Were divided by departments and common goals (e.g. trade, production, finances and administration) (Polish SME)

Random selection (SME, Slovakia)

Matching is not important. The crucial is to find the way how to collaborate to reach the goal (SME, Slovakia)

Sometimes through advertisements, my job role, or casual opportunities of finding affinity. (Brass Bands, UK)

No specific link between mentors and mentees (SME, Belgium)

They both match at the level of competences needed to perform the job, due to the fact that the development department needed to be reinforced with a new collaborator. (Portugal, SME)

Experienced employees of the same projects are matched with the mentees (SME, Belgium)

BRIEFING AND TRAINING

Why training?

- A professional training gives the signal to the participants that the organization stands behind the mentoring program and is convinced that a successful progress of the training is important.
- The training also ensures the development of mentoring skills and gives the participants an opportunity to express anxieties and ask questions.
- Furthermore, all people concerned get the necessary documents and instructions for use during the mentoring relationship.

What training is needed for mentors of new employees? What topics should be covered?

- Mentoring for new employees .
- Role of the mentor.
- What do newcomers expect when they enter our organisation.
- Do's- and-don t's when introducing new colleagues.
- Define and evaluate the learning goals (monitoring the progress of the training plan for the new employee)
- Teaching skills.
- Understanding the importance of learning styles; recognizing that there are different preferred learning styles and being aware of their own preferred learning style in order to help the other learn in the most effective way.
- Developing a coaching attitude and coaching skills
Understand the importance of an appreciative approach and learn to use a toolkit (rating scale, questioning techniques, core quadrants, areas of influence) that is based on this way of coaching.

- Knowledge and use of preferred thinking/personality styles to realize a more effective coaching relation with the mentee.
- Influencing skills (from a non-hierarchical position).
- How to deal with difficult behavior.

 *What training is needed for mentors (and mentees) when there is a focus on growth? Topics?*

- What is mentoring, what is not mentoring .
- Reflecting on the mentoring experience.
- Assumption hunting.
- The goals of the mentoring program.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Profile of an effective mentor and mentee.
- The process of mentoring (lifecycle of a mentoring relationship).
- Build up an effective mentoring relationship, control progress, closure.
- Appointments.
- Techniques and skills (coaching skills, defining and evaluating SMART learning goals, be aware of different learning styles, reflection on the own communication style).
- Simulation and practicing some typical mentoring conversations (for mentors)
- Documents and instructions used during the mentoring relation. For example:
 - Reflection form for mentees (to fill in and give to the mentor before each mentoring session):

- Date, topic
 - What did I want to achieve after the last mentoring session?
 - What did I try concretely?
 - How did I feel about this?
 - What went well?
 - What did not go well?
 - Questions/remarks from my mentor.
- Benefits for mentor, mentee, organization
 - Dysfunctional mentoring relations, typical pitfalls of mentoring relationships

Training offered to the participants

Examples from partner countries:

Start up training about mentoring concept and future expectation from both parties (Turkish big company)

Training for new employees (Slovakia, big company)

Communication training. The mentors familiarize with the topic on daily basis so they have a thorough insight to the topic and this is really valuable for the new-comers. The problem is with the communication as obstacle – how to make jargons used at work become simpler and understandable for the new-comers (Slovakia, big company)

Solving problems through brainstorming, teamwork, raising qualifications related to the performance of duties (Polish SME)

Basic: time managing, delegation of responsibilities and communication

(Polish SME)

Training in negotiating skills (SME, Slovakia)

Company basis introduction, ad-hoc trainings needed for day-to-day agenda, for understanding company business activities and processes (SME, Slovakia)

I took a diploma for mentoring; the training gives you some techniques but it was not so useful if the mentor didn't possess already the necessary personal qualities. (Brass Bands, UK)

None (SME, Belgium) , None (Portugal, SME)

All mentors followed a 3 days course called "Peterschap" (SME, Belgium)

We schedule an individual learning trajectory for every employee. We take into consideration age, other work experiences, individual needs and set up trainings.(SME, Belgium)