



**2013 Mentoring Program
Guidelines & Resources**
for Mentors

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Introduction

This booklet is provided to participants in the Women in Technology (WiT) Mentoring Program as a means of providing you with all of the basic information you need to participate effectively in the program. The guide contains:

- An overview of the program's aims and structure
- Contact details
- Guides to help you establish effective mentoring relationships
- Support resources

An electronic version of this document is available on the WiT web site at www.wit.org.au along with many other tools and resources related to effective mentoring.

Program Details

Program Aim

To provide WiT members with access to mentoring relationships which foster personal and professional growth through the provision of knowledge, experience, support and guidance.

Program Objectives

- To establish an ongoing program that allows WiT members to access mentoring relationships at any time
- To establish a program that requires minimal resources to ensure its continued operation

Program Contacts

The Board Readiness Program is co-ordinated by a sub-committee of the Board. Membership of this sub-committee is:

Jane Fitzpatrick jane.fitzpatrick3@mail.dcu.ie

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback you should contact them via the email addresses below.

Mentor Matching Breakfast

Tuesday 13^h August, 2013

AIM – Australian Institute of Management

Management House

Cnr Boundary & Rosa Street

Spring Hill Qld 4004

7am until 9am.

Participant Responsibilities

Mentors

- Fulfill obligations agreed
- Provide feedback on your relationship as requested by Program Coordinators
- Participate in program events where ever possible
- Complete program evaluation at the end of the year or at the end of your relationship.

Mentees

- Fulfill obligations agreed
- Initiate contact to arrange your first meeting
- Provide feedback on your relationship as requested by Program Coordinators
- Participate in program events where ever possible
- Complete program evaluation at the end of the year or at the end of your relationship.

What is Mentoring?

The material in this section has been adapted from Darwin (2000) and Rolfe-Flett (1996).

Mentoring is hard to define, as everyone has different ideas about who mentors should be, and what characteristics they should have. It's a good idea to talk through your meaning of the term with your mentoring partner. Discussing where you are both coming from is the first step in opening your mind to the perceptions of others. As mentoring is situational, depending on many contextual factors, developing an understanding of what you mean by the term is a first step to working within the relationship.

Definitions of Mentoring

- A wise and trusted guide (The Macquarie Concise Dictionary, 2nd Edition)
- A career friend, knowledgeable about your field you advises and encourages (Wareing, Imogen [1992] *Career Strategies for Women Survey*, Imogen Wareing and Associates)
- A mentor is simply someone who helps someone else learn something that the learner would otherwise have learned less well, more slowly or not at all (Bell, Chip [1996] *Managers as Mentors* Berrett-Koehler)
- A mentor is someone such as a teacher, supervisor, co-worker or friend, who either knows more than you or has more experience than you, is an inspiration, and is willing to share their wisdom (Shea, 1992)

Comments from Mentees about Mentors

Regardless of the goals of your mentoring relationship successful mentors seem to share some basic characteristics. Listed below are characteristics that mentees have indicated make a successful mentor.

- they want to make a difference
- they are willing to share their personal and professional experiences
- they offer support in a non-judgmental way
- they act as though people really matter to them
- they are skilled, experienced and knowledgeable
- they give sound advice
- they listen well
- they ask relevant questions
- they encourage successful behaviour
- they challenge you
- they are passionate

Your Role as a Mentor

Your role as a mentor is to generally assist the mentee to determine where they want to go and to help them find positive, effective ways to get there, while helping them to develop along the way.

Characteristics of a Mentor

Mentors do not need to have teaching qualification, nor do they need to have seniority. The main prerequisite is enthusiasm, commitment and a desire to see your mentee achieve their goals.

Mentors have the following essential skills:

- They are good listeners
- They ask questions
- They share knowledge and experience
- They encourage the mentee to fail in order to succeed
- They open doors
- They are honest

Mentoring Tips

The following tips will assist you in developing a successful and rewarding relationship:

- Maintain regular contact
- Don't expect to get all the answers
- Respect confidentiality
- Avoid being overwhelmed by your mentee's problems— be empathetic, but distance yourself from becoming involved.
- Be honest
- Try not to give the answers—let the mentee find their own
- Regularly monitor the progress of the relationship

Avoiding the Risks

Although there are relatively few risks associated with mentoring it is worth noting some of those that may occur and putting in place some risk mitigation practices.

Mismatches

When a mismatch occurs it will become obvious that the mentor and mentee are not suited to each other. There is no one at fault in this situation—sometimes it just happens. Your personal styles may clash, or you may just not be able to find suitable times and places to meet. The reasons can be many and varied.

When a mismatch reveals itself, it is up to the two of you to decide whether the relationship is worth saving and working through your differences, or whether terminating the relationship and finding an alternative partner would serve both interests.

Competition or Rivalry

It may seem childish but rivalry between a mentor and mentee can ruin a relationship. Be on the lookout for any actions taken by your mentor that may signal they are feeling a level of competition with you. This may be particularly evident if you work within the same organization or industry.

If rivalry is a problem, rarely can this effectively be deal with so that it does not impact upon the relationship. Discuss the issue honestly and determine the best course of action together.

The Perception of Failure

“(those) who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to nothing and success.” Lloyd James

There is no such thing as failure—unless you don't put anything into the relationship in order to make it succeed. When you elect to become a mentee, you have considered the role ahead and you have given your commitment to work towards a goal of your choosing.

Whether they actually develop and grow within their career/business is essentially up to you. Your mentor can't do it for you. All you they can do is help you to find the right questions and the right answers for you.

Getting Started

This mentoring program is established for the purposes of the Board Readiness Program and the primary goal is to introduce participants to an experience Director who is already operating at Board level.

The goal of this mentoring relationship is for the mentor to guide mentees in their consideration of target Boards and in the development of their profile which will be published in a booklet for release at the Industry lunch in July.

Preparation

The following steps are not essential in your preparation for the first meeting with your mentee, however, we believe they will be useful in ensuring an effective start.

- Review your mentoring expectations and prepare your thoughts.
- Prepare a list of questions for your mentee that will help you to understand what it is that they want to achieve.

The First Meeting

In your first meeting there is a lot of ground work to cover so allow a reasonable amount of time to ensure that you are both comfortable with the outcomes. We recommend covering at least the following items:

- Discuss expectations.
- Discuss communication and feedback styles and preferences.
- Generally get to know each other.
- Set a date for the second meeting and agree its content.

The Second Meeting

By now you should know quite a lot about each other and should be preparing to get down to work. To some extent the agenda for your second meeting will be determined by what you achieved at the first meeting. Here's what we recommend:

- Generally catch up
- Provide feedback on your progress to date. This is a great way to practice your feedback techniques and increase your understanding of each other's styles.

At the end of this session you should be comfortable with where things are headed and be ready to move forward.

Reviewing the Relationship

Successful mentoring relationships are constantly reviewed by both participants. You need to check in with each other to make sure you are still on the right track. You might want to agree certain check points at which you will do this or you may choose to make this a standard agenda item for every meeting.

To monitor the effectiveness of the program and how relationships are progressing WiT will also check in from time to time and ask you to complete a brief questionnaire regarding your progress.

Tracking stages of the relationship is an important element of developing and improving the program, therefore, we strongly urge you to make time for this task.

Ending the Relationship

Most mentoring relationships are established for a specific purpose or time frame. Preparing an initial mentoring agreement helps to ensure that both parties can easily recognise when the relationship has reached the end of its lifespan. Of course, things do not always go according to plan.

What if you have achieved your original goal but you both want to continue the relationship?

You need to acknowledge that you have achieved what you set out to do and celebrate your success. You can then decide whether you want to set a further goal and establish a new agreement or whether you would just like to continue your relationship on a less formal level.

What if it just doesn't work out?

As previously noted mismatches occur all of the time for a variety of reasons. The first thing to do is to discuss the issue openly and honestly with your Mentor. Then the two of you can decide whether to it is worth trying again or if you would like to end the relationship and try an alternative match. If you are not comfortable holding this discussion you can contact your Program Coordinator and they will help you identify a suitable solution.

What if your circumstances change?

One of the issues often seen as failure is a change in your circumstances which affects the amount of time you have available to work with your mentee.

Circumstances change—that's life. The first thing to do is to talk to your Mentee and see if there is anything you can do to work around the changes. If not, offer to assist them in finding an alternative mentor or to develop another plan that will meet their needs. They may be willing to wait until your circumstances change again.

Program Evaluation

WiT has been facilitating informal mentoring relationships almost since it began in 1997. We know that many of these relationships have been very successful but we don't know why. Until the introduction of the formal mentoring program in 2005 WiT did not capture information on these relationships. We know that we missed out on some wonderful success stories and some great information about the needs of our members. To ensure that we don't continue to make that mistake it is extremely important that you complete a *Program Evaluation Form* at least once a year. This form will be made available by the WiT Secretariat.

The forms should be completed at the end of each mentoring relationship. If your relationship is ongoing then we will ask you to complete a form at the end of the calendar year.