



Clutterbuck  
Associates

## MAKING YOUR MENTORING PROGRAMME WORK

Prof. David Clutterbuck

Mentoring and coaching are essential parts of the development framework for all companies, no matter how large or small. Coaching, primarily an activity within a work team, and mentoring, almost always in Europe an off-line relationship, form two legs of a personal development triangle – the third being how the learner manages their own development and career planning.

Effective mentoring schemes all begin with **clarity of purpose**. What exactly does the business expect to achieve from investing in this activity? Objectives vary widely, from the relatively general, such as raising the competence of our people, to the very specific, such as achieving targets for increasing the number of women or racial minorities in senior positions. Having a clear set of scheme goals is critically important in helping each relationship develop its own clear sense of purpose and direction. (Otherwise mentor and mentee struggle to find anything to talk about after the first few meetings.)

Effective schemes also have **top management champions**, who are prepared not only to support mentoring with encouragement and resources, but who become role models for mentoring. At District Audit, which has one of the most successful schemes in the UK, the chief executive attended a high proportion of training sessions and talked openly about his own current experience as a mentee.

Effective schemes are also clear about who their **audiences** are. Although there are examples of all-comers schemes that work well, it is not normally realistic to expect everyone to have a mentor at the same time.

Effective schemes manage well the three key processes of **selecting, matching and training**. The selection criteria will normally depend on who the target audience is, but a pragmatic ground rule is that mentors should be substantially more experienced than the mentee, but not so far ahead that it is difficult for the two of them to empathise with each other's work issues. The practice, now largely abandoned in most countries, of placing young graduate recruits with very senior managers, led to very little real learning, because the experience gap was too great.

For large schemes (30 people or more) matching software is available. Good practice is to allow participants at least some choice of mentoring partner and to build in a **"no-fault divorce"** process.

Without any focused training, less than one in three mentoring relationships delivers real value. With appropriate mentor training, the proportion rises to two out of three and with in addition training for the mentee and some form of education in mentoring for line managers, success rates of 90% are common.

Finally, **measurement and review** that covers both hard outcomes (eg retention rates) and key processes, such as whether people meet sufficiently frequently, help on three levels. Firstly, review within each relationship helps in re-assigning those that don't work. Secondly, measurement and review at the six month point helps the co-ordinator adjust the scheme.

Finally, measurement at 12 months and beyond provides the data to demonstrate that mentoring is delivering results for the business.

**Clutterbuck Associates operates according to the following ethos:**

- We do not offer services unless we can offer unique and leading edge solutions
- We maintain a constant programme of research into both fundamentals and good practice in each area of our service offerings
- We always offer an opportunity to transfer to our clients both knowledge and the capability to run CA-generated programmes using their own in-house resources
- No change takes place in isolation – it is part of an existing and often powerful system. We expect to work with clients to identify and manage the context, in which a programme will operate
- Wherever possible, we avoid the “sheep-dip” approach – most of our programmes involve continued support to maintain sustainability
- Measurement and evaluation are essential

*If you would like to receive David's latest articles by email, please let us know at [info@clutterbuckassociates.co.uk](mailto:info@clutterbuckassociates.co.uk)*

**Clutterbuck Associates**

Grenville Court  
Britwell Road  
Burnham  
Bucks  
SL1 8DF

T: 01628 661 667

F: 01628 661 779

E: [info@clutterbuckassociates.co.uk](mailto:info@clutterbuckassociates.co.uk)

[www.clutterbuckassociates.com](http://www.clutterbuckassociates.com)