



Mentoring Systems Must Support Your Strategy

By Ann Rolfe

From my window seat, I watched anxiously as the bags were loaded on the plane. Would mine make it? There had barely been time for me to disembark, find the departure gate and board the aircraft for the next leg of my trip. I hoped Qantas had a system that would transfer my luggage in time. I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw my bag on the conveyor belt into the hold of the plane. It didn't happen by chance. When I collected my suitcase at the airport I could see the big yellow tag clearly signalling baggage handlers with transfer instructions. A system is in place, people have given thought to the process, my journey was not disrupted. What about your mentoring program? Do you have systems in place to support participants?

Here are some questions to help you think through the issues so that you can put systems in place:

Pre-Program

How's your communication? Do prospective mentors and mentorees get the information they need to attract them to participate? Is it easy for them to find out more, simple for them to apply? Do they understand what will be expected of them? Do you have selection criteria and a system to manage people who are not accepted? How will you match mentoring pairs?

How about managers? Do they understand the strategic value of mentoring and why they should support it? Do you systematically bring them on board and keep them in the loop? Have you got a plan to prevent nay-sayers from derailing mentoring?

And staff, people not directly involved, how will you prevent them from being disgruntled if you have targeted a specific group for mentoring? What information will you provide to them? Do you plan to support informal mentoring in some way?

From The Get-go

How will you ensure that mentors and mentorees will have the knowledge and skills they need for their roles? How will you introduce them to each other? What resources will you provide and how will they access them? Is there a network of support from their cohort? Is there a go-to person for questions or problems? What if the match doesn't work, what's the exit strategy?

Along The Way

How will you monitor progress and step in with help if required? Is there a process for feedback to participants, program coordinators and management? Is there a program of activities, support and

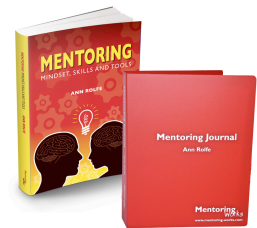
resources to maintain the momentum of mentoring? How will you manage any dropouts that leave unpaired participants?

At The End

Is there an event to celebrate and recognise achievements? What methods for feedback and evaluation will you use? How will you ensure mentoring is not a one-hit-wonder? How will you incorporate learning from one program to the next?

Phew! A lot of questions, huh? And there are many more to think through so that you can set up the systems that ensure your mentoring works!

Phone me 02 4342 2610 (in Australia) or email ann@mentoring-works.com if you need help with your mentoring systems.



Mentoring Mindset, Skills and Tools
And The Mentoring Journal
By Ann Rolfe