How To Evaluate Your Mentoring Program

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With Ann Rolfe

Why Evaluate Mentoring Programs?

In a survey of mentoring coordinators, almost all reported that they had undertaken, or were planning to conduct some form of evaluation of their programs. Some had evaluated half-way through the program as well as at its conclusion, some evaluated continuously. They said that they needed evaluation to:

- Justify the program's existence
- Find ways to improve the program
- Identify benefits for participants and the organisation
- Determine whether the expected outcomes had been achieved
- Discover any unexpected outcomes
- Resolve problems and change direction
- Assess the degree to which objectives were met
- Gather information to use in marketing
- Measure participant satisfaction
- Report success
- Obtain proof that key performance indicators had been achieved
- Look at relationships that were continually evolving and constantly changing
- Identify actual benefits (not just "key performance indicators").
- Achieve accreditation (a quality program requirement)
- Celebrate success
- Align mentoring with other programs
- Obtain attrition statistics
- Find out if it made a difference
- Determine whether it changed the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of managers
- Meet the requirements of the funding body

Why do you want to evaluate mentoring?

Organisational Needs	Strategic Value
Employee Engagement	Attract, retain develop people - increased productivity
Knowledge Management	Prevent the loss of tacit and implicit information
Skills Development	Improved capability
Succession Planning	Ensuring there is a pipeline of leadership talent for the future
Diversity and Equity	Compliance or improved organisational performance

What is the strategic aim of your program?

Broad goals such as those listed above are challenging to evaluate, particularly in the short-term. Furthermore it is not possible to prove a cause and effect relationship. However, evaluation provides evidence that the program outcomes are consistent with contribution toward organisational goals.

To create realistic objectives we have to ask:

- What might indicate success?
- What could you measure?
- What tangible outcomes would you expect?
- How else would you know whether the program was successful or not?

ExamplesReturn On Investment

- Staff retention
- Return to work after maternity leave
- Representation of target group in grade, roles, positions, locations
- Percentage applications for internal jobs or promotions
- Number in target group who won a position or promotion
- Number who participate in training, eduvation or development opportunities
- Number of external applicants for jobs (attract target group)
- Benchmark comparison, industry average, other organisations

What To Evaluate

The evaluation will examine the following aspects of your mentoring program:

Processes	Mentoring	Participant Support	Outcomes
Recruitment	Relationships maintained	Training	Mentorees
Selection	Quality	Materials and resources	Mentors
Matching			Organisational
Communication		Other support activities	

Sources from which the data can be elicited include the participants who may be surveyed or interviewed and various records that can be accessed.

How To Evaluate

Basically you have two avenues to assess outcomes:

1. Qualitative – ask the participants their opinions
2. Quantitative – numerical and statistical data

Techniques for evaluation include:

- Informal contact by the program coordinator
- Questionnaires at intervals over the life of the program
- Group review processes
- Individual interviews
- Participant narratives or extracts from journals volunteered
- Post-program follow-up
- Before and after data e.g. statistics on retention, promotions or job applications

he simplest way to evaluate is to ask participants what they thought. While opinions provide qualitative data, responses can be quantified in a questionnaire, by asking questions with rating scales (to what extent …) ranking relative importance, or asking for percentages or estimates.

A mentoring program evaluation questionnaire as well as templates, worksheets and checklists are included Ann Rolfe's **How To Design And Run Your Own Mentoring Program**, to purchase at:

http://mentoring-works.com/product/how-to-design-and-run-mentoring-programs-manual-ebook/

Or as part of the **Fast Track Your Mentoring Program Planning Pack**:

http://mentoring-works.com/product/fast-track-your-mentoring-program/

	Element	Criteria	Method	When
1.	**Processes:** Recruitment & Selection	Potential mentors that applied Potential mentorees that applied Suitable applicants accepted to program	Record applications Record applications Record	Pre-program
2.	Matching	Number of matches accepted/rejected by pairs Number intact at mid-point Number intact at end Participant satisfaction	Record Record Record Participant survey	Pre-program Mid-program Program end Program end
3.	Communication	Contact with coordinator Nature of enquiries Participant satisfaction Other	Record Record Focus group/workshop Participant survey	As occurs As occurs Mid-program Program end
4.	Processes	**What could be improved?**	Focus group/workshop	Program end
5.	**Mentoring**	Relationships maintained Quality	Done in 2. Above Participant survey	Program end
6.	Mentoring	**What challenges are experienced?**	Focus group/ workshop	Mid-program
7.	**Participant Support:** Training	Attendance Positive/negative participant feedback	Record Debrief	At workshop At workshop
8.	Materials	Positive/negative participant feedback	Participant survey	Program end
9.	Resources	Usage rates Positive /negative participant feedback	Record Participant survey	Monthly Program end
10.	Activities	Attendance Positive/negative participant feedback Engagement Interaction	Record Participant survey Observe Observe	As occurs Program end As occurs As occurs
11.	Support	**What support do they need?**	Focus group/workshop	Program end
12.	**Outcomes:** Mentorees	Did they achieve what they hoped for? Were their other outcomes?	Focus group/workshop	Identify at start & review at end
13.	Mentors	What were their outcomes, benefits, challenges	Focus group/workshop	Program end
14.	Organisation	Impact on organisational needs	Before & after measures	Pre & post-program
15.	Return on investment	Strategic value	Financial Triple bottom line	Post-program

Planning The Evaluation

Planning evaluation is part of the program design process. Evaluation involves collection of data and the use of that data to answer questions and make judgements about the program. Therefore, planning evaluation begins with the identification of the questions that need to answered and the criteria against which judgements will be made.

During the program design phase you need to identify:

- Attributes of success – in the context of your mentoring program, what does a successful outcome looks like?

- Information needed – what performance measures will you require?

- Data sources – what information can you collect?

- Strategies – How will you measure success?

- Extraneous factors – what else may have influenced the outcomes?

- How and to whom will you report?

What have you gained from this webinar, and how will you use it?