

August 6, 2010

# Drive Employee Talent Development Through Business Mentoring Programs

by Claire Schooley  
for Business Process Professionals



August 6, 2010

## Drive Employee Talent Development Through Business Mentoring Programs

by **Claire Schooley**

with Connie Moore and Ralph Vitti

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The business world has long known and relied upon mentoring as a proven technique for developing in-house talent. Today, mentoring is experiencing a resurgence because business leaders not only recognize the benefits of transferring knowledge among employees — they also have access to mentoring technology that fosters and manages large numbers of mentoring relationships. This new software category offers a breakthrough in the scale and quality of mentoring throughout the enterprise. Why does it matter? Companies that use mentoring extensively boast higher employee retention, more engaged employees, and stronger succession bench strength.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Business Mentoring Provides Coaching, Sharing, And Knowledge Transfer**
- 4 Mentoring Saves Money, Retains Workers, Builds Leadership, And Grows Talent**
- 7 Use Mentoring Technology To Manage Mentoring Programs**
- 10 The Mentoring Vendors We Reviewed**
- 11 Two International Organizations Have Implemented Mentoring Successfully**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17 HR Professionals: If Starting A Mentoring Program, Focus On The “Must” Dos**
- 18 Supplemental Material**

### NOTES & RESOURCES

Forrester interviewed seven vendor and user companies including Insala, Intrafinity, Management Mentors, Mentor Scout, a division of Nobscot, Rockwell Collins, The Women’s Alliance at Xerox (TWA), and Triple Creek.

#### Related Research Documents

[“Case Study: First Horizon National’s 90-Day Onboarding Program Benefits The Company”](#)  
April 23, 2010

[“TechRadar™ For Business Process Professionals: Human Resource Management Apps, Q1 2010”](#)  
January 6, 2010

[“Get Serious About Informal Learning”](#)  
April 22, 2009

## BUSINESS MENTORING PROVIDES COACHING, SHARING, AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Mentoring involves a formal or informal developmental partnership where employees receive information, advice, and guidance from an experienced professional, usually within the organization, who has expertise and a strong desire to help others grow in their jobs. Mentoring encompasses coaching, sharing perspectives, and transferring knowledge and wisdom to the mentee(s). The mentor is not a supervisor but a person with whom the employee can communicate freely and honestly without concern about being evaluated.

### Size And Location May Vary, But Voluntary Participation Is Key

Successful business mentoring programs match mentors with experienced staff to speed time to competency while also transferring knowledge and increasing internal talent. Within the Fortune 500 today, about 70% of the companies have formalized mentoring programs.<sup>1</sup> In other companies, about half have some kind of mentoring function in place. The most successful and long-term programs tend to be structured with organized mentor/mentee profiles, training on mentoring best practices, and instruction on using mentoring software. The mentoring pair commits to work together for a period of time, usually up to a year. Some mentors work with more than one employee and may also be mentees themselves. Mentor/mentee partnerships may exist across lines of business and even across geographies. Here are some of the options:

- **Mentoring choices include one-to-one, group, and situational.** Most commonly, mentoring occurs on a one-to-one basis where mentor and mentee set goals, meet monthly, and refine goals over the established time frame. Alternatively, mentoring can be group or one-to-many with the mentor meeting (in person or virtually) simultaneously with multiple mentees to discuss a selected topic. Participants benefit from the mentor's expertise as well as discussions with one another. In situational mentoring, the relationship exists to address a certain issue, challenge, or opportunity, such as becoming comfortable with the new computer system; meetings happen frequently but for a shorter overall time.
- **Communications methods depend on location.** Traditionally mentoring happens face-to-face, but in today's mobile and dispersed worker world, face-to-face may occur only occasionally. Mentoring groups use telephone conference calls, video conferencing through Webcams or desktop/conference room videoconferencing, or even email.
- **Mentor/mentee are matched or chosen by participants.** Some organizations have mentor managers who make the matches based on employee online profiles. The most effective approach — especially with a large mentor program — allows mentees to select their mentors from a software-generated list of close matches. After employees choose from the suggested list, the mentor either: 1) accepts and then mentoring arrangement begins, or 2) declines, gives reasons why, and offers other suggestions.

- **Employees are encouraged to participate, but no one is forced.** Mentoring program volunteerism matters to success, since forcing employees to engage in mentoring is bound to fail. The mentoring coordinator (usually part of HR or a business unit) should encourage participation and hold orientation and training sessions for both mentors and mentees as frequently as needed. Mentors and mentees must make a commitment to the mentoring process knowing that the relationship requires time and energy.

### Critical Components Of Mentoring: Planning, Communicating, Training, And Sponsoring

Mentoring encompasses far more than the technology that supports mentoring programs. In fact, understanding the mentoring approaches requires significant upfront planning before you decide which type of mentoring best matches your organization (see Figure 1). If you are a business manager or HR professional, make sure that you:

- **Secure executive-level support.** An executive sponsor remains key to success. This person helps evangelize the value of mentoring and assists in securing the financial commitment for the technology and a mentoring manager. Employees need to hear from executives and HR business process professionals or business managers that they value and support the program. These executives and managers are often the first program mentors.
- **Plan well.** Mentoring programs range from informal to formal. Some programs zero in on a specific mentoring area like new hires, leadership, technology, diversity groups, and so on, while others provide more general employee mentoring programs like career development. You'll need mentoring software if you plan to manage mentor/mentee partnerships of 50 or more. If you are an HR professional or business manager responsible for the mentoring program, carefully plan the program elements including mentoring metrics and formal participant surveys.
- **Communicate to all employees the “what” and the “why” of mentoring.** Work with internal PR to spread the word about what mentoring means and the benefits for both mentee and mentor. Be aware that not all employees want to be a mentor or be mentored. This program should be voluntary, allowing people to join or exit at any time. Generate interest in signing on as a mentor or mentee through an internal Web site that gives additional information along with FAQs. Communicate continually about different aspects of mentoring, even after the program starts, to keep mentoring awareness high.
- **Provide upfront training for mentor and mentee.** Make sure that the goals of the program are clear, and that mentoring participants understand the basic principles and logistics of mentoring. HR professionals or business managers responsible for the mentoring program should suggest guidelines for meetings and invite an experienced mentor and mentee to talk about their experiences and recommended best practices. Conduct sessions face-to-face, via live Webinars, and via Webinars on demand so all participants can access training.

**Figure 1** The Mentoring Continuum

	<b>Informal</b> <b>Little or no structure</b>	<b>Hybrid</b> <b>Limited structure</b>	<b>Formal</b> <b>Structured</b>
Relationship	Experienced employees volunteer or are asked to mentor when a need arises.	Employees are involved in their mentor selection.	Employee receives an assigned mentor.
Coordination	No need for a mentoring coordinator	A part-time mentoring coordinator	A full-time coordinator and a mentoring panel for matching
Technology	No technology used for formal records kept on mentor/mentee meetings	Technology facilitates matching and keeps track of mentor/mentee matches	Technology used for tracking mentoring progress
Mentoring approach	Informal discussions rather than formal evaluation	Evaluation based on data from surveys and number of matches	Formal mentoring evaluations
Degree of training	Mentors use their common sense on how to mentor	A few hours of training	Formal training program
Budget	Department-based and no designated budget	Executive support and budget	Executive support and budget

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**MENTORING SAVES MONEY, RETAINS WORKERS, BUILDS LEADERSHIP, AND GROWS TALENT**

Three parts of the organization benefit from a formal mentoring program: the mentor, the mentee, and the organization itself.

**Mentoring Saves The Organization Money**

Mentoring contributes to employee growth and tenure. In the long run, a well-organized and managed program can save the company thousands of dollars. The California Nurse Mentor Project found that mentoring reduced RN attrition, saving hospitals between \$1.4 million and \$5.8 million over three years.<sup>2</sup> Specific benefits to the organization include:

- **Reduced turnover and recruiting costs.** Mentoring relationships can help retain talented people because they have a stronger commitment to the organization.<sup>3</sup> Talent remains much less likely to leave if they feel supported in their work and made aware, for example, of new opportunities that their mentor suggests. It's not unusual for organizations to hear that their strong mentoring program attracted new talent.
- **Assistance in transferring knowledge from the retiring workforce to new workers.** Many mentoring relationships help younger employees learn from those who will retire soon. Pairing

junior staff with more senior staff can reinvigorate the enthusiasm of senior employees as they transfer crucial knowledge to the next generation of workers. This reduces the loss of the tacit knowledge from seasoned veterans leaving the workforce.

- **Helping employees learn skills and gain knowledge.** Mentoring is an excellent example of informal learning, which is the way people learn 80% of the time in the business world.<sup>4</sup> A mentoring program reduces training costs due to the mentor/mentee informal learning relationship, which often deals with content one-on-one that otherwise would be covered in a formal course. It also brings new employees up to speed quickly in those first few months of employment. The chief learning and development officer in a global consulting firm confirms the value of mentoring as a learning tool: “People grow more with human interaction on the job, and we are trying to bring that to all our employees. The best way to learn is from a fellow professional.”
- **Assistance in career growth, building leadership capacity, and increasing bench strength.** Mentees can put their learning on a fast track with mentoring. If they’re headed toward management, for example, the mentoring may focus on becoming a better leader and manager. When the mentor shares her own experiences, gives advice, and suggests readings, online courses, or other experiences to help other employees move toward their goals, she builds her own leadership skills in the process. Enhanced bench strength in company leadership ensures successful succession planning and increases productivity.

### Mentors Enhance Their Leadership And Management Skills

Some employees hesitate to become mentors because they feel it’s not worth the time and energy that they must put into the relationship. Mentors do not get paid for their time, although some organizations recognize a mentor’s work in an employee’s salary bonus. While mentoring is a big decision that needs weighing carefully, the majority of mentors who volunteer in well-organized mentoring programs find that they get more out of the relationship than they expected. A technology company mentor said, “This mentoring experience — into which I entered hesitantly — has revitalized my enthusiasm for my job. I realize how much I know, and I enjoy the chance to pass it on to new employees.” Mentors say their own benefits include:

- **Enhancing professional growth.** Mentors hone their coaching, leadership, and communication skills as they advise their mentees, which they can in turn apply to their own day-to-day work. Some find that mentoring reenergizes them by empowering them to bring new business ideas to the table.
- **Increasing knowledge and insights about other employees.** Mentoring allows mentors to work with employees of different ages, backgrounds, values, styles of working, and professional expertise. This relationship breaks down barriers and informs mentees about other areas of the business. Mentors increase their employee network at different levels and know more about what’s going on in the organization.

- **Gaining a fresh perspective on performance.** Mentors often find that they gain new insight into their job and how they are performing. When mentees ask why a mentor does things a certain way, it often causes the mentor to reexamine his advice, take a critical look at how he functions as a leader, and explore what areas he may need to adjust for improvement.
- **Helping others grow in their profession.** Mentors gain the satisfaction of sharing their experiences with others and take pleasure in seeing the results of their work. It's a boost to the mentor's morale as their mentees gain more self-confidence in their work, get the promotions they sought, or choose a career direction that the mentor suggested they explore — sometimes in a different part of the organization.
- **Working to keep strong talent in the organization.** Mentors develop and retain talent by helping new employees learn about the organization and feel more a part of the culture. Mentors help employees consider how they would like to grow as a professional and suggest company programs to enroll in, new skills to develop, and career growth areas to pursue.

### Mentees: The Key Beneficiaries Of Mentoring Programs

Employees seek mentors for many reasons: They are new employees and need newcomer assistance and advice; they want to explore career options; they've set a goal within their present work they want help achieving; or they need assistance perfecting a specific skill. Programs designed to benefit mentored employees incorporate these benefits:

- **Ongoing support and encouragement in the job.** Strong support remains key to mentoring relationships. Mentees should expect to receive straightforward yet constructive feedback from their mentors. Mentees must also trust that they can raise questions or concerns in confidence because a mentoring relationship is not a supervisory or reporting relationship.
- **Inside advice from experienced and successful employees.** Mentees who have specific goals that they want to achieve in their work can garner meaningful insights from mentors who have vast knowledge and years of experience to share. Aside from encouragement, motivation, and support, mentees gain insider perspectives into best ways to improve skills, navigate their career, and network within the organization.<sup>5</sup>
- **Encouragement and challenges to achieve new goals and explore careers.** Mentors help their employees determine how to make informed choices about their careers. Ideally, they listen carefully, ask questions, and even identify skills gaps to cause the employees to think differently or more broadly about their career success factors.
- **Learning about the organization's dos and don'ts.** With mentoring, employees acclimate to new jobs faster, particularly employees who are new to the organization. Mentors help

employees meet other people who are important to know, and they may suggest social networking groups within the organization to join to become a part of the culture.

- **Establishing a presence in professional and social networks.** Mentors suggest appropriate organizations and groups that can benefit mentees professionally as well as act as a support or sounding board on work challenges. Some groups also provide more social interaction, which can help mentees achieve work/life balance.

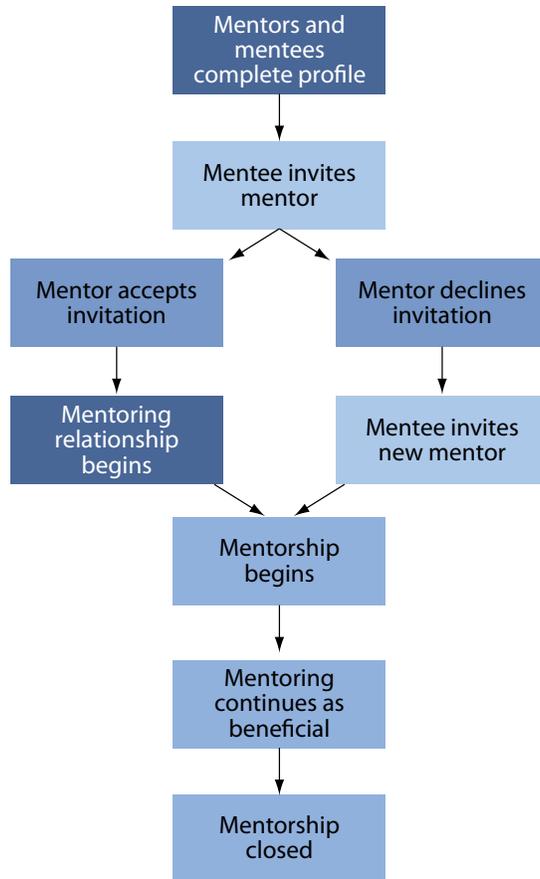
## USE MENTORING TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE MENTORING PROGRAMS

Once an organization has more than 50 mentor/mentee relationships, HR professionals and business managers need software to manage the mentoring activity. Mentoring software helps mentors stay on track and think about the goals of the program. Mentoring technology also makes the matches, the scheduling, the surveys, and the evaluation process more efficient and effective than a manual process (see Figure 2).

Technology alone will not make the mentoring program successful. Careful planning by HR professionals or the business manager creates the requirements for the best program for an organization.

Currently, mentoring vendors exist as small, niche providers. We expect that these small companies of less than \$10 million a year in revenue will increase revenues by 50% to 75% in the next two years or be absorbed into talent management suites (see Figure 3).<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 2** Enabled Mentor/Mentee Program



56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 3** Features Of Mentoring Technology Vendors

<b>Vendor</b>	Insala	Intrafinity	Management Mentors	Mentor Scout, a division of Nobscot	Triple Creek
<b>Product</b>	Hi-Impact Mentoring	MentorMatch	MentoringComplete	MENTOR SCOUT PLUS	Open Mentoring
<b>Hosted or installed</b>	Hosted	Hosted, installed	Hosted, installed	Hosted	Hosted, installed
<b>Licensing structure</b>	Per-user fee for one year minimum	Per-user subscription	Per-user subscription	Per-user subscription	Per-user and enterprise subscriptions available
<b>Languages supported</b>	English (US and UK), Dutch, French, German, Spanish, and Swedish are supported out of the box.	English and French are supported out of the box. Other languages are supported with separate language packs.	English only supported out of the box. Additional language templates are available.	English only. Many additional languages supported with add-on language modules.	English out of the box. Capable of supporting international languages.
<b>Types of reports available</b>	Reports include mentoring pairs, mentoring activity, and mentoring goals achieved.	Reports include mentoring pairs, mentoring activity (active, successful dropped, unmatched mentor/mentees) and outstanding tasks reports	Reports include mentoring pairs, mentoring activity (quality of relationship) and mentoring goals (accomplishments and level of satisfaction).	Reports include mentoring pairs, mentoring activity, and mentoring goals achieved.	Reports include mentoring pairs, mentoring activity, mentoring goals, and business intelligence.
<b>Supports data feed integration with HRIS</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Process customization</b>	A modularized platform allowing customization of application, matching, interaction tracking, and reporting	A modular platform supporting systems, reports, and mentoring process workflows	A completely customizable system	Customizable mentoring profiles, groups, eligibility screening, and documentation	Fully customizable, including integration of organizational competency set(s), program setup for multiple initiatives, process workflows, and reports

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 3** Features Of Mentoring Technology Vendors (Cont.)

<b>Vendor</b>	Insala	Intrafinity	Management Mentors	Mentor Scout, a division of Nobscot	Triple Creek
<b>Professional services</b>	Product orientation and readiness, mentor/mentee training, program implementation services, program consulting, and program evaluation	Product orientation and readiness, mentor/mentee training, strategic consulting, and implementation services	Product orientation and readiness, mentor/mentee training, and consulting services in mentoring	Product orientation and readiness, mentor/mentee training, and best practices Webinar; other services available	Product orientation/ readiness and strategic consulting; training, program evaluation, and other services available

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

## THE MENTORING VENDORS WE REVIEWED

The following section includes a brief description of each of the mentoring vendors and products we reviewed for this document. Choose a vendor whose approach to mentoring approach fits best into your company culture.

### Insala: Hi-Impact Mentoring

In the Insala product, all mentoring process activities are coordinated from a single portal, and all forms, assessments, and other materials are in a central source. Features include a multiple mentoring program capability, tracking and reporting tools for program administrators, a goal-setting capability for participants, and the ability to upload any content using the built-in content management system.

### Intrafinity: MentorMatch

Geared toward SMBs, MentorMatch establishes, coordinates, and manages single- and multiple-person-configurable online mentoring processes aimed at medium and large organizations. These programs build a full mentoring process from registration and matching to training and tracking the program progress.

### Management Mentors: MentoringComplete

Management Mentors' system allows clients to have multiple types of programs (one-on-one, etc.) and a multiple number of programs, as well. Programs can share templates, and mentors and mentees can participate in multiple programs. The system uses focus areas, personal characteristics, mentoring roles, and other criteria to find the right match between mentor and mentee; it also has automatching features.

### **Mentor Scout, A Division Of Nobscot: MENTOR SCOUT PLUS**

Designed for both small and large and complex organizations, MENTOR SCOUT PLUS offers the ability for self-matching, administrative matching, and an in-between hybrid approach. The program supports one or many mentoring programs within an organization including programs for high potentials, diversity, new hires, new supervisors, knowledge transfer, performance improvement, mergers and acquisitions, culture acclimation, and retirees.

### **Triple Creek: Open Mentoring**

Open Mentoring is an enterprise mentoring system that supports the three elements of social learning: 1) All e-mentoring interactions have a learning goal and are aligned to organizational competencies; 2) mentoring is through one-to-one, group, and situational experiences; and 3) a database provides access to a range of people and networks. Open Mentoring allows organizations to run multiple large programs at once, with matching taking place via self-directed and/or administrative matching.

## **TWO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE IMPLEMENTED MENTORING SUCCESSFULLY**

Rockwell Collins, a Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based aviation and information technology supplier, sells its products to government and aircraft manufacturers. Xerox, a Norwalk, Conn.-based company, sells document services, IT services, and computer peripherals. Both companies have approached mentoring from very different perspectives, yet each put robust programs in place geared toward developing their employees.

### **Business Executives Drive The Rockwell Collins Mentoring Program**

Twelve years ago, Rockwell Collins started a manually administered, direct-match mentoring planning process for high-potential future leaders. In 2007, Rockwell Collins partnered with Triple Creek to implement a configured version of Open Mentoring, develop a strategic multiyear plan, and launch the first phase of the initiative. In 2008, the program became an e-enabled all employee mentoring program with the goal of connecting company employees across geographically dispersed regions to provide knowledge transfer, knowledge management, and employee development.

The mentoring program now has 1,700 one-on-one mentor/mentee relationships, advertised throughout the company as “mentoring for all.” A total of 16,000 of 20,000 employees have mentoring access, and 10.6% of these employees (1,700) actively participate in the mentoring program as mentors or mentees. Importantly, the CEO strongly encourages all leaders in the company to become mentors, and he is a mentor himself.

Rockwell Collins has seven internal employee networks that encourage participants to mentor. The mentoring coordinator, Kelly Kennedy, spends about 10 hours a week managing the program for the

entire company. This includes promotion and communication which Rockwell Collins' mentoring director believes drives their success. She constantly sends out information about the program, encourages employees to participate, and gives tips to those already in the program.

The company considers its mentoring program a huge success. Here's how they do it:

- **Employees initiate the mentoring relationship.** The first step in the mentoring program is for mentors and mentees to complete an online profile. Both mentors and mentees complete profiles, which describe their background, job expertise, business management experience, leadership skills, and so on. Mentors add the skill areas they are willing to offer in a mentoring relationship. Mentees add what they want to focus on in a mentoring relationship and select desired areas of development, learning needs, and goal statements. These selections provide the basis for the match through a comparison of mentor and mentee shared information. A list of potential mentors comes back to the mentee for review and selection. "Communication to employees about mentoring is so important," emphasizes Kelley Kennedy. "I use many methods to reach employees from success stories on our Web site, online mentoring commercials, weekly emails to newly transferred or promoted employees. Employees are reminded about this opportunity and encouraged to participate." Kennedy's monthly statistics show that mentoring relationships increase during performance reviews — when managers talk about mentoring as an employee resource — and during any special communication blitz.
- **Length of mentoring experience depends on goals established by mentee.** Mentoring relationships at Rockwell Collins generally last about a year. Mentor and mentee meet once a month for 1 to 2 hours, either in person or by telephone. Some relationships flourish online using instant messaging or email, especially if mentor and mentee are located in different parts of the world. Rockwell Collins data shows that the mentees and mentors meet for two reasons. First, employees meet for fundamental information sharing like new employee guidance or skill development assistance. Second, mentees receive guidance in career development — often based on an HR learning and development plan.
- **HR, working with senior execs, establishes mentor competency and provides best practices.** Mentors must achieve a performance competency rating of "solid performer" in their Rockwell Collins work to become a mentor. The mentoring coordinator, who is in the Leadership and Organizational Development department within HR, provides a number of best practices Webinars for new mentors, including the time and energy commitment that they must devote for successful mentoring. They also learn the mentoring application Open Mentoring from Triple Creek. Both the vendor and the Rockwell Collins HR mentoring coordinator give strategies for successful mentoring. It's the mentors' decision as to the number of employees they want to take on (often influenced by the mentors' workload). When the mentor reaches mentee capacity, her name no longer appears in the list of mentors available to new mentees.

- Senior executives continue to champion the program.** Certainly the continual support of the executive team fuels mentor relationships; the CEO mentions mentoring as a tool for feedback and employee growth. During a recent acquisition, the executives made mentoring a part of the business integration activity. Each year the mentoring strategy builds on earlier years. For example, in fiscal year 2009, the company targeted new hires, onboarding employees, specific student program coop, and interns for mentoring. The program also targeted two international regions, Europe and India, where managers requested mentoring. FY '10 growth strategy focuses on expanding onboarding and new hire program, as well as moving into Asia Pacific. The company plans to grow the program by 2% (see Figure 4).

Survey results show that the Rockwell Collins program provides value to employees and their mentors, and both are very positive about continuing to participate in the mentoring program. Mentor/mentee matches, although not always perfect, do not hamper the success of the program (see Figure 5).

**Figure 4** Rockwell Collins Mentoring Metrics Show Program Growth

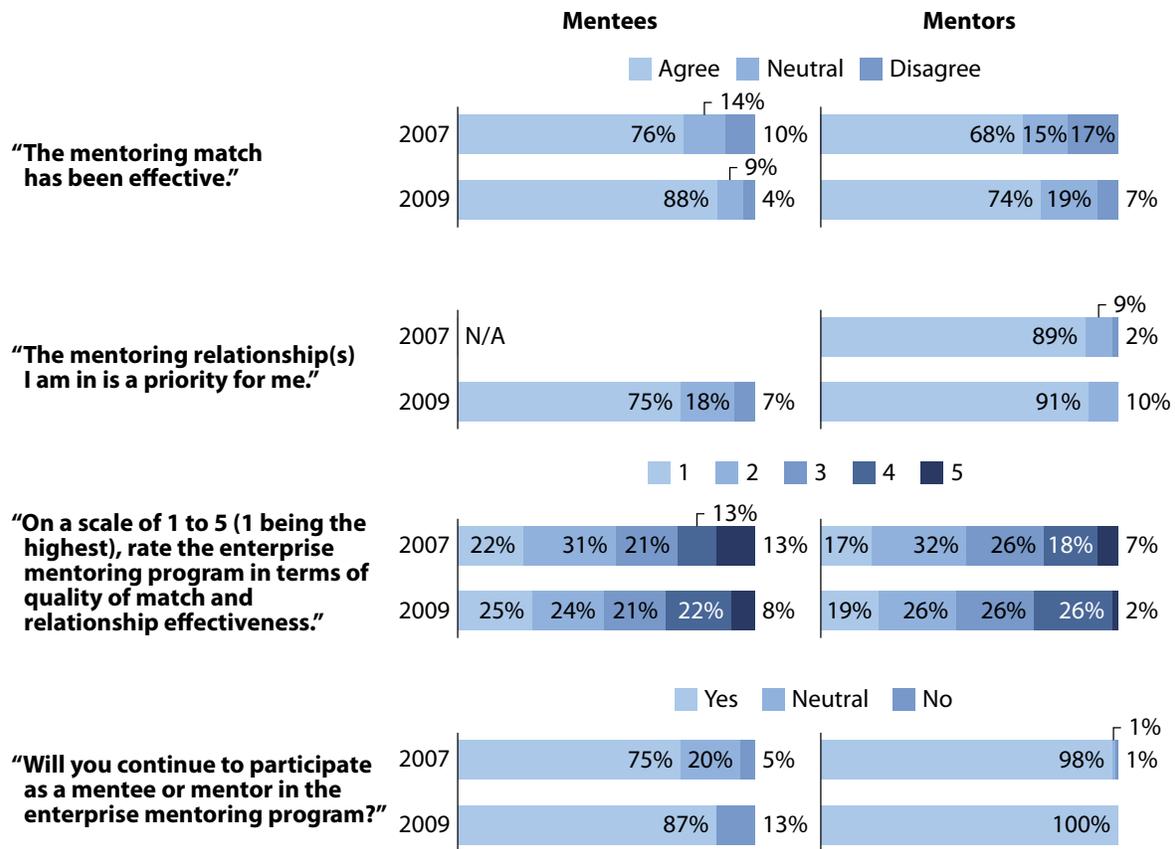
<b>Enterprise mentoring program</b>	<b>April 2010</b>	<b>April 2009</b>
Active unique participants in past year	10.6%	9.0%
Total active relationships in past year	1,776	1,202
New relationships started this month	197*	56
Mentors invited, not responded within the past six months	48	64

Source: Rockwell Collins  
 \*Quarterly metric

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Figure 5** Mentor/Mentee Survey Summary



Base: 195 Rockwell Collins mentees and 40 Rockwell Collins mentors (percentages may not total 100 because of rounding)

Source: Rockwell Collins

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

**Xerox Program Started As Part Of The Women’s Alliance**

The Women’s Alliance (TWA) at Xerox exists as a volunteer organization with 501(c) status that develops the personal and professional expertise of women employees. A group of woman executives started TWA in 1984, with the vision “Women at Xerox are recognized and valued at all levels of the corporation for their contributions and leadership.” With a membership of more than 1,300 in 12 Alliance chapters, mentoring fits well with the mission. But it took three attempts — first using spreadsheet matching, then an expensive solution behind the firewall, and finally a SaaS-based self-service technology matching — to find a manageable e-enabled mentoring program. For their

latest solution, TWA chose Mentor Scout, a division of Nobscot, for their mentoring technology. Here's what Xerox's TWA did with a volunteer staff to get the mentoring program off the ground:

- **Volunteers surveyed the membership to determine mentoring needs.** First, a marketing team surveyed women to determine the desired skill development areas. Then an infrastructure team studied how to facilitate technology-aided mentor matching, and a third team investigated the mentoring software market. The Alliance benchmarked program success indicators: The software must be inexpensive, easy to administer, intuitive for users, fast to implement, and it must enable user confidentiality. After a successful six-month pilot with 35 mentor/mentee matches, TWA's mentoring program launched officially in July 2007.
- **Self-service mentoring is as an essential aspect of the program.** Because the voluntary mentoring program had limited staff, the software was required to run with limited program administration. To keep it simple: 1) both mentors and mentees complete profiles; 2) mentors indicate their background, expertise, and reasons they want to mentor; 3) mentees search the profile for mentors; and 4) mentees send email requests to mentors that look promising. Mentees must personalize the request by indicating why this mentor fits their needs. The mentor accepts or declines with a personalized message in response. According to Patricia Hill, TWA Mentoring Program Chair, "One of the beauties of this program is its self-service feature. As a volunteer organization, a laborious people-matching process was out of the question. The program also gives the mentee control of the mentoring relationship, which is valued by our membership."
- **TWA invites mentors to participate.** Members of TWA recommend mentors based on their experience and expertise, mentoring surveys, and needs expressed by the mentees. All mentees are either members of the Alliance and pay minimal yearly dues, or they join the program by paying an annual fee equivalent to the annual dues. If specific mentoring skills requested are not available, TWA asks for recommendations from HR. Now other caucuses in Xerox like ACT (Asians Coming Together), BWLC (Black Women's Leadership Council) and the network group, YP@X (Young Professionals @ Xerox) have joined the TWA mentoring program (see Figure 6). This brings men as well as women into the program but continues to provide maximum flexibility in mentor/mentee selection. Today there is an approximate 70/30 ratio between female and male mentors.
- **TWA continues to expand resources for mentoring.** A mentor user guide provides an overview of mentoring and has FAQs about the program; lunchtime forums introduce the program and answer questions; guest speakers share stories from mentor and mentee perspectives. More than 200 mentor/mentee profiles now exist online, and this number continues to grow. TWA currently experiments with wikis and wants to create a blog within the wiki for members to share experiences and best practices. TWA expects to add more Xerox caucus groups, as well as include non-Xerox employees. Today, "friends" who are not associated with Xerox may participate in the program as mentors if they have a skill or expertise that's needed and they are recommended by TWA mentors (see Figure 7).

- **Thoughtful planning, flexible technology, and dedicated volunteers keep cost low.** Cost recovery from membership fees paid mentees covers the technology costs. The flexible self-service system allows streamlined mentor matching. Volunteers collect monthly metrics on mentor/mentee matches, conduct surveys, and listen carefully to feedback and prioritize activities. They also monitor the mentor/mentee activities, sending reminders about pending requests or that it's time (after a year) to close a relationship. They also create program awareness primarily through word of mouth and the Web site. These tasks, spread among three people, take about 10 hours per month.

**Figure 6** TWA Mentoring Resource Center Web Site

The screenshot shows the 'Mentoring Program Wiki' website. The header includes the Xerox logo and the title 'Mentoring Program Wiki'. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Mentoring Program Admin Team Blog'. The main content area is titled 'Home' and features a large heading: 'Welcome to the Mentorship Program Resources Center'. Below this heading, there is a paragraph explaining the resource center's purpose and a list of three main segments: Public Resources, Administrative Resources, and Other Resources. A section titled 'Public Resources' lists various items like 'The Mentorship Program Team', 'Membership Guidelines', and 'Mentor Resources'. A sidebar on the left contains navigation links for 'View All Site Content', 'Sites', 'Documents', 'Wiki Pages', 'Recycle Bin', and 'Recent Changes'. The footer of the page includes the source information: 'Source: The Women's Alliance (TWA) at Xerox'.

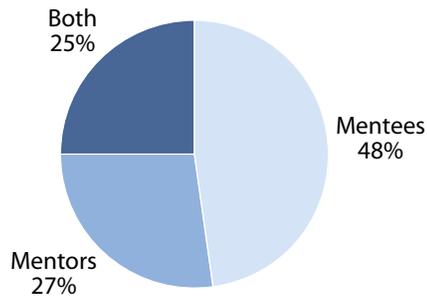
Source: The Women's Alliance (TWA) at Xerox

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

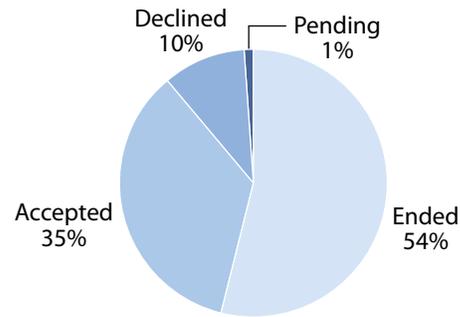
**Figure 7** TWA Mentoring Participation Report For May 2010

**Participation report mentor type percentages**



Base: 213 active TWA mentorship participants

**Mentorship status percentages**



Base: 153 TWA mentorship relationships

Source: The Women's Alliance (TWA) at Xerox

56621

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

**HR PROFESSIONALS: IF STARTING A MENTORING PROGRAM, FOCUS ON THE "MUST" DOS**

Mentoring requires careful planning, an understanding of employee needs, and selection of appropriate mentoring technology by HR and/or business execs.

- **Secure top executive support for a formal mentoring program.** Don't begin a mentoring program, whether manually administrated or e-enabled, until you have not only senior executive support from the CEO or COO and a number of senior business executives, but also a commitment from senior leadership to participate and encourage their managers to mentor. This firm commitment should include a mentoring program budget, resources, and most of all, a strong commitment by senior execs to lead by example by participating in the mentoring program. If you're starting a grassroots informal program or a special group mentoring program like Xerox's TWA, you still need a committed executive to stand behind the program and act as a spokesperson and adviser.
- **Create a business plan that documents components of the mentoring program.** Include information on the vision, the business need for a program, goals, expected outcomes, and benefits to the organization. State the evaluation plan, which should include mentor match metrics, semiannual mentor/mentee effectiveness survey, and recommendations for improvement. Add in the estimated yearly administrative staff and software cost for the program. Also provide a detailed estimate for the amount of time expected from mentors and mentees.

- **Select the best mentoring approach for your organization.** Study mentoring approaches used successfully by other organizations — both nonprofits and corporations. Talk to organizations that have successful mentoring programs in place, especially on a large-scale basis. Select technology to facilitate mentoring even with a small program because you expect it to grow.
- **Create a pilot mentoring program.** Select a group for the pilot, such as new employees, a particular department, or a group of new leaders. Prepare the group with a short training session for mentors and mentees and carry out a six-month pilot. Do electronic and face-to-face surveys and tweak the program during the pilot. Carry out a final pilot evaluation and make necessary changes before program expansion to the broader company.
- **Communicate the mentoring message.** Get help from internal PR when you launch the program, but don't stop there. Communication must be ongoing to keep mentoring top-of-mind. Too often HR managers start mentoring with fanfare and then think it will take care of itself especially with technology matching. Wrong! Unless HR and business managers communicate continually, share mentoring results, and best practices, mentoring will not flourish in your organization

## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

### Companies Interviewed For This Document

Insala	Rockwell Collins
Intrafinity	Triple Creek
Management Mentors	The Women's Alliance at Xerox
Mentor Scout, a division of Nobscot	

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Source: Toddi Gutner, "Finding Anchors in the Storm: Mentors", *The Wall Street Journal*, January 27, 2009 (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123301451869117603.html?mod=crnews>).
- <sup>2</sup> The California Nurses Foundation implemented a three-year California Nurse Mentor project to lower attrition rates. The average over the four participating hospitals showed that 23% of non-participant RNs had left within a year of hire, but only 8% of the mentoring program RNs had left. Source: Joyce F. Mills, MS, RN, PHN and Anna C. Mullins, DNSC, RN, "The California Nurse Mentor Project: Every Nurse Deserves a Mentor", *Nursing Economics*, Nov. 25, 2008. Synopsis in Medscape Today (<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/582650>).
- <sup>3</sup> Searching for a new employee can cost an organization up to 150% of the person annual salary. This includes costs from lost productivity, time for planning, advertising, recruiting, and interviewing new

candidates, and training of the new person once hired. Source: Maggie McPhillips-Jacka and Paul Quinn, “Beware Of The Hidden Costs Of Staff Turnover,” Absolute Recruitment Group ([http://www.absoluteglobal.net/absolute/globalweb.nsf/\(\\$Content\)/article\\_staffturnover.html](http://www.absoluteglobal.net/absolute/globalweb.nsf/($Content)/article_staffturnover.html)).

- <sup>4</sup> Today organizations spend 80% of their learning dollars on *formal classroom instruction*, while employees spend 80% of their time in *informal learning*. Formal learning is not going away, but organizations need to research informal approaches and achieve a better balance in spending their learning dollars. See the August 13, 2007, “Informal Learning Connects With Corporate Training Programs” report.
- <sup>5</sup> Rockwell Collins has seen a shift in reasons for mentee participation in the program from “encouragement and support” (2007 mentoring survey results) to “building and expanding their networks” (2009 mentoring survey results.). Source: Laura M. Francis, “Shifting the Shape of Mentoring,” *ASTD T+D*, September 2009 ([http://www.astd.org/TD/Archives/2009/Sept/Free/0909\\_ShiftingTheShape.htm](http://www.astd.org/TD/Archives/2009/Sept/Free/0909_ShiftingTheShape.htm)). This indicates that employees are placing greater value on having broad networks and multiple sources for knowledge sharing as an informal learning approach: just-in-time resources that are aligned with company business.
- <sup>6</sup> Forrester has identified 19 human resource management applications that reflect the breadth and diversity of this HRM ecosystem of applications and related services. See the January 6, 2010, “TechRadar™ For Business Process Professionals: Human Resource Management Apps, Q1 2010” report.

# FORRESTER®

Making Leaders Successful Every Day

## Headquarters

Forrester Research, Inc.  
400 Technology Square  
Cambridge, MA 02139 USA  
Tel: +1 617.613.6000  
Fax: +1 617.613.5000  
Email: [forrester@forrester.com](mailto:forrester@forrester.com)  
Nasdaq symbol: FORR  
[www.forrester.com](http://www.forrester.com)

## Research and Sales Offices

Forrester has research centers and sales offices in more than 27 cities internationally, including Amsterdam; Cambridge, Mass.; Dallas; Dubai; Foster City, Calif.; Frankfurt; London; Madrid; Sydney; Tel Aviv; and Toronto.

*For a complete list of worldwide locations visit [www.forrester.com/about](http://www.forrester.com/about).*

For information on hard-copy or electronic reprints, please contact Client Support at +1 866.367.7378, +1 617.613.5730, or [clientsupport@forrester.com](mailto:clientsupport@forrester.com).

We offer quantity discounts and special pricing for academic and nonprofit institutions.

Forrester Research, Inc. (Nasdaq: FORR) is an independent research company that provides pragmatic and forward-thinking advice to global leaders in business and technology. Forrester works with professionals in 19 key roles at major companies providing proprietary research, customer insight, consulting, events, and peer-to-peer executive programs. For more than 27 years, Forrester has been making IT, marketing, and technology industry leaders successful every day. For more information, visit [www.forrester.com](http://www.forrester.com).