

Executive Mentoring – what is it, and how can it help me?

What is mentoring?

The term ‘mentoring’ is often used to describe a relationship in which a more, or differently, experienced person works with another to support their personal and professional development.

Mentoring is a process whereby two individuals, a mentor and a mentee, agree to work together to develop the knowledge, skills and insights of the mentee.

Mentoring is successfully used in a number of contexts, ranging from mentoring of chief executives and senior managers in business, through to mentoring of individual school children by an adult.

What are the outcomes and benefits of mentoring?

- **accelerated and sustained learning:** mentoring effectively supports personal and professional development through its focus on the needs of the individual mentee
- **better decisions:** mentoring enables a wider range of options to be considered, and allows different perspectives to be explored, together with their impact. The opportunity to sound out ideas with an impartial other increases reflection, and ultimately helps to increase commitment to the chosen path
- **increased confidence:** being able to sound out ideas, focus on developing skills as and when they are needed, and talk through different organisational strategies and issues, increases confidence and commitment
- **improved relationships:** mentoring can improve executives’ relationships with others through helping them develop their interpersonal skills, discern others’ agendas more clearly and base their relationships on shared values
- **retention:** the support provided by a mentor can mean that an organisation retains key staff they do not wish to lose

What is executive mentoring?

Having a trusted person who can act as a sounding board, encourage a range of perspectives, and offer the benefit of their own experience or background, can be invaluable to chief executives and directors.

The executive mentoring relationship is a partnership, focusing both on the executive’s individual needs as well as the organization’s collective needs, goals and interests. The mentor is someone who is at a distance from the organisation. This avoids any conflict of interest.

How does it work?

The purpose of mentoring is to support the executive to move forward and make changes. These changes may be about any number of issues – for example, leadership style, relationships at work, organisational strategy, decision-making, work/life balance etc.

How does it work? (cont.)

Working in partnership with a mentor enables an executive to identify clear goals, clarify how they wish to achieve them and make changes which are sustainable.

The partnership between the mentor and executive is both supportive and challenging, thereby engaging the executive in fully developing their potential and extending their experience. It accelerates their learning by providing them with development that is targeted to their specific needs.

A mentor will not tell you what to do, but will support you in finding your own answers and direction, whilst providing the benefits of their own knowledge and experience.

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