Why Mentoring Programmes in South Africa are not delivering

By Penny Abbott and Peter Beck
Clutterbuck Associates South Africa
Fundamental flaws in programme design or implementation

- Purpose not clear – business case not researched and clearly presented
- Key stakeholders not involved, briefed and trained
- Small pilot programme not run before full roll-out
- Outcomes:
  - Not defined in multiple dimensions
  - Not expressed in measurable terms
  - Not measured and reported on
- Clear guidelines and codes of conduct not designed and published
- Mentoring pairs don’t receive support from Coordinators
- Coordinator not trained and doesn’t stay long in the role
Addressing some of these flaws

Content of remainder of presentation:

• Business drivers
• Stages of implementation of a mentoring programme
• Stakeholder involvement and training
• Some important mentoring concepts
• Good practice benchmarking – The International Standards for Mentoring in Employment
• Coordinator training workshops
Some possible business drivers for Developmental Mentoring

Identify what critical people-related problems impinge on implementation of the business strategy and see where mentoring could make an impact.

For example, mentoring can help with:

✓ Passing on the legacy of implicit knowledge from leaders and senior employees to the next generation
✓ Attraction – future employees often ask about mentoring programmes
✓ Retention – of both mentors and mentees
✓ Diversity/creating an inclusive culture/environment
✓ Skills development at all levels
✓ Talent pool leadership development – strengthening the talent pipeline and bench strength
✓ Graduate and fast track programmes
✓ Glass ceiling programmes (reverse mentoring)
✓ Team development or new employee induction (peer mentoring)
✓ Maternity leave – keeping in contact and re-induction
Mentoring programmes should follow 5 implementation steps:

1. Laying the Foundations
2. Designing and Planning
3. Launching
4. Supporting Participants
5. Reviewing and Improving

The Co-ordinator
Some Important Mentoring Concepts
Laying the Foundations - Stakeholder involvement, briefing and training

• Top management must fully understand what mentoring can and cannot do, and must determine the guidelines for the programme. They must agree and adopt the company’s definition of mentoring and how it fits with other developmental processes.

"Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking."

• Relationship between line manager, mentor and mentee must be defined.
• Both mentors and mentees need to be trained in their roles and responsibilities.
When mentors are “off-line”, the relationship delivers more growth

Off-line

Confidential

Broader view

Objective

Trust

Different perspective

Challenging pull out the learning

Operate on the quality of the thinking, not the detail

Test out ideas

Self aware
Developmental model of mentoring works better in South Africa than sponsorship

**Sponsoring**
- Always senior to junior
- Power is important to the relationship
- Loyalty expected from junior partner
- Mainly one way learning
- Involves active promotion and intervention by sponsor

**Developmental Mentoring**
- Experience gap more important than hierarchy gap
- Power is “parked”
- Friendship and mutual supportiveness evolve
- Learning is two way
- Mentor helps mentee do things for self
- Ubuntu
Mentoring programmes should be measured on four dimensions, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection criteria, proportion of successes/ failures, training, skills, programme support</td>
<td>Retention, recruitment, promotions, improved assessments, productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport, committed objectives, meeting frequency/ relevancy/ value, learning</td>
<td>Learning milestones reached, performance improvements, confidence level, line manager reaction</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Pairs should be matched for maximum learning

- Comfortable: Low potential for learning. Need to work to build rapport.
- Stretch: High potential for learning. Need to work to create learning opportunities.

Known: Similar
Unknown: Dissimilar
Criteria of the International Standards for Mentoring Schemes in Employment
Criteria

1. Clarity of purpose
2. Stakeholder training and briefing
3. Processes for selection and matching
4. Processes for measurement and review
5. High standards of ethics
6. Administration and support
Clarity of Purpose

- The intended outcomes and benefits of the programme are clearly defined and understood by all the stakeholder audiences
- The outcomes are translated into viable and well understood objectives for each mentoring relationship

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance criteria</th>
<th>Suggested Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a published and readily available statement of programme purpose</td>
<td>Information guide in paper or on intranet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a published and readily available statement of values.</td>
<td>Information guide in paper or on intranet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring is clearly defined and terms of reference are understood by all</td>
<td>Consultation to agree these elements with the target audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both mentors and mentees have clear and complementary expectations from the</td>
<td>Part of training programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programme and from their relationship</td>
<td>Item on 3/6 month questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each mentoring pair is encouraged to establish individual learning and/ or other</td>
<td>3 or 6 month questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goals from the relationship; their goals may extend beyond the organisational goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is a process to monitor whether this has been done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholder training and briefing

- Participants and stakeholders understand the concept of mentoring and their respective roles
- Participants are aware of the skills and behaviours they need to apply in their roles as mentors and mentees; and have an opportunity to identify skills gaps
- Learning support is available throughout the first 12 months of their involvement in the programme

Examples

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in a process to learn the basics of mentoring is a non-negotiable condition of taking part in the mentoring programme, for both mentors and mentees</td>
<td>There is a record of at least some time spent learning about mentoring and associated skills by all participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are opportunities to reflect on personal experience and to build self-awareness</td>
<td>Training outline provides reflective space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is opportunity to practise the skills of being an effective mentor/mentee and/or evidence of prior competence in the role</td>
<td>The training course outline builds in practice time</td>
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Processes for selection and matching

- Mentors are selected to meet the specific needs of mentees
- Both mentors and mentees have an influence on whether they participate and who they agree to pair with
- The experience gap permits significant learning by the mentee
- There is a process for recognising and unwinding matches that do not work; and for reassigning the participants, if they wish

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<tr>
<td>There are clear criteria for participation and/or selection of mentors and mentees</td>
<td>Information guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training workbook/materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a consistent process for identifying mentees’ needs and comparing these to mentor characteristics</td>
<td>Information guide; data collection documents; data base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The experience gap permits significant learning by the mentee (NB this does not necessarily imply a status differential – peer mentors may have equal, but dissimilar experiences and therefore a high experience gap)</td>
<td>Process to assess broadly the mentee’s learning need and the mentor’s relevant experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Processes for measurement and review

- The programme is measured sufficiently frequently and appropriately to:
- Identify problems with individual relationships
- Make timely adjustments to programme processes apart from 4.3 below (see comments) 
  there is nothing to measure this
- Provide a meaningful cost-benefit analysis and impact analysis

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| Measurements are based upon the goals defined in the programme purpose and programme values; and upon the goals defined within the individual pairings | Information guide  
Evaluation and review questionnaires and results                             |
| Mentors and mentees receive clear feedback from each other on their performance in the role | Co-ordinator checks with each pair that this has been done. Record of checks       |
| Feedback from mentors and mentees is analysed by the coordinators to identify recurring themes relevant to the programme or to other development issues within the organisation | Analysis of documentation                                                        |
High standard of ethics and pastoral care

- The programme adheres to clear guidelines on the behaviour and responsibilities of all stakeholders
- There is a process for recognising and managing conflicts of interest between stakeholders (e.g. between mentees and the organisation)

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<td>Has a Code of Conduct for all parties (mentors, mentees, line managers, programme support staff and the organisation in general)</td>
<td>Code of Conduct document Information Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance against the Code of Conduct is monitored</td>
<td>Exceptions noted on database; individuals counselled in scheduled meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants understand clearly the hierarchy of interests (mentee, mentoring pair, organisation) and have discussed the implications for managing relationships and the programme</td>
<td>Training workbook/materials Training outline – practical exercises (e.g. “dilemmas”)</td>
</tr>
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Administration and support

- Participants have adequate support throughout the formal programme and, where appropriate beyond
- The programme is managed professionally

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<td>The programme co-ordinator and other support staff (where applicable) have a clear, written description of their roles and responsibilities and are assessed against them</td>
<td>Documents available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mentoring process is clearly linked to other development activities, where appropriate (e.g. appraisal, personal development planning or a process of continual personal development)</td>
<td>Information guide Process documents showing cross-references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a clear and accessible process to assist participants in dealing with issues, which fall outside the remit of the relationship (e.g. an Employee Assistance Programme)</td>
<td>Information Guide; intranet; training; roles and responsibilities documents (see 6.1 above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programme Coordinators’ Workshops
August 24 – 25, October 26 – 27 2010

In-house mentoring
In-house coaching

Small business mentoring
Learnerships

The two-day workshop is constructed around a logical flow of steps to be considered in implementing and maintaining a programme and includes a variety of practical activities to apply and reinforce the theory. The workshop aims to give participants a solid grounding in the basic elements of implementing an organisational programme, thus providing a foundation for building their own.

Delegates from various companies and programmes have the opportunity to share their experiences.
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