The Design, Implementation and Outcomes of a Mentoring Program

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Summary

This paper reports on the design, implementation and outcomes of a mentoring program involving 18 employees in the IT Division of WorkCover Queensland. The paper provides some background information to the development of the program and the design and implementation phases including recruitment and matching of participants, orientation and training, and the mentoring process including transition and/or termination. The paper also outlines the quantitative and qualitative evaluation processes that occurred and the outcomes of that evaluation. Results indicated a wealth of positive individual, mentoring, and organisational outcomes. The organisation and semi-structured processes provided in the program are considered as major contributing factors to the successful outcomes of the program. These outcomes are likely to have long-term benefits for the individuals involved, the IT Division, and the broader organisation.
This case study reports on the implementation and outcomes of a mentoring program introduced in the Information Technology (IT) Division of WorkCover Queensland, Australia. The program included detailed and structured processes for recruiting and matching mentees and mentors, orientation and training of participants, and monitoring and reviewing of the program. These processes, together with the results of comprehensive evaluation, are presented in this paper. The organisation and structured processes, particularly in the early stages of the program, are recognised as a major contributing factor to the successful outcomes of the program.

WorkCover Queensland is a Queensland Government owned statutory authority operating as an independent, commercial enterprise. WorkCover Queensland insures more than 143,000 employers, making it the main provider of workers’ compensation insurance in Queensland. The organisation employs approximately 1,000 people throughout the State. The IT Division of WorkCover Queensland employs a total of 60 professional and administrative staff and is responsible for maintaining the internal IT infrastructure. The management of this Division requested that a mentoring program be introduced as a vehicle for staff development. The stated broad objectives for the program were to “enhance the personal and professional development of employees” and to “increase communication between members of the Division”. However, in addition to these stated objectives, the Division was open about their desire for “any positive outcomes for staff and the organisation that may arise through the mentoring program”.

Guidance and support for personal and professional development has recently been found to be the key aim of mentoring relationships (Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005), replacing the focus on “commitment to providing upward mobility and career support” that was prevalent in earlier definitions of mentoring (e.g., Ragins & Cotton, 1999). It may be that there is a significant difference between cultures reflected in these definitions, with respect to the expectations of mentoring. For example, US definitions focus specifically on career advancement (Ragins & Cotton, 1999) whereas the Australian focus is more broad and emphasises personal and professional development (Fowler & O’Gorman, 2005). An important implication of this is that although the majority of mentoring programs in Australian organisations are designed and implemented on the basis of research and practice conducted in the U.S., such programs should be tailored to the needs of Australian mentees and mentors.

Although personal and professional development is a broad overarching aim of mentoring, a wide range of more specific benefits have been found for those involved in mentoring relationships. For example, mentees have reported job and career satisfaction (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Collins, 1994), organisational socialisation (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992), organisational and career commitment (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990), and career planning (Chao, 1997) as positive outcomes of having a mentor. Mentors have identified career enhancement (Zey, 1991), reward by peers and superiors (Fowler, Gudmundsson, Whicker, & Branch, 2001; Hunt & Michael, 1983), building support networks (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997), and a sense of meaningfulness and fulfillment (Fowler et al., 2001) as a result of mentoring. Both mentees and mentors have identified the enhanced interpersonal relationships that result from mentoring (Fowler et al., 2001).

The benefits of mentoring extend beyond the individuals involved to the organisations in which they work. Mentoring has been found to contribute to the development of managers and facilitate the process of managerial succession (Zey, 1988). It increases productivity,
reduces turnover, and enhances communication between levels and sectors of the organisation (Koberg, Boss, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994; Kram, 1980, 1985; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993; Viator & Scandura, 1991; Zey, 1988). Mentoring can facilitate organizational socialization by helping employees adopt appropriate role behaviour, learn work skills and abilities, and acquire and promote the transfer of desired norms and values (Clawson, 1980; Kram, 1986). It is not surprising, in recognition of the array of benefits associated with mentoring, that organisations are increasingly making use of mentoring relationships to improve individual and organisational effectiveness.

The mentoring program reported in this case study was designed to enhance the personal and professional development of employees, via a process that allowed mentees and mentors to work together to establish and achieve their own goals. This reflected the Division’s explicitly stated broad objectives while recognising that other “positive outcomes” would arise from involvement in mentoring. The paper briefly describes each phase of the program, highlighting the critical success factors of each phase. Following the description of the program, we report on the process used to evaluate the program and the outcomes of that evaluation. Several outcomes are similar to those identified in previous research, reinforcing the value of mentoring not only to mentees and mentors, but also to the broader organisation.

**The mentoring program**

An organisational consultant was recruited as program co-ordinator and was responsible for designing, facilitating and evaluating the mentoring program. The co-ordinator met with the HR Co-ordinator and other managers in WorkCover for the purpose of discussing and planning appropriate program strategies (e.g., recruitment, matching, and training). Due to the emphasis placed, by the program co-ordinator, on the process of consultation and planning with stakeholders at each phase (as suggested by Schein, 1988), specific details about the design and implementation of the program were not pre-determined. Rather, a range of options for each phase was presented to management. The specific details unfolded as the program progressed, with review and evaluation of each phase (recruitment and matching, orientation and training, the mentoring process, and transition from the mentoring process) informing the development of the next phase. This ensured that the program was tailored to the needs of the participants involved.

**Phase 1 – Recruitment and matching**

Three ½ day mentoring awareness sessions were held with 20 participants in each (a total of 60 employees from the Division). The purpose of the awareness sessions was two-fold: for participants to gain an understanding of the importance of mentoring to their personal and professional development, and to enable participants to make an informed choice about whether or not they wished to participate in the mentoring program. The sessions were designed to be highly participative and interactive and covered topics such as the roles and responsibilities of mentees and mentors, understanding the mentoring process, and the benefits of mentoring.

The session provided an overview of the mentoring program including: the process to be used to match mentees and mentors; involvement in orientation and training sessions; and the monitoring and review process that would occur over the 6 months of the program. Each session concluded with a number of reflective activities that facilitated participants in considering their own needs and concerns and how they might benefit from engagement in a
mentoring relationship. All participants were invited to self-nominate as mentees or mentors. A total of 33 employees nominated for participation in the program, however, WorkCover management set a limit of 18 participants (9 mentees and 9 mentors) for this pilot program. Participants were drawn from lower and middle management levels of the Division and participated in the program over a period of 6 months.

Prior to the awareness sessions, participants completed a brief questionnaire that asked them about their current knowledge, skills, and abilities in regard to mentoring, and their interest and willingness in being involved in a mentoring relationship. A more detailed post-training-questionnaire measured, in addition to those concepts measured in the pre-questionnaire, a range of individual and organisational variables that are presented in the outcomes section of this paper. Results of the post-training-questionnaire indicated an increase in participants’ knowledge about mentoring and provided a wealth of data for the purpose of matching mentees and mentors for the program.

A comprehensive matching process was undertaken. Data from the questionnaires completed after the awareness sessions were used to examine the functions that potential mentors felt they could provide and the functions that potential mentees felt they would benefit from receiving (using items developed by Fowler and O’Gorman, 2005), and the benefits that mentees and mentors desired from the relationship (using items developed by Fowler, 2002). Participants were also asked to rate their willingness to engage in the program as a mentor or mentee and were provided the opportunity to nominate the names of individuals with whom they would like to be paired. After considering the data, each mentee was contacted by the co-ordinator with a list of three possible mentors. After discussion with the mentees, mentors were contacted with a short-list of potential mentees. On the basis of these discussions, the co-ordinator matched each mentee with a mentor and contacted the participants to confirm their satisfaction with the outcome of the matching process. At the completion of this process, all 18 participants reported their willingness to proceed with their nominated partner. This detailed process was intended to increase the probability of ‘suitable’ matches. Ongoing feedback throughout the program suggested considerable success with the outcomes of the matching process.

Phase 2 – Orientation and training

The participants that were selected for the program participated in a two-day workshop. The training included directed discussions by the facilitator and small and large group exercises and discussion. The workshop aimed to provide and share information about mentoring for the purpose of creating effective mentoring relationships.

The training re-covered some of the material that had been introduced in the awareness sessions: the concept of mentoring, benefits of mentoring, and appropriate functions and roles that are provided in mentoring relationships. However, these concepts were covered in more depth in the workshop and in a manner that made them relevant to each participant’s particular mentoring relationship. Mentees worked with their mentors to engage in goal setting, examine the behaviours and skills that are important in mentoring, and investigate the costs of mentoring. They also participated in some trust building activities, a range of exercises to enhance their communication skills, and discussed the relationship between mentoring and different learning styles. A major focus of the workshop was on each mentor-mentee dyad working together to negotiate, contract, and plan their mentoring relationship. Purposefully, the workshop was designed to allow participants a considerable amount of time
to build rapport with each other and to begin to develop a positive relationship that would enhance the opportunity of success in the program.

A range of tools and resources were provided to assist participants with the mentoring process. These included a list of reflective questions to consider when goal setting, a format for developing a written action plan for each goal, a list of questions and prompts for the contracting process, a list of questions and prompts for mentoring meetings and after-meeting reflections, etc. Although the necessity of such guided processes might be questioned by those who advocate for completely informal and unstructured mentoring relationships, one of the major concerns of mentees and mentors is how to ‘get going’ in the relationship, i.e., how to contract and negotiate, plan, and move forward. The value of these guided and semi-structured processes, provided in a written form, should not be underestimated in the initial stages of a mentoring relationship.

For the purpose of evaluating the orientation and training program, participants completed a brief questionnaire containing nine items rated on quantitative scales (from 1 ‘poor’ to 5 ‘excellent’). Participants rated the facilitator’s ‘knowledge of mentoring’, ‘presentation skills’, ‘interest and enthusiasm’, and ‘opportunity to be active participants in the process’ between very good and excellent. The five remaining items – ‘content covered by the program’, ‘effectiveness of support materials’, relevance of content to your needs’, ‘appropriateness of activities’, and ‘contribution toward preparedness for your role’ were all rated highly.

Participants made positive comments about ‘the content’ that was covered and how much they had learned about the concept of mentoring. Several participants commented on the length of the training workshop. Interestingly, these comments were divided between those who felt the ‘allocated times [for training] were right’ and the ‘two days were beneficial’ and those who thought ‘it could have been covered in a day’. One participant summed up this diversity in opinions with the comment that “maybe one day would have been enough… [because] we often seemed to be finished what we had to do… [although it] wasn’t a problem because we were also actively doing the mentoring as well”. When exploring this issue in discussion with participants, it became clear that the majority of participants had recognised that the length of time allowed for each activity and the overall length of the 2-day program was an important and intentional part of the rapport building and mentoring process. Specifically, they had taken the opportunity to develop their relationship (by discussing mentoring issues, making plans, or chatting informally) when the opportunity arose. In future programs it would be useful to make the rationale for the two-day workshop explicit in the introductory session on the first day.

Phase 3 – The mentoring process

Over a 6-month period participants engaged in the mentoring process. In general, early meetings involved further planning and goal-setting and later meetings focussed on progressing toward achievement of those goals. During this time the co-ordinator was available for one-on-one consultation (via personal meeting, e-mail, and telephone), working with mentoring dyads, and/or working with small groups as required by the participants.

Approximately 2-3 weeks into the program, each participant was contacted (with the exception of two mentors who were on leave) to monitor their progress. The majority of participants were clear about their plans for ongoing meetings, including the importance of
scheduling regular mentoring sessions, setting agendas, taking notes, etc. All of the participants were clear about the goals they were working toward, and several reported on the action steps they had taken to date in regard to those goals. The co-ordinator reiterated her availability for any issues or concerns that might arise, and suggested her possible usefulness as a resource for any guidance or information they might require in regard to both the content and process of their mentoring relationships. This early contact between the co-ordinator and participants helped ensure that the mentoring relationships had commenced and were proceeding on the ‘right track’.

A similar process of monitoring continued over the course of the program with the co-ordinator regularly phoning, e-mailing, and visiting participants in their workplace. These contacts enabled close and careful monitoring of the mentoring processes that were occurring in addition to gaining valuable data for the purpose of evaluation. The data collected through this process is included in the outcomes section below.

**Phase 4 – Transition from the mentoring process**

Toward the end of the formal 6-month component of the mentoring program, participants were provided some advice for the purpose of terminating or transitioning their mentoring relationships. The co-ordinator provided participants with some reflection and review questions and points for discussion to assist in this process. The majority of participants indicated an intention to continue the mentoring relationship in some form. Several dyads planned to work together until their goals had been achieved and others expressed a desire and/or intent to continue to develop and achieve new goals. An offer was made to all participants to contact the co-ordinator for assistance with termination or transition, beyond the completion of the formal program. A focus group, with participants having the opportunity to share their experiences and outcomes, signified the end of the formal program.

There are several key design and implementation features that are considered by the program co-ordinator as significant contributors in the success of the program. For example, the initial ‘awareness sessions’ were successful in increasing employees’ knowledge and understanding of mentoring processes (including those employees who were not involved in the eventual program). They also provided the opportunity for employees to make an informed choice about participation. The self-nomination and comprehensive confidential matching process, which provided for participation and choice by participants, enhanced the possibility of making ‘successful matches’ of mentees with mentors. The interactive orientation and training workshop provided time to build rapport, increased opportunities for communication between participants, and provided structure for the mentoring dyads to negotiate and plan their mentoring relationships. Finally, the availability of the co-ordinator throughout the program, for consultation and advice, increased the likelihood that relationships would not terminate prematurely.

**Evaluation and outcomes**

A comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation was conducted. In recognition of the diverse needs, desires, and plans of individual mentees and mentors, outcomes may most effectively be gauged by reflection and evaluation of individuals’ mentoring goals. To this end, a wealth of qualitative data was collected from participants during the course of the program. This data was collected via telephone interviews and discussions between the co-
ordinator and participants. The personal accounts of participants revealed many positive outcomes.

For the purpose of further evaluating the program, on a range of mentoring and organisational variables that could be measured across mentoring relationships, quantitative evaluation was conducted. Data was collected from members of the IT Division prior to the commencement of the program and again at the completion of the formal component of the program. This data was collected from participants (mentees and mentors) and from non-participants, so that possible effects of the mentoring program could be measured.

**Outcomes of evaluation**

Although the formal component of the program extended over a period of six months, it is important to note that some mentoring relationships extended beyond that period. Thus, some outcomes may continue to emerge over time. Further, it is likely that many outcomes will not be immediately measurable because the most significant benefits from involvement in a mentoring relationship are often not realised until some time after the completion of the formal program or termination of the relationship (Ragins, 1999). Thus, it is primarily short-term outcomes that are evident immediately after a mentoring program.

**Quantitative outcomes**

Data was collected before the program commenced (pre-data) and again at the completion of the formal component of the program (post-data) on a range of variables (with each measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 7). The variables included intention to be a mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), intention to be a mentee (adapted from Ragins & Cotton, 1993), drawbacks to being a mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), drawbacks to being a mentee (adapted from Ragins & Cotton, 1993), organisational commitment (Cook & Wall, 1980 with the addition of two items from Meyer and Allen, 1984), perceived organisational support (adapted from Eisenberger et al., 1986), organisational citizenship behaviour (adapted from Podsakoff et al., 1990 and Van Dyne et al., 1994), job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), careerism (adapted from Rousseau, 1990), intention to turnover (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981), perceptions of social support (supervisor) (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980), perceptions of social support (co-workers) (Caplan et al., 1980), perceptions of social support (mentee/mentor) (adapted from Caplan et al., 1980), and work stress (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979 cited in Cook et al., 1981).

For each person from whom data was collected at both points in time, the pre-data for each variable was subtracted from the post-data to measure change in their score over time (i.e., the 6 months of the program). The scores shown in Table 1 represent the average change in scores over time for participants (mentees and mentors in the program; n = 17) and non-participants (employees in the Division who did not participate in the mentoring program but from whom data was collected; n = 14). For example, on the measure of job satisfaction participants averaged a .3529 increase in their score over the time of the program while non-participants averaged a decrease of -.3590 over that same period.

Due to the limited sample size, sophisticated statistical analysis of the data was not conducted. However, the difference in mean scores over time indicated a move in the ‘right’ direction for the majority of individual, mentoring and organisational variables. For example, employees who participated in the program showed an increased intent to mentor in the future and
Table 1. Average change over time on a range of mentoring and organisational variables for participants (n = 17) and non-participants (n = 14) in the IT Division mentoring program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring and/or organisational variable</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Non-participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention to be a mentor</td>
<td>+.5588</td>
<td>-.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to be a mentee</td>
<td>-.4412</td>
<td>-.0357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawbacks to being a mentor</td>
<td>-.9792</td>
<td>+.3846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawbacks to being a mentee</td>
<td>-.2059</td>
<td>+.2051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>+.3750</td>
<td>-.1454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived organisational support</td>
<td>+.2574</td>
<td>-.0288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational citizenship behaviour</td>
<td>-.0441</td>
<td>-.0714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>+.3529</td>
<td>-.3590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careerism</td>
<td>+.0529</td>
<td>-.1659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to turnover</td>
<td>-.1176</td>
<td>+.4231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of social support: supervisor</td>
<td>+.6912</td>
<td>-.4643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of social support: co-worker</td>
<td>+.0588</td>
<td>-.4107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of social support: mentee/mentor</td>
<td>+.6250</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work stress</td>
<td>+.1875</td>
<td>+.1154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants = employees of the IT Division who participated as mentees and mentors in the program. Non-participants = employees of the IT Division who did not participate in the program but from whom pre- and post-quantitative data was collected. A positive score (+) indicates an increase in the average score over the period of the mentoring program and a negative score (-) indicates a decrease in the average score over the period of the mentoring program.

perceived fewer drawbacks to being a mentor or mentee than they did prior to their involvement in the program. Because mentoring is an intergenerational process with successful experiences as a mentee influencing willingness and ability to undertake the role of mentor in the future (Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999), this finding has positive ongoing implications for developmental relationships in the organisation.

The division and organisation will also benefit from the participants, compared to non-participants, increased organisational commitment and job satisfaction and their decreased intention to leave the organisation. It is possible that these factors are related. Drafke (2006)
pointed out that feedback and recognition, quality and quantity of interactions with others, and the influence of coworkers (all related to mentoring relationships) are important contributors of job satisfaction. Further, feedback and opportunities for interaction lead to organizational commitment that, in turn, increases employees’ desire and intent to remain with the organisation (Steers, 1977). Beyond these advantages for the organisation, there were positive outcomes for the individuals involved. For example, the increase in perceived organisational support and social support (from supervisors, co-workers, and mentees/mentors), reported by participants, is likely to offset some of the ill effects that job demands make on those employees (Drafke, 2006).

**Qualitative outcomes**

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed additional positive outcomes from the program. For example, the majority of participants were clear about the importance and value of setting clear goals and developing action plans to realise the achievement of those goals. Throughout the program participants regularly reported on their goal progress and/or achievement. Indeed, many dyads achieved their goals and established new goals, even in the very late stages of the program. The goals were both content- (e.g., to become a team leader, to learn about conflict resolution) and process-based (e.g., to communicate more effectively, to get to know someone from another section). This is an important recognition by participants that a balance of both content and process goals is important for personal and professional development.

The majority of participants also displayed a clear understanding of the importance of having structure in their mentoring relationships (e.g., regular meetings, formalising discussions, keeping records, etc.). For some participants, this came as a learning experience in the event of not establishing structure early in the program and realising and rectifying this situation in later stages. Many of the conversations between participants and co-ordinator early in the program focussed on the importance of introducing and maintaining structure. In a couple of cases, mentees took notes or minutes of meetings and forwarded these and/or their action plans to the co-ordinator on a regular basis.

Goals and structure in a mentoring relationship provide the ‘reasons’ to meet – they are the glue that holds the relationship together. In most cases where mentoring relationships do not meet their full potential it is because of a reluctance or negligence by one or both parties to establish and review appropriate goals and structure. The importance of establishing goals and structure also emphasise the importance of early contact by a program co-ordinator. In cases where these aspects were not well established the co-ordinator was able, in most instances, to ‘get them on track’. These benefits will extend beyond the immediate program in that participants should recognise the establishment of personal and professional goals and the development of structure and plans to assist with the achievement of those goals as effective organisational practices.

Mentees reported many benefits that had emerged through discussion and reflection with their more experienced mentors. For example, one mentee reflected on his “greater understanding of life balance” and reported that he had “rethought his career in order to achieve a better balance”. Several mentees reported a change in career direction, ranging from “I would like to become a team leader and we are working on that” to “I have decided the role of team leader is not for me – I am going to concentrate my efforts in another area”. 
In many cases, mentors and mentees discussed and worked on career development. Some of the suggestions made by mentors and carried through by mentees included completing particular training courses and/or modules, enrolling in long-term courses, and reading in a specific area. Other practical exercises that were undertaken were working on resumes, planning and practicing for job interviews, and reflecting on the outcomes of job interviews. Many discussions focussed on exploring career alternatives.

Mentees reported the value of tapping into the experience of someone from a higher level in the organisation and, in some cases, from another section of the organisation. One mentee commented on the benefit of “gaining insight into people that fill important roles in the organisation” and another was pleased that he “had got to know not just my mentor but others from that area”. These benefits were reciprocated with many mentors making similar comments.

Another area where the benefits were mutual was in relation to communication. Many mentoring dyads had at least one of their goals developed around some form of effective communication, and in other cases this simply emerged as one of the benefits of the program. One mentor reported that they had “done some personal development work on how she communicates with others” and another reported on their “regular discussion around conflict resolution, which is one of our main goals”. While one mentor made a general comment that “I have learned a lot more about communication”, another was more specific in reporting that having a mentee “has opened up my eyes to other people’s situations and how I might be able to assist them”. Another mentor reported feeling “more confident about meeting and consulting with others” as a result of being involved as a mentor in the program.

The majority of mentors commented on the sense of satisfaction and fulfilment that occurs from having been in the role of mentor. Many expressed this simply as the “satisfaction you get from helping another”. One particularly insightful comment was that “I now know what it all means – the impact you have on someone else”. Some mentors were clear about how they had extended their learning beyond the immediate relationship. For example, one mentor commented that the advice he had given his mentee, which had worked effectively, was now being extended to other members of his team.

On several occasions throughout the program the co-ordinator was requested to discuss a range of organisational issues and provide resources to mentees and mentors. Those requests included a copy of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, a teams styles inventory, an instrument for gaining 360° feedback, information about learning styles and interview skills. This displayed an eagerness on the part of several participants to enhance their organisational effectiveness.

It is important to include, in a section titled ‘outcomes’, negative aspects of the program. However, in this instance there were no negative outcomes raised by participants either during the program or in the final evaluation (including the focus group review). This is not to suggest that there were no negative aspects, but simply that they did not emerge through the evaluation that was conducted. The co-ordinator, however, raises two issues in this regard. First, although not raised by participants in this program, ‘the time invested’ is often reported as a negative aspect of mentoring relationships (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997). Although not being dismissive of this issue, it is difficult to imagine positive outcomes arising and indeed a relationship developing at all without the commitment of time. The second issue relates to the availability of participants for the initial training and early stages of the
relationship/program. In two dyads the mentors were not available for the second workshop and were absent on annual leave during the initial few weeks of the program. Interestingly, these dyads appeared to be less focussed and terminated their relationships more quickly than other mentor-mentee dyads in the program. Clearly, careful consideration should be given to the commitment and availability of participants in the initial phases of formal mentoring programs.

Some personal stories

To conclude this section, presented below are four examples of outcomes from the mentoring program. These are provided in an attempt to show some ‘real life’ outcomes and their impact beyond what can be expressed in aggregated and compiled data. Embedded in each example are clear outcomes for the individuals involved, the Division, and the broader organisation.

Example 1. Mentee and mentor set three goals at the outset of the mentoring relationship: learning to manage teams; developing knowledge and skills for project management; and learning about the role of being a business analyst. This dyad carefully rolled out these three goals. They began by focussing on the first goal and setting clear actions steps to work toward its achievement. After careful monitoring and review of their progress they considered they were well on their way to achieving that goal and, while continuing to work on it, turned their attention to developing and setting action plans for the second goal. They continued this process until their three major goals had been met. At the end of the 6-month period they planned further work on the third goal while continuing to monitor progress and performance on the earlier goals.

Example 2. Mentee was having difficulty relating to their work team. There had been conflict within the team and dissatisfaction expressed by other team members regarding this particular employee (mentee). The mentor worked with the mentee to develop skills and plan strategies for working appropriately and effectively with the team. The mentee regularly met with the other team members, applying the skills and strategies suggested by the mentor. The mentee and mentor would then meet to review the process. After several meetings, the team reported they had sorted out their difficulties and set some agreements and plans for how they might work more effectively. After a short time, team members reported high satisfaction with their team leader (mentee). Both mentee and mentor were very pleased and satisfied with this result.

Example 3. Mentee desired to work in the area of business analysis and was unsure how he could enter this field. After discussion and planning with his mentor, it was decided the most effective way would be to approach relevant parties and express his willingness and availability to undertake this work. The mentee commented that being in the mentoring relationship gave him the “reason and confidence to approach people and look for project work”. In a short time, the mentee had been offered more project work than he could take on. He was clearly delighted with the opportunities that he had been provided and with the possible change in career direction as a result of his mentoring relationship. He commented that “horizons have been broadening considerably and that is excellent”. The mentor in this relationship was equally pleased and expressed considerable satisfaction with “his opportunity to help another”.

Example 4. Mentee was on parental leave for the first three months of the program. Mentee and mentor maintained regular contact over this time via meetings in the workplace and e-
mail. Together they worked on the mentee’s career plans and the mentor assisted with organising resources for the mentee to undertake a training program in her home. Mentee and mentor had as a major focus the transition of the mentee back into the workplace after her period of parental leave. The mentee reported that her “concerns about returning to work” had been greatly reduced as a result of discussions with her mentor who had “provided an important link while on leave”.

Conclusion

This paper reports on the design, implementation and outcomes of a mentoring program involving 18 employees in the IT Division of WorkCover Queensland. The paper provided some background information to the development of the program and the design and implementation phases including recruitment and matching of participants, orientation and training, and the mentoring process including transition and/or termination. The paper also outlined the comprehensive evaluation processes that occurred and the outcomes of that evaluation. Results indicated a wealth of positive individual, mentoring, and organisational outcomes. The organisation and semi-structured processes provided in the program are considered as major contributing factors to the successful outcomes of the program. These outcomes are likely to have long-term benefits for the individuals involved, the IT Division, and the broader organisation.

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Podsakoff et al., 1990


*(adapted from Rousseau, 1990)*


Van Dyne et al., 1994

