Understanding Formal Career Mentoring: A Relational and Social Support Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research thesis is to help explain formal organisational career mentoring as it is perceived among dyadic mentoring pairs. It proposes a more holistic in-depth understanding of mentoring relationships that requires a focus shift away from the conventionally utilised dual function categorisations of career and psychosocial support functions. It argues moving towards alternative taxonomies that have stronger theoretical bases in the relational aspects of mentoring. The main objective remains focusing on how mentoring is constructed by mentors and protégés in unique organizational settings. Second, it was intended to deepen our understanding of how mentoring operates and in what ways specific learning foci lead to protégé development. The initial research question is: How do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships, what do they value or seek to achieve and what are the expected and experienced outcomes?

The study is wholly qualitative and utilised in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The data were collected from 38 individuals (19 dyads) in four organisations located in the information technology, pharmaceutical, banking and education sectors.

The study makes a significant contribution to the literature on workplace mentoring through the rich detail presented about perceptions of mentoring relationships from matched pairs of mentors and protégés. The analysis of the data yielded categorisations of support functions that indicate the importance of social support functions that are inextricably interwoven with career mentoring exchanges. It highlights justification for examining mentoring through a relational theory lens.

The findings have important implications for the continuing research on mentoring and, by extension, HRD practioners’ ability to guide organisational mentoring programmes in a way that would maximise the potential for effective, high quality mentoring and the associated development and psychological well-being of individuals.
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To Ciara and Lena, I dedicate this thesis to the both of you and with all of my love.
Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted to any other University or Higher Education Institution or for any other academic award.

Where the work of others has been reported, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced.

____________________________________
Andrew David Rock
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has become an increasingly widespread and well-recognised practice in contemporary organisations and familiarity with the concept in general is becoming quite common. Indeed the term mentoring has a certain robustness and currency as a helping relationship across a range of contexts (Lucas, 2001). There are three main streams of mentoring practice and research – youth mentoring, academic mentoring, and workplace mentoring (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008). It is workplace mentoring that will be the primary focus in this dissertation. Simply put as an introductory definition, mentoring in the workplace archetypically is a one-to-one (dyadic) relationship between a less experienced person and a more experienced person that enables the personal and professional development and/or advancement of the less experienced individual (Mullen, 1994). This is conventionally understood to be “traditional” mentoring (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002). The “mentor” is the more experienced and helping individual and the less experienced person can be referred to as either the “protégé” or “mentee”. Protégé will be the term used throughout this thesis for no reason other than it is the term that has become more widely preferred in the scholarly workplace mentoring literature. These relationships can also be generally classified as either formal or informal. It is commonly understood that formal mentoring relationships are initiated by third parties, normally with the organisation itself as the catalyst. The initiation of programmes that establish or
help establish formal mentoring relationships are typically on the increase. Informal mentoring relationships are generally understood to occur naturally between two individuals through either mutual attraction or through developing into a mentoring relationship by way of increasing frequency or volume of developmental exchanges. However, it is important to point out that a wide array of degrees of formality can be found along a continuum ranging from the wholly informal where the relationship is not even explicitly recognised as “mentoring” to formally matched pairs where the individuals are joined together in the relationship by third parties and the content, duration and meeting structure is largely prescribed. Research will be presented in literature review and in the findings and discussion in this thesis that identifies how some of the variable characteristics associated with formality can guide and define distinct types of relationships. In between these extremes there can be any number of contextually bound or uniquely formed structures of formality. For instance, there can be an organisationally guided mentoring programme where the individuals explicitly recognise the relationship as a “mentoring” relationship and meeting appointments are set, but whereby the individuals themselves establish and define the relationship as well as perceiving it to be quite informal. This hypothetical example illustrates how the boundary between formal and informal mentoring relationships can be blurred and how the degree of formality can be largely dependent upon the individuals involved in the relationship as it is by organisational structures. Nonetheless, as this type of relationship is explicitly recognised as a mentoring relationship and characterised as traditional mentoring, it would fall within the range of formal mentoring relationships. Formal,
traditional mentoring relationships are the primary focus throughout this thesis.

Table 1.1 presents a collection of definitions of mentoring.

**TABLE 1.1: SELECTION OF DEFINITIONS OF MENTORING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“(A mentoring relationship) is one of the most complex and developmentally important, a (person) can have in early adulthood. The mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority in the world the young (person) is entering. No word in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship...words such as “counsellor” or “guru” suggest the more subtle meanings, but they would have other connotations that would be misleading. The term “mentor” is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, adviser or sponsor. As we use the term, it means all these things and more...Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles, but in terms of the character of the relationship and the functions it serves”</td>
<td>Levinson et al, (1978: 97-98).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The mentor is a trusted counselor who accepts a guiding role in the younger or less-experienced member. Mentors use greater knowledge, experience, and status to help develop their protégés. Not to simply pull the protégés up the organization on the mentors ‘coattails’”</td>
<td>Bass (1985: 90).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Someone in a position of power who looks out for you, or gives you advice, or brings your accomplishments to the attention of other people who have power in the company.”</td>
<td>Fagenson, (1989: 312)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A mentor is a more senior individual who uses his or her experience and influence to help the advancement of a protégé. He provides guidance, support, knowledge, and opportunity the protégé deems necessary.”</td>
<td>Burlew, (1991: 214)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Mentoring is defined as a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-upon goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies”


“A senior manager who provides emotional support, guidance, and sponsorship to a less experienced person”

Kirchmeyer (1995: 72)

Mentoring is "an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior experienced colleague (mentor) and a less experienced junior colleague (protégé) in which the mentor provides support, direction, career plans and feedback regarding personal development"


“A mentor is defined as an individual who holds a position senior to yours who takes an active interest in developing your career. While it is possible for an immediate supervisor to serve as a mentor, relationships of this type represent a special opportunity to interact with a senior manager. The standard subordinate/supervisor relationship is not a mentoring relationship. In the questions to follow please indicate whether or not you consider one or more individuals to be your mentor (while it is possible to have multiple mentors, the nature of the relationship implies that the number of people appropriately classified as your mentor will be small.)”


Dreher and Cox (1996: 301)

"A mentor is generally defined as a higher ranking, influential individual in your work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to your career. Your mentor may or may not be in your organization and s/he may or may not be your immediate supervisor."

(Ragins & Cotton (1999: 535)
“Mentoring is a form of social support in which individuals with more advanced experience and knowledge (mentors) are matched with a lesser experienced and knowledgeable individual (protégé) for the purpose of advancing the protégés’ development and career.”

Sosik & Lee (2002: 18)

“An influential individual in your work environment (typically a more senior member of your organization or profession) who has advanced experience and knowledge and who is committed to the enhancement and support of your career.”

Forret and de Janasz (2005: 484)

Mentoring is described as a one to one relationship between a more experienced and senior person (Mentor) and a new entrant or less experienced person (his/her protégé) in the organizational setup. The Mentor need not be the supervisor or department head and not necessarily from the same department. A mentor can generally be defined as an influential individual in your work environment who has advanced work experience and knowledge and who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to your career.” Then subjects were instructed, “You may not have experienced mentoring in a formalized manner but informally at some point in your career or even currently, you may be relating to some person who provides you with psychosocial support as well as shows interest in your career movement.”

Scandura and Williams (2001: 349; 2004: 455)

“A mentor is an experienced employee who serves as a role model, provides support, direction and feedback regarding career plans and interpersonal development. A mentor is also someone who is in a position of power, who looks out for you, gives you advice and/or brings your accomplishments to the attention of people who have power in the company. In order to assist individuals in their development and advancement, some organizations have established formal mentoring programs, where protégés and mentors are linked in some way. This may be accomplished by assigning mentors or by just providing formal

Day and Allen (2004: 77)
opportunities aimed at developing the relationship. To recap, formal mentoring programs are developed with organizational assistance. Informal mentoring relationships are developed spontaneously, without organizational assistance.”

“A protégé is the person who is guided and supported by a mentor or coach. A mentor is an influential individual with a higher ranking in your work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge so he/she can give you support, guidance, and advice for your development. Your mentor can be from inside or outside your organization, but is not your immediate supervisor. He/she is recognized as an expert in his/her field. Most of the mentor relations are long term and focus on general objectives of development.”

Van Emmerik, Baugh, & Euwema (2005: 314)

This collection of definitions reflects a number of differing types of emphasis in attempting to define mentoring. Chapter 2 section 2.5 will discuss some of the problems with the definitional aspects of mentoring and the negative repercussions for both research and general understanding. There are definitions that explicitly state things such as career influence and sponsorship. Many are also very prescriptive about who, from where, in an organisation can be a mentor. This is far too limiting and indeed misguiding. For the purposes of this thesis. Workplace mentoring should be considered as the following:

*Mentoring is a relational process involving an intense dyadic relationship in which a more experienced person provides guidance and/or assistance to a less experienced protégé or “mentee” on an on-going and focused basis* (adapted from Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wang et al., 2010).
1.1 CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF MENTORING

Mentoring has been recognized as a key developmental resource in organizational settings. It involves developmental interaction occurring between two individuals with the intent of enhancing personal development or learning and may address a variety of personal or professional topics, such as career advice, work-life support, and job or task guidance (Eddy, D’Abate, Tannenbaum, Givens-Skeaton, & Robinson, 2006). Management-level employees have been the primary target group in most organizationally based mentoring programmes normally being initiated to enhance their career development and performance (Douglas and McCauley, 1999). Mentoring, is a practice that has been embraced for the potentially very powerful developmental benefits accrued to the protégé and, by extension, the organisation. Developmental relationships are increasingly viewed as essential to the successful development of management and leadership capabilities (Day, 2001, Douglas & McCauley, 1999; McCauley & Douglas, 2004). Developmental interactions refer to interactions between two individuals with the intent of enhancing personal development or growth and they may address a variety of personal or professional topics, such as career advice, work-life support, and job or task guidance (Eddy et al., 2006:60). Mentoring has become recognised as a primary type of developmental relationship (along with managerial coaching) for management and leadership development. There is also a rapidly expanding body of literature on the use of mentoring as a development tool in professions such as education and healthcare.

Mentoring is typically conceptualised as a relational process involving an intense dyadic relationship in which a more senior or more experienced person provides guidance and/or assistance to a junior or less experienced “protégé” (Ragins &
Kram, 2007; Wang et al., 2010). The primary purpose and focus of such a relationship is the professional development of the protégé (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Kram, 1983). Formal mentoring relationships are typically implemented by organisations for a multiplicity of purposes including socialisation, personal development, talent identification and development and career development (Allen et al, 2006; Eby et al. 2003; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). The career context is an important one. Individuals are faced with unfamiliar complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty when seeking to advance their careers (Hartung & Blustein, 2002). The process of planning one’s career is not a simple straightforward and rational process. It is one that involves interaction with others, role modelling, and the consideration of advice and experience from others. (Blustein et al., 2001; Shultheiss et al, 2001). Mentoring relationships can provide protégés with important opportunities for learning and insight (Greenhaus, et al., 2008). They can also inform the career decision making process. Protégés frequently require developmental support to act on decisions and navigate their careers effectively (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

This establishes the importance and prevalence of mentoring for individuals and within organisations. Our understanding of the workplace mentoring relationship has increased substantially during the past two decades. It is a very large area of research within management, human resource development and the social sciences. However, it still has immense scope for much greater clarification of many of its fundamentally defining aspects. The outcomes and many of the variables involved with mentoring have become quite well established in the literature, yet it seems that there are underlying assumptions about how mentoring operates and why that need to be challenged critically. Because mentoring itself
is immense as both a construct and in the range of ways it is utilised or employed, there is a risk of taking too many of the established assumptions for granted without establishing a complete understanding of why there is “better mentoring”, “good mentoring”, “marginally valuable mentoring”, and “bad mentoring”. Yet moreover, it is rarely clearly established precisely which type of mentoring is being experienced or studied. Nonetheless, there does seem to be one underlying core aspect of mentoring that remains constant throughout the distinct types of mentoring and this seems to be the most misunderstood or at least poorly explained aspect and that is the nature of the dyadic relationship itself. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the framework within which this thesis is presented and to establish the rationale for the primary focus which is developing a greater understanding of the relational nature of mentoring. As mentoring is a complex and dynamic interpersonal and developmental exchange between unique individuals in varying contexts, the variables are immense. A great deal of work has been done in mentoring research to try to differentiate and clearly distinguish aspects of mentoring. However, this has largely failed to fully appreciate that these distinctions might be dependent upon context. Rather than trying to further separate the functions of mentoring under a generalised umbrella, the aim here is to attempt to discover the deeper relational aspects that may be occurring in different contexts in order to better understand the nature of the relationship itself.

Excepting that it is normally understood whether mentoring is formal or informal (although there are indeed varying degrees of formality), mentoring relationships are then normally treated in a homogenous sense in terms of functions served. While a great deal of attention has been paid to mediating and moderating factors, these are usually identified at the individual level. It then becomes problematic to
try to explain the antecedents and outcomes when there had been a failure to understand the qualitative aspects that are operating, or perceived to be operating at the dyadic level. So we are left with either distinct functions assumed to occur relatively homogenously, but based on individual characteristics or we are left with generalisations about functions that may be operating with different frequencies, but are then used to determine unique outcomes. What is missing in between these two extremes is what may operate in different contexts at the dyadic level and in an interdependent way with other support functions that make them uniquely valuable relationships.

All positive relationships have some mutually beneficial qualities (Ragins & Dutton, 2007). Furthermore Duck (2007) highlights that all aspects of relationships require some form of cooperation and interdependence; no relationships are inherently positive or negative, rather they are open ended enterprises that progress through complex processes. Mutual dependence and reciprocal benefits may be more clearly distinguishable where mentor and protégé work closely together toward common goals. However, it would be difficult to imagine a mentoring relationship perceived as meaningful to the mentor where the mentor did not derive fulfilment, satisfaction or other benefit from it. These benefits would likely be dependent upon the relational qualities of the relationship and sense of mutuality with the protégé.

1.2 RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

There is a continuing interest among academics, organisations and Human Resource Development practitioners in attempting to discover exactly how mentoring functions best, what outcomes can be expected, and about to what
degree, when and for whom mentoring can be formally implemented in an attempt to maximise the benefits that have been shown to occur naturally through informal mentoring. Because of the many benefits of mentoring that have been identified in organisational mentoring research, it has become recognized as a key developmental resource in organizational settings. However, researchers continue with the challenging endeavour of developing a greater understanding of how and why mentoring works among individual dyadic pairs. Researchers have continued to call for research that looks deeper inside the mentoring relationship to learn more about the micro-processes that best facilitate protégé growth, learning, and leadership development (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). It is somewhat surprising that, particularly after an early surge in the mentoring research and the early moves to more mainstream adoption of mentoring programmes that relatively few studies were conducted that focused specifically on formal mentoring relationships and the qualitative factors (Fagenon-Eland et al, 2007). There continues to be a tendency for mentoring research to focus on prescriptive antecedents and outcomes which themselves may be founded on shaky ground as there is a serious lack of attention paid to what really determines the quality of mentoring relationships as perceived by those participating in them (Young & Perrewé, 2000). Although many questions remain poorly answered or yet to be thoroughly investigated (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007), there have been some glimmers of light shed on the nature of the relationship that deviated from the more conventionally adopted scale measures. For instance, Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) identified a number of relational characteristics that have yet to be fully explored in subsequent research. They argued that there are a number of mentor behaviours that are essential to effective relationship building and
functioning as it pertains to mentoring such as: building and maintaining rapport and relationship management through trust, focus, empathy, congruence and empowerment, self and behavioural awareness, listening, allowing silence, observing, questioning and being flexible. Likewise, they identified protégé behaviours that are often overlooked such as clearly expressing a developmental need and then actively helping to identify the goals, actively seeking critical feedback, demonstrating commitment to follow-through, seeking to understand expectations and boundaries and maintaining confidentiality. Nonetheless calls remain for more qualitative field studies to develop a more holistic and in-depth understanding of mentoring relationships that may inform further research and that could add value to the design of future quantitative empirical studies (Scandura & Pelligini, 2007).

The aforementioned areas remain largely unexplored in mentoring research. While it is not the goal of this thesis to explore specific prescribed variables previously identified in the research, the main objective remains focusing on how mentoring dyads perceive the nature of their relationships. Therefore, the primary research question is:

How do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships, what do they value or seek to achieve and what are the expected and experienced outcomes?

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The second chapter here presents a thorough discussion of the background to and context of workplace mentoring. It also establishes various theoretical perspectives that have been applied to mentoring research previously, the
persistence of general functions classifications and the largely instrumental focus that has been pursued historically. Along with this is a discussion of the problematic nature of clarifying mentoring as a construct due to its complex and dynamic nature and the large degree of variance among individuals in different contexts. Following this is a presentation of various relational perspectives that can and should be applied to mentoring research as it evolves. This culminates in a focus on the relational qualities that are important not just to mentoring relationships, but also any intense and meaningful relationship.

The third chapter presents the research methodology. This includes a rationale and justification for the qualitative approach and methods employed. Characteristic details of research participants are described as well as the various contexts within which the mentoring relationships were operating. Finally, there is a discussion of the procedures for what is largely a grounded approach and the strategies for how the data were analysed and presented through a fundamentally emergent structure. Tables of extracted data are presented and full interview transcripts are appended.

The fourth chapter presents the data under various themes and subheadings with rich detail and content highlighted. This is followed by commentary on how these were perceived to be important to those reporting the data and the importance of these to understanding the nature of the relationships.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings in detail and situates this with the fulfilment of the research question and objectives. This is presented within a framework of important aspects and perspectives for the study of mentoring. The
limitations of the study are then discussed. Following this the implications for research and practice are presented culminating in the overall conclusions.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

In this section I will provide a review of the literature relevant to the theoretical background and current research context. This includes a contextual overview and discussion of the initial progressive work on contemporary workplace mentoring, the commonly identified benefits of mentoring, as well as the meaning of mentoring in construct terminology. Furthermore, the problems associated with clarifying mentoring as a construct will be addressed. This will lead to a review of the literature relevant to a relational perspective on mentoring.

Very little attention has been given in the research on mentoring to the dynamics and processes within mentoring relationships; rather, a majority of studies has focused on the antecedents and either positive benefits and outcomes or negative outcomes (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Wanberg et al., 2003). What is still missing is a strong knowledge of how effective mentoring occurs and operates as perceived by relationship members. This is particularly important for determining how higher quality mentoring occurs in the increasingly popular formal mentoring “programmes” (Young & Perrewé, 2000). It is examining the behavioural aspects and relational qualities that persists as a research priority (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Furthermore, it is often misunderstood what constitutes mentoring in organisations as compared to other
types of developmental relationships such as coaching and the distinction between these two often remains blurred (Hamlin & Sage, 2011).

Theorists and practitioners alike have long espoused the notion that engaging in effective mentoring relationships can be very useful for an individual’s personal and professional development (Kram, 1985; Kram and Isabella, 1985; Higgins and Kram, 2001, Noe, 1988). Formal mentoring relationships are typically encouraged and supported by an ever increasing number of organisations across various settings. Many of these organisations go further by implementing formal mentoring programmes. This increasing popularity is principally the result of the widespread recognition that having a mentoring relationship seems to be an extremely valuable, if not essential developmental mechanism and career resource (Kram & Raggins, 2007). Many organisations espouse the value of mentoring and adopt these practices for a multiplicity of purposes including socialisation, personal development for performance enhancement, talent identification and development, and career development mainly among managerial level employees or ascending professionals (Allen et al, 2006; Eby et al. 2003; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007; Douglas & McCauley, 1999). Mentors encourage protégés to value learning by imparting wisdom about the norms, values, and mores that are specific to the organization and help advance the protégé’s career (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). The career development context is an important and pervasive aspect for both individuals and organisations. It has been for quite some time evident that the nature of work and careers is different to what it has been in the past. To begin with simply, it is apparent that increasing global marketplace interaction and change brings uncertainties and flux. This has led to responses to change that have become much more rapid and flexible. This spills over into the organisation
of work itself and has led to changes in how organisations manage their human resources. Individuals are faced with unfamiliar complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty when seeking to advance their careers (Hartung & Blustein, 2007). The process of planning one’s career is not a simple straightforward and rational process. It is one that involves interaction with others, role modelling behaviours, and requires the consideration of advice and experience from others (Blustein et al., 2001; Shultheiss et al, 2001). Mentoring relationships can provide protégés with important opportunities for learning and insight (Greenhaus, et al., 2008). They can also inform the career decision making process. Protégés frequently require developmental support to act on decisions and navigate their careers effectively (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). The feedback that protégés can receive has important implications for not only the potential and realised aspects for career advancement, but also the quality of decisions about approach and direction in taking those steps (McCauley & Hezlett, 2002). The types of support available are varied. Understanding the processes and subtle differences in how these strong relationships function effectively will help both theoretical development and learning among individuals.

Allen & Eby (2007) highlighted that an overarching hallmark of all types of effective mentoring relationships is that they fulfil a need to belong and this felt sense of belonging is what leads to positive affective, cognitive and behavioural outcomes. Although research literature on mentoring has evolved over the past several decades to include foci on network mentoring and even E-mentoring, what has been left in this wake is the remaining need to closely examine traditional, dyadic, face-to-face mentoring (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007). There remains a great deal of work left to be done as our understanding of effective mentoring
relationships through empirical research still remains somewhat surprisingly limited. This is largely attributable to the highly complex nature of relationships in general. This is not intended to suggest that researchers are severely ill prepared to pursue alternative perspectives on evolving types of mentoring constructs and the consequentially evolving definitions of “mentoring”. Nonetheless, there has been a recently growing consensus and body of research that seeks to integrate a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of mentoring relationships. While there has been progress in numerous instances with the incorporation of sociological perspectives and organisational psychology theories, there remains a plethora of opportunities to incorporate theories on the nature of relationships into advancing the theoretical underpinnings of our understanding of workplace mentoring. It is in this light that this dissertation will focus on dyadic workplace mentoring from a relational perspective rather than simply from a positivistic and outcomes or consequences perspective. Indeed, we may discover in the aftermath of the seismic shift in the nature of the marketplace from the time when mentoring research began and today’s global economic environment that mentoring itself has changed its content focus to some extent. However, this would seem to suggest that there is a need for mentoring to support individuals faced with complex and challenging career trajectories and decisions. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage with the continually evolving nature of work and career, the primary endeavour is to broaden and deepen our understanding of 1:1 dyadic mentoring relationships as perceived by both the mentors and protégés engaged in these relationships. This is both warranted and creditable for its value as there remains a dearth of this type of empirical evidence in mentoring research.
Recently there has been increasing recognition of the importance of a focus on the relational qualities in mentoring relationships. Lillian Eby and colleagues have been producing some of the most prominent work on negative mentoring experiences and this will be dealt with subsequently. Simply put from a relational perspective, however, it is important to note the quality of mentoring relationships seems to be influenced to some degree of significance by initial expectations and met expectations and this is largely related to participant behaviours. Eby et al (2010) point out that it is important to note that notions of good mentoring experiences and bad mentoring experiences are conceptually and empirically distinct. They note that the absence of bad mentoring does not necessarily mean that good mentoring has occurred and likewise that the absence of good mentoring does not necessarily mean that bad mentoring was experienced. It may be the case that limited mentoring functions were fulfilled and may be based on a complex range of factors and an interplay of variables between mentor expertise and protégé requirements (Eby et al, 2010, p. 82). Therefore, within mentoring dyads, it is important to examine perceived expectations, reported experiences, interpersonal relationship qualities as well as what the mentoring relationship means to participants as a whole. This review will subsequently continue in this vein. However, it is essential to first set out the foundations and evolution of the workplace mentoring construct as established in the literature.

The following section will give a concise review of mentoring research to-date before moving to examine the problematic nature of mentoring research and theory before moving to incorporate a relational perspective on career mentoring.
2.1 BACKGROUND TO MENTORING

Building on some of the initial progressive work on mentoring (Levinson et al., 1978), Kram (1983, 1985) and Kram and Isabella (1985) made important contributions to the earlier body of research on mentoring. Kram’s (1983, 1985) seminal work identified many of the possible mentoring roles or functions that can be fulfilled. These continue to be used in mentoring research as characteristic functions of the mentoring construct. However, it is important to note that Kram became aware of the complex nature of this type of relationship and initially avoided using the term mentoring, preferring to refer to interactions as developmental or peer relationships. Nonetheless, this early body of research and its identification and classification of mentoring functions has had a lasting effect on how workplace mentoring is typically defined and understood. That is, mentoring is a relational process involving an intense dyadic relationship in which a more senior or more experienced person provides guidance and/or assistance to a junior or less experienced protégé or “mentee” (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Wang et al., 2010). This is widely accepted, particularly with regard to traditional, dyadic mentoring relationships. This simple definition is an appropriate and adequate starting point for understanding the mentoring construct. The problematic nature of definitional aspects as applied in mentoring research will be discussed subsequently. With regard to primary functions, traditional mentoring as identified, in particular, by Kram (1983, 1985) has been conceptualised as a two-dimensional construct composed of career functions (coaching, sponsorship, exposure and visibility, protection, and providing challenging assignments) and psychosocial functions (counselling, role modelling, acceptance and confirmation,
and friendship). It has been widely accepted in the literature on mentoring that these two broader support functions (career and psychosocial) provide accurate differentiation of the type of support that can be provided. As the relationship develops, more or different functions may be performed over time with the general assumption that the more that are served – the better the relationship (Kram, 1985). Wanberrg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) presented some concise definitions of each one of these functions as derived from their extensive review of the literature. These are presented in Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>Actively supporting an employee for lateral transfers and promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Shielding and employee from damaging contact with key senior figures in the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>Giving an employee assignments that provide contact with key senior figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Assignments</td>
<td>Helping an employee prepare for greater responsibility by providing challenging work and feedback that encourages skill development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Sharing advice, information, and ideas that help an employee attain objectives and achieve recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Sharing informal social experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Using active listening to enable an employee to explore personal concerns about self and career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance/Confirmation</td>
<td>Conveying positive regard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Modelling</td>
<td>Serving as a model for the employee to emulate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Wanberg et al (2003: 42-43)
Following this Wanberg et al (2003) included 2 more psychosocial functions as proposed by Ragins and McFarlin (1990). These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Participating in informal social activities one-on-one outside of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Construing the relationship as a parent-child relationship</td>
</tr>
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</table>

However, these functions occur in different ways in different relationships. All mentoring functions need not be present for a mentoring relationship to be effective (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Subsequently, Scandura (1992) and Scandura and Ragins (1993) suggested role modelling as a third and distinct function. Therefore, a multiplicity of roles are possible for developers in developmental relationships including, for example, sponsor, career mentor, network mentor, coach, role model, peer mentor/coach, or counsellor-friend. There are numerous possibilities beyond these examples (Rock & Garavan 2006, 2011). Another issue identified in recent qualitative research on developmental networks is that the types of support realised through networks often have distinct sub-functions that are not yet fully understood. It also seems that mentoring support functions are not as generalizable to other types of developmental relationships as previously thought (Janssen, van Vuuren & de Jong, in press).

### 2.2 DISTINCT FORMS OF WORKPLACE MENTORING

While mentoring is identified as one of a possible range of developmental interactions that can be experienced, the notion of ‘mentoring’ can be considered a generic conceptualisation for what may be in effect a wide range of distinct forms of mentoring (Friday, Friday, & Green, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001). Mentoring
entails significant differences in content and process depending upon job requirements, career focus, degrees of psychosocial support provided, and individual competency development requirements. While individuals may receive different types of mentoring based in the provision of different types of support functions, there are also structural variations resulting in different types of mentoring. Mentoring entails differences in type or form depending upon variables such as degree of formality or participants’ location in organisational structure or hierarchy. Within the context of workplace mentoring, there are still several variations in content and structure of how relationships operate. Perhaps the most apparent differences arise from the nature of the relationship between the actors, i.e. the mentor-protégé dyad. A mentor may be a peer or colleague with greater experience, a direct reporting supervisor or manager, someone higher up the reporting structure, in a different department, or external to the organisation (Eby, 1997, Eby, et al., 2008).

Another key difference in the type of mentoring that may occur is whether it is formal or informal mentoring. Purely informal mentoring occurs when a relationship is formed solely through mutual attraction (Kram, 1985, Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). It can be manifest where, “someone, other than your manager or immediate co-workers, …provides you with technical or career advice, coaching, or information on an informal basis” (Seibert, 1999: 493-494). Formal mentoring is generally understood to begin when the organisation acts as the catalyst and assists in some manner of establishing, supporting, or promoting the formation of the relationship and may likely be instrumental to a certain degree in matching participants (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ragins & Cotton, 1999;
Ragins et al., 2000). Formal mentoring usually occurs within a set or limited amount of time. One year is a common duration for many formal mentoring relationships (see Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura & Williams, 2002). Informal relationships can last as long as the members in the relationship deem the relationship fulfilling, viable or whatever other decision making criteria on the cost-benefit of maintaining the relationship may be (Chao, 1997). It is quite easy to compare with personal experience of other types of relationships where they may grow and become stronger and last for years, or for a lifetime. Other relationships may be much more brief and fulfilling, or somewhat less than satisfying. Various aspects of the problems that may arise in relationships and lead to relationship separation or destruction will be dealt with in subsequent sections. As the focus of this thesis is on formal mentoring relationships (of varying degrees), the focus maintained here will be the nature of formal mentoring relationships as compared and contrasted with naturally occurring informal mentoring relationships. Besides the more obvious participant matching processes, planned duration and perhaps the extent to which the relationships are voluntary, one of the most fundamental differences between formal and informal mentoring relationships is that formal mentoring relationships are more or less driven by organisations to fulfil organisational needs and desires and informal relationships are driven by individuals to fulfil individual needs and desires (Allen, Day & Lentz, 2005; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). This is not to say that individual needs are not met as formal mentoring relationships are constructed or evolve. Rather they are usually influenced to some degree at the outset by third parties about what purposes should be served, what focus should be maintained and perhaps what beneficial outcomes should be expected (Allen & Eby, 2003;
Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). Informal mentoring relationship meetings might even seem to the chance observer to be unplanned, unstructured, unfocused or even simply casual interactions; however, the value of these interactions may not be underestimated by the participants who are also more aware of established norms of behaviour of what is appropriate for a meeting and what is not (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). This indicates the importance of the organic nature of informal mentoring relationships and hints at how mutual attraction and interpersonal functionality works to perhaps a higher quality than may be expected to occur in a more synthetically generated arrangement. However, organisations have long recognised the benefits of mentoring and have attempted to reap the benefits through initiating mentoring “programmes”. There is a myriad of trade-offs in terms of benefits and drawbacks in the comparison between formal and informal mentoring. Explaining these in thorough detail is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting for the sake of understating the foundations of some of the relational qualities of mentoring relationships that whereby an organisation has a formal mentoring “programme”, it is usually much more visible in a number of ways. It is generally known who is mentoring whom and this is broadcast to some extent. It is also common for those involved in the programme to be more involved in sharing knowledge, experiences and information generated through the mentoring. This would have rewards for the organisation, in terms of increased knowledge, skills, and abilities or attitudes geared toward the satisfaction of organisational goals (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). However, this may also give rise to issues about confidentiality whereby members may not feel at liberty to discuss or confident in the confidentiality of discussions as a result of this more open environment even
though this information may be beneficial to the development of the protégé (Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003). Furthermore, organisations that use mentoring programmes and select “high-potential” protégé’s to be mentored and “fast-tracked” through the organisation can be accused at times of favouritism (Forret, Turban, & Dougherty, 1996). However, mentoring programme offering can also be seen to be geared toward women and minorities in the interest of development, levelling a playing field, and increasingly the potential benefits of a more competent diversified work force (Kram & Bragar, 1992; Ragins, 2002). The variables that could be considered here for effective matching and hence effective relationships are evidently numerous. Although it seems, for the individual at least, that informal mentoring may be more satisfying and valuable than formal mentoring, good mentors have the potential to be better recognised in formal programmes than in informal arrangements, both organisations and individuals can still stand to benefit from more formal mentoring (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). From an extensive review of the literature, it seems that a lot of the degree of success in formal mentoring relationships can be explained through and examination of the relational qualities established in relationships more so than merely structural differences and considerations. This is perhaps the key to understanding how and why developmental relationships can be effective and may provide the much needed information required by those initiating or facilitating formal mentoring programmes, but for which there remains a paucity of research evidence.

This complexity and the perhaps infinite number of possibilities for structure, content or combinations of functions renders mentoring a truly immense area of
research. For more than two decades, substantial advancements have been made in developing our understanding and strategies for measurement of the mentoring construct. However, the challenge of dealing with the complexity and the need to engage with multi-disciplinary perspectives remains vast and often problematic. As veteran researchers Ragins and Kram recently noted, “In a nutshell, we know (mentoring) works; we are still grappling with why, when, and how” (2007, p. 4).

One area of workplace mentoring that has been receiving quite substantial attention in the research literature is the mentoring of beginning or pre-service teachers and this is occurring across the continents. The adoption of formal mentoring programmes, either mandatory or voluntary, for new teachers began at approximately the same time as other recognised programmes for formal workplace mentoring. The mentoring that takes place is almost always between the new teacher or recently qualified teacher protégé and an experienced teacher mentor, either in the same or a nearby school. The practice has become more widespread and now occurs very commonly to the extent that it is the usual norm more often than not. The research has generated mixed evidence of the effectiveness of such formal programmes in this context and this is usually based on a number of variables including mentor teacher training and aspects of the matching compatibility of the pairs. The rationale for initiating and maintaining such programmes for beginning teachers is primarily aimed at the retention of teachers and is usually more of an intense and concerted effort particularly in locations where there has been a history of high turnover (Hallam et al., 2012). The support envisioned to help mitigate factors contributing to turnover intentions include emotional support in the face of stress, clarifying the ambiguous, practical
strategy alternatives provision relevant to teachers, and a range of other general practical or emotional support functions that assist new teachers to cope in the face of challenges as they embark in their new careers Hennissen et al., 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentoring programmes for new teachers are largely similar to many other forms of workplace mentoring. However, there are a number of notable and unique distinctions as compared to that which occurs among professionals in other industries. The characteristics associated with the actual functioning of these types of mentoring relationships and the perceived qualities and outcomes will be discussed in a subsequent section.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM ‘MENTOR’

Understanding the term “mentor” is important. Mentoring as a concept has a long and pervasive history. Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2007:7) noted that it is encountered in many literary works such as Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein*, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, and William Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*; among famous professionals including science (e.g., Sigmund Freud mentored Carl Jung, Harry Harlow mentored Abraham Maslow), literature (e.g., Gertrude Stein mentored Ernest Hemmingway, Saul Bellow mentored Philip Roth), politics (e.g., George Wythe mentored Thomas Jefferson, the arts (e.g., Haydn mentored Beethoven), sports (e.g., Phil Jackson mentored Michael Jordan, Dale Earnhardt Sr. mentored Michael Waltrip), and entertainment (e.g., Duke Ellington mentored Tony Bennet, Tina Turner mentored Mick Jagger).

The term “mentor” appears to have been originally borrowed from Greek Mythology where Mentor is a key figure in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. It is
worthwhile exploring the origin and meaning of the term as there are numerous instances in contemporary mentoring literature where Homer’s Mentor is cited as being the origin of the contemporary term; however, this is often inadequately and inaccurately explained. It is often simply stated that Mentor “mentored” Telemachus and this is not completely accurate. It is conventionally held that Mentor was a friend and presumably trusted adviser to King Odysseus. Odysseus left for the Trojan War and left Mentor in the charge of care for his son, Telemachus (and indeed, his entire household). This has been construed to mean that Telemachus was left under the tutelage of Mentor. However, Roberts (1999) is careful to point out that there is little or no evidence that Homer’s Mentor fulfilled any role of “mentor” as we understand the term today. Indeed, it can be argued that Mentor was not adequately competent to fulfil the role for which he was presumably left in charge. However, it was the goddess Athena, regarded for her wisdom, compassion, and inspiration, who disguised herself as Mentor while encouraging and guiding Telemachus. In this vein, Roberts (1999) suggests that it would be more appropriate to attribute the modern notion of ‘mentor’ to Francois de Salignac de La Mothe-Fenelon (1651-1715) who wrote Les Adventures de Telemaque, a fictional extension of Homer’s Odyssey, in 1699 and which became a very popular piece of literature in the eighteenth century. It is Fenlon’s Mentor who was endowed with the qualities that we associate with modern-day mentoring, such as teacher, adviser, guide, nurturer, counsellor and enabler (Roberts, 1999). Perhaps this is the original catalyst for how and why we regard those who help us to develop as mentors rather than athenas. This is coupled with the realisation that the qualities with which we associate Athena are broader than those we associate with modern mentors; however, it seems the qualities with
which we associate modern mentors are broader than those we can attribute to Homer’s Mentor and in many instances more similar to those we associate with Athena. This suffices as an adequate explanation of the historical origins of the term mentor as we use it today. However, regarding grammatical idiom, it is also worth considering that the term mentor originated as a proper noun, evolved into a common noun, is used as a verb (to mentor), a gerund (mentoring someone), and a form of substantive noun (i.e., ‘amount of mentoring received’). The use of the term mentoring as a gerund is indicative of our somewhat grammatically dubious tendency in English to create meaningful gerunds that inadequately convey the complex nature of a role or act. English dictionaries often cite “smoking” as an appropriate example of a gerund. However, a more spurious example can be found in Ireland and the U.K. where chefs are often referred to as engaging in the act of “chef-ing”. Indeed, it is not as simple a task to invoke a complete sense of what exactly the act of mentoring involves or entails. In reference to the problematic nature of inconsistent definition and taxonomy of mentoring, Luecke (2004) charged, “The business world has no shame in changing perfectly good nouns into verbs” (p. 76). Using mentor as a verb (to mentor) accounts partially for the exacerbation of the problem in how we conceptualise the mentoring construct.

2.4 BENEFITS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH MENTORING

Mentoring research has identified a broad range of commonly occurring beneficial outcomes for protégés as well as some potential benefits from the relationship for mentors. It is conventionally understood that mentoring relationships contribute
to the professional and career development of a protégé through the provision of career related support, psychosocial support and role modelling (Allen et al., 2004; Kram, 1985; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). Indeed as highlighted by Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) many studies have focused on outcomes for protégés with hardly any particular focus on outcomes for mentors. However, this has begun to be remedied recently. As Kram (1983, 1985) identified: First, “mentoring” leads to individual development in early and middle careers. Second, this relationship leads to career advancement and personal growth. As the relationship advances, the functions served by the relationship evolve. Likewise, as the individual’s career advances through various stages, the needs to be met by mentoring relationships also evolve. Noe and his colleagues (2002) further outlined mentoring outcomes as either proximal outcomes, meaning more direct and immediate, or distal outcomes that emerge over the longer-term. Proximal outcomes include the various psychosocial, career, or role-modeling benefits accrued to protégés through these distinct mentoring functions being served. Distal outcomes can include a range of previously identified improvements such as enhanced salary, career advancement, and satisfaction. Mentored individuals tend to enjoy more advancement opportunities and higher wages. Career effects have been a particular focus of objective mentoring outcomes for quite some time in mentoring research. Certain aspects of this are relatively easily measurable in survey instruments such as increased remuneration and promotion rates (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura, 1992, Turban & Dougherty, 1994).
Mentored individuals have reported increased job satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989; Koberg, Boss, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994) and decreased work alienation in the form of felt meaningless and isolation (Koberg et al, 1994) than their non-mentored counterparts. Mentoring has helped protégés cope with stress and work-family conflict (Nielson, Carlson & Lankau, 2001). The relationship between the mentor and protégé has been characterised as being potentially mutually beneficial in that the mentor may receive career and personal benefits, making them co-learners (Hall & Kram, 1996). In a recent longitudinal study, Chun, Sosik & Yun (2012) found mentoring functions offered and transformational leadership as a mentor outcome and affective well-being and organizational commitment as mutual outcomes for both mentors and protégés. Furthermore, researchers have shown that mentoring is an appropriate and potentially very effective mechanism to facilitate career development, managing diversity (see Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008), organisational socialisation (Chao, 2008), as well as adjustment to change, tolerance of ambiguity, and various other coping skills (Chao, Walz, & Gardener, 1992; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Recent meta-analyses confirm many of these potential benefits although effect sizes vary likely dependent upon numerous sub-factors (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). It is for these reasons that many organizations have attempted to capitalise on the benefits identified in informal mentoring relationships by initiating formal mentoring (Burke & McKeen, 1989; Douglas & McCauley, 1999; Noe, 1988). A growing number of organisations are aware that mentoring has also been recognised by researchers and practitioners as a potentially critical development tool for leveraging human and social capital (Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, p. 40), leadership development (Hegstad &
Wentling, 2006) and to socialize newcomers to organizations (Douglas & McCauley, 1999; Kram, 1985; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Effective mentoring programs can increase organizational attraction (Allen & O’Brien, 2006) improve commitment and reduce turnover intentions (Payne & Huffman, 2005; Scandura & Viator, 1994) and there have been conscious efforts to use mentoring for effective induction aimed at better new entrant employee retention (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Mentoring for new teachers in education has become particularly popular across the globe in a field where attrition is generally quite high (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentoring for these individuals has also been shown to account for higher retention and lower attrition (Cohen & Fuller, 2006; Henke et al. 2000). In most cases this is identified in terms of assistance provided as perceived by the protégés (Hennissen et al., 2011). Lindgren (2005) identified two general areas of support for organisational newcomers. These were personal/emotional support and professional support. Ballantyne et al (1995) identified four categories. These were, personal and/or emotional support such as offering empathy and reassurance, task-related assistance and advice which could be as simple as useful information support, problem-related assistance and advice provided through discussion and exploration of problems and critical reflection and feedback on practice. However, these areas highlight elements of socialisation that go beyond the simple notion of induction and perhaps learning about the ‘who’s who’ and ‘get to know your colleagues’ aspects. While it seems obvious that socialisation is important for individuals, it is also quite clear why an organisation would take steps to help ensure that this occurs effectively in order to enhance performance. Chao et al. (1994) identified six important areas of organisational socialisation where individuals need to learn about: 1) performance...
proficiency, or learning to perform the job effectively; 2) specific language related to organisational acronyms and jargon; 3) relationships and how to actually get along with other organisational personalities; 4) power structures and organisational politics; 5) organisational goals and value systems; and 6) the history of specific organisational units and general organisational history. Here we see how a mentor could be an efficient, effective means of this information provision and learning offering a protégé greater insight, perspective, and clarity.

2.4.1 Personal Learning as Integral to Benefits and Outcomes

The nature of work has changed to an extent that employee learning must continually develop substantially beyond that which is immediately applicable to specific roles or tasks (Lankau & Scandura, 2007). This is particularly relevant when considering the complex roles of managers in contemporary organisations. Increasingly the role of the manager is less about executing some form of technical expertise, or indeed fulfilling a single specific organisational function; it is more about learning how to learn, adapt, and engage in effective working relationships across various functions in order to be productive and effective. Continuous learning is recognized as necessary for personal development and the management of self and career (Hall, 1996). Hall’s emphasis on the protean career highlights the importance of learning to adapt and change with greater self-awareness in relation to the social contexts of the organization. Hall (2002) frames this as a move from “know how” to “learn how”. This ‘learning how to learn’ moves significantly beyond traditional methods of acquiring technical skills. Managers need to learn how to better understand and conduct themselves and in relation to others and the organisation as a whole. Therefore, it seems that
socialisation learning through mentoring relationships can play a large role in a variety of ways. Socialisation of newcomers to an organisation usually begins with some form of induction programme and may involve partnering the newcomer with someone who can help through the transitional process. This type of personal and relational learning is where mentoring may be particularly valuable to the individual’s development of insight and understanding and level of competence overall. Interpersonal skills development has become more salient and mentoring is a potentially very effective means of developing self-awareness and interpersonal skills (Kram, 1996). Furthermore, the rate at which people must learn, adapt and perform a range of competencies for career progression in contemporary organisations is often overwhelming and developmental relationships are often viewed as essential for success (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram & Hall, 1989, 1996; Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Vocational mentoring has been shown to improve this type of personal and relational learning and the role-modeling that mentors can provide help protégés understand and acquire the skills necessary to engage effectively with others (Lankau & Scandura, 2002).

Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) proposed a conceptual dynamic process model to contribute to our understanding of the antecedents, processes and positive outcomes of formal mentoring relationships. Following Kraiger, Ford and Salas’s (1993) categorization of cognitive, skill-based, and affective learning for training evaluation, the authors identified these three types of protégé personal learning (proximal outcomes) that would mediate more distal outcomes such as promotions and satisfaction. Hezlett’s (2005) case study confirmed the existence
of these types of learning through mentoring. She found that cognitive learning was particularly characterized by increased organizational knowledge and cognitive strategies; skill based learning included interpersonal, problem solving self-organization skills; and affective learning, such as self-confidence and attitudinal changes, was represented by enhanced motivation. Wanberg Welsh and Hezlett (2003) also included a fourth proximal outcome element of social networks “that may, at least in part, drive the achievement of more distal extrinsic and intrinsic career success outcomes in a formal mentoring context” (p. 93). The researchers note that rather than being an individual learning outcome, it involves the aforementioned social integration as well as the development of social capital, which will be dealt with in a subsequent section. However, this still effectively contains learning elements in terms of information and network features as well as identifying areas for social support. Here it becomes clear how the various forms of learning are integral to career outcomes and even organisational beneficial outcomes where individuals are provided with the assistance necessary to begin to get a comprehensive picture of the organisation and what it takes to succeed. This is a valuable way of conceptualising the benefits and positive outcomes of mentoring. However, it is necessary to leave aside any attempt to illustrate outcomes for the mentor at the moment as accounts of these remain scarce in the research literature. If we are to also set aside dealing with the antecedent factors and relational or functional qualities that impact outcomes for the moment, it is still useful to examine the proximal and distal outcomes relationships as depicted in the second half of Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett’s (2003) conceptual process model of mentoring. The relationship between outcomes illustrated by this important piece of research is adapted in the following exhibit:
Figure 2.1 Mentoring Outcomes Relationships

Proximal Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégé change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distal Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégé Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Satisfaction &amp; Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Wanberg, Welsh & Hezzlett (2003: 92)

Dougherty and Dreher (2007) point to Ramaswami and Dreher’s model (2007), which proposes that mentor attributes such as (a) mentor knowledge about organizational politics and culture, (b) mentor knowledge about protégés’ chosen career paths, (c) mentor skill as a trainer and developer, (d) mentor motivation and opportunity to provide developmental assistance, and (e) mentor power and hierarchical position will determine mentoring quality. They also suggest that the mentor’s ability to accurately perceive what a protégé most needs and then being able to deliver protégé-specific developmental solutions is another way of assessing and defining the mentoring construct.
Ramaswami & Dreher (2007) suggest that the cognitive, affective and behavioural learning that can result from receiving carer and psychosocial mentoring can lead to protégé carer enhancement. They propose five process paths by which these benefits can be accrued: Human Capital, Movement Capital, Social / Political Capital and Signalling, Path-Goal Clarity, and Values Clarity. Just as Ramaswami & Dreher reiterate that Kram’s (1985) original categorizations of mentoring functions are not mutually exclusive, their five process paths are largely interdependent and contain significant overlap with each other in how mentoring can positively influence the protégé’s career. Furthermore, each one of these process paths can call into play a variety of Kram’s mentoring functions. As Ramaswami & Dreher illustrate in their model: Human Capital is enhanced by the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities accumulated through mentors providing challenging assignments, coaching, and role modelling. Movement Capital is gained through sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and coaching to help the protégé learn how to socialize and perform effectively in new arenas and gain recognition for broader competence. Similarly, Social/Political Capital and Signalling can be generated through sponsorship, exposure and visibility, protection, and coaching. This can help a protégé gain legitimacy and exposure through mentors providing political insight and information as well as identifying appropriate network contacts. Path-Goal Clarity can be achieved through building a protégé’s self-efficacy and motivation through role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship focused on achieving career goals. Likewise, Values Clarity deals with the inevitable personal concerns a protégé will likely have in relation to carer goals and choices. Through enacting the same mentor functions as path-goal clarity, mentoring can focus on exploring
career options and their value in relation to the protégé’s personal life situation(s). Here mentoring can provide protégés with the opportunity to test ideas and to reflect on and make career and life choices within the context of guidance and feedback from a more experienced individual (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). This can involve mutually planning appropriate career goals or a career path and clarifying the protégé’s personal/professional identity in relation to long-term desired career outcomes. The notions of path-goal clarity and values clarity are not entirely unique concepts for the consideration of career success. London (1983) identified two similarly framed elements important to career success: career insight and reduction of career vulnerability. London defined career insight as “the extent to which the person has realistic perceptions of him or herself and the organization and relates these perceptions to career goals”; and reduction of career vulnerability as “the extent of psychological fragility (e.g. becoming upset and finding it difficult to function) when confronted by less than optimal career conditions (e.g. barriers to career goals, uncertainty, poor relationships with co-workers)” (p. 621). Looking at career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring through this lens, it becomes more apparent that it is extremely difficult to isolate individual mentoring functions as occurring independently. For instance, encouragement or confidence building may not necessarily be required in all cases. However, it may not always be helpful to isolate psychosocial functions or the consideration of personal circumstances from career mentoring when assessing mentoring. A mentoring relationship that excludes one or more considerations is likely to be less beneficial. Furthermore, we could imagine how a single mentoring discussion might take in a wide range of personal and professional considerations simultaneously when dealing with a specific protégé
issue. Essentially these areas of focus culminate in personal learning about self, others, options and desired trajectories.

These spheres of focus take a unique approach to the examination of the complex dynamics involved in mentoring relationships. Indeed, Dougherty and Dreher (2007) point to the importance of qualitative research that has identified other influential mentoring behaviors, such as provision of networking opportunities and skill development, not adequately captured by many mentoring scales. (p. 73). It is apparent that there is significant overlap between previously identified mentoring functions. Mentoring experiences may involve the receipt of several mentoring functions simultaneously. Furthermore, mentoring relationships may differ in their structural and situational contexts, but also may differ in the breadth or depth of developmental focus. Similarly, receiving mentoring has been shown to be closely related in many aspects to social capital accumulation and networking opportunity and skills. It is generally accepted that all of these either seem to have or will have considerable implications for the protégé’s career. Protégé’s may experience cognitive, skills and affective learning through their mentoring experiences. Likewise, their human capital, movement capital, social/political capital and signalling, path-goal clarity and values clarity received or enhanced through mentoring are likely to have several complex interdependencies. There have also been some key determinants of relationship quality that seem to allow the above to accumulate in an effective manner. There are a number of relational theories that help build understanding of the characteristics that facilitate the effective functioning of mentoring relationships.
2.5 DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS HINDERING CLARITY ABOUT MENTORING

“Mentor” is a considerably broad contemporary term. A mentor is a person that fulfils a role that can take many forms. As previously noted, a mentor can serve a wide array of possible, often overlapping and complex functions in a variety of combinations that may or may not exist in various forms of mentoring. These various possible sub roles are where we can more appropriately begin to apply more clearly focused gerunds such as coaching, counselling, guiding, teaching, encouraging, protecting, sponsoring, and role modelling, to name but a few possibilities all aimed at the broader purpose of “developing” (a protégé). Effectively since the beginning of contemporary research on mentoring and through to the present, researchers have attempted to grapple with the problematic nature of clearly and concisely capturing the essence of the mentoring construct. This was apparent where Levinson and colleagues (1978) noted,

No word in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship…words such as “counsellor” or “guru” suggest the more subtle meanings, but they would have other connotations that would be misleading. The term “mentor” is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, adviser or sponsor. As we use the term, it means all these things and more (p. 97).

Definitions and conceptualisations of the mentoring construct in the scholarly literature have evolved over the last three decades and not consistently. Haggard et al, (2011) conducted a review of the literature on mentoring focused on the definitional aspects presented to respondents in research. They found that the lack of consistency in the application of definitions has made the findings somewhat
spurious. For instance they noted that some definitions were broad or vague allowing for the likelihood of more self-identifying protégés and others were more restrictive eliminating certain respondents that would have likely included supervisors and peers. Of particular interest for the purposes of this study is that a great deal of research failed to clearly differentiate between formal and informal mentoring, yet some of this clearly identified levels of intimacy, intensity, or “closeness” between relationship partners at the outset, which, by definition, would have a strong tendency to exclude a considerable number of potential respondents in more formal mentoring relationships. Furthermore, there is often found to be a focus on gathering data related to positive career mentoring functions and outcomes; however, the research population is sometimes comprised of professionals such as teachers, nurses, and social workers where it is questionable if there is much opportunity for either upward or lateral mobility within these industries. The work by Haggard et al. (2011) serves to reinforce the notion that there is general consensus about the notion of mentoring, yet a considerable lack of clarity about varying forms of mentoring. They do emphasise that there are certain key distinctions about mentoring in comparison to other types of developmental relationships. That is that mentoring involves degrees of reciprocity and certain elements of social exchange rather than being a one-way relationship and that there is variance in commitment, intensity and duration, mentoring involves a certain regular and consistent interaction (Haggard et al, 2011). It is understood generally that mentoring, rather than being a one-way process, is traditionally a collaboration between two individuals (Allen & Poteet, 1999; Scandura, 1992). However, the problems associated with clarifying the mentoring construct are not new revelations either. Gibb (1999) pointed out
that there is a lack of clarity about the role of mentoring and about what mentoring is. Feldman (1999) noted that, “the term mentor has gone from meaning intense, exclusive, multi-year relationships between junior and senior colleagues to also include a wide variety of short-term, low intensity interactions with peers, slightly older co-workers and direct supervisors…(making) comparisons of mentoring effectiveness across studies…much more difficult” (p. 249). ‘Mentoring’ is often considered a “catch all” term (Friday, Friday, & Green, 2004), but contextual differences in where workplace mentoring as applied seem to have a significant impact on the types of relationships that are formed and on the information that is exchanged. A simplified and widely accepted definition of mentoring has already been provided earlier in this review. However, it is valuable at this point to explore the range of definitions of mentoring as they have evolved and affected both the direction of the research and our conceptualisations of the mentoring construct.

The review of the definitional aspects of mentoring by Haggard et al (2011) concluded with the notion that there are 3 core aspects to “real” mentoring. That is, it should contain reciprocity, developmental benefits, and regular/consistent interaction over some period of time. (p. 292). This is an important point for considering mentoring as a relational and two-way experience. It also agrees with the notion that direct supervisors are not generally considered true relational mentors as the required reciprocity would not exist in most of these types of workplace relationships. A final point on these aspects echoes the point made by Levinson et al back in 1978 and that is that mentoring is more importantly defined by the qualities of the relationship and the functions it serves rather than by the
formal roles that define it. This type of categorisation of mentoring is not adequate and runs the risk of delineating different types of mentoring relationships as wholly distinct, but which may indeed be more similar. For instance, we are presented the specification that a mentor cannot or should not be a supervisor because there would be a lack of reciprocity. However, this seems inappropriately restrictive. One could imagine and instance where a supervisor could indeed be engaged in a two-way interpersonal relationship of mutual support that contains the core qualities identified by Haggard et al (2011). That is it may be a relationship that is characterised by reciprocity, developmental benefits, and regular/consistent interaction. Furthermore, the common distinction made that assumes that a traditional mentor must be more senior in rank is similarly flawed on a philosophical level. Consider for instance an individual with more experience that engages in mentoring a protégé that holds the same organisational rank by way of title or pay scale point. Similarly, the often included age distinction seems a needlessly inserted criterion. While it is still likely that a mentor will be older simply based on the nature of workplace demography, the nature of the modern career is such that it is no longer as uncommon for there to be someone that is both younger and more senior that can serve as a mentor to a more junior, older colleague. Albeit still rare, this could continue to become more common considering the nature of lateral career moves and major shifts on career direction. While this situation became somewhat more common in contemporary careers, future research may show that it has also been increasingly driven by the impact of global economic recessionary shocks affecting substantial proportions of workforce members across entire sectors and
industries. Again it is the functional nature of the supportive relationship that seems more important than the formally pre-existing role definitions.

While some researchers have begun to be more precise in the definitional aspects of mentoring, it is not always wholly clear what functions are intended to be served through mentoring. There frequently exists a stark contrast in some of the functions and outcomes of “mentoring” and at times there is little cognisant understanding upon entering the relationships about what is expected to be achieved. Furthermore, there is very limited research investigating similarities and differences among mentor – protégé pairs to compare how they perceive the role of mentoring (Gibson, 2004). However, a few researchers have begun to more rigorously address this gap (e.g. Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Marchese, 2006; Wanberg, Welsh, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). There remains a need for theory development on the ‘mentoring’ construct. As of yet we still do not have a clear understanding of the possible combinations of factors involved or enough about what exactly transpires as a result of these factors. Bozeman & Feeney (2007) contend that the difficulties in clear theory development for mentoring can be attributed to the sheer depth and sweep involved and to some extent, the limited progress seems attributable to a focus on the instrumental to the neglect of the explanatory (pp. 719-720). Furthermore, “the literature has been more concerned with understanding the relationship between mentoring and other constructs, rather than defining the nature of mentoring itself” (Allen & Eby, 2007, p.4.). Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge (2008) point out that although it is acknowledged that mentors can be a boss, manager or supervisor, but that usually they are not, measurement strategies often allow for an examination of the effect
of having a mentor, yet treat all mentors as equally effective. Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) highlighted that there are further problems and ambiguities with mentoring theory development. Firstly, it is not clear how many distinct mentoring functions there are and principal components analysis is insufficient for making strong inferences about underlying, latent structures. Secondly, the authors point out that there has been a lack of clarity in research about whether specific, narrow mentoring functions serve either the career or psychosocial support functions. Furthermore, there is a critical dearth of research on the differences between formal mentoring programs content and quality especially considering the extent to which organisations have sought to implement mentoring ‘programmes’ as a human resource development tool (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003). Egan and Song (2008) echo this and caution,

The handful of rigorously implemented and analyzed studies has largely failed to differentiate formal mentoring programs in terms of a variety of facilitation approaches, such as quality, content or high versus low program facilitation (Wanberg et al., 2003). Such studies lump all mentoring programs into one group whether the formal mentoring effort is painstakingly organized or involves a haphazard pairing of mentors with protégé’s without thoughtful attention to program elements that may support the development of the mentoring relationship. (p. 2).

While there is evidence that there is potential for well-designed formal mentoring programs to be beneficial (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000), a lot of studies compare formal mentoring with either informal mentoring or no mentoring rather than comparing successful or unsuccessful formal mentoring, which risks drawing the conclusion that formal mentoring does not work (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett,
Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) applied another important perspective that needs to be considered in more depth when considering the quality of mentoring relationships. They noted that mentoring generally falls along a continuum from highly satisfying, through marginally functional, to the extreme of dysfunctional with substantial negative consequences. Categorising these relationships as either formal or informal with broad strokes tends to cloud the specific aspects of mentoring “programmes” that may enhance their success (Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007; Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). The problem remains that we still do not know much about how the dynamics of exchange influence mentoring outcomes among explicitly identifiable pairs (Young & Perrewé, 2000a). The overwhelming majority of research on mentoring pairs (dyadic mentoring research) focuses either predominantly or solely on the protégés’ perspectives (Dobrow et al, 2012; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). However, in a few instances researchers have begun to analyse the characteristics of effective and ineffective developmental interactions (Eddy, D’Abate, Tannenbaum, Givens-Skeaton, & Robinson, 2006) as well as attempting to enhance our understanding of the possibilities that may be available (e.g. D’Abate, Eddy, & Tannenbaum, 2003, Rock & Garavan, 2006). Still, mentoring research that incorporates the perspectives from both members of the dyad, i.e. the mentor as well as his or her protégé, is quite scarce.

2.6 RECENT CALLS TO REFOCUS MENTORING RESEARCH

There continues to be calls for mentoring research that captures the perspective of the mentor in the relationship as well (Allen et al., 2008; Dobrow et al., 2012, Haggard et al, 2011). It is essential that mentoring researchers continue this line
of enquiry to further develop our understanding about the content and outcomes occurring in different types of mentoring. It is also valuable in helping to build our understanding of how mentoring relationships are constructed by participants and how they perceive the nature of the relationship itself. Furthermore, this may serve to add significant value for both individuals and organisations if it can effectively inform HRD practitioners about how to design mentoring ‘programmes’, facilitate dyad member matching, train participants and perhaps evaluate accrued benefits. It is apparent that many formal mentoring program participants enter the relationship with either unclear or unrealistic expectations about content, process and outcomes. This is an unnecessarily precarious situation because we do know that in most cases mentoring relationships function dependent upon the expectations the participants hold for one another (Young & Perrewé, 2004). Moreover, because mentoring can promote various different types of learning, it is essential that we develop our understanding of what might be expected from different types of mentor-protégé interactions (Hezlett, 2005).

Noe, Greenberger, and Wang (2002) called for more research into how mentoring develops political skills. Blass et al. (2007) provide, “evidence supporting the argument that political skill is in part learned suggests that research should investigate, more specifically, how political skill is learned, what exactly is learned, who it is learned from and by, when it is learned, and in what context” (p. 103). Brouer et al. (2011) showed how receiving support and insight can buffer the negative effects of perceived organisational politics and develop skills to deal with organisational politics. This is a key example of a specific type of learning that may result from previously identified mentoring functions that can be served.
One could conjecture that focusing specifically on the development of political skill would have important ramifications for the protégé and perhaps the effectiveness of organisational actors toward organisational goals. However, it is not clear from which of the previously identified general mentoring functions or combination of functions this would arise. Furthermore, given that different learners will often have distinct developmental requirements; political skill development will require a different balance of information exchange compared to interpersonal skill development depending on individual needs. Therefore, while political skill development is a specific and perhaps measurable outcome, it is not a simple task to clearly identify from where exactly it may arise from within the current mentoring nomenclature. Both functional and individual variables are vast and various mentoring functions operating in concert will be more or less important factors in individual cases. A simplified example to illuminate how this may be pertinent would be if one considers a protégé that has high levels of confidence and self-efficacy, but who lacks knowledge about political actors and organisational rules of engagement compared to an individual who needs encouragement and interpersonal skills coaching, but who has a relatively accurate grasp of ‘the way things work around here’ and the motivations of senior actors. It is precisely these types of dynamic need fulfilment and support provision interactions for which we still have very little knowledge. Scandura and Pellegrini (2007) continue the call for more qualitative field studies to develop a more holistic and in-depth understanding of mentoring and the dynamics involved (p. 83). There is an increasingly proactive search for alternative perspectives that establish a clearer picture of what mentoring actually entails from a theoretical basis. For instance, Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, and Willbanks (2011) called for
the application of self-determination theory (SDT) to mentoring research. SDT posits that humans have three basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Janssen, van Vuuren and de Jong (in Press) found qualitative data showing developers’ supportive behaviours that were classified under each of these headings.

It has been clearly established that mentoring is frequently distinguished from other developmental relationships such as executive coaching. It is also important to note that it is becoming more generally accepted that collections of support functions found in mentoring are in some ways special and cannot be simply generalised to other types of developmental relationships (Murphy & Kram, 2010). Parker, Hall and Kram (2008) suggest that traditional notions of what constitutes mentoring also need to be challenged. The conceptualisation that traditional, hierarchical mentoring is an intense meaningful dyadic relationship in which a more senior or more experienced mentor provides guidance and/or assistance to a less experienced mentee or protégé has given way to conceptualisations that highlight the existence and importance of developmental relationship constellations (Higgins & Kram, 2001). This is where people seek or receive appropriate and distinct types of support from a variety of people dependent upon individuals’ needs and what the developers are capable of delivering. Thus, creating a constellation of developmental support where the array hopefully provides complimentary and or comprehensive support. Nonetheless, the remainder of the focus here will be on the various support functions that can be experienced within a specific dyadic mentoring relationship and the nature of the relationship and its functional qualities.
2.7 RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CAREER MENTORING

Bozionelos (2006) and Bozionelos and Wang (2006) have suggested that developmental relationships can be viewed as reciprocal learning relationships characterised by trust, respect, and commitment. Fleig-Palmer and Schoorman (2011) identified that trust is a key moderator between mentoring and knowledge transfer. Having higher levels of trust were associated with higher levels of learning for the individual and learning that was relevant to the organisations. Willingness of the protégé to be vulnerable to the mentor’s guidance was a key element and might have implications for the interaction and shared learning that takes place (Fleig-Palmer & Schoorman, 2011). Parker, Hall, and Kram (2008) suggested, in the context of a relational perspective on careers, that developmental relationships are characterised by: a focus on the personal and professional development of both parties, equal status of parties, the integration of reflection on practice, a focus on process as well as context issues, and accelerated career learning. They conceptualised career learning as a relational activity that consists of four key elements: (a) an ability to engage in self-reflection, (b) expanded self-awareness, (c) assessment of knowledge needs, and (d) a realignment of behaviour and attitudes to adapt to new learning. Ragins and Verbos (2007) highlighted that while the mentoring literature explains mentor behaviours and protégé outcomes, it does not address mutual relationship behaviours and relational outcomes (p. 95).
2.7.1 Relational Problems Found in Mentoring

Problematic interpersonal issues or negative relational characteristics are found in mentoring relationships seemingly just as commonly as they would be in any interpersonal relationship. Eby (2007) defined relational problems as “real or perceived aspects of mentor-protégé interactions that minimise, negate, or undermine the personal and professional growth of one or both members” (p. 324). The specific nature of these problems as they arise within mentoring relationships has been identified since some of the earliest research on workplace mentoring emerged. Negative behaviours such as manipulation, exploitation, psychological abuse, overdependence, dishonesty jealousy, betrayal and sabotage were brought to fore by Levinson (1978) and Kram (1985). It is clear that within the more common power structure of hierarchical mentoring relationships, or indeed in peer mentoring relationships where one party achieves a power dominance, that behaviours such as manipulation and exploitation arise from the mentor or dominant other and overdependence would arise from the opposite; however, the nature of relationships is so complex that one could predict that a number of the negative relational behaviours could arise from either party or in either direction. These behaviours that yield marginal relational quality of exchange, degrees of dysfunctionality or even destruction are often associated with negative consequences or outcomes such as needs left unmet, dissatisfaction and perhaps less willingness to participate in future mentoring relationships (Allen et al., 1997; Ragins et al., 2000). Just as strong positive dialogue is often associated with strong, trusting and supportive relationships, communication aspects such as a lack of communication, unconstructive communication or poor communication skills by the mentor or protégé are often identified in relationally
problematic mentoring relationships. Likewise, it is evident that effective and positively constructive communication is also key to maintaining functional relationships and repairing damaged or dysfunctional mentoring relationships (Kalbfleisch, 2007). Therefore, communication is the pivotal element of mentoring relationships as its functionality is affected by prerequisite relational qualities and participant characteristics as well as being the mechanism for the potential resolution of difficulties or problems that may arise.

2.7.2 Theoretical Perspectives for Relational Mentoring

Various theoretical perspectives can be used to understand a relational perspective on careers and the characteristics of developmental relationships that are strong, meaningful, and intense as typically characteristic of mentoring relationships. Interpersonal relationships that can be characterised this way have a central theoretical concept that Duck et al., (1984) describe as relationships perceived by participants as being substantially unique and / or irreplaceable. Following the commentary about the variance in quality in mentoring relationships and “marginal mentoring” (Ragins & Verbos, 2007), focusing on the mentoring construct from a relational perspective currently offers the best way to understand the characteristics and processes that are found in higher quality or more effective and valuable mentoring relationships (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). The following theoretical perspectives were selected and can be applied: relational or social cognition theory, self-in-relation theory (Miller, 1976, Surrey, 1985, 1991), social exchange theory, leader–member exchange theory (LMX) (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982), social capital theory, social networks theory, attachment
theory, and Josselson’s (1992) relatedness theory. These have potentially strong implications for the qualitative characteristics of developmental relationships.

2.7.2.1 Relational / Social Cognitive Theory
Relational or social cognitive theory explores how people mentally acquire and represent information about themselves and others through schematic mental knowledge structures that influence and shape behaviour. Relational theory as applied to the mentoring construct is essentially a combination of positive social capital theory with psychological perspectives on cognitive processes in relationships (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Ragins and Verbos, 2007). Ragins and Verbos (2007) argued that cognitive schemas represent “organised structures of tacit knowledge that serve to construct, construe and evaluate the behaviour of self, others and the relationship” (p. 100). This helps to explain behavioural expectations and how developmental relationships are understood by participants using cognitive maps. They envisage that these schemas will guide and frame how mentoring experiences and roles are constructed. Schemas adapt and evolve due to changing antecedents and behavioural feedback derived from the relationship and include various interpersonal scripts that will provide the “rules of the road” for developmental interactions. Furthermore, expectations, behaviours, and evaluation of those behaviours by both members of a developmental relationship are key factors in perceived quality of relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). However, mentoring research has often measured relationship quality simply in terms of instrumental outcomes. The notion that developmental relationships evolve over time has long been emphasised (e.g. Kram, 1985). Therefore, one can
assume that as the relationship and the functions it serves evolves, so too will the actual and perceived quality and effectiveness.

Quality and effectiveness is viewed in a relational sense rather than in attempt to measure instrumental or extrinsic outcomes. Social cognitive theory suggests that developmental relationships influence not only the reflexive construction of self but also the continual and reciprocal redefinition of the relationship over time. Therefore, a focus on the mutual and reciprocal, cognitive, and relational processes and structures is of substantial value to enhancing our understanding of how and why mentoring and other developmental relationships work. The traditional illustration of the mentoring relationship is that where a more senior, older, more experienced hierarchical superior guides and nurtures a less experienced and younger protégé to develop him or herself ultimately for the purposes of career advancement (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1989). However, more recently researchers have begun to question the accuracy of this somewhat simplistic assessment of the relationship which is actually much more dynamic and reciprocal in its processes (Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Higgins & Kram, 2001, Kram & Hall, 1996). Fletcher & Ragins (2007) purport that the relational perspective that has emerged widens the lens on mentoring relationship dynamics and qualities and takes into account this multi-directional aspect of what is indeed and exchange rather than simply a delivery. The qualities are the focus and relational mentoring is a term used to identify a mentoring relationship that is in the state of higher quality and brings to light the mutual nature of relationships through reciprocal process and particularly functions contributed by the protégé and benefits that accrue to the mentor (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Ragins &
Another challenge to the traditional model of mentoring that is presented by the relational mentoring perspective according to Fletcher and Ragins (2007) involves the power structure. This takes into account that rather than the mentor controlling the relationship as the prevailing source of power, influence and expertise, the protégé influence is considered. It opens up the power structure and allows for the contribution of unique knowledge and expertise from the protégé as well as for the learning that can be gained by the mentor in such a situation.

Fletcher & Ragins (2007) focused on the Stone Center Relational Cultural Theory as a broadening perspective on relational mentoring. This theory is a model of human growth that was developed by psychologists and psychiatrists at the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. It began as a feminist theory for development that occurs through connections with others. Psychiatrist Jean Baker Miller offered a new model of human growth and development after realising that existing models of mental health were inadequate for explaining the dynamic nature of the human experience. She chose the term “growth-in-connection” and subsequently identified various relational skills and attributes that are necessary for growth and development not just for the psychological growth of women, but for all human development (Miller, 1976). Fletcher & Ragins (2007) note that some aspects of this theory, such as developing empathy and the capacity to experience vulnerability were actually quite radical concepts at the time, but that this is easily forgotten in contemporary times considering the evolution of this theory into other theories and concepts that have gained widespread understanding and acceptance.
such as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Besides highlighting the mutual and multi-directional nature of relationships, Relational Cultural Theory brought to the fore the fluidity of experience as opposed to static point in time impact experiences. This has particular salience with mentoring relationships in a unique way. It highlights the continuum of mentoring episodes that lead to development rather than as simply once off learning points. A focus on the relational aspects of mentoring can help fill the research gaps identified. For instance, it is now generally understood through the mentoring literature that “In a nutshell, we know (mentoring) works; we are still grappling with why, when, and how” (Ragins & Kram, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, a focus that strives to better understand how quality and development is realised through reciprocal construction of the relationship and “growth-in-connection” (Miller, 1976) will help fill this gap in our understanding. The related subsets of this psycho-social theoretical movement include a number of complex interpersonal and psychological dynamics. High quality relational mentoring is not a simple tit-for-tat exchange of expressing needs and offering support. To better understand mentoring, we need to examine it through an appreciation of personal and interpersonal variables and the guiding cognitive schemas. Examining things such as willingness to express vulnerability and possible empathetic responses are only the beginning.

A key component of Relational Cultural theory that has emerged out of the work is Self-in-Relation theory that was formulated from the fundamental basis that the concept of self was not appropriately captured by western models of adult development that had focused on individualising and separating oneself (Miller, 1976, Surrey, 1985).
2.7.2.2 Self-in-relation theory

Self-in-relation theory was also initially proposed as a theory of women’s development (Surrey, 1991). Surrey highlighted a paradigm shift from separation to relationship connectedness as the basis for development and self-experience. The basic goal of development is a deepening capacity for relationships and relational competence. Mutuality in relationships provides meaning to an individual’s life and enhances self-esteem. Mentoring and other developmental relationships provide opportunities for self-other experiences in which the validity of both the individual’s own experiences and those of the mentor or other party in the relationship may have value because they emphasise interdependence rather than independence and self-reliance. Self-in-relation theory postulates that mentoring and developmental relationships have significant interdependent qualities. Increased autonomous competence may be a goal in some situations. However, relational competence is increasingly important in the contemporary career. Relational competence will be important in explaining the operation of a developmental relationship. It is a competence that determines the successful functioning of developmental relationships as well as a competence that can be developed through developmental relationships. Taking these aspects of relational theory and applying them to a relational mentoring construct focuses on the importance of concepts such as interdependence, co-responsibility, authenticity, empathy, empowerment, willingness to experience vulnerability, emotional competence, relational competence and desire to engage in further connection (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Following from this, Fletcher & Ragins (2007) developed a number of propositions for the applicability of these concepts to relational mentoring. Acknowledging mutuality and resisting hierarchical prescriptions would seem to lead to higher quality relational experiences.
Furthermore as mentoring is a series of (ideally high-quality) interactions, they proposed that the frequency, duration and intensity, not just of interaction, but of high-quality interaction will predict the degree to which the relationship members will perceive the relationship to be of a high-quality in nature. Similarly, they proposed that the frequency with which episodes of disconnection are addressed effectively within a mentoring relationship will determine the actual quality of that relationship (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007: 382). This is of course coupled with the range of interpersonal and relational skills possessed by both or either member in the relationship. Taken together we see how mentoring can be perceived through fluid cognitive maps on a continuum from dysfunctional to high-quality relational mentoring. Ragins and Verbos (2007) summarised the continuum as depicted in the following table:

**Table 2.2 Continuum of Quality in Relationship Mentoring States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Quality:</th>
<th>Dyfunctional</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Relational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Quality:</strong></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviours:</strong></td>
<td>Negative or Dysfunctional</td>
<td>Career development or Psychological support for the protégé</td>
<td>A range of support and relational behaviours for both parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prevailing Norms:</strong></td>
<td>Violated or exploitative</td>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>Communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes:</strong></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>One-sided; instrumental</td>
<td>Close bonds and mutual learning and growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Ragins & Verbos (2007: 98)
A key contribution that this extension of the relational theory direction can make to mentoring literature stems from its emphasis on co-responsibility. A lot of the discussion on mentoring focuses on developing individuals with a short to medium-term goal of development to a point of independence and self-reliance. While this is warranted for obvious reasons, having too strong a focus on the goal of disconnection and a uni-directional “push” focus runs the risk of underestimating the mutuality of the interdependent nature of the exchange required for high quality developmental experiences. Here we begin to see the relevance of qualitative relational elements such as relational authenticity. These issues cannot be ignored in trying to address the gaps about why, when and how mentoring works. However, in addition to this, it must also be acknowledged that people do make calculated decisions and these affect their behaviours and interactions with others. Therefore, to gain a more holistic understanding, we also need to maintain a focus on the motivations for engagement and exchange. Social exchange theory provides a viable starting point.

2.7.2.3 Social Exchange Theory
Social exchange theory is also a relevant consideration particularly with regard to some of the exchange elements of mentoring relationships and the motivations of the members of the relationship for creating and maintaining such workplace developmental relationships. Gibb (1999) questions why mentors are prepared to be pro-social and virtuous and to sacrifice their time and energy in order to support and assist others for no apparent tangible rewards. Perhaps, because participating in mentoring relationships can create a feeling of accomplishment and worth by sharing talent and experience (Young, 2000), especially among people in later career stages who have become somewhat stagnant (Kram, 1985).
Also, mentoring a successful protégé can enhance a mentor’s image among peers and managers for successfully developing talent as well as receiving assistance through delegation of tasks, while continuing to learn from the exchange, gaining technical and psychological support, and finding internal satisfaction in enabling a younger colleague to learn how to navigate in the organisational world (Young, 2000; Kram, 1985; Kram and Isabella, 1985).

According to social exchange theory, people maintain relationships in which the benefits outweigh the costs (Young and Perrewé, 2000; Ensher et al., 2001). It assumes we are rational calculators, developing pro-social relationships that involve costs to ourselves because they also have benefits for ourselves (Gibb, 1999:1061) and relational benefits serve to strengthen relationships whereas costs tend to weaken them (Eby, et al., 2004) Since everyone may have differing expectations of the levels of support that would be adequate, the support must be evaluated based on an individual’s specific level or need or expectation for support (Young and Perrewé, 2000). More is not necessarily better, rather enough, based on met expectations which is found to mediate the relationship between career and social support behaviours exhibited by partners in the exchange. In a study of mentoring relationships between senior, doctorate level mentors and assistant professors or doctoral student protégés, a significant finding related to role expectations among participants was discovered (Young and Perrewé, 2000). For mentors, protégé behaviours associated with career-related activities were significantly and positively influential in determining met expectations, but social behaviours exhibited by the protégé were not significant. For protégés, social support was significantly and positively influential in
determining met expectations, but career support was not. Both the mentor and
the protégé are engaged in an exchange of distinct, but related behaviours. The
mentor enacts support behaviour in the form of advice, guidance, protection,
encouragement, etc. and the protégé responds with “reciprocal support
behaviour”, such as, curiosity, interest, and willingness to exert effort, which may
very well reinforce or incite further support from a mentor (Young and Perrewé,
2004). For the benefits to be realised, each type of career and social support
behaviour must be tailored to the relevant perspective of either of the participants
in the exchange (Young and Perrewé, 2000). Simply put, if mutual expectations
are met, then mutual satisfaction would be likely.

The issue of reciprocity re-emerges where Ensher et al. (2001) incorporate social
exchange theory and social networking to evaluate the differences between
traditional, peer and step-ahead mentoring. An example of step-ahead mentoring
is where an organisation assigns a newcomer to a “big buddy” who has only a few
more years of experience than the new employee and is typically only one or two
levels ahead in their career. Newcomers benefit by gaining effective socialisation
and step-ahead mentors gain an opportunity to develop their coaching skills and a
sense of empowerment (Ensher et al., 2001:423). The authors suggest that
traditional mentors who hold higher organisational positions may be better able to
recommend protégés to task forces or introduce them to senior executives. In
contrast, perhaps peer or step-ahead mentors might have more of an impact on
protégés’ job satisfaction and perceived career success, as they may be more
accessible and provide more empathy and emotional support on a day to day basis
(Ensher et al., 2001:424). Their main findings were, the degree of reciprocity and
amount of vocational and role modeling support predicted protégés’ satisfaction with mentors; protégés were more satisfied in traditional and step-ahead mentoring relationships than in peer-mentoring relationships; vocational support was the only type of mentor support that predicted protégés’ job satisfaction and perceived career success; protégés with traditional mentors indicated significantly greater job satisfaction. The authors indicate that this is congruent with social exchange theory, as traditional mentors are likely to have greater access to power, influence and resources than other types of mentors. Furthermore, protégés need to develop clarity about expectations for each type of support and to develop a network of alternative and complimentary individuals while considering the trade-off between status and accessibility (Ensher et al., 2001:436).

Providing an alternative theory to contextualise the exchange, taking for granted that people tend to be good reciprocal altruists, Gibb (1999:1065) predicts that, “through communitarian theory…formal mentoring will succeed where there are strong ‘communities’, regardless of the organization or workplace size”. This correlates with the surging interest in modern organisations to facilitate group and team working. Ideally “people act in a pro-social, virtuous way as they are bound by core values, established and maintained by virtue of being members of a community (Gibb, 1999:1063-4).

Therefore, through examination of the motivations and fulfilment derived or goals achieved by participants including those of mentors may also help us better understand why, or indeed why not, high quality relational exchanges may be occurring. If we examine “What’s in it for me?” in a synthesis with relational
theory, we may also be better positioned to promote or facilitate higher quality mentoring in a communitarian way. While it is not a key focus of the research objectives in this thesis to focus on instrumental outcomes, it is worth taking note of what mentors and protégés expect as a result of investment in the relationship and why, when and how intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes are valued. Further to the examination of investments in and expectations from relationships, Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) has at times been proposed as relevant to mentoring literature and this may be particularly relevant in case where the relationship between the mentor and protégé are in direct or skip-level reporting relationships within a hierarchy and why some may gain or “be chosen” and some may not.

2.7.2.4. Leader-Member Exchange Theory
Leader–member exchange theory (LMX) highlights the importance of dyadic relationships in the workplace. LMX is of value to a relational perspective of careers because it seeks to clarify perceptions about roles in relationships and how they are established (Graen, 1976). The quality of relationships between leaders and their subordinates varies. Early research suggested that because leaders had limited time available (Graen, 1976) leaders formed higher-quality relationships with an in-group and have lower-quality relationships with the out-group (Liden & Graen, 1980).

Chun, Sosik & Yun (2012) found leaders are more likely to offer role modeling and career developmental support through transformational and high-quality leader–member exchange relationships. Higher-quality LMX relationships are characterised by high levels of mutual trust, respect, liking, interaction, and
obligation (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These factors are important in the establishment (role-making) phase of relationships and can grow or evolve as the relationship progresses (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Similarly, developmental relationship functions evolve as the relationship progresses over time (Kram, 1985). McManus and Russell (2007) suggested the integration of LMX with mentoring theory arguing that both are dyadic theories with significant developmental implications. They are also multi-dimensional and reciprocal constructs with a range of contextually based variables. Individuals provide assistance to others in expectation of receiving benefits of similar value in return in the future (Blau, 1964). These expectations will likely differ in content and timing depending on whether the leader or member or mentor or protégé is considered. LMX theory postulates that different subordinates can have drastically different perceptions of the same leader (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994). Viewing high-quality LMX relationships from a relational perspective will provide insight to how mutual appreciation develops and how elements of friendship emerge in mentoring and other developmental relationships.

Further examination of LMX aspects of mentoring may help us gain a better understanding of how, when and why mentoring functions in varying degrees of quality because it accounts for how different people may view an individual differently. Why does one person value a mentor while another person may not value the same person and how is this related to perceptions of the likelihood of met expectations. Continuing to focus on this may help-inform our understanding of high quality pairings as opposed to marginally functioning relationships. This may lead to better being able to the decision making of potential participants in
relationships from a theoretical basis. It is assumed that in workplace mentoring, these decisions are made largely based on career aspirations. Likewise, it is related to building human capital that requires some extent of a network of resources. Therefore, viewing mentoring through a social capital lens is also a necessary objective particularly when examining career decision making and achievement.

2.7.2.5 Social Capital Theory
Social capital in relation to the mentoring construct can be considered a function of personal attainment. Theories of social capital have consistently been utilised in the attempt to account for career progression (Lin, et al., 1981 a,b; Burt, 1997, Seibert, et al., 2001; Bonzionelos, 2003; Tymon & Stumpf, 2003). Tymon & Stumpf (2003) define social capital simply as the stock of accumulated resources that can be accessed via relationships and note, citing Baker (2000:25) that, “these resources include information, ideas, leads, business opportunities, financial capital, power, emotional support, goodwill, trust, and cooperation”. Social capital theories are increasingly used to explain the career benefits of mentoring and developmental relationships (Bozionelos, 2003, 2006; Bozionelos & Wang, 2006; Boozeman & Feeney 2008; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). However, our focus in this chapter is on the relational aspects rather than the outcomes of social capital. Nonetheless, it is difficult to completely isolate motivations for enhancing social capital and its career benefits from the relational and networking aspects. For example, political knowledge and skills can be a major component of developmental relationships (Blass, Brouer, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2007; Blickle et al. 2008). This is generally geared towards navigating networks and acquiring
further social capital. While it is assumed that mentors possess more political knowledge and experience than their protégés, both members of the relationship can bring experiences with political behaviours of others into the dialogue. Hence, both members can reciprocally learn through an exchange of ideas and experiences about navigating networks and establishing contacts. Both members may have enhanced social capital as a goal. This reciprocal process and mutual learning will likely strengthen their own relationship, mutual appreciation, and the quality of the exchange.

Adler and Kwon (2002), offer multiple conceptualisations to help us define and understand the concept of social capital: Firstly, social capital is understood roughly as the goodwill available to individuals or groups that is engendered by the fabric of social relations and that can be mobilised to facilitate action. Secondly, its source lies in the structure and content of the actors’ social relations. Thirdly, its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor. Or, more broadly, “social capital is the resource available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of their social relations” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 18) and make possible the achievement of certain ends that, in its absence, would not be possible (Coleman, 1988).

Early research on social capital focused on the strength of the relationship as a basis for social capital formation (Granovetter, 1973). One of the cornerstone focal points of social network research is the extent to which individuals gain access to valuable resources and non-redundant information through diverse network structures (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973). Granovetter (1973) argued
that weak-ties, which are those of less intensity and intimacy, shorter duration and with fewer reciprocal services, rather than strong ties, are more likely to bridge two otherwise unconnected social networks and that these are more efficient for knowledge sharing through their provision of novel, rather than redundant information. Furthermore, he demonstrated how white-collar workers are more likely to gain more efficient and high quality career advancement through these weak-tie connections. Burt (1992) found that senior managers with networks that are richer in structural holes (where two alters in the ego’s social network are unconnected to each other) were more likely to gain early promotions and acknowledges that strong ties have the potential to act as non-redundant contacts, but it is evident that weak ties were more likely to be non-redundant contacts. Furthermore, Burt (1992) advocates the focus on structural holes rather than merely on tie strength as a means to more clearly illuminate the bridging properties addressed by Granovetter (1973). However, Lin, et al (1981) found that a person can acquire a structural advantage by dealing with a person at a higher status level. Therefore, it was suggested that focusing on contact status would yield good indications of structural advantage achievement. Indeed, Gabbay and Zuckerman (1998) suggested that strong-tie contacts filling structural holes were more likely to affect promotion. Seibert, et al. (2001) integrate Granovetter’s (1973) weak-tie theory, Burt’s (1992) structural hole theory and Lin’s (1990) social resource theory with a focus on both the network structure and content aspects of social capital. Here, the effects of social resources on career success are mediated by three network benefits: access to information, access to resources and career sponsorship. The objective was the correlation between the number of weak ties and the number of valuable social contacts in an ego’s
network. Later research extended this to mentoring and developmental networks with a focus on relationship strength as one key factor (of many) to distinguish different types of developmental relationships (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

It has been established that individuals increase their visibility by networking with organisational members of a higher status (e.g., Burt, 1992). Allen, et al. (2004) re-emphasise that the potential access to social networks that that mentors can provide to their protégés provides the opportunity to display talent and skills to important decision makers, that this augments human capital and career support, and that protégés should achieve greater career success than their non-mentored counterparts. As Burt (1997:339) comments, “…while human capital is surely necessary to success, it is useless without the social capital of opportunities in which to apply it”. That is, human capital refers to individual ability; social capital refers to opportunity. Therefore, having more social capital aids in the identification and development of more rewarding opportunities and consequently, prospects of more effective mobilisation of an individual’s human capital. The implication for protégés, especially if early in their careers, is that if a mentor can “lend” his or her network contacts or social capital then enhanced career advancement opportunities may arise (Burt, 1997).

Social capital is embodied in information exchange, social trust, and norms of reciprocity that enhance cooperation for mutual advancement (Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 1998). This accentuates the relational aspects of how social capital may operate through developmental relationships. Singh et al. (2009) suggested that career outcomes are influenced by an interplay between relational and
individual career resources and that mentoring is just part of a portfolio or constellation of various resources that are weaved together to create the rich tapestry of career success.

Taken together, these themes signal various possible linkages between mentoring relationships and the potential for developing one’s social capital through a primary or initial network contact in the form of a mentor. Work on multiple developmental relationships (Higgins, 2000; Higgins and Kram, 2001) and that which addresses network structure, diversity and career progress (Chao, 2008; Higgins et al., 2007) establish a clear link between the mentoring literature and the social network literature. Higgins and Nohria’s (1999) research began integrating the two strands through a specific focus on the relationship between mentoring and social capital generation. The authors contribute to a theme originally addressed by Kram (1983; 1985) and Kram and Isabella (1985) where it was established that different or evolving mentoring functions are served at various career stages. Higgins and Nohria (1999) consider both early and late mentoring experiences in attempt to further understand how and when mentoring may or may not work with regard to career progress and protégés’ consequent social capital generation potential. Higgins and Kram (2001:270) note that, “although developmental relationships are not ties with casual contacts or strangers, they may indeed be weak-tie developmental relationships if, for example, the protégé receives, but does not offer much opportunity for learning or assistance to the developer in return”. The authors expect that “the protégé’s orientation toward career development (will) moderate the effects of help seeking on the strength of the developmental relationship(s) that result. Individuals who
seek out developmental relationships for the primary purpose of furthering their own careers will tend to exhibit help-seeking that can be described as instrumental, strategic, and in the extreme instance, self-centred. However, individuals who actively engage in seeking out developmental relationships for both career and psychosocial assistance will tend to be focussed on personal growth and learning that extend beyond immediate concerns regarding career advancement. In this case, the relationship is more likely to be expressive rather than instrumental and hence, more likely to be developmental of a strong-tie”. They also expect that individuals with strong-tie developmental relationships will experience more personal learning than those with weak-tie relationships and are more likely to receive psychosocial assistance because of the intimacy and frequency of communication characterised by such ties.” Relationship strength is defined or determined by the level of emotional affect, reciprocity, and frequency of communication (Granovetter, 1973). Lin, et al., (1981a) postulate that individuals must have the ability, motivation and opportunity to cultivate and exploit social capital to advance careers. Furthermore, the ability to understand oneself and to be successful in one’s career have been increasingly dependent on the nature and quality of relationships. (Tymon & Stumpf, 2002:12).

Social capital theory is valuable to our understanding of mentoring and developmental relationships by helping to explain how and why developmental relationships emerge. De Janasz and Sullivan (2004) suggested that individuals in developmental relationships engage in the signalling of identity (knowing why), the signalling of performance (knowing how), and the signalling of social capital (knowing whom). Social capital operates through features of social organisation
such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995, p. 67).

2.7.2.6 Social Networks as Developmental Networks
As theories of social capital have evolved into developmental social networks models of processes and interactions, there is likewise a pervasive applicability of this to models of mentoring (Chandler & Kram, 2005; Dobrow & Higgins, 2005; Molloy, 2005). The carry-over from theories of social capital is one of the earliest aspects which is the variance in the strength of ties in relationships. It has already been established that high quality mentoring relationships are assumed to be based on some sort of strong connection between the members of the relationship. Furthermore, it is now generally accepted that any individual action is embedded within the social context in which it founded and this is the basis of decision making within the social capital perspective (Granovetter, 1973). Arguments surrounding the notion that not all support functions could be likely filled by a single individual have contributed to the developmental network perspective. It is argued that the success of knowledge workers in the 21st century will increasingly be determined by, not only how fast they can learn and share their learning (Tymon & Stumpf, 2003), but by whom they know (Baker & Dutton, 2007). Therefore, Tymon & Stumpf (2003:14) predict the increasing relevance of significant contributions to organisational learning requiring “knowledge that is to vast and complex for one individual or functional area to possess. Effective knowledge workers realize that developing an extensive and diverse network of relationships is key to their ability to contribute to the organization”.

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The responsibility for learning and remaining current is shifting onto individual employees. While experts may know what training they need, they will also be expecting support in its provision (Dufficy, 2001). The degree to which this support will be attainable is unclear as organisational and political structures governing them evolve. Workers may need to look beyond the organisation to multiple relationships that can provide valuable developmental assistance. Moreover, changing organisational structures would entail a limited ability to rely on a single mentor within the organisation, because it cannot be taken for granted that the mentor will be there throughout the projected life-span of the mentoring relationship – he or she may move as a result of relocation, job redefinition, or other organisational change (Higgins and Kram, 2001). Exclusive relationships are simply not valuable enough; mentors should ideally be coach, friend and supporter, but also be able to steer the protégé to a broad set of people and experiences (Ibarra, 2000:155). There has been an increasing focus on individuals being able to establish multiple developmental relationships (Higgins, 2000). Higgins and Kram (2001) revisit Kram’s (1985) original proposition that individuals rely upon not just one, but multiple individuals, or “relationship constellations”, for developmental support in their careers. Combining social network theory and mentoring research, the authors have developed a typology of developmental networks. An individual’s developmental network is defined as “the set of people a protégé names as taking an active interest in and action to advance the protégé’s career by providing developmental assistance” (Higgins and Kram, 2001:268). While the definition accurately describes a mentoring relationship, it is not restrictive to a single dyadic relationship (Higgins and Kram, 2001:268). However, in their study, the authors do restrict the boundaries of the
developmental network to individuals the protégé acknowledges as influential in his or her career and social support, ignoring those who provide developmental assistance in one form or another, but who are doing so unbeknownst to the protégé. Nonetheless, tie-strength (Granovetter, 1973) still has relevance within the developmental and social network perspective as applied to mentoring and this mirrors the relational perspective whereby frequency of communication and “closeness” of the individuals is an important consideration for assessing the quality of the relationship. Similarly, but simply put, relationships can still be measured by the extent to which it has range in diversity or its density which refers to the extent to which the individuals “know” each other (Brass, 1995; Burt, 1983; Higgins & Kram, 2001). The decision to initiate these relationships is related to the development seeking behaviours of individuals (Higgins et al., 2007). This can be considered similarly to the aforementioned willingness to display and experience vulnerability through the relational and self-in-relation perspectives. The motives may be related to the desire to fulfil specific developmental needs or to generally initiate a developmental relationship with the intention of broader learning and less instrumental motives (Scandura & Williams, 1998). Higgins et al (2007) identify information seeking behaviours that facilitate knowledge flow related to a person’s tasks, role, and organisation. This can be sought from a variety of sources, but it is likely the quality of the interactions and trustworthiness of the information as perceived through experience that will guide future information seeking behaviours and the content of the discussion. Similarly, Allen et al. (2000) emphasise the importance of individuals who arouse a potential developer’s desire to help through help seeking behaviours as being perceived as protégés who would be appealing to engage and
interact with. The relational characteristics re-emerge as salient here whereby this expressive interactional style (Miller & Striver, 1997) gives rise to mentors that feel respected and valued and who are more likely to engage authentically and in ways that are most valuable to the protégé’s development. Contrastingly, instrumental interaction behaviours that are purely geared toward short-term career advancement advantages will likely be perceived as mostly if not wholly self-serving strategic motives and could result in the targeted developer feeling bothered, patronised or even instrumentally used (Higgins & Kram, 2001, Higgins et al., 2007). The continuing search for evidence about how mentoring interactions are perceived as occurring and the reasons believed to be behind such interactions is what still remains lacking (Wanberg et al, 2003). This is the most potentially fruitful means of better understanding how and why mentoring relationships are initiated and maintained in relations to individual assessments about why they are believed to be valuable. Accounts of the antecedent factors behind developmental initiation examined in comparison to qualitative data about mentoring experiences should help explain the resultant relational qualities.

To integrate further the theoretical background explored thus far, it is appropriate to consider the mutuality perspective on developmental networks as presented by Dobrow et al. (2012). Again the issue that the mentor’s perspective here is essential and this moves beyond the instrumental outcomes focus of traditional mentoring research. This takes into account desires and motivations of the mentor for engaging in mentoring relationships and helps to explain the emergent qualities as relationships evolve. In essence, it is the foundation of positive relationships at work (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). The aspect of mutuality results in
both parties being better off from having the relationship (Dobrow et al., 2012; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Relational competence is likely an important factor in the ability of individuals to form effective developmental relationships on an individual basis and developmental networks at the constellation level (Chandler, Hall, & Kram, 2010). It may also be a self-fulfilling accrual where people that have had positive developmental relationships become more savvy relationally and are able to be more developmentally proactive, seek out developmental opportunities for either giving or receiving developmental functions and know how to apply effort focused on aspects that are mutually beneficial (Dobrow et al, 2012). Considering the impact of past experience, development seeking and initiation behaviours and relational competence, a logical proposal is that formally assigned mentoring relationships are less likely to develop into true, high-quality relational developmental relationships (Shen & Kram, 2011). Whether or not this is the case could depend to a large extent to which mutual objectives or at least mutually congruent goals are present. This again gives rise to considerations surrounding attachment. Similar others do attract and are more likely to form enduring relationships that are satisfying when there is higher degrees of perceived similarity (Allen & Eby, 2003; Enher & Murphy, 1997) This brings the theoretical discussion to issues involving relationship member attachment.

2.7.2.7 Attachment Theory
Attachment theory can be used to conceptualise and understand the importance of relationships in the context of development and career. In this theory attachment first emerged as a social cognitive, relational phenomenon in child–parent relationships (e.g. Ainsworth, Bleher, Waters, & Wall, 1978) and romantic partnerships (e.g. Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). This theory has been extended to
include conceptualisations of attachment in supervisory relationships and leader–follower relations (Popper & Mayseless, 2003). Germain (2011) suggested that understanding attachment patterns in mentoring relationships helps explain effective mentoring. She suggested that mentors with secure attachment styles, who are readily available and willing to provide support, are effective mentors particularly for attachment anxious individuals. Bowlby (1982) argued that individuals at any age are better adjusted when they have confidence in the accountability and responsiveness of a trusted other. Bowlby focused on the control role of attachments, which are defined as enduring emotional bonds of significant intensity that influence the development and ultimately participation in satisfying developmental relationships. Indeed, as Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izak, & Popper (2007) highlighted, “attachment theory can be applied to any adult relationship that fulfils three criteria: the maintenance of proximity (because people prefer to be near an attachment figure, especially in times of stress or need), the provision of a safe haven (an attachment figure often relieves an attached individual’s distress and provides comfort, encouragement and support), and the provision of a secure base (an attachment figure increases an attached individual’s sense of security, which in turn sustains exploration, risk taking, and self-development)” (p. 632). According to attachment theory, human development occurs through active participation of the individual within significant relational contexts. Different patterns of attachment styles by both members in relationships significantly affect a wide range of behaviours, perceptions, cognitive conditions, and ultimately the functioning of relationships (Davidovitz et al., 2007). Furthermore, individuals who have a secure base established through attachment relationships are more resilient when they
experience avoidance and lack of emotional availability from others (Davidovitz et al., 2007; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Lopez (1995) found that continued participation in mutually satisfying relationships was important for many developmental activities across the life span. Attachment theory highlights the importance of trust, dependability, and mutuality in developmental relationships. It postulates that attachment styles by both members of the dyad in developmental relationships will have a strong impact on that relationship and it has implications for foundations in other meaningful relationships and other developmental activities. Attachment theory is valuable to our understanding of levels of trust, mutuality, levels and types of support functions, and the reciprocal nature of the connection between actors in mentoring and other developmental relationships.

The common thread to this theoretical vignette thus far hinges upon two key elements of relational behaviour from the protégé perspective. That is, willingness to experience vulnerability (within the presumed existence of trust and safety) and similarly help-seeking and feedback seeking behaviours (Allen et al., 2010). How this functions is complex. Attachment styles that are pre-existing and possessed by individuals create “systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotions, emotion regulation strategies and social behaviour” (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002: 134). Those that are more anxious as opposed to secure in their attachment style may be less likely to seek feedback and display vulnerability perceiving it as an unnecessary risk, yet interestingly, these individuals may need the feedback equally if not more so than the more secure attachment figures (Allen et al. 2010). Compounding the difficulty here are the findings by Allen et
al. (1997) that mentors reported being more likely to give feedback to others that were receptive to advice.

2.7.2.8 Relatedness Theory
Josselson (1992) proposed relatedness theory to explain the value of relationships arguing that interpersonal life is an ongoing effort to connect to others and overcome psychological and physical space between people. Relatedness is central to growth and development in the context of experience of self and becomes richer, more complex, broader and more differentiated over time. Josselson’s theory identified eight stages of progression through which individuals connect with others and as development proceeds, they become more symbolic rather than physical or spatial: holding (feeling grounded), attachment (availability and predictability), passionate experience (intense affective experience), eye-to-eye validation (recognition that an individual has meaning to someone else), idealisation and identification (role modelling), mutuality and resonance (emotionally joining with another), embeddedness (the social context in which individuals define themselves), and tending and caring (the need to take care of others).

Aspects of relatedness theory have particular relevance to understanding mentoring and developmental relationships. Developers serve functions such as counselling and encouragement that can improve or maintain an individual’s sense of groundedness. Members in developmental relationships will have some sense of attachment to their counterpart and the availability and predictability of this counterpart will impact on expectations and how the relationship functions. Members engaged in developmental relationships may not, of course, experience
passion in its purest sense. However, affective experiences can be based in a passion for learning and success, motivation and commitment to learning, and engagement in meaningful relationships. Eye-to-eye validation, role modelling, mutuality and resonance, sensing embeddedness in context, and tending and caring are also states that can be readily experienced through developmental relationships. This has resonance in both developmental and network relationships. Especially, for instance, where dyad members have substantially mutual goals, shared responsibility, a history of similar experiences or where there is substantial reflective practice as part of the developmental relationship. Table 2.3 serves as a deliberately concise reference point to outline the theories presented and discussed above. The following section provides a synthesis.

Table 2.3 Summary of the Relational Theories Key Relevancies Presented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational or social cognition theory</th>
<th>Mental models and the construction of self through interaction with others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-in-relation theory</td>
<td>Relational competence &amp; perceptions of relationship quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social exchange theory</td>
<td>Motivation to engage in and expectations from relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader–member exchange theory (LMX)</td>
<td>Hierarchical attraction, transaction and interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social capital theory</td>
<td>Information and resource stock augmentation and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Developmental networks</td>
<td>Close / Strong ties with others for developmental support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment theory</td>
<td>Willingness to connect and to do so openly and with a sense of security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatedness theory</td>
<td>Richness of the interpersonal relationship</td>
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</table>
2.7.3 Synthesis of the Relational Theoretical Perspectives Presented

As indicated, a focus on the relational aspects of mentoring can help fill the research gaps identified. Rational and social cognitive theories can be incorporated into a concerted effort to account for things such as willingness to express vulnerability and possible empathetic responses to understand the relationship between perceptions of quality, what is valued and what is experienced in mentoring relationships. Progressing from this, Self-in-Relation theory can help inform the conceptual frameworks constructed for the examination of mentoring relationships by emphasising the co-responsibility inherent in relationships. In reduces the sometimes overly strenuous focus on how and why such relationships lead to the development of independence and self-reliance in favour of increasing the focus on the importance of mutuality and interdependence. Here we begin to see the relevance of, until recently, previously underestimated elements such as authenticity in mentoring relationships. However, this poses a challenge when we also acknowledge that people are rational (or irrational) calculators. This presents somewhat of a conflict for theoretical development as well as for any practitioner facilitation of training and guidance on mentoring. Nonetheless, it is not an insurmountable conflict or contradiction. Rather, it is another perspective that needs to be accounted for in the examination of what is highly complex and dynamic. Simply put, we have to examine the value of pro-social and philanthropic authentic behaviours in conjunction with the motivations and expectations involved in doing so. This in itself is a key goal and will address the gaps about why, when and how mentoring works. People do make calculated decisions and these affect their behaviours and interactions with others. As identified, social exchange theory provides a viable
starting point. Following from this examining “What’s in it for me?” we can better understand what mentors and protégés expect as a result of investment in the relationship, but also why, when and how intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes are valued. Further to the examination of investments in and expectations from relationships, Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) was proposed as relevant to mentoring literature particularly in cases where the relationship between the mentor and protégé are in direct or skip-level reporting relationships within a hierarchy and why some may gain or “be chosen” and some may not. While this will not be a significant focus for the remainder of this thesis, it is important to highlight that it is closely related to the other theories presented and when the relationship is characterised by a dyadic structure similar to LMX relationships, an LMX research lens will likely prove useful. In general, borrowing from this may help-inform our understanding of high quality pairings as opposed to marginally functioning relationships. Furthermore, this is related to a building and deployment of human capital geared toward career aspirations within networks and structures. Therefore, borrowing elements from social capital theory can be useful for understanding the ability to call upon resources, career decision making and career advancement. Furthermore, this helps to explain how and why developmental relationships emerge and career success is achieved through signalling of identity (knowing why), signalling performance (knowing how), and signalling of social capital (knowing whom) (De Janasz & Sullivan, 2004). However, to close the loop, social capital operates through features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995, p. 67). Therefore, the theoretical vignette hinges upon willingness to experience
vulnerability (within the presumed existence of trust and safety) and similarly help-seeking and feedback seeking behaviours (Allen et al., 2010). Attachment styles that are pre-existing and possessed by individuals create the “systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotions, emotion regulation strategies and social behaviour” (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002: 134) that operationalizes and guides the depth and trajectory of relationships. Finally, relatedness then hinges upon several aspects of the emotional and esteem based support functions. It entails, perhaps most importantly, that interpersonal resonance that allows for high-quality relational support and effective development.

2.8 LINKING SOCIAL SUPPORT THEORY TO FORMAL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS.

Social support theory identifies various forms of social support that have relevance in understanding the mentoring relationship.

“As it is intended, mentoring is supposed to be “the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, entailing the most influence, identification, and emotional involvement” (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003, p. 41).

However, despite the now extensive research on formal mentoring programmes, there are very few studies that consider such relationships from the perspective of social support theory. Mentoring can be considered a form of social support that may help buffer job-related stress through helping individuals with various coping strategies (House, 1981; Kram and Hall, 1989). Neilson et al (2001) viewed mentoring as a unique type of social support. While there are a range of
established definitions of mentoring, this unique type of social support can be conceptualised in specific ways where some have commentated on how a mentoring relationship should be characterised. For instance, Shea (1995) suggested mentoring is a “developmental, caring, sharing, helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how and effort in increasing and improving another person’s growth, knowledge and skills” (p. 3). Social support can be viewed as a means through which people gain support through supportive networks and can be comprised of people other than family, friends and immediate work groups (Barnes, 1954). Mentoring can fulfil a valuable role as a social support mechanism for various work and career purposes. However, as Ragins & Kram (2007) have observed, “In a nutshell, we know (mentoring) works, we are still grappling with why, when and how” (p. 4). We have learned a significant amount concerning the beneficial and dysfunctional outcomes of mentoring; however, we still know very little about the qualitative and affective aspects of positive mentoring relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Lindorff (2005) observed that although there is a considerable amount of research on perceived social support, little is known about the determinants of receiving support. She comments, “research into specific instances of support provision is thus important in itself. It may also help our understanding of the process by which people come to believe that relationships will provide support if required (p. 324).

2.8.1 Overview of Social support theory

Social support theory considers relationships as sources of interpersonal support. Researchers have highlighted the difficulty in clearly defining social support due
to its multifaceted and contextually dependant nature. In simple terms, social support can be considered as the fulfilment by others of ongoing social needs (Bowlby, 1982; Cutrona, 1996). House (1981) identified four types of social support: emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental. Cutrona and Russell (1990) and Cutrona and Suhr (1992) suggested five core social functions: emotional support, esteem support, information support, tangible assistance and network support. Emotional support functions, in the context of mentoring emphasise concern, empathy, and the ability to turn to others for comfort and assistance. Esteem support is important for the boosting of a protégé’s self-confidence, belief in the other person’s abilities, the validation of thoughts, feelings, and actions, and respect for what the other person has to offer. Information support may take the form of factual input, advice, guidance, appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, and developmental advice. Network support concerns the feeling that the developmental relationship enables an individual to be a part of a network of individuals with similar interests and concerns. Tangible assistance focuses on the provision of resources or assistance with tasks.

Social support can function as a strong buffer to the negative effects of stressors (Bliese & Britt, 2001; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Robbins, Lese, & Herrick, 1993). Lindorff (2005) found that although managers perceived more emotional support from outside work relationships, she suggested provision of this support in the workplace can be considered a legitimate work role. Barnes & Duck (1994) highlighted the importance of studying support received through ‘everyday’ discourse as it helps to construct and embody personal relationships as dynamic
structures of social support (p. 176). While formal mentoring may not occur in this ‘everyday’ manner and interaction between mentor and protégé is less likely to be a common daily activity, there is value in studying mentoring through a social support theory lens. Burleson, et al. (1994) have argued that the study of social support as a communicative process involves a focus on three issues: (1) studying the messages through which both mentor and protégé seek and express support; (2) studying the interactions through which supportive messages are produced and interpreted and (3) studying the relationships that are created and contextualised.

2.8.2 Identifying the social support dimensions of mentoring relationships

The psychosocial support dimensions of mentoring are often characterised as the “social support” aspects associated with helping protégés help themselves. Whereas, the career functions are associated with direct and proactive help with a protégé’s career. However, we know that mentoring is complex and involves an array of interdependent functions. Nielson, Carlson & Lankau (2001) have highlighted that the psychosocial aspects of the mentoring construct resemble House’s (1981) descriptions of emotional and appraisal support. They also highlighted that mentors can provide informational and instrumental social support aimed at career development.

2.8.3 Social support categories and their relevance to mentoring

Emotional & Esteem Support: Emotional and esteem support are two aspects of social support associated with mentoring relationships. Mentoring functions such
as friendship, confirmation and role modelling can be as source of socio-emotional support and confidence building that reduces self-doubt and situational uncertainty (Bozionelos, 2006). Day & Allen (2004) found that psychosocial support through mentoring has been associated with enhanced goal clarity, self-confidence and self-esteem. However, they suggested that self-esteem is a more static trait and that it may be more appropriate to talk about and enhanced sense of self-confidence and self-worth in terms of self-efficacy. There is a clear distinction between self-esteem and self-efficacy (e.g. Judge & Bono, 2001).

Social support theory posits that support occurs through a communicative process and occurs in a manner appropriate to the context and the needs of the individual (Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). The dimensions of this communicative process are highlighted in the mentoring literature. Neilson, Carlson and Lankau (2001) suggested that a mentor should be able to empathise with a protégé’s personal circumstances and desires. Relationships built upon strong mutual understanding and empathy are likely to be deep and meaningful relationships that go beyond tangible benefit. Trust is highlighted as a particularly salient characteristic of social support and is particularly important in emotional support. However, trust is less frequently highlighted in the workplace mentoring literature. Few studies have examined trust from the perspectives of both mentor and protégé (Young and Perrewé, 2000). To reiterate the key general gap in the mentoring literature is clear understanding of how, when and why mentoring works. Trust appears to be a crucial element in this, or indeed any relationships, as highlighted in the theoretical review presented here. Therefore, it is surprising that there has not been greater examination of elements in trust even when
focusing on mentoring from an instrumental perspective. The issue of trust will be revisited throughout this thesis and findings will indicate that it is a variable that should form a part of any examination of mentoring relationships. An element of trust is important at the outset of the relationship and may be an antecedent factor. However, trust is a quality of supportive relationships that develops over time (Parker, Hall and Kram, 2008). Wang et al. (2010) suggest that affect and cognition based trust are potentially important top mentoring relationships. Affect based trust focuses on close emotional bonds and feelings of identification (McAllister, 1995). Whereas cognition based trust is related to perceptions of dependability, reliability and competence. Mentoring relationships facilitate the development of close working relationships whereby both mentor and protégé reach an understanding of their common goals, interest, beliefs and values.

*Information Support:* Information support is a further element common to social support and mentoring theories. Factual inputs are important to aspects of social support. Likewise, mentors and protégés may reciprocally seek information such as performance feedback, social information and technical or normative information from each other (Mullen, 1994; Mullen & Noe, 1999). The receipt of feedback is essential to effective management and leadership development (see DeRue & Wellman, 2009). It is clear that a mentor that works closely with a protégé such as in supervisory mentoring would be in a better position to offer more performance related feedback. Nonetheless, a mentor that does not work closely with the protégé can still provide feedback about the protégé’s approach to and assessment of situations. Day and Allen (2004) highlighted that feedback provided to protégés is important for goal clarity, self-confidence and has
important career success implications. Likewise, a mentor can provide feedback about the protégé’s situation and reflective advice or information based on his or her past experiences. This type of information can also be generated through the greater amounts of insight and perspective the mentor can offer. Finally, career guidance information, such as information about options and assessment of those options is also generally understood to be a valuable aspect of career mentoring and can be considered a legitimate subject of social support.

**Network Support and Tangible Assistance:** Network support and tangible assistance are two forms of social support (Cutrona and Russell, 1990; Cutrona and Suhr, 1992) that are applicable to career mentoring relationships. In social support research, these types of support are generally perceived or realised as reactions to stressors or buffers of stress. Psychological research conceptualises network support as received from a provider of support that is part of an individual’s social support network or belonging to a group of individuals with similar concerns. Tangible assistance can be provided in the workplace to help an individual overcome practical problems (Lindorff, 2005). Mentors can be considered part of individuals’ support network, but may also be more or less instrumental in assisting protégés expand their networks or move more effectively within them. Furthermore, a relational perspective on mentoring highlights that the most positive or meaningful mentoring relationships are based in mutual or reciprocal interactions rather than in a unilateral instrumental exchange (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). It is also plausible to envisage supervisory mentoring relationships where mentors perceive protégés as part of their supportive networks and as providers of tangible assistance.
Assisting a protégé to cope with and understand organisational political behaviours and structures could conceivably span the boundaries of information support, network support and tangible assistance. Blass et al (2007) suggested that political skill development involves learning about unofficial rules of engagement which augment one’s ability to take advantage of opportunities. They argue that through understanding how things are done and who is important, “individuals will not only know whom to include in their networks, but also how to go about building them in a contextually appropriate way, because they understand the power structures in the organization, network positioning, and how to deal with the political behaviour taking place” (p. 96). When political behaviours become stressors to an individual a mentor may be well positioned to assist with a protégé’s coping ability as well as helping them to overcome the difficulties he or she is faced with. A mentor may also help with how to confront the difficulties in a constructive manner. Politically skilled people possess social competencies that enhance their interpersonal effectiveness to achieve goals through their understanding and influence of others at work (Blickle et al., 2008). This type of knowledge is essential for effectiveness and even survival in the political organization arena (Blass et al., 2007; Perrewé & Nelson, 2004). Blass and Ferris (2007) contend that political skill development is a social learning process and that mentors armed with experientially gained political knowledge can and should share this with their protégés as it is crucial to success. They maintain that this type of learning and support is based in contextual knowledge and helps protégés achieve career success by successfully dealing with and navigating within organisational networks.
Another way mentors assist their protégés advance within organisational structures or even external networks is by helping them achieve exposure and contacts. This is distinct from what is commonly identified in the mentoring literature as a career support functions such as sponsorship or providing challenging assignments (Kram, 1985). Friday et al. (2004) argued that although some researchers have studied mentoring and sponsorship as concurrent, they are in fact, “two distinctly different developmental relationships that are not necessarily mutually exclusive in terms of being performed by the same individual… (however) … the terms … should not be used interchangeably” (p. 641). Furthermore, the legitimacy of direct intervention by a mentor in sponsoring or protecting a protégé’s career is also questionable on a number of levels and depends upon the context. A mentor may have the opportunity and motivation to put forth a protégé in ways that directly achieve greater exposure and contacts. However, mentors may also help protégés do this for themselves. Nonetheless, this type of support, whether direct or indirect, can be conceptualised as a tangible assistance support function. This highlights the potential complexity and overlap of career mentoring functions, social support and networking. This is evident when one considers that things such as confidence boosting and political advice could be integral to the ability of a protégé to successfully gain positive exposure and enhance his or her network of contacts.

Social support theory highlights a form of network support as having similar others that are reliable. High quality relationships are based in mutual liking, trust and respect (Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Therefore, compatibility is an important feature for all developmental relationships. Compatibility between the provider
and receiver of support is also important for any form of social support. This is conceptualised as having ‘similar others’ for network support (Cutrona & Rusell, 1990). This issue in and of itself further clearly highlights the importance of effective matching of mentors and protégés in formal mentoring programs.

Tangible assistance can be realised through access to resources or task direction. Access to resources is gained through supportive or helpful social networks that facilitate career mobility (Podolny & Baron, 1997). Access to resources and guidance on how to approach tasks is often highlighted in the literature on mentoring new teachers (e.g. Ballantyne, Hansford, & Packer, 1995; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Having a mentor is a form of social capital and network support that can provide access to resources and careers (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

Careers have in many cases become complex and socially situated endeavours. Considering the paucity of research on perceptions of mentoring relationship qualities and how support is realised, the study of mentoring through a social support lens will should illuminate how and why these supportive relationships function and are valued in the context of work and career. There often exists overlap and a complex interdependence of support functions in career mentoring. This suggests that it would be valuable to highlight how mentors and protégés signify related support functions rather than attempting to further distinguish and isolate these functions.
2.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The theoretical perspectives discussed so far highlight particular dimensions of mentoring relationships that are important to the ability to enhance individual and relational career capital.

This section will focus on specific relationship characteristic dimensions: trust; match compatibility; authenticity; and dialogue, reflection, and feedback. Relationships will simply be less functional and effective without substantially positive levels of each of these dimensions. They are essential characteristics of high-quality relationships that foster personal and career development leading to the enhancement of individual and relational career capital. Relational/social cognitive theory, social support theory, social capital theory, social networks theory, attachment theory, relatedness theory, self-in-relation theory, and leader–member exchange theory provide various perspectives on how relationships operate. The absence of any of these quality characteristics will limit the relationship functionality. Furthermore, the important issue of relationship proximity is highlighted as a relationship structure variable characteristic. Each of these characteristic dimensions are discussed and some specific examples of their relevance to the theories identified are highlighted. As highlighted above, Lilian Eby and colleagues have been the most prominent contributors analysing the negative characteristics of mentoring relationships. Eby, et al., (2010) summarise a number of the issues relevant to this section. They note the most common bad experiences reported by protégés:
“…mentor–protégé mismatches (e.g., differences in values, personalities, work styles). Neglect can also occur if the mentor is perceived as not interested in helping the protégé develop. Protégés can also report lack of expertise (technical or interpersonal) or manipulative behavior (e.g., taking undue credit, sabotage) on the part of mentors. Finally, protégés report that some mentors exhibit general dysfunctionality, stemming from personal problems or negative attitudes that can negatively impact their relationship. Mentors can also report bad experiences with protégés (Eby, Durley, et al., 2008; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby & McManus, 2004). Protégé performance problems involve the protégé failing to meet the mentor’s expectations or being perceived as unwilling to learn. Interpersonal problems involve conflicts, disingenuousness on the part of the protégé, and other difficulties, such as over-submissiveness. Destructive relational patterns are more intense, and involve a breach of trust, relationship exploitation, sabotage, as well as jealousy and competitiveness toward the mentor. Mentor reports of bad experiences with protégés are related to less favorable work attitudes, strain reactions and reduced relationship quality” (P.82)

2.9.1 Trust as a Determinant of Relationship Quality

The existence of trust is important in any functional relationship. Trust has been shown to be of incontrovertible importance in the literatures on mentoring as well as other relational theories. Higgins and Kram (2001) summarise its salience this way: “Although career functions such as protection and sponsorship may aid an individual’s career advancement, an individual’s clarity of identity and understanding of developmental needs and personal values are most likely to be realised through developmental relationships that are characterized by mutual trust, interdependence and reciprocity” (p. 278). This is based in a sense of
goodwill that is a valuable resource (Adler and Kwon, 2002). It would be counterintuitive to imagine that there could be much perceived goodwill without trust.

Trust resounds throughout the mentoring and developmental relationship literatures. It is also highlighted in a number of the theories discussed earlier. For instance, trust is a key feature of social support theory (Cutrona, 1996), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982), and leader–member exchange theory. Trust is a key source of social capital and it is realised through support (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Furthermore, “To have social capital that can be leveraged, one must have trusted colleagues, friends, advisors and mentors in which the relationship has true meaning to the careers of both parties. The key words are mutual and shared. Mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit are essential, just as are having shared vision and shared values” (Tymon & Stumpf 2003, p.18). Trust is a characteristic valued by protégés. Burke (1984) found that most protégés perceived in general that mentors had a reputation for being “trusted, respected, liked and admired” (p. 400). Trust is also mentioned by mentors as a key feature of a positive mentoring relationship. Young and Perrewé (2000) found that the met expectations of mentors and protégés were partially mediated by perceptions of relationship effectiveness and trust.

Parker, Hall, and Kram (2008) highlight that trust is a quality that develops over time. Trust based in interdependence and is built from sharing and mutuality (Rousseau, 1995). Sheppard and Sherman (1998) refer to predictability trust where trust is bolstered through series of reliable behaviours. Trust is important at
the outset of the developmental relationship. Where trust is strong, it is more likely that the mentor or critical friend will be more comfortable asking difficult questions, offering feedback and criticism, and dealing with the difficult issues. Taking risks and receiving support can lead to more risk taking (Das & Bing-Sheng Teng, 1998). Trust is likely to be multidimensional in nature. Leana and van Buren (1999) make a distinction between fragile and resilient trust. The former exists when individuals in a developmental relationship make the decision to take a risk or demonstrate vulnerability in a transaction-by-transaction basis. Resilient trust is much more robust. It is derived from broader experiences of support with the other party. It can also deal more effectively with set-backs. A range of different types of trust issues can be identified (see Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). In particular, it would be useful to consider competence trust, predictability trust, and goodwill trust and how they are established through reciprocity in mentoring and other developmental relationships.

The authors argue that trust is essential if the benefits accrued to organisations in terms of knowledge sharing are to be maximised. This holds true for the knowledge sharing that occurs in mentoring as well. Honest, open, objective advice and a belief by help seekers that the advice giver has sincere and genuine concerns for their success seems to be essential for effective career discussions at work (Kid, Hirsch & Jackson, 2004). Indeed, mentoring can be a quite personal affair, but with the increase in formalised mentoring, there is risk that these personal factors may be underestimated.
2.9.2 Mentor-Protégé Match compatibility

Effective matching of mentors and protégés in formal mentoring programs is an important consideration for various reasons. A certain level of compatibility among relationship members is of paramount importance. A mismatch between participants in terms of holding some sort of common or at least compatible understanding would increase the potential for a lack of trust. It is now well established in the mentoring literature that in informal mentoring relationships formed through mutual identification and attraction, trust seems to be of primary importance in both the establishment and functionality of effective relationships. The issue of compatibility of the pair is particularly important in formally established mentoring and other developmental relationships. Viator (1999) suggested that input into the matching (pairing) process is associated with perceptions of a more positive relationship. Eby, Butts, Lockwood, and Simon (2004) found that effective matching was as a key feature of an effective formal mentoring programme and that mismatches between individuals in terms of personal characteristics were a key hindrance to effectiveness. There are well established paradigms of similarity attraction in both actual and perceived similarity that positively affect relationship quality and satisfaction (Dobrow et al., 2011).

I will define relationship compatibility as effective relationship functioning through mutually satisfactory and harmonious thought processes, behaviours, and expectations. This does not require absolute similarity; differences of opinion will complement the learning process and add value. However, strong dissonance will be disruptive. Relationships are constructed and evaluated through cognitive
maps (social cognitive theory). There will be perceptions of compatibility in naturally occurring developmental relationships. Effective developmental relationships are more likely to be based on mutual attraction and respect and develop because mentors and protégés readily identify with each other. Armstrong, Allinson, and Hayes (2002) suggested that naturally occurring developmental relationships will occur where both parties have complimentary or similar cognitive styles or quality would be negatively affected and the relationship would become dysfunctional and cease. Effective compatibility is also essential to interpersonal social support (social support theory) and the enduring emotional bonds established through attachment (attachment theory). The establishment of compatible relationships is manifest through the stages of progression of attachment identified by Josselson (1992). Self-in-relation theory highlights interdependence that is present in all relationships to varying degrees and the relational competence that is integral to this interdependence. For this to occur, compatibility is essential. High-quality relationships are based in mutual liking, trust, and respect (Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Therefore, compatibility is an important feature for all developmental relationships. Perceived similarity may be a key feature of compatibility between both parties in the relationship and has been associated with more positive perceptions of relationship quality (Allen & Eby, 2003). Noe’s (1988) finding that assigned mentoring relationships provided limited career and vocational benefits brought with it the implication that formal mentoring programmes have limited effectiveness. Ragins and Cotton (1999) confirm this aspect of the limitations, whereby formal mentoring programmes are seemingly unable to duplicate the strong relationships that develop informally between mentors and protégés, as informal relationships are based on mutual
attraction and respect, developing because mentors and protégés readily identify with each other. Clutterbuck (2004) highlighted the importance of an organisation seeking a balance between the formal and informal, and this will help avoid the risk of flawed compatibility and dysfunctionality often associated with mismatches.

“Our thinking increasingly is that the mentoring ‘package’ that will give organisations the greatest value is one that integrates both formal and informal mentoring so that they become mutually supportive. Furthermore, there has been some consensus that an environment where successful mentoring can flourish would contain some elements of structure in the form of support available, but require no third party intervention in pairings. Rather it would allow market forces to drive both the matching process and the quality control of the mentoring provided” (p. 17).

2.9.3 Authenticity

Authenticity is associated with issues of trust, esteem, and efficacy. Authentic exchanges are enabled by trust, esteem, and efficacy, which in turn can bolster trust, esteem, and efficacy. Trust has already been established as a crucial element of relationships. However, the interplay of this with esteem and efficacy is important. There must be a sufficient level of both esteem and efficacy to engage authentically; and authentic exchanges can build perceptions of esteem and efficacy. The interdependence of these issues is complex and has implications for relationships as conceptualised by relational theories. For example, the emotional bond formed through attachment (Bowlby, 1983) and progressive relatedness (Josselson, 1992) will be significantly limited in the absence of authentic
exchanges. Mutual esteem and self-efficacy are somewhat important at the foundation of the relationship and can grow as the relationship progresses. Authenticity and the building of inter-dependence associated with self-in-relation theory may be mutually reinforcing. Relational competence is a crucial element of this theory and this is associated with efficacy. Furthermore, mutual esteem and the boosting of self-esteem are particularly important elements highlighted by self-in-relation theory. These examples highlight relevant aspects of authentic relationships.

Authenticity received substantial attention through George (2003) who emphasised the importance of authentic leadership. While valuable for informing what it takes to be a truly great leader, a number of issues that George highlighted have pertinence to developmental relationships. He suggested the following as essential components of authenticity: learning from your life story, knowing your authentic self, practising your values and principles, balancing your intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, building your support team, and integrating your life by staying grounded (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007). Leaders and followers or peers and colleagues that approach developmental relationships in the same manner will be able to maximise the true potential of the relationship. Therefore, authenticity has emerged as an important issue in mentoring and developmental relationships. It suggests that there is limited value in simply emulating someone else’s behaviours no matter how positive they may be. Maniero and Sullivan (2006) suggested that authenticity is “striving to be genuine to one’s true self” (p. 159). Kernis (2003) made this subtle distinction: “Authenticity is not reflected in a compulsion to be one’s true self, but rather in
the free and natural expression of core feelings, motives, and inclinations” (p. 14). Individuals who are authentic have a strong understanding of their values, priorities, and preferences, and this may manifest itself in a number of ways. It may represent a longing for purpose or it may involve striving for growth. It may also represent a need to follow one’s own path or a desire for unrealised aspirations. Parker, Hall, and Kram (2008) suggested that authenticity is an important characteristic of a peer coaching relationship. They highlight the need for both parties to be honest and open with themselves and each other. Herriott (2001) pointed out that effective social relationships enable the reformation of self to acquire characteristics of authenticity including expressions of empathy, warmth, and generousness. Where individuals bring authenticity to the process, it enables more effective management of tensions. Schlegal et al. (2009) found that self-reported authenticity was positively related to important outcomes such as self-actualisation, self-concept clarity, self-esteem, and career clarity. Authenticity is also related to general subjective well-being, hope, and positive affect. These issues indicate that higher levels of mutual authenticity would likely augment the perceived and actual effectiveness of a developmental relationship for personal and career growth.

2.9.4. Dialogue, Reflection, and Feedback

Dialogue, reflection, and feedback are key features of developmental activities (Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008). Dialogue is an important element of meaning-making that occurs between parties in a developmental relationship as highlighted by social cognitive theory. Dialogue in developmental conversations is the vehicle or means of expression that carries learning, understanding, and growth forward
through deep and meaningful interaction. These are fundamental elements of developmental activities that should pervade more or less throughout any relationship. The absence of at least sufficient levels of dialogue, reflection, and feedback would severely limit the establishment of mutuality and the reciprocal nature of high-quality relationships as identified by each of the relational theories presented.

Parker et al. (2008) suggest that dialogue is different from conversations in that the former facilitates a greater degree of shared thinking and that the role of the mentor, developer or peer is to listen, question, and ensure that there is an appropriate emotional and cognitive space. There is some debate about whether dialogue and conversation are the same or different. Parker and colleagues prefer to “promote the concept of dialogue as posited by Issacs (1999, p. 22) as it ‘raises the level of shared thinking, it impacts how people act, and in particular, how they all act together’” (p. 498). While Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (2005) settle for using the terms interchangeably, they bring attention to distinctions that are important to relational concepts. Dialogue and/or conversation should not be considered simply in terms of reciprocally talking, discussing, or debating. They highlight that root definitions indicate that dialogue is actually more associated with the spoken word and that it can be traced back to Latin definitions of debate with pejorative connotations such as conflict and strife; but that conversation in its historically literal sense is more associated with broader social activity, sharing space, intimacy, and collaboration (Baker et al., 2005, p. 414). In agreement with Baker and colleagues, it is beyond the current scope to descend into a debate where one term is chosen as more positive and comprehensive. Nonetheless, it is important
to emphasise that the notion that reciprocating through the spoken word is not sufficient to capture the depth and complexity of the interaction. “Dialogue” will be the chosen term simply for its contemporary connotations of being deeper and more complex than “conversing”. The issue of dialogue is important to many of the relational perspectives previously discussed. In order to achieve deep meaning and mutual understanding, the participants engaged in dialogue in developmental conversations need to be highly receptive and empathetic, dynamic and adaptive, inquisitive and sincere.

Reflection and feedback are emphasised as important elements that contribute to increased self-awareness. Raelin (2002) is a particularly strong proponent of reflection and argues that developmental relationships are ideal opportunities for this to occur. Most commentators advocate deep reflection, which is facilitated through pointed and powerful questions, challenging and follow-through, and the development of alternatives. Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) argue that attending to feelings is an important component of reflection. This involves utilising positive feelings and removing obstructive feelings. They use the term “revaluating experience” as an important outcome of reflection. Reynolds (1998) makes a distinction between “reflection” and “critical reflection”. Critical reflection focuses on asking questions of purpose and confronting the taken-for-granted that influences individuals’ thoughts and actions. Van Woerkom (2004) argues that reflection performs five important functions. It enables individuals to learn from mistakes, to engage in vision sharing, to share knowledge, to challenge groupthink, and to ask for feedback. Feedback is a constant in much of the literature on mentoring and developmental relationships.
Feedback enables individuals to become more reflective, to develop deeper levels of consciousness, and to change behaviours where appropriate. Feedback processes, in general, range from formal to informal. However, their effectiveness will be enhanced or limited by the openness of the individual to be receptive to the feedback and by their willingness to act on the feedback (Gilbert & Trudel, 2005). Feedback can be intricately incorporated into processes of dialogue and reflection. Mentoring relationships frequently involve protégés using mentors as sounding boards to test ideas and clarify perceptions about career options (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Furthermore, feedback is part of the process of helping people resolve issues for themselves rather than simply providing prescriptions (Kram, 1985). This occurs through a reciprocal and perhaps cyclical process of generating dialogue and reflecting on past career experiences. Feedback is an important part of the process and can be considered figuratively as the punctuation in the process where progress is assessed, decisions are made, or values established. From a relational perspective, dialogue, reflection, and feedback are integral to cognitive construction. They are also the processual instruments for career decision making through relational support.

2.9.5 Relationship Proximity

A related issue of mentor proximity has also been considered as a key consideration for effective mentoring relationships. This complicates the issue of perceived compatibility as it takes into account not only personal characteristics, but also individuals’ juxtaposition within or beyond organisational hierarchy, i.e. the structural proximity of the network members. This is implied through the relational theories presented that there must be the opportunity for closeness in
order for optimal relationship characteristics to be established. In other words, there must be significant proximity in order for a strong tie developmental relationship to be established and to be effective through significantly mutual and/or reciprocal processes. Proximity is considered a particularly important aspect of attachment theory (Davidovitz et al., 2007). Proximity in organisations is considered in terms of how individuals are connected or related structurally within or beyond an organisation as well as their perceptions of “closeness”. Considering a strong developmental relationship in organisations, the opportunity for “closeness” or proximity is an important consideration. Is the relationship intradepartmental or interdepartmental? Or is it intra- or inter-organisational? Is it a direct reporting relationship or not? This is an important consideration also because depending on a protégé’s developmental needs and the expectations of both parties in the relationship, current and past roles are relevant to the functions and outcomes likely to occur. Those engaged in the relationship would therefore likely assess compatibility at this level as well. Ragins, Cotton and Miller, (2000) found that having an interdepartmental mentor led to stronger commitment and satisfaction with mentoring. However, Allen, Eby and Lentz (2006) found little evidence for the efficacy of having a mentor from a different department in formal mentoring programs. They noted suggestions that having a mentor from a different department provides opportunities for more diverse learning, exposure, and may avoid role clash that may occur with an intradepartmental mentor; however, contrastingly, they suggested having a mentor from the same department might provide greater opportunity for career mentoring based on more immediate knowledge and increased scope for interaction. They found that protégés reported receiving greater career mentoring from mentors within the same department, and
mentors reported providing more psychosocial mentoring to protégés from the same department (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006, p. 575). However, the researchers caution about the generalisability of their findings. Even so, it would be counterintuitive to suggest that an interdepartmental or inter-organisational mentor would not be able to provide objective advice about career trajectory or the counselling that is often gained through psychosocial mentoring. These issues require further empirical research in consideration of formal mentoring programme design. Nonetheless, it remains that there should be elements of choice as much as is functionally possible in the matching process. This issue had been given a great deal of attention early in the formation of the body of research on mentoring. Indeed, it is clear that assigned mentoring relationships may not be as beneficial as those that occur naturally and informally due to personality conflict (Kram, 1985; Noe 1988, Feldman, 1999), role conflict, especially if the mentor is also a direct supervisor (Feldman, 1999; Ensher et al., 2001; Armstrong et al., 2002), and lack of genuine commitment, especially if the programme is involuntary, because of the contrived nature of the relationship initiated by people other than the participants, which may lead individuals to feel coerced into participating and to confusion about role expectations (Kram, 1985) or decreased motivation to perform the role through perceived organizational pressure to display citizenship behaviours (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). The latter is a logical hypothesis, but one for which empirical evidence has not yet supported (Ragins, et al., 2000). It is important to continue to consider relationship proximity, degrees of formality, and the nature of hierarchical relationships in the theoretical development of a relational perspective on mentoring and other developmental relationships in general.
2.10 SUMMARY, SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS

A relational perspective on mentoring and other developmental relationships helps us to more fully understand their contribution to personal learning, support, and career development. There is a broad and deep body of theory supporting the view that self is more fully developed through effective relationships with others. It is likely that mentoring and other developmental relationships will play a significant role in individuals’ professional and career development into the future. Research suggests that relationships with others provide a critical resource that can inform decision making in a variety of areas related to self and career. We know that mentoring and other developmental relationships have the potential to be very fruitful experiences. Various developmental relationships can occur naturally in an organisation. However, mentoring and other developmental relationships are also viewed as interventions that facilitate a process of helping, development, exploration, and shared understanding. They are increasingly structured or formalised (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Burke & McKeen, 1989; Douglas & McCauley, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Whether they are naturally occurring or formally arranged, relational helping may take many forms, such as mentoring, coaching, peer coaching, counselling, and role modelling. There is significant overlap and common elements or functions throughout this conventional nomenclature. While these relationship titles have often been inconsistently differentiated, we continue to struggle to understand the developmental relationship construct and process, let alone concrete definitional aspects. However, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) argued, “To some extent, definitions do not matter greatly if those in the role (. . .) have a clear and mutual understanding of what is expected of them and what they in turn should expect”
Delving more deeply into discovering the relational qualities and processes of mentoring as perceived by participants in the relationships should help clarify how these expectations are formed, how they operate, how they change, and how they are satisfied.

The spectrum of relational theories discussed in this chapter highlight particular characteristics that are important for mentoring and other developmental relationships to flourish. These are trusting relationships that facilitate risk taking and exploration for learning and support; compatible relationships that allow the positive operation of interdependence, attachment, and the formation of shared meaning; authentic relationships that foster openness and reduce inhibition. Finally, relationships characterised by high levels of dialogue, reflection, and feedback as catalysts to learning will be more dynamic and productive.

The selected relationship theories discussed in this chapter highlight and signal a range of perspectives for the exploration of mentoring and other developmental relationships. In particular, they provide a useful range of perspectives in the investigation of how and why highly effective developmental relationships work. Reciprocal and mutual processes are not sufficiently understood or explained empirically. Ragins and Verbos (2007) suggested exploring social cognitive theory to better understand the relational implications. Furthermore, there are opportunities to build the theoretical basis of mentoring and developmental relationship constructs and phenomena through further incorporation of relevant elements of social capital theory, attachment theory, relatedness theory, self-in-relation theory, and leader–member exchange theory. Social support theory also
emerges as particularly salient. Emotional and esteem support both have implications for and individual’s ability to advance on a positive career trajectory. Information support could help to achieve this from a more knowledgeable basis. Likewise, network support and tangible assistance can be important elements to both facilitate and provide a buffer to the individual as a protégé strives to career development. The focus on the relational process that enables individuals to achieve an effective balance between interdependence and independence stands out as social support process and outcome for protégés of engaging in mentoring relationships. This serves to contribute to our understanding of the optimal conditions and processes through which personal and career learning flourishes reciprocally and mutually through developmental relationships.

It is evident that mentoring, regardless of form, can be very beneficial and is accepted as both a valuable and efficient method of learning and development of managers, among others, in organisations. Likewise it is also important to allow for the identification of negative relational qualities as signalled by mentors and protégés. Although mentoring is a process that can be highly successful, it can also be less than perfect or at times disastrous. It is often mistakenly assumed that any mentoring must be better than no mentoring (Feldman, 1999). However, Ragins, et al. (2000) found that bad mentoring may be destructive and in some cases, worse than no mentoring at all (see also Scandura, 1998). There are relational costs and expectations leading to vastly varying degrees of dysfunctional mentoring (Eby et al., 2004). Following from the notion of attempting to achieve a balance between independence and interdependence, it is useful to note that Higgins and Nohria (1999) have drawn attention to situations
where individuals seek to cultivate mentoring relationships for developmental purposes, but whose professional development actually becomes hindered because of the existence of the relationship and/or its structure. Specifically, the authors identified certain conditions where receiving mentoring early in one’s career can negatively affect the protégé’s ability to develop social capital through the emergence of a “side-kick effect” where protégés become over-reliant upon or overshadowed by his or her mentor. Hence, it is not a simple and straightforward process when either choosing a mentor and particularly not when third parties become involved in the matching process. Simply put, the type of support that is desired or required by the protégé may not be what the mentor is willing or able to provide. Likewise, relationship functionality and effectiveness would likely be compromised if a protégé fails to meet the expectations of the mentor through incongruous beliefs or behaviours. There would be a degree of uncertainty about this at earlier stages of the relationship and it might be more common for there to be problems and difficulties when the relationship is only nascent as the mentor and protégé may not know each other very well (Wanberg, Welsh & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). At these formative stages is where one might find the watershed between success and failure (or marginal effectiveness) as the mentor may need to strike a balance between being challenging and even demanding while still offering genuine forms of support and the protégé would then be faced with the challenge of being receptive to mentor behaviours as well as living up to mentor expectations. Furthermore, it seems logical to assume that mentor behaviours would impact to either a greater or lesser extent protégé perceptions of relationship effectiveness. Simply put, the mentor who is able to provide relationship inputs that the protégé perceives as valuable should impact positively
on relationship functionality, satisfaction with the relationship, and actual development. Therefore, highly functional and satisfying relationships from the protégé’s perspective would likely depend on the mentor being able to provide support that is what the protégé most requires in the ideal, or at least support that the protégé perceives as valuable. Similarly mentors would likely provide contributions toward a mutually fulfilling relationship if it were perceived that the protégé possessed the positive influencing relational qualities him or herself. Indeed, individuals are faced with complex cost-benefit scenarios throughout the social exchange. Not only should the relationship be functional, but also satisfying to both parties. As met expectations from the relationship have been identified as crucial to effectiveness, understanding the motives for engaging at the outset would also need to be examined. Furthermore, seeking feedback carries the risk of receiving negative information and some individuals may be motivated to defend or protect their egos and avoid negative feedback in the interest of self-protection (Allen et al. 2010). The extent to which feedback is received and welcomed would seem to have developmental implications for the protégé, but also may affect the perception the mentor has of the protégé’s ability, potential and desirability as a protégé. This and related issues will re-emerge in subsequent sections. These types of relational aspects and qualities are vital considerations in understanding mentoring as a relatively intense interpersonal engagement with both immediate and perhaps further reaching social implications. It could be considered that the career support begins when the protégé feels safe and at ease to share ideas and reservations, ask tough questions and get feedback, advice and confirmation (Cull, 2006). Therefore, it seems the career support elements of
mentoring relationships cannot be examined in clear isolation from the social (psychosocial) elements of support.

It has been discussed throughout this chapter how the gaps in the literature can be addressed through reframing the focus on mentoring research. It was reiterated that the key persistent dilemma remains, In a nutshell, we know (mentoring) works; we are still grappling with why, when, and how” (Ragins & Kram, 2007, p. 4). In order to address this the literature review has identified a number of qualitative aspects that are likely important, but we must understand how these are perceived by those acting in the relationship. The theoretical review also continuously pointed to need fulfilment, development, met expectations and experienced outcomes. Therefore, taking these together yields the research question most able to fill the gaps about why when and how mentoring works, which is:

*How do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships, what do they value or seek to achieve and what are the expected and experienced outcomes?*

A synthesis of the spectrum of elements of developmental relationships from a relational perspective is provided in Table 2.4 below. The following chapter will build on the theoretical framework and address the strategy for addressing the research question.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Key Relational Theories &amp; Postulations Relevant to All Developmental Relationships</th>
<th>Relationship Characteristics Emphasised by Theories and Relevant to All Strong Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career or job</td>
<td>Network Mentor</td>
<td>• Shares political knowledge and network experiences</td>
<td>Relational / Social cognitive theory</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on enhancing social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Trust is essential to all developmental relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>• Encourages learning, questioning &amp; reflection on practice.</td>
<td>Self-in-relation theory</td>
<td>• Trust is multi-dimensional including resilient trust, competence trust, predictability trust, and goodwill trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Challenges the individual, provides feedback &amp; supports new behaviours.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compatibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates appropriate behaviours, attitudes &amp; values.</td>
<td>Social exchange theory</td>
<td>• Compatibility of relationship members is essential to the ongoing functionality of relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourages imitation and mirroring of behaviours.</td>
<td>Leader-member exchange theory</td>
<td>• It is based on mutually satisfactory and harmonious thought processes, behaviours, and expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>• Provides friendly advice.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counsellor - Friend</td>
<td>• Helps the individual to find answers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Authenticity is essential in the free and determined pursuit of aspirations through relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focuses on coping strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• It is the means by which clarity is established to address goals effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Key Relational Theories &amp; Postulations Relevant to All Developmental Relationships</td>
<td>Relationship Characteristics Emphasised by Theories and Relevant to All Strong Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|       |       |           | *Social capital theory*  <br>• Explains relationship strength issues and mutual or reciprocal political learning and networking behaviours | *Dialogue, Reflection & Feedback*  <br>• These are the means through which deep learning occurs.  
• These drive both relationship interaction and have implications for relationship building |
|       |       |           | *Social & developmental networks theories*  <br>• Explains the closeness of support providers and a range of sources of support |                                                                                       |
|       |       |           | *Attachment theory*  <br>• Explains feeling secure in close relationships through trust and dependability |                                                                                       |
|       |       |           | *Relatedness theory*  <br>• Explains relationship progression, mutual understanding and shared experience |                                                                                       |
|       |       |           | *Social support theory*  <br>• Social support accounts for empathetic behaviours, how needs are fulfilled, and agentic capital enhancement behaviours |                                                                                       |

*Source: Rock & Garavan (2011)*
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will outline the methodological strategy for designing the research and how the research was conducted. Firstly, this will involve discussing the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings that influenced the choice of research methodology. Secondly, it will detail the methods employed. Remenyi and Williams (1999:28) define research methodology as, “the procedural framework within which the research is conducted. It describes an approach to a problem that can be put into practice in a research programme or process, which Leedy (1989) formally defines as ‘an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly’”.

The primary purpose and design of this study was two-fold. First, it was intended to identify how mentoring is constructed by both mentors and protégés in unique organizational settings. Second, it was intended to deepen our understanding of how mentoring operates and in what ways specific learning foci lead to protégé development. Therefore, the primary research question is: “how do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships, what do they value or seek to achieve and what are the expected and experienced outcomes. This also serves as a response to Scandura and Pelligini’s (2007) recent reiteration of calls for more qualitative field studies to develop a more holistic and in-depth understanding of mentoring, mentoring relationships, and the dynamics involved. Furthermore, there is limited evidence of perceptions mentors
have about their roles (Gibson, 2004). An in-depth qualitative method and the inductive approach pursued were deemed necessary to glean evidence of specific experiences as perceived by participants (Isabella, 1990; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007) and to gain a deep understanding of phenomena through the meanings humans attach to events experienced (Saunders et al., 2000). This research is appropriate when the study seeks the meaning of a particular phenomenon to participants or when individual perceptions and accounts of social processes (King, 1994). It attempts to capture data about relationships that are nested in a real-life context and have a ‘ring of truth’ about people’s perceptions (Amaratunga, et al., 2002). The broader specific intentions of this study were to gather data that would allow us to gain better insight about the learning that takes place in distinct types of formal mentoring and to strengthen our understanding of what mentoring functions and benefits are seen as valuable by both mentors and protégés. The multi-site research provided an opportunity to discover how mentoring differs depending on context. The approach is based on the assumption that formal organisational mentoring is not a generic process. The acquisition of data about formal mentoring experiences from multiple sites that are contextually distinct also enables the researcher to continually explore the inferences gained from one context in the case of another context, which lends to a strengthening of the validation of findings (Eisenhardt, 2002).

While it was expected that the data might represent some similarities in mentoring experiences in the various settings, substantial differences were also quite possible. Therefore, it was important to seek to discover what mentoring means to the participants in consideration of their unique job situations as well as how
they perceive the quality and value of mentoring as they experienced it. While the originally devised interview structure had specific foci on perceptions about the primary mentoring relationships, there were also questions asked of each mentor and protégé that sought to discover if any other mentoring or developmental relationships existed for the individual at another point in time or concurrently with the primary mentoring relationship. This provided the opportunity to gain insight into how individuals valued certain qualities of the primary mentoring relationship, at times, in comparison to other developmental relationships. There was also cognisance that this approach opened the possibility to gain richer information that might shed light on possible developmental network structures and qualities as perceived by participants. Seeking data from multi-site formal mentoring experiences occurring as contextually distinct forms of mentoring as well as that from matched pairs is a valuable approach that attempts to satisfy significant gaps and a paucity of deep understanding in the extant mentoring research literature. We have learned a lot from quantitative research about the antecedents and consequences of mentoring relationships at work. However, we understand comparatively very little about how unique mentoring relationships operate in terms of the support functions offered, received, valued and realised. Therefore, a key concept underpinning the rational for this research aimed at clarifying the relational aspects of the mentoring construct is that there is not a single, objective reality, but rather there is a series of multiple realities that need to be taken into account and valued as unique artefacts (Remenyi et al., 1998).

Taking into account the subjective nature of perceptions as perceived by participants, it is understood that the role of the researcher in qualitative research involves substantial interpretation and detailed description of the data gathered.
(Bryman & Bell, 2003). Moreover, the qualitative approach in data gathering techniques employed, namely in-depth semi-structured interviews, and subsequent data analyses involve cognisance that each interview, while uniquely situated, does not stand in isolation from others, but has meaning in terms of comparison with other interviews (Whyte, 1953).

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

One of the key research gaps identified in the literature review, Chapter 2, in this thesis is that there persists a lack of understanding of the relational qualities and behavioural aspects of mentoring relationships and what makes these particularly special or distinct in high quality mentoring relationships in comparison to different types of mentoring or developmental relationships (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). It has also been clearly established throughout both empirical and theoretical research on mentoring that there remains a lack of holistic understanding of mentoring as experienced by identifiable pairs involved in mentoring relationships in unique contexts. This is the primary reason there persists calls by researchers for more in-depth and explorative qualitative studies on mentoring that might better inform our understanding of what mentoring is and really means as well providing a stronger conceptual basis that can inform better focused and better defined quantitative studies. Simply put, at this stage of the evolution of the theory and the literature on the practice of mentoring, rich qualitative data and analysis remains an imperative. The following paragraphs in this section will discuss the philosophical position adopted and how this informed the research approach.
formulated to address the research questions posed. This will begin with an overview of relevant research philosophies, issues and tensions.

Interpretive, qualitative approaches to social science inquiry have gained momentum over the last few decades having emerged from being relegated to a subordinate, “unscientific” status (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). However, research “born out of concern to understand the ‘other’” (Vidich & Lyman 2000, p. 38) necessitates the more subjective and interpretive approach to capture the humanistic and socially constructed realities in a way not possible through purely objective, positivistic, quantitative metrics (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). In many arenas, there is a post-positivist approach where, opposed to the positivist approach, which contends that there is a certain reality that can be clearly and objectively captured and understood, post-positivists argue that reality can never be fully apprehended, rather only approximated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Guba, 1990). This contention entails distinctions in the research paradigm as compared to the more classical positivist scientific research design. The research paradigm is an interpretive framework (all research, including positivist, quantitative data analysis involves elements of interpretation) or a basic set of beliefs that guides action (Guba, 1990, p. 17). This is generally comprised of the epistemology (what is the relationship between the enquirer and the known?), ontology (what kind of being is the human being and what is the nature of reality?) and the methodology (how do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?) (Bazeley, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2008). Following from this there have emerged several variations of interpretive paradigms where there are subtle distinctions in defining aspects even within each of these depending on the philosophical contentions of individual researchers.
These include, but are not limited to, the following paradigms for example: Constructivism, Feminism and Critical Theory. These are examples of some of the more prominent variations following post-positivism (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2008). It is beyond the scope of this section to explore all of these paradigms in detail as each contain complexities on multiple levels. Notwithstanding, it is appropriate to describe certain parameters of the research philosophy adopted here.

While it will be continually emphasised in this thesis that the approach is primarily interpretive, there are also elements of a pragmatic philosophy. Pragmatism in terms of research philosophies asserts that the research question itself is the most important consideration. That is, the most important determinant of the ontology and epistemology is the research question, but if the research question does not suggest unambiguously which paradigm needs to be followed, it may be pointless to be too strict and get bogged down in meaningless debates about truth and reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 109). This captures that rationale behind the growing acceptance that, particularly in practice oriented disciplines, experimental paradigms and emerging methodologies based on subjective interpretation can be more loosely formed (Bazeley, 2013; Thorne, 2008). Bazeley (2008: p. 9) warns against overly strict adherence to established methodologies (and by extension, overarching paradigmatic divisions) and cite Janesick (2000: 390) as having coined the term “methodolatry” to describe, “a preoccupation with selecting and finding methods to the exclusion of actual substance of the story being told. Methodolatry is the idolatry of method, or a slavish attachment and devotion to method, that so often overtakes the discourse on the education and human services fields”.

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Therefore, from a largely pragmatic approach to interpretivism, it can be stated that the research paradigm adopted here is ontologically balanced between post-positivism ("real reality, but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendible) and constructivism (relativistic local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities); epistemologically, the inquiry is critically subjectivist with experiential, practical knowing and co-created findings. This, as previously stated, is guided by the primacy of the research question rather than in informing the development of the research question. To reiterate, the primary research question is:

*How do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships, what do they value or seek to achieve and what are the expected and experienced outcomes?*

Following this, the starting point must be primarily interpretive whereby the researcher begins with an open mind and listens to people telling their own stories to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the context in which they live and attempt to make sense of the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Hennick, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p. 9). This is an important consideration considering the nature of the inquiry. Rather than following the more structured and prescriptive nature of a positivist paradigm, it is precisely this openness that was consciously emphasised from the outset. While the procedures will be discussed later in this chapter as well as the nature of the semi-structured, in-depth interviewing as a data gathering method, it is important to note that the goal was to have participants tell their story, not to have them respond to questions surrounding preconceived ideas about what their story might be. This approach allows humans to speak about their human experiences while
capturing greater contextual influence, which positivistic paradigms cannot as readily accomplish, if at all (Hennick et al, 2011).

The elements of research design that have been focused on are among the fundamental building blocks of the type of sense making required to understand complex social constructs. It is understanding the very subjectiveness down to the individual level within context that is necessary before beginning to frame a more global and generalizable social construct. That is not to say that the researcher does not have influence on the direction of the research and the type of data gathered. It is an explicit recognition of the inter-subjective nature of examining socially-constructed phenomena and recognising that the research cannot be totally ‘value-free’ and objective, but rather that there is a need to strive for openness to the colour, shape and tone of the data gathered (Hennick et al, 2011, Prasad, 2005). This involves a process of personal and interpersonal reflexivity to help legitimise and validate the research process by scrutinising the researcher’s own impact not only through the guiding research philosophy at the outset, but through the data gathering, its analysis and the process of drawing inferences based in interpretation. This is an important consideration in the interpretive paradigm. Both personal reflexivity (considering researchers’ own backgrounds and assumptions that can affect the research process and data collection) and interpersonal reflexivity (considering he dynamic between the researcher and the participant in the creation of knowledge) help mitigate against unconscious bias in the research process (Hesse-Biber &Levy, 2006, p. 146). However, while it is important to devote some attention to these considerations, it is also important to realise that it should not lead to paralysing the research process. (Hennick et al., 2011). For the purposes of the research conducted for this thesis, it was a
conscious consideration to do as much as possible to minimise researcher impact through striving for the maximisation of the aforementioned openness both in initial approach and conceptualisation, through the data gathering process and analysis of that data. This involved a conscious effort to minimise the influence of any preconceived ideas about mentoring or mentoring related theory. For these reasons, it was planned to pursue predominantly flexible, open and grounded methods.

3.2 SELECTION OF METHODS
Because the objective of this research was largely exploratory and not set out to test existing aspects or variables identified in existing theory on mentoring and based on the gaps identified in the literature and the wide range of theories identified as relevant, there seemed a strong rationale for pursuing predominantly grounded methods. The procedures for data analysis will be discussed in following paragraphs. However, the aim of this section is to provide an overview of the key aspects of the methodological approach and the rationale for selecting these methods from a wide range of options available. Grounded theory has evolved quite substantially from its origins from Glasser & Strauss (1967) and there are debates and divergences between and among many who consider themselves grounded theorists. (Charmaz, 2008). It is important to note that I do not purport to have applied a purely grounded theory approach to this research and this has been established as acceptable once the research methods are ethical and valid.

Charmaz (2005) introduces grounded theory in the following way:
The term “grounded theory” refers both to a method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry…Essentially, grounded theory methods are a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development. A major strength of grounded theory methods is that they provide tools for analysing processes…A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships (p.p. 507-8).

It is largely the critical, comparative, synthesis and constructivist elements that are particularly appealing and apt for the research process as it evolved. It is the identification of concepts arising as relevant and as they emerged rather than strict adherence to procedures that was of particular value. It is this constructivist view of grounded researcher that justified the researcher as constructor rather than taking research and the data generated as provided and discovered objectively (Charmaz, 2008). Again, the approach is characterised by emphasis in the grounded aspects normally appreciated as valuable in inductive and interpretive qualitative research in general that than by some adherence to a strict framework. Miles and Huberman (1994) illustrate the goal of qualitative data gathering this way:

They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanation of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations. Then, too, good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks (p. 1).
This serves as an apposite preamble to both the goals and the consequential results of the research conducted for this thesis.

It should be noted that there are a number of other methods that could have been employed in this research and I will briefly discuss some of the more feasible and why they were not employed. Firstly, it would be interesting and perhaps valuable to gain access to a site and observe any mentoring programme training or briefing sessions that may be initiated and then following up with mentors and protégés that participate in the programme with a view to case study analysis. At the time of writing there are no known studies that have done so. However, in this case this was not possible because we were not aware of any training programmes or briefing sessions that were being conducted. Secondly, utilising Qualitative Diary Research was a strong consideration, but this option was eventually dismissed as the time frame available and planning that this would also require to commence this was deemed unviable. However, this is a method of data collection that is planned for follow-up studies and seems to be an ideal method of capturing rich detail in this type of subject matter. Gaining more contemplative and reflective detail would seem a worthwhile pursuit. It is foreseen that the challenge would be motivating people to enter their thoughts in a diary both with open truthfulness and with regularity. Thirdly, it is likely that there is scope for more focused questioning in follow-up interviews after initial interviews are conducted. This could also provide a platform for a longitudinal study perhaps gaining details about relationships from inception through to maturity and perhaps adjournment. Focus groups had been a consideration at one point in time; however, this was not undertaken in favour of the confidential one-to-one interviews. Furthermore, as issues of confidentiality emerged as extremely
important, it is likely that this type of method of data collection would not be substantially fruitful with regard to candid detail about mentoring relationships. However, they may be useful for studies about satisfaction with the structure and operation of mentoring programme initiatives.

3.3 SAMPLE

The data were collected from 38 individuals (19 mentor-protégé dyads) in four organisations located in the information technology, pharmaceutical, banking and education sectors. The participants consisted of mentors and protégés in formal mentoring programmes designed to facilitate their career development. Mentor and protégé participation was voluntary. Mentors in the four organisations who volunteered were chosen for the mentoring programme if they possessed high-level technical skills and extensive knowledge of the organisation. Mentors received training at the beginning of the programme in each organisation to help them understand their role and the purpose of the programme. Each organisation matched mentors and protégés based on the protégé’s developmental priorities, career goals and personal preferences. Each dyad was expected to meet for a minimum of thirty minutes each week. The dyads consisted of 52% male mentors and 39% male protégés. There were 26% male mentor-male protégé dyads, 35% female mentor-female protégé dyads, 26% male mentor-female protégé dyads and 13% female mentor – male protégé dyads. 85% of the mentors were not the protégés’ supervisors. 15% of mentors were the protégés’ supervisors. The average tenure of mentors was 9 years and of protégés was 5.2 years.
The organisations chosen for inclusion in the study were chosen as they were large enough organisations and located reasonably close to the research base. This was based on convenience and efficient access; however, it was fortuitous that these large organisation were located locally. Engagement was also facilitated as there were existing network contacts with the organisations through prior human resource development practitioner interaction. Nonetheless, the characteristics of the research sites had to satisfy a number or pre-determined criteria for selection for participation in the study. First, the organisations had to have formally recognised and established mentoring programmes currently operating. The precise structure of these programmes did not need to be specific. It was decided that for the purposes of this study, however, that the participants had to be consciously engaged in mentoring relationships of a certain degree of formality. This was a requirement due to the nature of the focus of the research questions. Another prerequisite criterion for inclusion in the study was that both the mentor and the protégé from each pair had to be available for interview. That is, no data was collected from any individual where the opposite member of the dyad did not also participate at some other time. It was deemed in advance that there was no foreseeable need for any other limiting criteria for the study. Indeed, it was hoped that there the research design would provide the opportunity to gather data from contexts of considerable variance. Therefore, the only pre-established criteria were that formally and explicitly recognised mentoring was taking place and that this was occurring in a workplace context among explicitly identifiable pairs.

The inclusion of the organisations themselves followed a progression from one to the next. The first organisational context to be included was the information
technology manufacturing company context. Table 3.1 outlines some of the key characteristics. The learning and development manager from this organisation was the primary contact and he agreed to be interviewed for a pilot run interview. This was deemed an appropriate approach as this individual had strong knowledge of the mentoring as it occurred on site. He was familiar with both the formal organisational aspects and how the relationships were formed, at least at initiation, on more informal levels. This was beneficial for a number of reasons and particularly for taking account for any preconceptions that I was bringing to the process of enquiry. For instance, as it was confirmed that there was a “mentoring programme” in operation at the site among middle and senior managers, it was assumed that there would be some significant degree of organisational involvement in the process, at least at the outset. However, it emerged that there were instances of mentoring relationships being arranged between individuals with little or no organisational involvement, yet these were still deemed to be “formal mentoring relationships”. Therefore, this emphasised the importance of the interview prompts allowing for commentary on these more informal aspects to be captured where they may have been missed had the focus been too strongly fixated on the formal mentoring as a programme. This pilot run at the initial stages created a strong reinforcement of the need to guide the line of questioning at gaining as much information about as many aspects of the mentoring relationships as possible while ensuring there was enough openness to capture anything that might emerge uniquely or serendipitously. Because there was to be such a strong effort to maintain openness with regard to the qualities and nature of the relationships in general, it was decided that no more pilot testing was necessary and data collection from individual members of dyadic pairs
commenced. The sample size of each organisation was limited only by those that were identified as available to participate in the study. The Pharmaceutical context followed. The Education context emerged as a potential research site after the initial planning stages of this research and it was included for interviews following the Pharmaceutical context. Only two pairs were identified as available for participation in the Banking context; however, it was reaching the stage where we decided that no significantly new or different data was emerging from interviews as analysis was being initiated concurrently with data gathering. The decision was made to halt the data gathering and to proceed with more analysis. It is noted that the findings and conclusions of this thesis do point to a need to continue the research in the direction that was taken and this is a goal for future research. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the sample size is justified as more than sufficient. It is important to note that there were no specific targets or quotas set out about gender balance, age, or hierarchical level. In each context, participants were simply included as those available. Table 3.2 details the profiles of each individual in pairs.
### Table 3.1. Characteristics of Each Site and its Mentoring Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
<td>• The company is a U.S. headquartered multinational. Its primary operations involve the manufacture and distribution of end-user IT systems globally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Technology** | • The local site investigated is a large, multi-function facility with approximately 3000 employees.  
• Mentors are all very senior level managers or directors mentoring middle to upper level manager protégés. There are no formally established time limits on the mentoring and it may continue or cease as mutually agreed by the participants.  
• Engaging in a structured mentoring relationship is voluntary, but strongly encouraged by the organization for both mentors and protégés. Pairing is a natural process of protégé’s asking for mentoring from someone they feel to be a suitable mentor. There is no mentoring training received by mentors or protégés. |
| **Pharmaceutical** | • The company is a U.S. headquartered multinational. Its primary operations involve the manufacture, research and development of pharmaceutical products.  
• The local site is a manufacturing and research plant |
with approximately 1500 employees.

- Six Mentors are all director or associate director level project sponsors mentoring senior level project managers. The duration of the mentoring relationship is generally related to the project life-span. It usually begins at project inception, but a relationship may continue beyond project closure. The mentoring relationship is inextricably linked to the nature of the participants’ juxtaposition in the reporting structure of the special project. It is considered to be a formal mentoring relationship by the participants and the organization, yet it is also a boss-subordinate relationship.

- Additionally there are two mentoring pairs where a very senior manager mentors a middle manager protégé in a different department. In this case mentors are chosen from a list of available mentors by protégés and are usually encouraged to seek mentoring through developmental or supervisor advice. The process is informally structured. There is no mentoring training received by mentors or protégés.

**Banking**

- A large Irish banking and financial services institution headquarters facility with a well-established mentoring “programme” of over 6 years. There are approximately
300 employees on site in various departments. Mentoring occurs at all managerial levels

- Generally mentors are one or two levels more senior than their managerial level protégés. Mentors and protégés may or may not be within the same department.

- Prospective protégés are provided with a list of available mentors, the individuals decide amongst themselves about paring and arrangements.

- Participants are offered a half day training programme on the mentoring process covering broad aims mentoring as a “helping” developmental relationship. Here individuals are informed that mentoring topics generally may include career direction, performance issues, interpersonal challenge, work life balance, company practices and individuals success.

“NQTs / School”

- This context is national, state-funded primary school education.

- The mentors and NQTs are employed in various local schools that are participating in the nationally established pilot mentoring program. Nationally, 112 mentors and 289 NQTs from 142 schools participated during 2006/2007.

- Mentor-teachers or principals mentor NQTs for a
period of one academic year following achievement
full formal teacher qualification.

- Mentors are experienced teacher volunteers who were
  put forward as available to serve in the mentoring
  scheme. Protégés were more or less obliged to
  participate in the mentoring program where their
  school or region fell within the remit of the pilot
  project. All mentors and protégés received 3 days of
  group training beforehand and separated according to
  either mentor training or protégé training.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Position / Title</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Gender M/F</th>
<th>Protégé</th>
<th>Position / Title</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Gender M/F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Director Q &amp; E</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Supply Chain Mgr.</td>
<td>4.5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Director Q &amp; E</td>
<td>5.5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Supply Chain Mgr.</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Training Manager</td>
<td>4.5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Paralegal (Mgr. Grade)</td>
<td>6.5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>VP Supply Chain</td>
<td>4.5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Supply Chain Mgr.</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Assoc Director / Sponsor</td>
<td>8 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Prjct Lead / Compliance Spclst.</td>
<td>13 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Director / Sponsor</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Project Mgr. / Compliance Spvrs.</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>Assoc. Director / Sponsor</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Tech Engineer / Operations Lead</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Assoc. Director / Compliance</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Project Manager / QC Engineer</td>
<td>9 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Assoc Director / Project Mgr.</td>
<td>9 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Project Validation Engineer</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>Director / Pgm Director</td>
<td>22 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Tech Engineer / Site Lead</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>T&amp;D / Lean prod. Mgr.</td>
<td>14 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Procurement / Purchasing</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Director Global Engnr.</td>
<td>15.5 yrs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Chemical Engineer</td>
<td>11 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>14 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P13</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)</td>
<td>8 mo.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6 yrs.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P14</td>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>4 yrs.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P15</td>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>7 mo.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M16</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>7 yrs.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P16</td>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>1.5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>5 yrs.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P17</td>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>1.5 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M18</td>
<td>Org. Dvlpmt Mgr.</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P18</td>
<td>HRD – L&amp;D specialist</td>
<td>3.25 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19</td>
<td>Head of Bus Mgt.</td>
<td>26 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P19</td>
<td>Sr. Mgr. – Corp Banking</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 PROCEDURE.

The previous section provides a general overview of the research participants. As noted in the previous section, contact was established with a member of the HR department in each of the multinationals to identify potential research participants. In the school context the primary contact was the regional coordinator of the program. Names and e-mail addresses of mentor-protégé pairs in each of the four organisations were provided so that their participation could be solicited. All of the potential participants initially contacted agreed to participate in the study.

Interview prompts were chosen based on a review of the mentoring literature. Respondents were given a description of the study and were asked to fill in a personal information sheet requesting basic demographic information. They were then presented with the same set of open ended questions in a semi-structured interview format addressing the study’s research questions. The interview template contained a total of 38 prompts. Allen et al. (1997) have suggested that the respondents’ answers can be based on beliefs and opinions rather than on actual behaviours and practices. To counteract this, respondents were probed to provide further elaboration and specific examples to increase the depth and breadth of their responses. This sought to encourage the type of free speaking that would occur in normal conversation (Legard et al., 2003). Participants were assured of confidentiality of all information provided. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS.

Following the inductive and interpretive research strategy, data analysis followed principally and fundamentally a grounded theory framework. It is difficult to provide a clear and comprehensive explanation of grounded theory with straightforward decisiveness. Since the primary instigation of a grounded theory approach to qualitative research as promulgated by Glasser and Strauss (1967), the framework for analysis has evolved considerably with varying degrees of prescription for the tools that should be employed (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The procedures in this thesis follow those outlined by Bryman and Bell (2003). These are chiefly as follows: theoretical sampling and concurrent coding, achieving saturation and constant comparison. The coding process entailed three levels of coding in the elaboration of categories of data as identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990) – Open coding (breaking down and comparing data), axial coding (recategorisation of data based on emergent patterns), and selective coding (generating core categories comprised of the labels generated through axial coding). This emergent qualitative analysis was utilised to analyse the responses to open-ended interview questions in this study. This method was selected due to its open explanatory nature and it is therefore suitable for uncovering new information. (Altheide et al, 2008). Data was not situated within predefined categories. Instead, concepts were discovered as they emerged during the analysis. The use of emergent qualitative analysis enables the data set to be viewed in an inductive rather than deductive manner. Over 300 pages of transcribed interview data were gathered. In order to generate themes, open coding was utilised to label each participant’s response in a brief, but descriptive way. The descriptive labels used contained words occurring repeatedly in
participant responses. This process continued until saturation of labels was achieved. Saturation was deemed to have been reached when it was no longer necessary to create new labels and it was concluded that nothing new was emerging from the data that added something unique to the existing set of labels.

We also sought inter-coder consensus. We compared and discussed the various labels obtained through the open coding process. Disagreements and coding discrepancies were discussed and, where appropriate, some of the labels were renamed or adjusted until consensus could be reached.

While reading through printed transcriptions, any predominant key words were noted with manual annotation; i.e. pen was put to paper. As this process continued patterns began to emerge where words were recurring in more than one instance. For example, initial codes were being applied to various sections of participant responses such as “friendship”, “confidence”, “manager”, “trust”, “difficult”, “talk”, “ideas”, etc. From this, similar labels were emerging and these were listed to group responses under equivalent labels to ensure all were captured. For instance, “confidence” in terms of speaking in confidence is different from building confidence. Therefore, speaking in confidence was grouped with confidentiality. Likewise, building of confidence was grouped with encouragement, but specific attention was paid to assessing whether or not there was subtle difference her or if the content was indeed synonymous subject matter.

Transcripts were then searched using word searches in Microsoft Word using the list of all the labels that were generated to ensure that all instances of each occurrence were captured and categorised. This required building of versions of the groupings from the raw transcripts were categories were generated and moved around. In each instance the respondent identifier label was always appended to
the extract. Also, sub-labels or previous labels were left in in either colour or smaller text in the initial stages to flag how the coding process was evolving. This was also important to see where there were instances of more than one or different pieces of subject matter being raised in close proximity to each other and to compare to see if there were patterns emerging that would indicate that there might be a relationship between mentoring functions or qualities being discussed and in particular if this was occurring in other pairs as well. Indeed, it emerged that this was occurring through the “storytelling” and this is captured in the results section. The index list was constantly updated and allowed for ease of reference in cross comparison (Bazeley, 2013). While this process was done manually and with the assistance of word processing software, it is noted that specific qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo and or MAXQDA would be a valuable tool in this type of research and it is planned to employ these in future studies with new qualitative data or indeed incorporating the data generated by this study as well.

At this stage the coding was still tentatively open (Strauss, 1987). However, data were being interpreted and manipulated into categories as the research progressed. It was a consciously flexible and experimental process of data analysis throughout the study and guided by the nature of the enquiry, this is justifiable. Corbin (2009) provides the following rationale:

Techniques and procedures are tools to be used by the researcher as he or she sees fit to solve methodological problems. They are not a set of directives to be rigidly adhered to. No researcher should become so obsessed with following a set if coding procedures that the fluid and dynamic nature of qualitative analysis is lost. The analytic process is first and foremost a thinking process. It requires stepping into the
shoes of the other and trying to see the world from their perspective. Analysis should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insights gained through interaction with data rather than being structured and based on procedures (p. 40-41).

Once consensus was achieved on the initial labels in terms of title and definition, the process of axial coding was employed to form themes or categories through which it was possible to represent multiple labels. The axial coding process consisted of grouping similar labels through the process of constant comparative analyses. Broad categories and themes were then created to represent the outputs of the analyses. Many of the sub-themes that emerged were similar to those generated by Sullivan (1991) and Braithwaite et al (1999). It is acknowledged that this realisation might run contrary to a pure grounded theory approach; however, the broader categorised labels generated through the analysis were emergent and not guided by existing social support theory. A particular challenge during the data analysis process concerned the significant degree of overlap of labels. Many extracts spanned the boundaries of several categorical themes as several key coded words would emerge simultaneously within extracts. This indicated the participants perceived that there was interdependence of several themes such as openness and trust, political learning career advice and networking, etcetera. Therefore, the data analysis process was challenging as respondents had discussed a number of labels simultaneously. Tables 4.0 through 4.3 present illustrations of the resultant thematic structures obtained by the use of these coding strategies.
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCTION
This study explored mentoring relationships as experienced by dyadic pair relationship members. This involved gathering, analysing and developing categories of data. These data were yielded through the rich descriptions of mentoring experiences as perceived by the participants. Having explored various theoretical perspectives, this section presents the findings of the study and suggests that a unique perspective or lens needs to be applied to mentoring as a theoretical construct. There are elements of each of the theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature review that can be applied with more or less relevance to the implications of this study. However, it is important to emphasise that previous theory did not guide the initial coding and categorisation processes. Furthermore and as emphasised in the presentation of the methodological approach to this research, existing theory did not influence the data collection itself through questioning strategies or through guiding the trajectory or content of interviews. That is, the initial resulting categories emerged from interviews that were open and explorative in nature. What became apparent after the initial analysis was that the data label categories sat in many ways similar to those as presented in previous social support theory categorical themes of support. A key finding was that it was extremely difficult to differentiate mentoring psychosocial support functions from career guidance and support functions as they were perceived to be occurring in tandem in many instances. Both mentors and
protégés expressed both explicitly and implicitly through story telling that many psycho-social functions associated synonymously with mentoring occur with either explicit, even preconceived intention or emergent, unintended yet real effect on career mentoring processes and outcomes. It became apparent that the simultaneous nature of career mentoring support functions required simultaneous occurrences of psycho-social support in a way that suggests these are perceived to have a sort of reciprocal chemistry and, in many instances, go hand-in-hand in an inseparable manner. The subtle detail of how this occurs in unique situations will be elaborated in the following sections. Some reference will be given in retrospect to some of the relational theory characteristics of effective relationships. However, primary attention will be given to the strongly emerging sub-themes in Tables 4.1 through 4.3.

Table 4.0 provides a summary of the frequency of the various labels that emerged from the analysis. These are presented against a high-level backdrop of thematic categorisation commonly found in social support research. The sub-themes are presented in this way because it reflectively illustrates the general topic of conversation that was occurring and through which the data were extracted. Under the broad theme “Emotional & Esteem Support”, the two most frequently occurring labels were encouragement and confidence building and trust-based confidentiality. Under the broad theme “Information support”, three labels were particularly salient for respondents: career guidance, developmental feedback and advice, and insight and perspective. Under the broad theme “Network Support & Tangible Assistance”, three labels were also particularly salient for respondents. These were political and network advice, exposure and contacts, and reciprocal
compatibility. The findings on each of the sub-themes against each of the broad themes are now presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Mentor N</th>
<th>Protégé N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and Esteem Support</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust in other’s ability / dependability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust based Confidentiality</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust based Openness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust based Friendship</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement/ Confidence building</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validation of Thoughts Feelings &amp; Action</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Support</td>
<td>Developmental Feedback &amp; Advice</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Guidance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insight &amp; Perspective</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factual Inputs/</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Support and Tangible Assistance</td>
<td>Political / Network advice</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure &amp; Contacts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reciprocal Compatibility</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual Dependence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to resources or Task Direction</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 EMOTIONAL AND ESTEEM SUPPORT

The broad theme “Emotional & Esteem Support” captured seven labels: (1) empathy, (2) trust in other’s ability and dependability, (3) trust-based confidentiality, (4) trust-based openness, (5) trust-based friendship, (6) encouragement and confidence building, and (7) validation of thoughts, feelings and actions. One of the key features of this broad theme is the recurring relevance
of authenticity in relationships. Authentic exchanges are enabled by trust, esteem, and efficacy, which in turn can bolster trust, esteem, and efficacy. Trust has already been established as a crucial element of relationships. However, the interplay of this with esteem and efficacy is important. There must be a sufficient level of both esteem and efficacy to engage authentically; and authentic exchanges can build perceptions of esteem and efficacy. Initial authentic active displays of empathy seem important to both mentors and protégés. It is also integral to foundations and maintenance of trust. Likewise, senses of both attachment and relatedness were evidenced though building interdependence through the practising of values and principles and balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations – all strongly associated with authentic relationships.

4.1.1 Empathy.

Both mentors and protégés emphasised empathy as an important element of social support in the workplace. Empathy was considered important in order to achieve insight and perspective on situations at hand. Protégés conveyed great appreciation of a mentor's empathetic behaviour when discussing the mentoring relationship.

Protégés spoke of needing to have, “someone to understand where I’m coming from”, a mentor who, “got a feel for who I was”, and the ability to, “empathise with where I’m coming from and see it from my point of view”. A mentor describes this required understanding as “putting yourself in their shoes and understanding the issues they have.” Some key findings from mentor – protégé pairs are following Table 4.1.1.
Table 4.1.1: Emotional and Esteem Support: illustrative extracts on Empathy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégés</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Someone to understand where I’m coming from and what my areas of</td>
<td>• It started off in the right frame of mind and we were both in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development would be (P7).</td>
<td>same place and shooting for the same thing (M7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• She just really got a feel for who I was and I just totally connected</td>
<td>• In terms of hopes as a mentor you want to make sure that the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with her. (P18)</td>
<td>individual will benefit from the relationship so that they feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that the sessions are worthwhile. That you will assist them in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>terms of their progression within the organisation. I myself take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quite a strong focus on coaching individuals through particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>issues they’re faced with. I know what that’s like (M18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yeah she’s very open and while we’re a similar age, we’ve very</td>
<td>• I think it is all about putting yourself in their shoes and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different circumstances; like she’s single and not in a relationship</td>
<td>understanding the issues that they have (M19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the moment, but yet she can totally empathise with where I’m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming from and see it from my point of view. So she’s very open to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what I have to say. (P19).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are numerous examples beyond this. It can be seen that there was emphasis placed on understanding the other person and trying to empathise with having been in similar circumstances themselves at one time or another, or, indeed currently. The findings present evidence to support the notion that expressing empathy is a valued and desirable outcome through mentoring, but also that it has considerable implications for providing both emotional and esteem support and dependent upon what the individual protégé requires. It seems that expressing empathy is important in general, but can likely be essential in many circumstances.
4.1.2 Trust

Trust emerged as a particularly salient dimension of social support for both mentors and protégés. In many instances where the word “trust” was not used in the interview questions, it emerged unprompted. For example, where participants responded to the question, “how much do you feel that you can approach your mentor (can your protégé approach you) with problems. Mentor 2 described the importance of trust through the use of metaphor:

*Mutual trust and mutual respect is really important. (He notes he is paraphrasing The One Minute Manager.) A journalist goes down to sea world to interview the guy that is training the dolphins. The guy explains how he does it: ‘That’s a rope at the bottom of the pool and each time he goes over it I give him a fish, the bar is raised, and before you know it the dolphin is jumping out of the water’. The journalist says, ‘well that’s pretty easy!’ The guy replies, ‘Well the first thing we’ve got to do is convince the dolphin that we mean him no harm; the dolphin has got to trust us. It takes months and months. We get into the pool with him every day and never harm him. After a while, he trusts us’. With regard to people, people cannot learn in a fear situation. The best learning happens when there is trust. Trust is the most important part of mentoring. (Mentor 2).*

Protégés perceive different types of trust as central to the mentoring relationship. First, trust in the mentor’s dependability and availability emerges as an important aspect of the relationship. Protégés speak of “trusting my mentor’s judgement”. Other protégés spoke of the value they place on their mentors’ provision of “time
and enthusiasm”, being “truthful” and being, “always there to help”. Mutual trust was also highlighted. Protégé 7 described it this way:

Once (my mentor) understood me and the kind of person I was he didn’t need to look over my shoulder. Once we established the ground rules, you know that dynamic worked. He let me work away; he seemed to be happy with what I’m doing. Of all my roles I found this one to be exciting and challenging because I’m allowed that flexibility so it is not like there is someone looking over my shoulder. I’m trusted to do a job |…| John believes that I can achieve the role so he has confidence in me and that gives me confidence to go and achieve the role. It is something that we spoke about early in our involvement and he is not going to check up on every single thing I do and I’m happy with that. If I have a query and I feel there is something that I can’t handle myself, I will go to John. There is a strong element of trust in our working relationship. He trusts that I’m going to execute what we want to achieve. That has really been great for me (Protégé 7)

This extract highlighted the dynamic and complex nature of trust in mentoring relationships. The protégé spoke of reciprocal confidence in each other as a basis of trust. Mentors and protégés emphasised the importance of trust in the confidentiality of what was exchanged as part of the mentoring relationship. They emphasised that confidentiality of the content of the exchange is necessary for the provision of open, honest and objective advice or to voice concerns about problems or developmental needs. Mentors and protégés used the word “trust” in their discussion of issues of confidentiality. It is not clear to what extent interviewers may have prompted the issue of “confidence”. One question asked,
“How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?” Nonetheless, the following responses highlight the appreciation of confidentiality where it is believed to exist facilitating a better quality relationship as well as how a fear of a lack of confidentiality was seen as a significantly limiting factor. A mentor in the IT setting that he believed “confidentiality is essential”, but also that, “it takes a bit of time and depends upon the individual (and) how quickly trust is established…the more contact, the quicker genuine trust (may be) established”. Another mentor provided highlights the ability of a mentor who is not within the protégés reporting hierarchy to discuss “personal issues” and “confidential personal advice about career options without overstepping professional bounds (or)…role clash”. Protégés were likewise concerned about confidentiality. Protégé 18 described it this way:

My concerns I suppose were around confidentiality...I kind of had nervous feeling...I was nervous about oh this is someone completely new. How could I discuss private things that were close to me and how much do I/ how much information do I give? How much do I hold back? How do I explain something without talking about an individual and not pointing fingers and would they know the people I was talking about? There was just that whole hazy (sic) around the whole confidentiality piece I think. (Protégé 18).

Protégé 14 also highlighted the reluctance to discuss challenges and mistakes out of a fear that to exchange information would be linked to a negative assessment and a “a slanted view of my performance”.
Trust was also associated with the issue of friendship formation. Protégé 11 when discussing the approachability of her mentor spoke of feeling free to seek help because of the level of trust that existed. Protégé 19 highlighted how trust enabled the mentoring relationship to evolve to a situation where the mentor was “like a friend…I would trust her hugely and would have a huge amount of time for her opinion”.

However, these perceptions of trust emerged in a slightly different way as mentors and protégés in pairs rarely commented on trust in the same way. They spoke about varying types of trust and at times expressed that they were themselves trusted by their opposite. Therefore, it is difficult to provide “both sides of the story” on the same sub-topic in many instances. Perhaps this is because trust can be contemplated from different perspectives. One can focus on mutual trust, trust in another, or feeling that one is trusted by another.

Notwithstanding, there was one particular instance where the element of trust in the other’s ability / dependability was commented on in the same manner amongst a pair. It is not surprising that this emerged in a direct reporting relationship. Consider the following by protégé and mentor respectively:

_He let me work away; he seemed to be happy with what I’m doing....I’m allowed that flexibility so it is not like there is someone looking over my shoulder. I’m trusted to do a job. (He) believes that I can achieve the role so he has confidence in me and that gives me confidence to go and achieve the role....he is not going to check up on every single thing I do and I’m happy with that. If I have a query and I feel there is something that I can’t_
handle myself, I will go to (him). There is a strong element of trust in our working relationship. He trusts that I’m going to execute what we want to achieve. That has really been great for me (P7)

It has helped success of projects, I’m involved in the PDC project which I couldn’t do if (Protégé 7) didn’t have his eye on the ball in terms of where this project is going. There is a broader context. The mentoring and the trust and that whole piece it goes onto other projects (M7)

Nonetheless, there are a number of instances where both mentor and protégés discussed with emphasis various types of trust in the relationship as important. These are presented in Table 4.1.2

Table 4.1.2: Emotional and Esteem Support: illustrative extracts on Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust in Other’s Ability / Dependability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• He helps me manage my own behaviour so that I get the most out of the people I deal with…My direct manager would give me the same kinds of advice, but I trust my mentor’s judgement and perspective more. (P2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He gives me time, enthusiasm. He loves it (mentoring) as a result that he has given a hundred per cent to the relationship. (P11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• She is truthful and provides good advice, I trust her judgment and I know she has my best interests at heart. (P13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (I have) no difficulty approaching her, she has been great from day one, I don’t know how I would have managed without her (P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I share any problems or situations whether good or bad…She understands me completely and is always there to help…(P17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trust Based Confidentiality

- I trust his view on situations… and there is strong trust in that I can talk in confidence and receive sound guidance. (P2)

- If it is serious or confidentiality is important, I trust he will keep it to himself. (P4)

- As I said, I feel I could confide any problems and that it would be kept confidential. (P13)

- I feel I could confide any problems and it is just between us and that my mentor cares… (P16)

- I think if I knew the relationship was completely confidential or if I had known my mentor before the programme began, I would be more inclined to confide in my mentor. (P14).

- My concerns I suppose were around confidentiality… How could I discuss private things that were close to me and how much do I/ how much information do I give? How much do I hold back? There was just that whole hazy (sic) around the whole confidentiality piece I think. (P18).

- From a learning and development or any other perspective, personal or anything I would confide in her no problem. (P18)

- I would discuss personal issues and for instance, with a female mentee considering going abroad with a different status level and language barrier… That’s where the mentoring is very beneficial in that, you can offer confidential personal advice about career options without over-stepping your professional bounds. There would often be a role clash if a direct manager had the same type of conversation… Confidentiality is essential. It takes a bit of time and depends upon the individual how quickly trust is established (M1)

- I’ve an open door policy and I want to treat people maturely and to do that I expect them to work in a mature manner and key to that is trust. Once I know that they will
keep information in the right envelope…A good deal of trust – it is where it needs to be. There is trust in terms of confidentiality and also getting the job done. (M8)

- There is a high level of trust, mutual respect and honesty and we had the candid discussions. This is a danger in my position that if I make comments about other people in the organisation there could be disaster if they’re leaked and so on. (M12)

**Trust Based Openness**

- It is an open kind of relationship… I would trust him 100% that what he says is for the best. If there was an area that he thought that I needed to develop or I thought I needed to develop that we would sit down and discuss it. That is really where the trust is when they can understand your personal and your business objectives. (P7)

- We talk to each other quite openly and I look forward to our meetings…(P16)

- I would not talk too much about my concerns or worries to my mentor as this might be seen as a sign of weakness. (P15)

- You can’t really separate personal issues and career advice, as they impact on each other. The mentor must be aware of the limits to which the protégé feels comfortable with discussing such issues. It’s up to the protégé to decide what those limits are and the mentor must respect that. (M1)

- …The fact that this person is willing to be so open with me…I respected her for that also. I admire someone who is willing to be so open. (M11).

- Neither of us have trouble in being open and candid and that helps a lot. (M12)

**Trust Based Friendship**

- Well I find him very trustworthy…and honest…I trust his opinion…I don’t think he would see me wrong, you know….there would be a friendship there. (P11).

- There was definitely a development within the mentoring relationship but it developed that much, then it was more, we were definitely like friends and it turned out that we knew people that knew each other and it just totally changed completely and it was no
longer a mentoring relationship I would say. Well it was more like a friend and more bouncing ideas off etcetera. I suppose well we get on as two people anyway in terms of, you know, we would have a friendly relationship but I would trust her hugely and would have a huge amount of time for her opinion (P19)

These findings illustrate various forms of trust that stabilise the relationship and provide the platform for the provision and receipt of emotional and esteem support. This highlights how it is perceived by mentors and protégés and it is worthwhile reflecting on the discussion of trust in the literature review in this thesis. Trust is a foundational element in Social Support Theory and it was also highlighted through the social capital literature that it would be counterintuitive to imagine that there would be any goodwill in a relationship where there is an absence of trust. Therefore, in terms of the research question, the findings present strong evidence about how both mentors and protégés perceive trust as a valued qualitative aspect of this type of relationship, but also how this is experienced and its importance to career mentoring context. Further discussion on the implications of this will be presented in Chapter 5.

4.1.3 Confidence Building and Encouragement

Both confidence building and encouragement emerged as important dimensions of emotional and esteem support. Mentor 3 explained how confidence building was an integral part of the mentoring relationship and his protégé concurs noting how this is valuable in the career context. The following extracts highlight the role of confidence building and encouragement.
She’s become more reassured about what she wants to do, not only in the short-term, but also in the long run. She’s more confident now about how to deal with her managers than she had been in the past. “...I am the protégé’s conscience...They know that I’m going to ask a number of months down the line if they had taken the steps that we agreed would be the most beneficial. I give a push and reassurance. So, they know that’s what they want and will feel like a dope if they don’t do it...Confidence building has been a key part of it. She’s become more reassured about what she wants to do, not only in the short-term, but also in the long run. She’s more confident now about how to deal with her managers than she had been in the past. (M3)

He’s helped me to be more confident in taking risks and being more outspoken. (My mentor) really challenges me with these kinds of tasks and then there are follow-ups and feedback. (P3)

The responses of both mentors and protégés illustrate the importance of confidence building to both the exploration of career opportunities and the readiness to seize these opportunities. Protégé 18 put it this way:

I know that, if I can bounce stuff off my mentor, I feel more comfortable, more confident to say yeah ‘I’ll do that’ because she kind of said to me why wouldn’t you be doing it because she coached me in a way to change my mindset so that I’d put my hand up for more things. (P18)

As discussed in the review of literature on mentoring and relational and social support, confidence building and encourage may mean different things to different people. In terms of developmental relationships, it is usually emphasised that provision of this type of support should depend upon the needs of the individual.
The findings of this study help illustrate how individually dependent the need for and focus of encouragement and confidence building can be. Table 4.1.3 highlights some further key examples here.

**Table 4.1.3: Emotional and Esteem Support: illustrative extracts on Confidence Building and Encouragement**

- Through confidence building...I’ve improved my ability to network. He is very good to come back with feedback – oh such and such said this or good job. (P7)
- To be truthful, she gives me courage. If I did not have the mentor\ I would be very slow to discuss these issues with colleagues as it might be seen as a sign of weakness. (P13)
- I feel more comfortable, more confident to say yeah ‘I’ll do that’ because she kind of said to me ‘why wouldn’t you be doing it’ because she coached me in a way to change my mindset so that I’d put my hand up for more things. (P18)
- I think I’m building their confidence as well to broaden their scope to move on or up. You build their confidence and relax them more and they’re not afraid the next time to maybe go two levels above. (M4)
- She was very conscientious to begin but the extra support has given her more confidence. I have taken great pride in watching her develop and am pleased I was able to play such an important part in her development. The reassurance she has gotten has helped her build confidence. When you have played a role in helping someone establish themselves in their career, it’s a great feeling and I am very proud to have been a part of that. (M17)

Here we see it can be about many things to different people. This type of support can be focused on encouraging people to take that first step and make contact or take on challenges. However, for others it can be about providing reassurance that they know they are doing the right things with the right people at the right times and this is a type of confidence building that can prevent anxiety and help an individual to be focused. In section 4.2.4 further findings are shown that
highlight the exceptional nature of the interrelationship between psycho-social support and career guidance focused mentoring. Extracts presented there will illustrate how in many cases encouragement and confidence building can be inextricably part of a single career mentoring topic of focus.

4.1.4 Validation of Thoughts, Feelings and Actions.

Validation of thoughts, feelings and actions was important for both mentors and protégés. Protégés spoke of this dimension in terms of “getting things clear in my head” and confirmation that they are “moving in the right direction” and that “I’m going about things the right way”. Protégé 2 further illustrates the emerging interrelationships between these support functions:

There’s great respect there, but it’s really open and positive. That’s really it, it’s positive. I get the courage that I know that I’m going about things the right way and it’s critical (P2)

Here we see how validation of thoughts feeling and action is intertwined with openness, positive regard, encouragement and career mentoring. Further examples are provided through the following perspectives of mentors and protégés describing this dimension of the mentoring relationship in Table 4.1.4:
Table 4.1.4: Emotional and Esteem Support: illustrative extracts on Validation of Thoughts Feelings and Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégés</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I know what I want out of my career and I’m confident I can achieve my goals. He really just listens and confirms…that I’m going about it the right way (P1).</td>
<td>• With (protégé 1) it’s a very informal sounding board. Some of my other mentees need a bit more coaching in soft skills and confidence building, but with (protégé 1) it is mainly about discussing her options. I ask her what she wants, and she knows what she wants, and we discuss how it’s progressing. We talk a lot about our roles, why we’re here, what we’re doing. I think my mentees sometimes just aren’t certain how to approach things. I can help with that. But others have strong ideas, but you know I can help them gain some certainty that they’re on their way. See, it’s not always about giving them courage. Some people don’t need that. They just need someone to tell them they’re making the right decisions – That it’s a sound game plan (M1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The reason why I think it has helped it’s because it gets things clear in my head and I know I’m moving in the right direction (P18).</td>
<td>• So in terms of what she’s gotten out of it I would say a lot of the focus of our sessions would be in relation to careers and where she wants to go with her career because she was quite unclear on the path she wanted to follow so I used one or two techniques with her in order to provide her with direction and also building her confidence to take action on certain things that she wasn’t taking action on (M18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that this dimension of the mentoring relationship can enhance both self-esteem and contribute to emotional well-being. The implications of these findings
will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The next dimension of social support in a career mentoring context is information support.

4.2 INFORMATION SUPPORT

The broad theme ‘Information Support’ captured four labels: developmental feedback and advice, factual inputs, insight and perspective and career guidance. This occurs under the more broadly encompassing subjects of dialogue reflection and feedback as discussed in the literature review. Dialogue in these terms is a crucial element of the sense-making that is necessary between parties for career discussions and career development. This resonates with social cognitive theory in terms of developmental conversations whereby dialogue is the vehicle or means of expression that carries learning, understanding, and growth forward through deep and meaningful interaction. Mutual elements of relationship quality also emerge as salient here in terms of the ease with which the dialogue can occur and the depth or richness of the exchange. The reciprocal and mutual nature of effective and valuable formations exchanges seems equally important to both mentors and protégés in many instances. Furthermore, critical reflection and insightful perspectives that a mentor can provide in through feedback are crucial elements not only for the cognitive learning and social network abilities necessary for career advancement, but also for the social support effects that allow this to happen.

4.2.1 Developmental Feedback & Advice

Positive feedback could have been grouped under esteem support; however, in this study it is grouped under information support because the focus here is
primarily on the content of the feedback (the information) rather than on the psychological conditioning. Both mentors and protégés focused on the content issues such as specific advice and pointers to facilitate personal and career development. A great amount of the data generated as part of this study was associated with this label. Two particular extracts illustrate the advice and developmental feedback dimensions some key selections will follow.

In terms of addressing the research question specifically, Protégé 6 highlights the value of the type of developmental feedback that can be gained in a unique way through this type of mentoring. Mentor 6 provides a detailed extract of how the advice and feedback dimension worked and implies how this leads to positive outcomes.

*I got really positive feedback from him I mean positive on the way I need to approach it. It was very personable feedback, not textbook. (P6).*

*It evolved a little bit in the context of her new role there were some concerns about her softer skills so it was assigned in order for her to roll into her role and get the senior support we will take a leap on that. Basically my boss said, ‘can you work with (her) to make sure she works through these issues’. I suppose the things that people were concerned about with her had more to do with the softer side of presenting or how to work a meeting. Anticipate what your audience are going to ask and be prepared for that kind of stuff. So before steering committee things she would typically send me what she wants to present and I’d give her some feedback on that. We would catch up*
pretty shortly after a meeting and give her my perception of how she was perceived. It was about of the how she was doing and it was more of the ‘manage up’ bit of that role. One of the concerns was the impression she could make in short interactions with corporate people, if you don’t do those things right they can tend to bubble their way around and come back to haunt you later. (M6)

Table 4.2.1 provides further selected extracts that highlight the type of developmental feedback and advice that is valued in career mentoring relationships.

Table 4.2.1: Information Support: labels and illustrative extracts on Developmental Feedback and Advice

- There are the personal skills or areas of weakness in my character that he may have picked up on and that he advises me on. So, overall he is helping me to do my job better, but not with the technical skills aspect. It’s more with the softer skills aspect (P3).

- I got really positive feedback from him I mean positive on the way I need to approach it. It was very personable feedback, not textbook. (P6).

- He is genuine. I suppose he wants me to do well and to get something out of it – as I suppose feedback, you know, if something’s bad for me, how to handle situations or you know it’s a different perspective. (P11)

- Well it’s definitely a very open and honest dialogue where he would tell me where my faults are as being a strong point. I think that’s one of the main benefits of the programme because he’ll tell me where I’m going wrong and then he’ll also give me ideas of how to make that better. (P12).

- I like dealing with a lot of the softer stuff, because that’s the stuff that can do the most damage if you don’t deal with it properly…More and more, the mentoring
4.2.2 Factual Inputs.

Factual inputs emerged in some of the more technical contexts and where the mentor was a supervisor. Factual inputs almost invariably focused on technical details and specific task-focused information. It is interesting how strongly this emerged in the Pharmaceutical context where mentors and protégés are working more closely together on technical and operational issues with a greater need to build mutual understanding through the sharing of factual information. This is not to suggest that this is not likely valued or sought by both mentors and protégés in other contexts. One can imagine how factual inputs about things such as who, what where, why, and how type content could arise quite regularly. However, in this case it is useful to highlight the more detailed emphasis on how this works in a unique context. Protégé 5 provided the following:

*If there was anything you didn’t understand, you could go back and he would explain it to you and point you in the right direction. He’d let you know what is going on, what to be saying and what not to be saying (P5).*
At the start all the external contact that he had, it would get me information that you wouldn’t normally get internally. He explains everything so that you are on the same page as him by the end of a conversation... you knew as much as he did. (P5).

Table 4.2.2. further illustrates the perceived value of factual inputs within context from the perspectives of matched pairs.

**Table 4.2.2: Information Support: illustrative extracts on Factual Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégés</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I would be better informed. Information is power and you need to have as much of it as possible to make decisions. What he provides me with is a pretty clear understanding of the requirements and any other additional information. (P7)</td>
<td>• (We discuss) people, organisation and technical issues, he also would bring what is happening on site to the table, so it can be specific info at times as well. We use it to compare. (M7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He has a vast knowledge because he has come from other companies and been in Pharma for a long time. I’ve learned a lot. That is how I would describe it – it has been a learning experience. (P8)</td>
<td>• A mentor is someone who is willing to share info &amp; experiences. There are people out there who like to keep these things – you know knowledge is power (M8).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.3 Insights & Perspectives.**

The mentoring relationship can be an important source of insight and perspective on how the organisation operates. This form of information support may involve first-hand accounts of how business areas operate, an expert’s account of ‘the big picture’ or where the mentor provides perspective on past experiences with a particular situation. Mentor 3 talks about clarifying the ambiguity and his protégé described this insight and perspective in context. She works in a role that is more solo with less scope for interaction. Consider the following from this pair:
I help her understand the grey areas in how people are acting. It’s just some honest advice about who’d be doing what and why. (M3)

(My mentor) has opened my eyes to other areas of the business...That’s why I asked for mentoring because I think you can be really cocooned in your area and very sheltered and isolated and I needed someone else’s opinion from the outside—in to my goldfish bowl...having a mentor in the same department wouldn’t be of any benefit to me. (P3).

Mentors also focused on insight and perspective issues when they used terms such as “understanding where the other people are coming from” “a fresh view...(that is)...nonbiased”. Mentor 8 illustrates the perspective dimension very effectively.

You can become pigeon holed in a project whereby you are creating an application that you think is excellent, you are very knowledgeable about it but the business sees it from a different perspective. They don’t necessarily think that it is being delivered in a timely manner or there are not as many benefits so a lot of the time would be in terms of explain how to soften their enthusiasm that we are excellent and looking at it from a business perspective and understanding where the other people are coming from. That would vary on whom they are dealing with. People have different glasses on – some are looking into a project and some are looking out; others are looking in. (M8)
Table 4.2.3 provides further selected extracts that highlight how insight and perspective is valued and why it is important.

**Table 4.2.3: Information Support: illustrative extracts on Insight & Perspective**

- He has a good oversight on corporate and he is very good from that perspective. He looks at things differently than the usual. I think he sees the bigger picture on what corporations would want and he is very customer driven. (P6).

- …he will offer examples or try and say how he would handle something. (P11)

- It can be largely about providing people with a snapshot of the mentor’s past experiences. This is what I did wrong in the past, so you may not want to go about it in that way. (M1).

- The other side of it is it’s great to have a fresh view, you know. Someone totally different who will actually share a cold viewpoint on something that I know is a hundred per cent non biased (M18)
4.2.4 Career Guidance.

Mentors and protégés provided numerous extracts that focused on explicit and direct career guidance. Consider the following examples from mentoring Pair 2. Protégé 2 illustrates the complexity of the mentoring relationship where she spoke of confidence, ability and guidance in the same extract.

*He has increased my confidence and ability to advance my own career and has taught me what to do and what not to do. For instance, he’ll ask me, ‘do you really need to take this on, where’s it going to get you, why are you doing this?’* (P2)

The previous extract is pitched in the first instance as a confidence building association. However, it is apparent that the key focus here is the information itself. It is drawing an association between the leveraging of human capital and how this occurs through the signalling and movement capital that emerged in the literature. Mentors clearly emphasised the importance of providing the protégé direction. Mentor 2 illustrates information based career guidance very effectively with the following extracts:

*The typical conversation is about career advice. A lot of people don’t have a lot of clarity about what they want to do. (He provides an analogy from Alice in Wonderland). Alice met the cat at the fork in the road and Alice asked the cat, ‘which way should I go?’ and the cat said, well where do you want to end up?’ Alice said I don’t know. So, the cat said, well then it doesn’t matter! I use that as an introduction to career coaching. I interrogate them and help them understand for themselves where they really want to go. I can then explain to them what it’s like down there and help
them get on the right track...Most of what they want is a map of the terrain and some sound advice...Most of what people are looking for is direction and advice. Think of CAR for career – You have all the controls and you make the decision about velocity and direction. I will only give you maps and advice about roads that work and roads that don't work. (M2).

Table 4.2.4 presents further selected examples highlighting how career guidance is valued and the expected and experienced outcomes.

Table 4.2.4: Information Support: illustrative extracts on Career Guidance

- It’s really an informal sounding board to test my ideas about what paths to take. I trust his experience, it helps me decide what I really want. I just vent and he gives me advice about how to best go about getting what I want out of my career (P1).
- I felt unclear about career direction, he helped me focus and become aware of what (career) opportunities exist, how to go about pursuing those opportunities and who the relevant people to approach are. It has helped my career development in that it’s helped me make up my mind about what I want to do. It’s helped me focus more clearly on what I want to do going forward. (P3)
- My priorities got muddled and it helped me to refocus...(he gives me) advice on career development. (P4)
- I would rely on her quite a lot. Around career development, where to go next. How to manage my career and to keep focused on it (P18)
- ...(Mentoring is) honest, objective advice about the way to go forward. (M3)
- She’s become more reassured about what she wants to do, not only in the short-term, but also in the long run. (M3).
- By giving advice and support - that is the most important role for any mentor, it is to help the individual plough her own furrow...I see my role as helping the new teacher
develop her career and to trust her judgment (M13).

- I would say a lot of the focus of our sessions would be in relation to careers and where she wants to go with her career because she was quite unclear on the path she wanted to follow so I used one or two techniques with her in order to provide her with direction and also building her confidence to take action on certain things that she wasn’t taking action on. (M18)

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### 4.3 NETWORK SUPPORT AND TANGIBLE ASSISTANCE

The broad theme ‘Network Support and Tangible Assistance’ captured five labels: political and network advice, exposure and contacts, reciprocal compatibility, mutual dependence, and access to resources. This is where elements of social capital social exchange and to a lesser extent in certain situations, leader-member exchange theories have a particular resonance. In many cases this is effectively the coming to fruition of the enhanced human capital and signalling through to the actual movement capital that may have real career effect. Social networking can either be directly or indirectly produced depending on the hierarchical and proximate structure of the relationship.

#### 4.3.1 Political Network Advice.

Both mentors and protégés highlighted the role of political and network advice as part of the mentoring relationship. This included advice concerning organisational politics, the provision of signals about people and places, who to get to know in the organisation to further one’s career and dealing with difficult
people. There are a number of examples from the findings that illustrate how this type of network advice is relevant to career mentoring. There are a lot of similarities in how these are perceived across various contexts. Much of the time this is valued assistance and support in how to engage with others in the organisational hierarchy. Consider for instance the following examples:

*Mentoring is* helping the protégés figure out for themselves the way things operate...how to navigate the organisational structure and the political pitfalls.

*(M3)*

This is how you need to interact with this person, this is not how this person works...Where cooperation is not being achieved how he can progress it.

*(M8)*

If I hadn’t had a mentoring relationship I wouldn’t have ran past anyone.

No one knows the way they work. *(P18)*

Mentors and protégés viewed the provision of political and network support to be particularly salient. Responses specifically focused on how to deal with difficulties within the structure. The following selected extracts presented in Table 4.3.1 highlight the perceived value and expected and experienced outcomes here among matched mentoring pairs from the Information Technology site context:
Table 4.3.1: Network Support and Tangible Assistance: illustrative extracts

on Political & Network Advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégés</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• career guidance, navigating politics, how to deal with individuals with whom I might be having problems. (He) has taught me that people I may need to step back a bit from people that I’ve been very loyal to and closely associated with, that from the perspective of my own career advancement, may not be the best thing. (P2)</td>
<td>• They ask me about how to manage their manager and how to network with their manager’s manager…What I do is help them understand how to move within the larger network for themselves. How to manage your manager, which your manager can’t help you do, but a mentor can. (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• my manager gives me access to other people that are more senior, but my mentor helps me understand what makes them tick. (P2).</td>
<td>• I tell my mentees that I think the biggest value I can give you is you ask me anything you think is relevant…what’s happening? Why is it happening? I can help answer some of those questions. (M2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is important for me to have an alternative source of guidance. He helps me through in a more focussed and structured way when I am experiencing difficulty with someone I work with. When I don’t know why someone is reacting in a certain way, he helps me understand why that might be happening. How to deal with specific management team personalities and gives me an objective look at behavioural patterns within the structure. He really helps me read political behaviours, which I’m not very good at. (P2).</td>
<td>• He shows me how to manage people; how to do things better, pointers on the political side of things, how to ignore jibes and point scoring. (P4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I try and coach the mentees on how to navigate the system and how to get over some of the obstacles…who he should be talking to, what the next step should be…(M4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that in this context protégé – mentor pair 2 are not in a direct reporting relationship as are most of the mentoring pairs in this context. I.e. pairs are normally situated interdepartmentally. This was particularly valued in most instances and there was a perception of a broader and strong “networked / political” structure about this organisation. However, note mentoring pair 4 above is in the unique situation of being also in a
reporting relationship intradepartmentally, yet navigating the structure and political awareness was also highlighted as important. Therefore, it seems important to realise that this type of support can be provided and even explicitly valued and expected in both close and more organisationally or hierarchically distant types of relationships. However, the uniqueness and focus of this type of support may depend upon the specific nature of the relationship. This indicates that it would be valuable to reflect back on the literature on social capital and social network structures concerning things such as strong-ties/weak-ties and boundary spanning regarding access to and information about unique and non-redundant network capital. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4.3.2 Exposure and Contacts.

Gaining opportunities for exposure and was reported as an important aspect of the network support theme. It is notable that neither the previous sub-category nor in particular this subcategory had any data generated. This is not to say that understanding organisational politics would not occur in a school context. However, it did not arise as a perceived valued and sought function or expected or experienced outcome. We can speculate that in this context, it might be perceived as more appropriate for this type of support to arise from more informal relationships such as trusted colleagues/friends or informal peer mentors. Again, this does not rule out its possibility of course as all organisations are political on one level or another. Nonetheless, the findings that follow will show how exposure and contacts is more of a relevance to other industrial contexts where proactive career movement is more of an explicit goal and topic of conversation.
However, there seems to be significant variance in perceptions of the value and indeed appropriateness of direct “sponsorship” as identified in the traditional dual function mentoring literature. A mentor from the Information Technology context illustrates the subtle distinction here:

…to spot and guide at the first rung of the ladder and give them a bit of an express route. We’ve passed quite a few through the system like that. It’s not just mentoring, it’s (an organizational) objective, taking them out and giving them the opportunity and then the opportunity itself creates development. They get a lot more visibility and involved in more cross-functional projects and they end up being successful. It’s a case of trying to spot that talent early enough, before they get caught in the mainstream and then they may not get a chance to step out. (M1)

However, Mentor 2 had emphasised the importance of gaining exposure and contacts, but described the role of mentoring in these terms:

There is a sort of a firewall around mentoring here. It’s confidential personal and career advice. It’s not about career boosting directly or about networking (direct sponsorship). We just don’t do it that way. And I think that’s good, cleaner, safer; I’m happy with the way it works here. You can’t keep a good person down, so if they need more help than usual, then what does that say? (M2)

His protégé corroborated this statement and this helps explain how this is realised in the following:
He helps me position myself to increase my positive visibility through coaching. He’s helped me get the best recognition I can out of opportunities he’s helped me create for myself. (P2)

Note the subtle distinction in the patterns emerging from two different contexts. Pairs 1-4 ate in the Information technology context. Extracts from pairs 5,6,7, and 8 listed in Table 4.3.2 below show more of an appreciation for direct intervention. Remember this is in the project management direct reporting relationships in the Pharmaceutical context.

Table 4.3.2: Network Support and Tangible Assistance: illustrative extracts on Exposure & Contacts

- (My mentor) has the ear of the V.P., they will facilitate him. He informs me about career opportunities and he could make suggestions to other managers that I should get involved with specific projects. (P3)

- At the start I would have been shy about contacting (other directors) but (my mentor) always encouraged me to just ask the questions. So there was a confidence-building element. I used to come in to (him) and ask him to send an email to such a person. At the start he use to do it but then he said no, you do it yourself, you can CC: me on it and if I want to add anything to it I will. Then it got to the stage where I’d leave him out. (P5)

- He always makes you feel comfortable if you are in a room with people higher in the organization than yourself…It is with (his) mentoring and him bringing me to these places, educating me, it has made people think of me as the expert here. (P5)

- Whomever he felt it was critical for me to meet on site, he would give me a shout. (P6).

- I was probably a bit nervous and didn’t have the confidence when I first started the role.
But (he) would engage you with very high level management, which is great…People really get a chance to know me…They all know who I am so it is great in that regard. Some of them contact me directly. (P7)

- Working with (my mentor) has given me the opportunity to lead more and to make leadership decisions more. (P7)

- I think I have given him the opportunity to be more influential; certainly in giving him the opportunity of being promoted, I’ve put him into roles where he can be more influential. He had the right personality and was able to drive each of those roles. We have given him the springboard and the opportunity and he has grasped it. That is recognized. (M8).

4.3.3 Reciprocal Compatibility

Social support theory highlights the importance of having “similar others” to assist through difficulties. The compatibility dimension emerged as particularly strong in both the Pharma and Education Contexts. Participants reported examples of where this existed and where it did not. Mentor 7 described the positive aspects of this dimension and his protégé corroborates this very succinctly as follows:

It was very clear that he had the right mindset and outlook on how the project should be delivered to get the ultimate functionality for the operations side. It started off in the right frame of mind and we were both in the same place and shooting for the same thing…(M7).

I would see that (my mentor) and I would be very like-minded in what we are trying to achieve. (P7).
Protégé 14 describes in detail how this characteristic was absent from the relationship.

(The relationship) was tense. When we started meeting I did not know what to expect and when I asked questions my mentor got frustrated as she wanted to be in control. We seemed to get off on the wrong footing. We motored along for the duration but I wish it could have been better... As time went on there was a personality clash. I can’t say any one thing happened to change things but there is no doubt in my mind there was a personality clash... Very soon I realised she was going to be my first hurdle... ...At first I was happy with the mentoring process but as time went on and our opinions clashed, I was more reluctant to meet with her. I am happy with my teaching style and in some ways you have to accommodate the learning abilities of your class. My mentor did not see it this way, she said it should be the same all the time. I played along for a while but little by little I became more brave in voicing my opinions. I made my point very diplomatically and after all I do have the same academic qualifications as my mentor. (P14).

The mentor in this case also acknowledged this whereby she perceived that her protégé was conflicted and “it became obvious to me that my protégé wanted to do her it her way...(and)...there was definitely a strain at times”.

When I took on this role it was mainly because I wanted to help new teachers develop their skills and freely offered advice but it became obvious to me that my protégé wanted to do it her way. She is a new teacher and
has great potential but she does not know all about teaching just because she graduated. She is a very proud person by nature and maybe she felt I was talking down to her which was not the case at all. We kept it going but there was definitely a strain at times (M14).

This is a particularly salient piece of evidence illustrating how important that there is mutual understanding and attraction. That is not to say there should be an absence of differing opinions or points of view. However this supports the idea well established in the mentoring literature that there are potentially immense knock-on effects of personality clash in mentoring that can lead to it being worse than no mentoring at all and limit effective future mentoring or even participation in future mentoring. (for example: Feldman, 1999, Scandura, 1998). What is particularly salient here is that this was one of the most negative findings in the research and it arose amongst a pair in the school context where there was limited, if any, participant involvement in the pairing process. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. However, it suffices to say at this point there are strong indications that it may always be a good idea for there to be substantial participant involvement in the pairing process and that perhaps more organisational / practitioner attentions should be devoted to facilitating this rather than trying to focus on detailed analysis of things like self-reported interests or personality profiles.

Having established this, there are also examples of “lucky” parings from this context as well as an example in the first extract in the below of simply limited
relational quality in the relationship. The illustrative extracts presented in Table 4.3.3 below are all also from the School context.

**Table 4.3.3: Network Support and Tangible Assistance: illustrative extracts on Reciprocal Compatibility**

- I cannot complain about the professional advice I have been given, it has all been spot on but the relationship has lacked the X-factor from my perspective… I think my relationship with my mentor could have been better. (P15)

- It was an advantage that we clicked as a pair and we very quickly established a good rapport, we shared a good sense of humour and come from similar backgrounds. (M13).

- It was great to mentor someone I had so much in common with, we were at ease with other and conversation flowed freely...I like my protégé very much as a person and this makes it very easy. (M17).

**4.3.4 Mutual Dependence**

Both mentors and protégés emphasised mutual dependence as an important benefit arising from a mentoring relationship. This dimension was particularly evident in the Pharmaceutical context where mentor and protégé were working in a project with a clearly articulated common goal. Protégé 7 explained how, “when stuff comes up, we bounce it off each other to make sure that it is going in the right direction”. His mentor supports this observation as follows:

*I’d say it is quite a 2 way relationship. You could say that (the protégé) had mentored me as well; he has brought a lot to the project by way of Six Sigma. He has brought all of that to the project and as I had done the Six*
Sigma’s champions course, I asked him to use his experience to bring along the project. My style of mentoring tends to be fairly frequent open discussion; we bounce things around a lot. It is not so much a boss subordinate relationship; we are all working here together. (M7)

However, there are mentors who derive value from the relationship and may even receive support in the other direction from the protégé. While it is expected that there is more scope or potential for this type of support to arise where there is a direct reporting relationship, as is the case in the following extract, this contextualises as situation where we could imagine that that a mentor could learn quite a lot from a protégé even if they are not in a departmental relationship because there is learning that can take place about other levels and other areas of the organisation. Mentor 4 provided this extract to illustrate the mutual dependence dimension:

A lot of people make something more serious out of mentoring than it actually is. You know, it’s people looking for guidance, advice, help, ‘how did you get there and are there learnings there for me in this thing?’ All it comes down to is basic. What does a human being need when he sits across the table from you and what can you get from him as well, because there is a learning in both directions, that’s what it is all about. If I sit here talking to a guy two levels down, there’s a lot I can take. It’s amazing the amount of learning you can get talking to people levels down and you can’t get to them all, but mentoring is a great forum for it. (M4)
4.3.5 ACCESS TO RESOURCES OR TASK DIRECTION

Protégés highlighted the role of access to resources and their provision as an important part of the mentoring relationship. Not surprisingly, this was most clearly illustrated in the education context where “resources” were a valuable asset to a novice teacher and were something that could be easily provided by a more experienced teacher. Similarly from a contextual point of view, there would be some instances of task direction on how to deal with parents for example, but teaching as in fulfilling the primary role is more individually and personally variable. On the other hand, in the Pharmaceutical project management context, the resources themselves were less emphasised, but task direction more of an expectation. The following selected extracts from matched mentoring pairs highlight this from these two distinct contexts.

Table 4.3.4: Network Support & Tangible Assistance: illustrative extracts on Access to Resource or Task Direction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protégés</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(She provides) materials from a variety of publications. Teaching is mainly responsible for the education of young children but there are so many more aspects to teaching that I must be aware of, equality, social exclusion, diversity, disability awareness, environment protection etc. (P13)</td>
<td>(We discuss) lesson plans, teaching resources, notes from meetings and in-service days...Any important issues that arise in relation to teaching. It could be in relation teaching a specific subject like science that young children find difficult to grasp, class management, lesson plans (M13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(She provides) ideas for teaching, teaching methods. She shares her experiences and this gives me a good insight into teaching...teaching materials to use, lesson plans and helpful with providing me with ideas; I feel my teaching has improved because of the mentoring as I found out better ways to handle the class to teach various subject matters...helped with solutions to problems when dealing with parents.</td>
<td>Lesson plans, resources, advice on how to be assertive with parents, especially those who are much older than the new teacher (M16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is one area I find very difficult and I rely on my mentor’s advice very much in relation to this. (P16)

- He really helps sometimes just letting me know what I need to do to get things progressed. The MBO piece – he is very, ‘this is your job so get on and do it’. He is very metric driven. I’ve learned to adopt that approach and it has helped a lot. (P6)

- Most of it is structured around upward communication which tends to be informing people of status so the feedback. Put yourself in the shoes of (An Anonymous Executive) or the corporate guys… what do they want to know about your project, or a decision on something. Do you need me to influence something? Make sure you cover those clearly succinctly right up front. It is that kind of feedback (M6)

### 4.4 SUMMARY

The findings presented in this chapter highlight 16 themes that emerged about how mentors and protégés conceptualise mentoring in various contexts. The data illuminates perceptions and experiences within context and it is organised under three headings that combine five subthemes against the backdrop of social support themes. Trust emerged as particularly important. This occurred in various ways as different types of trust were specifically identified with examples and contextual background rather than general trust in the counterpart without rationale. These forms of trust were associated further with issues of perceived confidentiality, openness, and perceived friendship. Encouragement and confidence building also appeared as forms of emotional and esteem support that occur in career mentoring discussions. Various other mentoring support functions were shown to be provided in a manner similar to social support themes, but also simultaneously in what are effectively career mentoring contexts. The findings about mentoring as relational construct also resonate with both extant mentoring literature and relational theories at various levels. However, the richness of the
contextual detail and background lends greater clarity to the functioning of the relationships as perceived by the dyadic members.

Table 4.0 presented in the beginning of this chapter outlines the key findings that are presented in greater detail and among matched pairs where possible. Several key findings have particular pertinence to the contextual distinctions and this is highlighted where relevant. In summary and in with regards to the research question, it is not only that there are differences in the mentoring functions that are valued or sought and the expected or experienced outcomes based on what individual protégés require and what mentors are able to provide. Organisational career focused mentoring functions have a tendency for quite distinct emphasis depending on the context within which the roles are fulfilled. Nonetheless, we can see a relevance for all of the themes and sub categories presented in Table 4.0, but there are subtle differences in how these are emphasized and to what extent. Also the findings indicate that there are certain perceived qualitative aspects of the relationships that should always be present and indeed allow for or encourage the provision of the other necessary support functions as they are provided in unique circumstances. For instance, we see lots of distinct types of trust emerging and this has specific relevance to other sub categories such as empathy, encouragement/confidence building and general functionality of the relationship. Indeed, as highlighted in the literature review, trust is essential in all relationships. However, we see why and how specifically this is related to various aspects of formal career mentoring relationships. Information support provided also varied individually and across contexts depending on needs and specific foci within context. We see different balances of the provision or realisation of the sub-categories here across the different sites, but also how there are strong
interdependencies between the focus of the information support, the aforementioned emotional and esteem support and the career related network support and tangible assistance. These interrelationships will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. However, to illustrate this, take for example generic scenarios of a combination and balance of key mentoring functions and how the relationship is constructed by the relationship members in various contexts. Examples are provided in Table 4.4 that highlight these generic scenarios from key findings.

Table 4.4: Generic scenarios of mentoring functions across the contexts

*Information Technology:*

- Complex political organisation where there is a lot of ambiguity about how to navigate the structure.
- Open sharing in a confidential mentoring relationship that is formally established, but informally operated
- Confidence building is individually dependent, yet normally always focused on taking challenging steps to advance ones career. This is linked strongly with the other emotional and esteem support functions, the information support and the network support.
- Less mutual dependence, but there is two way learning
- Direct intervention is limited if not non-existent in career support; the focus is on how to go about it from behind confidential, in-depth conversation.
- Developmental feedback is addressed as it is brought to the table from the protégé

*Pharmaceutical* 

- Project management / temporary direct reporting relationships between individuals brought together from different areas for a specific purpose and the
members of the relationship pair are part of the same team.

- Much stronger focus on task guidance and information sharing related to the job.
- There is much more mutual dependence
- There is a similar scope for learning about other areas of the organisation and this can form a key part of career mentoring whereby the protégé learns more about what is expected by unique individuals in unique areas. In this was career decision making can also be better informed.
- However, there is greater scope for immediate or future traditional mentoring “sponsorship” and this is not perceived as inappropriate in this context.
- There is greater scope for ongoing developmental feedback and behavioral advice on an ongoing basis.

_Education_

- Highly formalized mentoring programme where participants are given lots of prescribed training about the “mentoring”. There is little or no individually derived basis for mutual attraction and through this there were varying degrees of functionality. There was also ambiguity about trust based confidentiality which had implications for openness and developmental discussions.
- Protégés are at a novice level in new careers with little scope for upward mobility. Focus of conversation was more about how to survive and be effective.
- This was similarly through gaining insight and perspective from mentors experiences, but focused on task and role rather than exploring broader options about career direction. The options are more operationally focused.

_Bank_

- Formal mentoring programme with voluntarily elective matching of pairs. However, the existence of the relationship itself is not as confidential as in the IT context.
- The relationship members interviewed were all female in a work context that has greater gender balance. Therefore, we must be particularly cautious about
generalizing anything about the nature of the mentoring relationships in this context.

- The mentoring content was very balanced between interpersonal psychosocial support and personal and career development.
- Personal issues in work–life balance and coping strategies was important.
- There was less focus on political and network support in this type of context from a broader organizational perspective; the sharing was more about developing as a person and in career with an very individual focus.

The next chapter will explore this in greater detail and it will also focus on creating a synthesis of the analysis of the findings with the relational theories presented in the literature review. This is important in this unique study as it takes the framework of the findings and constructs the theoretical synthesis on the relational qualities of mentoring that allow and support the various social support functions provided through career focused formal mentoring exchanges.
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to assemble the range of research perspectives and to provide an overview of the research presented in this thesis. This will culminate in a discussion about the significance of the perspectives presented to future research on mentoring and dyadic developmental relationships as well as for the practice of engaging in and/or facilitating mentoring and other developmental relationships.

It has been established that an ever increasing number of organisations are initiating mentoring programmes as they try to maximise the human resource development potential of such relationships. However, after a few decades of research we have arrived at a point of realisation that “conducting” mentoring is not as simple and straightforward as it is sometimes assumed it could be. We have recently arrived at a point in the research of mentoring where the intricate and sensitive nature of interpersonal relationships remains as salient to the research on mentoring as it does other social sciences research on relationships. The largely instrumental outcomes focus that prevailed in much of the research on mentoring has encouraged simplified and prescriptive approaches that fail to fully recognise the interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, the instrumental outcomes focus has also tended to encourage acceptance of a rigid classification of mentoring functions that fails to take into account the interdependent nature of
various mentoring functions. This has to a large extent guided the research on the mentoring relationship in a manner that focuses on “mentoring”, but failing to pay adequate attention to the “relationship”. That is not to say that there hasn’t been substantial research on functional and dysfunctional mentoring relationships as highlighted in the literature review. However, much of this tended to be unilateral and focusing more on the characteristics of either the mentor or the protégé and less on the reciprocal and interpersonal nature of relationships. Revisiting Ragins’ & Verbos’ (2007) relational perspective on mentoring highlights that the most positive or meaningful mentoring relationships are based in mutual or reciprocal interactions rather than in a unilateral instrumental exchange.

The data presented in this thesis are illustrative of various dyadic phenomena that occur with varying degrees of reciprocity. Having captured rich detail about the topics discussed, functions served and the nature of the exchange has given an indication that previously identified categories of functions and support found to occur in mentoring relationships perhaps cannot be so rigidly separated out from one another. Rather, there is apparently a more complex interdependence between functions served, but this is not yet predictable and is likely to vary within a nearly infinite number of unique individual and dyadically defined circumstances. Nonetheless, there is scope for greater construct development and the creation of alternative models for the study of the relational and dyadic mentoring relationship.

The key concepts and the nature of the interdependent relationships as proposed are mapped in in Figure 5.1 below
Figure 5.1 Key Concepts and Relational Support Aspects for Career Mentoring

Social Support
- Emotional & Esteem Support
- Information Support
- Network Support & Tangible Assistance

Relational Qualities
- General trust
- Compatibility
- Authenticity
- Dialogue, Reflection & Feedback
- Member Proximity

Mentor

Protégé

Psychosocial Support Functions Served

Career Support Functions Served

Career Mentoring
Figure 5.1 above diagrammatically represents the key elements of the conceptual framework and the findings of the study. These emerged from the review of the literature on relational aspects as relevant to mentoring. This is not intended as a model of empirically supported variables and relationships. Its value is simply for illustration of the concepts as developed. Nonetheless, there is scope for this to be incorporated into further development of a model of the construct of relational mentoring as this research advances. This will be discussed in greater detail in the section on implications for research following. It is also worthwhile to refer to this diagrammatic representation as the findings are discussed. The significance of the Relational Qualities identified clearly have resonance with the social support functions and the nature of the relationships themselves. This will also be revisited in the final section on overall conclusions.

The research conducted and presented in this thesis is not free from limitations that warrant discussion. Issues involving the research design and its implications for the way the findings were generated and understood are discussed in Section 5.3.

The findings should also provide practical insights for Human Resource Development practitioners operating in a consultative capacity or from within the management structures of organisations wishing to initiate or facilitate mentoring “programmes”. In turn, potential and acting mentoring relationship members can be further educated about the nature of mentoring from a relational, reciprocal and dyadic perspective. This can occur through introductory and/or training sessions that should occur in conjunction with any mentoring initiative that is undertaken.
and may help in the functioning of the relationships themselves and/or satisfaction with the exercise of mentoring because expectations have been clearly and openly identified as well as removing any number of potentially negative aspects associated with things such as mismatches and conflicting assumptions at the outset of the initiation of the relationship. These issues and the associated propositions will be dealt with in the subsequent sections.

The findings of this research make a valuable contribution to the mentoring and developmental relationship literature. These are analysed within the framework of the literature review initially presented and are situated within the relational perspective in a meaningful way that enhances our understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of the dyadic developmental relationship. It is argued that the traditional approaches to the study of mentoring have been inadequate in their ability to capture the relational characteristics and functions that characterise high quality mentoring and other developmental relationships. Implications for future research on this will be presented in detail in light of reflection on the findings presented in this thesis.

5.1 DISCUSSION
The findings presented highlight 16 themes that emerged about how mentors and protégés conceptualise formalized mentoring in various contexts. Supporting data illuminating perceptions and experiences is organised under three headings that combine five social support themes.
The primary research question posed in Chapter 1 was: How do mentors and protégé’s perceive the qualitative aspects of their developmental relationships. Secondly, what do they value or seek to achieve; and thirdly, what are the expected and experienced benefits? The in-depth interviews generated rich detail about how participants in mentoring pairs perceived their relationships and each other. The interpretation and discussion of the findings will be presented under a number of relevant contextual and thematic headings.

Various forms of trust emerged as particularly important. These were associated further with issues of perceived confidentiality, openness, and perceived friendship. Encouragement and confidence building also appeared as forms of emotional and esteem support that occur in career mentoring discussions. Various other possible speculative linkages can be drawn where mentoring support functions are provided similar to social support themes, but simultaneously in essentially career mentoring contexts. Studying the process and content of mentoring as a social support mechanism is an opportunity to greater illuminate how and why mentoring works. It would also be useful in theoretical development of mentoring as a complex, dynamic, and often contextually unique construct. Formal mentoring is now commonplace. However, existing theory is still not well enough developed to justify prescriptions for the highly structured mentoring programmes that are being initiated in many organizational contexts. Our findings do lend support to notions that mentoring is best left as unstructured and unscripted as possible. It should be encouraged and facilitated, but left up to the individuals to find each other and construct their own relationships. Individuals receive social support from mentors. Unique, personal social support
aspects are relevant to career discussion with mentors. Development occurs in a social context and mentors provide valuable support and guidance on how to navigate and cope in social structures. Continuing to incorporate a social support perspective with research on the relational aspects of career mentoring will help to inform how and why mentoring works within context. This should help build a stronger theoretical base about how different types of mentoring actually function in relation to social structures at work. Ultimately, organisations and the members of explicitly identified mentoring relationships can better understand what might be expected upon entering formal mentoring relationships. Several elements appear as essential in the social support associated with career mentoring. Issues such as trust, openness, confidentiality, and compatibility remain crucial to the provision of social support in high functioning mentoring relationships. Understanding how these occur or develop and what they mean to mentors and protégés is essential to understanding mentoring relationships.

The following sections will integrate and discuss the findings and the varying degrees of importance or salience within each of the contexts. Table 2.2 outlined the range of relevant considerations. It is important to reiterate that the table is not intended as a matrix model indicating a classified grouping of dependent relationships. Rather it illustrates the broad spectrum of possible interrelationships.

5.1.1 Understanding the Key Relational Mentoring Implications

The relationship characteristics emphasised by theories and relevant to all strong relationships emerge as important to relational mentoring and are highlighted. Trust; compatibility; authenticity; dialogue, reflection and feedback, and
relationship proximity are key considerations throughout each of the contexts. Beyond this, there are some key considerations that come to the fore for the study of mentoring and these are discussed in the following sections. Under the broad theme of emotional and esteem support, any of the predominant labels seemed to be mutually and simultaneously relevant in several accounts of career discussions. Initial authentic active displays of empathy seem important to both mentors and protégés. It is also integral to foundations and maintenance of trust. Attachment and relatedness were evidenced through building interdependence through the practising of values and principles and balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations – all strongly associated with authentic and trusting relationships. This resonates with emotional support functions, in the context of mentoring where concern, empathy, and the ability to turn to others for comfort and assistance (Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). This in turn relates to mentoring functions such as friendship, confirmation and role modelling that can be sources of socio-emotional support and confidence building that reduce self-doubt and situational uncertainty (Bozionelos, 2006). This is important in career discussions where an individual’s clarity of identity and understanding of developmental needs and personal values are most likely to be realised through developmental relationships that are characterized by mutual trust, interdependence and reciprocity (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Examples of this type of continuum are evidenced throughout the findings and they emerge in career discussions as mutually important. Therefore, it is argued that they must not be examined exclusively, but rather more carefully at multiple levels and within the contexts they emerge.
5.1.1.1 Concurrent and simultaneous nature of content & functions

While discussing their mentoring experiences, it became evident that mentors and protégés often spoke about several themes concurrently. This suggests that during a single specific mentoring exchange, more than one or perhaps several factors are simultaneously relevant. Likewise, certain psychosocial support functions seem at times, as perceived and reported by participants, to be inseparable from aspects of career mentoring. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to predict protégé outcomes, a key endeavour was to examine various elements of mentoring quality, content and process focused on by mentors and protégés. A mentoring dyad may be engaged in a career discussion. During this single point in time exchange, the mentor may be attempting to help protégé learning and establish clarity about desirable paths while simultaneously exploring relevant career options. This process for decision making may involve reflection on the mentor’s past experiences where the mentor may now be considered to be engaging in both role modelling and counselling as well as attempting to provide encouragement and build the self-confidence of the protégé to address new challenges. Should the career discussion involve engaging with third party senior figures in the organization it is easy to imagine how the confidence building element may be important. Mentors and protégés reported simultaneously relevant functions associated with information and network support. This may also be characterized by the learning associated with knowledge of skills required, performance and behavioural expectations of third parties, understanding the political arena and the importance of networking (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). Elements of emotional support such as empathy and trust in the other’s ability/dependability, confidentiality, openness, arose as particularly important elements of support in
the context of career mentoring discussions. We are not yet certain to what extent these mentor behaviours occur serendipitously for the protégé or as the result of focused information seeking by the protégé. However, the findings suggest that it may be some combination of both. Trust and compatibility within the dyad are of incontroversial importance. However, there is also a question about the degree of confidentiality within the relationship that appears to be an important consideration.

The relational qualities highlighted as important in conjunction with a social support perspective examination of mentoring can help to illuminate the multiple levels at which these complex dyadic relationships are operating. A key finding through this thesis is that it may be somewhat misguided to try to isolate career mentoring functions from psychosocial functions; likewise, that personal issues are not always completely independent from career issues or career path choices. Krasikova & LeBreton (2012) argued that “the sine qua non of dyadic constructs is their relational core. Such constructs capture the fundamental properties of relationships: (a) the parties involved are interdependent and consider their interdependence when planning their interactions and activities, (b) the parties involved have a common future and allocate tasks between themselves, and (c) these parties are responsive to each other’s concerns, actions, and emotions and alter their behaviour to maintain their relationship or not” (p. 740). This accentuates the reciprocal nature of mentoring relationships that the literature has been touching upon for some time, but as of yet has been unable to fully emphasise the relational aspects and dynamic interchange between dyad members in mentoring or any other developmental relationships.
5.1.1.2 Confidentiality & Trust in Mentoring Relationships

The findings highlight the issue of confidentiality as perceived to be an important factor for mentoring relationship effectiveness and this appears to be associated with both the establishment of trust and issues involving how the mentor-protégé dyad was matched and their perceived compatibility in some cases. Similarly, the findings presented in this thesis showed that protégés value having trust in the ability and dependability of mentors and mentors may particularly value these qualities in their protégés. The issue of confidentiality may be an important element associated with trust that has been underestimated in assessing the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. This also could conceivably be associated with protégés believing that the mentor “has my best interests at heart.” This seems to be closely associated with having “someone who knows where I’m coming from”, having dialogue that is characterised by openness, honesty, and some sense for friendship. It appears that confidentiality of the content of the exchange is important to create an environment where protégés can feel at ease about asking difficult or sensitive questions about others in the organisation while having confidence that the content of the discussion will not be shared with others. It is also possible to see how this would be important to a protégé discussing developmental concerns or personal difficulties with a mentor. As one mentor put it, “You can’t really separate personal issues and career advice as they impact on each other.” This is not to suggest that all mentoring relationships engage with personal issues and career mentoring equally.
The fear of a lack of confidentiality of the content of the exchange emerged as a particular concern in a few instances in the school context. Here protégés expressed a reluctance to openly share their concerns or developmental needs because they thought that the mentor might report back to the principal who might then have, “a slanted view of my performance” or that discussing difficulties might be, “a sign of weakness”. Here it is possible see how this might seriously limit the effectiveness of developmental benefit that can be derived from the mentoring experience. A second potential drawback to a perceived lack of confidentiality could arise because of the serious limit of the ability of the mentor and protégé to discuss issues involving difficulties with third parties for fear that the protégés’ comments, or the mentors’ for that matter, may be divulged to others. A third possible limitation of a lack of confidentiality relates to career discussions. A mentor in the IT company indicated that confidential career mentoring allowed for the discussion of personal issues without “over-stepping professional bounds” and avoiding “role clash” that would result if the direct manager engaged in dealing with personal concerns related to career choices. Interestingly, confidentiality did not emerge as a concern in the project management context. Indeed, in this unique type of mentoring relationship it was clear that mentors were responsible for addressing certain protégé developmental issues in some cases (such as interpersonal skills) and that progress was discussed with other senior organizational members. Nonetheless, the element of mutual trust was perceived as of paramount importance in this context as well. Whether or not the mentoring content will in some way be linked to assessment of the protégé’s performance needs to be considered and explicitly established. It may be an acceptable element of the mentoring relationship in certain unique manager-
subordinate mentoring relationships. However, it was evident in the school context that a fear of assessment being linked to the mentoring exchange may seriously limit the ability to address developmental concerns.

5.1.1.3 Organisational Learning, Politics and Network Structures.

Career discussions at work will often likely involve learning about the organization and its political structure so that the individual may navigate the system more effectively. Also, this may both depend upon and/or result in an individual’s confidence to do so. Moreover, whether a mentor is actively engaging in sponsorship or active exposure of the protégé or not, political learning is a particularly valued element of the mentoring support provided in several instances. Gaining performance appraisal or feedback and advice about the engagement of others in the socio-political arena is also related to certain career discussions as perceived by both mentors and protégés. This type of social support has an indirect yet clear career mentoring relevance. Again, the interplay between mentoring functions appears to be quite complex here. A protégé may perceive certain career enhancement benefits from learning about the political structure and how to engage effectively with others in the socio/political arena. However, understanding one’s position within this larger network or system through reflection and establishing clarity through gaining the mentor’s insight and perspective appears to be inextricably linked to professional social networking. Having the ability to gain the mentor’s experienced perspective on the bigger picture functioning of the organization is helpful to protégés’ understanding about powerful decision makers’ expectations and thought processes. This helps the protégé prepare for interactions in a more informed manner when trying to access
these decision makers or create a positive impression for themselves. The findings highlight how this can be useful for career discussions at work where the protégé will seek to engage others that the mentor is very familiar with, but without the mentor’s direct intervention in helping the protégé establish contact. Conversely, in some cases it is still perceived as valuable and naturally appropriate for a mentor to be instrumental in assisting with introductions and initiating positive visibility. However, in this case, the learning about the socio/political organization and understanding the behaviour of its actors is similarly important as the protégé will subsequently have to proceed with less assistance than initially provided if personal success is to be realised. These aspects of the mentoring exchange did not arise to any noticeable extent in the school context with NQTs or their mentors. It is not beyond the realm of rational proposition that learning about the organizational functioning and politics could occur in a mentoring relationship in this context. However, the mentors here did not note this as substantially valuable beyond initial induction issues. Similarly, the topic of learning about networks and politics through a mentor was not something that emerged in protégés’ responses. We could speculate that this type of knowledge may be sought more readily from trusted peers. Furthermore, we could intuitively surmise that the nature of the organizational context is distinct in the school context in terms of the lesser importance of networks and engaging in the political arena for career advancement. This is not to say that understanding political structures is of no use for more effective fulfillment of one’s role, securing resources, and engaging effectively with colleagues. However, it may simply not be a primary concern in the context where the role is more autonomously oriented, performance is not continually assessed, and paths for
advancement are rigidly outlined based mainly on tenure. In organizations where the boundaryless and protean career (see Briscoe & Hall, 2006) is more immediately relevant, gaining an experienced mentor’s insight, perspective and knowledge of the political and behavioral structures and processes may be of crucial importance to protégé success. The cognitive learning about what is happening and why it is happening or clarifying why third parties may be exhibiting certain behaviors is perceived as of the utmost importance by many of the mentors and protégés interviewed.

5.1.1.4 Evidence of Sponsorship.

In the project management context in “Pharma”, mentors often helped protégés establish contacts and positive visibility directly, but beyond being pointed in the right direction, the protégé would also be informed about how to engage and why it is relevant to take a specific approach considering the target third party. Citing enhanced networks and increased ability to network was prevalent in among mentors and protégés in this context. In the IT company, mentors tended remain removed from any active physical intervention in protégé networking; however, mentors and protégés expressed that the learning that takes place through mentoring is just as valuable, if not more so in some respects. A protégé in this context highlighted this very clearly where she said her manager pushes her to confront others, but her mentor helps her engage effectively; her manager provides access to others and her mentor helps her understand “what makes them tick”. Another important element of the learning that takes place overarches the themes of networking and politics, sponsorship and protection interpersonal skills development, and role modeling. Evidence of a complex interrelationship
between these elements will be presented subsequently. However, a protégé response discussing gaining mentoring support for networking with others illustrates the integral element of managing personal behavior appropriately and in relation to others as a ubiquitous focus. The protégé responded that her mentor helps her to “manage my own behavior so that I can get the most out of people I deal with”.

The all-pervading relevance of this to acting on chosen career paths, making ongoing use of exposure and sponsorship and the obvious relationship to interpersonal skills development as well as role modeling mentors’ successes becomes quite apparent. Perhaps this personal learning element of mentoring and its relationship to other functions and outcomes needs to be more carefully investigated and supported by greater empirical evidence. One cannot assume that the provision of sponsorship, exposure, or even protection can fully compensate for a lack of exceptional competence in managing one’s own behavior with the utmost utility.

As previously noted, the provision of sponsorship and protection may or may not occur in formal or informal mentoring relationships. The findings highlight how this can be contextually dependent. The data presented provides us with contextually based perceptions about how sponsorship and protection is perceived as potentially valuable and a normal occurrence in mentoring relationships that also contain a reporting relationship between mentor and protégé. Conversely, mentors who are interdepartmental and engaged in a mentoring relationship that is valued as a confidential forum for developmental assistance express contentment
with the avoidance of providing sponsorship and/or protection. These mentors’ protégés concur with the rationale that direct sponsorship is not a valuable element of the mentoring experience. The other learning and support functions appear to substitute and supersede the importance of sponsorship. Here it is perceived as even more valuable for protégés to learn how to create and make use of opportunities for themselves. This is not to suggest that sponsorship is not available to protégés from managers within their reporting hierarchy. Indeed, one mentor suggested that “latching on to someone else’s wagon” does occur, but that this is not perceived as a function of mentoring. The response by another mentor stating that, “If a person needs more help than usual, then what does that say?” suggests an awareness that a mentor acting as a sort of crutch may not be the best way to develop protégé competence. This would also avoid the “side kick” effect (Higgins & Nohria, 1999) where a protégé becomes over reliant upon or overshadowed by a mentor. Nonetheless, we also found evidence of how in a direct reporting mentoring relationship, sponsorship and protection can naturally occur, but that there is also significant emphasis being placed on the developing the ability of the protégé to “fly solo”.

Opportunities for exposure and contacts should perhaps be seized when possible. However, the degree to which this occurs in relation to other personal learning elements should be considered. The findings provide greater evidence of how these issues operate within context and their perceived value to protégés in formal mentoring relationships. Especially in the case of management and leadership development, sponsorship and protection may be useful in initial stages and in moderation thereafter. However, the sustainable success of nascent
managers/leaders may be placed in jeopardy if they rely too heavily on this type of support. If it was to be withdrawn and it was a substantial basis for personal success, it would be disastrous for the individual. However, when considering mentoring as a developmental relationship, it is questionable as to whether or not significant amounts of sponsorship may actually be useful for the protégé or the organization in the long run. Career sponsorship has often been given considerable weight as a potential function of mentoring. However, it would be interesting to gather further evidence of its actual usefulness in relationship to other developmental functions served through mentoring. For instance, interpersonal skill development emerged as a key theme in the formal mentoring that occurred in the private company contexts researched here.

5.1.1.5 Matching & Dyadic Compatibility.

The findings from the school context provided examples of how assigned mentoring relationships can be “lucky” and function relatively effectively in terms of avoiding personal clash. However, some unlucky pairings were discovered where the relationship was perceived by mentors and protégés to be dysfunctional seemingly attributable mainly to personality clash or incompatibility of mind-set. This should serve as a further warning about lack of consideration of the likely effectiveness of the interpersonal relationship. Simply put, it is obvious that haphazard pairings will not always work. Furthermore, a careful consideration of compatibility needs to be ensured. Perhaps in this case, there would have been a greater likelihood of a more functional relationship had the mentors and protégés had a chance to agree on, and with, their respective counterparts through the initial
stages of the mentoring program. It is imperative that we gain a greater understanding about the possible dynamic interplay between these factors in various formal mentoring contexts especially considering the increasing inception of “mentoring” with often limited careful consideration of how these issues may affect the quality of relationships and the prospects for provision of effective social support.

5.2 CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

The overwhelming majority of the limited volume of research on mentoring pairs (dyadic mentoring research) has focused either predominantly or solely on the protégés’ perspectives (Dobrow et al., 2012; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). There is no known substantial research in the published literature that studies the mentor’s perspective and that also involves data gathering from the mentor’s protégé(s). Moreover, there is a scarcity of qualitative research gathering rich detail about the perspective of the mentoring relationship members. The data gathered in this thesis does so. It also looks deeply at the perspectives of mentors and protégés in matched pairs from a range of contexts. This is not intended to lump the various types of mentoring together and treat them as the same in the findings. However, the findings do indicate that there are similarities across the spectrum in how psycho-social functions similar to social support can, and often does, occur simultaneously in discussions about career development and hence career mentoring. It was previously charged that there has been a lack of clarity in research about whether specific, narrow mentoring functions serve either the career or psychosocial support functions (Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett, 2003). While this is a valuable observation to be taken into consideration in assessing
research findings and designing future research on mentoring, the findings of this thesis indicate that mentoring functions can serve career and psycho-social support functions in a simultaneous way and that there seems to be a previously unrecognised interdependence between career and psychosocial functions. This signals that it may be less important to continue to pursue clear and rigid delineation between career and psychosocial mentoring and that it may be more valuable to look at the relational qualities found in the relationship and how support functions achieved are actually realised through them. Suggested directions for future research will be addressed subsequently.

5.3 LIMITATIONS
While this purposeful sample was useful for obtaining qualitative data from a variety of contexts, it is a relatively small sample. It is also cross-sectional. We were not able to gain data from across a wider range of the life-span of the mentoring relationships. This would have perhaps better informed how the various sub-themes identified evolve over time. Qualitative Diary Research would also be particularly valuable for this type of research. It would allow us to capture far richer detail than is possible through semi-structured interviews of a limited duration. While we were satisfied that the prompts were appropriate to the strategy, it was apparent that several mentors and protégés would have contributed even more rich data had interviews not been cut short due to time constraints. All of the interviews were conducted during a time scheduled leave from the interviewee’s work and in their place of work. Leaving more time available and incorporating other qualitative data gathering methods would have been useful.
Another issue is that our data suggests a possible linkage between various subthemes and career mentoring. For instance, trust and confidentiality and in relation to emotional and esteem support, or political learning as an element of network support. As this was unexpected in terms of the complexity that the data seems to suggest. Our methodology does not allow for discernment of antecedent factors, causality or dependence. This will have to be addressed through more focused qualitative research and quantitative analysis of each potential variable.

5.4 RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The detailed qualitative data gained here about how mentors construct their roles coupled with protégé descriptions of how they perceive the value of their mentors’ support provides us with some insight to the complexity of the mentoring process. We know that organisational mentoring helps protégés’ personal and career development, but there remains considerable scope for understanding how and why this happens. We may garner more knowledge about the mentoring construct by examining it through a social support theory perspective and in a way that captures the relational core of the dyadic construct. The themes identified in this research can contribute to elements of the variable scaffolding to enhance our understanding of dynamic process models (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012).

Responses by both mentors and protégés illuminate the difficulty in differentiating certain social support functions from elements of career mentoring. The findings also indicate that rather than conceptualising mentoring as varying instrumental functions and outcomes, perhaps the more holistic notion of mentoring could also be better understood through a social support theory perspective. This could
examine the ways in which several interrelated and perhaps interdependent functions are enacted simultaneously in order to address specific protégé issues and achieve desired goals. Congruent with previous research on mentoring, the findings suggest that mentors provided various types of career and psychosocial support for their protégés. However, evidence was also found of how and in what context several support functions were experienced simultaneously by protégés. The findings support the notion that several mentoring functions can be applied that may facilitate protégé career advancement.

Dynamic process models and models that establish a framework for identification of mentoring functions and learning outcomes (e.g. Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2007) are extremely valuable for augmenting our understanding of the elements of the mentoring process and their relationships to protégé outcomes. A key argument in this thesis is that while the findings illuminate more how mentoring is constructed by its participants, we also need to go further toward explaining the interplay between the elements and how they may be interrelated or interdependent in the achievement of protégé development. Similarly to the way in which there is a reciprocal or complementary nature of the interactions between mentors and protégés (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2007), as well as evidence to suggest that levels of trust and perceptions of relationship effectiveness can be mediated by met expectations (Young & Perrewé, 2000). It also appears that there is a reciprocating continuum of individual mentoring functions and types of protégé learning. The complex nature of these processes is still under-researched. The findings illustrate the theme of confidence building and encouragement that cannot be easily isolated within the realm of
psychosocial, career, or role modelling mentoring functions. Social support can be categorised into 5 themes: emotional, esteem, information, network and tangible support. Perhaps future research could investigate mentoring using Cutrona & Suhr’s (1992) Social Support Behaviour Codes (SSBC) instrument. This may generate more rigorous qualitative data about how and why social support mechanisms function in mentoring relationships. This will go further to explaining the dyadic relationship that is apparently operating at multiple levels and therefore required the construction of models that can capture the complex dynamics that are occurring at these multiple levels (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Continuing with the relational and social support focal aspects of mentoring relationships in the organisational and career context could also be incorporated with alternative theoretical approaches. For instance the recent qualitative research by Janssen, van Vuuren and de Jong (in Press) similarly re-classified supportive behaviours found in mentoring relationships from a self-determination theory perspective whereby content analysis of developers’ supportive behaviours generated many more sub-headings under the themes of autonomy, competence and relatedness. These sub-headings involve items such as creating freedom and encouraging self-initiation as diving factors, confirming, praising and problem solving for meeting competence support needs, and intimacy and caring to build relatedness. Many other examples were given, but the stand-out point is that these are similar to and would fit within the relational perspective proposed as important to the study of mentoring in this thesis.

In terms of building on what has been achieved through the research for this thesis, there are a few clear and ambitious directions that can be taken. It is
certainly an aspiration of this researcher to take pursue the following goals. Firstly, similar in-depth, semi-structured interviews need to be conducted with more identifiable mentoring pairs in varying contexts with a view to more in-depth comparative and case study analysis. This will also be with a view to strengthening the theoretical positioning of mentoring as a social support construct within unique career contexts. The enquiry has to strike a balance between more focused seeking of the relational qualities as perceived by relationship members and being open enough to discover any more unknown aspects that may help inform and illustrate emerging patterns. Methodologically, there is scope for integration of personality profile details and further incorporation of demographic variable analysis leading to more methodologically rigorous mixed methods approaches that may satisfy more positivistic objectives. Other data collection methods such as Qualitative Diary Research may also be a worthwhile endeavour, but this will be a challenging pursuit in research on mentoring as discussed in the methodology chapter. This will require consideration. Furthermore, it is envisaged that there should be some attempt to initiate research at or near commencement of relationships and following up with more data collection as relationships mature or evolve. This will also be challenging work, but worthwhile to gain a more holistic understanding about how the relationships are constructed and how perceptions may change and what contextual factors may be causing those changes. This will also obviously provide a platform upon which more long-term longitudinal research can be conducted. We don’t know how many different types of mentoring relationships there are. However, the goal is not purely to quantify, but explore the
contextually bound constraints and generic as well as contextually distinct opportunities.

5.5 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Individuals establish various types of mentoring and other developmental relationships that strengthen their personal learning and career development. A relational focus is valuable because it increases our understanding of a range of complex issues and processes associated with how developmental relationships operate. Relational theories highlight various relationship qualities and processes integral to strong and meaningful relationships. This thesis engaged with nine theories that can help illuminate how highly effective mentoring and other developmental relationships function. Incorporation of key elements of these theories with research on mentoring and other developmental relationships will help explain perceptions about how and why relationships are established, how to build effective relationships, how they are mutually constructed by individuals, and how they evolve over time. Overall, it is argued that researching mentoring through a social support lens will be valuable in helping to clarify the mentoring construct. The findings indicate that at any given point in time in what are effectively formalised career mentoring relationships that social support functions remain at the forefront of the effective functioning of the relationship and realised support for the protégé. Also, it is the reciprocal nature of the exchange that is major component of how the relationship is framed and operates. While this is dictated to some extent by the context and the structural qualities of the relationship, the relational qualities seem to be as important in guiding the focus and outcomes as does the instrumental focus. A number of characteristic qualities
are essential to all effective relationships. It is argued that viewing mentoring from a focused social support perspective will offer valuable insight to and understanding of the mentoring construct. Furthermore, several relational qualities were highlighted as essential elements. These are: trust; compatibility of relationship members; authenticity; dialogue, reflection and feedback; and relationship proximity as key characteristics that allow mentoring and other developmental relationships to flourish.

A relational perspective on mentoring and other developmental relationships helps us to more fully understand their contribution to personal learning, support, and career development. There is a broad and deep body of theory supporting the view that self is more fully developed through effective relationships with others. It is likely that mentoring and other developmental relationships will play a significant role in individuals’ professional and career development into the future. Research suggests that relationships with others provide a critical resource that can inform decision making in a variety of areas related to self and career. We know that mentoring and other developmental relationships have the potential to be very fruitful experiences. Various developmental relationships can occur naturally in an organisation. However, mentoring and other developmental relationships are also viewed as interventions that facilitate a process of helping, development, exploration, and shared understanding. They are increasingly structured or formalised (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Burke & McKeen, 1989; Douglas & McCauley, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Whether they are naturally occurring or formally arranged, relational helping may take many forms, such as mentoring, coaching, peer coaching, counselling, and role modelling. There is
significant overlap and common elements or functions throughout this conventional nomenclature. While these relationship titles have often been inconsistently differentiated, we continue to struggle to understand developmental relationship construction and process, let alone concrete definitional aspects. However, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) argued, “To some extent, definitions do not matter greatly if those in the role ( . . ) have a clear and mutual understanding of what is expected of them and what they in turn should expect” (p. xvi). Delving more deeply into the relational qualities and processes of mentoring and other developmental relationships will help clarify how these expectations are formed, how they operate, how they change, and how they are satisfied. The spectrum of relational theories discussed in the review of the literature highlight particular characteristics that are important for mentoring and other developmental relationships to flourish. These are trusting relationships that facilitate risk taking and exploration for learning and support; compatible relationships that allow the positive operation of interdependence, attachment, and the formation of shared meaning; authentic relationships that foster openness and reduce inhibition. Finally, relationships characterised by high levels of dialogue, reflection, and feedback as catalysts to learning will be more dynamic and productive. The selected relationship theories highlighted in this thesis signal an opportunity for researchers to incorporate a range of perspectives for the exploration of mentoring and other developmental relationships. In particular, they provide useful alternatives to incorporate a range of variables in the investigation of how and why highly effective developmental relationships work. Reciprocal and mutual processes are not sufficiently understood or explained empirically. Ragins and Verbos (2007) suggest exploring social cognitive theory to better understand the
relational implications. Furthermore, there are opportunities to build the theoretical basis of mentoring and developmental relationship constructs and phenomena through further incorporation of social support theory, social capital theory, attachment theory, relatedness theory, self-in-relation theory, and leader–member exchange theory. However, this list is not exhaustive. There is scope for a comprehensive integration that includes a range of other leadership, relationship, social, and psychological perspectives. This could focus, for instance, on the relational process that enables individuals to achieve an effective balance between interdependence and independence. This would also contribute greatly to our discovery of the optimal conditions and processes through which personal and career learning flourish reciprocally and mutually through developmental relationships. One of the goals of researchers of mentoring for quite some time now has been to help organisations and human resource development practitioners better understand how to facilitate mentoring “programmes”. The key contention in this thesis is that there has been far too strong a focus on prescription and informing potential mentors and protégés what mentoring is at the expense of emphasising that it is what one makes of it. Not only is it different individually, but also it can and perhaps should be a very different type of experience depending on the context. It must also be clearly understood that contextual distinction should not be considered simply in terms of obviously divergent contexts such as very different industries, but also where there are more subtle, but important distinctions such as may be found between two companies that are, for instance, both large, multi-national organisations where the mentors and protégés are managers or executives with strong technical expertise. It is important to remember that there many potential are contextual distinctions both
within and between seemingly very similar sites. Failing to take account of this runs the risk of returning to the generalisation of what mentoring is and indeed treating very different types of mentoring or developmental relationships as the same thing. This suggests that there are some implications of this that have not always gained the attention that perhaps they should. Firstly, we should continue to emphasise letting mentors and protégés find each other with assistance if possible and letting them “do their own thing” after making sure that they understand that mentoring can be many things to many people with a plethora of options that can be mutually established. Moreover, this creates opportunities for researcher practitioners to guide organisations wishing to initiate or improve mentoring taking place through analysis of the context identifying what people need before trying to tell them what they can or should get. Finally, it has been argued that there is a growing interest in viewing mentoring and developmental relationships from a relational perspective, but that there also needs to be a reconceptualization of mentoring as a personal relationship that does not underestimate the social support aspects and attempt to view them in isolation from career support functions.
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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS MENTORS

M1

I  Intro
I  How long have you been in the company?
R  6 years
I  And in your role
R  Same. No promotions.
I  Can you describe what the mentoring relationship?
R  With (protégé 1) it’s a very informal sounding board. Some of my other
mentees need a bit more coaching in soft skills and confidence building,
but with (protégé 1) it is mainly about discussing her options. I ask her
what she wants, and she knows what she wants, and we discuss how it’s
progressing. We talk a lot about our roles, why we’re here, what we’re
doing. I think my mentees sometimes just aren’t certain how to approach
things. I can help with that. But others have strong ideas, but you know I
can help them gain some certainty that they’re on their way. See, it’s not
always about giving them courage. Some people don’t need that. They
just need someone to tell them they’re making the right decisions – That
it’s a sound game plan (M2).

I  What is the most important aspect of a mentoring relationship?
R  Confidentiality is essential. It takes a bit of time and depends upon the
individual how quickly trust is established. It probably takes about a year
depending on frequency of contact. The more contact, the quicker genuine
trust is established. Infrequent contact may take significantly longer than a
year - particularly if there is a break of contact in the case of, for instance,
maternity leave.

I  OK. What would be an appropriate duration for a mentoring relationship?
R  Mentoring should last 1-5 years depending on person / situation. (Protégé
1) is very clear where she wants to go, if she makes that move, I see little
benefit in continuing with a mentoring relationship. She should seek a
different mentor. The same goes for the other high potential mentees, they
will likely progress and require different mentors. To pick up something
different. They need to make those connections.

I  And would you help them make those connections?
R  This is a very networked company. I wouldn’t go out of my way to
connect people in the sense that …You’re in that group, now I’m going to
formally connect you to this group. People form those connections
through operations generally anyway. You don’t need introductions
around here. If you want to work with somebody, you just go and do it. I
don’t see any advantage to that here. Our work is very cross-functional.
That would be more beneficial in organisations that are more stove-piped.

I  OK. Yes…Would you make suggestions about possible mentors?
R I suppose I could, I guess I have. But it’s really up to the individual to make those connections and find someone they can relate with.

I OK. You said this was a very networked company. Would networking be a part of mentoring?

R It’s more about how the individual fits; how she or he is going to connect with others, but I don’t do that for them. It’s personal learning and maybe some coaching about how they handle themselves, personality issues and what clashes might be out there, what to expect so they don’t rub people the wrong way. From within, I might help a mentee engage with someone in the rare instance that there was difficulty in making contact themselves. It’s a big place but the relevant people are all known. It’s already networked from the structures. And the only instances where network contacts are made outside (This site) are for things such as benchmarking in other organisations or specific projects. In my experience mentoring has very little to do with that.

I OK

R We have the data bases. The contacts are there. The perception from the outside is that the organisation is held together by a unique, highly integrated IT system, but the reality is that it is held together by people. It’s a no excuse kind of culture. We just get things done and that helps people to go through barriers more.

I What’s mentoring role with regard to people going through barriers?

R Every company I’ve been with, I’ve looked back and there have been people who had advanced and wouldn’t have done so had they not been given the opportunity. Maybe that kind of talent will rise to the top anyway, but not as quickly without help. Mentoring is just an extension of developing talent – helping people become more satisfied and that’s satisfying to me. It’s not so much mentoring that helps do that. It’s largely irrelevant in the sense of removing barriers and providing opportunities. It can be largely about providing people with a snapshot of the mentor’s past experiences. This is what I did wrong in the past, so you may not want to go about it in that way. It’s nice to say after 5 or 6 years that you’ve helped develop a lot of people, but that’s our job as managers anyway.

I Do you think you get recognition for that?

R I think there’d be recognition if you did it badly. People would talk and you’d stop getting customers. I don’t think being a mentor has increased my recognition or visibility. Being a mentor is an accepted part of the job. I don’t think it is that recognised at more senior levels who is mentoring who. The talent is developed within one’s own micro-organisation and recognition is achieved in that way.

I So what is your support role in a mentoring relationship?

R I’m like a grandfather, not the direct parent. They should be removed and be able to stand back and observe the bigger picture and offer a bit of wisdom. The mentor is someone who can provide the occasional wisdom and people might listen a bit better to a mentor because there is not that role clash. Again, it is the grandparent role rather than the parent role. I shouldn’t be delivering an action list, unless somebody really wants that,
then I would go that route. They need to take the lead themselves. It’s their career, not mine!

I OK. Any examples to put it in context?

R I would discuss personal issues and for instance, with a female mentee considering going abroad with a different status level and language barrier, etc. I would help the mentee clarify for herself what she really wants and what the implications of the various options are, having worked abroad myself. That’s where the mentoring is very beneficial in that, you can offer confidential personal advice about career options without overstepping your professional bounds. There would often be a role clash if a direct manager had the same type of conversation. Not to mention the legal implications.

I Yes of course.

R Your family life is important and how you are to manage that in various contexts is important. You can’t really separate personal issues and career advice, as they impact on each other. The mentor must be aware of the limits to which the mentee feels comfortable with discussing such issues. It’s up to the mentee to decide what those limits are and the mentor must respect that.

I Anything else on career discussions?

R I try not to give pointers in terms of recommended career paths and urge people to decide what they want to do. (Protégé 1) is very strong minded and able to forge forward herself. I can offer my experience. We reflect and I can coach a bit on how to best move forward according to her objectives. I have other protégés where I observe them regularly in meetings and I can offer much more coaching about interpersonal and behavioural skills to make them more effective in their roles. However, this is the same kind of feedback that I offer to most of those that report to me anyway. For instance, “I think you were behaving a bit too politically there” I help identify blind spots.

I OK. And with regard to (Protégé 1), how do you feel you may influence her career through your relationship?

R I would definitely act as the eyes and ears for her about opportunities that might arise. I’ve had several strong mentoring relationships where I received quality mentoring, even though these relationships where never really formally identified as being mentoring. Strong coaching, strong career benefits, putting me out there show what I was capable of and pushing my career. However, in (the current organisation), I don’t see this as my role as a mentor. There would be a clash between my role and the protégé’s manager. I see it mainly as opening their eyes, giving them the tools to network for themselves and soft-skills.

I Can you tell me more about what you feel about “putting people out there” as you said?

R It isn’t perceived necessarily as a mentoring role to fast-track high-potential people through the organisation. There is a concerted effort to identify these individuals early in their careers, to spot and guide at the first rung of the ladder and give them a bit of an express route, we’ve passed quite a few through the system like that. It’s not so much mentoring, it’s (an organisational) objective, taking them out and giving
them the opportunity and then the opportunity itself creates development. They get a lot more visibility and involved in more cross-functional projects and they end up being successful. It’s a case of trying to spot that talent early enough, before they get caught in the mainstream and then they may not get a chance to step out. There’s one guy I’ve been mentoring for only a few months. I do see the potential as a mentor to break him out and create opportunities. (The protégé) is perceived as a very high potential individual working in a relatively isolated engineering role. My background is engineering and there will be no problem vouching for his technical ability as he takes on roles and this could help him move on. But this isn’t a formal mentoring function. My boss actually put it into my objectives a couple of years ago to find new talent every year, to discover it, encourage it, and put it out there.

I OK. Can you tell me more about hoe your relationship with (Protégé 1) works?

R I don’t use the guide [Interviewer looks inquisitive] We have a kind of a manual about mentoring here. We know it’s there if we need it, but we just parked it; we just decided at the outset what kind of things we’d be talking about. We just agreed it’d be a sounding board and career topics. For the others, those less removed and more visible, there will be more coaching about style issues. For each person I mentor there will be a slightly different structure because I think you have to adapt it to the individual.

I Yes…

R Mentoring works well here like this, I’m worried that if it became more formalised and bureaucratic that we’d run the risk of it just being another project for somebody. I’ve seen some that are so structured, where everything is written down and to me, that’s more like performance objectives with your boss. It depends on what you want from the relationship, but my own personal opinion is that mentoring should be a bit softer.

I OK. So you have a manual about mentoring, but you don’t use it. You adapt the relationship to the individual’s needs?

R Yeah. Some people use it. Some mentoring relationships around here are fairly structured, but it is well know the most beneficial ones are the one’s where this guy comes to you and says, ‘look, would you mind giving me some of your time? Take me on as a mentee?’ I got a brief course training from (the organisation) in mentoring, but I felt that that was to prescriptive of a process, too rigid and formal. An analogy: Years ago when benchmarking came out. I was doing a course in benchmarking. Before, the Japanese were doing it (benchmarking) for years, going around with cameras and taking ideas and implementing them. Suddenly, this benchmarking came out and it became a week-long training programme. I just felt like if you went through all the steps, by the time you did the corporate benchmarks, suddenly it was like 5 years later. A good idea just got formalised too much. It was perceived that you had to go through all these steps to do it right. The Japanese were doing for years very successfully and didn’t do half of this stuff. I think mentoring may have often crept that way, where, it’s an excellent idea, but if you put too much
of the docketry (Listing of things to be done) around it, you lose the real spirit.

I OK – so if people seek mentors on their own – do those that want it get it?
R I think there are enough good mentors here for the people that need it or want it. Some may be unlucky I guess, but if they’re dogged enough and show that initiative, I think they’ll find something worthwhile. There are individuals that are required to have a mentor, (internal succession planning programme). All that would succeed me would be required to have a mentor.

I You mentioned networking. What is your role in that for protégés?
R Look, I don’t perceive myself as particularly good at networking or contact maintenance. I see myself as more focussed on the here-and-now and as more locally event driven. I have sometimes referred people to others I felt were skilled in this area or that in order that they be able to provide some support. I really only give advice on how to get around a network. There isn’t much call for giving advice about building a network. As I said earlier, the organisation is highly network integrated anyhow. Although I see how that would be more beneficial for new entries in the sense that they need that initial socialisation and general induction. There’s extensive cross functional training where people make contact with individuals at all levels in various departments. So, if a team leader is promoted to supervisor, he / she will be much more advantaged than an experienced supervisor recruited from the because they will know who to go to to get something done. With regards to (Protégé 1), she’s fairly confident in making out her own contacts.

I OK. Can you tell me more about your view of how mentoring works here?
R Mentoring has only come on in the organisation in the past couple of years as something to be called a mentoring programme. The company has progressed in the last couple of years from relying on people to actually developing them. Mentoring has just come on the back of that. It occurred at an informal level previously, but now it’s developed more into a way of managing people. Like I said, my fear is that, while now it is blossoming, it may become too bureaucratic and a hindrance to the more natural flows and processes that operate.

I So you appreciate the natural processes?
R Of course. Mentoring is a personal thing, the issues are personal, well, specific to the individuals. You have to adapt your styles as much as possible. I don’t think people would be that into it if it was just about satisfying company objectives. It’s got to be about the mentee and what he or she wants. That’s why it’s valuable to them and beyond that. If you’ve got somebody getting the advice they need to move on and be successful, that they’re going about it the right way and will end up where they want to be then that’s good for the company itself. You don’t want the right people ending up in the wrong places.

I Yes, so it is very personal at times. How do you deal with that?
R They need to lead the discussion. I just come in with what I think might help – offer some guidance. It’s just a discussion and letting them know that you have their best interests at heart and that you are willing to listen.
and offer something constructive whether it be criticism or reinforcement. But it’s got to be about them and what they’re dealing with – helping them cope with whatever is on their mind. Sometimes they’re stressed out and it’s nothing really. You just give a bit of reassurance and advice about how to deal with the choices – how to deal with people that are in your path.

I People that are in their path?
R People that they encounter or will encounter. Sometimes it’s about what to expect – how their situation might change. A lot of people at this level know what to expect, but I can shed more light on things from my experience. I give them a bit of a heads up with regards to what they need to take into consideration. I can talk to them about the benefits and what the challenges might be – about what this person wants out of his or her career. It’s a one-to-one where they get the opportunity to discuss these things with someone who’s been through the same thing. It’s me giving my time so that they can do that and maybe get more focus and [pause] well, better armed.

I Do you find that your protégés, your mentees value this advice?
R Well, I think they do mostly. They seem to. Look, like I said, they don’t have to do what I’m telling them. It’s their careers. You just establish a rapport and get them talking about themselves then they know you care; that I’m offering genuine counsel. It’s a unique kind of relationship, but it shouldn’t be all that difficult once you can get the discussion going. That’s why there are so many managers looking for good mentors. Someone who will focus on them for a while.

M2

I Intro
I How long have you been in the company?
R Five and a half years in the company - one year in this role, but always this senior.
I How long have you been mentoring (Protégé 2)?
R About a year and a half. I mentor five or six others as well.
I OK. At the same level as (Protégé 2)?
R Yes, I informally mentor two peers as well. And I’ve had lots of informal mentors. I’ve always seen it as a valuable exercise. There’s one I’ve been with for four or five years, but the time limit is just about up on that.
I Time limit?
R Well not a time limit per se. It’s a question of diminishing returns. We’ll stay in contact, but there’s not a lot left to mentor on.
I OK. While we’re on it can you tell me about those peer relationships?
R Executive assistants to the regional VP – I was the first – It’s informal, but they’d say, “Hey (Mentor 2), Thanks for the mentoring!” I get a good deal of peer mentoring support as well. I get a good bit more out of it myself than mentoring the guys down a couple levels, but it’s difficult to say whether it’s true mentoring or peers supporting one another.
I: OK. What’s the difference.
R: Well, I get a lot of knowledge from the guys at the same level, but I find out a lot from the more junior managers as well. It’s just a different balance of reciprocation.
I: And how to you establish the relationship with the junior protégés, for instance (Protégé 2)?
R: People go about it all different ways. Some go out on their own and some get help finding a mentor. The typical approach would be that the individual’s manager would come to me and ask if I would mentor a particular person. In some cases the individual would make the first approach of her own accord. That’s what (Protégé 2) did.
I: I’ve heard about mentor-mentee confidentiality; that the relationships are confidential. How do you feel about that?
R: High level people know who is being mentored. HR knows. I make a point that I will not mentor without the individual’s direct manager being aware.
I: OK. May I ask why is that?
R: It’s just the way I do it. I want them to know if I’m working on one of their people. I won’t discuss the mentoring with them, but I think it’s better if they can come and ask me how the mentee is getting on in general. There’s nothing negative in it for the mentee. I mean I like to give positive feedback. These people are looking for mentoring for a reason and it’s a very positive exercise.
I: OK. What is important to consider in mentoring relationships?
R: I’ll explain that with this analogy from The One Minute Manager. A journalist goes down to sea world to interview the guy that is training the dolphins. The guy explains how he does it: ‘That’s a rope at the bottom of the pool and each time he goes over it I give him a fish, the bar is raised, and before you know it the dolphin is jumping out of the water.’ The journalist says, ‘well that’s pretty easy!’ The guy replies, ‘Well the first thing we’ve got to do is convince the dolphin that we mean him no harm; the dolphin has got to trust us. It takes months and months. We get into the pool with him everyday and never harm him. After a while, he trusts us.’ With regard to people, people cannot learn in a fear situation. The best learning happens when there is trust. Trust is most important part of mentoring.
I: OK. Do you help them make contact with other people that can help too?
R: I would occasionally point people in the direction of others at my level that I thought might be able to answer their questions or if they really wanted to know more about a job opportunity. However, it doesn’t really happen that often. The typical conversation is about career advice. A lot of people don’t have a lot of clarity about what they want to do.
I: And how do you feel you help protégés in that regard?
R: I’ll give you another analogy, from Alice in Wonderland. “Alice met the cat at the fork in the road and Alice asked the cat, “which way should I go?” and the cat said, “well where do you want to end up?” Alice said, “I don’t know.” So, the cat said, “well then it
I use that as an introduction to career coaching. I interrogate them and help them understand for themselves where they really want to go. I can then explain to them what it’s like down there and help them get on the right track.

I: That’s good. And what do you discuss?
R: The core of my mentoring style is any of my mentees can come to me and ask me anything they think is relevant from a work point of view and I will feel obliged to give an honest answer. This is because this is what I found most valuable from being mentored...feeling at ease about asking really awkward questions. I asked my mentor in a previous organisation, ‘why don’t they fire my manager?’ I thought my manager was incompetent. He explained to me why and gave me a very good answer. He studied the organisation...he was unconventional, but very smart. At the level I was at, there was layer after layer of management and I didn’t understand the politics. I didn’t understand the informal rules and how they worked. By asking specific questions and getting honest answers, I learned a tremendous amount. I tell my mentees that I think the biggest value I can give you is you ask me anything you think is relevant...what’s happening? Why is it happening? I can help answer some of those questions.

I: And can you help them with dealing with people? With network opportunities?
R: Most of the mentoring itself is confidential, so it is rare that I go to anyone myself and put a good word in as a mentor. What I do is help them understand how to move within the larger network for themselves. How to manage your manager, which your manager can’t help you do, but a mentor can. Most of my mentoring doesn’t involve helping them from a networking point of view and I find very little demand for it. But half of my mentees are women. The odds are still stacked against women and I would attempt to nudge open doors to address the imbalance that exists.

I: You had mentioned that some people know about these mentoring relationships and that you like to give positive feedback. Can you tell me [interrupted]
R: I like to mentor high potential individuals, because that’s part of the payback for me is to see them make progress. An individual who expressed an interest in working within my organisation. I talked to the hiring manager who was a direct report of mine and I told him that I thought this guy was very good, but it’s your decision. My recommendation might have had an influence, but it was the hiring manager’s decision. I don’t see my role as a career booster, it is as advisor in sharing learning. However, I know that my mentor earlier in my career in another organisation was the swing factor in me getting promoted. I think it was because my mentor thought I was the right person for the job and I don’t’ think that was a bad thing. I think I wouldn’t have been treated fairly by the hiring manager, but for (my mentor’s intervention).

I: I’m interested are you still connected to this mentor?
R  Not anymore. Now he works for a prime competitor and he wouldn’t be comfortable maintaining contact. I regret this because, otherwise, I would have liked to keep in touch.

I  OK. Can you tell me more how you feel about intervening on your mentee’s behalf?

R  There’s a sort of a firewall around mentoring here. It’s confidential personal and career advice. It’s not about career boosting directly or about networking. We just don’t do it that way. And I think that’s good, cleaner, safer; I’m happy with the way it works here. You can’t keep a good person down, so if they need more help than usual, then what does that say? Most of the people I mentor are good capable people. Most of what they want is a map of the terrain and some sound advice. We do a thing where I meet all of my extended staff; we do skip level one-on-ones with a group of about 130 people and I do about 2 a week. And all of these conversations follow pretty much the same theme. Most of what people are looking for is direction and advice. Think of CAR for career – You have all the controls and you make the decision about velocity and direction. I will give you maps and advice about roads that work and roads that don’t work. I find Irish people more assertive about their careers on average than Americans. Americans are more likely to be in a job, comfortable and happy in the job and Irish people are more likely not to be happy, or settled rather, in a particular role, no matter what role they’re in. They’re always thinking about the next level and they’re more competitive. …They ask me about how to manage their manager and how to network with their manager’s manager. There are believers and competitors. Believers believe that if they do a good job that they’ll be looked after; competitors know this is not the case, they know it’s a game, they study the game, play the game and influence the game. Believers end up working for competitors. A lot of what goes on at the senior management level has to do with gamesmanship. I’ve found a lot of mentees to be totally in denial about this and are initially shocked at the reality of it. I get people to realise that it is a game before teaching them how to play it. People don’t realise how much gamesmanship is involved. I get them to come out of denial.”

I  And what do you get out of teaching them?

R  The most satisfying thing is being able to give advice that is taken and used by people and seeing them prosper. Also, my mentees seem to like being mentored and it’s an honour and a privilege to be selected as a mentor. There is an employee satisfaction survey taken bi-annually and it is a metric that is looked upon very seriously. It is seriously career limiting for a manager to get consistently poor employee response scores. I don’t know if you could get fired, but you’d definitely end up with a change of career. It’s good for me career wise if I have a reputation for being a good mentor and getting results in peoples’ development. I know I have a reputation as a good mentor in HR and that probably positively impacts on my recognition. I believe in mentoring. Mentoring in (the Company) is well developed, even though relatively informal.

I  And are all of your mentees from a different department?
R Yes. There is one person who I’ve been mentoring for a year and a half that joined my organisation and I insisted he should seek another mentor. It should be removed to a different area.

I OK why?

R Like I said, it’s cleaner that way. There’s a difference between career advice and performance objectives.

I Are there any negative aspects to the mentoring here in your experience?

R I’m toying with the idea of putting a one year to 18 month time limit on the mentoring. Because I have one guy that I’m mentoring and I’m getting fed up mentoring him because I feel I’m not making any progress with him; he’s disappointing. If he decided to go get mentoring somewhere else, I’d be delighted! I feel I’m wasting my time. I feel the guy is not on a learning curve. Part of the problem is this, “I was being mentored (for about 2 years) by (a divisional VP)…he was a very useful mentor because he was (from corporate HQ), very senior and charges sales and my background is in manufacturing. We formed a very good link, but he has since gone back to (Corporate HQ). He was also mentoring this individual with whom I have a problem. The problem is that he’d talk to one person, talk to another, talk to his boss, and it’s almost like he can only remember the last conversation. He’s constantly looking for a quick fix. I’ve become more and more prescriptive with the well known evaluation and assessment tools along with information gathered through channels, like 360 feedback, etc. But, the mentee would take advice from the last person he’d talked to. So, when I asked him in our next meeting what progress he’d made. He’d say, ‘so and so asked me to do this other thing, so I’ve been working on that.’

I So it was frustrating he wasn’t taking your advice.

R Sure it was. I mean what’s the point in investing all your time working on a guy if he’s just going to ignore what we agreed. There’s no inherent problem with having multiple mentors, I do, as long as all the advice is taken into account.

I He wasn’t doing as you had agreed?

R No. We work this thing out and he would say this is the best thing to do and then go and do something else. I mean, It’s not like he has to take orders from me, but he was fairly scattered in his approach and I was getting no where with him.

I Alright. Can you tell me about relationships with your mentors?

R I have a fairly well extended network for my own development. Peers, colleagues and more formal mentors. I see them as vital in gaining clarity among other things. I’m pursuing establishing a mentoring relationship with a guy in another department that would take me out of my comfort zone.

I And helping you advance?

R At the middle tiers, mentoring does not, nor should it become involved in recruitment aspects. However, I admit that at the director level, I have what would be considered highly informal mentors that will likely create the opportunities for my promotion and relocation back to (corporate HQ).
OK. So what do you feel are the most important aspects of a good mentoring relationship?

Taking the opportunity to ask the really tough questions – from both sides. Delving into trying to get some answers. The mentee needs to be able to ask me difficult questions, but also needs to answer some difficult questions for himself. That’s where I come in. I can help them understand the organisation and all the players. I went through the same learning curve and I can shed some light on this and that so that they aren’t going in blind. I respect them and they respect me. I like I said – trust is the big one. We have to remove the fear and get the serious topics going. It works both ways.

Great. And what about the quality of mentoring relationships.

Sure. Like I said, openness. You’ve got to get it all out on the table so that we can work through it. It’s like anything else really, but this is about a manager and what they need to learn to do so that they operate potently. It’s as much listening as it is giving advice. The mentee has to bring something to it as well. I give them my time and some answers.

So the discussion is an important aspect?

That’s what it is. I can’t give them anything unless they bring some sort of proposal. There’s a bit of brainstorming too, but yes, it’s a discussion where I can give some honest answers – even if they don’t know what the question is yet. Some do, like (Protégé 2). She’s sharp and she puts me on the spot. I appreciate that and I can challenge her back about her plans. That’s how you make the most out of the whole mentoring thing.
I  Intro
I  How long have you been in the company?
R  Four and a half years.
I  And in this role?
R  Two years as training manager. I’ve had 1 grade promotion and been in several roles.
I  And how long have you been mentoring (Protégé 3)?
R  Three months now
I  Have you mentored others?
R  Only one other – an HR consultant that needed some career and role advice.
I  Have you been mentored?
R  No, not in the formal sense. I got some informal mentoring from various other seniors in (the company), including (Mentor 2).
I  And what do you think about mentoring?
R  I think you can get the same benefits from other people including peers and managers. That doesn’t happen enough. People don’t reach out enough to others unless they actually are told that they should get a mentor. Otherwise, people just sit there and moan, “nobody is willing to talk to me!” It’s a lot back to the mentoring process here; it is informal. We don’t really have an official mentoring programme here. Everyone would want to get a mentor simply for the mentor’s sake. The reality of it is that we only have x amount of good people managers here. So, they would be swamped; so, we just don’t do it. Some people show a lot of promise that are identified and they’re told they should get a mentor. But, often other people are left behind because they don’t ask for assistance.
I  So are enough managers getting mentoring?
R  I think so. Well some aren’t. But the ones I think that want it are. People that are on an upward track tend to be that ambitious and do end up getting a good mentor. It’s caught on and I think more are looking for mentors so we’ll have to see down the line.
I  So would a more formal programme be required in the future?
R  Perhaps it would, but the informal mentoring will always be that much more...desirable – positive. I’d say that will always happen – and it should. If we were to get more hands-on in matching mentee A with mentor B then they might put less into it.
I  The mentors or the protégés? Mentees?
R  Both. Mentors and protégés get involved because there’s a sort of admiration there. That will always happen here now. Making it artificial will take away from the whole dynamic.
I  Would that be better than no mentoring? Not getting any mentoring?
R  I don’t know. In some cases, yes. In others, probably not. But I don’t see how it would match what happens here at the informal level. We’ve helped people find a mentor if they ask and some people are told they should ask a specific person. But it’s still up to the individuals to decide how or if they want to do it.
OK. You’ve been mentoring (Protégé 3) for 3 months. How is that going?

Pretty good. Better than good. We’ve reached a comfort zone now. I’d say it’s a fairly strong relationship already. There’s strong trust and the trust came pretty quickly, swift trust, and we can open up.

Great. And what sorts of things do you talk about?

It’s a lot to do with confidence building. Urging and coaching to keep a career progress on track. She brings some ideas and we’ll discuss that. It’s direction setting and personal and interpersonal issues.

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And what sorts of things do you talk about?

Mainly advice about the options available for her career. And giving more confidence. She’s become more reassured about what she wants to do, not only in the short-term, but also in the long run. She’s more confident now about how to deal with her managers than she had been in the past. I use management books, now discover your strengths, myers-briggs, which helps the mentor understand the person better to help guide them and helping the person to better understand themselves – to put it all in context.

And what does mentoring mean to you?

It’s honest, objective advice about the way to go forward. Helping the mentees, protégé figure out for themselves the way things operate and how to navigate the organisational structure and the political pitfalls. I’ve helped her to become more confident in taking risks and being more outspoken.

And what does mentoring mean to you?

The mentee should guide the relationship to avoid becoming over reliant on the mentor. That’s why the informal process works best. As opposed to being a one-on-one objectives check listing, the mentee asks for developmental support in a particular area.

And what is your role in that aspect of the relationship?

I am the protégé’s conscience. They know that I’m going to ask a number of months down the line if they had taken the steps that we agreed would be the most beneficial. I give a push and reassurance. So, they know that’s what they want and will feel like a dope if they don’t do it.

And what is your role in that aspect of the relationship?

So how do you help in dealing with others? Do help with contacts?

Not really. I help her understand the grey areas in how people are acting. It’s just some honest advice about who’d be doing what and why. It helps give them confidence to engage. If I thought it would be of benefit to the protégé’s career development, I’d certainly provide relevant contacts. I’d have no problem with vouching for her and arranging a meeting. However, I would have to be confident enough that there was a good chance of impressing the person – of demonstrating capability and making an impact before I’d go that route. Right now it’s just the one-to-one. She wants to be seen to be making headway on her own, getting noticed. So yes, senior people do come up as the right people to be talking to and we agree she’ll go and contact them herself, but I’m not involved directly in that way.

How would you describe your interactions?
I’m really doing a lot of coaching I suppose, confidence building and career coaching. But we talk a lot, deeply at times. It’s more personal than coaching. It’s more like a professional friendship. I think that’s what she wants. Someone who’ll listen and give a push to help her get where she wants to be. It’s satisfying to me to see that it helps. I really don’t know if I have offered all that much accept just being someone who cares with a bit of a different perspective on things.

Are there any negative aspects?

None really. Only that there’s not more time for it. Mentoring someone is just an opportunity to give some attention to things that people don’t get the opportunity to talk about in depth. It’s time set aside for that and that’s why it’s so worthwhile. Like as I said, people don’t reach out enough and get that kind of support. When you agree to do it like this, more like a formal arrangement, you can get to the root of things with someone and come up with some clear plans of action rather than being left to do it on your own. You can get that kind of help from others as I said, and probably more often if you look for it, but this is more like a dedicated session where you’re focused on the individual. With (Protégé 3) it’s a case where she’s somewhat more removed and feels a bit isolated in her role so I can act as sort of her life line to another space.

OK. Any other thoughts?

It’s great for me too. To take the time. It helps me get thoughts clear too so I suppose I’m getting a good bit out of it as well. We learn as we go. Not everything I suggest is what we decide on. It’s a two way exchange of ideas and we work it out together. So I’m learning there. And I think I’m getting…well I am getting something out of it because you can’t put things in context without talking about your own personal experiences. So we talk about my stuff at times and it helps us relate to each other. It’s a unique thing. A good thing. I think we’re more friendly than some other mentoring relationships might be, but that’s good.

How long do you see the relationship lasting?

As long as it needs to. As a mentoring thing? I’d say at least another year. If she might want to get another mentor at that stage. But I’ll always be a contact that’s available.

I

Intro

How long have you been in the company?

Four and a half years.

Have you mentored others?

I mentor six or seven others. I’ve always been a mentor here. I’ve been doing it for twenty years.

Wow. That is impressive. And have you been mentored?

I’ve been mentored at least eight or nine times and I’m being mentored now.

Great. Can you tell me how mentoring is established here?
Some people are told to get a mentor, but often the more aggressive people pre-empt this and seek out a mentor of their own accord.

Can you comment on what you see as valuable aspects of mentoring?

Being mentored gives you a broader scope on the organisation. Being mentored by people outside my area of expertise would give you a broader perspective on the organisation that is necessary for someone at my level. I’ve also undertaken independent mentoring. I have an outside mentor working on me at this point. This brings a whole new perspective on how other people see you. I do a more personalised 360 degree feedback session with her. She goes and interviews 10-12 people directly face to face and you get a more balanced score and better feedback. You learn about perceptions too and that really helps with access.

With access? How do you mean?

Providing access. I’m thinking of this one guy I mentored and when we looked at some of the issues he was having and we paretoed down where his biggest focus needed to be at, for me, and we discovered that that should be IT. We discovered that his relationship in IT wasn’t what it needed to be. I put him on to the IT department and all of a sudden he’s working his way through that and understanding what goes on and getting a better appreciation for what happens in that space. He’s advancing there and broadening his horizons. And he kept his link to me and would come to me every three months and give me an update about how he was getting on.

Yes…?

It think this led him out into other areas and I think it got him to the point where instead of him feeling like he was the victim of systems, all of a sudden, he was participating in solutions and at the same time, building the team and the network and moving on again from there. In some cases I’ll tell the protégé to ‘go talk to so and so and tell him to give me a call and I’ll give him some leads on what he needs to do’. It’s not a case where I call somebody and say I’ve just mentored this guy…I think doing it that way, you’re looking for favours. I think if the guy himself takes your advice and goes and makes the first approach and then this other person tips back into me, it’s a better way of doing it”.

Ok. So can you tell me more on how you feel about helping mentees with relationships and contacts?

It depends who the mentee is and it also depends on the nature of the character you are trying to connect him to. If the relationship is damaged there and you are trying to build a bridge and you see this as an excellent way of getting this guy moved on. Then yes, I would pick up the phone and say I’m recommending this guy and would you kindly act as a mentor for him, and I understand the relationship hasn’t been fantastic, but I think this is a way for you to build a bridge with him and he gets to build a bridge with you and gets a better understanding of your portfolio and what you do with that whole space. I like to mentor guys at a level or two levels down because I think I’m building their confidence as well to broaden their scope to move on or up. You build their confidence and relax them more and they’re not afraid the next time to maybe go two levels above.
I: It seems more common her to have an interdepartmental mentor – someone from another area. Can you tell me about the what you think about this as opposed to a relationship in the same area?

R: Outside versus inside mentor? [Interviewer affirmative nod] The guy inside is helping you within that organisation. I think if you have an outside consultant, like I have at the moment, who is a highly skilled professional from the United States, they’re bringing a real broader scope to what you are trying to look at and do. I’ve had this mentor for 9 months now, she’s extremely talented and reasonable enough in the questioning, but great follow through; she’s a great follow-upper. That broadens your scope as a manager. I think the higher in the organisation you go - I think it’s probably better to have both an inside and an outside mentor. You don’t have to run them in parallel. I found the outside one right now particularly helpful. If you’re in the organisation at several levels down, I think you’re fine with an inside mentor. If you get up to the top levels of the organisation, where I’m at and I’ve worked with my boss for many many years, both here and elsewhere, I think having the outside mentor is very helpful. My mentor helped me identify several people we felt needed to be networked and I spent a whole day over in the states trying to network them. In some cases we’ve set up fortnightly conference calls, some of them just talk about the weather, but at least the contact is there and it’s not just a name on an e-mail, it helps to get things done.

I: So what types of mentor support are important to a good relationship?

R: It’s mainly about how you connect with others and how that whole dynamic works on your career. So there’s the whole career advice element coming in a lot of the time too – It depends on the individuals and where they are in their journey.

I: So career support is valuable?

R: I think if you think that you’ve gone past that, then you’re finished. Things change; things move on. If you’re not open to new ideas here and things changing here and you’re not a change agent, then you’re in the wrong job. When you’re in management quite a long time, you can get pretty set ideas, I try to avoid that. You tend to have an aggressive streak in you and you need that to get things done around here sometimes, but I think you need to have balance with that. I think that ‘tweaking’ that comes from the mentoring side is what helps achieve that. My mentor has helped me become very aware of some flaws I have in my management style and I’m very conscious of these things outside of here, in daily routine stuff that I go through, from the focussed questioning, you’d have to question some of the things you see (in yourself) and do even on a private level. If you feel you’ve gone past the stage of mentoring, I think you’ve gone past the stage of learning.

I: Ok. And what other types of support do you feel you can provide protégés?

R: Support. I’ve devoted a lot of my time here in what we would call work-life balance. At the risk of boasting, I’m actually at the top of the pile here in work-life balance. I think I’ve brought a lot of that to the people I mentor and to some degree to the organisation that I run. I think we’ve proven that people over the last 3-4 years - that you don’t have to be here twelve hours to do your job. If you do in your daily job some of the stuff
that you preach as a mentor, you have a lot of credibility. I think on the work-life balance thing, I would score somewhere in the high 90’s and it’s very tough to get it over 80. And the reason I’m in the 90’s is that I believe in it. Just as with anything else, you can be a mentor all your life, but if you don’t practice and you’re not seen to be practicing and ‘walking the talk’, you’re going to fail as a mentor. So, I think the reason a lot of people latched on to me and said, ‘Look, the reason I got you to be my mentor is because I’m stressed; the job gives me a lot of bellyache!’ so, when we get into it and break it down and look at what’s happening, I can show them how to approach it better.

Yes

We break it down and talk about what is important. And coping with the whole thing. Work-life balance is pretty important here. I think some of the actions we’ve taken as a management team have demonstrated to these people that there is a life outside of here and of your 168 hours of a week, 40 hours is all we’re looking for, the rest is yours to go do what you wish with it. If you’re working 12 hours a day every day, in three weeks time you’re useless anyway, you’re actually probably only turning in 6 or 7 hours of worth. I have a record of whose on the job at any one time. So what actually we actually do at the weekly staff-meeting, I have my P.A. out up a chart showing the exceptions who have worked more than 48 hours last week. Some of them are doing through habit, some are doing it because their boss is on late, other are doing because they’re overloaded with work. So, it got to a point where we looked at, e.g., why is ‘Mary ‘ doing all these hours and how come her colleague John can go home at half past 5:00 every evening?’. By balancing the load, and looking at what they were doing, it works out right. So, it’s like with other people, you see charts all over the wall here, a very simple thing, buyers are down there and there stressed out trying to make sure we get parts in. What we’re saying is come up here and stick it up on a board here and tell us, what’s the issue?, what’s the run rate?, are we ahead of forecast and what’s the supply line like? And we can give them help because we’ve looked at it and told them what’s going on and all of a sudden, they’re not stressed anymore because their manager and senior vice president have taken this thing on-board and it’s a problem shared. So, people start asking, ‘how do you get that style and how do you get that balance and let’s have a mentoring session so I can see how I can achieve that style in something else they’re doing. Most things come down to people being stressed. Some people are very happy in their grade, other people want to get up the ladder and they’re wondering how they can get up the ladder and start looking for a mentor. A lot of people make something more serious out of mentoring than it actually is. You know, it’s people looking for guidance, advice, help, ‘how did you get there and are there learnings there for me in this thing? And work-life balance. That’s all it comes down to in the end. You can have all these fancy charts and fancy discussions, but all it comes down to basic - what does a human being need when he sits across the table from you and what can you get from him as well, because there is a learning in both directions, that’s what it is all about. If I sit here talking to a guy two levels down, there’s a lot I can take. It’s amazing the amount
of learning you can get talking to people levels down and you can’t get to them all, mentoring is a great forum for it.

I  On that, numbers, what do you think about the availability of mentors?
R  At times, I feel like I’m mentoring too many people at the one time, but at the same time, it’s very difficult to refuse somebody that opportunity. There should be more mentors, enough is never enough. I think we’re getting better at it. I think if you want a mentor today, you can have it and have a very good mentor.

I  Alright. I want to come back to when you mentioned the helping with confidence and contacts – from a mentor’s perspective.
R  Look. In other companies, that I saw as more wired from person to person, you didn’t get anywhere without latching on to someone else’s wagon. Here it’s really performance based. Of course, there’s some element of politics, but from what I’ve seen in four and a half years, results count here. Have people got on because they’ve latched on to somebody else, of course they have, but it is no where close or near to the companies I’ve worked for in the past. I try and coach the mentees on how to navigate the system and how to get over some of the obstacles. In some cases, person is ring fenced and can’t get out. In most cases, the individual has a big part to play in having that ring fence there in the first place. So you’re helping him to break down that ring fence. You’re helping him to get out of the harbour and out into the bay and start looking for real fish to fry out there. It’s not so much breaking it down for him, but rather who he should be talking to, what the next step should be, who would be the next best mentor for him, broaden his scope so the results can develop and start to talk and the results can start to deliver for him. There is one guy I’m mentoring now and he’s got all the pieces except one and that’s personality. He just doesn’t know how to deliver a bad message with out upsetting people. You’ve got 30 seconds and you’ve got to deliver a bad message properly and get people to say, ‘WOW, Joe is excellent, I feel good walking away from this thing even though I just got a really negative message!’ Another guy I’m working on, he’s excellent, but he tends to try and operate one level above where he is and in doing so, he’s upsetting people. A lot of the people I mentor are very intelligent, but they just can’t network properly, and how you do that without upsetting people.

I  So you teach them how to deal with others?
R  Yes. I like dealing with a lot of the softer stuff, because that’s the stuff that can do the most damage if you don’t deal with it properly. You want to avoid hearing people say, “That guy is so arrogant I just can’t work with him!” One of my own direct reports who I mentor, my best direct report, had a huge communication issue. A number of years ago this person wouldn’t want to be seen (by corporate HQ). Six months ago, a senior VP said to me that any of 10 departments would want that person over there today. It wasn’t an issue about capability; it was about how you deliver a message. Now he is seen as a results driven, good people manager. That’s the balance they’re looking for here, aggression with a soft-touch. When people are assessed, they want to see the results, but also how you did it. Did you walk all over people, or did you bring them along? It’s the
how that matters. More and more, the mentoring piece is going to focus
on the how.

I And what about mentor – mentee relationships?
R You cannot run an operation without a proper mentoring system. It’s
implied here that managers need to get mentored. When I first came here,
I was told who my mentor was going to be. I didn’t like that approach; all
of a sudden you are off on the wrong foot. You’re better off to establish,
“Look, you need to get a mentor and it needs to be one of X’s 15 or so
direct reports. It’s better to let it develop naturally because it takes the
suspicion out of it and people don’t feel like they’re being interrogated if
they make the first move. In the rare instance, I will say to someone else,
‘look, I am mentoring this guy and I would be grateful if you would take
him on for me because he’s struggling in the IT’, or whatever ‘and it
would be great for both of you if you could sit down and take a look at
this, what do you think?’, and move it on like that.

I And how do you engage with protégés? Mentees?
R I give 10 or 15 minutes of a heads up about what I see, then I say, ‘look it’s
your session, what do you want out of it?’

I Do you have any examples of what they want out it?
R There was one individual I was mentoring about 12 months ago. He was a
middle manager. There was an off-site with operations and his name came
up in a pretty derogatory way, which upset him quite a bit. I taught him
how to go back around and understand and by the process of elimination,
it came down to what the core issue was. It came down to one individual
that had one bad day with him and it was taken out of context and beca
me
a career-limiting position. Once we went through it, he went around to
every member of that team and he’s since got promoted. That day he
came to me about it, he was shell-shocked, but by talking about what the
real issue was, narrowing it down and talking about the ways that he could
overcome.

I So you guide them on how to overcome problems?
R That’s it really. People get into situations and they can panic. They
haven’t been there before and don’t keep a cool head and just do the
obvious – what experience would tell you is obvious. You need to talk
them through it and all of a sudden it makes sense and they’re happier to
solve that – whatever is holding them back. Yes it’s how to fight your
corner and stand up for yourself, but doing it the right way so that you
don’t make things worse rather than fixing it. I get them to talk through the
issues and we can come up with the answers together. It’s better than
learning the hard way because that can ruin you. A lot of these people are
bright sparks, but they just get a little overwhelmed sometimes in the
politics. Having someone that can work through the questions and throw a
bit of clarity on it is a real advantage.

I So how do these problems or issues come up in the meetings – the
mentoring?
R Everyone has problems. I do. Sometimes they don’t know what the real
problem is, but you’ve got to get the dialogue going. Sometimes they ask
all the questions and sometimes I ask all the questions. There are always
questions to be answered. They’ve got to be prepared to talk about it and
know that I’m in their corner. I won’t fight their battles for them, but I can show them some good techniques that work in different situations.

I From what I’ve seen the mentoring is fairly informal here do you have any other thoughts on how that is working?

R I think mentoring here is getting up a head of steam. I think by about the middle of next year, I think we would have to have a more formal programme. I think by then that enough people will have gone through it in the informal way that people are going to realise that it’s going to be a part of our DNA here. I think once you get to that level, you can put in a formal one, because people may have had six successful mentoring relationships in the past four years and it becomes a natural expectation. Of course it will have to be flexible to cater to the – the personalities and characters. If you don’t click with the person it would be pretty tough going and people might not get into it again. It would be a waste of time or the whole thing might fall apart.

I What do you think about the quality of your relationship with (Protégé 4)?

R Good. I mean that’s a bit different. I work closely enough with him anyway. We know that the mentoring piece is another string to the bow. There’s a mutual respect built in there, but the mentoring forum is an opportunity to interact on a different level. It’s all about the learning and coaching. But I know where he is at I suppose. If it were someone in another organisation, I’d probably listen that much more. It’s an easy enough thing to do though. He’s determined an it’s a plus for him that we can work through the work around or actions he needs to be taking to tackle the whole job and career movement angle.

I So is it serious or relaxed?

R Both really. There’s a time for both. We take it pretty seriously, but it’s a different sort of conversation when you’re doing the mentoring bit. He has no problem exploring the issues and options with me and that’s good. I like to hear it and because I’m interested in his best interests…we can work out where he’s going.

I Do personal issues arise?

R Certainly. Your circumstances have an impact on what you do and how you do it. Personal things come up and sometimes you have to bring them out to put everything in context. But, the organisation is a different space. How you focus on it is key to conquering it. We have a good mutual understanding so the mentoring works. You have to help the person get to the place where they know what they have to do and help them get there. He knows I’ll work on that. But like I said, I learn from it all as we go too and I wouldn’t have it otherwise,

I You are in the same area. How often do you mentor (Protégé 4)?

R I schedule twelve sessions for 6 months. Every 2 weeks - half hour to an hour - even though I’ve had one direct report for 4 years, but that’s very informal an it’s for succession planning purposes - intensive coaching. With (Protégé 4) we might put a session on hold, but he’ll run things by me in between.

I Any more thoughts on the relationship?

R Not that I can think of. It’s a working relationship. They don’t last forever in the mentoring realm. He’ll move on and there will be someone
else to fill that space, but I think you get a lot out of it in both directions and you remember these things and take them with you. You remember the good and the bad and you learn.

I How long do you see it lasting?

R We have to talk about that. We have raised the issue. In another couple of months we might start talking about getting him another mentor to focus on other areas. Once you’ve done this though with someone there is a link there and you can always tip back. It depends on how it works out how strong the link is.

I How it works out or how it works when you are doing it?

R Yes that’s obvious. It’s a people thing. How you got on as it were. (Protégé 4) may or not come back to me down the line. He may have taken all he could get. I think he knows he can come back to go over something. Who knows. I might ring him up to go over something with him down the line.
M5

I Intro

I How long have you worked for (Company X)?

R Almost Eight years

I What is your role in (Company X)?

R Associate Director of Operations working in the Efexor department.

I How long have you worked in your current position?

R About three and a half years

I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60

R I’m forty

I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which

R Yes, Food & fine chemicals

I Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?

R Yes

I How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?

R I’d say probably “institutionalized”

I How many projects have you worked to date?

R Over 100

I Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?

R Most of them are unbudgeted, which is an issue. In terms of duration, anywhere from 3 months to probably 2 year

I Define your project(s) activity in terms of budget & duration?

R In terms of the project, from a budgeting point of view is to capture the costs of the project, capture the savings and then probably in terms of duration, was a 3 month project a 3 month project or did it stretch to 4 months, 5 months. But invariably projects we are associated with would come in on time. Most are unbudgeted. The bigger ones are budgeted. Invariably that is the Efexor 3b expansion came in under budget

I Would that have been a corporate initiative?

R It would have been. The others would have been local site initiatives

I If you were to pick one project for the purposes of the interview at what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?

R EPC project. I joined at the start.

I What position do you hold on your current project(s)?

R Team member on the change control

I Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?

R I would, yes

I What level of training have you received? (On the job, Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic, other).

R You can tick all the boxes. On the job, internally, I’ve an MBA through the Open University

I Define project success in your terms?
R I suppose the project success is when you have moved the organisation from point a to point b. You have actually achieved movement. The other aspect is that the new outcome is now part of the frozen stage of the process. It becomes part of the new culture. I won’t use the word “paradigm”

I How successful were your previous projects?
R About 85% of them were successful

I Who do you mentor? (1 or more)
R (Protégé A) is going to be the individual and then I mentor all the supervisors. I have about 10 people there. Then I actually mentor people in other areas as well.

I Do you perceive it to be an important function
R Yes I do. Some people now I won’t tell you because they don’t want it known.

I Taking (Protégé A) as an example, was your project protégé assigned to you?
R No, I selected (him) myself

I Did the relationship evolve naturally? If yes, how?
R Yes it was a natural thing. I kinda selected (him). We put (him) into that particular role to help on EPC.

I So it was an arrangement when he joined
R No, no. I just picked him because he is a good guy.

I So you saw potential in him?
R Yes, yes

I What position does your project protégé hold in the organisation?
R He was a manufacturing supervisor; he is now our compliance specialist. He has been promoted.

I How long has he/she been mentored by you?
R I’d say, about 3 years

I Do you have a mentor(s)?
R I do. (Respondent provides the names of 2 individuals and their titles)

I How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?
R Three and half with (A) & 2 years with (B).

I Has your experience to date as a project mentor been positive?
R Yes, I would highly recommend it.

I Any negative experience (s)?
R No, no negative

I How much time is spent in communication with your protégé?
R On a daily basis… If you want to quantify it probably an hour a day but really on a daily basis

I Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?
R Yes.

I Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?
R Yes, yes he would because he would be into the nuts & bolts with people so he would.

I Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?
R Internal to the organisation.
I What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?
R On EPC it would be the inner workings of the project and basically what we have done is we have got ourselves in the position where we actually raised our change control, though us being so nice and they (Change control committee) actually put them on the system. They are very flexible with us.
I So this has helped you manage an area that is perceived to be particularly challenging?
R Yes, ah yes.
I Is this information verbal or written?
R The change controls obviously are written and the information part would be on a verbal basis
I How valuable is this information to your functional/project role?
R One of the key success factors
I Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?
R Yes, he has been promoted
I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped you become more influential?
R Yes
I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network, hence your career?
R Yes. From my own point of view I started of as a supervisor, I went through manager and am now an Associate Director.
I Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?
R Yes, that helps (Protégé A). I’ll show you. It helps turn the boxes green (He introduces a document tracking project achievements)
I Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)
R Yes, you can tick all boxes.
I Does the information you provide to your project protégé positively impact his/her contribution to project success?
R Yes, it does. He has clear direction. Know which people to deal with and how to approach them.
I What specific information types contribute to this success?
R Clear direction & people contacts
I Is this information shared verbally or in written format?
R It would be verbally really. We have a project plan which is to turn these metrics green. Most of it would be verbal.
I How is project specific information stored?
R This is what we were working towards (metrics) and now we have that sorted out so really that was our issue if you like. Now what we actually did and may it was wrong to say verbal because we actually did a project plan and we also did a daily update in relation to it. And I suppose you could also make the point that the evidence to open and close these were the written word. So you would have it stored on C drive & F drives
I Describe your overall perception of your project protégé
R He is a very good guy, hard working and very diligent and very positive can do attitude.

I Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?

R A positive experience overall. It is something that I would like to encourage throughout the organisation.

I How much trust do you have in your protégé?

R 100%

I Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?

R We have at this stage Efexor 100% compliant. We have completed our program and we have done it in a very tight timeline.

I Any additional comments/observations?

R I suppose in terms of the informal. I suppose it is not active. We went through a coaching/mentoring training program and you have very little evidence of it in the organisation. It may be a case, like I have a couple of people that don’t want anyone to know and that why. It may be that as a result of that. But I get a sense that people have gone through the training program, gone through coaching & mentoring etc and have just let it sit so I suspect that you will find it difficult to find people. If you look at, there is probably 100 managers on sit, that is probably 6% and add on about 4 more, maybe 10% of such a large organisation that has actually spent money and time and energy into actually trying to initiate mentoring, it hasn’t worked I don’t think.
Intro
How long have you worked for (Company X)?
5 Years
What is your role in (Company X)?
PPU director in (Town Named)
How long have you worked in your current position?
19 months
Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60
37
Have you experience of other industries?
I was in the Naval academy for undergraduates and did 5 years as an officer in a submarine. Did graduate school for a couple of years – MBA and did 3 years with a Strategy consultant with Accenture – supply chain strategy. 2 years with a start up company and then Pharma
Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?
Sure
How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?
Structured
How many projects have you worked on to date?
As a consultant everything is a project so dozens
Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
The projects tended to be 3 to 8 months and they were typically strategy type projects and the team would usually be approx 10 consultants working with the clients. Within Wyeth the last role was various projects going on in my organisation. Strategy projects included outsourcing, organizational assessments. One of the projects in my previous jobs was to implement E-procurement. In my group was responsible for rolling that out. I guess that was a $4 m dollar system in 19 locations. Most of my consultancy was strategy. Most of my (This Company) experience is the business side of the technology solutions
Are you currently involved on a project? If yes, define this project in terms of budget & duration?
Sponsor of various projects in NB. On MES I am specifically the sponsor for the Weight & Dispense part. I am responsible for the W&D activity here so the MES project has 2 big pieces W&D and Electronic Batch Records. The budget is around $6.9m. It really kicked of early last year and goes live in Oct so 18 months or so
At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you become involved?
I was tagged as the sponsor just because I was the organizational owner of the system so right at the start
What position do you hold on in relation to this current project(s)?
Sponsor
I: Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?
R: I’ve learned through all of the education that you have given me that there was a lot more science to it than I was unaware of. So base on that I don’t know but from a structure progressing from step 1 to step 2, step 3, I wouldn’t call it a core competency but it is something that I can do.
I: Have you received PM Training?
R: Most of my project management training would have come through as a consultant, thru Accenture. It was more focused on the strategy. How do you run a strategy project in the concept of milestones & deliverable and client review meetings but there are not nearly as structured as an engineering or systems project. There is a critical path and dependencies and things like that. I’ve never had to go to the level of a Primavera type project plan I’ve always been able to stay at the level of excel
I: Define project success in your terms?
R: On time/ on budget and client that are happy with the outcome
I: How successful would you rate your previous projects?
R: I think that a certain amount of flexibility around projects. I probably almost go on the client side. So the e-procurement there was a couple of 3 year projects still going on, certainly timelines have slipped and things like that, I consider it a success getting from the clients, every stage where we have extended timelines or do something else, what would you like us to do so in that regard it was a success. Understanding a project in the context of which it is required. So that particular one Indirect purchasing is not a business critical system so if you miss a deadline, horrible things happen and we were probably less stringent than you would have otherwise been.
I: Who do you mentor? (1 or more)
R: (Protégé B) - Nothing formal, I’d like to think that any of the folks that work in my area has some kind of professional relationship. I can think through at least a number of times, people working for me where I would classify it as a mentoring relationship, as an example I’ve got a guy who worked for me 5 years ago who still kinda rings me and we keep in touch every 4 –6 months when he has got a career decision and he is looking to bounce decisions of me. The same goes for someone who worked for me in the last group so you know within in this group there are a couple who I would say we have that kind of relationship. People who I sense are a little bit more career driven & receptive to advice. Meeting of minds describes it about right.
I: How did the mentoring relationship start?
R: It evolved a little bit but in the context of her new role there were some concerns about her softer skills so it was assigned in order for her to roll into her role and get the senior support we will take a leap on that. Basically my boss said (Mentor B) can you work with (her) to make sure she works through these issues
I: What position does your project protégé currently hold in the organisation?
R: She is the project lead for MES. She was a Compliance specialist support my PPU and HTs
I How long has he/she been mentored by you?

R I guess the formal thing was when she got the job which is probably 8-9 months and before that because she was a member of your team

I Describe your experience to date as a project mentor? Positive or Negative?

R Fairly loose. I suppose the things that people were concerned about with her had more to do with the softer side of presenting or how to work a meeting. Anticipate what your audience are going to ask and be prepared for that kind of stuff. So before steering committee things she would typically send me what she wants to present and I’d give her some feedback on that. We would catch up pretty shortly after a meeting and give her my perception of how she was perceived. It was about of the how she was doing and it was more of the “manage up” bit of that role.

I Any negative experience (s)?

R No no not at all. She has received good feedback. One of the concerns was the impression she could make in short interactions with corporate people, if you don’t do those things right they can tend to bubble their way around and come back to haunt you later. I’ve gone somewhat out of my way to talk to the guys back home, how is (K) doing for you and got good positive feedback.

I How much time is spent in communication with your protégé(s)?

R Not more than 30 minutes a week if you average it out. Not a tremendous amount

I Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?

R I don’t know, you could probably do more but on the meeting of the minds stuff, part of it is the perceptions. Now we don’t work directly on this project so I don’t interact with her that much directly on the project. She physically doesn’t sit near me. We have to make an effort to catch up so it tends to be before and after steering committee reviews that we get a chance to catch up

I Do you have a mentor(s)?

R Not formally no… and informally certainly not as much as I would like.

I How many?

R There is a bit. I’ve an uncle who is a senior business guy who over Christmas dinner we have conversations about business related things. I don’t have any other relations in my family who have done that kind of stuff. My former boss in (This Company) every 6 months I’d try to have lunch with him when I was at home and kind of caught up on some things. They are there in the background and around here it has been a bit absent to be honest

I Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

R Haven’t yet.don’t know. In this relationship you have got the plant and you’ve got the corporate guys. At least in a big multinational like this most of the networking that you would want to do is external. I came from the external so I think my network is more out of here than in here. I think the fact that she is more junior to me wouldn’t do me any good

I Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?
I’d like to think so. I’m pleased that the feedback on her has been positive. There was certainly a concern by a number of people about her ability to lead a project to influence people, influence corporate direction. But the feedback is positive and I was concerned about play out. I feel pretty good about that. (Protégé B) was aware of those concern. That was the initial conversation that we had. I was tending to really push her for the role so I argued in her corner. So I was told if you really want her in the role, then you are accountable so we had that open discussion. You know she had these people who may not have had the utmost confidence in her and here are the reasons why.

I: Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped you become more influential?

R: I don’t know if influential is the right word, certainly something that is good to do professionally – helping people. I personally think that these things do kind of evolve. I know there are organizations where you have mentor as your nametag. I would rather that there was a sense that he is a good guy and someone you need to talk to. But not necessarily with a name tag. You would hope that as things got underway that things flow back and the some of the feedback as an individual is that he provides good guidance as an individual.

I: Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network, hence your career?

R: Maybe the networking side is a little bit different than the mentoring. I’m here because of networking. You have to do it in these big corporations. I came from a big corporate role. I spend about 18 months in my last role trying to figure out where the next role is going to be. Wyeth doesn’t have a formal rotation program. Trying to have lunch with the various people and meeting some senior people through various projects. I know Steve White through a couple a little of projects and frankly I was sitting down with him and discussing next steps and what he think would work and that is where the discussion came about this particular role. Mentor is a bit too strong at this point in the relationship but when he comes over I tend to have good 1-1 time with him to talk about career related stuff. You can’t force this stuff – it doesn’t make for a good relationship.

I: Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?

R: From a mentoring point of view, it is more loose one. Not about the “what”, more about the “how”.

I: Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)

R: It is more about the organisation information. It is all around the “how”, how do you sell your story, behaviours.

I: Given that you share this information with your project protégé how do you think this impact his/her contribution to project success?

R: It certainly gives her more confidence to herself. I know it is picked up by the senior folks here when they are getting updates on the project. There is a confidence in the project which is a self perpetuating type of thing. I think that is how it has helped.

I: What specific information types contribute to this success?
Most of it is structured around upward communication which tends to be informing people of status so the feedback. Put yourself in the shoes of (An Anonymous Executive) or the corporate guys… what do they want to know about your project, or a decision on something. Do you need me to influence something? Make sure you cover those clearly succinctly right up front. It is that kind of feedback.

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

No – it is typically verbally. We would catch up around meetings and talk afterwards

How is project specific information stored?

There is some email exchanges perhaps on things. She will send me this deck and say take a look what do you think and I will respond with a few things.

Describe your overall perception of your project protégé

Good – coming into the job like she does and getting frank feedback and you had to be quite self assured and confident to take it the right way and to realize that the soft side is more important as you move along. Some people can make the leap from being the smartest one in the room to ‘why doesn’t everyone get me’. It think that she is taking the feedback well and that is good.

Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?

It is good. It is frankly the first one I’ve been in which was assigned and forced. It is a little unnatural but we get along o.k. I’m not sure that the relationship would have developed without intervention. But that being said hopefully it has been of some value to her.

Did that make you more reluctant to engage with her?

No – I had worked with her obviously as a compliant specialist. She had positive feedback from the person who was leaving the job. I put a lot of faith in that. I asked (Y) who do you think would be best to follow you up and she had good things to say about (M) which validated my gut feel. She know the job and she knows (K) well. As we got into the interviewing…she was the one we wanted to put into this role and then you start hearing a little bit of noise. I trust my gut on this one and I trust Y’s opinion but if there are some rough edges that some people have a concern about I’m happy to figure it out.

How much trust do you have in your protégé?

Around the project – complete really

Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?

I think confidence the organisation in her is important because if you start to loose that you get all kinds of extra help that you don’t need and spend your time defending this and you are going to find that the little things that weren’t there. So I think that it has helped keep some of the heat away from her not that there was heat on her but it prevented it happening in the first place

Would you view this as being the type of mentoring experience that once MES is finished, that is it?

I certainly wouldn’t not answer the phone! Recently we haven’t had as much opportunity to catch up. I would hope that it would evolve into
something that if she needed someone to bounce things off of that she would come to me. Going back to what X said, I’m doing this activity, which is one of the things that he was looking for out of this and it is kind of gone now. So hopefully it will evolve naturally.

I Any additional comments/observations?
R It depends on what your career/life aspirations are, everyone can look back at one or two individuals that had a big effect on you and you would love to be able to go out there and pick that guy and he is going to be my mentor. That is where I want to be in a number of years and I think it is incumbent on you as an individual to figure out how you can best model and hopefully have some discussions and get into that kind of feedback

**M7**

I How long have you worked for (Company X)?
R 3 years in June
I What is your role in (Company X)?
R Project Lead for a couple of projects
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R I’ve been working on projects for about 2 years now. Prior to that I was Packaging Ops manager, then I moved over to the projects and started on the BZA CE, then moved over to Levo. I’m still working on the Levo project but also I’ve taken on the PDC project.
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R 31 – 40
I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?
R This is my first Pharma job. Prior to this I worked in Medical devices, similar but different
I Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?
R I guess it varies really. We have a number of big projects, SAP, BZA Levo so to a large extent projects are used to implement change. Even when they do small changes in side, they tend to use projects as well
I How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?
R In the broader context, structured would be a reasonable place to put it. But in terms of the systems, the QSE systems, there is a defined process that you are supposed to follow. That would be getting towards the managed process.
I Would you not consider that to be the compliance part of it?
R There is a whole PM piece around the documents that you have to generate and tollgates. You have to meet your tollgates before you move on to the next phase of the project. So there is an element of structure there. The one thing that I would say is that people struggle with it a bit and see it as another thing that they have to do as opposed to seeing it as a real tool. I guess the softer side of project management; it is down to the individual who are working on the projects to implement those. There is no real structure about that.
How many projects have you worked on to date?

In (Company X) the 3 big ones plus one other small one. Prior to that numerous projects in different guises, ERP projects, general manufacturing. My background prior to working (here) was Customer Services Manager, Operations Mgr and Product Development Manager. Your life really revolved around projects, quite a lot but nothing to the same value as now.

Can you define these projects in terms of budget & duration?

They were probably…The biggest one was about 4 million and that would have lasted about 18 months or so. That would have been part of my overall role. There were a lot of sub projects ongoing but were less than a million. Most 6 months to a year.

Are you currently involved on a project? If yes, define this project in terms of budget & duration?

BZA Ce I’ve worked on and moved off it. That one is worth $350m but I’m not working on that anymore. The Levo project is less than $70m and duration is about 3 years. The PDC project is budgeted for 40m but we are also doing the design for our sister plant in Puerto Rico so all told it is about 78m dollars. The duration is about 36 months.

At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you become involved?

The project had just started and it has started under a different guise but it went away and it took up the guise of Levo so it was really in the concept stage.

What position do you hold on in relation to this current project(s)?

As the overall site project lead on Levo

Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?

I hope so

Have you received PM Training? If yes, What type of training have you received? (On the job, Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic, other)

Nothing by way of the Project Management Institute. Just general small PM courses down through the years. On the job

Define project success in your terms?

On schedule budget and the desired functionality. One of the very successful things we have done here is to integrate the project teams together and that is going to help us lead to the on budget/on schedule. Not just the plans but also the people as this is the first project team on site where we brought together – operations, quality, technology and the engineering service provider. It is one team, one group, none of this You & Me and it has work. So in terms of success by bringing the project in on budget/schedule, it has helped to achieve it.

How successful would you rate your previous projects?

Very

Who do you mentor? (1 or more)

(Protégé 7) & others as well. I suppose on the Levo project team. (Mr. X) is the project manager, (Protégé 7) is the operations lead, governing the technology. (Mr. Y) is the technology, we have an automation lead, we have a number of leads that report directly into me. But I guess that
(Protégé 7) is a key one as he is the operations lead and he would be a person who would be ultimately the owner.

I How did the mentoring relationship start?
R It started I guess…it is mentoring such that (Protégé 7) reports in to me on the project. We had started the project, it was up and running. It was a true concept, it was true preliminary engineering and we were moving onto detailed design and we didn’t have a dedicated operations person on the team as we were doing the earlier stuff. We went out and specifically determined that we needed an operations lead and we hired internally. (He) was the successful candidate so it was really from that point onwards he came onto the project under the assumed role of operations lead for the project and I guess from that point onwards then that the mentoring started. It wasn’t evolutionary such that we hired him specifically for the job. It would have been a bit evolutionary in terms of getting to know each other.

I From the outset you perceived him as a candidate that you would like to mentor?
R Yes. We recruited him and he was the successful candidate.

I What position does your project protégé currently hold in the organisation?
R He is the operations lead

I How long has he/she been mentored by you?
R About a year, since (Protégé 7) joined.

I Can you describe your experience to date as a project mentor?
R OK from my perspective, it started off in a pretty good place because when we hired (Protégé 7). I had spent a couple of interviews with him and had gotten a very good feel on his background and felt it would be appropriate to the role that he was filling. He had had some experience in Tech services or the process development side of things but he had also had experience in operations and he has a PhD in terms of Pharma development. I’m not too sure exactly what his PhD is. He has a very strong technological and operations background but he was really the ideal candidate. But suppose the context of the mentoring started when I interviewed him because it was very clear that he had the right mindset and outlook on how the project should be delivered to get the ultimate functionality for the operations side so I reckon from day one it was very clear from our interviews what he wanted to achieve.

I Can you describe the relationship?
R It started of in the right frame of mind and we were both in the same place and shooting for the same thing. From there on in terms of how the mentoring developed, it has been fairly informal and very frequent contact. As you can see our offices are right beside each other and we are all in the same cabin, as I mentioned earlier so when stuff comes up we bounce it off each other to make sure it is going in the right direction. I’d say it is quite a 2 way relationship. You could say that (he) had mentored me as well. He has brought a lot to the project by way of Six Sigma. (He) has brought all of that to the project and as I had done the Six Sigma’s champions course, I asked (him) to use his experience to bring along the project. My style of mentoring tends to be fairly frequent open discussion.
We bounce things around a lot. It is not so much a boss subordinate relationship; we are all working here together.

I  Any negative experiences?

R  Very few if any, let me think – no not really. There might have been a couple of times but I can’t bring to mind any examples. Maybe a couple of times when we are in meetings there might have been times where we are trying to direct the team on a couple of design issues and we might have a difference of opinion. But to the point where we discuss it off line and we agree where we should go with it. So no issues but differences of opinions at times but always rectified.

I  How much time is spent in communication with your protégé?

R  We sit down on a one-one basis and it is probably no more than an hour or two each week but because of the set up here we would probably spent 30% of our time in the same room doing the same things, working on the same stuff. So it is proximity and going through stuff together. And in terms of the structure, which I suppose can be bad about the whole mentoring style of being informal we don’t have dedicated time and we talk about what is going on. It tends to be more ad hoc and informal which can be good and can also not good. We lean towards the informal at the minute and we need to get back to the more formal, not regimented but more structured. You know one-to-one time.

I  Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?

R  Paraphrasing what you have said in the previous questions it would from an informal perspective but you would like to see it more structured if it was formal formalized relationship with out becoming too rigid.

I  OK.

R  I suppose that is down to me really and I know it is a two-way thing. I know that we are together a lot we have this informal thing and there is no gulf or divergence there in terms of where we see the project is going but it doesn’t hurt to sit down one a week and determine what is going on, what is important. Take time out and that is something that we could improve on.

I  Do you have a mentor?

R  I have people I take to and I bounce things off. Peers more so than mentors. I report directly to the MD. He is very busy but he is good such that if we are not getting time to talk during work he will organize a dinner once every month or so to talk through things. So I get direction from (Mr. X), it is fairly infrequent. But aside from that I have others we would bounce stuff off each other. It is more networking but if I were to pick one example when I stepped out onto the projects two years age, it was all very new to me, Pharma was new to me. (Mr. Z) was a strong mentor to me at that time. He helped me along, guided me and I went back to him with a lot of questions. That has weaned a little bit as I got up and running by myself. But in the early day of moving to the role I would have certainly said the (Mr. Z) was a mentor. It is more networking now but back then I felt if I needed anything he was my mentor for six months to a year.

I  Do you have this type of relationship with others?

R  Yeah, about four – all in similar roles we are all running big projects. It’s kind of a peer structure
I How long have this/these relationships existed?
R About one year to two years with the exception of (Mr. Z)
I Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?
R He would I guess (Protégé 7) has worked here longer than me and he has worked in various different roles within (this company). Operations, product development. Certainly (he) brings a link to the site that I wouldn’t have had previously. Politics a bit, he would have a strong connection with people. It helps with recruitment from inside the organisation. You can’t beat that when you are trying to recruit.
I Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?
R Primarily internal
I What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?
R People, Organisation and technical issues, he would bring what is happening on site to the table, so it can be specific info at times as well. We use it to compare.
I Is this information verbal or written?
R It is primarily verbal, by way of networking, by way of the networking piece. In terms of general information piece, he obviously provides written information in reports by way of updates. Particularly in terms of the Six Sigma he submitted FMEA which we all signed off on. But by way of networking and linking with the existing site, it is mainly verbal.
I How valuable is this information to your functional/project role?
R Very! It is keeping abreast of what is going on. It is one of the peculiarities of a big project and having set it up the way we have, you get your dedicated team, you bring them out into a cabin – you are all focused on the same thing. You can get very good delivery of the project but by doing that you can create a cocoon and the disconnection from the existing site can begin. So it is very important that you have people that are linked to the site.
I Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?
R I’d like to think so. To give you specific examples of that we do a lot of updates for both people on site and visitors. Last week we had 7 presentations alone on vision, progress to date etc. By way of exposure, some project leads may present and not even bring the team with him. The approach that we take here is that we all go in together so that all the leads get exposure by showing what they are doing to senior people.
I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped you become more influential?
R I guess it does. On one level when engaging in a mentoring relationship you become more influential because you are influencing them and they are delivering stuff for your project and that is one is a kind of a direct influence. Indirect also by way of the network piece because that network that Kevin brings to the project by way of the link with the existing site. When he brings people and their views to the table, we also have the ability to influence in the opposite direction. So I suppose by definition of a networking it is a network that everyone influences everyone else. There is also the two way piece to it.
Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network, hence your career?

Yes, it has.

Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?

(Protégé 7) as an individual is very competent. It is not that I have to spoon feed him along the way. If there is something there is to be done and we talk about it I’m very happy for him to go off and do it. From time to time there will be advice given in terms of how he should approach it or present it. But in terms of the specific nuts & bolts, he more or less can represent himself.

Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)

When we are presenting, I suppose what we have done is, right you prepare the presentation but let’s sit down and see who is our audience, what message do we want to get across, what bit do you need to present and what is the format of that presentation. I have to say that in terms of the people and the politics that is probably a two way street. I get as much from (him) as I give to him.

Given that you share this information with your project protégé how do you think this has impacted his/her contribution to project success?

Positively, I think to date his roles have been in operations. He is getting some of the overall context of being the overall owner of this facility and he has to step beyond the bounds of well I am looking after the tablet press / report. He now has to see that this is going to be our new facility, what is going to look like. He has to think of the bigger picture of being an owner of a factory. I think I am helping him along the way in that to see the bigger picture.

What specific information types contribute to this success?

Helping him see the wider picture and promoting this ownership piece.

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

Typically verbally.

How is project specific information stored?

We shared a lot of stuff and information that I get in I would pass along via email but to a large extent this whole idea of ownership, a lot of that is being discussed so it is mostly verbal but we do pass written info from time to time.

Overall, describe your overall perception of your project protégé

He is very good and strong individual. He came with the exact background that we were looking for. The fact that he had the tech services is a bonus. He came with the right mindset in terms of accountability as a team, ownership as a team in that they own what they need to deliver. In terms of his development, the whole idea of a project and the project world was new to him, executing a project from start to finish, what is involved, the engineering piece. I can see that he is very much developed in that role. I don’t think he has had any formal training. But the whole thing of the URS which becomes an FS and then a FAT but you can see he is developing a lot in that area and is starting to understand the engineering piece in the bigger part of the project. Overall perception – very good. The big thing
for me is that he has the right attitude and he has the whole idea of owning the facility and he has very much brought that to bear.

**I**

Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?

**R**

To my mind it has been a very good relationship to date, in that it has been fairly informal, it is the way I like to work, which can be good or bad, as I said. It is informal, we talk a lot, we bounce ideas of each others and we are commonly going in the same direction. However, as I said before we gear towards the informal a bit too much. That is my style. I find I have to pull myself back on that a bit and that it has more structured sit down talks & discussions.

**I**

Do you find your discussion is more about the project rather than the softer side?

**R**

We do that but it infrequently enough and when we have had those discussions, Kevin prompts them more, to be fair. By his training needs and courses and we have identified that these are the right things to do and to go do it. It transpires that the particular one he wanted to do, he couldn’t do. So he picked a different one. We have talked about where he wants to go and what he should do. To be honest we want to get to a stage where I’m prompting that a bit more.

**I**

How much trust do you have in your protégé?

**R**

Total. Full stop.

**I**

Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?

**R**

I suppose from my point of view if we hadn’t this type of relationship it would make the project very difficult to deliver. I know that (he) understands where we want to go with this. That helps me a bit in that I don’t have to keep annoying him all the time. If I cant make a meeting I know that (he) is there, that he is in the right frame of mind and that he is not going to let it go off an a tangent that is irrelevant and drive it in a direction that we don’t want the project to go. [Pause] It has helped success of other projects, I’m involved in the PDC project which I couldn’t do if (Protégé?) didn’t have his eye on the ball in terms of where this project is going. There is a broader context. The mentoring and the trust and that whole piece it goes onto other projects.

**I**

Any additional comments/observations?

**R**

Maybe due to informality and the way we do things and how we interact together is very much a personal type of thing. I feel a bit uncomfortable with the word – mentoring. When you say mentoring it is more like the lets sit down and we can talk about where you are going in your life and career and that. And we do an element of that from time to time, in fact a reasonable element to be fair, when I use the word mentoring it evokes a different type of image of the traditional or in previous companies they hire a mentor from a consultant and he is going to sit with you for a couple of days a month for 6 months and then he goes off again. It is like someone who has been around the block about 20 times and maybe is retired and does this by way of mentoring, helping people be successful in their career so when I use the word mentoring, that is my image of mentoring so it is difficult to equate what we do here with that style of mentoring. But is equally relevant. [Pause]
The way we have set up is a function of the individual. It seems to be the way mentoring is evolving to be more informal.

I Yes?
R It works very well with people who are like minded but if you brought someone totally person how would I mentor them. If you don’t click so well with this person as you would with others, how do you ensure that you are mentoring them as well as others.
I Levo is a project with a defined beginning and end. Will the contact remain?
R The vision around Levo is that it becomes a PPU, the vision is that I would follow through and lead it up and (Protégé 7) heads-up operations. We are not just the mechanics we are the car owners.
I Can you explain?
R It would evolve into us working together. If that doesn’t happen, I would still imagine that the relationship would still be there and whether we would continue mutually mentor each other, we would certainly have a very strong network link.
I Strong network link?
R You need to be careful about the whole informal side of the mentoring relationship and that it becomes a friendship than a boss-subordinate relationship and a mentor relationship. It is a fine line to navigate. I’ve seen it happen in the past where people have become too close and if it doesn’t work out then it can be very messy. It can be hard to be critical of someone if you are too close. In informal mentoring that line between informal versus friendship and keeping it professional is difficult.

**M8**

I How long have you worked for Company X?
R 3 years since last August
I What is your role in Company X?
R Associate Director for Compliance – I’m responsible for Compliance in Newbridge
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R Coming up to 14 months
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R 31–40
I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which
R No, pharmaceutical industry
I Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?
R Yes to varying degrees they are
I How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?
R A lot of them would be unstructured and a number would be structured. Very little if any above that, maybe like Pfizer
I How many projects have you worked on to date?
R It is hard to tell. Not more than a 100 but more than 10
I Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
R Budget-duration they would range from “LACES” which is the biggest project from $6m over 3 years. Trackwise is 500k for a year and right down the scale 10k for a months
I Are you currently involved on a project? If yes, define this project in terms of budget & duration?
R I’m involved in a number of projects in different roles. LACES project I’m the program lead on site and the project manager reports to me. I’m sponsor for a number of other projects, System owner for others and also project program lead for Trackwise/EPC sustainability
I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you become involved?
R In the Gowning Task force – I got involved pretty much from the start. It was a goal in the department to set up a gowning task force. Then it got linked into an IMB commitment where by I’m down to the owner of the commitment so more recently we put it into a defined project with a group of people
I What position do you hold on in relation to this current project(s)?
R Program compliance and project sponsor
I Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?
R I would say that I’m reasonably competent at it. I wouldn’t be an expert.
I Have you received PM Training? If yes, What type of training have you received? (On the job, Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic, other)
R I’ve done some PM training. It was a small course a number of years and also been involve in Project Management training sessions and prep session for the various corporate projects where they would set out the methodology
I Define project success in your terms?
R Let’s take a computer systems project – it is taking an application that is fit for purpose and meets the expectation of the business and that is met on time and within budget
I How successful would you rate your previous projects?
R It varies. The Watson project was delivered on time and on budget. It depends on the expectation of the business. The GxPharma was delivered on time, there was a mad target at the beginning but then every phase was delivered on time.. The LACES once baselined and then all of the initiative came in on time. All of the last 5 compliance initiatives have come in on time.
I Do you mentor others?
R Yes I do. It depends on whether I think I’m mentoring them and they see it the same. There would be a number of Laces supervisors that I would have mentored over time and various in my organisation to varying degrees. So probably 2-3 people there that I would have spent a good bit of time mentoring.
I Why is it important here?
R One is the project piece and the other is how they interact with people in the business. In the project they are very technical and passionate about what they do but we have to liaise with the people. You can become
pigeon holed in a project whereby you are creating an application that you think is excellent, you are very knowledgeable about it but the business see it from a different perspective. They don’t necessarily think that it is being delivered in a timely manner or there are not as many benefits so a lot of the time would be in terms of explain how to soften their enthusiasm that we are excellent and looking at it from a business perspective and understanding where the other people are coming from. That would vary on whom they are dealing with. People have different glasses on – some are looking into a project and some are looking out others are looking in.

I How did the mentoring relationship start?
R When I joined Quality I joined as Quality Manager in the Quality Assurance organisation. Michael was one of the experience analysts at the time. One of the immediate roles that I had to fill was a QA supervisor. It was open for a number of months. Michael was in the department and you would know he was there. I recognized from that that a lot of people, peers in a mentoring capacity, and would ask his advice. It was based on that that I suggested him as the QA supervisor. He would have been perceived at the time of someone to go to and that has helped him move up the ladder.

I Was your project protégé assigned to you?
R He wasn’t assigned as a protégé but I hired him as he had a lot of the skill sets he was looking for. I saw that he had potential and could be developed. One of the things that I look for in an individual is – are they on an upward path, can they continue and how far can they go before they plateau. He was one of the people that I could see was on an upward path and could go quite a way up that path.

I What position does your project protégé currently hold in the organisation?
R He works now in Compliance as a Quality engineer

I How long has he been mentored by you?
R Over 3 years

I Describe your experience to date as a project mentor? Positive or Negative?
R His main objective is the gowning task force. I’m going to be the sponsor and he is the project manager. There is one other person working with him doing all of the spadework. I take a hands-off approach by stating these are the overall objectives and timelines and we put a bit of work in pulling together the documents that are required for this project. I would work with him in terms of the approach. His next phase is to put together a project plan. I’ve asked him to have that ready and then the next stage that I step in is to know if the project plans are correct and timing is o.k.

I Any negative experiences?
R Not to my knowledge – he takes on board comments & criticism. There hasn’t been an example where we have disagreed on our approach or method. He is pretty straight and if he doesn’t like something he will say it. So if there is something that he doesn’t like about it I will know about it.

I How?
R I’ve an open door policy and I want to treat people maturely and to do that I expect them to work in a mature manner and key to that is trust. Once I know that they will keep information in the right envelope. Most of the people that I mentor work in that capacity. They are the people that I want to work on the projects. They will come back if they have a problem but they are essentially go-getters and independent worker
I How much time is spent in communication with your protégé?
R Officially between meetings around 3 hours a week, then we might have another hour every second day and then as we bump into each other.
I Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?
R I think so he is an independent worker. He will do a lot of things. In the case of Michael, yes I think it is more than enough.
I Do you have a mentor or mentors?
R I don’t think I have but I suppose my boss would be some kind of mentor to me. She is open in terms of the goal she reviews how you interact with senior management, corporate, peers and directors etc. She would provide feedback on how I interact with people, if you were too arrogant or too curt with people.
I How long has this relationship(s) existed?
R Since starting in (this company).
I Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his network?
R Probably not because the context of his network would be internal and I know them myself anyway as I would have dealing with them
I Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?
R Yes, I think so. Certainly in giving him the opportunity of being promoted, I’ve put him into roles where he can be more influential. Putting him into the Quality supervisor role, it is a very central to generating metrics across quality and gives him the opportunity to present at Quality council. He had the right personality and was able to drive each of those roles. We have given him the springboard and the opportunity and he has grasped it. That is recognized
I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped you become more influential?
R It is hard to tell. But if (Protégé 8) is doing a good job, that will reflect on me. There would be a lot of things where he is presenting and I would have worked with him on the presentation and made sure it worked. I don’t really want to take credit for it. But it can’t be negative. How positive it is would be hard to ascertain.
I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network, hence your career?
R It has in certain respects because in the latest project where I’m working with the guys on the project, they are working with other people on the project, while you are mentoring them, I have to engage with a lot of other people that I would necessarily have to. Also working with (Protégé 8), there are some people he deals with, that I may have to interact with, either through escalation or getting an agreement.
I Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?
I do yes, specific to project and other activities as he reports to me, most of his goals and objectives come from me. With the GTF he is running that, I’ve given him the overall objective and suggest what tasks he needs to look at.

Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)

Yes it would. It is very important. That is one of the things that comes down from Anne, that in a big organisation we need to be cognizant of how it works and certainly as he has been promoted I would have spoken to him about the expectation of the business. As you get promoted, there is a certain amount of leeway given but as you evolve in that role, people’s expectations get higher. They don’t cut you as much slack in terms of misinterpretations or making mistakes. He needs to be aware of that and that he would be expected to perform at a certain level. It is important both internally and externally. As a department we have a lot of dealings with external bodies (IMB, BOH), Corporate, specifically with the projects.

Given that you share this information with your project protégé how do you think this impact his contribution to project success?

One of the things that he is aware of is that you have to get everyone on board. There are a myriad of people on this project and they have different ways of doing things. He is a lot more savvy and now he can, manipulate is not the right work, but more convince or align those people to the projects. This is how you need to interact with this person, this is not how this person work and it is more about co-operation. Where cooperation is not being achieved how he can progress it.

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

Verbally yes and a small amount of written in his appraisal this year. Mostly written.

How is project specific information stored?

Mostly in his head and also hard coded into his appraisal document.

Describe your overall perception of your project protégé

He is a very hard worked, recognized across the board. And importantly he has a sense of pride in his work and a loyalty to (this company). By that I don’t mean that we are all company people but it is important to him that he does his job right so that the company. He is accountability and understands that his accountability means that our department works well. He has respect for the concept. That is important in being part of the mentoring- protégé concept.

Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?

It has been quite good. I have a good team working for me. It is important to do that. You are never successful by yourself; you are always dependent on the people who work for you. I’ve made a reasonably good fist of making sure that there are good people in the team. It makes life easier from the point of view of getting things done. You can rely on them to get things done.

How much trust do you have in your protégé?

A good deal of trust – it is where it needs to be. There is trust in terms of confidentiality and also getting the job done. On the whole he completing on both of those
I Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?
R I suppose I’ve tried not to get hugely involved, as it is a key task for (him). The vision that we have for it gets done. There is risk associated with the project, as there is a lot of interaction with others.
I Any additional comments/observations?
R We don’t do enough mentoring on site. A lot of mentoring is general conversation, taking 5 minutes out, just saying you are doing a good job. We get too much into the words and the babble. So we talk a different language sometimes. It is hard to mentor in that environment.
I How does that work?
R We have a weekly meeting with our supervisors – a portion of it is about tasks and updates. Sometimes it is just a forum where I ask if anyone has any questions. We get a lot out of that. At least they know in the Compliance department that they are treated maturely. It is important in an organisation like this that they know that they can trust their boss. They understand that there is certain things they need to know and others that they don’t as opposed to the other way of no communication at all. There is a balance.

M9
I How long have you worked for Company X?
R This is my 9th year. I’ve been working on & off in Wyeth since 1997.
I What is your role in Company X?
R It varies from client to client but generally it is a project management or lead engineer to the projects
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R I’m one of the founder members within KE so I’ve always has a project role so 9 years
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R 31- 40
I Have you experience of other industries?
R No I’ve always working in Pharma, Initially when I graduated I worked in research as well. So Pharma & Medical devices
I Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?
R No, I think it is becoming more common practice to do change through projects where as before things kind of happened because they were required under Quality. It was a Change control with Quality being the driving force on the project
I How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?
R Structured
I How many projects have you worked on to date?
R I couldn’t tell – numerous. My role within the company is working on projects so I’ve been working there for 9 years. So 9 by 3-4 so 35-40 projects
I Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
R They vary. Some would have been large-scale multi national project, which was a roll out of a project in Asia Europe & the States and then some very small projects of about 3-4 weeks. Budget wise, they would vary from thousands to millions. I’m currently involved in two and a half projects. The infrastructure budget has been 12 months and wireless upgrade one is 6 months from start to finish. As well as (this organisation), I’m project manager on other sites
I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you become involved?
R The wireless upgrade one I join at the start. The Infrastructure one has been ongoing for about a year and a half before I joined. At the point when I joined we re-scoped the project.
I What position do you hold on in relation to this current project(s)?
R Project Lead
I Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?
R I hope so
I Have you received PM Training? If yes, What type of training have you received? (On the job, Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic, other)
R No formalized training, mostly on the job and whatever site specific guidelines that they have when I move from site to site. Like Wyeth I would have done QSE 23
I Define project success in your terms?
R On time, within budget and still having your head on in one piece on your shoulders!
I How successful would you rate your previous projects?
R Quite successful! The vast majority I have managed to get in on time and those that I haven’t gotten in on time there have been genuine reasons for it in relation to hardware or software delays but we have done everything within our power from a project perspective of bringing it in on time. Sometimes unfortunately these are factors, which are outside your control.
I Who do you mentor? (1 or more)
R There would be a number of people within KE Consulting that would, like any new person that starts they would be mentored, specifically on this site I would work with (Protégé 9).
I How did the mentoring relationship start?
R It started as a requirement from (this company) to have an additional KE resource on site so that is how (Protégé 9) came on board but I would have worked with him on previous projects before starting here. What I do, it is also from a client perspective, so that the client don’t get annoyed with us or in 6 months time, come back and say “Well (Protégé 9) has been here for 6 months what has he achieved. So on a weekly basis, like when (he) started here we knew that he had to work on whatever 3-4 different projects so I got him to put a project schedule together so that KE’s internal use so that he updates that and we can see the progress as we go
along. We have to report back to CC the relevant person, so that they are fully aware of what he is working on and where and his progress.

I Was your project protégé assigned to you?
R It would have been part assigned and part evolved. If you were to talk about other people within KE, the different divisions in KE I would look after the Computer Systems part of things, (Mr. Y) would look after the equipment side. So if a new person starts and they have a computer background they will be assigned to me and I will be involved in their initial training, introduction to GMP training, GAMP, FDA regulations and guideline. If it were a chemical engineer or an electrical engineer they would be automatically assigned to him.

I What position does your project protégé currently hold in the organisation?
R He is a Validation Engineer. It is a pretty flat structured company and in relation it could be for arguments sake that he could be the project lead and I would be the Validation Engineer assisting him on it. It wouldn’t be on a full time basis. To date it hasn’t happened to date that I’ve been the junior person but in the same way it could happen in the way that (he) is the junior person here. On his next project he could be senior.

I How would that work?
R What drives that? For example (he) is working on a proof reader now. I’ve never worked on a proof reader so it would make more sense to him, that if he is on site and they want a proof reader that he would push that project. He has the experience of knowing the timeframes and the dates and what is required. I would assist him I making sure that what ever time lines need to be met, can be met. That is why I don’t like staying on one site and one site only, I’m here 3 days a week maximum, then on my other days I’m on the other sites. So if I’m here full time then I don’t learn anything except the (Company x) ways. I can learn other places ways so that I can bring that into the project.

I How long has he been mentored by you?
R Since he started – 2-3 years

I Describe your experience to date as a project mentor?
R It is challenging because sometimes people don’t quite grasp the importance of hitting timelines, dates & targets. Sometimes a more junior person will go “well it doesn’t make that much difference if we go over by a week” They don’t see the budgetary constraints behind that, from that perspective it is challenging that it is important that we meet dates, not just from the clients perspective but from the clients perceptions of us as a company if things run over it has a huge impact so I find it challenging.

I Do you think that you have a certain mindset about what a project requires and you are mentoring this person to match in essence what you perceive to be the right way to do things.
R Yes, that would be the process but if someone has a better idea, I’ll take that on board. For example, the document tracker has really started with 2 other guys within KE with them using it in a very ad hoc kind of fashion and I saw that and decided to take it on board because it was a good project management tool. I would be looked upon as being quite senior but I wouldn’t be that single minded that I wouldn’t take things on board.
In mentoring people for them to become a project manager themselves, KE is all about having project managers being able to manage their own projects. Some people just aren’t cut out to be project managers but they can’t see that themselves. So having to try to convince, not even convince, just let them know that you need to do this, this and this to get the PM experience and the negative thing would be at internal reviews, right your goals last year were this, this & this. We have a salaried structure, once you are able to run your own projects, it is a certain salary and until that point you don’t get the incentive. It is important that people are able to manage their own projects and are not reliant within the company the whole time.

How much time is spent in communication with your protégé(s)?

Probably not enough. The project schedule he would give to me once a week and then I would question or query why dates are slipping and follow up on that. It would be about an hour a week, sometimes more, sometimes less. If he is really busy or whatever, I also know that things are slowing down for him so that it won’t go back to the client that well that week I know that he wasn’t working. I can communicate to the client the reasons why.

Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?

It is the only one I know so. It meets our requirements and it has been successful to date with whatever people within KE that I would have mentored as well.

Do you have a mentor(s)?

No.

Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

(He) would if from his area, he know that there was work going on, yes I would meet other people through that. There are other people in KE, say that there are 3 – 4 of us who are senior and have been there from the start and between the 4 of us we would communicate as well. Jeff looks after the equipment validation side of things, if he came across something that was more computer systems related he would pass it over to me and visa versa.

Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?

Internal & external – other business as well. Say on the computer systems side of things we would have relationships with companies like Hewlett Packard and other software companies, we would have to remain detached because we never promote a product over another so no alliances.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

It would be different tools that are on the market whatever, different courses are available out there, or just general information. If someone was putting in a new calibration system for example, we would have seen such and such a client used “Blue Mountain” and found it very successful. But another place used Blue Mountain and we would know what their problems were so that if it came to (this company) putting in Blue Mountain, we can say Client A put it in no problem because of this, this.
and this. Where as Client B has these issues but the reason they had these issues was from such & such.

**I**

Is this information verbal or written?

**R**

Most is verbal communication, sometimes it is in a social environment, seminars, conferences with maybe a follow up if maybe you heard something in particular that interested you. You might say, can you send that to me in a mail.

**I**

How valuable is this information to your functional/project role?

**R**

It really varies from information to information. Put it this way to you, if I didn’t find the information very relevant, I’d store it there (points to head) and if I ever need it a later date it’s there. All of this information must…enhances your profile as a consultant – Yes it does, for example you are doing SAP here now, I’ve worked on SAP on other sites and I know what the pitfalls are.

**I**

Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?

**R**

I think I have strengthened his skills from when he started within KE itself but I think I do need to bring him along a bit more in just say, (this company) or other client sites. I do think he is good but I don’t think I’ve encouraged him properly to sell himself better. He knows his stuff but at times he may come across as being a bit nervous or anxious.

**I**

Yes?

**R**

It is a terrible pity. We can only encourage and try to build his confidence that is something that needs to come from himself. But hopefully with time, we’ll succeed as I find him lovely to work with. He is very polite and helpful.

**I**

Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network?

**R**

I suppose it would enhance my career as well because obviously the more people you work with the better the more information you learn as well and everything new that they learn, if they ask questions to you, it does increase your knowledge of it. If I was ever to leave KE, the more people you have working under you, it does seem to be better for you going forward.

**I**

Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?

**R**

Yes, the schedules and there would be a couple of people that I give that too.

**I**

Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)

**R**

Within KE, when someone starts they are given a rough outline of what our clients requirements are and then when someone starts on a site, we find out the information for them before they start on the site, they cannot go on site without knowing who their contacts is, what job they are working on, what is the context of that job and who to be afraid of.

**I**

Given that you share this information with your project protégé how do you think this impact his/her contribution to project success?

**R**

Good – you have to know all those areas that you just mentioned. People & politics are important for any project success. If it in known in advance that a certain person has a specific form, then at least you don’t know how to address it. Now sometimes my opinions of people might be incorrect
and may be just my opinion. I would always say that “my opinion of this person is whatever”. That person might find the opposite. If (Protégé 9) felt a bit wary of someone, he would often ring and ask what is such & such person like or what is their involvement in this project before they proceed any further so that they can expect or more important what timelines to expect so if you are working on a project with a, b, c, d & e, where A, B, C have quick turn around but E & D are slow and have to be pushed or factored into the plan.

I  Is this information shared verbally or in written format?
R  It is definitely verbal. You would never put that type of information in an email.

I  How is project specific information stored?
R  In the brain.

I  Describe your overall perception of your project protégé
R  He is very confident. Technically he is extremely good. I just think he needs more confidence within himself to portrait that confidence to the client.

I  And your role there?
R  I play the role of encouragement – telling him that he is well capable of doing it, not to worry about it. I don’t just keep building him up all the time. If I got feedback from a client as in he needs to get more involved or whatever. I wouldn’t say it in a negative way or giving out, I don’t think that that sort of approach gets anyone anywhere. I think it is extremely important to have a good relationship with whomever you are mentoring because you don’t get anywhere with anybody if you are negative and constantly nagging. You need encouragement and it is important to put a positive spin on it. But in the last 3 years I’ve seen him come along a lot

I  Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?
R  I enjoy it. The mentoring thing came as a by the way. The project management thing was always there and as KE grew we needed to take on people so I’ve always enjoyed training people or educating people

I  How much trust do you have in your protégé?
R  I’d trust him 100% - my faith wouldn’t be as high. If I asked him to do something, I’d trust him to do it, but if you drill down in to the detail of how well he did it, even though that too is going. Put it this way when he started here, I said to him a year ago, do not issue any documents to (this company) audience until I have a review of them first. I was insistent upon that but now in the past couple of months I haven’t been in as much communication with him

I  Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?
R  I think it is setting a schedule, reviewing that schedule and if things are slipping why are they slipping and pointing to him that when things are slipping who he needs to talk to. From that perspective if it is me explaining it to him, I phase it “if I were you, what I would do now is. Or say look this isn’t going anywhere what is the story. It will help in decisions being made.

I  Any additional comments/observations?
It is something that should be more structured approach to the whole of project management.

How long have you worked for Company X?
In came to (this company) from the merger with (X) so all totalled between the 2 companies would be 22 years. I’ve been around a little while. I came right out of college and loved it so much that I just had to stay. Most of the time I was in (Site in the U.S.) – about 18 years there about 2 years in (Site in Asia) and almost 2 here.

What is your role in Company X?
I’m the program director for…. I’m responsible to get the new building built, get it validated, get the operations set up, get the organisation put in place, get the product developed and the product launched. Then I get to leave and go do something else.

Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60
41-50

Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which
Primarily Pharma

Are projects typically used by your organisation to implement change?
Projects in the general sense - I guess I’d say yes & no. If it is something big, breakthrough, innovation or change, it bubbles up into project. Then again making everything is making a project, like making a batch. I guess that we do.

How do you rate your organisation in terms of project execution on a scale of 1 – 5 (Unstructured – Structured – Institutionalized – Managed process – Optimized Process)?
It is developing – I wouldn’t call it a mature process and I think a lot of the activity level that is happening now sort of defining the implementation. I think it is structured; we are not quite yet at the institutionalized or managed process.

How many projects have you worked on to date?
Endless – I’ve done a little bit of everything. Prior to this I was in charge of manufacturing in (Site in the U.S.). Prior to that it was (Site in Asia). Prior to that I had (Mr. X’S) job (Director of Engineering) in (Site in the U.S.). So I’ve been on both sides of the plant between manufacturing and functional support. But obviously in my engineering role, I’ve done a lot of projects. Even in manufacturing we would have done a lot of process improvement projects.

Can you define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
It would cover the spectrum – from a $1000.00 project to this which is over 3 years and the budget is $300,000,000. (Drug A) – 3 years – budget we have to go for a little more so the budget is probably going to be $330m. Duration – by the time it is all done my part of it will be about 3 years. It actually started a year before I got here and it will stop being a project about 6 months after I leave.
I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you become involved?
R There was a concept design phase and then it moved into preliminary design so I came toward the tail end of preliminary design and then we got into detailed design
I What position do you hold on in relation to this current project(s)?
R Program Director.
I Do you consider project management to be one of your core competencies?
R I consider people management to be one of my core competencies. It is my core competency. When I run an operation or when I run projects, I can’t say that I do anything different between the two. Although making a batch doesn’t fit the classical sense of a project, I still consider those like a whole bunch of little mini projects because a lot of the planning is the same, a lot of the execution is the same. The people aspects are the same, except you do it every day rather than over the course of 3 years or whatever. My technical side is probably my weaker side. I know enough to ask the right questions. But I’m not going to sit here and design a piece of equipment. If I was doing that I’d probably be doing the wrong things anyway.
I Have you received PM Training? If yes, What type of training have you received? (On the job, Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic, other)
R Actually no… on the job.
I Define project success in your terms?
R In general, to achieve the objective of the project – for us it is to launch the new project so it is not to build a building or to operate, it is to launch a new product. If we can do that within our constraints, launch a new project which assume we are on schedule, within the budget that we have and that the building is a quality building and that the operations is set up properly. Classically it is budget, schedule quality.
I Who do you mentor? (1 or more)
R I try to coach and mentor my whole staff. That is my job to, not only to launch a product but also to develop the staff. My job is to make obsolete. Everyone is just knows what to do.
I How did the mentoring relationship start?
R We talked about it a little bit. It is not like an official mentoring program like back in (Site in the U.S.), I had something like that - meetings and all that. This is more like a natural progression – like I say it is my job to mentor and coach people. There isn’t any formal relationship through HR other than it makes sense to do.
I [Was your project protégé assigned to you?] N/A
I What position does your project protégé currently hold in the organisation?
R (Protégé 10) is called the project site leader. He is the second in command of the project. He also has duties as the function lead for the operations.
I How long has he been mentored by you?
R Since I’ve been here, almost 2 years.
Describe your experience to date as a project mentor? Positive or Negative?

I think it has been good. I’ve seen a lot of growth in (Protégé 10). When I first came, he was the good cop, in his office clicking away doing his calculations and all this stuff. And now he is really one of the recognized leaders on the project. He does a lot of work with people outside the site, presentations to VP’s. He travels and all that. He is the project representative to other sites. Also he is out doing it with his staff. I see a lot of growth.

How much time is spent in communication with your protégé(s)?

Hours a day.

Does this meet the requirements of an effective mentoring relationship?

Yes I think so because we both have the open door. If things come to mind, he pops into my office, I pop into his, we meet in the corridors. It is very free and casual, open.

Do you have a mentor(s)?

I guess I say I do. I would say not necessarily at this moment, but throughout my career. I have. I guess I’ve learned from a number of people throughout the site, even if they are not necessarily mentoring. I’ve had one main one, (Mr. Executive) who tends to kind of drag me around from place to place. I guess I would say that he is probably the one that I’ve learned the most from.

How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?

Ever since I met him – probably 12 years.

Does your project protégé introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

Yes.

Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?

Both – external being corporate, because we work with quite a lot of sites. Some are new contact for me and some are reverse where I’m telling (Protégé 10) who to contact.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

For us it is more project related information on the technical side.

Is this information verbal or written?

Both

How valuable is this information to your functional/project role?

If I’m getting it is something that I wanted to know or wanted to know about. For the most part, all of the technical part (Protégé 10) would kind of sort of handle it himself. But if there is a particular issue that I’m interested in, then I get the info.

Have you helped your protégé become more influential in the organisation?

I think so. I think he has grown a lot. All these people that he comes in contact recognize him as a leader. He can present everything and explain everything. People look at him and take his word at face value. So I would say “yes”?

Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped you become more influential?
R I don’t think so. I don’t know if influential is the right work. I don’t know if influential is the right word. Respected maybe – comments from visitors indicating that they are impressed how well the people have developed. People are taking over and doing their thing and are allowed to run with the ball. I don’t think that is influence but it is more respect. – Maybe greater levels of respect that people are being developed. I can’t say that when I say something that everyone starts jumping.

I Has engaging in a mentoring relationship helped strengthen your network, hence your career?

R Yes I think so. If I look that course of my career, my core competency is people management. That comes from coaching and mentoring and that is one of the reasons why I’ve been fairly successful in my career because I am able to manage people. For that respect, that from being able to manage people it has allowed me to get the job done which has allowed people to recognize that I’ve gotten jobs done and it keeps me being promoted.

I Do you provide project task related information to your protégé?

R I give (Protégé 10) tasks to do but those are like, “…we need a presentation because the guys are coming in next week”. What (he) gets is objectives…for example, “That the place has to run in a lights out fashion. So (Protégé) go figure out how to do that”. He has the autonomy to go and achieve that.

I Do you provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & Objectives or Organisation History)

R Yes, all of the above. We actually do goals as a group at the beginning of the year.

I Given that you share this information with your project protégé how do you think this impact his/her contribution to project success?

R I think it is the only way he can do his job, without knowing the big picture and all the information, knowing what is going on. When you limit the information, the work that comes out isn’t going to be as good because they don’t quite see how that fits into the bigger picture. They have to know the full context and then you can see how your little piece fits into and you get a better result by knowing that.

I What specific information types contribute to this success?

R Business info – how is the X business. The sales information, what are the launch volumes with clients, regulatory information, technical information, general project information – schedule budget. We provide general plant info – how is (X or Y) coming along so people can know what is going on, especially like the project will become part of this operation.

I Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

R Most of it is verbal – staff meetings or 1:1 conversations. Some of it is through presentations, PowerPoint or all-hands meeting once a month. Some of it is passing on email. I’m still on the US system. I actually get all the corporate info which gets passed on in electronic format.

I Describe your overall perception of your project protégé

R I think he is great. He is very hard working, dedicated…no problem with hours or anything like that. His work quality is excellent. You don’t have
to describe things 100 times. You can tell him and he knows what needs to be done. He is a good advisor – if I have an idea about something and he has an idea. We can get together and kick it around a bit, refine each other’s ideas about things. I think he is very much willing to learn and try and do things. I think he does well with his people. It is a similar methodology that he uses with his people.

I Describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?
R To me it is routine – it is what you are suppose to do. I couldn’t operate any other way. If you are put in a supervisory or management position, you have people that work for you this is what you are supposed to do. Even if you don’t have people reporting to you, you can deal with people, with some of the other directors or managers on site, if something comes up, you know I will coach – “(Mr. Executive) said this and what does that mean?” So what he means by this is that you should be doing this and this. I can coach and mentor sideways and upwards. I’ve found that from the course of my career that people who have the information and know why they are doing something, do it much better than people who work in the dark – just do it. People who are told to just do this, fight it because they don’t really know why. I find that sharing the information is much better and much easier.

I How much trust do you have in your protégé?
R 120%
I Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to the success of your protégé’s project?
R I can mentor and coach someone to where I trust them to get it done and do it and sometimes anticipate that it needs to be done. On this project which is big, complex and changing all the time with 3 million details, I couldn’t hope to manage, I have to relay on people under me to take care of their piece of the project and to co-ordinate with each other. I can’t do all that from the corner. So I have to have mentored people that I can trust to handle all that for me. If I don’t do that, there is no way that I can get this done. This is absolutely a tool to get this done. They know my expectations, how I want things to work so now I can trust you to handle your piece and it becomes more management by exception. So I assume that everything is going great in your neck of the woods unless you come and tell me. It has worked over the years but it depends on the people you have working for you. Certain people mentor trust and then go but over here there is a bit of a problem child. So that one you watch over a little bit more, put a bit more effort into and maybe they have to come to you a little more often. Fortunately here on this project I’ve got all people who I trust to handle their area. In bigger more complex areas it is the only way. I look at it like I have 5 people reporting to me, not 800, and I worry about those 5. If I know that those 5 are doing what they are suppose to be doing, then I know that those underneath them do too.

I Any additional comments/observations?
R I think it is something that if every manager, supervisor director does. I think their needs to be development in that area. It is all around leadership. You can grow leaders to be effective in their jobs. It will actually make
your job easier if you mentor, coach & guide as you’ve got someone doing
if for you so you don’t have to worry about it.

\textit{M11}

I  
Introduction
I  
So how long have you been with the company?
R  
Fourteen years.
I  
What is your current work and what we’d call non work role (roles outside
the company as well)?
R  
Work role is training and development manager and also business
approval manager which is to do with an internal lean programme.
I  
Okay. And would you hold any other non work roles outside of the
organisation then as well?
R  
Could it be related?
I  
It could be or it could be sports or social or family?
R  
There’s a community development centre, there’s an education centre
locally in my own area of Waterford and I do some work with that.
I  
Okay,
R  
And the rest is just sports.
I  
And how long have you been in your current formal position in the
company?
R  
Five years.
I  
Okay. And how would you describe the characteristics of your current
stage, of your career, do you see it as mid or later stage?
R  
Late stage.
I  
Late stage okay and how would you describe that or what’s important to
you now in terms of that phase of your career.
R  
Well I see myself, I mean I’m fifty-six at this stage, at this time so I’ve
done a number of things within this organisation and previous
organisations so I’d see myself as now as being mature, capable, more in a
development role than a self progression role.
I  
Okay,
R  
And when I mean development role is developing people working for me.
I  
Okay, and would you think that your, are your career priorities now have
they differed from what they were in the past and how would you think
they’ve changed in the last three years?
R  
I’m glad you said three years.
I  
(Laugh).
R  
The past is a long time ago.
I  
So how different are you career priorities now?
R  
You mean my personal career?
I  
It could be both?
R  
What I would say is my personal career priorities haven’t changed. I
would say our organisational priorities have changed.
I  
Okay, and how has it impacted you?
R: We were recently taken over by a private equity company. I think their focus is much more on nuts and bolts, performance and financial return.

I: Okay,

R: Can I just qualify that by saying I’m not saying that people development, community involvement, employee motivation, I’m not saying that that is this the part of the organisation I would just say that the emphasis is a lot of less on those areas at this point than previously.

I: Okay, and how do you feel about that and how does that impact you?

R: Well on a personal basis I would be, I would say I would be employee focused rather than task focused so it would be.

I: Okay and it has now moved to a task?

R: Not totally but a lot more task focused.

I: Okay and it has now moved to a task?

R: Not totally but a lot more task focused.

I: Okay, thank you. Okay so just maybe that was just a little bit of context on yourself/ so is this your first encounter in participating in a formal mentoring programme?

R: Its not my first participation in mentoring programmes, but in an actual formal company organised or business organised it is/ and I’ll qualify saying that in saying that because our co-ordinator of the mentoring programme reports to me I was obviously involved in setting up the mentoring programme, the logistics, the objectives and the evaluation, etc. But this is the first time I’m formally mentored on it.

I: Okay, what was your experience of informal mentoring?

R: Informal mentoring?

I: Yes

R: I would say my style has always been to mentor in the sense that I would have a nick name here ‘the delegator’ but I’d actually believe that my style would be to encourage people to take ownership and control/ and to support them/ and that its not because I try to devolve responsibility on tasks. Like if people are willing to take up tasks/ I would be supportive and encouraging. I think my style would be that way and my staff, people reporting to me would tell me that my style would be towards developing, and mentoring/coaching, I’m not too sure what the difference is?

I: And how did you become interested or you were made aware of the mentoring programme?

R: My thoughts, I had previously completed a MSc and one of the modules in it was coaching which is flip side of mentoring so at the start of that I done some research on coaching and I completed some work myself on coaching. My belief was that mentoring was quite common in organisations but probably not well recognised. That the formal mentoring programme and the training associated with it wasn’t strong within our organisation and that ninety percent of mentoring actually happens in an informal or an outside contractual basis and that we should make that, we should be stronger in that area. I also believe that because of the cost of contracting somebody outside to do mentoring that very few people would have the opportunity to organise professional mentors and that we should do the best we could to make our people in-house capable.

I: And how was your protégé chosen in this programme?

R: I’m too sure (laugh) is the answer. I know that the protégé would have nominated me but she may have nominated one or two other people and
they may not have been available. I never asked, but the protégé would to
have to agree with the mentor.

I Okay, so was the relationship, was it assigned or was it voluntary.
R Oh, it was voluntary.
I And so how long are you in this particular relationship now at the
moment?
R I’d think we’d have about five to six sessions.
I Over what period?
R It’s about over three months now.
I Okay and does your protégé does she work in the same, I think you
mentioned it’s a different section/ And how often would you meet?
R Well we try to make it once every two weeks so working there over three
months, once every three weeks or so you know.
I Okay, what were your hopes and concerns, for the mentoring relationship
when it started?
R Well my concerns were that first of all I didn’t know this individual, I
didn’t know this individual well/ so my concerns were what our
relationship would be. My other concerns were because there was no
contract up front/ I didn’t know what area of interest and what areas the
person might be mentored in so I didn’t know what my own strengths
were going to be in that area.
I What were your hopes or aspirations for the process then?
R Well my only hope was I was going to be some value to the person
concerned, then I did not have any idealistic or very large scale hopes, I
just hoped that I could give some guidance where it was concerned.
I Why did you volunteer to be a mentor?
R Probably because my position in the organisation, number one and as I
said, previously probably because I have some experience and would have
an interest in that area.
I And what, now that the relationship is three months, what qualities does
the protégé brings to the relationship or what would you have observed at
this kind of early stage?
R On a personal basis you’re talking about?
I Yes, or whatever comes to mind.
R Are you talking about the personal qualities of this individual or to the
mentor relationship?
I Both.
R Well I’d say for the individual concerned is extremely hard working. Well
organised, very task and completion focused; very open, very willing to
share and to explore areas. Probably challenged by work life balance.
And for the mentoring relationship for myself it’s obviously the fact that
this person is willing to be so open with me/ I felt it was of great
confidence for me/ and I respected her for that also. I admire someone
who is willing to be so open.
I Okay so it was a solid start then from your point of view?
R Well I would say there was a natural/ but I think with this individual I
think it was quite solid because the individual is very solid as I said, open
individual. The starting point was I think was a little bit difficult because I
am a manager within the company, I would be a senior manager. This person would be reporting to me but I do think when you sit into that type of relationship the whole company ethos, sits there, the fact that they come into this office, the fact that my chair, not deliberately taller, but because of my back/ it is taller and actually a small thing like this/ one of the comments a protégé said to me/ that struck me/ he said, it felt a bit like a psychiatric consultation.

I
(Laugh).
R So that set me back thinking then about the whole setting of the, you know, the scene setting.
I Okay and just to continue on that theme then, how would you describe how it has grown now since/ you know those early days and you talked about?
R Okay I would say we’re probably at redefinition.
I Okay and how would you describe that or what does that mean (is there common ground, trust or respect or friendship?)
R Well what I’d say is that as I think we’ve established a good rapport. I think we’ve established openness and I think we’ve established a mutual respect. I think one of the difficulties I always find, not always find that I commonly find in a mentoring relationship is clear definition of the goals and what I find is that its particularly in a management type relationship that the goals are often couched in a broad type language, like someone might say I want to be strategic. I want to improve my interpersonal skills. I want to be assertive. They’re very broad areas so we had defined the goals and the goals were, I can say what the goals were can I?
I Oh absolutely, yes, yes.
R So I reviewed my notes there now. The goals for this particular person is one is that they wanted to be more strategic. So one of the strategic was we got closer to the fact that well you need to define what strategic means to you in your context within the context of your work area. Obama’s strategy is a lot broader and bigger than mine is so we also spoke about the situation of dealing with awkward situations where there might be tensions involved and we also, I forget what the third one is. I could look it up later.
I That’s fine.
R One of the areas that came up was in that discussion was the fact that you know you can’t be strategic unless you grab, unless you make yourself part of the present situation and stop being a bystander and grab control and show that you are part of the process. So what I felt was that there was a, I felt that the mentee went through the experience and back and had changed the mindset whereas before they were very I’m overburdened to what’s to me. I’m down, I’m not being downtrodden it’s just because she’s a very good relationship with the people reporting to her but I’ve too much work. I’m not capable of dealing with it. Its wearing me out, I’ve got family, etc. and then there was a shift back then and it was yeah I have problems/ but I have more control of them, I know what I’m doing and I think what had happened there is that the person had shifted to say I want to be more assertive and more involved and more organised in working with the people who can actually control situation.
Okay.

Because the situation was out of their control. They needed to task other people so I felt and I don’t whether the individual felt but I fed it back to him that your mindset has changed completely whether it just happens to be the moment or some other event so they agreed yes it has. They felt that although the same difficulties were there/ they were much more positive on how they were going to approach them. So when I say there was an interlude what I said was and what we agreed was look you’re doing extracurricular studies which is stopping you now focusing on the mentoring so what we agreed that is go, focus on your studies, then re-evaluate what your objectives are and decide to come back and come back in say I’ve re-evaluated I want to move forward in this direction and I’ve re-evaluated and I want to terminate. So I left it at that where the individual was concerned.

Okay, and I think you’ve commented how you described the level of openness. How much do you feel you can confide in or disclose to your protégé in relation to work issues?

You mean personal work issues?

Could be work issues/ work relations, / would be yourself in terms of your goals and priorities etc

On work issues, business or companies issues no more than you can confide to any other individual because you have a responsibility there, a business responsibility. No matter how much you trust or respect the people you’ve been given that responsibility because people don’t want information being leaked out/ so my policy was the only way is not to tell anybody no matter how much you’ve confidence in them. So just the same as anybody else.

On work relationships?

Yeah I’m very open on work relationships as long as you respect the individuals involved. No problem and my own personal relationships…

What’s your goals or priorities if they can impact?

And I’ve no hesitation and in fact I’ve used my priorities quite frequently in talking about the contrast to where an individual might be and other individuals.

And the quality of work life balance if it is raised? How would you handle that part of the discussion?

You know sometimes when it comes to/ my view is that this is one of the discussions I had earlier with the mentee. I would have to be careful with a mentee not to give my perspective on what’s the right way to behave, what’s the right way to be, what’s good quality or bad quality. I’ve no problems when it comes to a work objective. What’s the right way to do the project or a business report but I have to, I explained to the mentee that I would be inclined to force my perspective of life onto you or onto the person involved and to be aware of that. So the questions of quality of life I have to hold myself back just to beyond asking the questions. Do you find it difficult taking work home at night? I would be guarded against saying whether it’s right or wrong. I’d have to say that, I have to; even though I personally may feel different I’d leave it to the individual to make their own decision on it.
Okay, and what aspect of the mentoring relationship would give you most satisfaction at the moment?

I have to be honest, I might be stroking my own ego is that because of the situation we were dealing with, because I felt that the situation wasn’t to do purely with a task, because it was to do with a perspective that I was personally delighted with the person coming in with a different perspective. As I said to the mentee / I said I’m not even sure whether I had anything to do with it, it could be totally outside of the, I’m delighted for you that its changed so on a personal basis I’d always be unsure of my ability to really, to really mentor somebody on something more fundamental on, you know, if you wanted to complete this particular project this is what you need to do. When it comes to those areas, so that gave me satisfaction. And what gave me satisfaction also I have to be honest was that that you could build up a rapport. And then I suppose one of the other reflections I had on is that you know this person has tremendous organisational abilities and looking at details.

Alright.

And I’m not good at that.

So just to see someone/ talk to somebody who is good at that and learn what they do it is a good thing

I personally haven’t found any difficulties. The client could be difficult but because I’m sponsoring the programme as well as being a mentor I’ve definitely put time together for it. A difficulty, yeah I suppose one difficulty is that the mentee has as well as wishing to develop themselves, the mentoring relationship they also have pressures external to that relationship so as I mentioned for instance that this person was doing one of our management development programmes, I know there’s a lot of pressure in that programme. There could be work in the, there could be demands from the course content of the management course. The difficulty is that I don’t want to ask the question why you have missed one or two meetings because I don’t want to feel that there’s an onus on them because it’s a choice for them. Now if someone is paying you money (laugh), you don’t want to pay the money but when in this type of relationship it’s a sort of a, its not a financial contract between you so in my position what I’m feeling is I want to give the person the liberty to be or not to be and then I’m wondering whether if you’re questioning them are you indirectly putting an onus on them saying well you know you should be doing this.

Okay.

So I find that a bit difficult.

Would you, are there any difficulties from the organisation’s point of view in terms of lets say the mentoring relationship, does anything impinge from an organisational point of view?

Well I’ll speak my broader knowledge here. We were very strong to make sure that it was never seen as promoting high fliers. That it was open to a broad spectrum in the organisation. Obviously some high calibre would be in there so we’re very strong on the confidentially of it. You could
break the confidentiality/ that could be damaging. So but I think we’ve been quite successful at that and its not low key but it’s private. I don’t say that I’m doing it to any of my people, importantly who I’m doing mentoring with or visa versa.

I Does the mentee bring any benefits to you as mentor through the relationship?

R As regards my mentoring abilities is it?

I Or she in terms of what she might contribute to the relationship?

R I think what it did make me realise is that a particular function this person is operating in, that you know/ from a distance I wouldn’t have perceived the amount of turmoil, change and difficulty within that area and how stretched they are in just keeping up with the workload that’s there at the moment. So from a business perspective it would have opened up my mind to say yeah the relationship to this partnership should be different now because things are not as smooth and as easy as they may seem on the surface.

I Okay, would you have received anything from that mentee in terms of say/ feedback/ empathy/ friendship etc?

R No really outside of mentoring we haven’t had any relationship at all.

I Would she have developed any particular interest in your area?

R No she wouldn’t have developed interests in my area because my focus would be on her goals and her goals are within her area. My only feedback would be that of my own personal experiences or experience within my own area or previous experiences.

I And how has the mentoring relationship helped your own career guidance and growth?

R It certainly, yes it has because it’s reinforced again by difficulty of identifying clearly what the goal is and therefore identifying clearly what the steps are in addressing that goal. So and I think that’s an issue and being part of the sponsoring programme but I will be asking the organiser here to look at this/ we would need some training, further training for people on the process of mentoring.

I Has the mentoring relationship has helped your protégé?

R The number one I think I mentioned already and I think what I mentioned was I perceived and its only my perception because we haven’t had a discussion since then I perceived the situation where the person thought about their issues, thought about where they position themselves regarding these issues and took a more proactive involvement. That would be my perception. And when I think it’s too early to say number one is whether I’m right. Whether there’s some other extraneous factor, and what I would be really interested to know and why I’d like the relationship to continue is to see how sustainable it is if that’s the case.

I And are you happy with the level of feedback that you get from your protégé in terms of the contribution she thinks is getting from the relationship?

R No I wouldn’t and I’d say that’s my weakness. I think on the process, on the mentoring process I’m not taking enough time at the end of each session to say what was good, you know, what did I do wrong and its probably because I don’t like negative feedback.
(Laugh) who does? (laugh). Alright okay that’s fine and we’re just on the last question. How did the relationship provide you with access to other people that help you to do your job more effectively or help and advise you on your career?

No, I wouldn’t say so.

We are going to conclude now shortly and would just like to invite you to raise any other questions or comments if you wish?

Can I go back to just one question there please? You mentioned about difficulties or pressure of the programme.

Yes

On our programme the mentees are not meant to mentored by their direct manager.

Correct, yes I understand.

But I have had experience where I’ve mentored people reporting to me/ and a benefit of this programme is that you don’t have people who report directly and my experience of people reporting directly is its almost impossible to break the manager/employee relationship whereas in this particular relationship I can see immediately the difference. There’s an openness there that I’ve never experienced in people reporting to me even though the people reporting to me have said this normal coaching/mentoring relationship. It’s not the normal manager relationship and I’ve gone through the normal process but the subtlety behind is very different.

Alright. One final question, what would be your contact with the protégé’s manager or would you have any contact?

No I don’t have contacts but I would know the line manager very well. I’ve known them all over the years but I wouldn’t as regard this relationship I wouldn’t get involved unless the mentee asked me to.

Okay then, I would just like to thank you very much for your contribution and for a very interesting discussion.

No problem, you are welcome.

**M12**

So could I begin then just by asking you how long you have been in the company?

About fifteen-and-a-half years at this stage.

Okay and what is your current work role? What does it involve?

I’m Director of Global Engineering for a Business Division so I have a functional responsibility for a group here that does development and capital engineering projects. Then I have a matrix responsibility for process engineering here in a US plant and a UK plant

And do you engage in any other non work roles and by that I mean in the broader community. Are you involved in any community aspects or in terms of your own life as well what other roles would you consider yourself involved in?
I was heavily involved with the (Local Childcare Centre), I was on the board for ten years the last five of which was as the Chairperson. And I felt ten years on any one board is long enough so while I was still enthusiastic I left that board. I went onto (Local Credit Union’s) board for three years and I actually gave up on the board but I stayed on their investment committee.

Okay, alright. And how long have you been in your current formal position in this company?

This job in this format is probably I’d say it’s probably, it must be four years at this stage.

Okay and how would you describe the characteristics of your current career stage and I’ll assume the statement I’m making it’s assuming that you haven’t made major career changes in your life to date so in your current career stage would you regard yourself as mid career, late career and how would you, what does that mean to you then?

I’m still trying to figure out what I do when I grow up (laugh).

That’s the early career stage (laugh).

When I grow up I want to be!!! but at the same time I worry about my pensions. So that probably puts me in the middle.

There’s a security reason there?

Yes, a security reason there. I’m actually a chemist by profession and did chemistry for a while and then migrated into doing research and development and hence into engineering so it’s probably I’d like to think there’s at least one more career advancement.

Okay alright (laugh). And so in terms of the stage you’re at then like what would you consider the important priorities.

New products. Cost improvement, developing the organisation and they’re probably in that order and you as a HR person will want the last one first!! I would be only lying if I said that!!

(Laugh) No I perfectly understand. Are your career priorities different now from what they were in the past, maybe three years ago?

Okay. I’ve always been on the issues. I like to make a difference in the world. I, however, have decided for family reasons to not relocate for example to the US.

Okay.

And now that my son is fifteen, my daughter will be twelve next month I’m not going to move while they’re teenagers if I can help it. Obviously I may not be able help it depending (laugh) on the economic climate but it certainly wouldn’t be my intention so I’ve been very clear that I’m willing to accept sacrifices to my career for the constraints that I put on my career.

Okay.

Alright just moving in then maybe to the mentoring programme and just a little bit of context around it. Is this your first experience of you participating in a formal mentoring programme?

This is, we’re on our second wave here as it may have been explained to you.
And is this your second mentoring relationship?

This will be my third in the formal system in that I had two under the first round which actually was too much of a strain in some ways having two. One of our decisions was one if you’re doing it formally one is as much as you can cope with. There were two from the first round. The fact that even yesterday somebody commented that one had turned the corner and had really seen a change in the last two years and I said “well I’m going to take some of the credit for that” (laugh) and the person actually is delivering, is actually happier in themselves and contributing more to the company than they were just after starting the mentoring relationship.

Okay so a good positive experience and positive feedback then from your point of view?

And equally that individual seems to appreciate it, and we still actually have carried on our meetings. While the second one again it was part of our learning in the formal process. The second one there’s probably there is two organisational levels between me and the second person and that was one too many.

Okay.

And there was a more junior position with respect to my role and hence I was depending more on my recollections of when I was in that stage. It became harder for me to put myself in that person’s shoes.

I understand, yes.

Well, as one of the people who wanted to support it (laugh). I feel that I have gained significantly from an individual when I was in the States. It wasn’t a formal mentoring programme but he really did help me an awful lot and I sort of like to give back the same to other people.

So it obviously left a positive impression.

Yeah, somebody that isn’t in your organisational management reporting that has an interest in your career and gives you advice and somebody you can go talk to makes a difference to help you. How well people perform, I think the individual gains and the company gains.

Being on the steering committee I had a benefit in some ways in that we had selected a group of mentors and mentees of people that we felt needed, that would gain the most from development and we let people, we effectively gave them a choice of who they wanted as their mentor.

Right, okay.

And that relationship is a critical one. That both people actually want to have the other person and the individual I got in this case/ I had actually given her some informal mentoring advice that she found useful so that’s why she wanted to come back to me. And another manager here actually suggested that she comes along to me and talk to me about something that she was dealing with and she found that useful so when she had the opportunity…

You were the chosen one?
R Yeah, I’d already, the trial sample had worked (laugh).
I (Laugh).
R And equally I was impressed with her from that conversation so I was quite happy to have her and I did feel she was an under utilised resource.
I And how long have you participated now in this current mentoring relationship?
R We started before Christmas. You interviewed her this morning.
I That’s right,
R So her version of it may differ from mine (laugh). I think we’re very open anyway. So she went off and got married in January and she was missing for a while so we haven’t really got into a good routine in that we probably have had five or six meetings. That would be at the upper end of it.
I Okay and you’ve answered actually my next question, the number of meetings and she had worked in a different section as well to you.
R Yeah.
I So what are you getting out of the relationship at the moment?
R Whereas I tend to get out of it? I get an inside particularly if they’re not part of your organisation; you get an insight to other parts of the company and what is going on.
I Okay, so could you tell me, what were your hopes and concerns were for the new mentoring relationship?
R My hopes, I would say, she’s a smart, capable individual that’s locked away in the analytical chemistry lab. We’re not getting the full use of her abilities so equally she was ending up being frustrated in terms of do I want to stay with this company or not and she would be a loss to the company if you let her go. So if I do my bit as a retention that could be useful in itself.
I Right, okay, alright.
R In terms of the concerns just I mightn’t be able to help her would be a legitimate concern.
I What qualities or characteristics would you believe that she brings to that relationship that you would have observed?
R Neither of us have trouble in being open and candid and that helps a lot.
I Okay.
R Because then you can talk (laugh). If there’s something you want to say we can talk it out and deal with it. So she’s open and candid. She is quick at the uptake so you don’t need to go into a level of explanations which helps a lot. So what was your question again?
I What qualities or characteristics would you have observed you know from the duration of the relationship for example?
R She needs reassurance. She’s lacking in self-confidence.
I How would you describe, the growth of the mentoring relationship in terms of lets say feeling of connection, mutual respect, grounded, sharing trust, etc.
R I think we started well before Christmas. There is a high level of trust, mutual respect and honesty and we had the candid discussions. This is a danger in my position that if I make comments about other people in the organisation there could be disaster if they’re leaked and so on. So it is
important so we got over that I’d say within the first two meetings. So we
developed quickly onto her list of concerns, what she wants, in fairness to
HR Manager, she’s put in a good system in/ in terms of how people have
to, they’re not just nice conversations but conversations with a purpose.

I   Yeah.
R   And that’s probably the difference between the informal and the formal
mentoring I would suggest in that you have in the formal process there are
actually goals but the informal mentor that I had we never used that
terminology and yet it was very clear that he was interested in developing
my career and I was very interested in getting his advice from his
experience.

I   Alright, and did you, how did you grasp that growth then as you say it
wasn’t kind of identified and kind of nice goals. How did you capture that
then within the informal process?
R   For me?
I   Yeah.
R   The fact that he was in the US so I only actually met him maybe four times
a year and I talked to him on the phone more frequently as it were. I think
it was a case of he had helped me and I had helped him. So there was
mutual information and while he wasn’t functionally my boss he had, it
was his area of interest or requirements so there was an overlap so I think
it started with me giving him the credibility that I was somebody worth
investing his time in. So there were some early wins out of the
relationship and then it progressed to, in particular one I always remember
is when I was in the US plant, where he closed the door and said, “(Name),
do you realise what you’ve just did?”

I   And was that good or bad? (Laugh).
R   It was bad (laugh) and I was young and I made a mistake.
I   Right, okay, yeah. You appreciate it. It mightn’t have been good at the
time (laugh).
R   Not at the time yeah. And equally when things (from a work of point),
weren’t working he was someone I could go and talk to about it.
I   And in terms of the informality is that something that you could pick up
the phone now that that relationship exists or have things…
R   Unfortunately he’s now died.
I   I’m sorry to hear that.
R   So he got some type of cancer he got.
I   Oh, that’s sad.
R   So but even after he was retired we were in contact.
I   How would you describe the level of openness, in the relationship at the
moment?
R   Well my style is not restrained (laugh) so it probably encourages openness
in reverse.
I   Do you feel you can confide in your protégé, in relation to the work
issues?
R   On occasions I have to talk about (“His Full Name”) in the third person.
I   Right,
Because there’s an overlap (laugh) between how that person or what that person is doing and how (His Name in third person) might perceive it.

Okay, I understand.

And we talk about on occasions, I’d sit in this chair and talk about the guy in my chair over there (laugh).

Yes,

And on occasion I’d explicitly say I’m having this conversation with my mentoring hat on not my senior manager hat on.

I understand.

And yeah by being clarifying on the role that I’m playing at the time and equally they’d come back to me with/ this is a mentoring question and on some areas for example they blind copy me on emails because if they copy me, other people might interpret it ‘why is he copying (M12’s Name) here?’

Yes I understand (laugh).

And I normally would not condone blind copying but in this case it’s not for the content of the email its how the person is presenting their message and so on rather than for the content.

I understand. And in terms of work relations would you feel comfortable disclosing or confiding in the individual?

If it is like we announced yesterday (redundancies) that type of area I’m not going to comment

That’s understandable.

Because it’s not relevant to the relationship.

Okay.

So no I can’t be an insider source of information. That’s asking them to keep quiet too much (laugh). I’d be putting them in a difficult position.

No I understand. Actual relationships within the organisation, would you engage in discussion where relevant to the mentoring process?

In terms of how they interact with the people in work, whether they get on with them or not, how to manage their bosses is a very legitimate part of what I would do in mentoring in my view.

Alright, okay. And in terms of your own goals and priorities would you feel comfortable again sharing where relevant?

Yeah I’m relatively open as a person so I it doesn’t worry me too much. And part of the mentoring to be effective is you describe your experiences but I know they’re not alone.

In relation to work life issues if they were raised by the mentee, have you had to respond to such issues?

To a certain extent but I wouldn’t see myself as a life counsellor. This is a work mentoring relationship so I wouldn’t…We’ve touched on it. Probably implicitly or explicitly I closed it down. It’s a formal mentoring programme so yeah I’d be reluctant to give life advice but I don’t know, I can’t always restrain myself.

Are there any difficulties then or downside to the relationship?

I am very busy and I do wonder on occasions is this the best use of my time and I justify it to myself (laugh) because I probably enjoy it and its
something different from the day job. It’s a little bit of light relief in some ways.

I  So its time really is the thing?
R  Time would be the big worry. There is a sensitivity I think sometimes with the functional manager, it is seen that this individual is having all this time with (Mentor 12) and they’re not. From a positional point of view that is an issue.
I  Yeah, I understand, and would you perceive any downside from the protégé’s perspective in terms of the mentoring relationship?
R  In many ways their expectations that their career is going to advance faster or those things are going to happen because they have a relationship with (Mentor 12) that might not make any difference. I’m here as an experienced manager given, we’re having conversations and asking questions, trying not to give too much advice but, probably failing on that/on occasion but that is different to the other parts yeah.
I  Are there any downside for the organisation in relation to mentoring programmes/relationships?
R  No actually. I’m an advocate of it but I think it is an additional networking and as we have a more and more laterally changing world, the more networks you have the better so it’s an alternative communication method across the company. It more than justifies the time it takes. We probably have managed well/ that just because you’re on the mentoring doesn’t mean that you’re on the fast track career. They help, you develop in your existing role /as much as advancing your career and probably we have done a good job there because there is that potential risk.
I  What have you gained in terms of insight from the mentees?
R  Yeah they do help you understand and there’s bits of the organisation that aren’t directly in your influence, that nevertheless will have, they’re all the one organisations that will have an overlap and there is an element of particularly the reverse side of say the one I commented on where the gap is too large.
I  Right,
R  There is a generational thing and I’m somewhat upset and I used to be classed as the baby boomer and they’ve changed the goal posts of the birthdays (laugh) that I’m now considered a baby boomer while there’s a definite, the generation x’s and then there’s the millennials or whatever they’re called. They are different. They’re absolutely different and it’s good to have that exposure and insight into that.
I  Has the mentoring relationship helped your career guidance or your own growth, what would you perceive you’re getting from it.
R  I think I’m a better manager from it because it’s easier for them to give me feedback on how I interact with them and my direct approach.
I  Alright and what about your own self growth?
R  Yeah I think I’m a better person for it yeah.
I  How would you perceive the benefits gained by the protégé?
R  We’ll just take the two from the last round /one the perception of the individual in the organisation has done a turnaround. People are now looking for him to be part of their team where he would have been
somewhat shunned beforehand. The more junior one, it has helped his
development somewhat and then the new one it’s too early to say.

I Okay and in terms of the relationship? Would it have given you access to
help you do your job more effectively in any dimension?

R To a small extent just to know some of the other things going on in the
building and…

I Okay and also then in terms of either any help or assistance in your own
career?

R No, it’s in the field of a charitable donation (laugh).

I I know we are almost close to conclusion now, are there any other
questions or comments that you would like to add?

R The relationship with the functional manager is one that we felt in the first
round here we didn’t involve them, they were actually almost excluded.

I Right.

R And they were nervous about it. Particularly because the first round was
within the engineering community within the organisation but certainly the
engineering community. Now we’ve broadened it a bit this time.

I So is there more comfort around it now?

R There’s still a nervousness I think or by the functional managers.

I Why is that do you think?

R Well you see if the functional manager had been through the programme
on either side I think it would be a lot easier. There’s an element of this
unknown, what’s going on here.

I So the next programme they’d probably be linked into it.

R Yeah, they’d probably will with time as we get more people involved it
probably will work better but I think there’s still nervousness. My most
recent one, arguably her boss needs some mentoring, one of the clear
actions after about meeting two or three is maybe I’m mentoring the
wrong person. It’s the boss who needs the help.

I Are there any changes that you would like to see happening maybe in the
next programme?

R We, it is on the list of things to do. We all need refresher training on our
communication styles and influencing styles. At the last steering meeting,
I sort of joked that personality transplants just don’t seem to be taking
(laugh). We need professional listening skills and all that good
wholesome stuff we do forget it. And a refresher on that I think is always
good.

I Okay.

R And I think the other thing that worked well in the first round and we need
to do it again is after we’d gone into the process for a while the mentors
were facilitated off site where we could have an open conversation about
how the programme was going, how we’re getting on and even do a role
play on some of the more difficult conversation and it was quite funny in
that the role play I did was replayed with the real individual.

I Right.

R The practice session, the answers were the same (laugh). I obviously had
described and maybe the individual was known well enough in the
organisation but the person I was role playing with/played the exact same
role as the real individual subsequently did and I think that was ready and
we’d time to think about how to help them and that does help. It does acquire a lot of trust basically because you are; you’re running the risk of breaching the confidentiality between you and the mentee. So you need to trust that that other mentor isn’t going to abuse that information where it is, its all designed to help the mentee (laugh) but nevertheless there is that risk.

I Will the focus continue to be one the mentee?
R Yeah it is meant to be a two way, like everybody learns from every interaction. But, I think that is where you can’t have too big of a gap between the two for reciprocal learning to work.

I Will the mentoring programme then continue in the organisation?
R I think it is yeah. I think it is. A concern I would have is if I pick up one a year I could (laugh) eventually have a calendar that’s full of (laugh) and like a formal programme does end after the year but in some ways it’s a measure of the success whether you keep having the meetings or not. But you can end up /and what’s happened with my first two is one of them has dropped down quite a lot and the other one has turned into five or ten minute sessions.

I Okay.
R Which actually works for both of us and there’s less baggage and less explanation needs to be done so you can actually cover it in five or ten minutes.

I I just want to thank you now for your time and contribution and for a very interesting discussion.
R You’re welcome.
**M13**

I  Introduction

I  How long have you been in the school?
R  14 years

I  How long have you been at this particular job?
R  11 years

I  What is your job title?
R  Primary school principal

I  Who do you mentor (1 or more)?
R  Just the one.

I  What is your Protégé’s position in the organisation?
R  Primary school teacher

I  How long have you been a mentor to this person or others?
R  11 years. 1 year to this person. 10 years to others throughout my career.

I  Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R  Mentoring is done as part of the job. I was assigned to her.

I  Have you been mentored?
R  Yes. In another school but it was eleven years ago when I was first promoted as a new principal. It was a very informal mentoring relationship where I was mentoring by a principal from another school. I started and was working in my new job and had mentoring sessions from time to time with my mentor after school day was finished. It did help me find my feet and I retained a very positive opinion from that experience.”

I  What benefits do you feel you’ve gained from being mentored?
R  I received support when take on a new role with significant responsibility, not only was I was I responsible for running the school and managing staff but also had responsibility for over 200 pupils. The mentoring was invaluable to me at the time.

I  How often do you meet your Protégé?
R  Informally, approx twice a month. As a principal, in a way I mentor all my staff on an ongoing basis but with a new teacher and the fact that we meet regularly, it also allows me to get to know the person much better. This has been a big advantage for me

I  How strong is the relationship?
R  Very strong. It was an advantage that we clicked as a pair and we very quickly established a good rapport, we shared a good sense of humour and come from similar backgrounds. She was very willing to engage with me, was willing to share her opinions and feelings but at the same time wanted to hear another perspective on a particular issue. As the protégé is a few years younger than I we also discussed how the teaching degree had changed since I studied.

I  How important do you feel the relationship to be?
R  Very important - to all parties. This was clear from the start, so little changes in primary schools that any new initiative is a talking point in the staff room and all were very interested in hearing about the programme. What was reassuring was there were no negative feelings at all

I  What problems or issues do you discuss?
Any important issues that arise in relation to teaching. It could be in relation to teaching a specific subject like science that young children find difficult to grasp, class management, lesson plans or just talk about why we chose teaching as a career and the rewards it provides both professionally and personally.

How open is the relationship?

Very open, I hope! Naturally a new teacher is very wary when she/ he starts a first teaching post but as time went on it was clear we did build up trust. After all if a protégé does not trust the mentor, it would be very difficult for the relation to work or be productive.

How formal?

Not formal. I like to discuss the issues that are of interest to the protégé and allow her to set the agenda because of my experience I know we will cover all aspects of the job and her development during the programme. It is after all in place for her benefit and not me.

What kinds of support do you provide to your Protégé?

By giving advice and support. That is the most important role for any mentor, it is to help the individual plough her own furrow, we are after all, individuals, and we all have our own teaching style. I see my role as helping the new teacher develop her career and to trust her judgment.

Does your protégé provide you with any kind of support?

Yes. She has raised issues regarding new projects in the school and has volunteered to assist in those, this has shown great “buy-in” on her part and I have no doubt it will continue in the future.

Have you gained opportunities for greater visibility in the organisation through Mentoring?

Yes. I have attended in-service days and it has enabled me to interact with academics and the coordinator and to provide feedback about the programme. The system depends on the support of principals for it to be successful, and it is possible, if not certain that it will become a requirement for all new teachers in the future. The fact that I participated from the start is very satisfying.

What information or resources do you provide that helps your protégé do her job better?

(We discuss) lesson plans, teaching resources, notes from meetings and in-service days...Any important issues that arise in relation to teaching. It could be in relation teaching a specific subject like science that young children find difficult to grasp, class management, lesson plans.

Have you put your protégé in contact with others who provide her with information and resources?

Yes, other members of staff, e.g. special needs teacher, English language teacher.

Does your Protégé have any contacts that have provided you with information or resources?

Yes, school mentor, meeting with inspectors and in-service days.

How strong are these relationships?

Very good. They were not strong to begin with but as time has passed they have strengthened.

Was this contact established thorough your protégé?
Yes, there’s a general support situation in place for NQT’s. In general members of profession are very supportive of each other and I enjoy that support also.

How much does your protégé rely on you for support?

Not hugely. She is a very accomplished individual who has overcome person difficulty in her life to get where she is, so is very self-reliant. I know my assistance is of benefit to her but I have no doubt she would have a successful career with or without, my help.

What type of support does she rely on most?

Advice on my experience as a teacher and as principal. I suppose it is when we share our personal experience with someone and I look back and reflect how I reacted to certain situations, it is only with hindsight you know if you did the right or the wrong thing at the time.

Has the relationship helped your protégé’s career advancement?

I hope so. Although that will not become obvious just yet, maybe in two or three years time she may have progressed.

Has the relationship helped your own career advancement opportunities?

No. But has been good for me on a personal level.

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that can provide you with information and resources?

Yes, I have gotten to know much more people in other schools in the region.

Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?

No, in general Newly Qualified Teachers are very open to advice. It is seldom that any problems arise with a newly qualified teacher.

How influential do you feel you are in school?

Quite influential. It is hard to give examples as one person cannot change the Irish educational system, but I know my advice is often sought by other schools.

Have you helped your Protégé become more influential in the organisation?

No, not yet.

Try and describe in a few your overall feeling about your mentoring relationship, and/or about what your Protégé has gained?

It’s very beneficial, open lines of communication, mutual benefit and good for all school staff who are all involved in helping new person in some way have to manage as closely if she had not participated. I hope is will become a permanent fixture for NQT’s in the future.

Introduction

How long have you been in the school?

Six years

How long have you been at this particular job?

Four years

What is your job title?
Primary school teacher with responsibility for mentoring.

Who do you mentor (1 or more?)

Two now.

What is your Protégé’s position in the organisation?

Primary School Teacher

How long have you been a mentor to this person or others?

One year. One year to this person and one year to other

Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?

Voluntary on my part.

And your protégé?

She was assigned to me.

Have you been mentored?

No.

How often do you meet your Protégé?

Once a week.

How strong is the relationship?

Fair. When I took on this role it was mainly because I wanted to help new teachers develop their skills and freely offered advice but it became obvious to me that my protégé wanted to do it her way. She is a new teacher and has great potential but she does not know all about teaching just because she graduated. She is a very proud person by nature and maybe she felt I was talking down to her which was not the case at all. We kept it going but there was definitely a strain at times.

How important do you feel the relationship to be?

Very important to me. Not that important to protégé. Important to school. I would like to think that the protégé understood how much time and effort went into putting this programme together. I don’t think she realised that I had been on training days in preparation of taking on the role of mentor. I also wanted it to succeed and I wanted a good relationship to develop between us.

What problems or issues do you discuss?

We do not have an agenda, I allow the protégé direct the meeting content. This worked for a while but there were certain things I thought were of importance and I worked on those for a time. I felt if I had not covered these things I would be selling the protégé short in some way but I don’t think she saw it that way.

How open is the relationship?

Open. There are no issues that I would not raise or be afraid to raise, so I felt that in that respect it was open in that sense but it was not always comfortable.

How formal?

Open and lighted but with goals

Giving advice and support. I have also given her advice on where she can access additional resources and she has acted on them and they have been of use to her.

Does your protégé provide you with any kind of support?

No and to be fair there is no opportunity for her do so.
Have you gained opportunities for greater visibility in the organisation through Mentoring?

No. I am as well known among the other staff as I had been before becoming a mentor.

What information or resources do you provide that helps your protégé do her job better?

Lesson plans. I try to help my protégé as much as I can and I have also helped her with posters.

Have you put your protégé in contact with others who provide her with information and resources?

Yes, other members of staff, e.g. English teacher and Special Needs teacher and other newly qualified teachers in the district

How much does your protégé rely on you for support?

Not at all, she’s very independent…Comes from a teaching family and gets a lot of support from her parents who are or have been in the teaching profession. But she also relies on me.

What type of support does she rely on most?

She wants guidance and is willing to take it

Has the relationship helped your protégé’s career advancement?

Not really.

Has the relationship helped your own career advancement opportunities?

I’m seen more outside now and I suppose a better reputation internally. Other teachers could have volunteered for the programme but they were not interested themselves but they do admire the time and effort I have put in

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that can provide you with information and resources?

Yes, I have met other mentors from other schools at the in-service days

Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship?

No.

Have you helped your Protégé become more influential in the organisation?

She is now seen more as a colleague by myself and others, instead of a novice. She was very confident to start with but she has grown and developed as a teacher during the year, but she probably would have been this way with one years teaching experience behind her. She has also gained more visibility.

Try and describe in a few your overall feeling about your mentoring relationship, and/or about what your Protégé has gained?

It is not easy to be a mentor and it does not come easy but the rewards of helping another person are worth the effort. I would recommend it to anyone who wants something else as well as teaching and if at some stage you are wanting the responsibility of running a school as principal

**M15**

Introduction

How long have you been in the School?
Four years

What is your job title?
Primary school teacher. New teacher Mentor.

Who do you mentor?
(Protégé 15) and one other new teacher.

What is your Protégé’s position in the organisation?
Primary school teacher

How long have you been a mentor?
Just a year

Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
Voluntary

How was your protégé chosen?
I don’t know – they did that in the programme. She was landed with me (laugh).

Have you been mentored?
No

How often do you meet your Protégé?
Once a fortnight but not always face to face. Sometimes it was over the phone. I think we met three or four times face to face and in hindsight I would say face to face is always better. One cannot get to know another person over the phone.

How strong is the relationship?
It’s all right. Because we work in different schools there is no professional interaction, we cannot share our experiences as they occur. If we were in the same school it would have been better. This meant that our relationship never really got off the ground and if I have not got some commonality with a protégé it’s an uphill struggle

How important do you feel the relationship to be?
It’s…It’s got a lot of potential to be important. I don’t know how important she feels it is though. She is always there to take my calls and has been on time for our sessions when we met but sometimes I felt I was boring her and she wished she was someplace else or had better things to do

What problems or issues do you discuss?
Whatever we want, whatever she wants, but sometimes I think I am boring her but she is probably too polite to say it. Teaching is a solitary profession, in that you perform your work without the company of colleagues like in other jobs, when you think about it you spend most of your career on your own. You have to dig deep some days to keep it going and I tried imparting this to my protégé but we were definitely not on the same page.

How open is the relationship?
It’s open enough. I like to think that my protégé could discuss any professional concerns she has with me and at times she has been very frank but at others I got the impression something was bothering her but she did not say. Having said that, she has shown examples of where she acted on my advice and when she did she was leased with the outcome. I think she is a difficult person to get to know, we are not all the same. I
I think sometimes in the teaching profession we find it hard to let go of the control we exert in the classroom, outside it.

R How formal?

I The mentoring relationship is difficult. As she performed extremely high in college, and finds it difficult to take direction or advice. I can only guide the protégé along the path, I am there for her benefit, she will benefit more from the relationship than I. I thought mentoring would be easier than this.

I What kinds of support do you provide to your Protégé?

R Giving advice and support. I try not to do too much for my protégé, she has some teaching experience and I like her to do as much planning as she can. I offer help when it is sought and provide material if asked but the purpose of the programme is to make teachers self reliant and resourceful.

I Does your protégé provide you with any kind of support?

R No. Teaching is not like other professions like working in an office or factory, teams have a different construction here. It’s not as though we share the same space all day.

I Have you gained opportunities for greater visibility in the organisation through Mentoring?

R No. it has more or less stayed the same from that first time

I What information or resources do you provide that helps your protégé do her job better?

R Lesson plans. I try to offer practical assistance where possible but as my protégé is somewhat experienced there is little scope for this

I How much does your protégé rely on you for support?

R Not at all, very independent. Comes from a teaching family. Bother her parents are teachers.

I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with career guidance?

R Yes, I have met other mentors in other schools and we have exchanged information and given each other advice and some tips but because of the geographical structure of the programme it has made it that bit more difficult

I Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship?

R Yes. It is difficult to mentor a person who achieved very high grades in college as they are usually very independent individuals. We could have been matched better

I Try and describe in a few your overall feeling about your mentoring relationship, and/or about what your Protégé has gained?

R It is not easy to be a mentor and it does not come easy but the rewards of helping another person are worth the effort. Trying to teach, study for the Diploma in Teaching and participate in the mentoring programme is a jam packed year for the NQT’s but I would like to think that in some I lightened the load
I Introduction
I How long have you been in the company/organization?
R 5 years
I How long have you been at this particular job?
R 4 years
I What is your job title?
R Primary School teacher
I Who do you mentor?
R (Protégé 17)
I How long have you been a mentor ..?
R One year just since (Protégé 17)
I Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R Voluntary
I How was your protégé chosen?
R They assigned the proteges
I Have you been mentored?
R No
I How often do you meet your Protégé?
R Once a week after school has ended for the day.
I How strong is the relationship?
R Very Good. It was great to mentor someone I had so much in common with, we were at ease with other and conversation flowed freely. We also laughed a lot and this I think made it very productive. Teaching is a serious business but very rewarding and we both love it. I also think we both worked hard to get here and we share that same sense of achievement.
I How important do you feel the relationship to be?
R It’s really important I suppose – to get that kind of support when you’re starting out
I What problems or issues do you discuss?
R I have set out areas I wish to cover which I feel will be of assistance to protégé as she goes through her career. Discuss mistakes I have made and how I could have done things differently with someone to advise me. She enjoys this and compares her experience of today. I know she trusts me and this helps the relationship a great deal
I How open is the relationship?
R Very open. I like my protégé very much as a person and this makes it very easy, the relationship is very interactive and it also motivates me in my job and makes me more aware of the things I do and decisions I make.
I How formal?
R Mentoring relationship is very enjoyable for both of us. Sometimes I feel a bit stressed myself going to meetings if I have had a difficult day but it reminds me how hard it was when I started and how far I have come. I would not like to go back to having those unsure feelings again. I know I
am having a positive impact on how my protégé sees herself, how others see her. I think she is very talented and I like to think I am playing a part in nurturing that talent.

I What kinds of support do you provide to your Protégé?
R Giving advice and support and a confidence

I Does your protégé provide you with any kind of support?
R Yes, we really trust each other and that helps a lot

I Have you gained opportunities for greater visibility in the organisation through Mentoring?
R Yes, other experienced teachers see me as someone who can give advice to them

I What information or resources do you provide that helps your protégé do her job better?
R Lesson plans, resources, advice on how to be assertive with parents, especially those who are much older than the new teacher

I Have you put your protégé in contact with others who provide him/her with information and resources?
R No, it is just us. That is not because I wouldn’t its just that she met the other protégés at the in-service day and she already knows her colleagues in school.

I How much does your protégé rely on you for support?
R She was very conscientious to begin but the extra support has given her more confidence. I have taken great pride in watching her develop and am pleased I was able to play such an important part in her development. This programme has been one of the best things the department has introduced in recent times and I hope it will become a permanent part of a teachers training

I What type of support does he/she rely on most?
R The reassurance she has gotten has helped her build confidence. When you have played a role in helping someone establish themselves in their career, it’s a great feeling and I am very proud to have been a part of that

I Has the relationship helped your protégé’s career advancement?
R Too early to say.

I Has the relationship helped your own career advancement opportunities?
R Not at present but it could in the future.

I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that can provide you with information and resources?
R Yes, I have met other mentors participating in the program

I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with career guidance?
R Yes. I have also gotten to know project leaders working for Dept of Education

I Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?
R No, it has been very positive for both of us and we will remain in contact in the future. I know she would be a person I would turn to in the future if I needed advice.
How influential do you feel you are in the organisation? Any examples?

The same as I was before I became a mentor. Others may look on me the same way but I look on myself differently. I feel I have more to offer and would like to continue making that extra contribution in the future.

Have you helped your Protégé become more influential in the organisation?

No but it has raised her profile and exposure and could benefit her in the future.

Try and describe in a few your overall feeling about your mentoring relationship, and/or ... about what your Protégé has gained?

It has added a new dimension to my job and I look forward to the sessions, being to help others makes me feel good about myself. I would not have any problem if mentoring became a permanent part of my job, I feel the experience has been just as beneficial to me as my protégé.

Introduction

Okay so I’m just going to start then with some context questions and then what we will do then is move into the scope of the relationship, or how you finding it at the moment and what you’re getting from it. So how long have you been with the company?

Ten years since ’99.

Alright and what is your current work role?

My current work role is Organisation Development Manager in HR.

Alright and do you have any roles outside of work (community, family, sports etc)?

Any other role. I teach, I do teach children in Sunday school.

Okay.

Which is part of a Church of Ireland thing so I’ve done that since I was fourteen or fifteen? So I do that every Sunday.

Okay, alright and how long have you been in your formal position in this company?

In organisation development I’m a manager three years.

And how would you describe the characteristics of this stage of your career, are you early career, or mid career?

Okay, I would probably say mid career because I have been doing HR since I started.

So how, would you describe where you are at now in your area of expertise/career/life etc?

My role is particularly challenging given the I suppose the role itself because it’s quite a strategic role so it has very strong emphasis on changing things within the organisation at a quite a senior level. So you get a lot of exposure /in terms of the actual role itself. It is a challenging role yeah.

Okay, alright, okay. So what would you consider then the important priorities for you at this stage of your career?
At this stage in my career it is continuous on the job challenge. The ability to strengthen relationships in the organisation and opportunity to build my skills to become an expert I suppose in what I do.

Okay, alright and are your career priorities now different from what they were in the past, say in the last three years?

They may have changed slightly in that they’re not quite as aggressive and probably that’s where I’m at in my life, where I’m at a crossroads now and I think I really, I suppose a woman gets to that stage where its do you want to start having a family now or do you want to focus on your career. So there’s the I’d say I’m at the crossroads stage.

Alright, okay. So maybe just moving in then to the mentoring programme context then. Is this your first encounter participating in a formal mentoring programme?

Not my relationship with (Protégé 18) because I mentored, I’ve two other people that I mentor.

In addition to (your protégé)

Yeah.

Okay.

And well in actual fact just two at the moment because one of them is gone on a career break and I’m a mentee as well so I have my own mentor as part of the programme.

And how did you become interested or were made aware of the mentoring programme?

(Laugh). The mentoring programme got designed and rolled out by our team (laugh), so I’m part and parcel of that and would be championing what we do.

Okay and what triggered the need for mentoring? Why did you choose mentoring as a development initiative?

I chose it from my own perspective as a mentee, not part because that’s where I would see the most benefits for myself. I choose it because I wanted to strengthen my business relationship. I knew that I had an opportunity to build my knowledge of the business as well as my profile.

Okay, alright. And in terms of your protégé or protégés how were they chosen for this programme?

Well what happened in our mentoring programme is that each mentor fills out like a mini kind of CV of their details and then the list of those mentors that are available are on the system so the likes of (Protégé 18) or whoever is looking for a mentor goes into the system and will pick who they’d like to establish a relationship with and that’s how the relationship gets established then, go to and ask if you wouldn’t mind being their mentor.

Okay and what happens lets say if more than one mentee approached the mentor, how is it co-ordinated let’s say could three or four people approach the one mentor.

What happened is when I fill in the details about myself I say how many people I’m willing to mentor so in that instance I said two and once I had two mentors, the system, because its an automated system, the two
mentees have been assigned to me then I’m off the system. Yeah you can’t give me anymore.

I Very good.

R But in the way that my relationship got established with (Protégé 18) she actually approached me outside of the system because she knew I’d lost a mentee.

I Okay, So the relationship then is voluntary, and what would be the next step?

R So yes you would, well sorry the next stage is that the mentee and the mentor go on training, like a mini training session. They have their training and then a meeting gets established either by the mentor or the mentee, whichever does it first. It doesn’t matter too much and normally what happens is there’s a kind of contract gets established and a lot of its verbal but you just agree the boundaries of what the relationship will be and even things down to the duration that you want the relationship to last. How confidential you want it to be. What type of an approach a mentee wants you to take in the sessions; you know like how honest you want them to be, or whatever. What type of guidance are they looking for? What do they want the relationship to focus on?

I So that’s all scoped out initially.

R Okay, alright.

I Okay so and how long have you participated in this particular mentoring relationship?

R God (laugh) when I’m just going down or when she’s going to ask me (laugh) how long and I can’t remember.

I Probably more than a year or…

R No, under a year.

I Alright and does your protégé work in the same or different department or section to the one you’re working in?

R She worked within human resources but not in the same team as me, however, over the last couple of months she’s working on our team and she’s actually reporting directly to me two days a week so we’ve kind of put our mentoring relationship on hold for the duration of the next while/ I just didn’t feel it was appropriate for me still to be her mentor while I was managing her so we decided to break that.

I Okay and how many organisational levels between you and the mentee?

R (She) is an officer, two, maybe three.

I Okay and how often would you meet?

R We would not meet very regularly. Its kind of adhoc when she needs something. So only twice actually so it’s new in terms of that.

I Okay, alright. And who would initiate the meeting or where is the onus set from a training perspective?

R The onus would be on (her).

I What were your hopes and concerns at the outset when starting the mentoring relationship?

R In terms of hopes as a mentor you want to make sure that the individual will benefit from the relationship so that they feel that the sessions are worthwhile. That you will assist them in terms of their progression within the organisation. I my myself take quite a strong focus on coaching
individuals through particular issues they’re faced with. One of the benefits as well is that it’s a confidential setting for someone to seek advice from someone whose more senior and who would have more experience hopefully than the protégé that you have.

I Okay and did you have concerns about…

R Concerns.

I Starting off maybe in the earlier day. Maybe they’re not as strong now that you are experienced.

R I’d be concerned that I’m not living up to their expectation, providing them with advice that is ill fitting advice that doesn’t actually benefit them. You know that you actually give advice in relation to something and it backfires on them or you put them in a worse situation than they were in before so they would be the only major worries.

I Okay, thank you. So what qualities or characteristics would you have observed that the various protégés bring in to the relationship?

R Well I feel like in relationships with the likes of (my protégé) she is really say like proactive. Very energised and this would probably go for everyone as in they’re very energised around their careers but I think everybody takes fits and starts and I found that with a lot of mentoring relationships that it’s all great at the beginning and everyone’s all excited and then it takes this massive dent that it’s like ‘agghhh’. [Pause] And I often find that it’s the mentor that ends up doing the rejuvenating. It’s not the mentee because the mentee only will go to the mentor if there’s an issue so if everything is going great they’ll tend not to approach you.

I Okay and would you have felt that you needed to challenge or probe that with the mentees?

R I would have challenged because initially if we’d established a relationship that we wanted to meet every two months or whatever it might be in the initial part I would have said look its totally yours, you control this. So you contact me every two months. If they weren’t contacting me I would say listen, why don’t we have a meet up and review where we’re at and if we don’t think that this is working out lets let it go. If it’s not of benefit to you lets not go any further in this relationship. Let’s put an end to it because I think a lot of relationships in mentoring people are afraid to end it.

I Yeah because they might be concerned about hurting other people’s feelings.

R Yeah they’re afraid of hurting someone or whatever and then they just drag on too long, you know, and it’s just not worth either parties while meeting up. I know in some relationships now I have said to the person look if you want a casual mentor relationship I will be there on a casual basis if you want to have someone to just bounce things off or meet up so I do have one relationship that’s quite like that.

I Okay, how would you describe the strength of that relationship at the moment (common ground or trust or respect being established etc)?

R I think a positive from the relationship I had with (her) is that the relationship is already there in terms that I knew (her) and so there was already elements of trust. The other advantage is that I actually know the unit she works in so any individual she’s speaks about I actually know
which means I have an understanding of the background. Like we don’t waste time trying to explain what’s going on and it means I think that I’m a little bit more objective.

I

Okay.

R Because not only am I listening to her viewpoints I’m hearing her side of the story. I actually probably have my own observations or my own side of the story whereas in other mentoring relationships I think that sometimes even the mentor can miss the point or you can miss something in the discussion because you’re only getting one side of the story so it’s much more difficult to be objective.

I

Okay.

R Than when you actually know the background of the situation because I just find that with my own mentor. Sometimes he doesn’t know the background.

I

Okay so you have to invest time?

R You not only have to invest time in explaining it you actually sometimes feel that he hasn’t got the full picture of everything that’s going on whereas I think I would be more objective actually because I actually know some of the background.

I

Okay, and how do you close that gap from a mentoring viewpoint?

R What I tend to do is I take the observations that he makes on board reflect back on them and then I make a judgement call on whether I think I should follow through with advice he’s taken or he hasn’t taken.

I

Okay.

R Because some advice he’s given before in the past I haven’t taken it on because when I look at everything in the whole picture I don’t actually think that its…it doesn’t come together so it’s not the most appropriate advice but it’s great, the other side of it is it’s great to have a fresh view, you know. Someone totally different who will actually share a cold viewpoint on something that I know is a hundred percent non biased whereas mine, although I’m saying I’m being objective, I think I’m being objective but someone else on the outside might think I’m being a little bit biased.

I

Okay,

R You know based on my own viewpoint.

I

So how would you describe the level of openness that you would experience in the mentoring relationship?

R Very open. I think (she) would be really open with me to a certain degree because I choose a business person which I choose for reasons, for benefits that I outlined earlier. I in certain things will not be completely open because it might jeopardise my relationship with that business person.

I

Yes

R Do you like, he’s still at the end of the day he’s still a customer so there would be a slight conflict there.

I

So, you’re always conscious of boundaries as well.

R Exactly, so I think I would be slightly more conscious of boundaries and less open than (she) would be with me.

I

Okay, alright, okay. And how much do you feel that you could confide or disclose to your protégé in relation to lets say work issues?
I’m open enough with (her) in relation to work issues. Having said that I don’t focus on sharing my opinion or my views about individuals because that’s not what the relationship is about. It would be like me trying to coach (her) so unless I feel there’s something I can share about someone’s characteristic that will actually help her, I won’t share it.

What about confiding regarding work relations?

I would confide insights where I felt/ I thought there would have been of benefit to (her)/ but I would be reluctant to share my viewpoint on whether I liked someone or I didn’t or whether I personally got on with them or didn’t. I wouldn’t share those pieces of information.

Alright and how much would you generally confide about yourself in terms of your own goals or aspirations etc.

I would share to a certain degree but as I said I genuinely focus the whole thing on (her).

Okay.

So she would share ninety percent and I’d share ten percent if you’re asking for a balance in terms of what.

What about quality of work life issues?

I’d be quite open, yeah.

What aspects of the mentoring relationship would give you most satisfaction?

Most satisfaction. I definitely would get a lot of satisfaction if I coached somebody on a technique that they found worked and so I find a lot of my coaching tends to be around career advice. It’s either career advice or like situational issues so relationship based issues. So I would definitely get a lot of satisfaction from a technique that worked and they got, something became apparent to them that weren’t apparent before.

Okay.

And also motivating the individual as well to keep working at whatever they were working at.

Are there any downsides to the mentoring relationship, lack of understanding/ time issues, jealousy etc

No I wouldn’t see any major downsides. The only thing would be the time thing if you feel that you’re in a relationship and you’re not, nothing is happening out of it. If you’re in a mentoring relationship and you feel like the mentee or the protégé just couldn’t be bothered and you feel like you’re putting in all the effort well then those types of things would frustrate me.

Okay.

Because you feel like your time is wasted whereas if the individual goes into it and they’re really enthusiastic and want you to give them as much support it’s a lot more in their interest and advice you have to give well then you don’t mind giving the time. Its only when you feel the time is a burden to you because it’s a waste of time then they’re not using it properly.

Okay and would you perceive any downsides from a protégé perspective?

Sometimes, the mentor you have, depends on the location that they’re in, depends on the type of person they are. Like say like on time thing
sometimes my mentor sessions I think they go on way too long compared to what I’d prefer them to be in terms of shorter ones.

I  Right.

R  Are there any other downsides? The only other downside is exposing you too much. That there’s an element of showing your development gaps and the emphasis is on your development gaps which means that because my mentor happens to be a business mentor I’m showing a lot of my cards to someone who’s a customer as such so I would have to take care over how much I expose. So sometimes the downside can be balancing how much to expose and how much not to expose.

I  And would your perception of how much the mentor is disclosing influence you?

R  I think subconsciously you probably do make a certain judgement but in terms of how much they’re sharing and whether you share a little bit more but in the main, before I go into a situation I’d be conscious of how much I share.

I  Yes,

R  They tend to be quite good at getting you to open up, my mentor anyway so we tend to share more. I tend to feel like I’ve shared more than I wanted to share with him.

I  Yes.

R  So I’d say, yeah I’d say it just depends.

I  It depends on the situation, okay, alright. Are there any downsides to having a mentoring relationship or a mentoring programme in the organisation?

R  No I wouldn’t think so. I think they’re really advantageous.

I  Okay and in terms of the way the programme was launched does everybody have access to the mentoring programme?

R  You see when it was introduced it was introduced like on that formal basis that it was introduced to the system. That was when each different business area, if they wanted to roll it out, we’d roll it out in that business area. Now because we’re not doing big bang roll out its only if someone wants to establish a mentor. They can either establish it through us or they can go themselves and approach somebody to establish it. So now it’s kind of open to everyone to have a mentor but not everybody avails of the programme.

I  It would be a level of openness between lets say mentees then, would they talk to each other about the fact that they’re being mentored or is it a kind of confidential relationship.

R  It is meant to be like a confidential relationship but if someone, like a lot of people would speak about their mentors, who their mentors are. Like most people on my team would know who my mentor is. Having said that I know other people that have mentoring relationships and they don’t talk about it or they don’t really want people to know. I think it’s personally how you view it.

I  Alright so in terms of let’s say the reciprocal side of the relationship, are there any benefits that you would have gained from your protégé through the relationship?
Not massively. I’d say it’s more in the relationship side than an opportunity to strengthen a relationship with another individual. So say with the likes of (her) or whatever it’s an opportunity to build a relationship with her. [Pause]
Only to build your own coaching skills, you know, build your own ability to given guidance and to coach people that you can try techniques. So say if you don’t have a massive amount of direct reports there might be techniques you would try with your mentor to strengthen you skills. So if I was thinking about my own benefits of like being a mentor I would say that it gives you the opportunity to practice some types of people management type skills.

Okay.
Without crossing the boundaries in managing someone, if you know what I mean.
Yeah, sure yeah. Okay and in terms of let’s say emotional support, (friendship/ interest/empathy/feedback,) would that have been reciprocated?
I think so yeah.
Okay. And then at a broader level then has the mentoring relationship helped you in any way in terms of your job effectiveness which I think you’ve talked about coaching skills.
Yeah that’s what I would say yeah.
What about career guidance for yourself.
It definitely enhanced my skills in terms of career guidance and then the other side is as well when you’re coaching someone say on career guidance it often gives, highlights things to you yourself. You go oh actually I really need to get myself in gear. Do you know so it does act as a bit of a prompt?
Prompt, yeah. Okay and in terms of your own self growth would you see any benefit?
I definitely think that you, it gives you the opportunity to play like a third party kind of role, you know what I mean in terms of situations. So you can strengthen your own personal growth by observing how different people interact because generally what you will also be looked for advice on, outside of careers, there’s actual relationship issues or things that are going on with an individual and you’ll see two sides of a particular story so you’ll get to observe.
Ok
Yeah and you get to form an opinion and okay well in that situation actually this would be a good thing to do which is much easier to do than if you’re the person in the situation.
Okay and how would you perceive how that the mentoring relationship has helped the protégé?
Well the thing with (my protégé), I’d say that she may have said to you that she gets more out of working with me on the team now/ as her people manager.
Ah right, okay.
Because we didn’t have a massive number of sessions from a mentoring perspective. So in terms of what she’s gotten out of it I would say a lot of
the focus of our sessions would be in relation to careers and where she wants to go with her career because she was quite unclear on the path she wanted to follow so I used one or two techniques with her in order to provide her with direction and also building her confidence to take action on certain things that she wasn’t taking action on.

Alright.

Or I think with (my protégé), some lines are probably a little bit blurred because I’m her line manager for two days a week, her mentor and gave her, just recently gave her feedback as the coach, and the three sixty so I’ve got a massive…

Sharing of feedback

Yes, from different angles and its made me understand her better in terms of because I was coaching her through like her three sixty or whatever it means that it highlighted things that I would have known about her that we’re working through and working on in terms of any development that she might have had /so I’m able to give her more as a line manager now probably because I’ve been her mentor and coach during the three sixty as well.

Okay, that probably just more or less concludes the individual pieces of the relationship.

Great.

Would you have had any involvement in a general evaluation of the mentoring programme/ benefits and other feedback from mentees?

I think that from an organisational perspective the biggest benefits are the career development side of things. Allowing an individual to have another source in order to progress their own career. So in order to build their own development gap. It works on our so we apply like a seventy/twenty/ten rule, you know, in terms of training and interventions. [Pause] So seventy percent of it should be on the job, twenty percent mentoring, three sixty feedback, all those type of things and ten percent fall into actual training programmes and that mentoring fits in nicely into the twenty percent category so its an alternative in terms of actual career progression or an alternative in terms of development. From an organisations perspective as well it also helps in terms of relationship building that and knowledge sharing. So it strengthens our organisational knowledge.

What would be the take up at different levels in the organisation?

I would say more emphasis on the junior side.

Okay, junior.

Yeah and I do think that was as a result of rolling out the programme like in a big bang kind of approach, tended to attract more junior people.

Alright.

And I don’t know if it was just because of the number, the people talking about it or sometimes when you make something open to everybody it tends to be the junior people that take it up and the senior people think that oh that’s for everybody else and not for me.

(Laugh) okay.

But more recently on an informal basis more senior relationships have started to be established and I think sometimes they might not call it necessarily mentoring but it might call it networking or put a slightly
different name to it but yet its not quite networking because it’s a more
senior person and they’re providing the individual with advice and
coeaching.
I  Okay and would you see that kind of approach working well for the
organisation?
R  I think so.
I  Ok
R  I think the way its working works now. Having said that we could
probably benefit from getting more people involved in it/ but from a junior
perspective it’s so important for a junior person in the organisation to have
a mentor because to a certain degree it allows, if someone doesn’t have a
brilliant people manager it lessens the risk.
I  Okay.
R  So that’s another benefit from an organisational perspective that it lessens
the impact of a poor people manager. But I do think it needs constant
championing to be considered yeah, to keep it alive.
I  Okay, I would just like to thank you now for your time and contribution
and for the extended and interesting discussion on the programme
R  No problem.

M19

I  Introduction

I  Okay so I’m just going to start then with some context questions and then
what we will do then is move into the scope of the relationship, or how
you finding it at the moment and what you’re getting from it. So how long
have you been with the company?
R  I joined the company in 1982.
I  Okay and what would be your current work role at the moment.
R  At the moment I’m Head of Business Management. I just started that role
about two weeks ago and before that I was Head of Training and
Development for the Business Unit and before that I worked as a
Relationship Manager on the team, so I was basically a lender.
I  And what would you regard as your non work roles (outside of your work
area)?
R  Well I played hockey for gosh maybe, I don’t know, twenty-five years so I
was captain and I was, you know, executive and president of the hockey
club.
I  Alright and how long have you been in your current formal position?
R  So we’re going through the change though, it’s a new challenge.
I  Okay so how would you describe, the characteristics of your current career
stage?
R  I guess my new role is one that I would have not chosen for myself but the
corporate banking needed me to do this. Its kind of more ensuring that we
are complying with our policies and procedures and making sure we pass
all our audits, which we’re very good at/ so lots of IFSR/FSC/ they’ve loads of regulations, more so than they ever had so we just want to make sure that we’re on top of our game/ and I’m in charge of ensuring the staff know what they have to do and then get them to do it. I guess my challenge is, it’s a process driven role more than anything but my challenge is to change I guess or communicate better with people who are not like me.

I  Understand

R  Do you know what I mean so I’m kind of a, / you know, the different types of communication. The MD is different from me so he probably thinks I’m completely a soft person who thinks of the people all the time whereas I, and I think he’s cold and doesn’t care. You know I’m just picking the extremes. So I have to change myself so I come across to him as what he needs me to come across. So that’s I guess one of my big challenges for the new role.

I  Right, okay.

R  Just being able to communicate with them and get them to kind of see me in a different way.

I  Okay. And are there are other challenges for you?

R  Well in the bank at the moment there are no promotions. To me I think that’s great because in my business unit, we, it’s a very competitive environment and every year there was a round of promotions and you had to do your CV and go for an interview and it causes stress and I think it took people’s focus away from their day jobs as well. So it’s a great a place to work now. Everybody is just doing their job.

I  Yes

R  And I’m ambitious, I definitely would like to get two more promotions at least but I’m in a very good place, you know, in my life and in work as well, you know.

I  So what are the priorities for you at this stage of your life and again now we’re looking holistically, career and life.

R  Ah well definitely being healthy. Having a healthy family. Having fun and having lots of energy to have fun, so staying fit and eating properly and all that kind of stuff.

I  Yes that’s all the quality.

R  The quality of life is very important yeah.

I  Are you’re career priorities are they different now maybe from what they were maybe three years ago?

R  I guess three years ago I was a lender so I was doing the deals and you know working the weekends and a very, very stressful time because you work through the night to get the deals done and so I’ve so delighted that I’ve stopped that.

I  Right,

R  And I’ve gone another way now with the training and development.

I  And what has that meant for you the fact that you’ve stopped that? How has that impacted?

R  It’s I think it’s made me calmer.

I  Okay.
R: Less stressed, more relaxed and definitely broadened my outlook on life and on the bank. Now I’m lucky that because in training and again in my new role what I get to do is help the people and I’m very passionate about people. So my trench or my war stories that I have of being in the trenches, doing the deals and all that they stand to me because I know what the people are going through.

I: Yes

R: So I’m kind of still connected to the business and that’s what I’ve done in the training to try to intertwine the business in to it.

I: Is this your first encounter in a formal mentoring programme, the relationship that you have now.

R: Yes.

I: Okay and how did you become interested or how were you made aware of…

R: Well we’re very lucky in my business unit, we have a formal mentoring programme so you know it was rolled out and I put my name down to be both a mentee and a mentor and its one of the things that’s great and we do roll it out every year to remind people about it.

I: Alright and what prompted you to become a mentor? what did you like about the idea.

R: Well I had I guess, I have to step back when I think about it. I guess I had an informal mentor so that person was a great help to me in my early career.

I: Right, okay.

R: So I thought well you know it’s about like giving back something to it so I thought I’d be able to help.

I: Right, okay.

R: You know so I have three mentees now.

I: Right, okay and how were those mentees chosen then or…

R: They chose me. They’re given; two of them are from the formal scheme so they’re given a list of people.

I: Okay.

R: I think they’re given three and they can pick which one they want.

I: Right,

R: And then say they pick me and I’m not, I can’t do it or something, then they go to the next person on the list but I was very flattered about six weeks ago one of the girls came up to me and said to me would you be my mentor and not through any formal programme.

I: So many mentees are formal and informal?

R: Two formal and one informal.

I: Okay, that’s fine. And if we just take the mentoring relationship that you have at the moment how long have you been in that relationship with…

R: Would you believe it about five years? So it’s a long time. So the longest one is five years. Well one is only six weeks and the other one I’d say is about a year.

I: Oh, do they work in the same section as yourself?
They all work in different parts of my business unit. The unit is divided into regions of country clients, Ireland, international, North America, Asia Pacific and Britain.

Okay. How many organisation levels would be between you and the mentees?

Two.

Two okay. And how often would you meet them?

I’d say we’d meet every two months.

Every two months, okay and that would generally go for all three of them or is there a difference.

I’d say the one of the five years is more infrequent probably maybe once a quarter and it’s maybe just a coffee.

Yes

Unless they have a problem.

And they would initiate it or you would initiate it.

No they would. Because it’s up to the mentee to do it.

Okay, when you started out on the mentoring relationships what hopes did you have, and then maybe what concerns would you have had as well?

I hope that they would come to me but not as a kind of an adjudicator between themselves and their line managers but more as a sounding board. Nearly like as, I consider my mentor a wise old man. He keeps on the straight and narrow. So that’s what I’m hoping that I can bring to them as well.

Right, okay.

And a bit of balance and realism you know.

Okay, alright. And would you have experienced any concerns starting off the relationships?

I mean the first was very, starting off was very difficult because it’s new and with anything that’s new you’re kind of going God I hope that I’m going to be able for this, you know.

Yes

And the first mentee said I picked you because you’ve got such great experience and I know you’d help me.

Okay.

Then and I hope/ I always, its kind hard they’re nearly my friends now.

Right, so the relationship has changed quite a bit.

It has but once your friends there’s some things you have to say that are very hard to say. So its making sure that I say it the proper way to them, in a nice way that they don’t get pissed off with me and my mentoring.

Has the friendship element made any difference to the relationship?

It’s easier. You can just say it, you know, because I know them and they know me now.

Yeah, okay and what looking at the various mentees, what have they brought to the relationship as individuals?

I guess themselves you know/ and made me look at things differently and I guess different approaches to different problems and I guess they’ve helped me like, you know they’ve been confused/ and I’ve been confused so we’ve kind of muddled through together, you know.
I: Any particular example?
R: Well I guess one of the big things, at first when you do is come to me when they were promotions/ and whether she should apply for promotions or not and I guess she, you know, corporate is very focused on lending and it’s very hard to get promoted when you’re not in the core lending area.
I: Right,
R: But her skills weren’t in that area/ so that was, it was kind of difficult to say to her well look you shouldn’t be a lender/ because you’re not that good at it and you need to go and look at other areas which she did /and she got promoted in a different area so.
I: Has she attributed that to your advice.
R: Ah no, it’s down to her now.
I: Okay
R: Really I nudged her.
I: Alright.
R: And you know I would never say that to myself, oh you’re great to make her do that (laugh), you know.
I: Looking at the three relationships are they at different stages of development, in the sense of how much trust, respect, sense of grounding has been established etc?
R: Yeah definitely there’s trust I mean. I don’t think they would have asked me to be their mentor unless they felt they trusted me. I certainly wouldn’t ask anybody to be mine.
I: Okay and how is that trust established or for you how does that trust come about?
R: Well it is being totally honest with them and you know no bullshit as they say and I guess they would have known my track record in corporate banking so they know that I do what I say what I do kind of thing. I walk the talk so…
I: So respect, and how would you describe the level of openness that exists between your and your mentees?
R: You have to be careful that you don’t kind of step on or go outside any of the policies and procedures that we have in the bank and in my business unit.
I: Sure.
R: So having said that then I’m an open person I’m not going to hold back.
I: Okay and do you feel you could disclose or confide in your mentee in terms of lets say work issues, (i.e. they bring some work issues to you)
R: I guess the main work issues is they’re not getting on with the people they report to.
I: Okay so its work relations then.
R: Yeah it is work relations and you know I just keep saying to them, well you know what is it that the person is doing/ because they’re quite a nice person actually/ so can we just take the names away from the people and look at the problem here/ and that tends to work.
I: Okay.
You know. I really hate when people start, when I give someone a problem and they say ‘let me tell you about’ when that happened to me. I hate that. So I don’t do that with them.

Right,

So I just try to peel away the emotions.

Sure

Because I’ve had terrible line managers as well/ so rather than say this is what I did I just try to remember/ what did I do, what did my mentor tell me to do and what did my other kind of people/ I trust in my life tell me to do and just say it to them.

Right, and how much would you confide in your mentee in terms of let’s say yourself, your own goals and values?

Yeah I’m a firm believer in sharing your goals because if you don’t talk about them they’re not going to happen/ so yeah I would have my dreams and my goals and I’d be very willing to share them with people.

Okay and sometimes lets say quality of life, / work issues come into discussion, would you have experienced any of those issues from the mentees?

Yes they do come into the discussion.

Okay and how would you deal with those or what would be the range of issues that you might have to discuss or…

Well from bereavement to difficult marriages to sick parents to sister’s dying, everything.

Okay and what’s your own approach to that then, you know, do you feel that that’s within the boundaries of the mentoring relationship or how do you deal with it when they get introduced.

You see I think they’re not within the boundaries of the mentoring programme but they are with me.

Yes, okay.

I wouldn’t really feel comfortable talking about them with my mentor but the girls feel comfortable talking about them to me.

Yeah and when you say that you don’t feel that they’re maybe within the boundaries of mentoring is that as conveyed to you by the mentoring programme or is it your own thoughts.

No it’s conveyed by the mentoring programme. Yeah it’s kind of more a work mentoring programme. But the kind of personal side does seep in and I would be completely open. You can’t not do it, because its part of the person. And I’d have to say if something major happens in their lives I would ring them, then.

Yes

That’s the time I would call and say shall we go for lunch or coffee or something like that. It’s probably the only time I initiate the contact.

Okay and looking at the three relationships that you’ve had at the moment like what aspects of those relationships give you most satisfaction?

You know when they’re in good form and they’re smiling and they’re coming into to work and they’re smiling at their desks and they’re happy and laughing and they’re not just coming from,/ like that and being you know cross, keeping their heads down like that.
I And do you get or ask for any kind of feedback on what works well for them in terms of the mentoring relationship?
R I haven’t really but the person who asked me to be a mentor to her/ said to me I just want you to be my mentor because you’re very calm.
I Right,
R And you know you listen very carefully to what I’m saying to you. And you give me a measured response.
I Okay.
R So I really like that.
I Okay.
R So that’s why they asked me.
I Okay, are there any downsides for you in the mentoring relationship, now it could be anything from the kind of practical/ emotional aspects ( time, or perceptions of fast tracking promotions etc., jealousy by others of time spent etc.)
R I think that’s more male mentors to be honest with you (laugh).
I Okay, Why would you think that?
R You know it’s a very political organisation right and I’m not a very political person at all so it is perceived now that if you have this person as your mentor you’re definitely going to be considered for promotion. I guess that frustrates me about it/ and sometimes then people clamber to get these people as their mentors/ for the sake of having them as their mentors. Having the ‘name’ rather than the benefit.
I And is that a reality with those mentors or is it perception?
R I think its perception.
I It is perception.
R I don’t think it reality. I don’t think you get promoted because you have Mary as your mentor.
I Okay, so from your own personal perspective then are there any downsides, you know, in terms you doing three?
R You do kind of worry about them; I’m a devil for that.
I You would worry?
R For not having your bell jar down and letting it bounce off you. I take it on board and would kind of like think about them.
I Right, okay.
R Especially on, not on the work things but on the outside things.
I Outside the work area you mean.
R Yeah those things.
I Okay and are there any downsides for the mentees themselves, you know, that you would have picked up of being in a mentoring relationship.
R Well maybe the five year one is too long, you know, and its kind of I mean you could to the well/ and there’s water in it for so long and there’s only a certain, I mean I’d say I’m giving the same advice/ over and over again.
I Do you feel that the mentee needs to close on the relationship, or would you be suggesting closure on it?
R I did say it you know, five years is a long time, you know, and I’d be very happy to continue but if you feel you want to get somebody else or maybe
get another mentor, please do. And she said “no, no I love having the relationship”

I So she continues to enjoy it?
R Yeah loves having the chat so.
I Alright, okay and from the organisations point of view would you see any disadvantages to the mentoring process or mentoring relationships in the organisation.
R You see I don’t know how else you’d it.
I If you didn’t have the mentoring in the organisation would it be a disadvantage?
R Yes.
I Okay, why would that be?
R Because all the knowledge, the tacit knowledge and all the experience that we have/ we’d be keeping to ourselves /and we wouldn’t really be giving it out the younger people.
I Okay so it’s that sharing process.
R It is, sharing is really important and the sounding board and you know/ but then when you come in as a graduate and you join the mentoring programme you’re given three names and sure you don’t know them from Adam.
I Yeah, yeah so as a graduate you …..
R You’re stuck, it’s kind of the luck of the draw /but so I don’t know whether we should, whether HR should have a panel of, you know, really sound mentors for the graduates in the first two years that they’re in. People like who care.
I Yes about the graduates.
R Yeah.
I Yeah, okay. And let’s say in relation to yourself now you’ve had three mentees at any stage would you have felt let’s say if the relationship wasn’t working do you feel that you could bring that to a closure, you know, if the dynamics of the relationship weren’t working.
R Yeah and I mean they’re very clear when HR come and talk about the mentoring programme every year they go if it’s not working for either of you just tell us you know and there’s no problem.
I Okay so there’s a comfort level around that.
R There is yeah.
I Okay so just kind of looking back then at the last few years like what would be the main benefits as a person, that you have received, you know, from being in a mentoring relationship,
R I think it is all about putting yourself in their shoes and understanding the issues that they have and that definitely helps you as a team leader with your team then.
I Okay.
R You know it keeps your finger on the pulse of what other levels of people within the organisation are feeling and thinking and what their problems and issues are. So it’s great, it keeps you kind of…
I Kind of connected.
Very connected yeah. And you know it keeps you in touch and I guess challenges you to help them and develop them you know.

And again, from an emotional perspective then what would be the benefits of for you when those mentees feel comfortable talking to you about non work issues?

A feel good I suppose.

Yes

And I like helping them.

Okay.

Just like anybody when they say “God what would I do without you?” you kind of go/ well that’s great, you feel like you’re making a difference.

Okay, very and then finally, we’re just coming towards the last question/ at a broader level then, how has the mentoring relationship helped the mentees that you have worked with?

Well I don’t know really now. I mean one definitely changed the direction of her career. I guess they got some kind of direction and piece of mind/ and you know they’d say to me things like, you know, I’m probably mad and/ this is what I’m thinking and feeling and I’m/ no you’re not, that’s exactly how I would feel and so they feel like their normal people.

So you can

I empathise with them.

You kind of give reassurance as well and in terms of your own personal growth how has the mentoring relationship you’ve been involved with the last four or five years how has that helped you in any way.

I guess it helps me be more tolerant.

Okay.

And you know you have to be more understanding, diplomatic.

And let’s say from your own career guidance point of view has it made any difference?

I think it’s made a difference, yeah, it has but I do, it is part of work, you know, they’re all intertwined. I’m glad/ I’m in it and I’m glad I do it because I get a buzz out of doing it.

Okay, alright.

I never sat down and thought ‘God…’

Does it make any difference to your career.

Does it make any difference to my career? It doesn’t.

No,

It just makes a difference to me...

Does the mentoring relationship impact your job?

I guess it does, you know, because you do stop and think, gosh now how is that person going to feel about that.

Okay.

And I guess being a mentor you have to be very aware of how you come across to the mentee. You can’t be pushy you know so you can bring that then into your everyday work with customers and with your other colleagues.
 Okay, alright. Alright that’s we’re almost close to conclusion. Are there any overall comments or observations that you wish to make about the mentoring process, you know, that we haven’t touched on so far?

R Its just we seem to be forcing people to go into it you know.

I Right,

R It’s not something that they do naturally.

I Right, okay. Is it offered to everybody in the organisation?

R It is yeah.

I And there’s an understanding you must, you should take one or it’s expected of you.

R Well the MD stands up and says “mentoring is great and I’ve had a mentor all my career and I really find it great”, you know, so sign up for it.

I Yes,

R Well it’s confidential but I’ve heard some of young people saying “God I’d better join that thing, he keeps going on about it.”

I So there’s a subtle pressure there.

R There is.

I And it would be better than if it was more a voluntary piece?

R That’s the way it’s sold but there’s a little underlying thing, come on now. Do it.

I Okay and does that take from the intrinsic value a bit.

R I think it does and I also think it would be better if we had mentors from different parts of the company.

I Oh right, cross-functional? Thank you for that, any other final comments?

R The training is very good, you know.

I Okay, how much training would you have had.

R You’d have a half day but I mean it’s very intuitive.

I Okay.

R I think people are mentors because they’re interested in it.

I Rather than the tasks that you have to do.

R Yes

I Okay, I would just like to thank you now for your time and contribution and for the extended and interesting discussion on the programme.

R No problem.
**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS PROTÉGÉS**

**P1**

I Introduction:

I How long have you been with the company?

R Four and half years.

I What is your current role?

R Programme Manager – Supply chain.

I How long have you been in this particular job?

R From the start. Programme Development and process improvement.

I What is your mentor’s position?

R Director of Engineering and Quality.

I How long has he been mentoring you?

R About a year and a half now.

I How often do you meet?

R Roughly every six weeks.

I For how long?

R About an hour.

I How strong is the relationship?

R Fairly strong. It’s professional but relaxed.

I How important do you feel the relationship to be?

R Well, it’s important to me. It’s better than if I didn’t have a mentor. It helps a lot. It’s a privilege to have a mentor you can rely on.

I What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?

R He listens and gives me advice about my career development.

I Ok, developmental advice?

R He doesn’t really coach me. I just vent and he gives me advice about how to best go about getting what I want out of my career. I trust his experience; it helps me decide what I want.

I How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?

R As much as I need to. I mean I talk to him about my career and my personal decisions to an extent. But it’s really just professional based. I trust that what we talk about is just between us.

I How much do you feel like you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?

R It’s the same really. We don’t really talk about problems as such. Hmm… I might talk about something being difficult or challenging, but it’s really to do with the choices I’m making. I guess he tells me about what problems I could encounter down the line or with regards to promotions.

I Any examples?

R (Pause) It’s really just a sounding board. He asks me what I want out of this whole (company) experience. I tell him and we talk about that; where I am, where I’m headed. He tells me about what options might be there, out there for me. Like if I was thinking about changing base to take on a
new opportunity, he’d have the perspective on that and can help me make up my mind if it’s a good move or not. But mainly about where I am now and how I can make that work for me, where it might lead and how to get there.

I So what other kinds of support does your mentor provide you?
R He gives me tips, sound advice about how to conduct myself, what’s expected, what works. See, he refers to himself as a grandparent. He doesn’t see it as his role to tell me what to do. He wants to know what I want to do and gives me positive encouragement and he tells me about his experiences. He is like a grandparent. He’ll tell me stories about his experiences that are relevant to my career and he…It’s like he’s just sharing his wisdom so that I can take that on board and have it to refer to.

I Down the road?
R Yes, down the road or here and now, what to expect based on my decisions.
I Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?
R No. That’s not really his role. He talks…we talk about how to use softer skills to get what you want. He knows I’m fairly confident about dealing with others. The soft-touch is important here. He reminds me about how to go about getting results with people. He’s learned how to do that and I have to do that so he might tell me about mistakes he’s made or his small victories.

I Do you obtain support similar to what you receive from your mentor from other individuals in the organisation?
R Well, from friends, co-workers, my husband. But we don’t talk about things in such a structured way. It’s really a unique relationship. It’s a sit-down focused on me and my career.
I Has your mentor put you in contact with others who provide you with information and resources?
R No. Well he might tell me that someone might have some knowledge about something and that I might ask them. But it doesn’t happen that often. I have my contacts here. He knows I’m confident enough to pick up the phone or knock on doors. We basically both know all the relevant people anyway. Or at least who he or she are. Like I said, we talk about me and we talk about his experiences, his advice, and how that fits in with me. I have no problem knocking on doors. I know what I want out of my career and I’m confident I can achieve my goals.

I So networking is not really a part of the conversation?
R No not really. Well he might tell me that someone might have some knowledge about something and that I might ask them. But it doesn’t happen that often. I have my contacts here. He knows I’m confident enough to pick up the phone or knock on doors. We basically both know all the relevant people anyway. Or at least who he or she are. Like I said, we talk about me and we talk about his experiences, his advice, and how that fits in with me. I have no problem knocking on doors. I know what I want out of my career and I’m confident I can achieve my goals.

I You mentioned soft-skills. So your mentor helps you in that way?
R Ummm. Well, I’m fairly confident I wouldn’t really put my foot in it. He reminds me of what works. The approach to take. I’ve no problem approaching people, but mentoring gets it clear in my head why I’m doing it, the importance of the discussion.
I With others? The discussion with others?
R Yeah. The impact it might have.
I You mentioned confidentiality, “just between us”. But does your mentor get involved with others for you on your behalf?
R No not really. No. I mean the mentoring here is supposed to be confidential. That doesn’t mean people don’t know who’s mentoring so and so. It comes out, but it’s not discussed. I mean sure people in HR know and some directors and such know, but the conversations are supposed to stay in the room and I think they do more or less. I mean sure someone might help someone by putting a good word in. I’m sure that happens here, but even then I don’t think that most mentors would want to go that way. (My mentor) I’m fairly sure keeps things to himself and if he were going to talk about me with someone else, he’d say so first so I’d be in the loop. That’s not to say I wouldn’t want him to. I’m thinking about a career move now and I wouldn’t mind if he talked about me with someone because I’m sure it would be fairly positive.
I So he might have a positive impact on your advancement.
R I don’t know. If I asked him to, I’d say he would. He might. He knows people and if I were moving anyway I don’t think there’d be any harm in it.
I OK
R I don’t know. It’s not that important. I mean it’d be nice. But it hasn’t really come up. We just assume I’m going to do things for myself.
I Is there anything that is difficult with the relationship?
R Nothing. It’s a benefit to me and he finds it easy enough to do. It’s al very positive. There are critiques, but it is positive and open.
I Critiques about you or your career?
R About reviewing the options and what I want. It’s a sounding board. In most cases I’ve already made my decision. But we talk about the options anyway and he just reaffirms what I already decided. He might give me some advice about how to handle it. How to expand the horizon.
I So can you tell me anything else about your relationship with your mentor? How you interact? What’s important?
R It’s important that it’s open; that I can bring anything to the table and he listens and tries to inject some perspective. Like I said, a sounding board. We analyse my career plans. He listens and gives feedback or questions that help me make sure about what I want. There are a number of different paths to take. Some of them go nowhere and some are sound. He confirms it for me that I’ve made the right choices. Coming from him, I know it’s a sound decision. Things that keep my options open.
I You said he encourages you?
R Yes, it’s encouraging to know I’m planning the future the right way.
I And he listens and advises?
R Yes, I think he genuinely wants to hear about my situation, my plans. I think he’s genuinely happy for me and the prospects for my future. It’s good to see people succeed. He’s told me that.
I And your discussions are very open?
R Yes, there’s no plan to our meetings. I normally know what I want to talk about going in. It’s a discussion. He listens, he comments.
I And the comments are beneficial?
Yes, of course. He’s been there, done that. It’s really a great benefit to me to gain his perspective, his experiences. It helps clarify things.

OK. You mentioned it was an open relationship. How would you describe it otherwise?

Yeah open. We wouldn’t be all that close like you might talk to a friend, but he’s willing to listen. There’s great respect there, but it’s easy, relaxed. It’s easy to talk to him about my career in detail. I can ask him questions and like he calls it, it’s more like talking to a grandparent about your dreams. He asks me things. I ask him questions; he gives me advice and positive reinforcement. That’s it really.

OK, thanks. Is there anything else you’d like to add about the quality of your relationship or anything else?

It’s grand. No drawbacks. It is what it is. I’m certainly happy with it, I know what to expect from it and that’s it really. I assume it’s the same for him. I really appreciate that he is so willing to share his experiences. He even tells me about how things didn’t go so well for him so it’s like he’s preparing me to be sure not to make the same mistakes. You know, just in case.

Yeah, it’s all positive, easy. Mentoring is a great thing to get. I’m sure it’s different for everybody, but I’m getting what I want out of it.

What words would describe the most positive aspects of your relationship?

Listening…trust…respect…knowledge sharing…openness. It’s pretty intense at times talking about serious issues like personal choices, but it’s easy with to do when you’re with someone who cares a bit more than your own manager can.

Introduction:

How long have you been with the company?

Five years. Wow. Five years!...I’ve had several promotions

What is your current role?

I’m a Supply Chain Manager.

What is your mentor’s position?

Director of Engineering & Quality

How long has he been mentoring you?

One and a half years

How often do you meet?

Once a month. Usually about a half an hour.

Can you tell me about how the relationship started?

He would have been a skip level manager of mine in the past. So, I knew him from there. He’s now in a different area. So, I approached him because I was moving into a management role. I felt that he had the knowledge and experience to give me guidance about what pitfalls there might be.
I: Is him being in a different department important?
R: Yeah. Well, I suppose, yes. Like I said I knew him and how he’s moved on. So, I guess it’s good to get that angle. He has a way about him. He’s very keen to share his experiences and what he knows to help people move on.
I: How strong is the relationship?
R: Very strong, I trust him explicitly; I trust his view on situations, I trust his outlook, I trust his perception about scenarios and there is strong trust in that I can talk in confidence and receive sound guidance.
I: So can you describe the relationship?
R: Very open and confidential…relaxed.
I: How formal is it?
R: As formal as I want to make it.
I: OK. How important is the relationship?
R: Very important. Because I know that the perceptions other people have about my direct reporting manager’s reputation is not always in the best of light. So, it is important for me to have an alternative source of guidance. He helps me through in a more focussed and structured way when I am experiencing difficulty with someone I work with. When I don’t know why someone is reacting in a certain way, he helps me understand why that might be happening.
I: What kinds of support does your mentor provide?
R: Career guidance, navigating politics, how to deal with individuals with whom I might be having problems. Whatever I bring to the table, I dictate the agenda. He’s very well read and recommends reading material on organisational and management subject matter…How to deal with specific management team personalities and gives me an objective look at behavioural patterns within the structure. He really helps me read political behaviours, which I’m not very good at.
I: Does he help you contact or connect with others?
R: No, not really. He may in the future, if it would be seen as beneficial to my development or advancement, put me in contact with someone within his extended network, he would likely do it if I asked him to, but mainly, he has helped my learn how to deal with people that would be or would have been his collegial peers, how to read what they are actually saying.
I: And do you receive this type of advice from others?
R: My direct manager would push me to confront others. He would give me the same kinds of advice, but I trust my mentor’s judgement and perspective more. He gives me advice on how to go about such things. So, my manager gives me access to other people that are more senior, but my mentor helps me understand what makes them tick.
I: Do you think the relationship helped your career advancement?
R: Not yet, directly. I’d want to make sure before asking him to put a good word in and would likely wait or leave it up to him to decide whether or not he felt like he should nudge my career. He would have to believe in me being the right person anyway. He would have observed my advancement as a bystander. He has increased my confidence and ability to advance my own career and has taught me what to do and what not to do. For instance, he’ll ask me, ‘do you really need to take this on, where’s
it going to get you, why are you doing this?’ and has taught me that people
I may need to step back a bit from people that I’ve been very loyal to and
closely associated with, that from the perspective of my own career
advancement, may not be the best thing. He helps me position myself to
get noticed and increase my positive visibility through coaching. He’s
helped me get the best recognition I can out of opportunities he’s helped
me create for myself. But not directly; he just tells me how best to
approach people.

I Do you have any examples of this?

R I manage a project where I’m the primary contact between Ireland and the
headquarters in the States. My division is the exclusive supplier for the
U.S. Federal government. I don’t see any networking advantage in dealing
with these people. The only advantage is that the project is a good CV
every. I don’t learn from them. They can throw more bodies at the work
than they can here and they have a wonderful reputation. The mystery is
solved, the fancy reports and the speed with which they get things done
isn’t as impressive considering the manpower. When controlling for
manpower, the systems and processes in my division are probably more
efficient and productive. So it’s how I deal with these people, how I make
things happen and get things accomplished that gives me recognition here
and wider throughout the company. He (my mentor) tells me how to
approach these people, how to best deal with them and that has helped not
just in my ability to deal with others the right way, but I suppose to get
recognition for being good at it.

I Is there anything else you can add about your relationship with your
mentor?

R It’s been a great learning experience. I know how to deal with senior
people and how to get things done around here. You wouldn’t get that
type of detailed advice from anyone else. He listens to my situations and
just gives really good advice and tells stories from his experience how to
make that work. How to approach people, how to communicate with them
effectively. He has a lot of experience and really likes to share the
relevant bits. He adds a lot and puts things in perspective for me; things I
wouldn’t have thought of or thought to ask like from his experience. We
talk about what I should be doing here; not just about the job, but about
the bigger picture and what I can get out of it – how it affects me. So I
guess he believes in me and gives me confidence to know that I’m going
about things in the right way.

I You said he believes in you and I take it you believe in him. (Respondent
nods affirmatively). Any other thoughts on the relationship then?

R We just talk and listen. I suppose he wants me to do well. Yeah, he
believes in me and wants me to succeed so he teaches me how to do that.
It’s amazing really. It’s like one-to-one teaching just for me, but my
particular situations. He’s been through that over the years and seems
happy to, well, keen to share what he’s learned. There’s great respect
there, but it’s really open and positive. That’s really it, it’s positive. I get
the courage that I know that I’m going about things the right way and it’s
critical. Not critical about me per se, but like what are the options and the
outcomes. We decide what’ll work best for my situation. It’s unique you
know, like there’s respect and teaching and coaching, but its just like a conversation and he shares a lot with me.

I: Ok, great. Anything else?
R: That’s it really, it’s really just been a great opportunity to get this mentoring. Not everyone gets it I don’t think. So, I really appreciate the experience and how to learn from somebody that is willing to share, that cares about what’s best for me. Having a mentor like him is great for that.

P3

I: Introduction:
I: How long have you been with the company?
R: Six and a half years. Nearly six in this job.
I: What is your current role?
R: I’m a Para Legal
I: What is your mentor’s position?
R: He’s Training Manager
I: How long has he been mentoring you?
R: Mmm…A little over three months now.
I: How often do you meet?
R: Every couple weeks…For a bout an hour.
I: Every two weeks? Bi-weekly?
R: Yes.
I: How strong is the relationship?
R: Quite Strong. It’s very open. Informal. Relaxed. We trust each other. I wouldn’t confide in anyone else around here like I can with my mentor you know. It’s a good relationship.
I: OK. So how much do you feel like you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?
R: It’s easy. I feel at ease…at liberty to approach him about anything.
I: OK, How important do you feel the relationship to be?
R: Important?...Hmm…Yeah. It’s important. It’s great. It’s helped my career development like it’s helped me make up my mind about what I want to do. It’s helped…He helps me focus more clearly on what I want to do going forward.
I: In what ways? May I ask how?
R: Open and honest feedback on my career and job development. There was an issue where I approached (my mentor) because I wasn’t sure what path to take. So, (my mentor) challenged me to go and speak to someone else in the organisation about putting feelers out there and if there were other positions available in the organisation and (my mentor) followed up with me to see if I actually had that conversation with (the individual). That, to me, was a challenge…Obviously you don’t want to rock boats outside your nice little cocoon unless it’s necessary.” (My mentor) really challenges me with these kinds of tasks and then there are follow-ups and feedback”. (My mentor) has opened my eyes to other areas of the business. That’s why I asked for mentoring because I think you can be really
Ok.

We agreed that mentoring helps understand how I’m perceived by others and how to go about improving these perceptions. Like I said – It’s an outside view. My role is fairly isolated. Having a mentor in the same department wouldn’t be of any benefit to me.

Does your mentor help you to do your job better?

No, I don’t see that as his role. There are the professional skills that he can’t help me with, but there are the personal skills or areas of weakness in my character that he may have picked up on and that he advises me on. So, yes, overall he is helping me to do my job better, but not with the technical skills aspect. It’s more with the softer skills aspect.

And this helps you deal with others as you said?

Yeah, and he provides me with names and ideas about people to approach that I wouldn’t necessarily have thought of.

Like who?

These would all be people at more senior levels I may have had some previous job related contact with, but he gets me to make contact with them with a view to my career.

How influential do you feel your mentor in the organisation?

He has the ear of the V.P. They’ll facilitate him. He’s helped me to become stronger in my role too. Like how to deal with these people and be seen to be dedicated and ambitious.

So you mentioned discussing other relevant people with your job and your mentor challenging you. How do you fell about this with regard to your career?

At one point I felt forced into making a decision, where I felt he wanted me to go in one direction that I didn’t really want to and I had to pull back and say, ‘No’, which was very good for me because it was a challenge and there was no issue when I discussed it with him after.

So you mean it was a challenge to disagree with him but it was OK? Was he supportive?

Yeah, he supported my decisions and we understood each other…about what direction I should go. We talk and it’s…he’s supportive. It’s unconditional. There’s no obligation to take every piece of advice as if it’s and order.

OK. So can you tell me more about the support you really appreciate?

Someone who listens unconditionally, someone you can unload on and there wouldn’t be any negative repercussions otherwise there are around here (Trust).

Otherwise there are?

I’ve no problem discussing personal work issues with co-workers…or even with my boss if there interpersonal problems between me and someone else. But you have to be careful I suppose.

So you discuss these things with your mentor too?

I could. Yeah, I do. But it’s not a major thing. We talk about where I’m going. You know, the bigger picture stuff, opportunities, who to approach. I asked for mentoring because I felt pigeon-holed and that others’
perceptions of my capabilities were limited enough. I changed careers, got my qualifications and the technical knowledge, but I didn’t think I was getting the recognition I deserved. (My mentor) I think was impressed with my technical knowledge and he’d be willing to help me get the recognition I deserve.

I So does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself or get more recognition in the organisation?

R I suppose. Like he could inform me about relevant job openings and also to make suggestions to other managers I should become involved with specific projects.

I Does he?

R Well… about job opportunities and would put me in touch with the relevant people yeah.

I So this helps you get noticed as you said?

R Yeah and I think it’s viewed in a positive light by my own manager that I sought out a mentor…showing that initiative without him having to say so.

I OK, what about other people?

R Well, he knows a lot of other people and what’s going on from his role. I suppose there’s more potential for him to invite me into his network or get access to other people he networks with. Like I said, he recognises my legal knowledge and sometimes I give him technical advice. There are the corridor conversations. There’s almost mutual support there. He could come to me with talking about his own career.

I So you are close in that regard?

R Yeah, we respect each other. It’s someone you can trust, who listens, who helps.

I So what are your overall thoughts about how the relationship is going?

R It’s new still. Being mentored is really a breath of fresh air. I think a mentoring relationship is something that has to be built up over years. It’ll probably be more beneficial down the line.

I OK.

R Yeah, our relationship might prove to be mutually beneficial as it develops indefinitely over years as both of our careers advance. As mentor and mentee it should grow until we agree there is nothing left to offer of it is decided that you need different mentoring relationships.

I So what do you think?

R About the mentoring? How long it’ll last?

I Yes, what do you project?

R I suppose two to three years until we might grow out of the relationship. The mentoring relationship. If we get too familiar with each other…it becomes difficult to be objective enough don’t you think?

I I suppose.

R I mean you never know…where we’ll end up. But it’s been really great so far. It’s helped me a lot and I guess I want more of it. (He) really seems to enjoy doing it too and like he’s getting something out of it. We clicked and it’s working. Should do for a while anyways. It’s kind of a friendship. Professional. Give and take. But he’s an advisor too. You have to be able to give that cold hard truth and be critical. So after a while you might need a fresh perspective if you get too close.
Introduction:

How long have you been with the company?
R I’ve been with (the company) for seven years.

What is your current role?
R I’m Supply Chain Reengineering Project Manager

How long have you been in this particular job?
R Well, I’ve been in my current role for...three years. I was promoted once – up one grade level in it recently.

What is your mentor’s position?
R He’s VP Supply Chain

How long has he been mentoring you?
R One year now...July...One year and a bit (appx. 3 weeks).

How often do you meet?
R Well, we’re scheduled bi-weekly, but it’s mostly monthly...for a half hour. We see each other around.

How strong is the relationship?
R It’s quite strong...seventy percent I’d say. I...We put a lot into it and it won’t be shaken easily.

OK, How important do you feel the relationship to be?
R Well, we put a lot into it. I depend on him for things and he knows that. I get good advice and it helps me improve my chances around here. (My mentor) knows what’s good for me and it’s helped a lot. Recently especially.

How so?
R Well, it’s been a lot of personal support recently.

In what ways? May I ask how?
R Well, my father passed away a couple of months ago...and...

Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.
R It’s OK. See my priorities got muddled and (my mentor) helped me to refocus. It’s all that...and well...just how to get on. He shows me how to manage people; how to do things better, pointers on the political side of things, how to ignore jibes and point and career development.

So how much do you feel you can confide in your mentor?
R Trivial things that (his mentor) says will not divulge will leak out, but if it is serious or confidentiality is important, I trust he will keep it to himself.

How open is the relationship?
R Open, informal, relaxed

So again, can you tell me about the kinds of support your mentor provides you?
R Job feedback. Because he is my mentor, he knows and trusts me a bit more than if he weren’t my mentor. So, he helps me knock down walls and gives me more sanction without to much scrutiny.

So does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself or get more recognition in the organisation?
R Yes, definitely! He makes positive reference to me among his peers regularly. He exposes me like that…in a good way. He knows the intricacies of my job…You know…I guess it helps me get things to happen – to make things work.

I So would you say he’s helped you become more influential?

R Yeah, he would tell me who to talk to and that I can say that he sent me. Like I said, exposure, visibility, references. I was promoted while being mentored by (this individual). The manager put me forward for the promotion and my mentor was on the review board. It is difficult to say how much of a positive impact this had on the promotion. It may have happened anyway. I think he thought I deserved the promotion. He knows my capabilities and that I was ready. It probably helped in the review process and may have been the swing factor.

I So he’s possibly been influential in your career advancement.. Anything else?

R With or without (mentor) support, I don’t have a problem approaching anyone. I just don’t. I don’t…I haven’t asked for his help in getting access to people that pull the strings. If a door wasn’t opening, I’d say (he) could intervene there.

I So what are your overall thoughts about how the relationship is going?

R It’s been grand. It probably has a life-cycle of another 3 meetings before returns diminish. I guess it’s a disadvantage of having him in same department. I know other people have mentors in other areas and it’s different…I suppose…on what you can get out of it and talk about. We have to be professional in our relationship too you know and people are more aware of the mentoring relationship piece. People might place blame if I divulged something that the director then acts on. However, the prospects for the opportunities is there and we can talk about it more. If he was in a different area of course he wouldn’t have the same interest and giving me space…projects to get seen doing. It has been good for my career.

P5

I How long have you worked for Company X?

R Going on 13 years

I What is your role in Company X?

R Temporary compliance Specialist but my permanent is Processing Supervisor

I How long have you worked in your current position?

R I’ve been supervising for the last 4 years and doing this temporary role for the past 6 months. The temporary role is based on a gap in the organizations

I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60

R 31-40

I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?

R Yes I was a fitter, welder for 6 years before I joined
Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?

Yes. That would be a strong yes on that.

How effectively does your organisation manage projects?

Level 3 & 4 across (this) site. I’ve been involved in projects in other areas.

How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?

Prior to (this one) I’ve probably worked on 3 or 4.

Can you define these projects in terms of budget & duration?

One was a Latin American project in the OC area. I don’t know about the budget as I was looking at the demand side. The other was in relations to rationalization of the packaging lines when I was in the planning role. We were looking at the SKUs and trying to increase the size of the runs we were doing. Budget never came into – it was more a process excellence type project.

Define your current project in terms of budget & duration?

There is really no budget on EPC because it is a registration requirement that we get in line with registration requirements. The duration is over a year and there is probably 3-4 more months before we can really say to the IMB that we are compliant. From the (Drug x) side we have everything done.

At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?

It was probably 3-4 months into the project. It was last May. It would have been at the planning phase. In fairness to the EPC project they didn’t really have a project plan initially until it was scoped out. Then they were able to identify milestones. When it hit us it was panic stations for a while but now it is being executed in a more controlled manner.

What position do you hold on your current project?

I ensure that all the product is in compliance so I raise all the change control or the MIRs or the actions that have been identified and make sure that they are closed.

Is project management one of your core competencies?

No.

What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)

No training at all. I’ve worked on projects and I understand the concepts, the timeline etc.

Define project success in your terms?

My project success criteria are the (Drug X) becomes compliant by the end of March this quarter. If we can achieve that by then, it will have been successful. So in general terms it is achieving what you originally set out to do.

How successful were your previous projects?

The Latin America project was very successful – it is up and running now. The rationalization of the packaging wasn’t so successful but we did increase the packaging line, which was a 2-tier operation within the project.

How did this (mentoring) relationship evolve?

(An other) was looking after the EPC work but was on holidays and I was asked to step in to look after his role while I was away on holidays.
(Mentor 5) helped me out at that point to define what our goals were within the project. He said that he would guide me through the process, putting change controls together. I would put the package together and (he) would review it. He would point me in the direction of where I needed to go, whether I was right or wrong. He gave me visibility of the organisation that I need to be within at the time of raising the change controls.

I Was your project mentor assigned to you?
R It was a natural progression. Tom would sit with you when preparing and then would come with you when it came to presenting. He would help you out by answering any questions if you couldn’t

I How long has he/she been mentoring you?
R It was well in place prior to EPC. Back 7 –8 years ago I was an operator and (Mentor 5) was a supervisor. (He) basically progressed me along with him

I Do you liaise with more than one mentor?
R I would liaise with a lot of people within the plant whether you would classify them as mentors. I would liaise with a lot of people which have been very helpful in any role. On the EPC side of it Catherine Cronly. When it comes to that side of it, she would be my next port of call.

I How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?
R With (Ms. Y) only in relation to the EPC project. It is really role specific.

I Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?
R She is higher in the organisation.

I Is your project mentor(s) internal or external to your organisation?
R Internal

I Can you describe your experience as a protégé to date?
R Very good, I’ve learned a lot. When I was in the processing area, I wouldn’t have seen as much as I’ve seen now and the goings on within the company. In fairness to (Mentor 5) anytime something new comes up and he knows that I’m not aware of it, he’ll say this is it, this is what you need to do about it. He will point you in the direction of where you need to go to, to get the information that to get yourself on the right track. Exposure is at the director level, he has no fear of bringing you into any environment. If there is a directors meeting in the morning and (he) would insist on me attending with him, even if I don’t want to. He feels comfortable doing that will people he knows. He knows they are capable of doing the job.

I Any negative experiences?
R No negative experience. During the EPC I think everyone exhibited the company values, (Mentor 5) included. A lot of good cross communication came out of that. People in Processing worked with people in Quality

I How much time is spent in communication with your mentor(s)?
R Every day for about an hour. It wouldn’t be one hour but maybe 15 minutes here and there, giving him an update.

I Does this meet your requirements?
R Oh yes it does. If I needed 10 hours a day from (him) I would have gotten 10 hours. I didn’t need that time because of the clarity of direction that he started me off on at the beginning.
Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

Yes without a doubt. Majority of the directors would know who (I am) now, prior to this they wouldn’t have known (Uses his own name in the third person). Within (Project X) I would have been known, outside. I would have been known because of the length of time I’ve been here but not as well known as I am now in relation to EPC. I also have corporate contacts. At the start I would have been shy about contacting them but (Mentor 5) always encouraged me to just ask the questions. So there was a confidence-building element. I used to come in to (him) and ask him to send an email to such a person. At the start he used to do it but then he said no, you do it yourself, you can Cc: me on it and if I want to add anything to it I will. Then it got to the stage where I used to leave him out.

Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?

Internal to (this site) and externally to corporate. None outside the (Company X) community.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

Updates on variations related to the project. Updates on registration information that you need to know. Mainly anything to do with registration specific to EPC.

Is this information verbal or written?

It is mostly written.

How valuable is this information to your project role?

It is essential. If we didn’t get this information we couldn’t ship.

How is project specific information stored?

I have my own database where I store this information. I share this with registration so that we are not duplicating effort. We have set up a system that they share information with me and I share what I have with them. It works well.

Have you become more influential as a result of being mentored?

Yes, in relation to the QP (quality person) when an issue now arises on a change control or a batch record, they will ring to ask for clarification whereas before they wouldn’t have. Also where I’ve been pushed in the organisation, people now see – he is well capable of doing the job.

Has engaging in mentoring strengthened your network?

Yes, This role I’m currently doing I was given this because of my performance on the EPC project as people could see that I was well capable of doing it. I’m kind of away from the group that I use to work with. I now more into the quality registration side of it and I’ve been able to see both sides of the coin. I’ve learned a lot through the EPC project. If an issue arises with something on the floor, you’d put a comment on it whereas now I would really analyze it before I do anything with it. Now I know what the QP’s are looking for. Before I was just interested in getting the volume out the door because that was my job. What I tend to do now is go back to the floor and tell the guys that they need to watch out for it. It would be benefit if more of the supervisors got into that role and do the rotation with quality for a few weeks to learn what is going on.

Does your project mentor(s) provide project task related information to you?
Yes he would. He would assign a lot over to me.

Does your project mentor (s) provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)

Yes he would, if there anything that you didn’t understand, you could go back and he would explain it to you and point you in the right direction. He’d let you know what is going on, what to be saying and what not to be saying. It is important information if you don’t realize who you are talking to.

If your mentor does not provide this information, where do you source it?

I would, based on my time here but with a lot of difficulty. (Mentor 5) makes it easier. He knows that if you came across someone who was difficult and thought they were higher up the ladder than you were and they were playing that, then we would step in. He would let you know that before you went in really. (He) would give you the other perspective on difficult situations & people.

Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact your contribution to project success?

Without a doubt and he would work very closely with you to make sure that the information that he was giving you was correct and if wasn’t correct, he would come back and let you know. He wouldn’t send you on a wild goose chase.

What specific information types contribute to this success?

At the start all the external contact that he had, it would get me information that you wouldn’t normally get internally. So (he) used to go out to people he has previously met. He is very knowledgeable within (Company x) and outside from other companies/industries that he has worked in. He explains everything so that you are on the same page as him by the end of a conversation. When the conversation ended, you knew as much as he did.

If (Mentor 5) didn’t have that breadth of knowledge, would you have engaged with him as a mentor?

Probably not. There is an element of trust in it as well because you know that he knows what he is talking about. He is more confident as well when you have to relate this. If he know about something and knows that I know about it too, he will sit back and let me explain it. Only if you are going down the wrong road, will he step in. He wouldn’t over power you.

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

Most of it is verbal – unless in email which he forwards on to me.

How is project specific information stored?

In the context of EPC some of it goes into the change control documents. A lot of it is in my head.

Can you describe your overall perception of your project mentors?

Excellent. He has been very good to me in all aspects of the project. We’d work late together to ensure that things were being done. He has come in early to help with the change control and gone off to deal with the more difficult people if I didn’t feel confident enough to go and talk to them. He always makes you feel comfortable if you are in a room with people higher in the organisation than yourself. He makes you feel that they are on the same level as you. He always includes me in conversations if he
feels that I need to know what is being discussed, even though I may not think that. But mostly it has turned out that I did need to know that information.

I    Can you describe your overall perception your mentoring experience?
R    Our goal was to make (Drug X) EPC compliant. It has been very positive. I wouldn’t have succeed in the EPC role or the compliance role if I hadn’t had the mentoring

I    How much trust do you have in your mentor?
R    Anything I need he gives it to me. I’ve total trust in him.
I    Do you mentor others?
R    Yes, I think from his mentoring, I am currently mentoring others. As I was saying earlier, if I see something now and I go back to the floor and share what I’ve learned. The fundamental aspect of mentoring is the ability to share your information.

I    Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success.
R    More empowering…it has opened doors. An example, if you see in other areas where the people are doing the change control, they don’t have as much visibility as I do. If you see an email coming out now in relation to EPC, you’ll see my name on it and one or two others but there are a lot of people who are not included. It is with (Mentor 5’s) mentoring and him bringing me to these places, educating me. It has made people think of me as the expert here. A lot of this has to do with what I’ve been doing with (him). At the start I would have been pretty shady but people can see now that I’m doing a good job

I    Any additional comments/observations?
R    It has been enjoyable. It has opened door to me and I’ve seen parts of the business that I wouldn’t have seen.
I How long have you worked for Company X?
R 6 and half years
I What is your role in Company X?
R Right now the MES project manager
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R 7 months
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R 33
I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?
R I worked in Laboratories before here
I Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?
R Yes
I How effectively does your organisation manage projects?
R Between 2 & 3. We are beginning to develop a structure. It was very loose and undedicated resources. People were trying to do things in their spare time.
I How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?
R Numerous. About 10 –15. This is my first full time management position. I’ve managed other projects but they were part time
I Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
R Duration would have been anything from 2 months to one that went one for 2 years. Budget was never really top of the agenda. They were more about compliance. That is one of the things we didn’t do is to work out the benefits before we started. We just ploughed onto the project. There was no real dedicated budget given to them, just resources and maybe some equipment. All funded through operations budget.
I Define your current project in terms of budget & duration?
R Duration is extending but is 18 months. Budget is $6.9m
I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?
R About 5 months – Scope and requirements
I What position do you hold on your current project?
R Project Manager
I Is project management one of your core competencies?
R I certainly hope it is. Probably not until now but certainly I can see some learning deficits that need to be addressed but in general probably yes.
I What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)
R Very little, really. On the job mostly
I Define project success in your terms?
R A successful project comes in on time or as close to the time as possible. On budget and as close to the budget as possible but more importantly that it is a solution that actually works for the corporation
I How successful were your previous projects?
They all came to completion. Some of the timeframes extended based on the fact that they were part time. They were all closed with a statement of success. Sometimes the outcome may not have been as good as we wanted.

How did this relationship evolve? If yes how

I think (a senior manager) had some concerns about my abilities and (Mentor 6) has recommended me for this position so (Mentor 6) was landed with the job.

If no, was your project mentor assigned to you?

It was assigned. I was more comfortable with that than John was. He was almost apologetic. He needed to do it and constructive criticism is always good. I was delighted with the fact. That was my perception I'm not too sure what his was.

What position does your project mentor hold in the organisation?

PPU director

How long has he/she been mentoring you?

Since I joined the project – 7 months

Do you liaise with more than one mentor?

(Lists 5 people by name)

How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?

For as long as I have been on the project

Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?

I suppose they do – They are all AD or Director level

Is your project mentor (s) internal or external to your organisation?

It would be predominately internal. I would go to (executive X) at Corporate level for advice as well. There would be nobody really outside (this company).

Describe your experience as a protégé to date? Is it positive?

Very positive. One of the steering committee meeting, I had done 4 or 5 of them and found them quite grueling at the outset as you were being challenged in various different issues. There was one where I was a bit complacent and I felt that I had been hammered. I didn’t mind the resulting workload but I think I hadn’t handled it very well. If I was more prepared I would have handled them better. So on that occasion I got really positive feedback from him I mean positive on the way I need to approach it. It was very personable feedback, not text book.

If no, describe your negative experience (s)?

No not yet.

How much time is spent in communication with your mentor(s)?

Right now not as much – maybe 1 hour a week if even. It is after decreasing. I've taken on board the instructions that he has given me. I don’t need the repeated instructions. I just send him up the presentations. He ratifies them, I go out and do it. If I need feedback, I will go back and look for it. He doesn’t look to meet me anymore. I would go back and say how did that go.

Does this meet your requirements?

I suppose that it would be nice sometimes if her reminded me that I need to go back. I would hate to think that I had become so arrogant in my job that I felt I was doing a fantastic job and I didn’t need to go back and get
guidance and feedback. I mean I don’t think it is a big deal but it would be nice if he called out sometimes. Having said that most of the communication would be positive. I never have to go looking for positive feedback. He continues to give positive feedback which is nice. It would be more concerning if there was negative feedback and he didn’t think to come to me. I always worry that perception is different to reality. I have confidence that if there was a burning issue that he would give me a shout. I’m happy with it.

I Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?
R Yes – for instance he was a training course and he had met some people from (a vendor) over there that he wanted me to contact. Where ever there was requirement. I have met some through the site interaction but at the outset (Mentor 6) was there by my shoulder to meet. Whomever he felt it was critical for me to meet on site, he would give me a shout.

I Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?
R Mostly corporate…(X) is a vendor

I What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?
R I don’t get a whole lot but I do get an opportunity to enhance the MES (projects) message. It is more me giving them information and John would have facilitated that process through introductions. I’ve approached this as project stakeholder management piece. If we have the likes of (Executive X or Y) on board, our internal stakeholders will pay much more attention. Fact of life

I How valuable is this information to your project role?
R This interaction is important from a stakeholder perspective. It makes it a lot easier if you are trying to push through change, if you have the backing of the top guys.

I How is project specific information stored?
R I would try and communicate this back to the team and it would be minuted and we have changed the format of the weekly report so that people who have missed the meeting can get the communication piece and then there are the monthly reports. I keep track of all the pieces of information I gather and include it in the monthly report. As information comes up I think that would be useful to put somewhere. It makes my life a lot easier.

I Have you become more influential as a result of being mentored?
R I probably think so. For instance a lot of the feedback – my biggest place where I get change or instigate change or get some interaction with the company would be through the steering committee. Through his guidance I’ve learned to deal with them a lot better. What they are looking for – the 3 keys what the problem, how are you fixing it and what can we do to help. I would have always used that approach but not as refined as he has trained me to do it.

I Has engaging in mentoring strengthened you network?
R Oh yes, when I move on from the MES project, I would still feel that I have a network with the (Executive X or Y’s) of the world.

I Would you be a natural networker?
R No, I guess I would have just sat there and hope that the profile of the project would have just land itself and everyone would just spot it. Now I’m much more comfortable presenting our case and putting the best case forward.

I Through confidence building as a result of being mentored by (my mentor), I’ve improved my ability to network. He is very good to come back with feedback – oh such and such said this or good job.

I Does your project mentor (s) provide project task related information to you?

R No not really. He is not that directly involved in the project literally. He takes the approach – tell me the issues and if you need me come in to talk to me. The intent was more around the soft skills. (Senior Manager X) was confident enough that I could manage the project but he has concerns around the soft part, which he was right, I did.

I Does your project mentor (s) provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)

R That would be more where he was involved. I guess the mentoring would have focused more on the language, not the spoken word but more the form of the language.

I If your mentor does not provide this information, where do you source it?

R I use the company intranet (named) a lot actually. I used to think it was a waste of time. I go mainly into all the financial stuff, location of people, the who is who of (this company). I would use that quite a bit and I would spring a good bit off the core team as well.

I Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact our contribution to project success?

R In an indirect way yes. Not directly. If I had not had the guidance, I would have struggled through the steering committee. I’m made a lot of progress and a lot of that is how I’ve presented to the Steering Committee.

I What specific information types contribute to this success?

R The language, presentation, the corporate piece. I didn’t realize that there is a corporate template for presentations. It is small stuff but kind of important.

I Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

R Verbally & through email. It is not formal. If it is verbal it is pretty much stored in my head, unless it is really significant. Or it is brought into the weekly report.

I Describe your overall perception of your project mentor (s)

R I think he is very good. He calls it as it is. I trust him. If he says something, I don’t think he bullshits. He has a good oversight on corporate and he is very good from that perspective. He looks at things differently than the usual. I think he sees the bigger picture on what corporations would want and he is very customer driven. The MBO piece – he is very this is your job so get on and do it. He is very metric driven. I’ve learned to adopt that approach as well.

I Describe your overall perception your mentoring experience?

R It has been very positive. If you asked me this time last year could I see myself actually not being nervous going in to present to Steve White, the answer would have been “no” whereas now he comes and I make a
presentation and I just go in and do it. It doesn’t faze me. I know that a lot of it is around knowing my subject. Probably more importantly it is because I’ve had the positive feedback. The process has been empowering. It has been very positive. I am delighted with it.

I How much trust do you have in your mentor?
R A lot.
I Do you mentor others?
R Not formally I would hope that I would use the same approach. It is one of my objectives this year to keep my team motivated. I need to look at communication. I view it as a way to develop people based on my positive experience.
I Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success
R I would think a lot of the positive influence because of the confidence building. We would have done the same work but not presented it in the same way. We are not getting corporate recognition for doing a good job. A lot of that would have been down to using the language. A lot of my information is based on Core’s feedback and I don’t think the Americans tend to tell it as they see it.
I Any additional comments/observations?
R I think we should do it more. I would hate for it to become a situation where people think, god I have to mentor and not do it effectively. I’ve been extremely fortunate. There are others that I fear if they were given that role and they may not do it as well, It would end up having a negative approach on the protégé and the initiative. Attributes of a good mentor is that they need to know the corporate and that it is not just the narrow NB perspective. They need to be honest and they need to be consistent, willing to share information. That is down to the confidence a person has in their position. You find that the more confident a person is in their role, the more freely they share their information where as those who are not confident may not be willing to share the information.

P7

I How long have you worked for Company X?
R I’m with (this Company) for 5 years now
I What is your role in Company X?
R Operation Lead for (this pharmaceutical brand name) project
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R Since May 2005
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R 31 - 40
I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?
R No Pharma is my only area of work
I Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?
R Yes they are, I would say
I How effectively does your organisation manage projects? (Ratings provided)
R About a 3 – institutionalized. There are strong structures in place for the projects but I feel that people who are involved in project that are not part of their normal day-to-day roles. They are brought into projects, as a result people do as they see done. Rather than project management as a role, people often have another role in the company and people are feeding into the project. They may not be familiar with project management in general
I How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?
R I would say in (this company) I have worked on 2 or 3 other projects and before that through my PhD which was a project in itself
I Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
R An expansion to the existing OC area with was the OC Sort project – it was about one year in duration. It involved the fitting out of a new area for the OC sort process. In terms of budget it was somewhere in the region of £12m. I worked in Technology in Process Development before working on this project. I would have been involved in several efficiency improvement projects there. Things like the improvement of the active process and the improvements associated with that which would have cost savings.
I Define your current project in terms of budget & duration?
R A project that sets out the development of a manufacturing area, which is being fitted into one of the existing workspaces. It’s duration from Q1 05 up to project completion in Q1 2008. At that stage we hope to have the area built, commissioned and the process developed. The budget is $52m
I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?
R At the very early design stage
I What position do you hold on your current project?
R I’m responsible for all things operational- anything got to do with the end user the system owner basically
I Is project management one of your core competencies?
R I probably wouldn’t. Up until this role I haven’t worked full time on a project so it is a new role. My background is very technical. I’m a Pharmacologist by profession. From there worked in manufacturing for a few years and then technology and now back to manufacturing. From a project perspective this is the biggest project I have been involved in.
I What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)
R Yes I’ve conducted a course in the IMI in relation to PM just before I started here. It was about the softer skills of PM. It was definitely of some benefit anyway. It was about change management and getting people to see thing from your perspective. It is always easier to sell a project to someone if they can see the value for themselves
I Define project success in your terms?
R Success in terms of this project will be the delivery of the manufacturing area on time and the ability of that area to produce quality product. The ultimate success is that it is brought in within its budgetary constraints.
I How successful were your previous projects?
Certainly the OC optimization project was very successful in that it was a very big difficulty at the time for the OC manufacturing area. It was successful from the point of view that we sorted out the problem in a very short time frame. The OC project ran over the budget associated with increasing costs, when we got into the design of the area. We underestimated the initial cost as the project was more exploratory in its nature. It did run a bit over but it was delivered on time.

How did this relationship evolve? If yes how

Basically it evolved from the recruitment process from the very start. The applicants were invited for the position so I spoke to (Mentor 7) about what the position would entail so I spoke to (him) to try to get upfront understanding of it. From that initial meeting I found (him) to be a very approachable individual and that I could learn a lot from him. That was my key decision in moving from technology. It wasn’t because they were those kind of people in technology but I suppose (Mentor 7) having an operational background, I felt it would be more suitable to where I wanted to go in my own career. So obviously the interviewed and being offered the job I started work here, (he) being the more senior in the project and having an operations background I found him to be very likeminded and from the early days set the stall out on his expectation and what he was trying to achieve

What position does your project mentor hold in the organisation?

Program or Project Director of this project. I think he is an associate director of operations is his actual role

How long has he/she been mentoring you?

9 months

Do you liaise with more than one mentor?

Probably the other person that would have mentored me and still continues to do so is (Senior Manager X) in the OC PPU (director). I still liaise with (her) and obviously I worked with (her) before this project. I still have ties there and meet with (her) from time to time. From an academic background I still have links with my academic professor from College in (An Irish University). He is the Head of Biomolecular research in (An Irish University). He is someone I still have links with

How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?

With (Senior Manager X) it goes back to 2003 when she started. When I work in Technology, I would have indirectly report to (her). I had a link to (her) in terms of what developments were going on. From those meetings I found (her) to be a very creative person and you could really learn from her leadership skills

Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?

I would say that they do. Ultimately I would see mentors as being people higher in the organisation that you could learn from. I found it in (this company), whether it is good or bad, that it is not always the people in the very highest level in the company that you learn most from. Someone like (Senior manager X), although she is a director and also (Mentor 7), it is more the interaction on a day to day basis. Other people may have more to offer me but I don’t have that many interactions. That is how they develop, in my mind.
I  Is your project mentor (s) internal or external to your organisation?
R  Both
I  Describe your experience as a protégé to date? Is it positive?
R  It has been very positive in terms of working with (my mentor). I would see that (he) and myself would be very like-minded in what we are trying to achieve. He is a very open flexible type person so there is never a problem discussion anything with (him). Like very much there is a strong element of trust in our working relationship. He trusts that I’m going to execute what we want to achieve. That has really been great for me. Of all roles in (this company) I found this one to be exciting and challenging because I’m allowed that flexibility so it is not like there is someone looking over my shoulder. I’m trusted to do a job.
I  Would you attribute that to the mentoring aspect of the relationship?
R  I think so yes, (my mentor) believes that I can achieve the role so he has confidence in me and that give me confidence to go and achieve the role. It is something that we spoke about early in our involvement and he is not going to check up on every single thing I do and I’m happy with that. If I have a query and I feel there is something that I can’t handle myself, I will go to John. It is an open kind of relationship
I  Any negative experiences?
R  I suppose we sat down at my yearly appraisal and at the point (my mentor) asked me how was the relationship from my point of view, I would have said to (him) at the time, I would have asked him for more feedback. With the autonomy of doing your own job comes a lot of the hands – off approach but you still like to be re-assured that that was a good job. Especially I know that (he) agrees and it is nice to hear it – a bit selfish. It is important to know if the guy agrees with you.
I  How much time is spent in communication with your mentor?
R  Probably over a week – a couple of hours I’d say. You know, I don’t talk to (him) absolutely every day but I would definitely say a couple of hours and more if needed.
I  Does this meet your requirements?
R  I would be happy that it does.
I  Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his network?
R  Very much so that is something is really I was probably a bit nervous and didn’t have the confidence when I first started the role. But (my mentor) would engage you with very high level management at (this company) which is great. It really is a great plus for me in the organisation. People really get a chance to know me. It happens through presentations. Certainly monthly the corporate guys would be over to get an update on how the project is going. Certainly at the start I would have been introduced to all of these people and we get a chance to share our own thoughts on how it is going. They all know who I am so it is great in that regard.
I  Some of them contact me directly. They will always associate me with (Mentor 7). I suppose that they go to (him) first and then they would contact me. I suppose I am second in command.
I  Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?
Within the project there are a lot of (A Partner Company) people who are external to (this company) and I would have been introduced to them by (my mentor). It would be a combination of both external & internal.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

All strategy. Business strategy and what we are trying to achieve here. The higher level management within (this company) and they would try to put together a strategy for OC manufacturing and we would try to put together a vision and a plan to support that strategy. They tell us what they would like to see, we tell how we are going to execute it and they give us feedback on it.

Is this information verbal or written?

From them it is mostly verbal

How valuable is this information to your project role?

It is very valuable because it makes sure that what we are trying to achieve is in line with what the corporation requires.

How is project specific information stored?

Really I suppose in the case where there is presentation we obviously have meeting minutes and capture them that way and we discuss it between John and myself as appropriate. We would answer the query or address the concerns of the corporation to make sure we incorporate the requirement of the request. It would be through that way.

Have you become more influential as a result of being mentored?

I do. I hope I have. I certainly think I have.

How has that manifested itself?

I have more confidence. As I said before working with (my mentor) has given me the opportunity to lead more and to take leadership decisions more. That is something that I enjoy doing and enjoy having the opportunity to do that. I certainly think I have developed more in this role than I have in previous roles in (this company).

Do you have influence back into the organisation?

I think so. At the moment we are recruiting for the operation. The influence is that I would have discussed and given project updates to the operations group within the last year. The influence of that has given rise to a huge level of interest in working in the area, in terms of trying to get people on board with the project and what we are trying to achieve. I think that that has worked well.

(My mentor’s) approach is such that if there is something that I’m not particularly sure about the door is open. Even when we bounce ideas around, (he) will always have very positive, his own ideas, or extras to the mix. I respect (my mentor), he is a very smart guy. I learn from him. That is the biggest compliment that you can pay someone. What would retain me in a position is the opportunity to learn. It is empowering. I develop and continue to develop in this role more than I would have in some of the other roles that I have had. That is a positive.

Has engaging in mentoring strengthened you network?

It has very much so.

Will you be able to bring all of those contacts when the project has finished into your next role?
Yes I would. One of the biggest improvements of my own development is my ability to network. The people that I engage with now are very high in the organisation which is great for me. You get exposure to people. I’ve worked on the floor in operations so I know the cold face and then moving out to the guys who make the decisions, I bring to the table, all that experience, as I understand what it is like at the cold face. I also better understand the decision made and their influence on the plant.

Does your project mentor provide project task related information to you?

He does. He regularly gives updates from his own network or group, outside of our own group. He would provide that through email.

Does your project mentor provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)

He does. One of the things about working on the project, particularly on a project that is outside the main building, you have to remind people that you are here. We try to create links with the existing plant, through HR & other groups to ensure that we are considered in all decisions, as ultimately we will become part of the plant. We are keen to tie into the existing plan so that people know what we are at.

If your mentor does not provide this information, where do you source it?

I suppose for the project if (my mentor) doesn’t have the information then one of the team will but mostly from within the project.

Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact your contribution to project success?

I would be because I would be better informed. Information is power and you need to have as much of it as possible to make decisions. What (my mentor) provides me with is a pretty clear understanding of the requirements and any other additional information.

What specific information types contribute to this success?

Maybe update dates from the States, how it is going with product registration, the submissions to the FDA, keeping us in the loop in terms of what is happening externally to the project but internal to (this company).

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

It is a combination of both. Mostly email but then there are matters that we need to talk about but it is a combination of both. A certain amount of it is stored electronically but some of it would remain in my head or (my mentor’s)

Can you describe your overall perception of your project mentor

(He) is probably only a few years older than me in terms of age. I found him to be incredibly knowledgeable and that I can learn a lot from. I think he is very open person, easy to communicate with. Nothing is ever really a problem, which is a great attitude. If he has a point to make that he thinks is relevant, he will always address it.

He is the best soft skills in terms of how to get the best out of people. Respect doesn’t come from an age difference, respect is about how he behaves. He is the best people manager that I have worked with in (this company)

Describe your overall perception your mentoring experience?
I think for myself that coming out on to a project of this size, I felt that I had a lot to learn so I needed to have a mentor. Someone to understand where I’m coming from and what my areas of development would be. (My mentor) fulfils that role more than adequately for me. The experience of working on a project and having been mentored has been very positive. My network, both internally & externally, have improved. My ability to make decisions and lead have improve. I have developed more in terms of my business awareness. All of that has improved my work on this project. There was more required obviously when I initially joined the project but once (my mentor) understood me and the kind of person I was, hopefully he thinks that I’m doing a good job and that he didn’t need to look over my shoulder. Once we established the ground rules, you know that dynamic worked. He let me work away; he seemed to be happy with what I’m doing.

How much trust do you have in your mentor?

100% - it is easy to say that but trust wouldn’t be something that I would give out regularly you know. The only concern I would have with (him) & myself is that he is a very astute businessperson and I don’t know if he will move onto greater things before the project is over. Only a select few know that. My only concern is that (he) may not be in a position to see out the project. I wouldn’t like to see that from a selfish point of view. It is not about trust; it is more of a concern. I would trust him implicitly that what he says is for the best. If there was an area that he thought that I needed to develop or I thought I needed to develop that we would sit down and discuss it. That is really where the trust is when they can understand your personal and your business objectives.

Given that scenario where (your mentor) may move on, could you envision that (he) would remain a mentor for you?

Absolutely. (He) has an open door policy. I could still see (him) as someone I would always want to keep in contact. I know that if I were to meet him in 5 years time, he would be a different person in 5 years time.

Do you mentor others?

I probably do but not officially. There are 6 people working for me at the moment on this project. I would see those as people I would be mentoring at different levels.

Would your mentoring experience influence how you mentor other?

Hopefully yes, it is something that I would try to instil in my own group to feel free to come for help if they need help. I see management more in a supporting role going forward, rather than a task oriented role. The most successful managers in my experience are those who, once you recruit the right people you don’t need to task manage them. Give clear leadership & strategy on what you want to achieve and let them interpret that and help them as needs be & support them, rather than standing over them. I don’t think that works.

Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success

I suppose that project mentoring has developed my own skills in terms of my ability to communicate and make decisions. That way I have brought more to the project than I would without mentoring. Personally I feel I
have developed more during this project than I would have had during the past couple of years.

I  Would you have struggled without it?
R  Yes I’d say I would have. If I came in and the boss wasn’t open to mentoring I’d say I wouldn’t have gotten to where we are today by making sure we were on the same page.

I  Any additional comments/observations?
R  Mentoring of projects is almost necessity. I would strongly recommend it. In general it is a good idea but it needs to be conducted between one person who listens and one person who gives good leadership. That dynamic between the 2 people needs to work. There is no point having a mentor that you can’t go to, who has a closed door policy. It has to have a dynamic where one is willing to learn and one is willing to teach.

I  Do you think there is a reciprocal element?
R  I hope that we learn from each other. We are both very straight up people. Nobody has to wonder what I’m thinking. I’ll let them know in a polite manner. (My mentor) is the same. I don’t have an agenda. In that dynamic mentoring works, no agendas but where people just want to get the job done. I rely on (him) & (he) relies on me. Clear channels where people can talk. I’ve been with (this company) for 5 years and you can become (this companyized) but (my mentor) brings something else to the mix which you might not have thought about. It is probably close to peer mentoring but I think still the respect is there because of the individual (he) is and not his position.

P8

I  How long have you worked for Company X?
R  9 years

I  What is your role in Company X?
R  I was a Quality Engineer, which is overseeing the Quality department, troubleshooting MIR investigation. It involves mostly the metrics, measuring the metrics – how we are doing

I  How long have you worked in your current position?
R  A year in June

I  Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60
R  34

I  Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?
R  I have Retail & Bar

I  Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?
R  Typically

I  How effectively does your organisation manage projects? (Ratings provided)
R  I’d say # 4 - Managed process

I  How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?
R In previous roles, I’d say 3-4 a year over the 9 years that is just a rough. It would be a huge part of what I do. When you get to supervisory level and above, there is a huge amount of project

I Can you define these projects in terms of budget & duration?

R Some of the could be 6 months to a year and budget I wouldn’t be 100% sure. I was involved in ISO train project. That went on for 6 months. I wouldn’t have had much to do with the budgets. My role would have been a support. It was mainly trouble shooting and making sure that they were compliance with procedures

I Can you define your current project in terms of budget & duration?

R The gowning task force project – I’m not aware of the budget figures. It is going to cost a lot. We have to get approval for it

I Can you give a ball park estimate?

R More than 50k. It involves a little bit of construction. Roughly now a ball park figure off the top of my head would be anywhere between 50 & 100k. It involves a bit of instruction in packaging. It involves a lot of signage and maybe changes to the uniforms. You are talking a good deal of money where you have to deal with other companies.

I Duration?

R We have a phased approach. Phase 1 we hope to have finished by the end of this year and phase 2 will start next year and it will take 6 months to 1 year as well. It has been approach several times. And we get some parts of it right and others not. I would have thought that the gowning is pretty good here but the IMB/FDA come and point out things to us – a new set of eyes.

I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?

R Very early – at the start

I What position do you hold on your current project?

R I would nearly call myself the lead. One of the leads anyway. Between myself and (my mentor) we would be leading it.

I Is project management one of your core competencies?

R I think so. I’m good with people. I’m familiar with the procedures. If someone needs to know something about quality, then they come to (refers to himself in the third person)

I What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)

R A bit of both – internal & external. For example I did the lead auditor course with RS when they came over for a full. I’m currently finishing my degree in Tallaght. A combination of both.

I In the context of the auditor course & your degree would they zone in on particular project mgmt modules

R They would indeed. The degree is specific to the Pharma. There are even sections to the whole micro-contamination & gowning and GMP. It is very relevant.

I Define project success in your terms?

R Achieving what you set out to do – successfully

I Do you set measures at the beginning – that is a more global definition? For example in the context of the gowning project, how will you know at the end if you are successful?
Feedback from different areas of the people who have to do the gowning and then we will know then. We will know when the IMB & FDA come back and give us the go-ahead.

I How successful were your previous projects?
R I think they were all quite successful. They were team-based approaches. So between us all, we all worked on them so I would say that they were successful.

I How did this relationship evolve?
R I worked for (my mentor) when he was the AD for Quality in CNS. I was the QA supervisor for CNS. So we had a very good working relationship there. Then when he moved to Compliance and this role came up. I had a choice of reporting to him or someone else. So I picked him because we had a very good working relationship.

I Was your project mentor assigned to you?
R No it was evolutionary – not assigned.

I What position does your project mentor hold in the organisation?
R Associate Director

I How long has he/she been mentoring you?
R Since 2003 – nearly 3 years.

I Do you liaise with more than one mentor?
R I would liaise with nearly all the AD’s in Quality as part of my quality role. I would be involved in talking to all of the supervisors.

I Is there anyone in particular that would take on board, guiding you?
R (My mentor) would play that role. If another AD has an issue or a problem that I was trying to solve, I would always run it by (him).

I He is your sounding board?
R Exactly. Yes.

I In the context of mentoring (Mentor 8) is your main mentor. You might liaise with others outside of quality?
R Yes I would.

I In the context of mentoring would they play a mentoring role in your career?
R Some of the compliance managers would be mentors to me as well. My specific person is you know, I would always run it by (Mentor 8).

I Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?
R They would be on the same level as me.

I Would it be a peer relationship?
R Yes, it would.

I Is your project mentor (s) internal or external to your organisation?
R Internal

I Can you describe your experience as a protégé to date? Is it positive?
R It has been a very good experience. I’ve learned a lot from it you know. He has a vast knowledge because he has come from other companies and been in Pharma for a long time. I’ve learned a lot. That is how I would describe it – it has been a learning experience.

I I would be fair to say that he gives you support?
R Oh God yes.

I Could you imagine organizational life without that support?
I kind of had before (my mentor) joined the company and I’ve experienced not having it. So when you are use to it, it is kind of hard to live without it.

If for some reason (Mentor 8) moved on, is this something that you would seek out from someone else.

Oh yes,

Any negative experiences?

No negative experience

How much time is spent in communication with your mentor?

Typically every day and on a weekly basis then we would have 2 meetings a week. Every day then we make time to discuss an issue.

When would you get time to discuss the softer aspects to a mentoring relation? Is it during the weekly dialogue more geared towards your work or the issues in the context of work?

Yes it would be. Then the informal daily meeting is more about sticking your head around the corner is more about “how is it going” “anything to report”. Even though (my mentor) sits upstairs and I sit downstairs, if we are passing by, we call over. Just in case there is anything to discuss.

Does this meet your requirements?

Oh god it does. He is always at the end of a phone as well. (He) is very busy. He could be busy on his way to a meeting but he will always make time to swing by.

Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

Yes he would

Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?

Well I suppose they are all working for the corporation, they could even be from the States. There 2 weeks ago, myself and one of the managers had to go to (a local site). It was (my mentor) who set up the meeting.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

Mostly information as to how they gown, what procedures they following, what signage they would follow in their plant, what kind of gowning requirements they would have. Looking at best practice.

Is this information verbal or written?

That is why we went to (the local site), we went down there to look at their gowning. We did a tour of the plant with 2 of the managers there. We had a meeting and they sent us out their literature. So it was a combination of both.

How valuable is this information to your project role?

I found it really valuable as it was the first time that I got to another (this company) facility. It is really interesting when you go down and compare it against here. There was specific value to the project. I’ve even indicated to (my mentor) that I would like to see other sites. Hopefully now in 2 weeks time I’m going up to (another Irish site).

How is project specific information stored?

I got some of the literature today and I got him to take photographs so I’m going to do a presentation to roll-out to the directors & MD to say this is how one of our other sites does it. This is how I think we should move.
Does your project mentor(s) provide project task related information to you?

Yes he would. Again in the context of the gowning project, it is very specific as we got citations from the IMB & the GCA so the tasks associated with those, even though (my mentor) has said that the project is mine, he is there to fall back on but practically allows me to run it. But when we have our meeting, one of the tasks that we have to do is raise a change control for anything we are going to change, so some of it would be task specific.

Does your project mentors provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)

He is very good in sharing that, particularly the goals & objectives.

In the context of politics would he field resistance.

Oh yes if there was resistance. Some of the meetings get a bit hot as everyone as their own opinion as to the way it should be done. We get bogged down into detail when we should be trying to make it simple. (He) will always say, “alright, put that aside”. When we are starting it and trying to do too much, he suggested that we try the phased approach.

Is there any other place that you source this information from or is it primarily from (Mentor 8)

From other audit reports, internet and guides – the written format.

Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact your contribution to project success?

Oh it does yes. Any of the info he shares is relevant as he has been away to the states, I’ve seen this in Guayama. I think that would work here if we did XYZ. He shares his experiences. He has been to (Company X) in Japan. It is (an affiliate of this company).

What specific information types contribute to this success?

I think it is the G&O’s. Over the years I would have gotten no objectives and you are trying to write up your appraisals and are totally lost. So I think the G&Os. He is very good and very specific with those. He likes to be sure that everyone knows what he wants from them.

If you drill down into the context of the project, G&O’s are nearly part of the wider I suppose of you reporting to (Mentor 8) as well as mentoring. But in the context of mentoring what are the most relevant information types you receive from (Mentor 8).

The people & the contacts and stuff like that.

By having this info what does it get you?

If he gives me a contact or tells me to go talk to other people, it is the person who will answer my query or be able to assist. It helps progress the project.

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

Both.

Can you describe your overall perception of your project mentor?

Very experienced, very willing to share information. You know if there is something wrong he will always tell you in a positive way. So there is no negative or bad feeling.

Can you describe your overall perception of your mentoring experience?
I think is very beneficial. I think I see myself as a mentor to a lot of the quality. I am the longest serving QS Supervisor and there are 5 QS supervisors so they all come to me for the smallest little thing. And I like that as I like to be able to assist as well. I can see both sides of the coin. It is really beneficial that (my mentor) mentors me and it is really beneficial that I’m able to mentor aswell. It works both ways.

You engage with a lot of peer mentoring?
Yes exactly.
How much trust do you have in your mentor?
Very trustworthy – on a scale of 1 – 10 he is a 10.
Do you mentor others?
An awful lot of it is peer mentoring. Even the role as QE. I’m a mentor to the supervisors. Making sure that they are trained. I suppose because I’ve been here 9 years and a lot of them are only in the door, they need the experience.
Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success.
Success of the EPC project. I worked with (my mentor) on that as well. He was the mentor there. It was very complex and confusing as a lot of it was QC and I’m more QA. But he was able to sit down and explain it. You had a clear vision of where we are going, what the problem was and how to resolve it. It has been a success. We are now leading the way in terms of being on of the most compliance companies in the area of marketing authorization.
Any additional comments/observations?
I don’t think we do it enough, either officially or unofficially. There are a lot of people I would imagine, from my experience, I’ve seen them coming up and not necessarily working in quality, would be coming up to me to ask my advice. People would set up appointments because they just want to chat. Those people would have supervisors & managers and for some reason, they don’t feel they want to approach them or can, or that they would have the time.
Do you think it is a personality drive thing?
Yes I do.
What would be your mentor profile?
Someone who is willing to share info & experiences.. There are people out there who like to keep these things – you know knowledge is power.
How would you know that a person has that profile?
There was a girl that I worked with. She was supervisor when I came on board. She trained me in and has now moved off to another department and I’m still very friendly with her. I bounce a lot of things of her. I suppose she is a mentor because I knew her. I think it is how you approach it and the personalities. Some people don’t even know that they are mentoring.

How long have you worked for Company X?
What is your role in Company X?  
A validation Engineer

How long have you worked in your current position?  
3 years

Which age bracket applies to you?  
20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60  
31- 40

Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?  
I come from a software development background

Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?  
We go on site to different companies. Wyeth would have everything structured for you here. They have their own procedures and you follow those

How effectively does your organisation manage projects?  
You normally have 2 or 3 different projects going on at the same time. So you develop a schedule for that, which you have to follow. It all depends on what site you go into. From my end of it I’m just told that I’m going onto a certain site to do whatever. (My mentor) and I work on completely different projects here but she is my manager on site but she would act as a guide

How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?  
There is 3 ongoing since I started up here

Define these projects in terms of budget & duration?  
Budget I wouldn’t be too sure as I don’t deal with the financial side of it. But they would be less than 100k. I’m here about 7 months and they will be ongoing for another 3-4 months. I’m there from start to finish

At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?  
I came in at the very start although PDM has been postponed. I work on EDMS 5 before

What position do you hold on your current project?  
I’m that validation lead

Is project management one of your core competencies?  
No, it doesn’t need to be at the moment

What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)  
Yes, they showed us how to organized spreadsheet and time sheet if needs be. Being on 2 or 3 different projects here, I need to know what to prioritize. That is also up to my manager here.

Define project success in your terms?  
Once the system is completely validated and ready for use – PDM is a little bit different as the documents are coming in from Core, they are documents that we take and review. It is not actually a big project.

How successful were your previous projects?  
EDMS went without a hitch. We were selected as a guide for a couple of different sites that are doing it in Europe at the moment.

How did this relationship evolve?
It started 3 years ago when we worked on different sites together. I report into (My mentor) but it has worked that we are always on the same site.

Was your project mentor assigned to you?

No she wasn’t assigned but it is whoever is on site and that may be one of 3 PM’s

What position does your project mentor hold in the organisation?

She is a project manager

How long has he/she been mentoring you?

3 years

Do you liaise with more than one mentor?

I would contact anyone above me in the company

How many?

Four

How long have this/these relationship(s) existed?

Since I started

Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?

Yes, they are managers or directors

Is your project mentor internal or external to your organisation?

Internal to (the partner organisation and external to (this company)

Can you describe your experience as a protégé to date? Is it positive?

I work quite closely to her. I talk to her if I have any issues on anything. We go through my schedule every so often and she gives a lot of guidance on priorities.

Any negative experiences?

No, none.

How much time is spent in communication with your mentor?

We are in contact every day so probably an hour and a half to two hours every week

Does this meet your requirements?

Yes it does

Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

There is no real need to in (this company). I’ve got my own contacts in here. Now internally in (the partner organisation) there is a lot of contact between the other members of the company as well. If there is a problem we can share it within the company as we have a lot of experience. So there is a network within (the partner organisation) that would help.

What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?

Basically if there is anything about a system that you need to know, testing wise. There is always someone to speak to

Is this information verbal or written?

By email or by phone

How valuable is this information to your project role?

On PDM it doesn’t really matter as it is all laid out from Core but on other systems if it is a new enough system and someone has worked it before, they can give an awful lot of valuable information on how to test the system or how the system works

How is project specific information stored?
I generally keep emails or I take notes when I’m on the phone.

R 

Have you become more influential as a result of being mentored?

I 

R 

Definitely and it has put structure to the week as well – what to do and when to do it. I’ve met a lot of people through (my mentor), not necessarily through the work aspect of it in (this company)

I 

Has engaging in mentoring strengthened you network?

R 

Definitely

I 

Does your project mentors provide project task related information to you?

R 

Yes she does

I 

Does your project mentors provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)

R 

Definitely – when I came on site the first time when I started in (this company), she had a lot of experience so she introduced me to people that she needed to know. She gave me the background on the company and what I’m supposed to be doing here.

I 

Which is more valuable to you?

R 

The organizational stuff first off, you get to know people without asking.

I 

If your mentor does not provide this information, where do you source it?

R 

I would have to speak to my contact in (this company) and get the information that I need there. He would be second line information provider

I 

Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact your contribution to project success?

R 

Yes, it always has. Depending on the situation, for example on PDM there isn’t a whole lot to be done but for Rees I got a lot of valuable info that helped push the project along, to a point where is was cancelled.

I 

Is this information shared verbally or in written format?

R 

Mostly verbal

I 

How is project specific information stored?

R 

I tend to take notes

I 

Describe your overall perception of your project mentor (s)

R 

She is a very valuable resource to have. I could do it if she wasn’t there because I would have to but she does give me a lot of information and feedback. I worked with her for 3 years and she has always pointed me in the right direction. I didn’t know anything about schedules when I started as I had come from a testing background; she gave me a lot of valuable information

I 

Can you describe your overall perception your mentoring experience?

R 

She knows exactly what is going on where and she knows what needs to be done about it. She is very communicative.

I 

How much trust do you have in your mentor?

R 

She hasn’t put me wrong so far. I have trust in her

I 

Do you mentor others?

R 

Depending on whether they would need help on the systems. I’d help out wherever I can.

I 

Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success
I didn’t have any idea about project scheduling so with the help of (my mentor) I constructed my own week and with her help structure a full project. We get a site versions and then we would put our own schedule together.

I Any additional comments or observations?
R It has to be there. In project management it is a necessity.

P10

I How long have you worked for Company X?
R 6 years.
I What is your role in Company X?
R Site lead for technology transfer of new projects into the facility from one of our sister companies in the states. For (Brand name drug).
I How long have you worked in your current position?
R About one year to year and a half.
I Which age bracket applies to you? 20 – 30; 31 – 40; 41– 50; 51 – 60; over 60.
R 31 –40.
I Have you experience of other industries? If yes, which?
R Yes Research & Development and Government Semi state bodies. R& D was on healthcare devices, semiconductor & some Pharma.
I Are projects typical used by your organisation to implement change?
R Not necessarily. Communication is used to implement change, being one of the main ones. Change control is another one. I suppose the project comes from the business sense from the requirements in terms of profits and the business in general.
I How effectively does your organisation manage projects?
R They are at a stage where they are becoming a managed process on the basis that they have the correct procedures in for particular project that I’m involved in, in terms of the QSE, the quality system elements so I think they are learning from previous but they are becoming fairly structured. Do you see? That as being specific to (Drug name) based on the budget it would need to be a managed process but the smaller initiatives. It is focus driven based on cost & importance and timing. On previous project around the $1-2m mark, they probably have been less structured but then again the proper procedures were not in place at the time.
I How many projects have you worked on previous to your current project?
R In general outside of academia, within industry itself, probably 4-5 major projects. Within (this company) I’d say that 3 out of the five were Wyeth related.
I Can you define these projects in terms of budget & duration?
R They range anywhere from $1m up to $335m. The 1m range would be projects between 3 –6 months range. The semi state bodies, their projects would be in or around $15-20 and then there is this one, which is $335m. To technology transfer 3 products you are looking at a 3 year timeframe.
for the project. I suppose 4 years when you take into consideration the conceptual design. Duration for the smaller projects were 3-6 months.

I At what point in the project’s lifecycle did you join?
R I joined in 2003. From a lifecycle perspective it was very much at the concept stage. I think I was the first person to be selected.

I What position do you hold on your current project?
R I’m currently the site lead which encompasses the pre-operating sense and the associate director level role when we go live. I’m a year and a half at that. Before I did that I was the project leader, which was a level below so now I have 2 project leads reporting into me as the site lead.

I Is project management one of your core competencies?
R No I don’t think so not in terms of where I see myself go in the business I don’t see it as being, no it is more down to experience at the operation level that brought me here

I What level of training have you received? (Internal or External to organisation, Professional or Academic)
R No formal training…on the job learning. Getting familiar with the software packages and the project management tools.

I Define project success in your terms?
R On schedule within budget, high quality and high standards

I How successful were your previous projects?
R They were on schedule, some were not commercialized – didn’t go to market because they were research & development so they lead to a decision around do we proceed or not. I would say in terms of % around 50% [were successful]

I How did this relationship evolve?
R How did it begin first of all. It began with (Mentor 10) being given the job opportunity here. I was one of the first people to meet him on site. Based on his previous experience, there is a hell of a lot of, you know, he has shown us new ways and angles on the way to do things, he is actually a good mentor to have. It hasn’t been done in a structured sense and I don’t mean to take away from (my mentor’s) approach. It hasn’t been done in a structured sense through any formal successive planning development plan. It is only becoming more visible now to have a development for your reports through the MBO. I suppose the project in general started off with a informal mentoring program but it has become very structured as time went on. We have gone from PD plan succession The added complexity is that (my mentor) has a lot to learn from us as well. Because the project was already up and running we were seen as mentors to him also. There was a reciprocal nature. So from a formal versus informal, at the start it was very informal.

I What position does your project mentor hold in the organisation?
R Project director or Program Director

I How long has he been mentoring you?
R I’d say that I’ve been reporting to him for nearly 2 years now but in terms of the structured mentoring approach we have followed for the last 6-8 months, the informal approach was I suppose the same time frame bringing us up to a year and a half.

I Do you liaise with more than one mentor?
Actually because of the way the project is structured and the project is set up, we have a pre-operating project and (Mentor 10) is my solid line for reporting but there is the dotted line approach to (Snr. Mgr. X) for the existing business. So there would be some communication with (him) on a weekly basis to keep him up to speed on what is required. But in terms of him mentoring me, it is mostly (mentor 10). It is more a communication thing with (Snr. Mgr. X) than a mentoring relationship.

Do these relationships reflect hierarchy?

Depending on the timing of where I was at any particular time, it would be 2 steps and it is one step now.

Is your project mentor(s) internal or external to your organisation?

All internal to (this company).

Can you describe your experience as a protégé to date? Is it positive?

Certainly I have learned a lot, say the old way of doing things, versus the new way. The old way of doing things in (this company) versus the way (my mentor) has forecasted, communicated things. He has made things a lot more visible, challenging and interesting at the same time. Communication is a big strength.

Did you have problems adjusting to (his) style?

Yes I had, on the basis that I suppose being here for 5 years you become somewhat institutionalized in terms of the way you do things because the Pharma industry is very heavily regulated by procedure. The way you are mentored, it is procedure. It is very, very difficult to break away from that as you have the blinkers on and that is it. With the new approach, the open communication approach, shop floor excellence where everyone is part of a team, initially it was a bit of a shock but I see the benefit now of having that sort of system in place. Complete flexibility in that you were not responsible for any one task in your job place. You have responsibility to deliver a product to the market with the highest standards and quality with input into the cross function responsibility across all areas. It is a bit more complex than what you had with the old way.

Any negative experiences?

They were very heavily weighted towards positive.

How much time is spent in communication with your mentor?

Daily basis. I see him as my advisor when it comes to mentoring, coaching; obviously successive planning. But he also sees me as an overall project general knowledge base, he uses me as his advisor, so a daily basis. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t communicate with him.

Does this meet your requirements?

It does but it doesn’t necessarily always revolve around the mentoring aspect, a lot of it is the project in general. But it does meet my requirements.

Does your project mentor introduce you to new contacts in his/her network?

Major, put a major on that. That is one of the biggest, even in the context of completing your self-assessment on a yearly basis. I suppose one of my development requirements was to meet new people, VP’s within the organisation, higher level people and also people outside (this company’s local) organisation but within the (corporate) network. I think that since
I’ve joined the project, I’ve been at meeting with VP’s, Senior VP’s across the organisation

I Are those contacts internal or external to your organisation?
R I would say because of the position of site lead, it is more on the corporate side. On a local level the project leads would deal with people at local level. I just got off a conference call there with corporate. It is not just meeting them in general but also having discussions with them.

I Would you be in contact with vendors?
R A lot of vendor contact. Because of the stage that we are at, installation phase, we are in weekly communication with the vendors. As the project ends can you see that you will take these contacts with you as a network asset? I will take it as a network asset. It has certainly given me confidence in terms of communication with these people and different aspect of the strategic planning for the business rather than just looking at it at a local level. I’ll take it with me but will the networking continue after the project, I don’t think it will because you will go into the routine mode of operation

I Would you feel comfortable contacting them?
R Definitely! Yes!

I What types of information do you receive from those new contacts?
R New business forecast for the product lines that we have. I suppose critical milestones dates that have come up with FDA, critical information that is needed from the sending site that has evolved over the past couple. Yes, new business forecast based on prescriptions for the new products, any technology info in relation to R&D, cycle times or through put times.

I Is this information verbal or written?
R It is very structured now because we are following QSE 27 which gives us weekly meetings, monthly meetings with our GTT (Sending team & receiving team) (TOTG). It would have been more verbal at the beginning but as the project progress through the lifecycle, it is more written. Yes, it is very much structured.

I How valuable is this information to your project role?
R Very valuable. I don’t know if you are familiar with RASI matrix. It is clearly highlighted on all of these documents who is responsible when it is needed. So they are good for reference documents to look back on.

I How is project specific information stored?
R In e-room that is one new way- we did have it in hard copies and folders and stuff but the E-room seems to be working a lot better. The engineering aspects and technology pieces, vendor management – all of that will be transferred from our consulting engineering. In terms of the transfer of the technical knowledge, it will be through QSE 27. It will be transferred to our technology department

I Have you become more influential as a result of being mentored?
R Yes, I would say. In the first instance I have been promoted. I can’t really answer that – nothing comes to mind. I’ve always seen myself as being a point of contact. It depends upon the skills & knowledge base that you have and your behavioural aspects, as long as you have a good combination of all 3 of those people will always define you as being a particular point of contact for knowledge. He is a good guy he will always follow up- that, this, the behavioural aspect. O.K. it has obviously
improved more and more as I’ve been promoted. I think old ways and new ways of mentoring that it has changed that much. I think I’ve strengthened it but I don’t think it was every black & white that I was never influential

I Has engaging in mentoring strengthened you network?
R Yes, I’ve answered that already. As part of your appraisal & development I clearly specified that through proper mentoring with A.S. I’ve become more network oriented.

I Would you have been a natural born networker?
R I’m fairly modest. I just believe in getting the job done.

I Does your project mentors provide project task related information to you?
R Yes he does. He provides me with absolutely everything. He is fairly fair on that approach. He doesn’t hound you to get task complete but yet he would give you a lot of tasks

I Does your project mentors provide organizational information to you? (People, Politics, Language, Goals & objectives or History)
R He would supply a lot of Harvard Business Institute information on how to run proper business management tools.

I Did he give you an introduction to new people?
R He would have attended with me at the first meetings, he would have guided me through the process. He would travel with me, introduce me, get a feel for how things are progressing and the release me.

I If your mentor does not provide this information, where do you source it?
R It goes back to the core documents, I would source it within the site procedures that we have. I’d source it from the sending site so I have a counterpoint in (another local site) who is the site lead for sending and I’m site lead for receiving so it would be there.

I Does the information you receive from your project mentor positively impact your contribution to project success?
R It certainly increases the workload. The spinoff is that it does give you more exposure to people in the organisation. You are totally in the spotlight the whole time

I What specific information types contribute to this success?
R It is the guidance that he gives me. All the information is there, it doesn’t necessarily come from (my mentor) but it is the follow communication that he supplies to you to say “the way you handle this is, I would suggest or can we discuss. Let’s say that I’ve received a piece of information and I need to act on it – a task or whatever. Before I even get a chance to do it he would have communicated to me a suggestion. He would never say that this is the way to do it; he would say what do you think etc. It is never the information that he gives, it is more the way he guides you through it.

I Is this information shared verbally or in written format?
R There is a verbal follow up. I think if it is something that is on the critical path, he will follow up verbally as well. He tends to repeat it, in a nice way.

I How is project specific information stored?
R Like any boss in the industry you store it verbally but you make a note that it needs to be done. I would transcribe it onto a notebook or as an email to myself

I Describe your overall perception of your project mentors.
It goes back to old and new. I don’t want to take from any of the good work done in the old business but everyone has strengths and weakness. He has made things a lot more open. Open communication is very, very important. I think he is honest. In terms of mentoring skills, he gives you options. He doesn’t tell you what way to do it. There would be a stage you reach where you have reached all you have learned from the person, so have I learned everything from (him), probably not. There is still a year shelf life and I intend to learn a lot more from him. A little bit more follow up in terms of documenting a development plan but I think that will come with the MBO’s. It is more visible to a person on a weekly basis. A very good mentor & coach, probably based on previous bosses that I’ve had in the business – he is very calm and very positive.

Describe your overall perception your mentoring experience.

I think that one of the advantages is that the new PPU director, that person will then have a certain time frame to liaise with (my mentor). From that point of view I think the person will have 6-8 months and a good learning curve. Certainly I’ve transferred it to my reports. I would see it as a good structure to roll out to people.

How much trust do you have in your mentor?

I think I’ve a lot of trust in terms of delivering the project in general but where it leaves me in terms of a position at the end of the project. I trust (him) based on the information given to date. I do trust him.

Do you mentor others?

We are drilling to all levels, to Project managers & supervisor in the project.

Describe how project mentoring has or has not helped you contribute to project success.

It has certainly given me more structure around timelines, more visibility around timelines, deliverables, accountability. You know your G&O’s up front so there is no stumbling around in November/December. It has certainly helped me deliver the project on schedule.

Any additional comments/observations?

I think in terms of the courses that are run. You get emails about the courses on coaching; leadership, mentoring, I suppose it is a time management time but to fit those in with a very busy project, it is difficult. If you were given the opportunity of hiring the next management structure in the company, probably a more structure plan for their development in terms of bringing them up to speed on training and all of that and building that in the early days. It is very had to teach that to someone who has been here for 6 years. You go back and have to mentor in a different way. It goes back to the behavioural aspect of the person, their outlook on the whole job. If you bring a person 6 years into a company and then go back, it is like and do, and tell them that it was done wrong because they weren’t given any training in the first place. It is down to the person themselves – their time management. I think they need to want to and not to put up a brick wall. But certainly in the business. I think if they got in the early stages, it would make a difference. It is never 100% complete; it is a work in progress because the business is changing.
Introduction

So how long have you been with the company?

Five years.

Okay and what is your current work and non work roles. So what is your current work role first of all?

I work in the purchasing department. I’m a procurement specialist. I manage indirect material coming in.

And what would be your non work roles be it either from a family or social point of view outside of work?

I am a mother (laugh), two children and that’s really it.

Okay/ alright.

I did some junior achievement work during the year. I gave a course to the school I actually went to.

Oh right, very good and how long have you been in your current formal position in the company?

Five years.

And how would you describe the characteristics of your current career stage? In other words are you at your early career stage, mid career stage.

I’m not at any career stage at all. Probably mid stage.

How would you describe that, / what does that mean for you?

Well there would I suppose, there could be opportunities longer term to progress although I suppose within the company we’re in an ever changing environment. But I mean there would be some opportunities longer term to progress.

Okay and at this stage of your career then what would be the important priorities for you?

Well I suppose my priority is always to manage my team effectively, to get the job done. You know/ we have we’re in a situation where there’s constant change; the priorities are changing on a daily basis so it’s to try and manage all those things. I mean the priority for me is to do a good job and get the job done - my first and foremost priority.

Okay and how would you experience that at the moment? Is that a difficult or challenging job?

Yeah it’s very challenging, it’s very challenging and more so now. You know we’re loosing people from this department. People have to take up the, fill the gap. I think that’s probably the same in every company across the country.

And are you career priorities different now from what they were in the past? Would you see any particular change say from two or three years?

Yes, I would have to say you know when you have a family you’d have to take them into account. It’s not a popular to thing to say but it’s is a reality, you know, so when you’re trying to get that balance/ it is difficult you know/ but at the same time you know/ I still you know I want to be true to myself in terms what I do with work. So it’s a constant challenge.
Yes, and when you say it’s not a popular thing, is that your perception of it?

Well (big sigh) I think if you want progress in your career I don’t think you can be shouting about the difficulties you’re having at home with your children, although saying that you know there are a lot of females here who have managed home life and work successfully and you know its certainly not a, you’d be treated equally, do you know what I mean. So if they do ask what you’re career aspirations were, you wouldn’t be saying well I’m trying to balance my home life and my family life. Of course it doesn’t go against you, not at all.

And you talked about a very important part there of being true to yourself/ what does that mean for you?

Well I suppose it means always you know doing a very, very good job. You know to progress and I’d very much like to progress and yes God I’m doing the job right you know and I think of those things, I suppose it’s in my nature and I just want to make sure things go right.

Alright so in terms of your goals and priorities in terms of the last three years they would have changed maybe in terms of the work life balance?

You can’t stay back and work in the evening when you like, like I did in my early years. Although I mean there are times when I’ve come in here and if I’m there I’ve taken work home but I mean in fact that I’ve taken work home a lot but that has to be done then after 10 pm when children are in bed.

Okay so moving onto the actual mentoring programme then, is this first encounter participating in a formal mentoring programme?

Yeah.

Okay. And how did you become interested or how were you made aware of the mentoring programme?

I was basically advised that they thought it would be a good programme for me to go on.

And what were your reactions?

Well I certainly didn’t see it as a negative. I think any sort of opportunities that you’re given you know have to be seen as a positive and you know you have to take them in the spirit that they are given to you and then its up to you to try and make it work or not. I’m also doing a management development programme. Yeah that’s over five months so it’s fairly busy but its good the fact that the company is willing invest.

And how was your mentor chosen then in this programme?

We have a, we were given a list and then you could choose the mentor.

And so how long are you in the relationship now?

Six months.

And what is your mentor’s formal position in the company?

He is the Training and Lean Manager.

And he works on a different section/ and so how often would you meet?

Not as often as we should. Probably maybe once a month, even at that I’d say I haven’t met him in the last month.

Who initiates the meetings?

I do.
I: And when you say maybe not as often is that due to kind of work pressure from your point of view?

R: Yeah. And as well, you know, with this other course I’m doing there’s two days a month and it kind of clashes with your work schedule. There are a number of assignments that have to be done during that time. Other people, there’s eleven of us doing it so we have to work in teams/ so which means you have people to meet which is more meetings and then as I said we’ve lost people from the department and I’ve had to take up some extra work so there’s obviously trying to get the work handed over. Trying to learn a little bit as you go along/ so one of my direct reports/ she’s on maternity leave because she went out early so we have to try and train in somebody on their own/ so when you take all of that into account its been a very, very interesting period.

I: Okay, how you see the relationship at the moment, in terms of the hopes and concerns you had starting out?

R: Yeah I suppose I didn’t know very much about the programme. I’m probably not great at the touchy feely stuff as I call it (laugh). At the moment, I know that’s a concern but I suppose that was maybe one area I wasn’t very sure about. In terms of the hopes I suppose we’re always maybe looking for an answer to a question or you know for everything to make sense (laugh). So I suppose from that point of view you know there’s always a hope that you can come out of the relationship being you know, maybe a different person, a better person.

I: In terms then of lets say the relationship now, what sort of qualities or characteristics does your mentor bring to the relationship.

R: Well I suppose first of all you know the reason I choose him was that I don’t have a lot to do with him on a daily basis. I didn’t really want somebody that I would have to deal with, you know on work as well, I think if you go into a mentoring relationship, you have to be a little bit more open and I didn’t want to have that with certain people but I suppose I wasn’t sure whether it would undermine your position.

I: So you wanted to have a boundary around it?

R: Yeah, now I suppose I’m also in a very fortunate position my boss is, my direct boss is excellent. I would have a very open relationship with her. I suppose I’ve been lucky with her over the years. In the way she’s probably informally mentored me even though you wouldn’t call it that. So as I said I wanted to pick somebody that I felt that I wouldn’t have too much to do with on a day-to-day basis, you know somebody that could bring something you know to the relationship as well/ and of course the relationship has changed. I didn’t know him terribly well before we started only really, you know, a chat here and there whatever but not very much but I suppose you know I’m not sure if it’s the same for other mentor/mentee relationships but this is quite intense and I suppose my manager…

I: And is it the timing, does the intensity come from the frequency or the dynamics?

R: The discussion I think. I think that my mentor likes this whole area. He has thrown himself into it and all of the areas that I’ve talked about that I wouldn’t really like terribly much, you know, his background would be
HR etc. He thrives on it. He loves it but as a result that he has given a hundred percent to the relationship and maybe not everybody gets that but that side, you know. I think that/ you know he can be quite frank with his discussions and I suppose I can’t say I’ve enjoyed necessary all the discussions from I suppose an uncomfortable point of view but has it been beneficial I think yes it has. I’m probably more staff aware than I was. Now I’m doing a lot of things at the same time. Like before this management courses well we had to do the personality profiles, 16PF5 and also I did the 360 feedback. So I suppose a lot of information was being thrown at me at the same time and I mean I think I was aware of a lot of my shortcomings and the positive aspects as well. But I suppose the sessions that I’ve have had have given me an opportunity, you know, to go through it and I think I’ve been quite open in giving my personality and ensuring openness.

I What else, do you think he brings to the relationship?

R He gives me time, enthusiasm. His genuine/ I suppose he wants me to do well and to get something out of it/ as I suppose feedback, you know, if something’s bad for me, how to handle situations or you know it’s a different perspective.

I How would you describe the growth of that mentoring relationship from where it started to where it is now?

R Well (sigh) I think when I go in to meet him you know you can just sit down and start your discussion. There isn’t a kind of opening or warming up period or anything but saying that I’d say the last time I had a proper discussion with him was the last time I met him, you know what I mean. I wasn’t always getting opportunities to speak to him. You might meet him occasionally on the corridor or something but things are just so busy you have to keep going with what you have. I mean unfortunately there’s very little time for social, you know.

I Would you feel that is there a level of connection and understanding now, or friendship?

R I mean do I like him, yes I do. Would I feel like I could go and talk to him without having an appointment yes I could. If I was genuinely troubled about something I could make it my business to approach him. You know I think your friendships in work are quite different from your friendships at home anyway. Certainly I would trust his opinion. I don’t think he would see me wrong, you know. I mean yes, you know, there would be a friendship there.

I Does the relationship allow a mutual exchange or would the focus of the meetings be on where you’re coming from?

R I think the focus is me/ but saying that he, you know, he will offer examples or try and say how he would handle something. He’s not afraid to share either you know what I mean. Its not that you go it because it’s supposed to be about me you know. I suppose that’s the one thing about the mentoring relationship is that they focus on me and I wouldn’t feel comfortable, I don’t feel comfortable under the spotlight.

I On you?
You know like having to kind of come to terms, all these things about yourself, you know, and I’m sure everybody feels like that/ I am not alone in this

So how much do you feel you can confide in your mentor? Work issues, work relationships, your goals/personal priorities etc?

I would talk to him about some things, maybe not everything because I would have a sense of loyalty to my own group. So I probably do try, maybe try and give him some maybe information/ if I need to try and get advice/ or discuss how to handle a certain situation but at the same time I said I would always be quite loyal to my own group or you know or other personalities you know.

Would you feel comfortable sharing you know meaningful pieces about your own goals and priorities?

Yeah I mean I would feel okay about that and I don’t think I’d be sharing everything but certainly where I’d feel that if this is the scope of the relationship I’d be more than happy to discuss those with him because I’m there to learn, I’m there to develop and if you don’t participate you won’t benefit and I would think he probably finds quite open because I would be quite open. I’m not just going to share everything.

Would you share issues that might concern you about work life balance?

I’m sure I could discuss some of it with him, yeah. As I said I think it’s not a problem in this company, the company are very good for things like that but I don’t always like to shout about it, either.

What aspects of the mentoring relationship at the moment now gave you most satisfaction and what do you get most satisfaction from?

Well as I said I haven’t seen him, you know, in the last maybe month or so but I think its good that you know/ he tries to help keep me focused as well/ and I think he was very much trying to help you/ know kind of define the goals of the relationship because that was the most difficult for me. Defining what I wanted to get out of it but I suppose just the thought, knowing that there is someone there that, you know, wants you to do well out of it and that support is very good.

Are there any downsides to the mentoring relationship?

Like I haven’t shared, in fact most people who are on the mentoring programme haven’t really shared the fact that there on a mentoring programme. As a group of mentees the current group we do meet as a group with the organisers but outside of that obviously my own manager knows. HR put me on it but other people wouldn’t and I mean I know as well you know something came up on the initial training and mentors and mentees and I didn’t mention I was on it but nobody would ask you who your mentor is and I wouldn’t bring it up about discussing it because I think its something that I don’t want to talk about outside, you know, that. I think as well that there is a perception as you say that maybe its favouritism and what it’s used for but I mean anyone who’s involved in the programme will always say that it’s not meant to be viewed as a mechanism to improve your career progression. And its not and that’s not even how I’m using it at all. Now maybe some people will try and use it differently but for me I don’t think it will, it’ll make no difference in terms
of my career progression. What it may do though is improve my own ability to progress my own career, you know what I mean.

I You mentioned the relationship privacy, what are the reasons for maintaining the privacy?

R I would say probably the way it is set up, It might be down to the fact that people may feel that it is favouritism, when it is not/ as well its like why was she picked and I wasn’t or you know, is there something wrong with me that I’m picked so you can see it from either side.

I And are there any downsides to the mentoring relationship that you would perceive from the mentor’s point of view?

R There might be a pressure there to be a good mentor. That they probably would hate that somebody would walk away from a relationship because maybe they would see as being a negative on them even though, you know, we’ve been told that sometimes people don’t gel. That’s the difficulties around to try and choose someone you can work with and someone that you can work with professionally can be different to someone who you’d work with on, in terms of mentor relationship.

I And so at this stage then like how much would you rely on your mentor then for lets say practical support, you know in terms of guidance.

R On a day-to-day?

I Yes or maybe guidance?

R Well I wouldn’t go to him at the moment if I was looking for guidance on something. I’m conscious of the fact that I haven’t seen him in a while and I’m hoping once I get my last module out of the way that I will be able to try and meet him. Again I suppose we probably focused on a couple of key areas and having discussed them on the occasion, you know, I’m more aware of them so I do try and keep them to the forefront of my mind. And as well I know there was one time he said something to me and I think for days afterwards it was just going around my head. Buzzing, buzzing, buzzing so it’s good that somebody can make you think, you know.

I Has the mentoring relationship helped your career guidance or career growth personally?

R In terms of my potential?

I Yes or any aspect of it that you have noticed

R Well personally I suppose I’m more aware of some things that I know I need to focus on I suppose the key areas for development and these are things that just don’t happen overnight. You’re going to have to work at them but I suppose from that side of things yes we’ve kind of discussed maybe areas that I need to improve in. So being aware of them is half the battle and trying to put things into practice/ so I mean there would I suppose some improvements. So if you take away all the change that’s going on (laugh) it might be helping my potential.

I Has the mentoring relationship helped your own self growth?

R Well I suppose I’m kind aware of a couple of key things that I am trying to actively work on.

I Okay and how do you think the mentoring relationship, might be helping your mentor?

R Well I suppose if things were going well you would have sense of satisfaction and be very enthusiastic about it so you know maybe from that
side of things as well that if you’re interested in something and I think its an area that he is interested in/ so I’m sure he is getting benefits in that sense because he’s doing something that he finds interesting.

I Alright and how has the relationship provided you with access to other people?
R No, he hasn’t introduced to anyone like that.
I Are there any expectations you believe have yet to be met in the mentoring relationship?
R Well I think I was very unsure going in of what to expect. The goal setting was a real struggle because I suppose we were trying to set something’s that, you know, I could really benefit from. I suppose a lot of things though have not progressed. That’s not necessarily my mentoring fault. It would be me, it’s like everything. You actually need time to do things and if you don’t have the time it can make things a bit more difficult so I suppose the pace isn’t as…
I Rapid?
R Yes but I think the circumstances are not anybody’s fault.
I Okay and what would you hope to get out of it for the next six months of the relationship?
R I think we need to sit down and review where we’re at and where we want to go, do you know what I mean because we have done a certain amount of work on particular areas but its maybe to try and sit down again and advise where we want to go at this stage. You know I’m at this point I don’t know yet.
I Are you happy to have been a participant in the mentoring programme?
R Well I think you know it has been beneficial. I’ve had discussion about things/I would never have had without it but it made me focus on a few things. That’s why/ but as I said we still need to kind of decide what the next stage is.
I We are close to completion now and I just want to ask if you would like to add anything further?
R No that is fine
I Well, then I just want to thank you for participating and for a very interesting discussion.

P12

I Introduction
I So how long have you been with the company?
R Eleven years.
I Okay and what would you regard as your current work role?
R I’m a chemical engineer in the plant so my job is to, I’m stand in manager for the chemistry lab and I approve all documents and to review all procedures and to sign off on a lot of the products. My job is to do projects within the plant.
I Okay and what would you regard as your non work role outside of your work life (community, family, sports etc)
R Well I’ve a lot of interests outside of work. Family would be a big one and I have my own house and garden, dinner to be provided and that kind of stuff around the house. I do a lot of sports as well, and I’m involved in other groups but not over anything in particular so.

I Okay and how long have you been in your current formal position in the company?

R I got promoted at the start of March.

I Okay, congratulations. And how would you describe the characteristics of your career stage and by that I mean would you consider yourself in your early stage or your mid career stage.

R In terms of where I can go?

I Where you are now.

R At the moment I’m probably low down the chain but I don’t want to go too high up the chain either. I’ve been promoted a few times since I’ve started here in the company and I’m kind of happy enough to go from where I am now and a bit more.

I Okay.

R But I certainly don’t want the job of running the plant.

I Alright and what would you consider the priorities that you have now for this stage of your career?

R In a job it’s to get on. I’ve got a new role but it’s difficult to progress within the company.

I Okay.

R And I just try to some recognition for the role I’m doing and maybe to move up.

I Okay so what would be the main priorities then for you to achieve that?

R This is why I’m part of the mentoring process because I don’t seem to be able to get to that next level. I’ve missed out on one or two promotions over the years that I should have been at that level and I wasn’t. So this is why I’m in the mentoring process to make sure to do that.

I Okay and are you career priorities, are they different now from what they were in the past and by the past I might define it as in the last three years.

R No they’ve pretty much stayed the same. You get to a stage where you’re going/ a look it’s a bloody job and then you’d come in and maybe the next month you’re really going oh no I want that promotion. My job is my life, this kind of thing so it does vary. It depends on what’s in your personal life to be honest.

I Is this was your first encounter in a formal mentoring programme?

R Yeah I started within January/February this year.

I How did you become interested or how were you made aware of the mentoring programme?

R It was through our Development Manager on site and I wanted to further my career and I was missing out on a few things and she wanted to do a profile on me. So she wanted to get an interested participant from my area/ I’ve asked for the mentoring/ and she agreed to help me. So they thought that maybe the mentoring process would be part of the new process that I should do.

I Okay and what were you initial thoughts about mentoring?
R To be honest I had no idea what it was at all. I went in naïve which is good.
I Alright and how was your mentor chosen in this programme?
R We were given a selection of names of who are the mentors in the plant and we were asked to pick three, name them your number one, two and three and then it was up to you if one of them agreed, whether you wanted them to be your mentor.
I And what were your reasons for choosing the mentor or it might have been a range of reasons?
R The guy I picked for number one was because he’s not; you can have an open and honest dialogue with him. He can give you bad news which you wanted rather than from experience from him in the past that’s why, it was mostly experience and what I know of the man and his role and also the department he was working in where I would like to be there. Do you know, a hidden agenda but I think I’ve been happy with my choice?
I The relationship then was voluntary?
R Well I choose him and he had to agree whether he would accept me.
I Okay and so how long have you been, participated since January is it?
R Yeah. Yeah we had one meeting just before Christmas but then I was gone for the month of January so basically it kind of started in February.
I Your mentor’s formal position then within the company?
R He is, I couldn’t tell you his exact title.
I But he’s in a different section to what you’re in.
R He’s head of basically everything global technology: You were asked not to pick your immediate boss or whatever.
I How often since February then have you meet?
R We set-up a schedule to meet every fortnight. For about half an hour/forty minutes. Now sometimes that’s not always possible. He’s a very busy man, he’s out of the plant a lot, and I have not seen him in 5 or 6 weeks / like my meeting at 12 is with him. He’s actually, like he’s very, very good and apparently I’m supposed to be the leader and organising these meetings but because of his busy schedule he’s very, very good he sets up the meetings.
I So between you, you both drive the meetings
R My job basically is to drive it. Or if I needed time in the meantime he’d get me somebody I could talk to about it.
I So what were you hopes and concerns when you started the mentoring relationship?
R Yeah we had to have a meeting at the start as a mentees group, so we could discuss clearly, what the programme was about/ so my expectations at the start were, like I began discussing the problem with my mentor, where I was at my stage in life. He could probably have told me where I was at but he just wanted to hear from me and basically as I said before, I was missing out on that next step for a promotion. So basically it wasn’t that I wasn’t capable of doing the job. Not very many people would know who I was outside of the plant (other plants) so it was basically to get recognition globally/ and in promotion/monetary terms/ a lot of my project work would be through them. So just basically to make sure that I was getting recognition for work/ that was what my main expectation. I didn’t
really have any concerns with the mentoring process because I knew him and I knew I could trust him.

I What do you think your mentor brings to the relationship at this stage in terms of qualities or characteristics that you would have observed?

R Well it’s definitely a very open and honest dialogue where he would tell me where my faults are as being a strong point so I think that’s one of the main benefits of the programme because he’ll tell me where I’m going wrong and then he’ll also give me ideas of how to make that better.

I Okay, alright and how would you describe how the mentoring relationship has grown in terms of lets say trust or common ground/respect or sense of connection that has been kind of established?

R Well I find him very trustworthy sort of, a lot of trust there and honest. He’s a man of few words. He probably thinks I’m doing the worst job ever but you’ll never know that. He’s so high up the scale I’m not sure he even knows what my job is but like I think when we’re talking that he’d want more of a senior role and he’s talking to me as a more senior role but its just to get there is the problem.

I What is the contribution of the mentoring relationship then to your development so far?

R Well I would tell him about the project I was doing at the start and then he would say well this is where you should be at like. Are you doing this? Are you doing that? Its even more the more formal procedures that I wouldn’t have been aware of and how to get recognition, make sure you send your minutes of the meeting out and who is responsible for the action/ you send the minutes/ and so then you’re in charge /this ensures that you know you’re not getting landed with a load of extra work which I’ve been in the past. So if you send out your minutes of the meeting like /say ‘(Mary) you have to do this bit’, and then in the end why it wasn’t done, I was always actually doing other people’s work as well. I was trying to do too much work or working late because I was doing so much more work but I wasn’t actually getting on. I was just doing more of the…

I Other people’s…

R Other people’s work but it was still at my same level because I was never actually getting recognised for it. Everybody said oh I’m a great worker but that was it.

I Ok, how would you describe how open the relationship is now?

R Oh I think he tells me stuff/ I don’t think he supposed to. He knows that I won’t say it and I tell him stuff what I believe of my boss and where I am in the company and I’ve never heard anything back.

I Alright. And how much do you feel you can confide in your mentor relationship?

R We can pretty much discuss every area because I have done in the past and he’s given advice in areas as to what I should do even with partners and bosses.

I Okay so you would have got advice and directions?

R Yeah.

I Okay and in terms of work relations then would you have got any advice?

R Yeah he’s very knowledgeable so he would have an idea. He would have a totally different view than I would on relations
Yes.

Exactly where it should be, he has / he pretty much know the scene. He’s a vast amount of experience. Yeah I would trust him. Yeah I’d have no problem; I don’t really have any issues.

Okay and what about you yourself then, your own personal goals? Are these up for discussion?

No, We’d go in and we might discuss the first few minutes personal stuff like you know, tell me something about his kids and I’m building a stone wall outside my house at the moment but after all he doesn’t need to know about my personal problems.

And are you happy with that?

Yeah.

Okay and you know in terms of part of your work life balance issues, would you discuss these with your mentor?

I’d discuss it briefly but I don’t think it’s any of his business and I don’t think he’d have any interest in hearing it. To be honest all he’s there is to do a good day’s work and his job is to make sure that I get to advance in my role but I don’t think he’d care about my personal life. Not in, in fairness, now that sounds like he doesn’t care about me, but it’s not meant that way.

You have sensed it?

I would see it as my perception. I don’t want to be bothering him. But I don’t know maybe he would disagree but I don’t know.

What aspects of the mentoring relationship at the moment, give you most satisfaction?

We haven’t really done a whole lot since we started. In fairness, we started up on how we were going to do, work on my goals and how what projects we were going to do this and do that but I had so much projects at the start of the year that we were going, he was going to make me better at those projects, but every single one of them got canned. The last one got canned last week. It is to do with the company and the way its going, so a lot of my main projects/ that he would have been working to help me to get known are gone.

And so how does this impact now on your mentoring relationship?

Oh in terms of mentoring he was very, very good. I just feel like he’s wasting his time now that I am back to scratch again. My job is still under staffed, where I am working now but I’m back doing more, not menial work, more work that I would have done maybe five or six years ago that I shouldn’t be doing now. So I don’t have time to even be doing more new projects. I’m trying to do other people’s work which as I said earlier on that’s all I seem to be doing.

And on his contribution as you say, you spoke highly of lets say the insights he gave you/ you were able to apply those to the project at the time they were live?

At the time yes, and it was great. I should be applying more of his advice and not doing what I’m doing because from the start he’s been telling me what I’m doing wrong but to be honest I’m kind of feel like I’m falling back into that trap again.

Okay so that’s something you want to bring up?
Exactly for twelve o’clock I’ve it written down though. I want to figure out where I’m going and I think it was more my managers are holding me back a small bit but it’s not their fault either because it is due to…Yeah it is due to being under staffed. You know the work has to get done so they don’t have time to do it; I get landed with their part of their job, so I’m still not getting recognition for what I’m doing.

So you want to kick start that again.

It got kick started at the start so now I’m kind of gone back to where it was.

Are there any negative aspects to the mentoring relationship and by that I mean, time constraints or conflicts or let’s say perceived jealousies or favouritism from others not selected for the programme?

No, no but say for my mentor I can’t say a bad word about him. We haven’t done a whole lot but anything he’s helped me with it has been good and patient but say my boss, who I report out found out that I was doing it, like they had their nose out of joint because they found out, well why are you doing it, why not me. My boss like asked them why wasn’t she picked. Like they never heard of it. Why did she feel that she was not being developed? I think it was, she more worried about her own job.

Right?

That was an organisational choice/ concern etc. As part of my mentoring I asked my mentor to do a 360 degree feedback to see what my immediate boss and two other bosses would think of my work and my role to see exactly where I am going at the start.

Oh right.

That was terrible, that is how my boss found out about it (that I had a mentor and that it was her boss)

Oh I see.

But I do feel that when I do make the changes that my mentor was actually advising me to do they not really favoured upon.

Really.

But I think it’s not more a, it’s not his advice I think its more freedom in my role.

So in summary then you wouldn’t have necessarily experienced any other negativity from other colleagues regarding the mentoring programme?

Well there’s obviously time constraints for my mentor/ you know because he didn’t have to commit that much time to talk, he actually enjoyed doing it and once he can see some benefit out of it I feel like that he actually enjoyed the time.

Alright, and are there any difficulties for the organisation, from having a mentoring programme?

No.

Would there be general support from your colleagues about you being part of the mentoring programme?

Well I told about my boss. I don’t tell her anything. Pretty much nobody really knows I’m attending the session.

Alright, so your other colleagues?

Say my co-workers. Some I’d know who to say it to and who not to say it to.
I  Right.
R  The ones I don’t say it to they don’t need to know. There would be a bit of begrudgery and the other colleague that I would talk about it I think its something that they should be doing and basically I’m kind of doing my own little mentoring to them and any advice that I would get from my mentor I’d be telling them so that they like this is what you need to be doing. You’d want to be getting IDP’s done; they are important, so little things like that.
I  Right, okay so those are kind of indirect benefits that you’re already using?
R  I give the advice that I get to my co-workers. And they are the co-workers that I feel I could do that with. Well they’d love like feedback whereas I would love feedback. But some of my colleagues wouldn’t like any feedback.
I  Sure.
R  They’d think that you’re not doing your job right.
I  And do you think that there should be more openness about the programme?
R  I’m not sure because I’ve never really heard about it before I started and I’m not really sure, like it seems to be quite secretive because people don’t to say who they’re mentoring with at mentee meetings/
I  Okay so at this particular stage then how much you would rely on your mentor, let’s say for practical support?
R  Not very much.
I  Okay.
R  Like only for he’s after emailing me now to say I’ve got an appointment for today I probably wouldn’t have bothered.
I  And is that by choice?
R  Its not, it’s just probably because my projects are canned and I’m kind of gone back to that phase again. This is probably where I need to start going to him again but like if I did have a problem I would go to him but to be honest. I don’t have anything challenging because I’m never so busy to be doing my normal day-to-day role.
I  Okay and in terms of lets say any emotional support, say, friendship, empathy, feedback etc
R  No I’d have other people I could talk to.
I  Okay and has the mentoring relationship helped you in any way like with, say your career growth or development, do you see any benefits?
R  It has been of benefit but not a huge amount. Probably my own fault. I could see how this could be of very big benefit and where my projects kept going the way they were going I could see it being of good benefit like.
I  Okay so the potential, you could see the potential.
R  There is, yeah there is huge potential in the project and I can see if things were different how it could be brilliant to have one. Like it has its down points but it’s not just depending on your mentor. Its more, its inter-company and managerial systems, what is going on inside the company and that kind of thing. That impacts and because a lot of projects were canned it had an affect on it like.
I So and in terms of your own personal or self development like what, where would you have benefited so far.

R He’s given me confidence in my job. He would say no look you have the ability to do this and if not, like I know you, it’s in there. Like he would give you a lot of confidence in yourself like.

I And how do you think mentoring or again it would be your perception, has the mentoring relationship do you think helped your mentor from what you might perceive?

R Ah he enjoys doing it, he enjoys getting the satisfaction. Whether he’s gotten to see a huge improvement in me probably not, but that would be more my side than his.

I Right.

R Yeah he tells me that he loves doing it like. He loves doing it every year. He loves seeing the achievements from it. Now maybe I’m putting down less than what he thinks. He does enjoy it. And he will be great at giving advice when I go back up and if I won’t take it on board, and it’s up to me to do it whereas I’m thinking I’m the one that’s not actually driving it. Like he’ll tell me what to do and I’m not really doing it right. I kind of fell like I’m stuck in a rut again a bit. I’d say it’s my fault.

I Okay. Has the relationship so far has that given you access to other people you know through the mentor relationship, which now help you do your job more effectively?

R Yeah well he was the one that got me onto the project that I’m doing now in America. So he was the one that suggested that I should go into that project instead of waiting to be asked.

I Okay. What about access to people in terms of help and advice on your career?

P Not really no.

I So do you feel the relationship is meeting your expectations?

R When I started the project I had no expectations and when I went and started it I couldn’t believe the amount the knowledge that I was gaining from it and it was just enormous like. I did a huge amount of learning but as for now, part of it has come downhill.

I Are there any areas that you’ve thought about that you’d like to explore with your mentor?

R I don’t know. He said it to me like once or twice going look I don’t mind how you’re going to go about this, because you’re boss isn’t going to let you, and he said that a few times, and he said that I think I’m, then I’m kind of going well why sure like bother like. I’m not going to get past my boss. He thinks I’m in the wrong the department for what I want to do.

I Okay so there’s clarity?

R Oh yeah. He’s a very wise man.

I Okay and in terms of each of the meetings that you have would you be consciously preparing it or is it something that you would give time to before you go into the meetings or would you, you know, does it allow a bit of perspective before you get in?

R At the start yeah I was doing a lot of preparation work for it. He was telling me things I should have done for it for the next meeting.

I Alright, okay.
Yeah now I’m just walking upstairs to start again

Just to see what’s happening. We are nearly close to conclusion, are there any questions or comments that you would like to add at this stage?

No that’s it.

I would like to thank you then for your contribution today and for a very interesting discussion.

**PI3**

I  Introduction

I  How long have you been in the company/organization?

R  October 06 to present (June 07)

I  How long have you been at this particular job?

R  (Same)October

I  What is your job title?

R  Primary School Teacher

I  What is your Mentor’s position in the organization?

R  Experienced teacher- 10 years experience. Not in my own school.

I  How long has she been mentoring you?

R  Jan 06 – Present (June 07)

I  Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?

R  It was assigned.

I  How was your mentor chosen?

R  She was selected

I  Have you had other mentors?

R  (Never had formal mentors in any position before)

I  How often do you meet?

R  3 times in total throughout the year.

I  How strong is the relationship?

R  Because we only met three times the relationship was never really established, there was not sufficient interaction for this to occur. The fact that we worked in two different schools did not help the situation as there was no regular interaction during the working week, so there was no means to strengthen the relationship. Also the fact that most of the day is spent on your own, teaching, at the end of the day there were other things for both parties to do, so I believe time constraints played a part in this. When I spoke to other protégés whose mentor worked in the same school, I felt I had in some way I had gotten the short end of the stick. It would have been great to interact with my mentor on a daily basis, even if was only during breaks, it would have enabled the relationship to grow. I felt we never got further than being acquaintances and never got to the friends stage. Having said that there was no conflict and my mentor always came to our meetings prepared and had planned what she was going to cover and had also allowed time to discuss issues of concern to me. I have a very high level of professional trust in my mentor. She is well respected among the local staff and is highly regarded in the school where she
teaches. In a way our meetings are very structured and business-like, as she has other protégés that is the only way she can keep track of the various interactions.

I How important do you feel the relationship to be? To your self?, your mentor? To the Organisation?

R I believe it is more important to me than my mentor, as a new recruit I am eager to learn and get on in my job. When you finish college all you want is to get a job as soon as possible, then the day I started as a teacher and stood in front of my own class I felt sick to my stomach, it was something I was not prepared for. I thought to myself, “the buck stops here”. I think it was recognized that many new teachers feel the same as if they have been set adrift once they have finished college. By being part of this programme I felt I had been thrown a “life-line”, one that I held onto very tightly. There is so much for one to learn once you start a teaching post and at the same time you are expected to assist your pupils to learn. Formal mentoring is a relatively new practice in the organisation, so I believe it is important for it to be effective and seen as a positive experience for the dyad if the mentoring process is to continue. It was very important to me to be able to participate in this programme and vital to my socialisation into my profession. My mentor took her role very serious, sometimes if I found myself lagging behind because of the high workload she would motivate me to get my act together. I know it was important to the school as all the other teachers were very willing to offer advice and encouragement. They see the introduction of the programme as a good thing and one which would have of benefit to them when they started teaching. Their encouragement has meant a great deal to me and made me feel accepted.

I How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?

R I am cautious about confiding in my mentor because I am not completely aware of the reporting structure the organisation. I know the Principal (Line Manager) is aware of the process and that my mentor gives feedback to her but I am not certain this is such a good thing for me as it makes me more wary and cautious about any comments, concerns or views I would have, or make. It’s like as if there is a third party in the relationship as times. I think if I knew the relationship was completely confidential or if I had known my mentor before the programme began, I would be more inclined to confide in my mentor.

I How open is the relationship?

R Very open, I don’t feel inhibited if I want to raise a concern. My mentor if willing to listen to my point of view and take on board what I want to achieve through the relationship. She allows me to have input into the sessions and will focus on the things that are important to me. She has goals or milestones with regard to my progress but she allows me set the agenda so it may not be in the order she had planned and we go back and forth but this enables me to thread together all the different themes that exist in teaching. My mentor encourages me to think for myself, way up different options and arrive at my own answer to a problem. I suppose she is like a lighthouse guiding me home”.

I How formal?
The relationship is informal. My mentor is very down to earth and empathises with me as a new teacher and knows how important it is to me to succeed and to be seen to be successful. The teaching profession sets very high standards for all teachers and it is understandable as we are under scrutiny every day by the public, we set and maintain very high standards. So while the relationship is informal I am never allowed to loose sight of the responsibility of my job. For example there is equality to consider, you must treat every pupil the same, even though they not same. Dealing with parents is a very difficult part of my job, the last thing I want is a parent complaining me to the principal, so sometimes I feel a bit of a pushover. My mentor gives me direction and encouragement and to be truthful, she gives me courage. If I did not have the mentor I would be very slow to discuss these issues with colleagues as it might be seen as a sign of weakness.

How much do you feel you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?

I have no reservations approaching my mentor with any problems and she is always willing to listen. As we only meet once a term, when I have meeting with my mentor I have prepared a list of things I wish to discuss. If there are things that are bothering me, I know I can call her outside of working hours. She is always willing to listen and will put time aside to talk to me during her breaks.

What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?

She listens to my concerns and offers verbal and practical support but encourages me to arrive at my own decisions and answers and guides me through decision making process. I know she is training me for when the programme is finished and is trying to make me realise I will have to rely on my own judgement. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed with all I have to learn and do in this first year, without my mentor I don’t know how I would have coped”.

Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?

No. This programme is tailored for new teachers only, as such we are not given much additional responsibility in the first year what with the mentoring programme and studying for the Diploma in teaching.

Does your mentor provide you with information and/or resources that help you do your job better?

Yes, (she provides) materials from a variety of publications. Teaching is mainly responsible for the education of young children but there are so many more aspects to teaching that I must be aware of, equality, social exclusion, diversity, disability awareness, environment protection etc. A lot of prejudices we have as adults we learn as children, as a teacher I have an obligation to help children care about and help the lesser well off in society. We are after all educating our future leaders and members of society. My mentor has helped me realise the importance of my role in society and understand that is it not just a job with long summer holidays.

Has your mentor put you in contact with other s who provide you with information and resources?
Yes with another 2nd class teacher for additional mentoring. She has put me in touch with this teacher and we talk on the phone and meet up from time to time to exchange our experiences. This has been of excellent benefit to both of us and we have become trusted colleagues, I know I will maintain contact with this other protégé after the programme has finished. I feel I can let my “guard” down when talking this other teacher, we are in the same boat and I think without this new contact it would have been not as enjoyable. It also helps to get an insight into how other schools are run and it has become clear that each school has its own culture, the root of which is very much related to the principal but members of staff also contribute to its culture, as do the pupils.

Do you obtain support similar to that which you receive from other individuals in the organization?

Yes, other teachers on the in-service days are very eager to discuss their experiences and I also get a lot of support from colleagues and peers on the programme. The staff teachers also see the benefit of the programme because they remember how hard the first year was for each of them, the pressure to be the “perfect” teacher is enormous. They also told me how important it is to develop patience and to always keep your cool in class, one child is not easy to manage at times, twenty five (25) pupils for five (5) hours each day can make it almost impossible at times. They have told me about stepping out of the class for a few minutes to collect your bearings.

How strong are these relationships?

Very supportive. I know that in many ways the other teachers in the school “mother” me a bit and are very willing to give advice. Its like they all have a vested interest in I doing well and coming up to speed within the next twelve months. I never thought about how much of an impact it had on other teachers when one teacher does not cover the full curriculum in the academic year, it means that the new teacher must finish last year’s books before she can move on. This creates a lot of additional work and I suppose they all have a vested interest in I doing well.

Were you introduced to this person through your mentor?

No, they are members of staff except for the other protégé to whom my mentor introduced me.

What type of information and resources or assistance are available to you from your relationship with the other

Practical support and advice on materials, teaching ideas.

How much do you rely on your mentor for support? What type do you rely on most?

It’s supplementary, but nice to know it’s there. The whole objective is that I will be able to rely on myself; I see the programme as training me for this. When I graduated I knew had the knowledge and skill to do the job and this about giving me the confidence to do it.

Has the relationship helped your career advancement?

Not particularly. As a newly qualified teacher it is much too early to say.

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you do your job more effectively?
Yes, in-service days allowed me meet others new teachers on the mentoring program. Although I suppose it is the organiser who has provided me with these contacts more than my mentor.  

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with your career guidance?

I now feel I have a network of teachers in other schools I can contact at any time, even when the program has finished. I will encounter them from time to time when I go on in-service days in the future but I can also get in contact with them at any time if I wish. The group had a common bond because of the pilot, not all NQT’s participated in the programme and we understood how lucky we were to have been given the opportunity.

Has your mentor helped you get more recognition in the organisation?

No. I don’t think that was the intention of this programme but that is not to say it may not be in the future.

Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences

None; it was overall a very positive experience for me.

How influential do you feel your mentor in the organisation? Any examples?

Not influential my organisation, she works in another school.

Has your mentor helped you become more influential in the organisation?

No

Has your mentor helped you become more autonomous in the organisation?

No

Has anyone else helped you in this way?

Yes. Two other teachers in the school have been extremely helpful and take me “under their wing”.

How did you meet this, these people?

Through mentor and another 2nd class teacher.

How do your mentor and this person know each other?

Yes. They’re colleagues

Can you try and describe in a few words your overall feeling about your mentoring?

I thought the mentoring program was extremely valuable. I think it would have been more beneficial to have a mentor that was within my own school. But my mentor made such an effort to help me, I was very lucky to have her. Sometime it is not easy to discuss issues or difficulties. My mentor helped step outside my immediate work group and look beyond. She also encouraged me to network and build my network as I go through my career. Especially if I want to seek promotion or change direction in the future. My working day is spent teaching and I would meet my mentor outside of normal working hours. Mentoring is a solution which works to help fast track orientation and socialization into the educational system. I don’t think I would have developed as well as a teacher, or as fast unless I had participated in the programme.
I. How long have you been in the company/organization?
R. 3 years

I. How long have you been at this particular job?
R. 3 years

I. What is your job title?
R. Classroom teacher

I. What is your Mentor’s position in the organization?
R. Classroom teacher

I. How long has he/she been mentoring you?
R. 6 months

I. Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R. It was assigned in the programme

I. How was your mentor chosen?
R. (Chosen by Principal. Teacher interviewed for post as mentor)

I. Have you had other mentors?
R. No

I. How often do you meet?
R. Once a week

I. How strong is the relationship?
R. Tense, strained. When we started meeting I did not know what to expect and when I asked questions my mentor got frustrated as she wanted to be in control. We had not been given guidelines at the start and we seemed to get off on the wrong footing. We motored along for the duration but I wish it could have been better.

I. How important do you feel the relationship to be? To your self?, your mentor? To the Organisation?
I. Important to me and important to my mentor. This my first permanent job and when I started I was told I would be participating in the program, I didn’t mind that as I knew any additional help I would get from it would be a positive, I wanted to do well. My mentor had volunteered for the project and I know it was important to her, otherwise she would not have taken her role so seriously.

I. How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?
R. Not much, I am very guarded. Things are a bit frosty at times so I tend to tread carefully. I can’t say why but we do not appeared to have struck a common bond, it’s like she has her agenda and I have mine”.

I. How open is the relationship?
R. Open enough, but not as much as I would like. As I said we both tread carefully. We meet every week and sometimes I dread going to the meetings, it may not be always convenient for me, personally of professionally but we have to meet because the mentor wishes it. It they were some flexibility, even to move the day up or down in the week I feel I would have some room, but at time I feel I am suffocating.

I. How formal?
Not very formal, there is no set structure to our sessions and sometimes we discuss her topics and sometimes we discuss mine. I feel a bit hard-done by this at times because I thought the whole idea of the programme was to help me.

How much do you feel you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?

At first easily enough but as time went on there was a personality clash. I can’t say any one thing happened to change things but there is not doubt in my mind there was a personality clash. The unfortunate thing is I felt I had nowhere to go for assistance when they did. If I went to the principal, she may have taken a dim view of me approaching her; after all, I was the “new kid” in the school”.

What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?

Advice & Resources. It has not been all bad; my mentor has given me very practical advice and help re preparing lesson plans and lessons for the inspector. This has been a great and did take some of the pressure off me.

Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?

No, I must do this myself. It’s not that kind of a relationship; it’s just me and her in the classroom doing our thing.

Does your mentor provide you with information and/or resources that help you do your job better?

Yes, help with lesson plans & posters.

Has your mentor put you in contact with other s who provide you with information and resources?

Yes, another protégé in a different school. I meet this other teacher at inservice days and it has been a great help.

Do you obtain support similar to that which you receive from other individuals in the organization?

No, teachers in my school are unhelpful and not at all interested in the mentoring program or those participating in it.

Do you seek advice, information or other assistance from other people inside the organization?

A lot of them have between ten (10) and fifteen (15) years service with young families, and they are more interested in leaving as quickly as possible after school, they would not be interested in this programme at all

How strong are these relationships?

Not very strong.

What type of information and resources or assistance are available to you from your relationship with the others?

Sharing of information, lesson plans, etc. We all have different ways of teaching and if it works for you and the children are picking things up fast, it’s good to be able to exchange tips with another teacher like yourself.

How much do you rely on your mentor for support ?

Not as much as I did in the beginning. I was a bit green at the start and took everything she said as gospel but after a while and as I gained experience I began to rely on my own judgment more. We have very different views.

Has the relationship helped your career advancement?
No
Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you do your job more effectively?

Not to do my job more effectively but to ensure I am teaching what I should be teaching, so it is more about the job and less about me. I suppose a lot of it is about the culture of teaching and the role of the teacher.

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with your career guidance?

No
Has your mentor helped you get more recognition in the organization?

No
Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?

Yes, we have different views on teaching methods, how class rooms should be laid out, etc. She is not impressed with my teaching methods I am happy with them and they yield good results for me. As a consequence, because of this I am reluctant to meet her. We seem to have differences regularly.

How influential do you feel your mentor in the organisation?

It’s difficult to say. I honestly don’t know. If she is as forceful with other people like she is with me, I don’t think it will yield good results for her.

Has your mentor helped you become more influential in the organisation?

No
Has your mentor helped you become more autonomous in the organisation?

Yes. Very soon I realised she was going to be my first hurdle. I knew it was going to political and I would need to be careful, she would be giving feedback to the principal and I did not wish him to have a slanted view of my performance. I made my point very diplomatically and after all I do have the same academic qualifications as my mentor.

Has anyone else helped you in this way?

School Principal
How did you meet this person?
He is my superior.
Do your mentor and this person know each other?
Yes
Try and describe in a few words your overall feeling about your mentoring.

At first I was happy with the mentoring process but as time went on and our opinions clashed, I was more reluctant to meet with her. I am happy with my teaching style and in some ways you have to accommodate the learning abilities of your class. My mentor did not see it this way, she said it should be the same all the time. I played along for a while but little by little I became more brave in voicing my opinions.
P15

I Introduction
I How long have you been in the company/organization?
R 7 months
I How long have you been at this particular job?
R 4 years
I What is your job title?
R Primary School Teacher
I What is your Mentor’s position in the organization?
R Primary School Teacher – works in another school
I How long has she been mentoring you?
R 5 months
I Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R Assigned
I How was your mentor chosen?
R Don’t know, I was just told by the principle who my mentor was going to be. I did not have any say.
I Have you had other mentors?
R No, this is my first time having a mentor.
I How often do you meet?
R We use phone for regular contact. Met 3 or 4 times.
I How strong is the relationship?
R Good. There are times when it could have been better and I don’t know why this happened.
I How important do you feel the relationship to be? To your self?, your mentor? To the Organisation?
R Very important to both of us and the organization. A lot of time and effort and money has been spent on this programme. The mentors had in-service days, the protégés and the school principals. I think if it goes well it may be implemented for all new teachers.
I How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?
R I would confide little things to my mentor but others I keep to myself, I can’t why I do this. There is not particular reason but to be honest I usually keep my own counsel. I am not the confiding type, it has always been difficult for me to let my feelings show and it has been the same during the mentoring programme. I think we could have gone a bit easier on each other at times”.
I How open is the relationship?
R Very open. We only meet about once a term as my mentor works in another school a few miles away but we do communicate on the phone. Sometimes this does not work well for me as I cannot discuss the lessons plans properly over the phone. We are asked to mix up the subjects to avoid the pupils getting fatigued or losing concentration. It’s easy for my mentor as she has taught for a few years but it does not come so easily to me.
I How formal?
R It is professional. I have spoken to other protégés at the in-service days and you would think we were part of different programmes as they have
developed really warm relationships with their mentors. I cannot complain about the professional advice I have been given, it has all been spot on but the relationship has lacked the X-factor from my perspective.

I: How much do you feel you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?
R: I’m very much able to discuss any concerns I have with regard to how I am doing my job and how I reach decisions. I know my mentor has only a few years experience but it has been in a few schools and she has shared information about different cultures in schools. It never occurred to me about this difference. She also told me it is important to be flexible and open to change. I have enjoyed these conversations and she listens to any concerns I have. Not all her stories are relevant to me but I listen anyway.

I: What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?
R: Professional and good for sourcing materials. I would not talk too much about my concerns or worries to my mentor as this might be seen as a sign of weakness. I let her think I am in control all the time. She has an excellent reputation but sometimes she expects too much, although I don’t say that to her.

I: Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?

I: Does your mentor provide you with information and/or resources that help you do your job better?
R: Yes
I: Like what?
R: Resources and information, this relates mostly to teaching subjects and new materials.

I: Has your mentor put you in contact with other s who provide you with information and resources?
R: No

I: Do you obtain support similar to that which you receive from other individuals in the organization?
R: Yes, another teacher in my school has been a great help to me. We clicked when I started working here and we have a lot in common. We have our breaks together most of the time when we are not on yard duty. Her support has been invaluable to me and in some ways she has been a surrogate mentor.

I: Do you seek advice, information or other assistance from other people inside the organization?
R: Other teachers in the school take a keen interest in how I am progressing and will volunteer assistance and advice from time to time but not on a regular basis. I know if I did approach any of them they would willingly help me but I try not to do this too much as they have their own classes to teach.

I: How strong are these relationships?
R: Reasonably strong. I have not been in the school very long and am still building relationships in the school but they are friendly and are there if I need them. I have been teaching a few years in temporary posts, this is my first permanent position but I do have experience. I am also a little older
than most new teachers so that might have influenced how they perceive or react to me.

I Were you introduced to any of these through your mentor?
R No.
I What type of information and resources or assistance are available to you from your relationship with the others?
R None really, it is more the exchange between colleagues and friends
I How much do you rely on your mentor for support?
R I rely on my mentor very little. There have been clear benefits to me from the relationship but they are limited. I would not rely on my mentor as a first place about my concerns, I am a bit wary.
I Has the relationship helped your career advancement?
R It is difficult to see it has helped career advancement, at this point in time, no but maybe in the future.
I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you do your job more effectively?
R Not really besides what I mentioned
I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with your career guidance?
R No not really. No.
I Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?
R No, it is what it is. It has helped there is no doubt about that but I think it will only become apparent how much in the future.
I I participated in the program because I felt I had to and did not have any other choice. It has not been a wonderful experience and I have made many contacts through it. But the…I think my relationship with my mentor could have been better.

P16

I Introduction
I How long have you been in the company/organization?
R 1.5 years
I How long have you been at this particular job?
R 2 years
I What is your job title?
R Primary School teacher
I What is your Mentor’s position in the organization?
R Primary School teacher
I How long has he/she been mentoring you?
R Nine months
I Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R Assigned
I How was your mentor chosen?
R Selected by Principal
I Have you had other mentors?
I How often do you meet?
R Once a week

I How strong is the relationship?
R Strong enough. We work in the same school and see each other every day so the relationship has grown over time.

I How important do you feel the relationship to be? To yourself?, your mentor? To the Organisation?
R Important to me, Important to mentor. Important to organisation

I How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?
R I feel I could confide any problems and that it would be kept confidential. She is truthful and provides good advice, I trust her judgment and I know she has my best interest at heart.

I How open is the relationship?
R Very open. And strong. I share any problems or situations whether good or bad. She listens to me, is concerned that I do not put myself under too much pressure. She knows I am a worrier and she builds me up when I feel deflated.

I How formal?
R Informal, this is a great advantage as on a given day it may have been really tough in the classroom and I may have been stressed out completely at the end of the day, its great to be able to sit down and talk with my mentor. In my school we sometimes met during the day, there may have been a substitute teacher in and this allows me draw breath and focus on my own development with my mentor.

I How much do you feel you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?
R No difficulty approaching her, she has been great from day one, I don’t know how I would have managed without her. She herself is very ambitious and career motivated and I feel by acting as a mentor to me she hopes this will stand to her in the future.

I What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?
R She’s helped with solutions to problems when dealing with parents. This is one area I find very difficult and I rely on my mentor’s advice very much in relation to this. (She provides) ideas for teaching, teaching methods. Shares her experiences and this gives me a good insight into teaching. I think I may have idealized the job a lot when I was training but I never realised how noisy it is in a class with children all day. She gave me good advice on simple things such as this.

I Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?
R No

I Does your mentor provide you with information and/or resources that help you do your job better?
R Yes, teaching materials to use, lesson plans. And helpful with providing me with ideas.

I Has your mentor put you in contact with other s who provide you with information and resources?
Yes, and no. I am in contact with another of her protégés but I know her personally anyway.

Do you obtain support similar to that which you receive from other individuals in the organization?

Yes, if I seek help from them.

Do you seek advice, information or other assistance from other people inside the organization?

Yes, I would often seek advice from various teachers who have expertise in certain subject areas with regard to teaching certain subjects.

How strong are these relationships?

Relationships between teachers are in general very strong both within this and other schools.

Were you introduced to others through your mentor?

Yes.

What type of information and resources or assistance are available to you from your relationship with the others?

Teaching resources, lesson plans, teaching schemes, ideas.

How much do you rely on your mentor for support?

In the beginning, I relied heavily on my mentor for advice and support but not as much as time went on. Although as things arise I do still seek advice and ideas from time to time.

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you do your job more effectively?

Yes, my teaching has improved because of the mentoring as I found out better ways to handle the class to teach various subject matters. I also learned this at mentoring in-service days outside of school.

Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with your career guidance?

Yes, other new teachers and other more experienced teachers. I was allowed observe more experienced teachers in order to get a better grasp of classroom management, etc.

Has your mentor helped you get more recognition in the organization?

No, not necessarily.

Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?

I have not found any negatives in general. Although maybe mentor might have provided me with ideas she thought she I might use and then I decided not to. Or at times, due to the difference in our personalities, I might have been less organized than she would have expected me to be. As organised as she is herself.

How influential do you feel your mentor in the organisation?

Although she is not in the organisation much longer than me she is quite well established and so quite influential. On the other hand, we hold the same post we are quite equal.

Has your mentor helped you become more influential in the organisation?

She has advised me on certain aspects that have enabled me to be more assertive in my position, sometimes I would doubt my decisions and she would reassure me.
I Has your mentor helped you become more autonomous in the organisation?
R No. Other than I achieving my Diploma in teaching, which I am sure I would have gotten anyway, as the Department Inspector had been very happy with my teaching and planning.
I Has anyone else helped you in this way?
R Yes, other teachers who would not have been involved in the mentoring process would have also helped me.
I How did you meet these teachers?
R We are work colleagues.
I Do your mentor and this person know each other?
R Yes, they also work together
I Try and describe in a few words your overall feeling about your mentoring?
R I was happy with the mentoring process to a point. Meeting my mentor in the beginning was beneficial, as time on I felt my mentor was treating me as a newly qualified teacher more that anybody else in the school, which at times made me feel inadequate. While she assured me my teaching was great, I did feel she might have shared a different opinion with the school principal. It became obvious to me that the dyad was being discussed by them and this was very upsetting to me and made me very wary as time went on. It’s a pity because everything until that last meeting had gone really well. However it was good to have someone to discuss problems and I had the opportunity on in-service days with other newly qualified teachers which I enjoyed and with whom I felt comfortable.

P17

I Introduction
I How long have you been in the company/organization?
R Two years
I How long have you been at this particular job?
R Three years
I What is your job title?
R Primary School teacher
I What is your Mentor’s position in the organization?
R Primary School teacher 5-10 years experience
I How long has he/she been mentoring you?
R Ten months
I Was the relationship assigned or voluntary?
R Assigned
I How was your mentor chosen?
R Selected by Principal
I Have you had other mentors?
R No
I How often do you meet?
R Once a fortnight, sometimes once a week
I How strong is the relationship?
R Very Strong. We got on very well from the start and established a good rapport from the start. She was easy to talk to and I felt comfortable discussing issues with her. The relationship functioned very well from the start and we were both very enthusiastic about the programme.

I How important do you feel the relationship to be? To your self?, your mentor? To the Organisation?
R (Import to me, Important to mentor. Important to organisation)

I How much do you feel like you can confide in your mentor?
R I feel I could confide any problems and that my mentor cares. When you teach as a student, the teacher of the class is always in the background watching over you but once you have your own class its like as if the safety net has been taken away. Having a mentor is like putting the safety net back for while.

I How open is the relationship?
R Very open. I share any problems or situations whether good or bad. She understands me completely and is always there to help, she boosts my confidence when it is lagging and praises me in public which is very flattering.

I How formal?
R Informal. We talk to each other quite openly and I look forward to our meetings. My mentor is willing to listen, give advice if asked and more over knows when to let me arrive at my own decisions.

I How much do you feel you can approach your mentor with problems you might have?
R No difficulty approaching her, there is no downside to this relationship. She supports me all the way and makes me feel good about myself as a teacher.

I What kinds of support does your mentor provide you?
R Helped with solutions to problems when dealing with parents. She provides ideas for teaching, teaching methods. Builds my confidence, tells me how good I am & Shares her experiences.

I Does your mentor provide you with opportunities to prove yourself in the organisation?
R Yes

I Does your mentor provide you with information and/or resources that help you do your job better?
R Yes, teaching materials to use, lesson plans. And helpful with providing me with ideas

I Has your mentor put you in contact with other s who provide you with information and resources?
R Yes. I am in contact with another of her protégés

I Do you obtain support similar to that which you receive from other individuals in the organization?
R Yes, I feel they look out for me as I am the newest teacher in the school. They are more than willing to help and will advice if asked. They are all extremely helpful and I feel a valued member of staff. I like they way they encourage me to learn, sometimes from my mistakes.
I What type of information and resources or assistance are available to you from your relationship with the others?
R Teaching resources, lesson plans.
I How much do you rely on your mentor for support?
R In the beginning, I relied heavily on my mentor for advice and support but not as much as time went on. Although as things arise I do still seek advice and ideas from time to time and I feel she also wants me to feel more independent as I gain experience.
I Has the relationship helped your career advancement? How?
R Yes, I feel my teaching has improved because of the mentoring as I found out better ways to handle the class to teach various subject matters. I also learned this at mentoring in-service days outside of school and I have a higher profile in the school as this is a new pilot within the Dept of Education.
I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you do your job more effectively?
R Yes, other NQTs’ (newly qualified teachers) and other more experienced teachers.
I Has the relationship provided you with access to other people that help you with your career guidance?
R Yes
I Has your mentor helped you get more recognition in the organization?
R Yes, I think the Principal sees me as more capable. When you start you are a complete stranger to everyone and teaching does not provide the same opportunity to get to know your colleagues like other jobs but I have demonstrated well the kind of person I am and the interest I have in my work.
I Are there any difficulties or downsides to the relationship? Negative consequences?
R I have not found any negatives. It has been a very positive experience for me and I think my mentor only interest is in helping me develop as a teacher and that is satisfaction enough for her.
I How influential do you feel your mentor in the organisation?
R Although she is not in the organisation much longer than me she is quite well established and so quite influential. On the other hand and we hold the same post we are quite equal.
I Has your mentor helped you become more influential in the organisation?
R Yes. She has advised me on certain aspects that have enabled me to be more assertive
I Has your mentor helped you become more autonomous in the organisation? How?
R No. In a professional like teaching there is very little mobility.
I Has anyone else helped you in this way?
R Yes, other teachers.
I Try and describe in a few words your overall feeling about your mentoring?
R I think this program has been invaluable with regard to understanding my ability and confidence as a teacher, and with regard to socialization.
Remember as a teacher you spend 90% of you days with children only and the opportunity for social interaction with others in very little. I had not been aware of the programme in advance and when I was given the opportunity to participate I was very excited at the prospect. I also felt very important. I have wanted to be a teacher since I was four years of age, once I started teaching I felt I belonged here. I am so glad to be in this profession, it’s everything I thought it would be, and more.

P18

I
Introduction
I
Okay so I’m just going to start then with some context questions and then what we will do then is move into the scope of the relationship, or how you finding it at the moment and what you’re getting from it. So how long have you been with the company?
R
I’ve worked here now for three years and three months to be exact.
I
And what is your current work role?
R
My role is, I work within the team HR. I work on the learning and development team for three days a week so I’m a Learning and Development Specialist and for the other two days I work on the organisational development team.
I
Do you have other non work roles outside of work? Family, community, sports etc
R
Well I’m a volunteer with the children’s hospital, with Crumlin, Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital and what I do there is I work for the Play Well Programme so I went through intensive training to become a Play Well Co-ordinator so what it is one evening a week I go up and I work there for four hours and I literally go onto a ward. I’d be dedicated a ward to go to and I go into the playroom and I gather the children from the wards, from their rooms within the ward and we play games for four hours. So it’s great fun. So really enjoying that.
I
It’s obviously important to you?
R
It’s a huge role for me and I’m actually in August of this year I will be going on to train volunteers who’ll be coming along so they only recruit for Play Well Co-ordinators twice a year so I’ve signed myself to do with my learning and development background to become a trainer.
I
How long have you been in your current formal position in the company?
R
So I’ve worked on the learning and development team the full three years/and organisational and development team for the last three months.
I
And how would you describe the characteristics of your current career stage
P
I suppose given the current environment there’s no room for promotion. So at times I would find that frustrating because I have been told that I would be at my next level if this wasn’t the current environment. But I am being continuously developed so, I’d say the first two years of working in L&D I really was coming up to speed at what the learning environment is about. It’s my first time working in HR within a company and then for the
last year, within my third year I was fully aware that I could have done half the stuff in my sleep (laugh) and I really had a conversation I suppose with my manager /and that if there’s anywhere in HR that there’s room for me to move around/ I’m happy to/ because I really do see myself from any career development discussion that I’ve had I’ve been a HR generalist/ and not a learning and development specialist.

I  You want to broaden your role?
R  Yeah I do want to broaden my role so at the moment I really am, I’m putting in the extra hours working on OD and it’s a struggle working within the two teams but putting them in will work for my future career progression. So at the moment I feel that I am, I felt consciously developing.

I  What are the important priorities, for you at the moment in work/life areas?
R  What would be my priorities? I suppose my priority is to develop as much as I can and especially with the recession/ yeah there is opportunities now. Okay so there are no opportunities for salary increase or any of those kinds of pay benefits but there is with the environment some areas within HR are quieter than others/ so there is room to move around and to gain on the job experience from someone else who has a lot more experienced than myself. So I really am, that’s a key focus for me at the moment to get as much, develop my skills as much as I can.

I  Okay.
R  So that’s for when I suppose the recession lifts hopefully then I could progress to the next level.

I  And would you say, your priorities changed in the last three years?
R  I definitely feel that they have changed because when I came here (laugh) I thought I was only really here for a year/ and I worked in finance for a year but then I left college and I knew that wasn’t for me but I always wanted to get into HR but it’s so hard to break in so I really just wanted to come here for a year and then I actually did want to go to a recruitment agency but I wanted to get my experience within working in HR first.

I  Okay.
R  But sure that didn’t happen. They’re no longer my priorities. So my priorities now are the way that they’ve changed it that now I see myself as more a generalist and not just working in the resources. That’s before I ever worked in HR, I always wanted to work there. And then I ended up in L&D. I love learning and development. That completely changed but I’d like to have a generalist role.

I  Okay, alright so just moving onto the mentoring programme then. So if I may ask then is this your first formal experience of being a mentee?
R  No it’s my second.
I  Okay so could you just maybe outline then just very briefly your former mentee experience?
R  My former experience the lady, again it was a lady manager.
I  Within this company.
R  Within this company who was my mentor beforehand was just one level above me so I used it more on an informal basis than a formal basis. So we never had full on discussions of what I was going to concentrate on or
what I wanted to get from the mentoring relationship. It was more just as
and when it was needed, what I really used that one for was to get advice
on how the business unit I worked works so to speak, so it was really to
get business knowledge.

I  How did the relationship come about?
R  It was actually, it came from the mentor not really from myself. It was my
first relationship so I think given that I wasn’t really sure how mentoring
worked. It was before I managed the mentoring programme. I wasn’t
really sure how mentoring worked and I hadn’t done the mentoring
training. So when I first met up with my mentor she did give me a
background on what it was and how it’s done/ and then from her
experience, she’d obviously worked in an informal relationship herself and
that’s what she liked to do. So we became more, I could actually say, I
suppose you would call her a friend, more friends than…[Pause]
There was definitely a development within the relationship but it
developed that much that then it was more, we were definitely like friends
and it turned out that we knew people that knew each other and it just
totally changed completely and it was no longer a mentoring relationship I
would say. Well it was more like a friend and more bouncing ideas off
etc. [Pause]
It wasn’t for work, more a desire to get the business knowledge. It does
change and this is what happened. It changed over time so say for the first
six months it was your settling in period so I did get some business
knowledge and then got to know each other and then we ended up crossing
over because I’d have lots of business contacts with working in HR so it
ended up crossing over. So it was a lady outside of HR, so she worked in
the business and we were just getting in a lot of work really through I got
to know each other, we’d see each other out.

I  How did you become interested or were made aware of the mentoring
programme?
R  With the mentoring programme, with working in HR I had heard about
mentoring but from my manager, my previous manager she had advised
me to get a mentor. It was something that I was interested in and to read
up about it so it was up our HR intranet site, so this is before I championed
the mentoring programme, she actually did at the time and she told of all
the benefits it was to herself and I worked out my learning and
development plan and one of my key areas was to develop my business
knowledge so that’s the reason why I went into it.

I  How was your mentor chosen?
R  I actually approached my mentor.
I  And how did it develop form there?
R  I came in contact with (Mentor 18) I did the three sixty degree feedback
and she gave me my feedback and she gave me lots of tips and I think to
be honest it was the most tips I’ve ever been given in a one conversation
or in all the time I’ve worked in this business division and she just really
got a feel for who I was and I could just totally connect with her. That was
my first time ever dealing with (her) although she worked in HR, I never
had to work with her or deal with her. Like I would say hello, just totally
informal but I never had to deal with her in that way and we just totally
connected. I felt she got where I was coming from without even knowing me. After that meeting I approached (my mentor) and I asked her would it be possible because I knew from the mentor programme that she is up there as a mentor, would it be possible for her to be my mentor and she said that it would be no problem but just to think about what I wanted to get from the mentor relationship and she actually suggested to me would it be better that, or would I like to get a mentor within the business. And I said because of my previous experience because the mentoring relationship I suppose it lacked and it became more or less friendship that I’d like to gain the experience of having a mentoring relationship first of all within my comfort zone and talk with someone, okay so not like hugely familiar with her/ but I did know her to say hello and because of her 360 feedback meeting that I literally like connected to her and she said okay that’s perfect. [Pause]

Then we started of the relationship and from there. (My mentor) organised our first meeting as a mentor and we discussed, she took me through like the mentoring relationship and how would I like it to work and what I’d like to gain from it so and how often we’d like to meet. And she really set the scene for me, do you want to just approach me or will we put in time for every three months or will you send me an e-mail, will we meet for coffee etc, all those kinds of things that made me feel comfortable then when approaching her because we’d got them out of the way at the beginning.

I How long have you participated in this relationship?
R Its ten months now yeah,
I And your mentor’s formal position in the organisation then, is that, I think we were saying its two levels.
R (My mentor) is a manager, grade 3 and I’m a bank official so she’s one, two, yeah, she’s on her third level. So our mentoring is on hold at the moment, just for the last two months, yeah.
I And generally how often would you meet or how often have you met since the relationship…
R Since we met initially and then I initiated two, so I’d say three meetings in the last 10 months
I Okay. And would you have, any occasion to meet outside of these meetings?
R To be honest and I know our mentoring relationship was on hold but I actually, last week only went to (my mentor) when I was back working on my own team with, to really get her advice on something so it was more informal and just around her desk. I just asked her when she got a minute and I ran something passed her which has nothing got to do with our work so it was definitely from a mentoring perspective.
I So the relationship is on hold now for the last three months is it really, it has been active about 6 months then
R Yeah.
I What were your hopes and concerns when you started out in the relationship?
R My hopes were to gain business knowledge and for career development.
I Okay, and did you have any concerns about it?
My concerns I suppose were around confidentiality. How I felt it was really, I kind of had a nervous feeling when I think on it. I was nervous about oh this is someone completely new, how could I discuss private things that were close to me and how much do I, how much information do I give. How much do I hold back? It was more around, yeah I know not to name names and how do I explain something without talking about an individual and not pointing fingers and there was just and would they know the people I was talking about. There was just that whole hazy around the whole confidentiality piece I think.

Alright, so having been in, you know, two relationships formal or informal what characteristics or what qualities you feel the mentor or mentors brought to that relationship.

Well I feel structure, with my current relationship. They definitely give me advice some coaching on their expertise. Their experience, so their career experience.

Yes,

Also a positive attitude to help me frame my mind on lots of things. They brought their own perspective as well and then for/ on a more constructive point I’d say from my previous mentor relationship because the fact that it lapsed/ it became too informal so I think they gave a, I don’t really know how you’d phrase that but it was just the fact that it became so informal. There was no real structure to it.

Alright and how would you describe at the moment now the strengths of the mentoring relationship you have/ the level of trust, common ground, like respect, friendship etc?.

Yeah the level of respect I definitely have a huge amount of respect for (her), I had watched her work a lot so we never like really overlapped in work situations but I had seen her and I suppose I do aspire to be like her so that’s the reason why I approached her.

A role model.

Yeah definitely a role model just from all her achievements like for her age, where she’s so driven. They are definitely; I have a huge of respect for (her). I couldn’t have chosen anyone better I would think that I know of.

Right, and how would you describe the level of openness that exists in your mentoring relationship?

I’d say it’s very open. Now it is, so I think it took a while. At first, when we first met up and then I said I wanted to focus on career development my first meeting then, (She) took me through a tool of how to decide on where I wanted to go in the future so we worked through this exercise and then it turned out I wanted to be a HR generalist. That is what I want to do and then she asked me to come up a plan of how I was going to get there and she gave me advice but it was totally focused on myself and my career plan over a five year period and to keep in mind the current environment. But she really did put structure on it completely so I think it took our first two meetings before I became as open as I would be.

Okay.
R And it helped, I think that allowed me to be open because it was an exercise. It wasn’t like I had to just bring out all this stuff. It kind of came out through the exercise.

I Okay so at this stage how much do you feel you can confide or disclose to your mentor in relation to work issues that are going on for you.

R I would say well yeah not thinking about the current, like the now, because obviously if there was stuff that came up in the organisational development team I wouldn’t say I’d be comfortable with confiding in (my mentor), because she is my manager there but from a learning and development or any other perspective, personal or anything I would confide in her no problem.

I Okay and from a work relations point of view, would you feel comfortable talking about that or seeking advice?

R Oh I definitely would definitely would and I’d definitely seek advice so I’d be asking (her), for her point of view of how she would approach it.

I Would you feel comfortable at the moment sharing quality of work life issues concerning yourself (if you have them?)

R I felt I do need to have a conversation with (my mentor) around working on the learning and development team and the organisational development team. I am like totally busy, like very, very busy at the moment and I know but the type of person that I am I’m kind of thinking out of it/ as that’s my career progression like if I want to get to where I want to go I need to put in extra hours but I am feeling a bit of a…

I Burnout?

R Yeah a bit of a burn out now at the moment like I’m constantly tired and I’m working longer so I’m in first thing. I’m in at eight o’clock and I’m not leaving before six o’clock and usually I work nine to quarter past five like everyone else or we can early because we’ve flexi time/ but I definitely am feeling that I’m definitely putting in the extra hours and I’m finding it hard to come back because when I work on Monday I’m in learning and development then, Tuesday and Wednesday in organisational development. Thursday and Friday in learning and development, and I am kind of feeling that where I am, I was going from one thing to the next. It’s a discipline to leave all your learning and development stuff behind when you go to organisational development and the same, visa versa but…

I Okay so in terms of the experience of being in a mentoring relationship, what has given you the most satisfaction, most buzz?

R What I’ve got the greatest buzz from I suppose is the fact that now I do work on two teams. Before that I don’t think I would have felt comfortable with chatting to my manager. When we did exercises and we were saying I want to be a HR generalist I just said sure there’s no opportunity for me to do that now. Obviously there’s no promotion or room for movement and (she) just asked me to think about it. [Pause] So when I thought about it I came back and I said maybe I could chat to my manager if that’s something you can say to your manager. I didn’t know if I could say it was but I wouldn’t mind working on another team without them taking offence and (my mentor) brought me through a way of dealing with that. So I think for me then when I approached my manager and then
it was within weeks I got offered another role, to take on this opportunity and it’s the first time. [Pause]

I suppose someone of my grade has worked on that team. So it’s a huge thing for me the fact that it’s with all managers, I’m going to get so much experience. That’s my biggest sense of achievement and I wouldn’t have done that/ If I hadn’t had a mentoring relationship I wouldn’t have ran past anyone. No one knows the way they work.

I So it was relationship with the catalyst then to make it happen.
R Yeah, definitely, definitely. I don’t think it would have happened.
I Are there any difficulties or downsides to the mentoring relationship?
R The downsides of being in a mentoring relationship? Well I don’t really feel, like the most I would say was around the time, was making the time. And you can kind of feel a bit pressure, not pressure but it is in the back of your brain. You’re like/ oh my God if I don’t meet up with my mentor will they feel like and I’d say to my last one because I was getting, oh God I don’t really feel the need to meet up on a formal basis and we’re meeting up anyway.

I Yes
R So it was more, okay right, I need to really arrange that. So it was more the pressure and the time. But now I’ve no regret.
I No negative thoughts.
R No.
I Is there any downside for your mentor being on the mentoring relationship?
R I think it’s more time as well.
I Okay.
R But I suppose I would feel that I am the one getting the most out of the relationship and I know my mentor has a lot of experience with mentoring as well so I do feel that its all kind of one sided. I think I’m getting a lot out of it. I wouldn’t know really how much she should get out of it.
I Okay and just finally then from an organisational perspective is there any downside to mentoring relationships?
R To mentoring relationships. No I would say no. One hundred percent no.
I Okay so at this stage then how much would you rely on your mentor in terms of lets say practical support or guidance, you know.
R Being the type of person that I am I’d say I would rely on her (laugh) quite a lot. Around career development, where to go next. How to manage my career and to keep focused on it. Yeah if I wasn’t working in the organisational development team now I would definitely continue the relationship with my mentor but the fact that I’m working there I think, I just need to wait hear how long more I’m going to be working there for/ and if that is the case I think I will be working there for another six months/ I would actually end the relationship and start up a new one.
I Okay, in terms of emotional support, empathy, security, feedback, how comfortable would you feel relying on her for that kind of support?
R Yeah I’d be very comfortable, yeah definitely now.
I Has the mentoring relationship actually helped your career guidance and growth.
R Definitely.
I: Yeah.
R: So it has helped my growth I would say one hundred percent. The reason why I think it has helped it’s because it gets things clear in my head. I’m the kind of person who would sit there and let things go through my head and not bring it up at team meetings and I don’t put my hand up for that because I know that, if I can bounce stuff off my mentor, I feel more comfortable, more confident to say yeah /I’ll do that because she kind of said to me why wouldn’t you be doing it because she coached me in a way to change my mindset so that I’d put my hand up for more things. I came out of my comfort zone because she helped me focus on my end results so where I wanted to get to so all these little things didn’t matter once I was doing them. Once I could focus on where I was going to which was the main thing for me so I definitely feel I got from my mentoring.

I: How do you think the mentoring relationship is helping your mentor at the moment?
R: Well from my mentor she’s always open to meet with me and always willing and comfortable and has lots of time. Gives of her time freely so I think it could maybe help to get, in the way that it would help her is her perceptions for say people like myself who are only in the company three years and how we see things from my point of view. So it kind of broadens her perceptions of how I think and how I see the business. After she compares the difference between myself and herself she takes that into consideration for people that she manages. So I’d say she could benefit from it in that way.

I: Yes,
R: Just being that open with me and building that relationship, her relationship skills.
I: Has the relationship helped you build any network with other people through meeting your mentor?
R: It has not opened up …yeah, well now that you say that, I’ve only literally just realised here now that it has happened (laugh).
I: Right,
R: Yeah. I’ve actually got many contacts for lots of different projects that I’ve been working on. Yeah I wouldn’t have approached her if she was my manager. The reason why I think I was comfortable to approach my manager was because she is my mentor and I wouldn’t have approached her before that if she wasn’t my mentor. So I definitely and I’m only realising that now very strangely.

I: That’s good.
R: No, no this is definitely useful because it helps me realise how much I get from my relationship as well. But I definitely have a few contacts and I never would have known that there was someone who could pass me on new contacts without having entered a relationship but definitely there was.
I: And has the relationship, the positive to this one, has the relationship helped and advised you on your career then?
R: Yeah, definitely.
I: Okay, so, if you don’t mind one or two questions on the programme? At what levels in the organisation is it making the most impact or take up?
R Where it’s making the most impact strangely enough at either very junior level or at senior level, and at very senior level. So we have general managers and executives within the business and all of the general managers and all of the executives have mentors.

I In a formal basis.

R Yes.

I Okay.

R And then with a junior level lots of the line managers, I would say people managers within this business division, these could be officers/ managers who manage a grade three right up to manager grade one are advising junior staff to get mentors but I don’t think, well I actually know, they’re officers not seeking mentors, the majority of them wouldn’t have mentors.

I Why in your view?

R Yeah the reason why I feel they don’t have is/ they’re kind of at the middle ground /so I think they had no, / they did have when they were junior level and they either had a good or a bad experience, if they had a bad experience they don’t feel the need for another one if they’ve had a good experience and are advising their junior staff to get a mentor and they’re not just allowing the time for themselves to have it.

I Oh right,

R I feel it’s just totally a lack of time.

I A time issue.

R Yeah totally a time issue and especially with the current environment. There is, you see there’s a mixture of attitudes to the current environment/ so some will have the attitude/ that oh yeah it’s a great time for me to gain as much work experience as I can and then others have the attitude/ why would I work this hard when I’m not going anywhere. [Pause] Why would I bothered now, sure I’m not anywhere anyhow but they’re not thinking of when this recession will lift and please God it will and that everyone is going to be the same level and you need to be the one who has gained the best experience. Yeah because not everyone can be promoted so you have to be individual and be different and have I suppose something better than the next person (laugh). But that’s what they’re not getting like. I think that point is coming across to some people though.

I Do you undertake any formal evaluation of the mentoring programme?

R It is really is on informal basis at the moment and to be honest I am in the process of reviewing the mentoring programme because firstly the reason that this came to my awareness was around our database that we have, so the relationships, when it was first set-up we had four different databases, representing four different business units. So there’s one for corporate bank and one for global treasure, one for service patents and one for CMBS and at the moment so this means that if you were a mentee from corporate banking you’d fill out your form on-line and it would generate an option of five different mentors for you to choose from with a level above within corporate banking.

I Okay.

R So my idea, what I want to do is I want to put them all together which I’m working on at the moment. I want to pull databases together because I want the cross functional mentoring to happen.
I Right.

R When it was first decided, when the programme first rolled out back in 2003 it was decided that we’d do it by different areas so it was rolled out in corporate banking first so it meant there was only, we trained mentors in corporate banking and mentees in corporate banking. Then we moved on to global treasury and so on, so on. [Pause]

So it meant the database only allowed for these but what I’m seeing now is I’m getting individual requests from people so I always ask an individual before they fill out the form on-line is there anyone that you feel you would like to be your mentor and I’ll approach them on your behalf/ if you’re not comfortable with approaching them yourself and your reasons why/ and what they need to think about before they even attend the programme. And lots of them say oh no, no, no, especially junior staff. Oh I don’t know who so/ we set them up but I am noticing that with say more senior mentors and mentees within the business they’re asking for cross…/cross functional mentors so that’s really where I want to go and I hope the centralisation works for me/ so in the informal feedback that I suppose I’m receiving is things like the opportunity to move, to get mentors across the company that they would like.

I Do you set up the senior mentoring relationships?

R The head of my team Frances Smith, she actually would ask me for,/ she’d get a request in from a senior manager for the mentoring relationship/ and she would ask them what they hoped to achieve and then I would come up with a list of mentors so its not only done on the databases its. So it’s a lot more discussion based at that level.

I Okay,

R Just because they are senior and have been in the bank so many years though its more, its just you have to be careful/ they might know these people or they just have more to get from the mentor or different a completely different approach to the mentoring relationship to work in.

I Do you see the mentoring programme continuing in the organisation?

R Oh definitely, definitely. I would think that almost half of my business unit would have mentoring relationships. Its being going now for the last six years and for the fact that its still half of the majority of this business unit have mentoring relationships then I would say that future is probably positive and the feedback because we all, I have relationships within the business and the business unit trainers there in the business we’ve always received positive feedback from them and just from speaking to people. [Pause]

Just from friends that I have who are in mentoring relationships within capital markets and they all feel it as being very positive but I would like to put in a more formal evaluation sheet because I think it definitely needs that and especially now…So I think that needs to be done before, we’re to guide where we want it to go from here and how we’d roll out and how we’d approach because at the moment I’m looking to relaunch it in the Paris and UK office/ and the reason for that is because the HR relationship manager is gone over to the Paris office and she asked me for some statistics on the mentoring so I don’t always look at the stats on everything and I looked and I was saying there’s actually only one relationship over there. [Pause]
Now there are only nine people in the office but still and the fact that they are international so I would hope to move international with it. The business unit is based in Dublin but it’s based all over the world now at the moment but I suppose the hub of this business unit is in Dublin. So I feel international staff should definitely have just not even for their own career advancement, just to have a connection with each other and to be just part of a wider organisation because that’s another place that I hope it would work for them. [Pause]

When the relationship manager went over there he did ask me to bring it up with the head of department in relation to the mentoring and it was something he was surprised that people weren’t in a mentoring relationship and it’s definitely something that he wants to push but I suppose it’s at discussion now about how we launch it. So in the UK the approach is we go out and you need to always get a sponsor.

I A sponsor is a vital presence then?
R Yeah and you need someone to open it, someone who counts to those people who are based over there and so if it’s to head of the department or manager/ or just someone that they really respect and have interest in it and they speak from their experience of how they found the mentoring relations. How it helped them to get to where they are today, if that’s the case and then we roll it out that we judge who wants to mentor/mentee and then start there and then get the connections.

I And so just my final question on the levels then generally speaking they might be one level above or two but probably not any more than two levels above.
R Not usually anymore than two levels above but never, they’re never just the level above. It would usually be two levels above. It’s always two levels above.
I And you’re one is on the third level.
R Mines the third yeah.
I So it would be say two to three levels then to get maximum benefit.
R And especially with the current environment, most people are at the next level but they just haven’t been promoted. So for them to be working with someone and I know that works in the same way the mentor would actually be at their next level than they actually are but I just feel two levels is definitely
I We are close to conclusion now and I just want to thank you for your time and contribution and the extended and very interesting discussion on the programme.
R Okay great, thank you.
I Thank you.
you finding it at the moment and what you’re getting from it. So how long have you been with the company?

R That’s fine, you’re welcome.

I Alright so we just want to start with some background questions first of all. So could I just start then by asking you how long you have been in the company?

R I’ll be ten years here in December, so nearly ten years at this stage.

I Okay and what is your current work role? What are you involved in?

R I’m a senior manager in corporate banking up till recently so I would have been involved in lending mainly to large corporations and in charge of the relationship with those corporations in terms of developing it and providing products and credit appraisal. So kind of cradle to grave approach that we operate. I’ve now moved into a more risk management function so it’s probably more a back office function that I’ve moved into for reduced hours and that’s more looking at policy and how the bank is run and looking at how lenders carry out their jobs. So its poacher turned game keeper (laugh) to a little extent.

I Okay and what would you regard as you non work roles outside of the work environment?

R Well I’m a mother of two small children and a wife so I have a busy role and that’s why I moved jobs so to reduce my hours. I was trying to balance; I suppose work/life balance as they say.

I Sure.

R So I suppose that’s the main thing outside of formal work.

I Okay and how long have you been in this current formal position?

R Two weeks in my current role but I suppose I mean I can give you the experience of ten years in my last role. I’m only in transition lets say.

I At this stage then how would you describe the characteristics of the stage you’re at in your career?

R Well I suppose it’s always been quite structured in terms of after university I went to KPMG and trained to be an accountant for four years.

I Okay.

R So and then after that I did a year travelling which is what a lot of people do and then started work here so I guess its always been quite structured and quite always looking for advancement in terms of doing the accountancy and then I came in as an assistant manager and I worked my way up through the ranks in AIB to senior manager.

I Okay.

R So I guess at this stage its probably levelling off a bit in terms of, you know, in the last year after having the children I kind of I suppose re-evaluated what I want from my career and I’m probably now more looking at holding steady and maintaining a challenging role without actually looking probably for progression in the next while. I’m happy to stay where I’m at now and have reduced my hours accordingly to get, once you do that it’s probably a statement in itself so I suppose my career is at the stage that probably, maybe thirties it kind of hits…

I Mid stage career?
Yeah I think so for now and you know I’ve kept my options open in terms of in a few years and I can always come back and go full-time again but that’s where it’s at.

What would you regard now then as the important priorities with work and life?

Well I suppose from a work point of view I’m very conscious of, well a couple of things really, one is it’s unusual I suppose where I work to have someone at my level on reduced hours so I’m very conscious of the fact that I still need to perform and justify their decision in terms of they’ve accommodated my request and I now feel I want to prove especially because I’ve moved areas I want to prove to them that it was worthwhile letting someone at my level reduce their hours/ and I really want to maintain a challenge and to some extent the move, while I was sorry to leave my last role its kind of exciting and interesting for me because it’s the first time I’ve moved in ten years.  I’ve moved to a really new role like, a completely brand new challenge.

Okay.

From a work point of view I’m hoping to get out of it even on the three day week and then I suppose the other side of it then is that it gives me the opportunity to run my life outside of here better as well.

Alright and you know you were saying that is it your perception that there’s an onus on you to prove yourself - it’s not just a question of okay we’ll move you in here?

Ah it’s probably self imposed to an extent.  The area I’ve left doesn’t accommodate reduced hours for women really and would be very anti it.

Okay.

And I suppose there’s half, a thought process in my mind even if its not reality, but the area that’s taken me has accommodate something that corporate couldn’t and I’m kind of, you know, I’m kind of grateful to them for accommodating me and I suppose its my onus that I want to pay that back in terms of being productive in the days that I’m here and you know making up and I suppose even for all women like there’s such a reluctance to allow women to reduce their hours in what’s really a male environment.

Its a huge struggle and you know I kind of feel that if you are lucky enough to get it, there’s a couple of people who get it/ I kind of want to prove that it can be done.

Why is there a reluctance to reduce the hours?

I partly subscribe to it because it is customer facing and I understand and I think is it culture./ it has become culture maybe and its down from the top but I mean it is, a lot of it, it is customer facing and requires a huge amount of interaction face-to-face with the customer and if you’re not there obviously you can’t do that /but in saying that I do think there are ways around it and I think maybe a three day week wouldn’t work but maybe a four day but they’re not prepared to do that.

Your career priorities now then, they’re different from what they were maybe three years ago?

Ah yeah, they would be yeah.  Well I suppose I would have been very focused on promotion and getting to the next level both role and rank, you
know, getting the next role as well as the next rank in terms of promotion and money and all that. So I would have been very focused on the career ladder.

I  Yes
R  Whereas now I suppose having the kids has changed that. Yeah so it’s more about the role now I get, if I’m satisfied in it while I’m here as opposed to anything else.

I  Is this your first encounter of participating in a formal mentoring programme?
R  Well yes and no in terms of, while its part of the formal structure my mentor I would have been assigned to her from day one really. Well from the first couple of weeks in the bank and then when the formal programme came in I got the option of deciding to stay with that mentor or choose to go with a mentor that would be assigned to me.

I  Okay.
R  So I suppose this is my first experience in terms of, it’s the same mentor all along who wasn’t originally as part of the formal scheme that’s now in place in the company.

I  How did you become aware of the mentoring programme? when you joined?
R  Yeah when I originally joined there was kind of an informal mentoring programme in place I suppose you’d call it. There was a mentoring programme but not as official I suppose as it is now and my manager at the time would have assigned me a mentor and it would have been probably more of a kind of looking after role originally in terms of someone in the organisation would show me the ropes and teach me from that point of view. It was someone on the team, so it wasn’t as, now they would be, someone that would have been two levels ahead of you and probably not in your department. So its probably more structured now whereas back then it was more a hand holding exercise in some respects but it has developed I suppose over time to be a more traditional mentoring relationship in terms of my mentors now ahead of me in the organisation and we don’t work in the same area. So it’s kind of evolved into a more formal and probably that’s because of the fact that she moved away that it has become that.

I  Okay and so you’re mentor then was assigned to you obviously when you joined the organisation.
R  Yeah.
I  Okay so and how long have you been in this mentoring relationship?
R  Nearly ten years yeah.
I  Okay, and what is your mentor’s formal position then in the organisation.
R  She’s a senior manager but she’d be a rank ahead of me.
I  So she’s one level about you.
R  One level above me yeah.
I  Okay and obviously as you mentioned you’re working in different departments.
R  Yeah.
I  How often would you arrange for meetings with her?
I suppose in true Irish fashion it’s not as straightforward mentoring relationship because we’re friends as well as everything else.

R

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R

I suppose in true Irish fashion it’s not as straightforward mentoring relationship because we’re friends as well as everything else.

I

Sure

R

So I would see her just casually for lunches and you know the odd maybe early bird or whatever but then on the actual mentoring, I suppose really any time I’d need career advice would drive it.

I

Okay.

R

So I would have talked to her every time I was looking for promotion or a change or this time reducing my hours or if I had a problem I would always ring her so from the mentoring point of view I kind of contact her when I need her in terms of crisis phone calls (laugh).

I

I’m probably asking you to go back a little bit now when you started the mentoring relationship, what were your concerns and what were your hopes at that stage?

R

She would have been in the organisation before me so even though we were at a similar level at the time she was quite experienced in terms of who is/ who is who in the organisation and different links and contacts and I suppose originally it was a huge resource for me to tap into in terms of the actual structure/ because its such a complicated organisation and part of the skill of this place is to know who to talk to/ and I suppose that would have been a resource to have available.

I

Okay so the whole networking piece is a big component of mentoring?

R

Exactly, exactly yeah so that would have been originally day one I suppose would have been part of it.

I

Okay so did you have any concerns then about going into a relationship (was it going to work etc?)

R

I suppose originally not really because of the fact it was kind of an ad hoc one until the formal mentoring programme was put in place. I’d say with the formal programme that’s probably more an issue because in the formal programme that’s in place now I know from other mentees you’re given a choice of three or four people and you pick one of them to be your mentor and basically you probably don’t know and you have to make a decision and then you have to meet that person and you may never have met them before. So there’s probably a bit more in trepidation there in terms of meeting a stranger.

I

Okay.

R

Now in saying that I know a few people on the mentor side of it, a few people have asked me to be their mentor and its because they knew me so I don’t know whether people go for the unofficial, I think maybe when they join the organisation first I think the tendency is after a while you will seek out your own mentor in some respects.

I

Okay and just reflecting on the relationship and where it’s at now what sort of qualities or characteristics do you think your mentor has brought to your relationship?

R

I think probably the biggest one is the independence factor of it. The ability to stand back and look a situation without being emotionally involved in it/ which I think, well I suppose maybe for women and men but women tend to get very emotionally involved in their work and in the relationships in work and with their peers and their bosses and everyone/
whereas I think she has a huge ability and nearly a male ability in some respects to just stand back from the whole thing and shut down that and just look at it cold/ and I think that’s probably the biggest thing. I would consider her very wise as well and beyond her years actually wise/ but she’s a huge ability just to assess the situation and bring an independent view to it and just very a very clear thinker.

I
Sure
R
Which is fantastic/ like to be able to tap into yeah?
I
How would you describe the strength of the relationship (e.g. respect, trust and any other elements that come to mind?)
R
Ah yeah, it’s very, very good. I suppose well we get on as two people anyway in terms of, you know, we would have a friendly relationship but I would respect her hugely and would have a huge amount of time for her opinion and I’d know from people who report her that she’d be very highly respected by them as well.

I
Okay.
R
So I suppose I would always talk quite highly of her to others as well (laugh). Ah, no it’s very strong. I would really depend on her and if I didn’t have her I’d be lost at times.
I
Did you have any issues in the early stages about confidentially, trust or how did you build on those elements?
R
Yeah no I’ve never really, I’ve had one small incident where something was said that shouldn’t have been said and I think that’s where the whole mentor/friend thing can be awkward because we met and spoke about something that was worked based but yet it was kind of in a friendly environment and one thing did get said/ but in saying that we built a bridge and moved on.

I
Okay.
R
No I can’t, I suppose because we got to know each other over time a trust kind of built up over time, yeah.
I
It’s implicit now.
R
Yeah oh absolutely yeah, yeah.
I
And how would you describe probably the level of openness that would exist between you in terms of not being judged or you know feeling that you can discuss a wide range of issues be it either the work or family etc?
R
It’s completely open to be honest with you. I’d have no hesitation about talking about anything really.
I
Okay and in terms of the openness then would you feel you could confide in work related issues that are going on.
R
Ah yeah no I think I could yeah. Totally like, well everything from like anytime lets say anytime I’d be going for a promotion I’d send her over my application form and ask her to review it.
I
Okay
R
And give me her points on it or contributions and she’d do that for me. If I was thinking of applying for anything I’d ring her and talk to her about it.
I
Okay.
R
If there was an issue, like even the whole process of moving jobs and getting reduced hours or whatever there was a few hurdles on the way and I would have rang her more or less in tears and said “I can’t get out”
(laugh) so she gets all sides of it. I suppose on the technical side it’s just the work element itself probably not as much, like at stages she would have came back to work on the wider team and I probably would have popped over to her desk and asked her something technical but it’s not really about that. I don’t really need her for that side of it like I have my boss for that.

I  Yes

R  It’s more the what do, I do now or how do I go into this or how do I, and then managing people as well. I’ve had a couple of non performers and I was discussing this with her as well in terms of how to get around it.

I  And in what areas has she helped most with, in terms of the advice she has given you to-date?

R  Like obviously there’s a benefit to talking to someone about it and sharing it and saying it out loud. I suppose on the interview side of things, lets say for the career development it would be just talking out loud and on some of them I actually would have done nearly a mock interview with her and she would have listened to my responses. For that its just sitting in the chair/ but on some of the more contentious issues in terms of approaching transferring or whatever like she would have given me the strategy really and she would have made suggestions in terms of don’t approach (a) without approaching (b) at the same time because (a) and (b) are going to talk to each other /and like I was kind of saying I didn’t want to go to my immediate boss I wanted to go to his boss and she was able to say well why don’t you make an appointment to see the two of them and when you’re in with (a) say well actually I’ve an appointment to meet (b) next so she would have been very strategic in how I should approach the political side of it.

I  Yes

R  Yeah she’d be quietly political and would be very good at that aspect of it. So sometimes it’s just sitting/ and then another kind of issue I don’t how to deal she would say/ well look this is what you need to do (laugh) in a very nice way she tells me.

I  What about of quality of work life issues do you discuss these?

R  Yeah she’s very open and while we’re a similar age we’ve very different circumstances like she’s single and not in a relationship at the moment but yet she can totally empathise with where I’m coming from and see it from my point of view so she’s very open to what I have to say. Yeah we’re very different in terms of our way of operating but yet can… Yeah she can see why I would be looking for, like while that’s not the path that she’s going down and her career is on a different path probably she can totally see where I’m coming from and respect that.

I  Okay and looking now at the mentoring relationship what aspects of it have given you most satisfaction?

R  I think it is the sounding board more than anything. Its just someone that I can pick up the phone to and just say listen and sometimes I kind of feel because its not, well it is I suppose formal in the terms that its formalised itself over the years/ I kind I feel I drag on her time sometimes too much. She kind of hears from me when I’m stuck or whatever and so I’m kind conscious of that as well /but it’s just great to have someone that you can
just ring and ask and like even reviewing application forms or meeting you before an interview or whatever. Like she’s very giving of her time which I truly appreciate.

I And what is the core attraction of the relationship?

R I think because she is so different. Yeah I suppose I just really admire her from the point of view that she’s very contained, a very clear thinker, doesn’t rush in. She’s all things I’m probably not. I’m probably more impetuous, I’m probably more vocal.

I Is she a role model?

R Yeah, oh no, absolutely. Her management style and she’s a great person for, what I admire about her/ anytime I worked near her/ she was never asking anyone to do something she wouldn’t do herself. So she’d stay to the end until the job was done and she doesn’t just delegate the job and walk out the door. So I admire that about her. Ah no there’s definitely parts of her that I would see as a role model. I think our approaches are always going to be fundamentally different in terms our personalities are different but her approach is, yeah absolutely she would be a role model.

I Sure

R I suppose sometimes she just gives me insight that I don’t maybe see myself and I just enjoy that kind of learning really and she understands the organisation so well that it’s just interesting sometimes to get her perspective on it.

I Has the evolved friendship changed the relationship in any way?

R Ah probably not really. No and maybe its just the Irish way in terms of we tend to (laugh) develop these things. No it hasn’t really. Like I still, like I’d always feel while we’re friends/ she always I suppose in some respects has the upper hand/ because I’m the one that has to come to her all the time but /I then would try and do other things then on maybe the personal side. Be there for her in other aspects like but on the work side I’d never contribute to her work etc (laugh).

I Yes I understand

R And she wouldn’t come to me with a problem.

I Are there any difficulties or downsides to being in a mentoring relationship, from your experience?

R I don’t know. I think it tends to be quite private here really. I don’t think people, like there’s always the thing of someone practically adopt someone/ and kind of brings them along with them and I think that’s more than mentoring in some respects. I think, you know, there is a coat tails element if someone likes working with someone and if they get promoted through the organisation they bring them with them.

I Yes

R But I think, I don’t know if you call that even mentoring but that’s generally, so I think the actual mentoring here is quite private.

I Okay.

R I don’t think people go around saying oh my mentor is this, that or the other and.

I So you wouldn’t have experienced any kind of downside to it?

R I haven’t really no, no.

I And what about for your mentor, are there any downsides?
R I’m not so sure. Yeah I don’t know from my mentor is there any particular downside. I suppose as a mentor myself there’s no particular like, I mean sometimes, you know, someone can pose a problem and you just don’t know the answer to it/ but I quite enjoy when someone asks me to get involved. It’s a huge vote of confidence when someone says to you, you know, can you sit with me. It’s happened to me a few times. It’s quite a nice feeling like that someone respects your view.

I Okay, are there any downsides to having a mentoring programme or mentoring relationships in the organisation?

R Yeah I haven’t heard any negatives to be honest. I suppose the one thing is just, I don’t know whether new entrants are they always made aware of it day one and sometimes it takes a while for that to work itself it out and I think, you know, it needs to be and I think as well sometimes just assigning a mentor to someone, I don’t know that works in terms of, how people get on after that like I think in some respects while you can try and formalise it sometimes maybe you’re better off seeking your mentor over time so while you may need at the beginning in the organisation I think as your career develops you’re probably going to choose your own mentor anyway because it has to be someone that you respect.

I And you can connect with.

R Yeah, yeah. So I think its great for, you’re in day one and you meet three, you have relationship contacts and all that/ but I think after a while as your career develops and you get on a bit/ you need to, that needs to evolve into your own choice really.

I So at this particular stage, then how much would you rely on your mentor then for practical support?

R Well I suppose I’d never make a big decision or take a big step without her input to be honest.

I Okay.

R So while it’s ad hoc it is something that’s absolutely fundamental to me. Any time I’d have any kind of hesitation on any aspect I would tend to ring her or if I got into a sticky situation she, I would talk to her as well so I would tend to ring her quite a bit when needed so yeah.

I How much would you rely on her in terms of emotional support?

R I would because I suppose while you can talk to your partner or whoever else like sometimes/ it helps to talk to someone who knows the individual involved so yeah and even how to manage that individuals. Like she would have worked for a lot of people that I would have worked for so she’d know exactly the approach that would be needed. So it would be the example I gave earlier of trying to reduce my hours like, you know, I was able to ring her and she knew exactly the people and the emotional buttons to push and so yeah I would talk to her about that.

I So overall then has the mentoring relationship, would you think helped your mentor?

R I think she enjoys it. I kind of feel she when she takes an interest in someone its genuine and she likes to kind of see how they’re developing so I get the impression that it’s something that she’s really interested in. She's not just coming to work for the good of it. Like she’s interested in the overall good of the organisation and the people in it so I think from
that point of view there’s a level of satisfaction in it from her point of view.

I And looking back how has the relationship then helped you in terms of your own career guidance and growth, you know, where has it impacted most for you.

R I think definitely in the early days like I suppose maybe even my first promotion I probably wouldn’t really have got without her input.

I Okay

R And she would be hugely influential on me I suppose from that point of view and just preparing because no matter how much your career might be going well and you may be well viewed like there is an interview process in here that you have to shine at and she has really been so helpful to me so I do think she’s been very instrumental in my whole career progression.

I Okay and would the mentoring contribution be acknowledged then in the career process within the organisation?

R Not hugely to be honest I think, I know the mentoring programme was brought in and all that/ but I think and the funny thing is and maybe its cultural from years ago in the bank maybe it didn’t need to be introduced formally/ Yeah kind of just people that you meet along the way and you just kind of…Yeah you just develop a relationship and it just continues and I think it’s a big organisation and people work for a lot of people and I think its kind of inevitable that at some stage you’re going to meet someone/ and while it may not always fit into the formal mentoring box that’s exactly what it is.

I Okay.

R While not kind of overtly mentioned in career progression I think there’s plenty of it around.

I How do you think the mentoring relationship has helped you personally?

R I think it’s a great fallback position to have. There’s a great sense of security to it that you can talk to somebody and know that you’re being listened to and getting good feedback and it’s absolutely crucial I think.

I Has the relationship provided you and I think you mentioned at the beginning access to other people that have helped you do your job more effectively?

R My mentor would just probably set things in context for me in terms of whose who in the organisation or who I might need to contact on different points and even from the point of view of understanding different areas she moved into a whole different side of the business and really I wouldn’t even know some of the jobs or the products if it wasn’t for her.

I Okay.

R So just from an overall understanding that it’s good for me to have even though it’s not something I have to have.

I Yes

R It’s really good from that point of view, to even tap into her knowledge and what the people around her do so yeah it has.

I So you would have developed a number of new contacts as a result of the relationship.

R Yeah exactly and just a better understanding of what people do as well.
Okay and would the relationship have introduced you to any other people through her that would have helped you with your career advice.

Not particularly I suppose.

Alright.

I can’t think of anyone off the top of my head, no.

Okay so overall then in terms of the mentoring relationship if it was concluded for some reason, how would you react to that?

I’d say I’d be at a bit of a loss to be honest in terms of having someone to talk to about things. I mean the nature of the organisation is there are a lot of people that you come into contact with and you know I have, my ex boss retired and I have a lot of respect for his opinion as well so I suppose I probably slot into some kind of relationship if I didn’t have access to my current mentor but I wouldn’t be too happy now to be honest (laugh).

I think it’s a huge benefit because while in time I do believe people will find their own, I think just introduce the concept to them and just for them formally to see that relationship in operation. Its usually important and then they can either stay within the formal programme/ or in time maybe pick out their own mentor but I think introducing the concepts of it/ and its hugely important and I think for new entrants as well to have someone in the organisation that can hold their hand a bit is massively important as well.

Alright.

As a mentor as
well I think it does work best when its someone that you respect and that you can seek out.
I  Okay.
R  And while the formal assignment of a mentor can work in the short-term I think long-term you have to seek someone in the organisation that fits for you and I think that’s what people do.
I  Okay then, I would just like to thank you very much for your contribution and for a very interesting discussion.
R  No problem, you are welcome