Chapter 1

Introduction

As the number of organizations implementing workplace formal mentoring programs continues to grow, such programs can no longer be considered but one more passing fad. The proliferation of formal mentoring efforts is no surprise, given the vast array of benefits that have been associated with mentoring. Mentoring relationships are thought to serve a critical role in an employee's career and skill development, key to retaining top talent, and a fundamental way by which organizations can shape corporate leadership. Given the continuing need for companies to groom early-career employees for succession planning purposes, to facilitate the upward mobility of under-represented groups, and to respond to organizational structural changes, there is reason to believe that the use of such programs will continue to flourish. However, the implementation of these programs should be done with care in that a poorly designed and executed formal mentoring program may do more harm than good.

Until recently, there has been very little empirical research to help guide the development of workplace mentoring programs. The aim of the current volume is to provide guidelines based on a synthesis of empirical research so that formal mentoring programs can achieve their full potential as a significant employee development tool. The recommendations made throughout the book are based on the existing research evidence and supplemented by examples based on

interviews conducted with organizations that have formal mentoring programs in place.

Defining Mentoring

Workplace mentoring is traditionally described as a relationship between two individuals, usually a senior and junior employee, whereby the senior employee takes the junior employee "under his or her wing" to teach the junior employee about his or her job, introduce the junior employee to contacts, orient the employee to the industry and organization, and address social and personal issues that may arise on the job. Mentoring can also be defined by the behaviors that comprise the relationship. Specifically, mentors are thought to provide two primary forms of support to their protégés.[1] *Career-related support* focuses on protégé success and advancement within the organization, and includes exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, sponsorship, and challenging assignments. *Psychosocial support* centers on the enhancement of the protégé's sense of identity, competence, and effectiveness as a professional, and includes friendship, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and role modeling. Research generally shows that the more that mentors demonstrate these behaviors to their protégés (e.g., the more opportunities they offer the protégé to be exposed to other key figures in the organization; the more counseling they provide to the protégé), the more positive the outcomes of the relationship.[2]

There are several defining characteristics that set mentoring apart from other workplace relationships.[3] First, mentoring is a two-person relationship between a more experienced person (a mentor) and a less experienced person (a protégé). Second, the relationship is one of mutuality, yet it also asymmetrical. Both the mentor and the protégé may benefit from the relationship, but the primary focus is the growth and development of the protégé. Third, mentoring relationships are dynamic. The relational processes and outcomes associated with mentoring change over time. The mentoring relationship often differs from the typical supervisor–subordinate relationship in the following features:

• The mentor and protégé do not have to necessarily work together.

- The mentor usually does not have any formal or reward power over the protégé.
- The mentor may be several levels higher in the organization and in a different line of responsibility than the protégé.

The terms "mentoring" and "coaching" are often used interchangeably. Indeed, there are several similarities between the two forms of employee development. For example, both can be done over an extended period of time, and both can include developmental activities such as giving constructive feedback, teaching the protégé/coachee a new behavior or approach, and goal setting and action planning. However, there are some key differences between the two terms:

- Coaching is often more instruction-focused – typically the focus is on specific tasks or specific skills that the employee currently needs or will need in order to perform his or her work effectively.
- Because it is more skill and knowledge-based, coaching is often provided by professionals who are external to the organization and who, in theory, can work with the coachee objectively and confidentially (e.g., professional consultants).
- Coaching interventions are often based on careful diagnosis of the coachee's specific needs, frequently using observation, interviews, and skill assessment tools.
- Mentoring often addresses or focuses on issues that are broader than those covered in the typical coaching relationship, such as sponsorship, introduction to key figures, increasing the protégé's contacts, orienting a new employee to the organization, and helping the protégé learn about the organization's unwritten rules. Anything done to help the employee's orientation, career, and professional development can be included under the broad term of mentoring.
- Because mentoring is broader in its focus, it can and often does include aspects of teaching and skill-based instruction. Therefore, coaching is a tool that can be used within a mentoring relationship.
- Because mentoring activities are often focused on issues specific to the context of the organization (e.g., broadening a protégé's network within the company; helping the protégé learn the company's politics; sponsoring the protégé for promotional opportunities),

mentoring is most often done by an internal, more senior member of the company (rather than an external consultant).

A *formal* mentoring program – the focus of this volume – is one in which the organization plays an intervening role in facilitating employee mentoring relationships by providing some level of structure, guidelines, policies, and assistance for starting, maintaining, and ending mentor–protégé relationships. As will be discussed throughout the book, the nature of the organization's role at each of these stages will not look exactly the same across all organizations. Organizationally sanctioned mentoring relationships are different from those that naturally occur within the organization. In naturally occurring mentoring relationships, it is the mentor and/or the protégé who initiate, maintain, and end a relationship, with little or no official organizational support.

Why Do Mentoring?

The primary reason to facilitate mentoring relationships is that they have been associated with a variety of widely publicized organizational, as well as individual, benefits. The popular press is replete with articles carrying titles such as, "The power of mentoring: finding the right advisor can give your career a boost," "A mentor is a key to career success," and "Find yourself a mentor." It is also not uncommon for well-known business leaders to attribute their success to having a mentor.[4] The guidance of a mentor can be a critical resource to individuals early in their career, while serving as a mentor to others during the later career years can provide a sense of accomplishment. The benefits of mentoring have been well established within the academic literature as well, with meta-analytic research supporting positive career benefits for protégés who have been mentored within a formal mentoring program.[5] However, as we noted earlier, poorly designed and executed mentoring programs can be damaging to the organization and its members. Moreover, a formal mentoring program may not be right for every organization or a program may be implemented for the wrong reason. This book is designed to help determine if mentoring is right for your organization and, if so, provide guidance as to how to most effectively structure the program.

> ### Good to Know:
> #### Outcomes Associated with Mentoring[6]
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> *For the Protégé:*
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> - Higher compensation and faster salary growth
> - More promotions and higher expectations for advancement
> - Higher job and career satisfaction
> - Greater career and organizational commitment
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> *For the Mentor:*
>
> - Enhanced career success
> - Career revitalization
> - Personal growth and satisfaction
>
> *For the Organization:*
>
> - Enhanced organizational attraction and recruitment
> - Reduced employee turnover
> - Increased organizational learning and employee socialization

Goal of This Book

The main objective of this book is to present an evidence-based best practice approach to the design, development, and operation of formal mentoring programs within organizations. We will inform the reader as to what research tells us about effective formal mentoring practices. A "start-to-finish" guide is provided that can be used by management, employee development professionals, and formal mentoring program administrators. The design of formal mentoring programs can vary considerably. Some programs are highly structured while others take a more casual approach. Research shows that programs with a greater degree of organizational facilitation and structure are generally more effective than those with little support and oversight.[7] Importantly, organizations should consider the cumulative effect of implementing multiple "best practice" features into their program. The impact of any one practice alone may be minimal.[8] Notably, facilitation and structure should not be equated with rigidity and inflexible formality. The form that the facilitation and structure takes needs to fit with the culture of the organization.

The recommendations found in this book are based on the academic, empirical research literature that has examined effective formal mentoring practices, data from companies that have implemented formal programs, and case studies of formal mentoring programs in organizations. However, we also recognize that there is much that we do not know yet regarding formal mentoring program design and effectiveness. We do not pull any punches – if the research evidence is not there, we tell you. In those cases, factors to take into consideration based on other research literature are offered. We also profile some of the obstacles and barriers that organizations reported facing in the execution of their programs. We believe that with the anticipation of potential pitfalls, companies can develop sound risk mitigation and back-up strategies to ensure that their programs do not derail. As an initial overview to the mentoring process we present the first of our case studies. The cases below each illustrate the general approaches to formal mentoring taken by Starwood Hotels and by KPMG.

Case Study:
Starwood Hotels

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. is a leading international hospitality company with over 870 properties managed in over 95 countries under several brand names (St. Regis®, The Luxury Collection®, W®, Westin®, Le Méridien®, Sheraton®, Four Points® by Sheraton, Aloft(SM), and Element(SM)), employing over 150,000 associates. Its mentoring program, referred to as the mentor network, is centered on a web-based tool that provides associates worldwide a common framework to help them create mentoring relationships. This framework focuses on helping mentors and protégés to define goals, determine which of Starwood Hotels' leadership competencies are to be developed, and to measure progress. The program was created in response to associates asking for mentoring programs in Starwood Hotels' annual engagement survey, as well as the company's need to provide structure and guidance to mentoring programs that were being implemented at local sites. The overall goal of the mentor network is to provide coaching and development opportunities for associates to help prepare them for potential leadership roles in the future. Although the mentor network is still in its early phases of implementation, several key features stand out:

- First, support for the program was demonstrated at multiple levels in the organization – from top management through Executive Level participation on a taskforce to help define the program, and from local general managers who champion the program by attending the local, on-site kickoffs.
- Second, the program allows for much flexibility and ownership at the "local property level." For example, local property management has significant input and decision-making responsibility for who participates as mentors and protégés, as well as how mentors and protégés are matched. Also, while suggestions are offered from the mentor network program owners, local management determines various aspects of the relationship's structure (e.g., frequency of meetings, duration of relationship, activities to be undertaken).
- At the same time, by providing a common process and corporate-level support, the purpose and expectations for each local mentoring program are much more clear, specific, and understandable. According to Corinne Donovan from Starwood Hotels' Organizational Culture & Effectiveness group, this helps prevent properties from "creating a mentoring program just for the sake of having one."
- Fourth, the mentor network provides comprehensive orientation and training to help mentoring relationships get started. Using some combination of live, or web-conference-based delivery, mentors and protégés are briefed on different learning styles, each participant's role, mentoring concepts, and how to prepare for the developmental relationship. Protégés receive further assistance with setting goals and expectations for the relationship.
- Fifth, after the six-month time period, Starwood Hotels administers a survey to evaluate the success of the overall program as well as each mentoring relationship, looking at issues such as trust, learning that has taken place, what mentors have benefited from, and whether protégés have been challenged.

According to Corinne Donovan, Manager, Organizational Culture & Effectiveness group and Mariangela Battista, Vice President, Organizational Culture & Effectiveness group, feedback from surveys, as well as anecdotal informal feedback, has been positive. Protégés have learned about themselves, gotten more exposure in the organization, and are in a better position to take on individual responsibilities. Also, many mentors have broadened their perspectives and learned from the experience as well. Finally, both mentors and protégés who report having good quality mentoring relationships are more likely to remain with Starwood Hotels.

> ### Case Study:
> #### KPMG LLP
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> KPMG LLP, a member of KPMG International, is a Big Four Audit, Tax, and Advisory firm with over 1,800 partners and 23,000 employees located across 93 offices in the United States. Although mentoring had been occurring informally for years, KPMG's Chairman and Deputy Chairman at the time, realizing mentoring's value in their own careers, began a push to formalize the process. Also, at the time, internal employee survey results indicated that a substantial majority of associates were interested in either finding or being a mentor. The overall goals of the program were to increase employees' connection with the firm and their development in order that they would progress and remain at KPMG throughout their careers. KPMG makes its mentoring program available to all employees, regardless of level or career track. Other unique features include the following:
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> - There are many incentives for people to participate as mentors. First, "serving as a mentor" is sometimes included on goal-setting forms as part of the performance review process. Second, KPMG has created a "National Mentoring Award" to reward and recognize top mentors at a dinner with the senior management. Third, on National Mentoring Day, all mentors nominated for the National Mentoring Award are sent an electronic "thank you" letter containing feedback from their protégé(s).
> - Comprehensive training is offered for both mentors and protégés. Common topics are presented, such as defining roles and expectations for each participant; specialized topics are also covered in separate training modules for mentors (e.g., how to provide constructive feedback) and protégés (e.g., learning quickly). As employees are very dispersed and are often in client meetings, training is delivered via an interactive Internet web-cast. Training is offered many times, and recorded playback of the web-casts is available. Employees often leave training learning that mentoring should be goal-focused and not necessarily a lifelong relationship.
> - KPMG evaluates the success of its mentoring efforts through an annual employee survey as well as through retention statistics. According to Barbara Wankoff, National Director of Workplace Solutions, and Steven Katzman, Associate Director of Organizational Effectiveness, over 9,500 mentoring relationships have occurred, covering 15,000 employees. Survey scores regarding

mentoring and career growth satisfaction are positive, and across all classification levels (i.e., staff, management, partners), those employees with mentors demonstrate significantly less turnover than those without, resulting in an estimated cost savings of $33m.

Organization of the Book

The organization of the book is such that the chapters follow roughly the same order as the steps taken to develop a formal program. In Chapter 2, we discuss issues related to initial planning and infrastructure. Chapter 3 reviews the topic of recruiting and selecting program participants. Chapter 4 covers matching mentors and protégés. Training is the focus of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 describes mentoring structure and processes while the book closes with the topic of program monitoring and evaluation in Chapter 7. Appendix A consists of a complete list of planning questions that can serve as a framework for overall preparation and development of the program. This planning form is to be used in conjunction with each of the remaining chapters.