

MRS Mentoring Review Day – 5th September 2019

Led by Frances Wills

A review day for the MRS Mentoring Scheme was attended by over 40 current mentors on 5th September 2019. This document collates their thoughts and recommendations under various headings.

What changes have you noticed in your Mentee as a result of mentoring?

- They have become more confident - personally, opened up, wider awareness of where they fit. More confident with career choices, more self-reliant.
- They take action, make the most of different opportunities.
- Confidence
- Self-awareness
- Able to make the right decisions
- Handling criticism
- Transferable skills
- Life Coaching – where are you going?
- Introspection.
- Inspired (eg Reading/Book Club).
- Confidence – taken more seriously by colleagues.
- Feel more confident if they are a sole researcher, less isolated.
- Skills in MR techniques and leadership (voice within organization).
- Progression/career
- Questioning is this the career for them
- Learning from mentor – sounding board
- Working out the next step for their career
- Developing mindset/thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Tools to develop career
- Building confidence.
- Perspective – how to broaden it.
- Visibility.
- Framework.
- Rules of engagement.
- Self-awareness.
- Enabling.
- Progression.
- Broadening their prospective outside their immediate world.
- Impartiality.
- Safe Space –which they might not have at work.
- Human moral support.
- Upskilling.
- Access to mentors black book of contacts –open doors.
- Feel more able to manage pressure.
- More skills for career.

What benefits do you think mentoring has brought to individuals, organisations and the profession as a whole?

For individuals

- It's a sounding board.
- Stops fretting.
- Non-judgemental feedback.
- Will experiment/approaches.
- Different viewpoints.
- Clarity of thinking.
- Confidence boost.
- Professional development guidance.
- Career progression.
- Opportunity to speak to someone who is impartial.

For Companies

- The scheme is not intended to support a company.
- Gives employees the confidence to ask for support and say no if needed.
- Developing skills and capabilities to the companies benefit.
- Positive disruption.
- Offering newly discovered skills.
- Leading to retention.
- Productivity/culture/relationships.
- Happy and supported staff.
- External resource.
- Organisation gets clarity/steer.

For the Profession

- Adds to the status/profession.
- Shows your experience is valued.
- Feel proud of the industry.
- Emotional brand values – MRS.

What have you personally valued most about being a Mentor?

- Becoming aware of other people/situations/stories.
- Affirmation of self/not lost touch.
- Giving something back.
- A sense of pride.
- Helped me realise how much I know!
- The value of my experience/advice.
- MRS Membership more valued.
- Reinvigorated coaching skills.
- Wider view of different organisations/industry.
- Learning new tools, methodologies, ways of approaches/insights.
- Developing people, seeing progress, satisfaction, pride.
- Understanding perspective of younger generation – life stages, attitudes to work.

- A different perspective (stops us being insular).
- Honesty.
- Keeps finger on the pulse.
- Warm fuzzy feeling when mentee achieves their objectives.
- Bring our learnings back into own working lives.
- Getting the best bits of managing people (without the day 2 day).
- CPD/own development goals.
- Confidence – forget what you know and how you can help.
- Self-awareness.
- Satisfaction of helping others.
- Reflect on own cultural practices.
- Get to share views with someone – feel part of a team.
- Goes beyond training/experience.
- Sharing beyond formal environment.
- Keeps good people in the profession.

What advice would you give to new Mentors and Mentees?

Mentors

- Try not to suggest solutions.
- Listen not suggest.
- Need to flex approach/goal/problem.
- Ensure your mentee takes responsibility for writing notes and arranging next meeting.
- Define and communicate 'rules of the game'.
- Have regular check-ins.
- OK if inconsistent.
- The closure can be tricky – stick to no more than 12 months.
- Learn about sectors.
- Rather than provide answers, discuss options.
- Keep focus on mentee not organisation
- Ensure you understand what career stage your mentee is at
- Set out clear objectives – clarify early on
- Get the mentee to solve their "need"
- GUIDE NOT LEAD
- Always take a step back, don't assume knowledge
- Set boundaries from the beginning, share with mentee and then give them the responsibility to steer the following meetings and take responsibility to make notes to share with you.
- Face to face meetings are ideal BUT do what works for you.
- Venue should be comfortable for both – sometimes coffee shops don't always work.
- Set up clear objectives (mentee) ask them what they want to learn from you.
- Set up clear expectations.
- You can't solve everything – prioritise – easy wins vs long term goals.
- Be realistic about what is achievable.
- Mix it up – F2F/Phone/Email.
- Short sessions may work – 3-6.

Mentees

- Don't expect your mentor to tell you all of the answers
- Reflect
- Be prepared to work/think
- Work between sessions
- Take responsibility for keeping notes
- Have an agenda and goals
- Be professional
- Do your homework
- Set the agenda for your meetings with your mentor
- Mentee needs to own the process