



# MAKING MENTORING WORK

## About Catalyst

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit membership organization working globally with businesses and the professions to build inclusive workplaces and expand opportunities for women and business. With offices in the United States, Canada, and Europe, and more than 400 preeminent corporations as members, Catalyst is the trusted resource for research, information, and advice about women at work. Catalyst annually honors exemplary organizational initiatives that promote women's advancement with the Catalyst Award.

# MAKING MENTORING WORK

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## HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT AS A PRACTICAL GUIDE AND TOOL

This product is designed to help you think critically about your formal mentoring program. Catalyst provides data and information, assessment checklists for you to rate your efforts, and strategies to help you augment your efforts in the form of real-life Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) practices and concrete strategic tools and samples. These will help you best assess what steps and measures will be most useful for your organization. Use the hyperlinks in the Table of Contents to quickly access the content most meaningful for your work.



# MAKING MENTORING WORK



Mentoring is a small word that encompasses a large territory. The impact and potential benefits of a formal mentoring relationship—those in which organizations match mentors and mentees, designate minimum time commitments, monitor relationships, and evaluate the program—can span an entire career. That is why it is important to strategically plan and consider the design, development, and execution of these programs.

A common misperception about formal mentoring is that it just doesn't work—that it cannot provide the benefits of informal mentoring relationships. But this simply isn't true. Formal mentoring relationships can be effective. The misperception comes from oversights when planning, designing, and implementing formal programs. The good news is that savvy organizations can avoid these pitfalls with the right knowledge and tools.

## SMART COMPANIES ARE ASKING—AND ACTING ON—THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- Do both mentors and mentees view formal mentoring as integral to career development?
- Are mentoring goals outlined, communicated, and tracked?
- Are all individuals involved holding themselves and others accountable for mentoring behaviors?
- Is there evidence of a successful program with solid return on investment (ROI) or other tracked outcomes? Are there links to overall business goals?

Formal mentoring programs have taken their place as imperative talent management tools that cutting-edge organizations are using to gain significant competitive advantage by conceptualizing, leveraging, and tracking these relationships. When effectively designed and managed, formal mentoring makes a positive impact on organizations, women and men, and mentors and mentees. Research shows that well-designed and well-executed programs are well worth the investment.<sup>1</sup>

| CHARACTERISTICS OF <b>INEFFECTIVE</b> FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS   | CHARACTERISTICS OF <b>EFFECTIVE</b> FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor and mentee matching is ad-hoc, not based on assessment</li> <li>• Lacks formal goals or objectives</li> <li>• No clear time frame or time commitment required</li> <li>• No monitoring or check-ins</li> <li>• No accountability</li> <li>• No clear tie to business efforts exist</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentors and mentees matched based on skills/development needs</li> <li>• Formal goals are outlined and tracked</li> <li>• Minimum time commitments are designated</li> <li>• Formal process exists for monitoring the relationship</li> <li>• Both parties are held accountable; links to talent management exist</li> <li>• Links to business strategy, goals exist</li> </ul> |

## FROM A DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PERSPECTIVE

Some organizations claim to have an informal mentoring culture and believe this will work for their organization. However, Catalyst research shows that informal mentoring is not always enough. Organizations need to specifically include diverse populations when designing and examining their organizational mentoring efforts. As evidenced by our research, lack of mentoring opportunities is a frequent barrier to advancement for women and people of color.<sup>2</sup> Also, women encounter gender-based barriers that keep them from enjoying the full benefits of informal mentoring. Women often have decreased access to potential mentors, are less successful in finding mentors willing to invest in their career development, and/or receive fewer benefits from mentoring relationships than men do. There are many benefits of formal mentoring that can address the lack of naturally occurring informal relationships.

Proper design and implementation of formal mentoring programs make them effective. Talent with decreased access to influential mentors often fall behind. Women, women of color, and men of color are especially vulnerable to this. Senior leaders—individuals whose experiences and positions provide a wellspring for sage advice and introductions to influential others—often choose to mentor those who “look like” themselves.<sup>3</sup> And because white men dominate top positions in most organizations, by definition women and people of color lose out. Smart companies cannot afford this loss of talent development and, thus, cannot risk leaving mentoring to chance.

### **Mentoring Versus Coaching Versus Sponsorship: What's the Difference?**

In this publication, Catalyst defines “formal mentoring programs” as robust efforts that often incorporate elements of mentoring, coaching, and sponsorship. Many practitioners use the umbrella term “mentoring” to describe the formal relationships but discuss how both coaching and sponsorship are crucial in order to maximize learning and development.

**Mentoring:** Mentoring is a relationship between two people for the purposes of developing themselves or their careers in navigating the workplace or a particular field.<sup>4</sup> More often than not, the relationships are mutually beneficial, with both partners learning and benefiting from the relationship.

**Coaching:** Coaching is instructional, often with a particular goal or focus, such as developing technical or soft skills or related learning and growth, and can be used as a way to train someone on a discrete task or series of tasks.<sup>5</sup>

**Sponsorship:** Sponsorship is when one partner, usually someone at a more senior level and/or an individual with strong influence within an organization, assists a protégée in gaining visibility for particular assignments, promotions, or positions.<sup>6</sup> The role is often recognized as having a career, job, or opportunity-related purpose with some inherent degree of accountability on the sponsor's part.

Formal pairings can enhance retention, help address human resources challenges (such as recruitment or succession planning), and ultimately foster cultural change. We have found that cultural context is *critical* when identifying and defining mentoring pairings. The definition of mentoring in one industry, country, region or part of the world may not be the same in another. And there may even be variation within the same location or organization. This is why it's vital to determine what will work for your own organizational culture. Don't get caught up in the terms—but instead consider the environment and what elements will be most effective for you to make change and benefit both your organization and your employees.

# HOW CAN FORMAL MENTORING SUPPORT CAREER DEVELOPMENT?

## Mentoring Matches in Today's Business Climate

Formal mentoring provides a unique opportunity to leverage relationships and diversity elements to support positive career and organizational outcomes. Among the historical reasons for particular mentoring matches (e.g., matching a tenured employee with a new hire to assist with on-boarding), today's business climate also presents unique situations to consider when pairing matches, including:

- **Gender imbalance in senior management:**  
Matching men mentors with women mentees, because the majority of high-level, high-powered positions are still held by men.
- **Confluence of four generations in workforce:**  
Matching employees in different life or career stages<sup>7</sup> (e.g., Millennials and Boomers or Gen Y and Gen X), pairing an employee just beginning to deal with elder care issues with an employee who has gone through the process, or matching a seasoned employee with a new recruit for reciprocal learning.
- **Global expansion:**  
Matching an employee in Asia, for instance, with one in the United States to explore cultural values and work styles.
- **Growing alumni base:**  
Matching an "alumni" or "boomerang" employee with a tenured employee to leverage those networks.
- **Mergers and acquisitions:**  
Matching an employee from the acquired company to one within the acquiring company for better cultural integration.



Successful mentoring should not stand alone. It is an integral component in a comprehensive development program that typically includes many aspects: overall talent evaluation (performance evaluations, reviews, 360-degree feedback); training; succession management (slates, succession planning); networking or other important career functions.

There are common organizational links that can be made to support career development. For example, employees in formal mentoring programs may be assigned certain projects to augment skill sets that are then transferable to their organizations. In addition, mentors and mentees may share their experiences with broader groups of employees or even with leadership. These presentations will help others understand how important mentoring is in the organization's culture, and reinforce its business benefit. Such assignments and critical networking are important for all employees' career development.

Utilizing formal mentoring programs to help employees gain key job competencies, expose them to others in the organization, or help prepare them for expanded job responsibilities can improve employees' satisfaction and the organization's bench strength. By ensuring that career development offerings include mentoring efforts, practitioners can better leverage these important workplace relationships.<sup>8</sup>

**Consider the following when aligning these systems:**

- Gain background information about career development needs, perhaps by conducting a 360-degree assessment for mentees and sharing the outcomes with their mentors to support success.
- Define the roles for mentor and mentee to help reduce ambiguity.<sup>9</sup>
- Ensure performance management systems function to allow mentees to solicit career feedback from someone other than their direct manager.

| MENTORING BENEFITS   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased organizational commitment<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• Reduced turnover<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Enhanced recruitment efforts<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Improved company performance<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Increased promotion opportunities<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• Increased knowledge transfer<sup>15</sup></li> </ul> |  |
| <b>ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased support for diversity and inclusion</b></li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased stress<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• Increased job satisfaction</li> <li>• Improved individual performance; increased skill</li> <li>• Increased exposure to and decreased bias against those who are different<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>   |  |

## LINKING MENTORING TO CAREER OUTCOMES

Mentoring should be included as part of the broader talent management system. When implementing a mentoring program, you may first need to build the business case and create mentor/mentee action plans for why it is important to consider mentoring an overall part of the career development portfolio. Doing so will underscore the importance and benefits of formal mentoring, which include both organizational (e.g., reduced turnover) and individual (e.g., decreased stress) outcomes (see the [Business Case Framework tool](#)). In addition, the business case and action plans will showcase the ways in which formal mentoring can support the work culture and help pinpoint the career outcomes that make the most sense to track.

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR BUSINESS CASE AND ACTION PLANNING

Take the following actions when developing your organization’s business case for formal mentoring:

- Provide guidelines, outline appropriate time frames, and set expectations.
- Align critical areas of focus or consideration with the business.
- Maintain strong communication over time.
- Assess progress/outcomes for the duration of the relationship.
- Link outcomes to job growth, employee satisfaction/morale, and retention.

Consider how to leverage the mentoring match for career growth during your planning:

- Mentor/mentee conversations are a great place to explore new ideas in a safe and confidential space. This is particularly important in environments that may be less open or transparent. Employees need to be assured that the relationship is a place where they can test out new ideas, concerns, or fears without risk of retribution. The relationship can also be an incubator for creativity and development that spills over into the mentor’s and/or mentee’s job.

- These relationships provide a non-threatening venue in which to provide feedback. During these discussions, the mentor should work with the mentee to identify training needs and goals. For example, what do they want to accomplish in six months or 12 months? Also, what goals or outcomes are important to the mentor? These relationships should be reciprocal, and learning should be taking place on both sides.
- Mentor-mentee relationships may include emotional or social components and role modeling. These relationship elements can

also help support career development. For example, a mentor explaining organizational politics or unwritten rules will help the employee navigate the work culture better, and a mentee discussing her perspectives may help a mentor gain different insights into the organization's culture.

- When pairing diverse matches, whether by gender, race/ethnicity, or other variables, mentors and mentees will learn from one another, reducing potential stereotypes and augmenting their D&I knowledge.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT 1

### How does your organization's formal mentoring program stack up?

The following assessment will help determine if your organization has hit the mark in creating a robust formal mentoring program. Complete the following assessment, considering the below questions related to **integrating mentoring into an overall career development system**. Each "Yes" answer is worth five (5) points. Each "No" answer is worth zero (0) points. If you are completing all sections, tally your subtotal at the bottom of this section. If you are completing only one or selected assessments, see the [Next Steps](#) section at the end of this guide. If you cannot answer, "Yes," to all parts of a particular question, mark, "No," for that item.

| YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you established a business case for formal mentoring?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you identified career development areas for mentors and mentees to work on through the program?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are the formal mentoring program goals and objectives explicit and clearly communicated to employees/leaders/managers?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you done the work necessary to ensure that links to career development are in place and transparent? For example, are employees within a formal mentoring program tapped for important work assignments? Do leaders know the employees within formal programs? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are mentoring participants meeting their overall career development goals (both mentors and mentees)?   |

Section 1 Subtotal: \_\_\_ /25

## TAKE ACTION!

**PLANNING:** Based on the above self-assessment, you may have identified potential gaps in what you are currently doing to **integrate your mentoring program into career development systems**. To help you as you consider options for your company or firm, we provide tools to guide you; examples for you to tailor to organization's needs; and D&I practices, which Catalyst considers promising models for others to follow.

Ⓜ **THE BUSINESS CASE FRAMEWORK TOOL:** Action-planning and developing the business case are essential business tools that can help eliminate ambiguity and align areas of focus as you develop your mentoring program. While the specific plans may vary depending on the type of relationship, goal/purpose, or even the organizational climate, this tool should be applicable in most settings. It provides you with the foundational research and critical questions you should ask and take action on to make the business link to the organizational benefits of formal mentoring.

Ⓜ **SAMPLE MENTOR AND MENTEE CAREER DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN:** This tool provides specific examples of the kinds of questions to consider during important career discussions.

Ⓜ indicates a member-only tool or resource.

## D&I PRACTICES

### **RBC (Royal Bank of Canada)—Diversity Dialogues**

This company-wide reciprocal mentoring program that pairs women or visible minorities with executives:

- Provides participants with a platform to discuss diverse aspects of themselves.
- Is integrated as part of the company's overall talent management program.
- Allows leaders to get to know diverse talent better in a formalized way.

### **Ernst & Young LLP—Employee Advocacy Through Career Planning and Mentoring**

This targeted development, coaching, and mentoring program benefits women and the organization by:

- Pairing women and diverse employees on partnership track with senior leaders as mentors, as career advocates, and to assist with career planning.
- Empowering senior leaders to challenge assumptions and advocate for optimal development.
- Aligning overall firm goals with specific career development needs for both the mentor and the mentee.

# HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS MEASURE AND ASSESS FORMAL MENTORING?

Properly identifying metrics and providing a link between mentoring and goals or outcomes highlights the importance of mentoring—both for individuals and the organization. These data serve as the foundation for demonstrating program effectiveness. Many organizations may think they are measuring and tracking what’s needed to determine the success of their mentoring programs and attainment of goals. However, this often *is not* the case. Measurement of mentoring programs can be challenging, particularly with respect to goals and outcome metrics, both of which are essential to determining program effectiveness.

Metrics can—and should—be gathered from a variety of sources, including employee surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

## THE TRICKY BUSINESS OF MEASUREMENT AND TRACKING

### GOALS

Some goals are easy to set and track, such as setting a specific number of mentor/mentee meetings for the year. Others can prove to be more difficult for organizations to convert into appropriate metrics. For example, companies and firms may have large, organizational mentoring goals such as creating a more inclusive culture that aren’t translated into or tracked using specific metrics. This makes it difficult to objectively determine whether a program has met success.

To create a suitable metric for a more difficult goal, think about how you will know when you’ve met it; what will have happened, what will you see, and what smaller goals would make up a larger metric? Or consider that there could be several ways to meet a goal, and sort through the metric possibilities that open up from this line of thinking.

| Examples of Formal Mentoring Goals                   | Potential Related Metrics You Should Consider  |
|--|--|
| Develop a diverse pipeline, ready for leadership     | How many mentees from different employee groups (e.g., Latinas) are receiving important assignments?   |
| Create a more globally or culturally aware workforce | How many mentoring participants have been placed in cross-region matches? How many pairs have specific mentee/mentor objectives about learning culturally-specific trends? Have these objectives been reached successfully?                  |
| Help retain talent                                   | How many high performers or high potentials have been mentored, and how many of them have been retained compared to those who have not been mentored? (Comparison employees should be matched on as many other characteristics as possible.) |

## OUTCOMES

A large part of the challenge with program measurement may be that organizations simply focus on, identify, and track “convenience metrics,” those that are easy to measure or are traditionally measured. While these metrics are important, they

don’t stand alone, nor will they allow companies to fully assess their mentoring program’s effectiveness, because many essential metrics, or outcome metrics, are missing.

| Tracked Programmatic Metrics  | Organizational Outcome Metrics  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participants:</b> How many mentors and mentees; how many women and men; how many of different racial/ethnic backgrounds</li> <li>• <b>Structure:</b> In-person, virtual, group, circles, or one-to-one</li> <li>• <b>Timing:</b> When and how often mentors and mentees meet</li> <li>• <b>Satisfaction:</b> How participants feel about, among other things, the program and their mentor or mentee</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What percentage of employees in the program is from diverse groups?</li> <li>• What is the effect of mentoring on promotion rates?</li> <li>• Do employee survey data show attitudinal improvement? Increased satisfaction, retention? High quality of mentoring relationships?</li> <li>• Do employees in the mentoring program have access to more opportunities?</li> </ul> |

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR PROGRAM MEASUREMENT

Once you’ve decided what you need to track and how, you must then make sure measurement happens throughout the program. Pre- and post-program measurements are needed to show progress. Also, you will want to revisit your measurement strategy and make any necessary adjustments over time. You should:

- Identify what you want and need to measure, including larger organizational goals and outcomes.
- Decide how you will measure; translate or convert goals into appropriate metrics.

- Ensure measurement takes place at appropriate times (e.g., base or pre-program measurement, end of program).
- Assure you are measuring *over time* for tracking purposes and to show movement.
- Revisit and adjust metrics each cycle to mirror your program evolution.

While it may be challenging to identify the key metrics to evaluate formal mentoring programs, organizations *can* do so and can even calculate their ROI.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT 2

### How does your organization's formal mentoring program stack up?

The following assessment will help determine if your organization has hit the mark in creating a robust formal mentoring program. Complete the following assessment, considering the below questions related to **metrics and tracking your formal mentoring program**. Each “Yes” answer is worth five (5) points. Each “No” answer is worth zero (0) points. If you are completing all sections, tally your subtotal at the bottom of this section. If you are completing only one or selected assessments, see the [Next Steps](#) section at the end of this guide. If you cannot answer, “Yes,” to all parts of a particular question, mark, “No,” for that item.

**YES**

**NO**

Have you translated mentoring goals or objectives into specific metrics that you are tracking consistently over time?

Do the metrics include programmatic elements, such as measuring and tracking by specific employee groups, including employees at various levels or traditionally underrepresented groups (such as women and women of color or visible minorities)?

Do the metrics include measuring and tracking the individual outcomes, typically identified as benefits, of mentoring such as increased job satisfaction, improved personal performance, and increased promotions?

Do the metrics include measuring and tracking the quality of the mentoring relationships such as whether participants are satisfied with their match’s commitment to the program or whether both individuals feel they are learning from the relationship?

Do the metrics include organizational objectives linked to specific outcomes/benefits such as the actual increase in qualified pipeline employees, decreased regretted loss turnover (the loss of employees that the organization wished to retain), and dissemination of organizational knowledge?

Section 2 Subtotal: \_\_\_/25

## FORMAL MENTORING: ASSESSING SUCCESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

There are numerous ways to define a successful formal mentoring program. For example:

WAYS TO DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS

- Reduced turnover
- Calculating ROI using regretted losses as a comparison
- High quality of mentee/mentor relationship
- Meets and/or exceeds mentee and mentor goals and objectives
- Specific benefits (e.g., increased job satisfaction, program gaining in popularity, etc.)
- Links to higher-level, organizational goals, such as increasing employee commitment
- High quality of outcomes (e.g., faster promotion rates)

Organizations must examine their formal mentoring program and decide what constitutes success based on the organization's goals. This can only be accomplished through strategic program measurement and tracking.

### FORMAL MENTORING RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

Another way to look at the success of formal mentoring programs is to compute mentoring ROI. Formal mentoring ROI, put most simply, is what a company receives in return for their investment in a formal mentoring program. Just as there are several ways to determine the definition of success, there are many ways to view mentoring ROI. Depending on your culture, it's likely you will find one that best suits your organization (see [Key Concepts for Viewing and Measuring ROI](#) below).

ROI is a guiding measurement in any organization, and it is important to understand exactly how the resources your organization is committing to mentoring pay off. Though it makes business sense to calculate ROI, many organizations fail to do so when it comes to formal mentoring, perhaps because they lack a strategy or the metrics to tackle the task. To aid in the process, we define essential

concepts and provide a [sample ROI tool](#) designed to help you assess your mentoring program investment. These resources serve as guidelines, providing practical ways to illustrate the concrete value of formal mentoring programs and initiatives.

In addition to calculating ROI, it's important to think about who needs to review the ROI information, how often it needs to be updated, and how you will actually use it. You should assign an individual to drive the ROI process. ROI data may be leveraged to:

- Gain further senior leader support and participation.
- Support expansion of the program.
- Show how things can be improved for a better return.

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR VIEWING AND MEASURING ROI

There are several ROI measures, and you will need to identify those measures that best apply to your program and your ROI “lens.”

**Softer** measures include but are not limited to:

- Simply tracking benefits, such as increased job satisfaction, decreased stress, and decreased bias toward others who are different.
- Comparing positive outcomes of a group that has been mentored to those of a group that has not been mentored.

**Harder** measures include but are not limited to:

- Comparing the cost of mentoring to the cost it would take to reach the same outcomes without mentoring through, for example, traditional training.
- Calculating concrete savings associated with the benefits of a formal mentoring program and weighing those against mentoring costs.
- Analyzing decreased regretted loss turnover for mentored employees when compared to those employees who were not mentored.

Using the resources provided in this guide, you can conduct a focused examination of your organization’s mentoring program, engage in strategic planning, and compute ROI. This will allow you to better leverage and support your mentoring program and reap the many benefits and rewards mentoring provides.

### CALCULATING ROI USING REGRETTED LOSSES AS A COMPARISON:

- Regretted loss turnover costs are the costs related to those who leave that the organization would like to keep.
- Mentoring has been associated with decreases in turnover.
- It can cost anywhere from 50 percent to 250 percent of an employee’s annual salary to replace her or him.<sup>18</sup>
- If companies can calculate mentoring costs and show how they compare to the savings generated by mentoring and retaining valued, diverse employees, practitioners will be able to better garner organizational support for formal mentoring programs.
- It is particularly important to calculate regretted loss turnover costs to measure how these are reduced through formal mentoring.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT 3

### How does your organization's formal mentoring program stack up?

The following assessment will help determine if your organization has hit the mark in creating a robust formal mentoring program. Complete the following assessment, considering the below questions related to **examining the ROI of your mentoring program**. Each “Yes” answer is worth five (5) points. Each “No” answer is worth zero (0) points. If you are completing all sections, tally your subtotal at the bottom of this section. If you are completing only one or selected assessments, see the **Next Steps** section at the end of this guide. If you cannot answer, “Yes,” to all parts of a particular question, mark, “No,” for that item.

| YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you determined your key success factors, such as goals met and outcomes achieved, with regard to your formal mentoring program?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you identified your organization’s desired ROI outcomes, for example, hard and soft measures, greater positive outcomes from mentored individuals versus non-mentored individuals, and/or actual mentoring dollar costs versus dollar savings? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you outlined the concrete costs of your formal program, including all costs related to program start-up and resources to support your mentors and mentees?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you determined who will drive the ROI process?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you determined who will view the ROI information, how often it will be viewed, and what you will do with it?   |

Section 3 Subtotal: \_\_\_ /25

### TAKE ACTION!

**UTILIZING ROI AS A TOOL TO MEASURE PROGRESS:** Based on the above self-assessment, you may have identified potential gaps in how you currently **measure goals and examine/determine the ROI of your formal mentoring program**. To help you consider options for your company or firm, the following includes tools to guide you; examples for you to tailor to your organization; and D&I practices, which Catalyst considers promising models for others to follow.

Ⓜ **THE FORMAL MENTORING ROI SPREADSHEET TOOL:** The tool can be used as a template to assess your organization’s mentoring ROI, and should be modified in part or in its entirety to suit your organization’s needs. It includes an example showing regretted loss turnover savings compared to mentoring costs. When you plug in your company’s data, you will see in real terms how formal mentoring can pay off.

Ⓜ indicates a member-only tool or resource.

## D&I PRACTICE

### *Sodexo, Inc.—Using Return on Investment Results to Measure Executive Mentoring Success*

Sodexo supports employee development through a variety of mentoring programs, and it closely tracks outcomes and results by:

- Assessing the ratio of monetary gain/accomplishments to the cost of running the mentoring program. In 2007, Sodexo had an ROI of 2 to 1, mostly attributable to enhanced productivity and employee retention.
- Asking participants about the impact formal mentoring has on their careers and day-to-day work.
- Tracking employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and other factors to monitor program effectiveness.

# HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY IN FORMAL MENTORING?

To fully reap the benefits of mentoring, both mentors and mentees need to be held accountable for their responsibilities to each other and the program. Robust and proper accountability supports the notion that mentoring is a shared model of development:

Mentors and mentees are responsible for their own development through their work together.

Organization supports employee development by providing formal mentoring.

Understanding and agreeing upon goals and the types of accountability methods for the duration of the relationship will allow concrete and measurable development to take place. Goals help people understand the ways in which they are to be held accountable to one another and should be tracked and monitored at several points throughout the course of the process. Many organizations with formal mentoring set programmatic goals such as specific targets for mentor/mentee program satisfaction rates, but holding individuals accountable for mentoring behaviors and actions can prove challenging. Research on accountability and mentoring<sup>19</sup> shows that to be successful formal mentoring needs to be tracked and the appropriate people held accountable for making progress toward mentoring goals. Thus, accountability and evaluation are crucial elements to integrate into formal mentoring efforts in order to reach goals and attain success.

This process should start with identifying the organizational-level goals for the program and cascading them down to corresponding individual goals and responsibilities. The [Sample Mentor and Mentee Career Development Action Plan](#) tool not only serves planning needs but can also be used as an accountability mechanism. Mentors and mentees can use it to spell out specific goals, activities, and a timeline for progress checks along the way. Goals and corresponding metrics go hand-in-hand, so be sure to identify the proper metrics, including gender breakdowns, number of completed participant meetings, satisfaction data, and promotions, among others.

## HOLDING PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

It's also essential to consider factors such as level, culture, and most importantly, what will work in your organization. For example, would it be a good fit to include mentoring objectives on senior leader performance evaluations and tie performance in this area directly to compensation? Or would it be a better fit to require a quarterly report out to the CEO on senior leaders' mentoring responsibilities? It's necessary to identify who is responsible for ensuring that mentoring responsibilities are met and accountability measures are working. Think about how you hold people accountable for other talent management objectives to determine whether you can integrate mentoring into those existing mechanisms.

Building a formal mentoring scorecard is an impactful and meaningful way to combine data and provide an informative snapshot of the program at a glance.<sup>20</sup> By creating and using a mentoring scorecard, the likelihood is high that accountability will be taken seriously and will be viewed as an important aspect of the program. Once organizations have tracked important elements of formal mentoring programs, it's imperative that these data are viewed by appropriate stakeholders and leveraged for continuous improvement.

## Mentoring Scorecard

As with a diversity scorecard, a mentoring scorecard can be a powerful tool. A mentoring scorecard is a brief, visually compact snapshot of formal organizational mentoring displaying specific metrics that show how mentoring is adding value to the business and business objectives. Though the scorecard is not a comprehensive measurement system, it highlights specific objectives and metrics that help show how the formal mentoring program is progressing towards meeting both program and business goals formalized at the outset. Additionally, it serves as an accountability tool in displaying the progress of the program over time.

### Your organization should use a mentoring scorecard to:

- Communicate mentoring benefits, status, and progress to a wide audience of stakeholders.
- Obtain clarity, consensus, and direction around mentoring programs and strategy.
- Clearly identify the organizational and employee performance outcomes related to mentoring.
- Set mentoring goals and objectives and better understand the link between formal mentoring and business strategy/performance.
- Serve as an accountability tool.

For more information on how to create an effective, customized diversity scorecard, see Catalyst's *Making Change: Creating a Business-Aligned Diversity Scorecard*.

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR MENTORING ACCOUNTABILITY

Be sure specific goals are in place and that those involved in the mentoring program receive the support they need to meet their goals. Also, pay particular attention to your culture to determine what will work.

- Identify someone to lead the accountability process and ensure compliance.
- Ensure that clear mentoring goals have been established and communicated.
- Identify appropriate measures and metrics needed to show progress.
- Determine specific accountability measures (e.g., performance objectives related to formal mentoring) and apply them appropriately and consistently.
- Link accountability to talent management facets such as performance evaluations.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT 4

### How does your organization's formal mentoring program stack up?

The following assessment will help determine if your organization has hit the mark in creating a robust formal mentoring program. Complete the following assessment, considering the below questions related to **accountability mechanisms of your formal mentoring program**. Each “Yes” answer is worth five (5) points. Each “No” answer is worth zero (0) points. If you are completing all sections, tally your subtotal at the bottom of this section. If you are completing only one or selected assessments, see the [Next Steps](#) section at the end of this guide. If you cannot answer, “Yes,” to all parts of a particular question, mark, “No,” for that item.

| YES                      | NO                       |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you establish pre- and post-mentoring goals for your formal mentoring program?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is it clear who is responsible for what and how they should act on those responsibilities? For instance, if mentees are responsible for setting meetings, are they following through with that duty? Is the person responsible for program measurement properly measuring and reporting that information? Are senior leaders responsible for talking in support of the program at meetings doing so? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are these mentoring efforts included in performance evaluations or report out meetings for the employees involved at all levels, including senior leaders?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you identified a person responsible for ensuring accountability mechanisms are in place and carried out properly?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you employ tracking tools to measure program progress, such as scorecards, interviews, or employee survey data?   |

Section 4 Subtotal: \_\_\_ /25

### TAKE ACTION!

**DEVELOPING A FORMAL MENTORING SCORECARD:** Based on the above self-assessment, you may have identified potential gaps in what you are currently doing to **integrate accountability and implement tracking mechanisms into your formal mentoring program**. To help you consider options for your company or firm, the following includes tools to guide you; examples for you to tailor for your organization; and D&I practices, which Catalyst considers promising models for others to follow.

**Ⓜ SAMPLE MENTORING SCORECARD:** The Sample Mentoring Scorecard provides programmatic and outcome metrics, including data for both employees who have mentors and those who do not to isolate mentoring’s effect on outcome scores.

Ⓜ indicates a member-only tool or resource.

## D&I PRACTICE

### KPMG LLP—*Achieving Results Through Mentoring*

This robust, organization-wide mentoring program engages all talent to achieve maximum results though:

- Establishing links to business benefits and results, like reduced turnover.
- Linking accountability for mentoring as part of performance evaluations for leaders and managers.
- Specifically monitoring and reporting metrics in a variety of forms.

# NEXT STEPS AND OVERALL SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORES

You now have tools to evaluate your formal mentoring program and its effectiveness. You've learned that critical links to career development, measurement, accountability, tracking, and even ROI will achieve results in your formal mentoring program. Failing to consider these elements could

result in missed opportunities, including losing your edge on your competitors.

Now that you've completed the self-assessments, it's time to see how your organization's mentoring program stacks up.

## IF YOU COMPLETED ALL FOUR SELF-ASSESSMENTS:

Final Score (tally of all four subtotals): \_\_\_\_/100

If you scored:

- 90–100** Excellent work. Align your resources to one or two of the priorities discussed earlier in this guide.
- 70–89** Solid work so far. Keep working at it. Use the tools and practices in this guide to better target your priorities.
- 50–69** You've obviously made some progress, but you need to think more strategically. Assess areas where you should devote resources.
- 0–49** You may be earlier on in your formal mentoring journey—revisit all the tools and D&I practices to gather ideas for your program to assess what will work for your company.

## IF YOU COMPLETED FEWER THAN FOUR SELF-ASSESSMENTS:

For how many items per self-assessment did you check “No?”

If it was **more than two or three per section**, you need to take a closer look at those areas and align resources appropriately to achieve the best results. Read the D&I practices that follow for additional suggestions or refer back to previous sections for appropriate tools and information to help support your program.

No matter how you scored, the below questions are meant to guide further discussion and help your organization embed these principles into your own mentoring efforts.

### HOW CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION:

**Encourage** and train employees on strategic mentoring behaviors?

**Ensure** that mentoring is a continuous part of a career development portfolio?

**Best track** formal mentoring opportunities and career outcomes—now and in the future?

**Make the case** for expenditures related to mentoring?

One of the greatest attributes of mentoring is that it can yield connections that last a lifetime. Formal mentoring partnerships can ultimately become some of the most rewarding relationships in the workplace and provide both mentor and mentee with valuable knowledge and expanded skills sets. By ensuring accountability and tracking mentoring outcomes, organizations can modify or tailor their formal mentoring programs to create a more inclusive and diverse culture for all employees.

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (D&I) PRACTICES

## RBC (Royal Bank of Canada)—*Diversity Dialogues*

In the mid-1980s, RBC's approach to diversity was rooted in compliance, with Canada's employment equity legislation; by the new millennium, RBC's approach had evolved from managing diversity to leveraging it for the benefit of the business. A program RBC uses to leverage diversity and create inclusion is *Diversity Dialogues*. Through 2008, more than 150 executives and diverse employees in Canada and the United States have participated.

*Diversity Dialogues* is a reciprocal mentoring model that positions mentors and mentees as partners in learning about diversity. The program matches mid-level women and visible minority employees with senior leaders and executives from across the organization. Participants in *Diversity Dialogues* partner for one year, meeting about once a month, or at least six times. Goals of the program include accelerating the D&I learning of senior leaders, ensuring that leaders know their diverse talent, and helping diverse employees gain visibility and insight into the organization and their careers.

Matching pairs for *Diversity Dialogues* is a thoughtful process involving the senior leader, human resources (HR) business partners, and the Diversity group. HR business partners have discussions with senior leaders about their diversity learning goals and work with the Diversity group to identify talented diverse employees who might benefit from the program. Each matched pair is provided with the *Diversity Dialogues* toolkit, which outlines a number of required and optional "steps" or actions for the relationship.

As it has expanded, *Diversity Dialogues* has become increasingly integrated with talent management processes. HR business partners more actively manage the pairing of participants, while still leveraging the Diversity group's expertise and resources. Businesses may turn to *Diversity Dialogues* to help develop diverse employees in an effort to move them into the pipeline for senior leadership roles more quickly.

Leaders who participate in *Diversity Dialogues* get to know their talent better, learn about the employee and client base, and often become strong champions of diversity. Mentees benefit from the coaching they receive from their executive mentors and often gain exposure to other executives and leaders.

## Ernst & Young LLP—*Employee Advocacy Through Career Planning and Mentoring*

Ernst & Young's Career Watch program—in which senior leaders act as “watchers” to employee “watchees”—helps high-potential women and visible minorities reach their highest promotional opportunity within the organization. In particular, participating employees gain valuable guidance and advocacy support to leverage their career opportunities and ultimately achieve their career aspirations. With a deep understanding of watchees' careers, watchers are additionally responsible for ensuring that the most appropriate and most valuable counseling and mentoring relationships are available to watchees. Career Watch is an organization-wide program, but Ernst & Young Canada's implementation includes adaptations to meet the particular needs of the Canadian region.

Career Watch began in 2003 when Ernst & Young noticed there were gaps in several areas related to performance and talent management, including retention and career progression of women and visible minorities. It was developed to bring senior leaders and high-potential women and visible minorities together in a performance and talent management program designed to promote a diverse range of talent for the benefit of both individual employees and the organization. It is also an excellent planning tool, as it allows senior leaders to get to know their talent in an in-depth way and understand who is in the leadership pipeline. The senior leaders participating in the program are expected to challenge assumptions and provide advocacy for the optimal development of their assigned employees.

Ernst and Young has a number of mentoring programs in Canada; the Canadian program functions differently than Career Watch programs in other Ernst & Young regions in that it engages the most senior leaders in the firm as watchers. Other regions use a matchmaking process to optimize rapport within a line of business, but Ernst & Young Canada has had good results using its pairing strategy, which sometimes pairs individuals in different lines of business in order to challenge assumptions and broaden exposure. Another difference between the Canadian and the U.S. programs is the number of participants. There are as many as 200 participants in some Career Watch programs, with each senior leader being assigned one or a few employees. Ernst & Young Canada limits its program to 48 participants, with each leader being assigned six employees.

Employees normally participate in the Career Watch program for two years before graduating, although this time frame is flexible depending on the needs and goals of the employee. Career Watch has helped to retain Ernst & Young's talented women and visible minorities by ensuring that they have access to a range of opportunities to both develop their potential and bring success to the firm.

## KPMG LLP—Achieving Results Through Mentoring

Mentoring has existed at KPMG LLP (KPMG), the U.S. member firm of KPMG International, for decades. Prior to 2004, however, the mentoring program focused primarily on assisting employees with the transition to partnership. In 2004, KPMG's former Chairman and Deputy Chairman, recognizing the critical role mentors played over the course of their own careers, set out to expand the program to all KPMG employees regardless of functional area, level, or partner-track status.

Mentor-mentee pairs are expected to formulate and monitor goals for the relationship. Setting goals helps better define the relationship and ensure expectations are met for both parties. The mentoring program is also entrenched in KPMG's performance management system. There is a general expectation that employees will become mentors as they advance within the firm, and partner-track employees are expected to specify mentoring as one of their formal career goals. Based on 2008 employee data, nearly 60 percent of KPMG's workforce across all levels (9,862 mentees; 5,990 mentors) participates in the mentoring program and there are 1.6 mentees for every mentor. These data show that the majority of KPMG professionals value mentoring.

Mentees are encouraged to use Dialogue, KPMG's firm-wide, computerized performance management system, to track their mentoring relationships. While this is not required, most mentees and mentors do use the system so that mentees can engage their mentors in important career processes, such as reviewing performance management goals or client engagement reviews. Employees identify their mentors on their profile pages, which allows KPMG to track and analyze mentoring. Employees are also able to use Dialogue to document their mentoring relationship. Mentor-mentee pairs are also expected to formulate and monitor goals for the relationship. Setting goals helps better define the relationship and ensure expectations are met for both parties.

KPMG is able to analyze the mentoring data provided by employees in a variety of ways, including by gender, race/ethnicity, practice group, functional level, and age. The firm is also able to compare turnover rates of people with mentors to those without to better understand the relationship between mentoring and career development. In 2008, turnover among staff and managers with mentors was 17 to 18 percent lower than it was for those without mentors. Among partners, those with mentors experienced 50 percent less turnover than those without. KPMG also views the annual increase in mentor relationships as evidence that the program is successful and valuable to employees.

By closely tracking these data, KPMG is able to show the impact mentoring has on the overall culture. In KPMG's 2008 employee survey, 77 percent of employees reported that they agree that firm management actively supports and encourages mentoring relationships, an increase from the previous year. Through the success of the initiative, KPMG has been able to show the positive impact that mentors have on mentees, many of which are women or from underrepresented groups. These pairings also encourage inclusion and foster a work environment that KPMG is proud of.

## Sodexo, Inc.—Using Return on Investment Results to Measure Executive Mentoring Success

Sodexo, Inc. launched its North American mentoring initiative in 2005 based on strong empirical evidence regarding the importance—for both employee development and business success—of corporate mentoring programs and linking mentoring to positive Return on Investment (ROI). Sodexo's initiative, *Spirit of Mentoring*, comprises three mentoring opportunities that aim to cultivate a diverse, inclusive culture; increase overall strength and diversity of the leadership pipeline; improve employee retention; and foster connections for employees dispersed across the continent.

Sodexo's formal mentoring program, called IMPACT, is tied to ROI results. It is a structured, yearlong initiative designed for mid-level managers and above, including the C-suite level who serve as mentors. Mentors are typically at least two job grades above mentees. A cross-functional implementation team that is chaired by the Director of Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives administers the program, and two executive sponsors at the President level are leveraged to sustain the initiative over time.

As part of its commitment to diversity, Sodexo strives for cross-cultural and cross-gender mentoring partnerships. In 2008, 70 percent of pairs were composed of individuals from different cultures or of different genders, exceeding Sodexo's goal of 60 percent. In addition, 90 percent of pairs were employees from different operational and administrative business areas. Finally, approximately 40 percent to 50 percent of participants were women, reflecting Sodexo's employee composition.

Research demonstrating that corporate mentoring is linked to positive ROI is the business case IMPACT is based on. Sodexo examines ROI directly related to mentoring activities three to six months following the conclusion of an IMPACT cycle, when it gathers qualitative and quantitative feedback from both mentees and mentors. This process aligns the mentoring programs with other internal diversity, inclusion, and business strategies and determines exactly how IMPACT has affected company D&I initiatives and the business itself.

To assess ROI, Sodexo examines the ratio of the cost to run IMPACT to the financial gains made by IMPACT participants, particularly mentees. Participants are asked to estimate: how the program affected and continues to affect their day-to-day work; the business accomplishments that they are able to attribute to contacts made during their participation in IMPACT; and their confidence levels related to these estimates. In 2009, the program received an ROI of 2 to 1, which is largely attributable to enhanced productivity and employee retention.

In addition to quantitative ROI results, Sodexo collects information on qualitative indicators of success, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, diversity awareness, teamwork, and decisiveness. Both mentees and mentors, as well as their teams, have demonstrated substantive increases in these areas since the program's inception.

# RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

## Lack of Access to Mentors: A Theme in Catalyst Research

- *Women of Color in U.S. Securities Firms—Women of Color in Professional Services Series* cites that women of color face an exclusionary workplace, which leads to difficulties connecting with mentors and results in fewer business development opportunities.
- *Leaders in a Global Economy: Talent Management in European Cultures* links lack of mentoring opportunities for pipeline and senior leaders in Europe to low job and company satisfaction and high turnover intentions.
- *Career Advancement in Corporate Canada: A Focus on Visible Minorities ~ Critical Relationships* found that visible minority women and men lacked access to mentoring relationships and this created barriers to career advancement.
- *Women and Men in U.S. Corporate Leadership: Same Workplace, Different Realities?* reports that having an influential mentor was among the top career advancement strategies for senior women executives.
- *Women in Financial Services: The Word on the Street* found that lack of mentoring opportunities is the leading barrier to women's advancement in this sector.
- *Women and the M.B.A.: Gateway to Opportunity* cites that less than one-half of white women (46 percent) and even fewer African-American women (37 percent) are satisfied with the availability of mentors.
- *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Opportunities and Barriers* reports that not having an influential mentor or sponsor is the top advancement barrier for women of color.

# ENDNOTES

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