



# Benefits of mentoring

**Robert McIlwraith – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

**University of Exeter Technical Services Conference**

# Benefits of mentoring

## Agenda

- Aims for today
- My background
- Why mentoring?
- Experiences of being mentored
- Experiences of mentoring
- What I have learned from both aspects
- Questions.

# Benefits of mentoring

## Aims for today



### For the mentor

- Helping younger or less experienced people develop more effectively
- You can gain skills as you help others develop
- To appreciate the great feeling that comes from helping someone grow as an individual.

### For the mentee

- Accelerating learning by working with a more experienced colleague
- To allow quality time to discuss your career and plans
- To improve interpersonal skills and learn about the organisation's culture

# Benefits of mentoring

## Background

- Worked in Aerospace industry initially as a Development Engineer and later as Chief Engineer, General Manager and CEO
- 20 years at CEO level
- Currently have a number of non executive and trustee roles.
- I mentor leaders of small businesses
- Teach at INTO UoE ; Guest Lecturer at Business School.

# Benefits of mentoring

## Why mentoring?

- Most people look for personal and professional development
- Mentees ideally set the agenda – Mentors help them find solutions
- Can link discussions to organisation's aims and objectives and individual's aims and objectives
- Likely you will learn something you did not know – both as a mentor and mentee
- Could just be peace of mind for the mentee – sharing an issue.

# Benefits of mentoring

## **Experience of being mentored**

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Straight out of University
- Mentor was several levels above me and in a different department
- We met 3-4 times a year
- We covered professional development and personal development.

# Benefits of mentoring

- Separated me from my day to day role and that of my line manager
- Allowed me to look at opportunities throughout the organisation
- Discussed what I needed to do to gain experience and develop relevant skills - with the aim to be promoted / work in a new area
- First clear awareness that I was more of a generalist than a specialist.

# Benefits of mentoring

## **Experience of being mentored - continued**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> time - as CEO of a global aerospace and defence business
- Much later in my career
- External mentor this time
- Much more challenging, much more rewarding
- This is where I learned the true benefits of being mentored and how it really worked.



# Benefits of mentoring

## Benefits

- Allowed me to step outside day to day activities and focus on the important issues for the business
- Allowed me to plan ahead – not just deal with current issues but the ones we would likely face in time
- Allowed me to get these key messages across to others in the organisation
- Allowed me to think about what was both good for me and the business.

# Benefits of mentoring

BE THE  
MENTOR

YOU WISH  
YOU HAD.

Who  
is it?

## Now in the role of a mentor

- Over the last 5 years I have mentored leaders of SME businesses
- Work with them to identify their business and personal goals
- Help provide guidance as they grow and face new challenges
- Support them with specific issues as they arise
- Just being available helps a lot.

# Benefits of mentoring

## **What I have learned as a mentee and mentor?**

- Mentors ask open questions
- They build on the answers
- They try to find the most important issues to the mentee
- They try to help the mentee to find their own solutions
- They provide guidance, support and assistance to help the mentee address these issues.

# Benefits of mentoring

- They ensure there are outcomes and follow up
- Works much better when you get on with each other
- Essential there is trust between both parties – you will likely share confidential information at times
- You know it works when you both want to meet rather than being reminded to meet.
- Important the mentee understands the aims and objectives of the organisation.

# Benefits of mentoring



- I believe all these points are relevant to a University department
- Does require more thought on professional as well as personal development
- Important to remember that ideally the benefits are to the individual and therefore the organisation
- Mentors can play an important role in the life and career of mentees – helping them get where they want to go – can be incredibly rewarding.

# Benefits of mentoring

## Questions?



# Benefits of mentoring

## Comments / questions

“sometimes people see things in us that we don’t”

‘what is the one thing you would go back and change?’

‘what questions should I be asking?’

‘what set you on your path to pursue your career?’

‘what is the most significant regret you have about your career?’

‘what did you learn by failing?’