The survey on which these findings on coaching and mentoring are based, was circulated to a small select sample of executive members of the Australian Human Resources Institute database. It was therefore pleasing to receive 111 responses in an area of HR practice which, while it has a growing number of advocates, is discretionary. Mentoring in particular has shown enormous growth in the past five years.

The results in both areas of enquiry reveal a snapshot of what is happening in organisations where coaching and mentoring practices operate but also in organisations where no programs operate.

While both coaching and mentoring are primarily set up for the benefit of the people who are respectively being coached or mentored, one of the instructive insights that came out of the results was the reverse benefits that mentors and mentors’ organisations can derive from participation in the programs, in addition to the benefits reported for mentees.

The qualitative results in particular reveal the insights that mentors can gain, particularly in the way the organisation operates with respect to the priorities of generation Y employees and the treatment of female employees on matters of gender equity.

Another illuminating result in the qualitative findings is the enthusiasm that is expressed in relation to external mentoring compared with the in-house equivalent. Both mentees and mentors comment on the openness, directness and genuineness of exchanges when the overlay of internal political positioning is removed and the mentor is not burdened by any direct career responsibility towards the mentee.

And mentors in particular are reporting back to the organisation that they are gaining insights that otherwise would not be possible through their sometimes blunt exchanges with mentees who are free to speak with candour about the way the organisation works and how it might work better, and also how other organisations are managing challenges such as change and talent.

I trust you will find the results of this research as enlightening as I have, and I commend the report to you.

Peter Wilson AM
National President
Australian Human Resources Institute
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KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

COACHING

• A little more than two thirds of respondents (67.57%) report that their organisation employs executive coaches.

• More than seven out of 10 respondents (72.01%) of the sample that have a coaching program report the perception of executive coaching in their organisation is either beneficial or very beneficial.

• HR coordinates executive coaching in 80% of organisations sampled.

• Support from management is regarded as the key success factor by two thirds of respondents (66.7%).

MENTORING

• Almost two thirds of respondents (63.96%) report their organisation operates a mentoring program.

• Of that sample, HR oversees the program in seven out of 10 cases and more than half are conducted by a designated program director.

• Nearly a half of mentoring relationships last one year with around one in five reported as lasting indefinitely.

• Six out of 10 respondents report in-house mentor programs and a half report engaging external mentors.

• More than half the respondents do not operate a formal independent matching process.

• Nearly two-thirds report the operation of a code of conduct associated with the mentoring program.

• The code of conduct includes a ‘no poaching’ clause in a quarter of cases.

• Respondents report that two thirds of mentors gain reverse benefits from the mentoring scheme.

• Of respondents whose organisations do not operate a mentoring scheme, nearly half believe the organisation would gain from introducing one and a quarter have plans to do so in the future.
SURVEY OVERVIEW

The survey that resulted in these findings was conducted online during October-November 2011, and communicated by email to a selected sample of senior executives from the member database of the Australian Human Resources Institute.

A total of 111 respondents returned answers to the survey. Responses were treated anonymously.

The same sample group of respondents answered separate groups of questions on coaching and mentoring practices from the perspective of their organisations.

WHAT ARE COACHING AND MENTORING?

Coaching and mentoring are ways in which people with experience assist those who are less experienced. Coaching usually focuses on advising on particular situations and ways to deal with them, and coaches tend to be appointed by a business for their employees. Mentoring is usually longer-term, involves the offer of voluntary time by the mentor during which a more personal relationship can be developed, and mentoring tends to focus on the broader career objectives of the person being mentored.

“Mentors gain better insights on real problems faced by mentees in their workplaces. This has caused mentors to consider whether the same problems exist in their own shop, but are being covered over. This is especially the case with gender equity.”

Survey respondent
SECTION 1: COACHING

Figure 1 shows that approximately two out of three respondent organisations (67.57%) employ the services of executive coaches.

Figure 2 indicates that more than seven out of 10 respondents (72%) who have coaches employed in their organisation report that the perception within the organisation is positive with 30.67% seeing it as very beneficial and 41.33% seeing it as beneficial. A quarter of the sample (25.33%) are reserved, seeing it as somewhat beneficial, and only a very small minority of 2.67% see it as not beneficial.
SECTION 1: COACHING

Figure 3 indicates three areas of particular strength coming out of the employment of executive coaches: development of skills and capabilities (78.67%), support for key employees (72%) and addressing of performance issues (68%), with approximately seven out of 10 respondents reporting positively in those areas. A little more than a third (38.67%) believe that coaching provides support for organisational change, so it might be concluded that there is more support for the idea of coaching as a personal development tool rather than an organisational one.

Figure 4 indicates that the main two ways of assessing candidates for coaching are by looking at existing performance measurement (69.33%) and by interview (57.33%). Considerably smaller numbers assess by survey (30.67%) or by the coach (26.67%).
SECTION 1: COACHING

FIGURE 4. PRIOR ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR COACHING
75 RESPONSES

- Interview: 57.3%
- Survey: 30.7%
- Assessment drawn from existing performance measurement: 69.3%
- Assessment provided by coach: 26.7%
- No assessment: 4.0%
- Don’t know: 1.3%
- Other: 14.7%
SECTION 1: COACHING

Figure 5 indicates that either the HR department (38.67% of responses) or the candidate being coached (26.67%) provides the information that assesses the effectiveness of executive coaching. Very few respondents (6.67%) report that no assessment is conducted, that the coach conducts it (4%) or that another department than HR conducts it (4%). The number reporting ‘Other’ is fairly high at 20%.

Figure 6 indicates that the HR department (80% of responses) overwhelmingly conducts executive coaching among the sample organisations, with a small minority of less than 10% being organised by individual managers.
**SECTION 1: COACHING**

Figure 7 indicates that the main two ways coaches are sourced are through existing contacts (75%) and direct knowledge of a coach’s work (58.67%), suggesting that the process is semi-formal rather than formal. That 41.33% are sourced through word of mouth seems to confirm that view though the same proportion are also sourced through a professional body, with only 16% sourced through coaching directories.

Figure 8 indicates that the experience is the overwhelming factor with 80% of respondents reporting that is the main way coaches are selected in their organisation is through experience as a coachee, and 60% are selected through experience in the field in which the candidate or coachee operates. Nearly half the sample (48%) reports psychology qualifications being a factor and 42.67% report formal coaching qualifications being a factor.
SECTION 1: COACHING

Figure 9 indicates that recommendation (84%), interviews (77.33%) and reference checks (64%) are the most common processes used to select a coach, with only 12% using an external assessment process.

Figure 10 shows that in three quarters of cases (74.57%) the HR department or a coaching coordinator determines the matching of a coach with a coachee, while in half the cases (50.67%) the coachee does the matching, and in 29.33% of cases the coachee’s manager does the matching.
Table 1 shows that the stand-out key success factor in most organisations is support from management (66.7%) which is the only one supported by a majority of respondents. Other highly rated areas are matching of coach to coachee (46.7%), the relationship between the two (44%), follow-up after the program (44%), formal measurement and reporting (41.3%) and confidentiality and ethical conduct of the program (41.3%). Engagement of the person being coached is rated well at 37.3%, and the selection of coach by 28% of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY SUCCESS FACTOR</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of coach</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of coachee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching of coach to coachee</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of coachee in the program</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from management for the coaching program</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from human resources for the coaching program</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between coach and coachee</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and format of the coaching program</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and resources available for the coaching program</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality and ethical conduct of the program</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal measurement and reporting process</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up after completion of the coaching program</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1: COACHING

SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents from organisations that do not operate a coaching program were asked to comment in writing why that is so. A sample of comments follows:

“Not a priority”
“Empirical evidence base is lacking”
“Budget”
“Organisation too small”
“We have a strong induction program on commencement that ensures competency levels of young entrants. Mentor arrangement established where necessary after induction period”
“Does not consider it enough of a priority”
“I am a sole trader (consultant, advisor, and author. I do not have a company and advise governments on reform. I coach and mentor, and advisors in my teams also do that. Many of the surveys I complete seem to assume that everyone works for a company. I have been self-employed for much of my working life”
“Does not fit our goals”
“Cost constraints”
“Executive management team been in place for a number of years”
“We are a coaching and leadership organisation”
“Believe coaching is a fundamental management skill of our business leaders and therefore have internalised coaching”
“Because we offer it as a service to others”
“It does, but we don’t hire external coaches”
“We discontinued it in favour of a mentoring program, given feedback from clients participating”

“Still yet to be determined if we are ready for this type of activity”
“It has not been value for money. Mentoring programs have had more impact on career development and lifting morale and performance”
“No expressed need”
“We are a company of 10 people. Coaching is a regular but informal activity. We have complex work processes and all inductions and training are undertaken on a personal coaching basis over a six month period. Because we are a niche consultancy, technical skills cannot be readily accessed externally”
As shown in Figure 11, two thirds of respondents (63.96%) report their organisation operates a mentoring program.

Figure 12 shows that confidentiality in the pairings of mentor and mentee prevail in two thirds (66.2%) of the sample group that has a mentor scheme.
As shown in Figure 11, two thirds of respondents (63.96%) report their organisation operates a mentoring program.

Figure 12 shows that confidentiality in the pairings of mentor and mentee prevail in two thirds (66.2%) of the sample group that has a mentor scheme.

Figures 13 and 14 indicate that while around half of the sample group (56.34%) report a director is appointed to oversee the mentor scheme, nearly seven out of ten (69.01%) report it is directed by the HR department.
SECTION 2: MENTORING

Figure 15 indicates that one year is the most common timeframe of a mentor relationship with 45.07% of the relevant sample of respondents reporting that, though nearly 1 in 5 (18.31%) report the relationships are indefinite. Around the same proportion of 1 in 10 report the arrangements last for 6 months (11.27%) or more than a year (12.68%) respectively.

INTERNAL MENTOR PROGRAMS

Figure 16 indicates that while a majority of organisations source the mentors for their programs in-house (61.97%), a significant minority source mentor externally.
SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents from organisations that source mentors in-house (see Figure 16) were asked to comment in writing on the results of that practice. A sample of comments follows:

“The support provided is practical and relevant. The mentors and mentees develop strong relationships which continue after the mentor program has finished”

“Very good. We see our mentees progressing in terms of performance and career development”

“Acceptable - it is quite early for us so still developing the program and how to evaluate it, taking on board feedback from mentors, mentees and supervisors”

“In-house mentors are deemed experts in a field/speciality. They use this to assist with retention programs and succession programs”

“Knowledge increase. Greater performance. Leadership skills”

“Broadening of internal networks and providing context of how to be effective within the company’s culture”

“Patchy application, inconsistent approach and mentoring tailing off if mentee not persistent. HR is about to introduce a formal process to address these issues and provide mentors and mentees with training and support”

“Reasonably effective”

“Very successful at first line level but the jury would still be out at senior levels”

“Very positive especially with a diversity overlay”

“Strong employee engagement. Mentees communicating the benefits to others or offering to mentor others”

“Early days of the program in two areas of the business. Not being run as a companywide initiative”

“Career progression. Networking”

“Identify and coach high achievers”

“Strong relationship building, more confident employees”

“Generally positive however the program is not overly formal so perhaps with more rigour it would be more easily and deliberately evaluated”

“Program tends to focus on career development rather than performance enhancement. Mentoring also can be used for specific skill/capability development which is more targeted. Many relations continue for over 12 months”

“Focus on customer-driven culture and inclusion/diversity (e.g. 12-week program with over 2000 women participating)”

“We aim for cross-divisional mentors to provide a different perspective and leadership role modelling”

“We have had mixed results. Our work is detailed and demanding. Not all recruits find they fit the work environment. This could be more of a selection issue than a mentoring issue”

“Increase in awareness of impact; greater understanding of the organisation by mentees; identification of gaps in leadership learnt by mentor”
SECTION 2: MENTORING

EXTERNAL MENTOR PROGRAMS

Figure 17 shows that the sample group were asked about whether mentors were sourced externally and indicated equal Yes and No responses.

![Figure 17. External Mentors](chart.png)
SECTION 2: MENTORING

SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents from organisations that source mentors externally (see Figure 17) were asked to comment in writing on the results of that practice. A sample of comments follows:

“More successful than internal mentors. There is a more open but confidential exchange and relationship developed when there is an external mentor. Feedback from mentee is consistently more positive when mentor is external”

“Much better than internal sources … External mentors more likely to have genuine interest of mentees to heart. Mentees are generally more satisfied as well”

“Top results. Experienced people who are independent of where the mentee works is a critical success factor”

“It is highly driven by mentees and therefore results are generally personal to those mentees”

“It’s been a positive situation having an independent who is not responsible for the individual’s career; similar to the benefit of an executive coaching program. Individuals can be bluntly honest without fear of affecting their progression and can use such a person as a sounding board on a wide variety of issues”

“Very good and superior to internal mentoring schemes. Candour comes with use of an experienced external mentor”

“Top quality. External mentors have fitted the bill when they have the right experience and mindset. The best ones use an open and engaging style that puts mentee into a positive frame of mind early on”

“External mentor results have varied dependent on the match and mentees engagement”

“Brilliant. This far outweighs the benefits (which are considerable) of internally sourced mentors. An external perspective, a new approach to problem solving and finding out more about how other organisations manage change and talent has been incredibly useful for all, not only the mentees”

“Excellent results. External mentors have the right mix of expertise and independence. Internal mentors often don’t possess these characteristics because they are subject to the internal organisational political structures and alliances”

“Top drawer. We have had very committed mentors with the right mix of experience and skills that have been valued and extensively used by our mentees”

“The feedback has been powerfully positive. Outside the square reviews have been very beneficial”

“Much better than coaching or internal mentor programs. External mentors lead to more frank exchanges that are more highly appreciated by the mentees here, and it shows”
As shown in Figure 18, professional organisations are the most common source reported by the relatively small proportion of respondents whose organisations participate in an externally organised program (14 respondents). Five each are run by the BCA and AICD and an independent director was reported as being used in four cases.
SECTION 2: MENTORING

SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents from organisations that participate in externally organised mentor schemes (see Figure 18) were asked to comment in writing on how successful they had been. A sample of comments follows:

“Feedback is strongly positive. Internal mentoring schemes are affected by an organisation’s politics”

“Not that successful”

“Very successful”

“Very successful. Internal mentoring provides too many forced and unconvincing ‘form’ relationships. The external mentor makes for a genuine and valuable exchange”

“Very successful - I hope the BCA and AHRI decide to extend this very important program that is a major part of improving gender equity in our business sector”

“Superb results have been experienced. Mentees speak highly and observable improvement in them is marked”

“Very successful. As an external mentor I have enjoyed this program and it’s one that should be continued by the BCA through AHRI. I saw my mentee grow professionally in the process. We had good support and guidance”

“Reasonably successful”

“Very - lots of people volunteer to be mentors each year”

“Our HR manager is a mentor with AHRI and she thinks it is successful”

“AHRI know what they are doing. It works well”

“Very successful. My employer is very happy with the results from the program AHRI has organised on behalf of the BCA”

“Excellent. We tried this last year and will be putting it into permanent effect in 2012 given the results from the trial”

“Very good - The AICD has a strong program where the commitment and resources are there to produce results”

“Good for me as I am the participant”
SECTION 2: MENTORING

MATCHING MENTOR AND MENTEE

Figure 19 reveals that the matching process is not done formally by an independent party in more than half the cases (56.34%). A third of cases are matched independently (33.8%).

Of the small number of respondents that reported on the process (see Figure 20), all of the suggested information sources rated highly.

FIGURE 19. IS MATCHING BY FORMAL INDEPENDENT PARTY?
71 RESPONSES

Yes: 56%
No: 34%
Don’t know: 10%

FIGURE 20. WHAT INFORMATION IS USED TO CONDUCT FORMAL INDEPENDENT MATCHING?
24 RESPONSES

- Reference to a CV: 83.3%
- Formal assessment of mentee potential: 75.0%
- Aptitudes and interests of mentors and mentees: 91.7%
- Capacity for the mentee to be stretched by the mentor: 79.2%
Figure 21 shows that nearly two thirds of respondents (64.79%) report a code of conduct operates for the mentor program in their organisation with a little more than a quarter (29.58%) reporting that no code operates.

Figure 22 indicates the reported areas covered by a code of conduct in mentoring schemes. Three areas stand out: confidentiality (63.38%), recommended frequency of meetings (59.15%) and business objectives of the relationship (59.15%), with managing conflicts of interest reported by a third of respondents (33.8%), and a ban on poaching by a quarter (25.35%).
SECTION 2: MENTORING

FIGURE 22. AREAS COVERED BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT
71 RESPONSES

- No poaching: 22.4%
- Managing conflicts of interest: 33.8%
- Confidentiality: 63.4%
- Recommended frequency and duration of meetings: 59.2%
- Business objectives of the relationship: 59.2%
- Don’t know: 9.9%
- Not applicable: 15.5%
- Other: 7.0%
Figure 23 indicates that participants are provided with a number of services in more than half the cases reported by respondents: mentor and mentee briefings (73.24%), mentee handbook (63.38%), mentor handbook (53.25%) and informal mentee networking opportunities (53.52%). A buddy system and a coach to help prepare mentees for mentor meetings by a quarter of respondents each (26.17%).

**FIGURE 23. PARTICIPANT SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH MENTOR PROGRAMS**

71 RESPONSES

- Mentee briefings: 73.2%
- Mentor briefings: 73.2%
- Handbook for mentees: 63.4%
- Handbook for mentors: 53.5%
- A buddy system: 20.2%
- A coach to help mentee prepare for meetings with mentor: 20.2%
- Informal networking opportunities for mentees: 53.5%
- Informal networking opportunities for mentors: 45.3%
Figures 24 and 25 focus on mentee and mentor reporting, with Figure 24 indicating that nearly two thirds (60.56%) reporting respectively that mentees gain greater confidence and better ways to manage difficult problems and interpersonal relationships. Nearly half the sample group (49.3%) report gaining clearer perceptions of senior responsibilities.

Figure 25 indicates that two thirds (66.2%) report reverse benefits for mentors who participate in the scheme.
SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents who answered the question on reverse benefits for mentors (see Figure 25) were asked to comment in writing on what those benefits were. A sample of comments follows:

“Better insights on real problems faced by mentees in their workplaces. This has caused mentors to consider whether the same problems exist in their own shop, but are being covered over. This is especially the case with gender equity”

“Greater perception of the business e.g. with ‘baby boomer’ mentoring ‘gen y’ greater understanding of other perceptions”

“Working with associates from across different areas of the business that they would perhaps not normally work with. Gaining a greater understanding of the grass roots issues”

“Major insights into life down the line these days. It’s changed so much in terms of pressure and stress”

“As an external mentor I have experienced greater insights from this program than others in which I have participated. The honest and direct exchanges with my mentee have told me a lot about the position faced by women in business today that I didn’t understand was so bad - and it’s probably felt also by a number of women I work with who have been too intimidated to say so. I am making some changes here as a result of this program”

“Understanding of competing priorities of individuals. Gained an understanding of different industry sectors”

“Awareness of key issues and better understanding of gen y drivers”

“Highly enjoyable - learn as much as I give... helps keep me up to date”

“Learning new skills - especially newer computer skills”

“Great for getting insights into other people in the business and seeing the upcoming talent”

“Increased ability to manage their teams effectively”

“Understanding of what happens in other organisations and often ideas come from these”

“Greater insights into workplace realities and relationships; fulfilment at mentee’s enhanced effectiveness and confidence”

“Insights we don’t get with in house mentees who feel victim to organisational politics, and don’t open up as much”

“Understandings that are more honest and compelling than I have had from in house mentoring relationships”

“Mentees tell you how it really is. I didn’t get that as much from internal schemes in which I participated”

“We have learned that mentors have picked up more ideas as to the genuine underlying sentiments and morale in the organisation”
SECTION 2: MENTORING

Table 1 shows that the stand-out key success factor in most organisations is support from management (66.7%) which is the only one supported by a majority of respondents. Other highly rated areas are matching of coach to coachee (46.7%), the relationship between the two (44%), follow-up after the program (44%), formal measurement and reporting (41.3%) and confidentiality and ethical conduct of the program (41.3%). Engagement of the person being coached is rated well at 37.3%, and the selection of coach by 28% of respondents.

Table 2 displays respondent answers on the extent to which mentor relationships succeed or not. A total of more than eight out of 10 (83.1%) indicate that a majority (42.25%) or a significant majority (40.85%) succeed. A minority (47.89%) and significant minority (14.08%) are reported as failing with a need to terminate, and slightly smaller numbers are reported as failing with a rematch required.

Figure 26 shows that a third of respondents (33.8%) report half-yearly evaluations of the mentor program, one in five (21.13%) report annual evaluations and 16.9% report quarterly evaluations, with a very small minority (4.23%) reporting monthly evaluations or no evaluations at all (7.04%).
SECTION 2: MENTORING

ORGANISATIONS WITHOUT A MENTOR PROGRAM

Figure 27 shows that nearly half of the respondents (45%) whose organisations do not conduct a mentoring program believe they would benefit from doing so, and a quarter (25%) believe they would not benefit, with nearly a quarter on the fence (22.5%).

As a corollary to the Figure 27 responses, Figure 28 shows that a quarter of the respondents (25%) whose organisations do not conduct a mentoring program report plans to do so in the future, more than a third (37.5%) report no such plans, and 20% report that the organisation might do so.
SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Respondents who reported having no mentor scheme were asked to comment in writing on why that is so. A sample of comments follows:

“Responsibility of line management”
“Small number of employees”
“Unofficial mentoring happens. It is part of the career progress of most people in this industry”
“Too small….but supports mentoring activities through AHRI etc.”
“Need has not been identified to formalise mentoring... it is encouraged but informally only”
“Organisation too small”
“Informal system exists but is not actively pushed”
“It is done informally at this time, with no structure. Has been identified as an area that needs to be addressed and we will do so in the next 12 months”
“Not seen a formal need for it for career progression”
“Does not fit goals”
“Looking at introducing one”
“No need at this time”
“Difficult to assess total impacts and can add to confusion as a cheaper option rather than professional competent coaching which is far more impactful. Additionally there is a social networking and political aspect to mentoring which can lack transparency in organisations”
“Internal support systems are in place, but not a formal mentoring program”

“Have operated a formal scheme in the past and currently focus on informal mentoring and coaching - we are likely to re-visit in the future but have found we do not need to keep a large scale mentoring program running continuously”

“We will but timing is not right. We will in 6-12 months once basic setup management / people processes and strategies are in place. We are a new strategically focused team and organisation and is important to set up right including enabling resources and processes”

“We use mentoring in specific situations but we do not have a formal organisation wide mentoring program”

“We are still in the development process for a mentoring program which will support leaders for their continued leadership development”

“Currently large turnover statistics are preventing this activity”

“Have discussed it but do not currently have the resources to train mentors/mentees and set up program - not yet enough executive will to make it a priority”