

# A Mentoring Model for the Australian Upstream Oil and Gas Industry



A Report by the  
Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association  
December 2008



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

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The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of APPEA or the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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"Those who have torches will  
pass them on to others."

Plato

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## Introduction

This report provides some general information on mentoring and the use of mentoring models in a variety of industry sectors both within Australia and overseas. The report suggests that a formal mentoring model aligned to other workforce development strategies may be beneficial for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry.

Mentoring and coaching are often used as interchangeable terms to describe processes used in the development of employees. This report will explain the key differences between mentoring and coaching and will describe how a formal mentoring model will provide sustainable, long term benefits for an organisation that may not be achievable through short term coaching or training arrangements.

In the Australian workplace context there is a focus on the development of mentoring programs and the use of mentors to improve employment outcomes for disadvantaged groups and to support vulnerable new employees. A key feature of the current focus is the use of volunteers to provide the mentoring services. The voluntary nature of many mentoring programs relies on the goodwill and enthusiasm of those individuals providing the mentoring support (the 'mentor') and the acceptance of those individuals in receipt of that support (the 'mentee').

Many volunteer mentoring programs rely on the existing skills of the mentors and assume that the combination of these skills, individual enthusiasm and goodwill will deliver a successful experience for the mentee.

Although in many circumstances volunteer mentoring programs may provide the individuals involved with a valuable experience and may add value to the employment arrangements, this report suggests that a mentoring model that relies on voluntary participation and limited preparatory support for mentors is unsuitable for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry.

It is not the intention of this report to comment on the validity or relevance of mentoring programs that rely on volunteer mentors and informal preparatory arrangements. Rather, the focus of this report is on the mentoring model that will work best in the oil and gas sector and those arrangements that will deliver effective workforce development practices for the sector.

The upstream oil and gas industry applies exacting standards to all areas of operation. In areas such as occupational health and safety, risk management, technical specifications and workforce development, the oil and gas industry applies the highest standards and expects employees, contractors and suppliers to accept and maintain these standards.

Mentoring programs for the upstream oil and gas industry need to satisfy the same rigorous standards that apply to all other areas of operation. Formal mentoring programs for the oil and gas sector will need to recognise and incorporate the following elements:

- Be initiated and implemented from within the sector
- Be an integral part of the industry's normal workforce development practices
- Use as a foundation for mentoring practice a formal training program accepted throughout the sector
- Recognise 'mentoring' as a normal work activity
- Allocate 'mentoring time' as a formal part of work activity
- Provide formal recognition and reward for mentors
- Recognise experience, expertise and enthusiasm as the key attributes for successful mentoring

The upstream oil and gas industry applies exacting standards to all areas of operation and expects employees, contractors and suppliers to accept and maintain these standards. Mentoring programs need to satisfy the same rigorous standards that apply to all other areas of operation.

## Background

The Australian upstream oil and gas industry is not immune from the labour market pressures that have impacted on all parts of the Australian economy for the most part of the past decade.

Despite the current economic difficulties facing many industry sectors and the significant slowdown of the Australian economy, the oil and gas sector still faces issues associated with an ageing workforce, competition from other industry sectors for skilled workers and the lack of skills in those people seeking to enter the industry. These issues and a global shortage of specific oil and gas industry skills have combined to create an environment where a focus on securing and maintaining a skilled workforce is an essential element of the industry's human resource practices.

Throughout 2008, the Australian Petroleum, Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), with support from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), delivered a National Skills Shortage Strategy (NSSS) Program.

The NSSS program focused on the following activities:

- Increasing the employment participation of under-represented groups in the upstream oil and gas industry including women, Indigenous Australians and mature-age new entrants.
- Retaining the experience, expertise and skills of existing older workers as mentors and workplace trainers.
- Enhancing the skills development and skills recognition processes used by State Training Authorities and Registered Training Organisations in relation to the upstream oil and gas sector.
- Increasing the number of School Based Traineeship placements in the upstream oil and gas sector, with a particular focus on Indigenous Australian students.

The NSSS initiative has proven the benefits of a partnership between industry and government in addressing skills needs. The initiative has also highlighted the importance of industry leadership in developing a broad range of strategies to address workforce development requirements.

This report provides details on one of the key strategies identified by the upstream oil and gas industry in relation to securing and maintaining its future workforce skills needs.

The development of a mentoring program that is acceptable to the oil and gas industry will satisfy one of the requirements of the NSSS project and will also deliver a model of best practice that may be used by oil and gas operating companies and contracting companies providing services to the oil and gas sector.

A mentoring program designed for the Australian oil and gas industry will provide opportunities for existing mature-age employees to move into a range of mentoring and training roles. With specialist technical and processing skills in short supply, it has never been more important to retain mature-age employees in the workforce and to utilise the knowledge and expertise they possess with new entrants to the workplace.

A formal mentoring model will allow mature-age employees to stay in the upstream oil and gas sector longer and to divide their time between technical work and mentoring other workers.

The development of a mentoring program that is acceptable to the oil and gas industry will satisfy one of the requirements of the NSSS project and will also deliver a model of best practice.

Mentoring programs will provide support for young people in the workplace and will also support the objective of increasing the employment participation of under-represented groups such as women in non-traditional occupational areas and Indigenous Australian employees.

The mentoring model suggested in this report is appropriate for all target groups. There will be a requirement to customise some elements of the model to ensure its appropriateness for each group. Some brief advice on customisation is included in the report.

Formal mentoring programs are not a significant feature of the Australian workplace. Mentoring as a formal part of an organisation's workforce development strategy is more developed in other countries. In the United States many major companies see mentoring as an important employee development tool. It is estimated that over 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies in the United States have formal mentoring programs in place.

Various studies since the 1980s have demonstrated the many benefits of mentoring, both to the organisation and to the employees involved (both mentors and mentees). Due to these positive benefits, companies are still interested in the use of mentoring as a way of increasing productivity, employee retention and work satisfaction. According to research conducted by the American Society for Training and Development:

- Productivity of workers increases by up to 88 percent when mentoring is involved whereas the increase in productivity related to coaching and training alone results in only a 24 percent increase.
- Companies with formal mentoring programs in place reported a 77 percent increase in employee retention while companies with no mentoring arrangements reported that 35 percent of employees were actively looking for other jobs within 12 months of joining the company.

The implementation of mentoring programs for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry makes good business sense and will help address a number of issues currently faced by the sector such as, employee retention, the transfer of knowledge from mature-age workers to younger employees, increased productivity and support for new workers from non-traditional recruitment pools.

Formal mentoring programs are not a significant feature of the Australian workplace, however, in the United States many major companies see mentoring as an important employee development tool. It is estimated that over 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies in the US have formal mentoring programs in place.

## Methodology

The methodology for the project followed a standard qualitative research approach. The project used desktop research, interviews with oil and gas industry personnel in Australia and overseas and the use of a simple survey tool to identify current Australian oil and gas industry mentoring practices.

The project identified the different types of mentoring programs available and then developed a definition appropriate to the needs of the Australian oil and gas sector.

Extensive desktop research was undertaken to identify existing mentoring programs in both Australia and overseas, with a particular focus on identifying specific examples of mentoring that could be used in the development of an oil and gas industry model.

In order to identify common elements present in all the mentoring initiatives identified a specific analysis of programs that support young people in the workplace, women in non-traditional occupational areas and indigenous employees was undertaken.

A focus of the research activity was to identify best practice activities associated with the provision of mentoring across a range of industry sectors. This activity took on a global focus, with information being sourced from a range of countries where mentoring has become established as a normal part of workforce development activity.

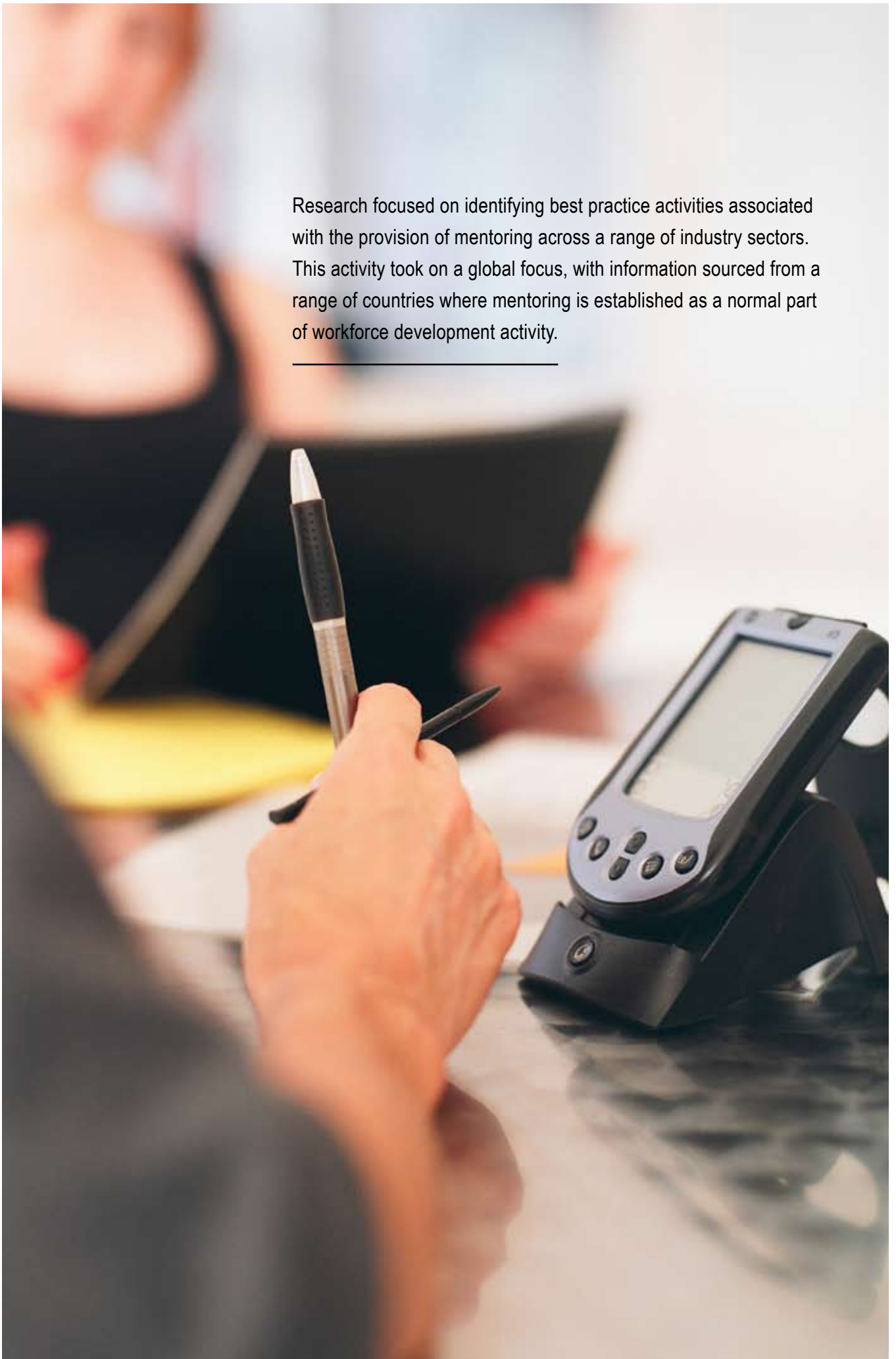
In addition, the research focused in particular on mentoring programs that have been implemented in the oil and gas industry in countries other than Australia.

Consultation took place with oil and gas industry personnel in Australia in order to determine the requirements and expectations of the industry in relation to the mentoring model. A survey tool was developed and circulated to members of APPEA and the results of this process used to inform the project activities.

As a result of the research findings, a suggested mentoring model for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry has been developed which incorporates all the elements of best practice.

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# Defining Mentoring & Coaching



## Defining Mentoring & Coaching

### Where It All Began

In Greek Mythology, when King Odysseus went to fight in the Trojan Wars, he asked an elderly counsellor to develop his son, Telemachus, to be a king. The friend and teacher's name was 'Mentor'.

### Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which a more experienced person provides support, encouragement and advice to another. This support, encouragement and advice is based on their knowledge, expertise and experience relative to the mentoring theme.

Mentoring provides a two-way learning experience for both the mentor and mentee which can often encourage deep satisfaction and numerous benefits in many personal, career, organisational and developmental areas. The mentor assists the mentee develop specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less experienced person's professional and personal growth.

Often mentoring occurs in an informal or unconscious way when individuals learn from others, adopt modelled behaviours and attitudes, absorb the culture of the workplace and the values of the organisation through day-to-day interaction with co-workers.

Mentoring is a process that gives people the confidence, resources and skills they need to reach their full potential. It is one of the most powerful training and development techniques available to modern organisations and when used as part of a formal workforce development strategy it delivers significant benefits.

When individuals in a workplace are provided with appropriate training and take on the formal role of a mentor they perform a number of different functions including:

- teaching a mentee about a specific issue
- coaching a mentee on a particular skill
- facilitating a mentee's growth by providing access to resources and networks
- challenging a mentee to move beyond his or her comfort zone
- creating a safe learning environment for the mentee to take calculated risks
- focusing on a mentee's total development.

The basic principle of mentorship is that one's accomplishments and failures are the life lessons for others.

### Types of Mentoring

There are a range of different mentoring styles or types that organisations may use to improve workplace performance or simply to support employees. The most often used mentoring approaches are outlined as follows.

#### Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring is where two people form a mentoring relationship without facilitation by a third party and without the signing of formal agreements. This form of mentoring is informal and unstructured and often begins spontaneously between colleagues or friends and then evolves into a mentoring relationship over time. This approach to mentoring is voluntary and develops without the benefit of proper mentoring training programs or organisational support structures.

When designing, delivering and assessing programs for indigenous learners, Registered Training Organisations need to recognise that acceptance of different learning styles or learning preferences is crucial.

### Formal Mentoring

The most typical and popular approach to mentoring is a formal arrangement that creates a one-to-one relationship between the mentor and mentee and is facilitated by a third party. This form of mentoring nearly always includes a formal agreement between the mentor and the mentee. The agreement sets out the details of the mentoring process and specifies the expectations or objectives of the relationship.

Most formal mentoring of this type is conducted within a workplace or professional association. In these situations there is usually a mentoring co-ordinator who matches mentees with mentors, organises mentor and mentee training and workshops and generally oversees the structured mentoring program.

Some companies have formal mentoring programs in place for new employees or graduates which are designed to assist the new employee gain awareness and understanding of how the organisation works. This approach assists the new employee to quickly come to terms with organisational systems and processes and this enables them to become functional and productive in a shorter time.

### Small Group Mentoring

Mentoring in small groups may be effective in some situations. Usually small group mentoring occurs within the same organisation so there is a common interest or goal between mentees and the mentor.

Group mentoring has become more common, especially in settings in which recruiting a sufficient number of mentors for one-to-one mentoring is difficult. This may be the case for under-represented groups such as women in non-traditional occupations and Indigenous employees. In this model, one experienced mentor is trained and matched with a small number of mentees, and activities are conducted in small groups.

Unlike one-to-one mentoring, many group mentoring relationships focus more on peer interaction, with the mentor acting as a facilitator. Consequently, group mentoring relationships are less likely to result in a deep connection between mentor and mentee as in one-to-one mentoring relationships and the outcomes are often less effective.

The ratios of mentors to mentees in group mentoring may vary depending on the number of program participants. Evidence suggests that smaller groups are more successful than larger groups and a ratio of one mentor to no more than four mentees is most often recommended.

### E-mentoring

E-mentoring uses email as the primary communication method between mentors and mentees. While e-mentoring can limit the depth of the relationship shared between the mentor and mentee, it also offers advantages in terms of time commitment and flexibility.

E-mentoring programs can be completely “virtual”, although e-mentoring in the workplace is usually part of another mentoring model. In this case, mentors and mentees use email to supplement their face-to-face relationships, and to keep in touch when they are not able to meet in person. In the workplace email can be used to ask and answer questions that come up throughout the workday. Email may also be used to schedule meetings, change plans, and coordinate activities.

E-mentoring allows the development of employees in remote locations where face-to-face contact is problematic. E-mentoring relationships can be enhanced by combining email with other forms of communication including web chats and video hook-ups using a web cam.

Wherever possible, formal classroom-based, lecture style delivery should be avoided in favour of participative and interactive conversation and discussion during the completion of practical projects.

## Professional Mentoring Services

Professional mentors have substantial personal experience in the industry in which they are mentoring and use a combination of coaching and mentoring to achieve high levels of results with their clients.

Unlike informal, formal and small group mentoring, which have traditionally been conducted free of charge (albeit at some expense to the organisation facilitating the mentoring program), professional mentors charge for their services (the cost varies depending on the type of mentoring and the experience and reputation of the mentor).

## The Difference between Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring and coaching are often confused and though related, they are two different processes. Both processes create a partnership between two people whereby direction is clarified and support is provided to achieve goals. Mentoring may involve coaching but a coach is not necessarily a mentor.

The key differences between mentoring and coaching are outlined below.

In the Australian context, coaching is often associated with on-the-job training where a supervisor, senior or experienced employee reinforces concepts, principles and practices learned in a formal training environment.

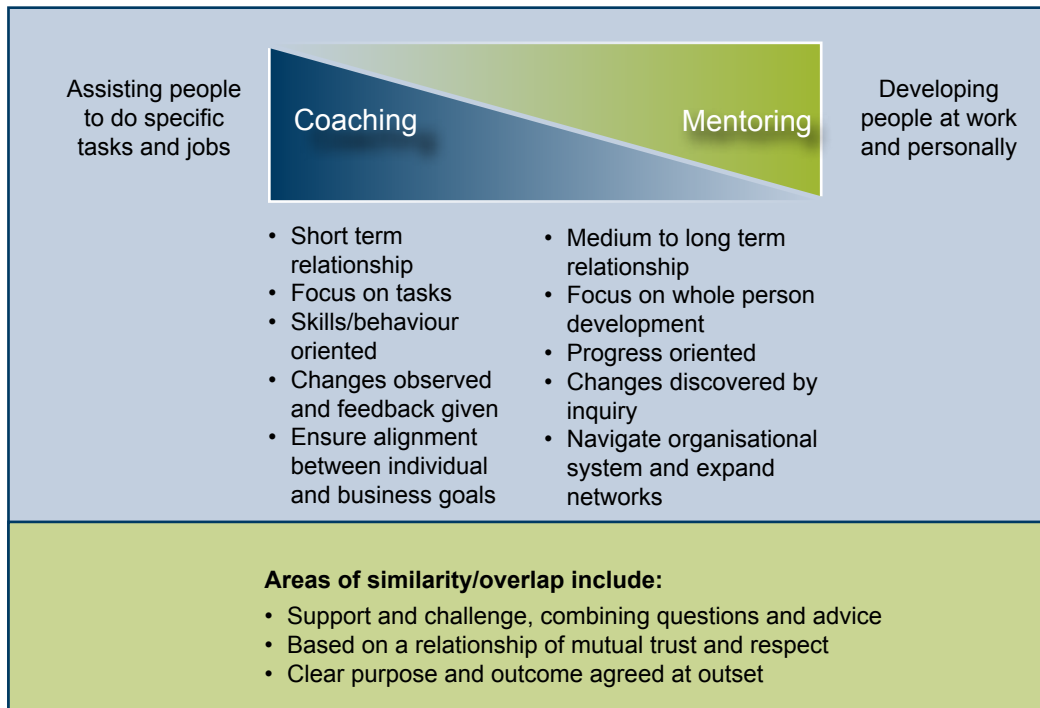
- Coaching occurs when managers and supervisors coach their staff, usually to complete specific and set tasks, as a required part of the job
- Coaching usually takes place within the confines of a formal line manager-employee relationship
- Coaching focuses on developing an individual within his or her current job
- When coaching the interest is functional, it arises out of the need to ensure that an individual can perform the tasks associated with the job to the best of his or her ability
- In coaching the relationship is usually initiated and driven by a manager or supervisor
- In coaching the relationship is finite, it ends when competence in a task is achieved or the individual transfers to another job

Mentoring goes beyond the functional relationship associated with coaching and provides a longer term arrangement focused on a broader development of the individual designed to produce more sustainable productive workplace behaviours.

- Mentoring may occur both within and outside the supervisor-employee relationship at the mutual consent of a mentor and the person being mentored
- Mentoring is work focused and designed to bring about long term work improvements and focused on personal development that may be outside a mentee's direct area of work
- The mentoring relationship is personal - a mentor provides both professional and personal support
- The mentoring relationship may be initiated by a mentor offering support services, initiated by an individual seeking mentoring services or in the best circumstances, facilitated via a company's workforce development strategies that match mentors and mentees
- The mentoring relationship crosses divisional, hierarchical and job boundaries
- The mentoring relationship is usually a long term association between a mentor and mentee and often remains in place through changes in work circumstances

Mentoring goes beyond the functional relationship associated with coaching and provides a longer term arrangement focused on a broader development of the individual designed to produce more sustainable productive workplace behaviours.

The following diagram illustrates the key differences between coaching and mentoring and the characteristics that differentiate each process.



**Source:** Interview with Lester Desmond, coaching and mentoring consultant for Shell Intl.  
*The Way Ahead*, a publication of the Society of Petroleum Engineers

### Benefits of Mentoring

The level of organisational interest in mentoring varies according to economic, social and technological factors.

Many organisations have recognised that workforce demographics will continue to change. In some cases these changes have had significant impact such as with the employment of women in previously male-dominated areas or through government initiated policies to increase the employment participation of minority or under-represented groups.

The influence of technology has automated many traditional employee functions and has impacted on the way people see themselves within the workplace.

Employee recruitment and retention practices are constantly adjusted as an organisation's fortunes rise and fall.

The changing nature of the workplace has created a generation of employees who are more flexible in the way they approach work. Many individuals are comfortable to embrace practices such as part-time and casual employment arrangements, multi-location employment, multi-employer employment, split shifts, weekend work and other non-traditional arrangements.

While employees are more accepting of flexible work practices, the downside for companies is that these employees are less likely to display strong loyalty to the organisations for which they work.

## Defining Mentoring & Coaching

### A Mentoring Model for the Australian Upstream Oil and Gas Industry

Employees with a strong 'skills set' have become marketable commodities and will regularly change employment. The challenge for companies is to attract, recruit and retain skilled personnel without jeopardising the flexibilities and improved productivity that is typical of the contemporary workplace.

Mentoring offers companies a process that allows an investment in the individual employee while retaining flexible work practices.

Ongoing development of employee potential is critical for business success. Workplace mentoring programs are effective in quickly ramping up employee performance because they facilitate the transfer of business knowledge in a way that may not be easily achievable through regular training arrangements. Effective mentoring is not a "stand-alone" effort, but is most effective when it is integrated into a company's broader workforce development activities.

A company that values its employees and is committed to providing opportunities for them to remain and grow within the organisation is an ideal candidate for the establishment of a formal mentoring program. Ideally, the company will have an internal structure in place which will support a successful program. Features of the internal structure are:

- A performance management program
- Identifiable core competencies
- A valued training function
- Diversity training
- A succession planning process
- A management development program

In addition, there should be senior individuals within the company who will be prepared to champion the mentoring initiative and to ensure its success. Champions may include the organisation's Chief Executive Officer, directors and other influential senior staff.

Formal mentoring arrangements established within a company provide direct benefits to the organisation and benefits to those individuals involved as mentors and those receiving the mentoring support.

Benefits to the company include:

- Improved productivity and improved achievement of performance targets
- Improved employee retention rates and reduced staff turnover
- Improved internal communication
- Measurable increases in workplace morale, employee satisfaction and employee loyalty
- Promotion of professional and personal growth
- Promotion of workplace diversity
- Improvements in the individual leadership, interpersonal and managerial skills of employees
- Promotion of a learning culture and improvement in skills, competencies and technical knowledge
- Promotion of shared work values and fostering of teamwork
- Development of cross-organisational networks
- Retention of corporate knowledge
- Provision of direct advice on issues faced by employees
- Building a core of skilled and committed employees
- Assisting in change management activities

Formal mentoring arrangements established within a company provide direct benefits to the organisation and benefits to those individuals involved as mentors and those receiving the mentoring support.

Benefits to the mentor include:

- Professional, career and personal development
- Improved workplace satisfaction
- Extension of professional networks
- Improved organisational knowledge
- Improved management, leadership, interpersonal and communication skills
- Increased confidence and self awareness
- Internal recognition and reward

Benefits to the mentee include:

- Acquisition of corporate knowledge including unspoken rules
- Professional and personal growth
- Career development and career goal advice
- Improved job satisfaction
- Exposure to a safe and protected learning environment
- Individual leadership and management development, including the acquisition of competencies more easily gained through example, guided practice or experience than by structured training
- Provision of positive feedback in key areas, such as communication, interpersonal relationships, technical abilities, change management and leadership skills
- Development of specific skills and knowledge relevant to his or her personal goals
- Development of workplace networks
- Increased confidence and self awareness
- Improved profile and visibility within the organisation
- Stimulus to act as a mentor to others
- Development of long term professional relationships

The development and implementation of a formal mentoring program provides a company with tangible results that relate directly to the organisation's productive output.

With so many benefits for the organisation and the employees involved, formal mentoring models provide a cost-effective approach to a range of workforce development issues.

The development and implementation of a formal mentoring program provides a company with tangible results that relate directly to the organisation's productive output.



# Mentoring to Support Workforce Diversity



### Mentoring to Support Workplace Diversity

Changes in employment practices in the Australian upstream oil and gas industry caused by the diminution of traditional skilled labour supply sources and the increase in under-represented groups such as women and Indigenous Australians is creating a more diverse workplace.

In other industry sectors where workforce diversification has been experienced, the impetus for the establishment of mentoring models often comes from these new and under-represented employees. These employees see mentoring as a way of 'levelling the playing field' and of rapidly building knowledge and expertise about an industry or an individual company.

Mentoring empowers under-represented groups and provides the tools they need to secure and sustain their position in an industry or company. While mentoring may be an important process for everyone, it is particularly important for young people entering the workforce, older new entrants to an industry and people from under-represented groups. Employees from these groups see mentoring as an important process in their career and personal development.

In order to cater for under-represented groups, formal mentoring programs should be tailored to the specialised needs of these employees and should address specific needs within an organisation. A mentoring program with the management of diversity as a key element allows an organisation to provide support in a way that suits individual need.

#### Examples of mentoring programs

There are hundreds of mentoring programs of varying degrees of structure and formality operating in schools, workplaces and communities across Australia. There are many thousands more programs operating in countries such as the United States and Canada where mentoring has been embedded in the organisational and workplace culture for far longer than in Australia.

While a significant proportion of mentoring programs focus on the mentoring of youth, particularly those considered "at risk", there are also a large number of workplace programs many of which focus on the provision of support to young people in the workplace, women in non-traditional occupations and under-represented groups.

Because most corporate and workplace mentoring programs are developed and implemented in-house, with little or no external funding, there is less public information available about these mentoring initiatives. However, this project has identified a number of programs that provide some direction on mentoring models and information on these examples is provided below.

The examples provided show how some companies and organisations are using mentoring to support workplace diversity. It should be noted that APPEA cannot guarantee the accuracy or currency of the information provided.

#### Women in Non-Traditional Occupations

Women continue to face a range of barriers within organisations and are often under-represented at many levels of organisational hierarchies. One reason for the lack of workplace opportunity for women in many occupational areas is the lack of access to informal organisational networks. In response to this, many organisations and individual female employees within organisations have begun establishing women's networks.

While a significant proportion of mentoring programs focus on the mentoring of youth, particularly those considered "at risk", there are also a large number of workplace programs many of which focus on the provision of support to young people in the workplace, women in non-traditional occupations and under-represented groups.

Companies are working with technical colleges and universities to promote non-traditional career opportunities, including skilled trades, to women and other groups and are also implementing internal policies to ensure that workplaces are better equipped to meet the needs of under-represented groups. Mentoring programs are now considered an important element in supporting female employees.

Examples of mentoring programs that have been implemented in Australia and overseas that provide support for women include:

### **Women in IT Executive Mentoring (WITEM) Program (Australia)**

This mentoring program in the Information and Technology (IT) sector was developed and implemented by Orijen, a professional mentoring company.

Orijen was approached by Dell to create the mentoring program which aims to address the significantly low numbers of women in the IT industry by providing women with dedicated executive mentors.

This program, in its fourth year, continues to grow and expand its reach into both the public and private sectors. The WITEM program is unique in bringing together organisations in a cross-mentoring structure. In the corporate sector, Managing Directors and Chief Information Officers (CIOs) mentor a high-potential female, identified as capable of taking the next step up, from another participating company for a 12 month period. In the public sector, CIO's in the Australia Public Service and in the South Australia Public Service have been matched with high potential women cross-departmentally.

Participating Australian public sector Departments include:

- Defence
- Industry
- IP Australia
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- DEEWR
- AGIMO
- Tourism and Resources
- Australian Tax Office
- Immigration and Citizenship
- Finance
- Centrelink

Participating private sector organisations include:

- Dell
- Cisco
- Ernst and Young
- Westpac
- EMC
- Lexmark
- Hewlett Packard
- Woolworths
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
- Lan Systems
- Intel

### **Constructive Mentoring Program (Australia)**

Industry groups including the Master Builders Association of NSW, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW Chapter) and the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) NSW Chapter, have united to provide a national mentoring program in the Building, Construction and Design Industry. This initiative is focused on small businesses growth and achievement and the role of women in this activity.

Orijen was approached by Dell to create the mentoring program which aims to address the significantly low numbers of women in the IT industry by providing women with dedicated executive mentors.

The industry partners are committed to developing essential skills and fostering small business entrepreneurship through effective delivery models and the use of innovative technologies.

The desired mentoring model outcome is to bring about a cultural shift and increased confidence levels for women in small business to move from survival to greater sustainability through the Constructive Mentoring program. This program was developed and implemented by Orijen, a professional mentoring company, and is supported by an Australian Government initiative through AusIndustry.

An international organisation that educates and informs women, BPW undertakes research and projects aimed at making a positive difference for women.

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#### **VICTEC (Australia)**

This mentoring program aims to increase women's employment in the IT industry and addresses the issues of isolation and lack of support often experienced by sole women in male-dominated work and training contexts.

The Win IT pilot program was developed by VICTEC in partnership with Box Hill Institute of TAFE during 2001 with funding from the Victorian Department of Education and Training. The program was designed to attract women into the high-skill end of technically orientated IT traineeships. The employment arrangement combines study and industry placement with a host employer. During the work placement participants attended TAFE and were mentored by a project officer with industry knowledge.

#### **Business and Professional Women (BPW) (Australia)**

BPW works to raise the status of women and encourages women to become well informed and active at local, national and international levels. An international organisation that educates and informs women, BPW undertakes research and projects aimed at making a positive difference for women. BPW lobbies governments at all levels including at the United Nations, where it holds Special Category Status, on current and emerging issues of importance to women.

BPW has formed an international mentoring taskforce and in conjunction an Australian taskforce has also been formed. Part of this initiative includes the development of a mentoring package that can assist with the development and implementation of mentoring programs for women. This package can be downloaded from the BPW website.

#### **Women Mentoring Women Network**

Launched in February 2007, this program invites senior women faculty members to share their experiences and advice with junior women faculty members. The mentoring program provides networking opportunities through a series of events as well as a one-on-one mentoring network.

This initiative has also developed specific mentoring programs for women working in the energy and resources sectors.

#### **Women's Energy Network (WEN) (USA)**

WEN was founded in 1994 with the purpose of fostering the development and advancement of women in energy by developing a strong network. WEN remains committed to providing high calibre events and networking to its diverse membership from across the energy sector.

WEN is actively involved in mentoring and has established the WEN Mentoring Program. This initiative provides an opportunity for WEN members to enrich their careers by expanding their networks, growing their knowledge and diversifying their experience. WEN members who wish to be mentored identify specific learning goals and are matched in mentoring circles with WEN mentors who work with them to achieve those goals.

### Women of British Columbia (BC) Resource Communities (Canada)

This Canadian network aims to promote the importance of British Columbia's resource communities and to support the well-being of the women who live and work in these communities. The network also organises an annual conference.

The theme of the conference held in 2007 was "Mentoring Women for a Sustainable Future". The conference introduced young women, who were about to enter the workforce or to continue with post-secondary studies, to the opportunities within the resource sector and provided an opportunity for them to hear from women who are leading the way in their fields. The conference explored ways in which to create positive mentoring experiences for women who live and work in British Columbia's resource sector communities.

### Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas Project (Canada)

This mentoring project works in partnership with industry, educational institutions and services, governments, labour and community groups to establish an integrated and holistic approach to women-focused industrial training and development.

The initiative is a multi-faceted research project that attempts to find workable solutions to providing access to resources, support and opportunities for women wanting to enter trades and industry occupations. It is a strategic approach to training and development in an attempt to increase the interest, involvement, and retention of Canadian women in the mining, oil and gas industries.

### Posit+ve Energy Network - the worldwide network for women in energy (USA)

The Petroleum Economist Ltd has co-hosted the Women's Global Leadership Conference for the past three years. Held in Houston, the conference has been hugely successful in bringing together hundreds of women leaders from the energy and technology industries.

To build on the achievements of the Women's Global Leadership Conference, the Petroleum Economist launched the Posit+ve Energy network for women in the energy industry in July 2007.

The first independent worldwide network dedicated to women and the advancement of their careers in the energy industry, Posit+ve Energy provides a program of interactive networking events, personal and professional development opportunities and an online community for female executives across the global energy industry.

### Indigenous Australian Employees

Indigenous Australian employees are often faced with greater personal, social and cultural pressures than their non-Indigenous workmates. These pressures place the Indigenous employee at a higher risk of not achieving their full potential or of accessing the same development opportunities. Early intervention through a structured mentoring relationship may give the Indigenous employee the tools and support needed to deal effectively with these pressures and to increase the likelihood of remaining in employment.

In addition to the benefits of mentoring already specified earlier in this report, mentoring can provide additional benefits to Indigenous employees. These may include contributing to breaking down the barriers between Indigenous employees, their employers and work colleagues and addressing cross-cultural communication issues.

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Mentoring Indigenous employees presents special challenges, particularly around cross-cultural sensitivities. It is important to plan and tailor the mentoring program to the needs of the Indigenous employee.

Research suggests that there are a number of issues specific to Indigenous mentoring programs, including adequate consultation and promotion of the initiative in Aboriginal communities, the need for flexibility in remote and isolated areas and sensitivity to cultural requirements in matching Indigenous mentors with mentees.

While the ideal situation in a mentoring program designed to support Indigenous employees is to have an Indigenous mentor, it is possible to achieve successful mentoring outcomes with non-Indigenous mentors providing these mentors have been trained, have respect for and an understanding of Aboriginal culture and recognise issues that are likely to influence the success of the individual mentee.

Examples of mentoring programs used to support Indigenous Australians include:

### **First Australian Business**

This initiative is a national business mentoring program for young indigenous entrepreneurs aged 18 to 35. Mentors are volunteers. The range of areas where mentees are developing business operations includes the arts, music, cultural education, employment services and multimedia communications. This program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

### **Tanami Mining Agreements**

These agreements, one of the earliest Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), include protection of heritage sites and provisions for employees of the mining companies to receive training in cultural heritage preservation. They also include specific environmental protections and community employment commitments, including a specific mentoring program to provide opportunities for young Indigenous Australians.

### **DEETAAC 'The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People' Initiative**

This initiative aims to improve the retention rate of Aboriginal people in employment through various programs, one of which focuses on mentoring. DEETAAC contracted Indigenous Employment Specialists (IES) to train mentors from across NSW to provide a mentoring support service for Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in their local areas. The program focuses on 'mentoring for retention' and aims to address issues as they arise thereby also assisting the employer.

### **Property Services Training Company (PSTC)**

The Sydney based Property Services Training Company (PSTC) is a Group Training Organisation (GTO) that employs trainees in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. PSTC has a strong commitment to the development of Indigenous Australians. The company employs an Indigenous mentor who works on a one-to-one basis with the company's Indigenous trainees. The mentor seeks to establish a close relationship that is based on mutual trust and understanding. With widespread Indigenous community and sporting links, the mentor and the program operated by PSTC are well regarded by local Indigenous Australians who now seek direct employment with the GTO.

### **AFL SportsReady**

AFL SportsReady is a Group Training Organisation (GTO) established and operated by the Australian Football League to provide young people with meaningful workplace opportunities.

AFL SportsReady operates in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria and uses successful sporting personalities as role models and mentors to encourage young Indigenous trainees to seek employment as apprentices and trainees. The organisation has a commitment to growing apprenticeship and traineeship numbers in the Indigenous Australian community.

### Indigenous Graduate Mentoring Programs

Formal mentoring programs for Indigenous Australians are well established in the tertiary education sector. Programs in place include:

- The Northern Territory Government Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mentorship Program
- The Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership Youth Talent Development Program Mentoring Scheme
- Curtin School of Nursing and Midwifery - the Indigenous Nursing Student Mentorship Program
- University of New South Wales Research Mentor Program for Indigenous Women
- Monash University Indigenous mentoring for graduate students
- La Trobe University Indigenous Employment Strategy
- The Victorian Bar Association Aboriginal Law Students Mentoring Program;
- The University of Canberra, the University of Southern Queensland and the Australian National University Partnership for Indigenous Graduate Mentoring Program.

A mentoring program for Indigenous Australian high school students, started by a young university student, now has over 100 mentors and mentees.

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### Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

A mentoring program for Indigenous Australian high school students, started by a young university student, now has over 100 mentors and mentees. The AIME program, run by Jack Manning Bancroft with Sydney University students as mentors, was conceived as a bridge-building exercise as well as an attempt to improve school retention rates.

### Indigenous Mentoring Pilots Project

Commissioned by the Australian Government, the objective of the Indigenous Mentoring Pilots Project was to trial mentoring approaches to improve literacy, numeracy, attendance and retention of participating high school students. The pilot projects also aimed to raise students' expectations of success and the expectations of their parents and teachers. Participating students have had access to additional support via their mentor, and were exposed to a range of pathways in relation to jobs, community work and further education.



# Best Practice



## Best Practice

Successful mentoring programs don't just happen, they are the result of careful planning and implementation. All the available evidence indicates that there are a number of core elements that are present in all successful mentoring initiatives, regardless of who the mentoring program is designed for and where the program takes place.

The following section outlines these best practice activities and describes the benchmarks associated with the provision of successful mentoring support.

### Benchmarks for Mentoring Programs

Mentoring Australia, a national association of mentors, educators and researchers, lists the following requirements for a good mentoring program.

- A well-defined mission statement and established operating principles
- Regular, consistent contact between mentor and mentee
- Establishment under the auspices of a recognised organisation
- Paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills
- Written role statements for all staff and volunteer positions
- Adherence to Equal Opportunity requirements
- Inclusiveness in relation to ethnicity, culture, socio-economic backgrounds, gender and sexuality as appropriate to the program
- Adequate ongoing financial and in-kind resources
- Written administrative and program procedures
- Documented criteria which define eligibility for participation in the program
- Program evaluation and ongoing assessment
- A program plan that has input from stakeholders
- Risk management and confidentiality policies
- Use of generally accepted accounting practices
- A rationale for staffing arrangements based on the needs of all parties

These benchmarks were developed by Mentoring Australia in association with a representative group of mentoring practitioners, all of whom had significant experience in the development and management of mentoring programs.

Another mentoring association, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership is widely acknowledged as the premier advocate and resource for the expansion of mentoring initiatives in the United States. MENTOR focuses on three essential strategies that support the successful development and implementation of mentoring programs. These are:

- Building and supporting critical mentoring infrastructure within an organisation or industry
- Generating support for the mentoring front line - the thousands of programs that run mentoring initiatives and need resources to broaden their reach
- Leveraging knowledge and leadership through the National Mentoring Institute (NMI), a forum for the nation's foremost experts on mentoring. The NMI delivers a wealth of products and services to the mentoring field, highlights of which include a dynamic research agenda and the recently-updated Second Edition of the "Elements of Effective Practice", the definitive guide to running high-quality mentoring programs.

Prior to the development and implementation of any mentoring arrangements, it is important to ensure that there is a mentoring culture present in the organisation.

Recently revised and updated, the “Elements of Effective Practice” reflects the latest in quality mentoring research, policies, and practices. These guidelines are geared towards helping mentoring relationships thrive and endure and include a range of measures any mentoring program can implement to offer the best support and service possible. The guidelines are based on solid research - research that affirms the importance of accountability and responsibility in satisfying the mentoring need.

The guidelines are also based on experience. The first mentoring “Elements of Effective Practice” was published in 1990 by a national panel of mentoring experts brought together by MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership and United Way of America.

The new guidelines are the culmination of a process that brought together many of the foremost authorities on mentoring in the United States. This group ensured that new ideas and practices that reflect the latest in mentoring policies, practices, experiences and research were included in the new guidelines document.

The guidelines, including the guide to building mentoring programs, were utilised extensively for the development of the mentoring model for the oil and gas industry outlined in the next section of this report.

MENTOR has also developed a toolkit with a significant amount of tools and resources that can be downloaded and customised to meet specific organisational requirements.

As the mentoring program grows, more people will want to participate. The more people that participate the more successful the program and the organisation will be.

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## Best Practice Activities – Key to Success

Prior to the development and implementation of any mentoring arrangements, it is important to ensure that there is a mentoring culture present in the organisation. According to Dr. Lois Zachary, a recognised mentoring expert and author of the best-selling *The Mentor's Guide and Creating a Mentoring Culture*, the following key elements need to be established in order to create and grow a mentoring culture in an organisation.

- Accountability - Define roles and responsibilities for participants. Set goals and expectations and gather feedback.
- Alignment - Make sure the goals of the mentoring program are in line with organisational goals.
- Communication - Make sure everyone is aware of the mentoring efforts, the participation, results, and successes of the program.
- Value and visibility - Share mentoring stories of participants across the organisation. Leaders sharing their own success stories help motivate and highlight the benefits of mentoring for all employees.
- Demand - As the mentoring program grows, more people will want to participate. The more people that participate the more successful the program and the organisation will be.
- Multiple Mentoring Options - Encourage all avenues of mentoring, including group mentoring and one-on-one mentoring. They are not mutually exclusive, but actually build well upon each other.
- Continuing education - Mentoring is an integral part of the training and development of the organisation.
- Safety Nets - Mentoring provides a way to learn and take risks without the fear of failure. Having others in the organisation to rely on when you get stuck helps everyone maintain high productivity.

Once a mentoring culture has been established in an organisation, there are a number of best practice activities that need to be incorporated into the program to ensure its success.

Some of these important reinforcement activities for implementing effective mentoring programs are listed below:

- Ensure that incentives, such as rewards and recognition for the mentor, are included
- Regular contact must be maintained
- All parties must have clear expectations
- Mentoring must be considered as an official and recognised task and time allocated for the activity
- A formal recruitment and selection process for mentors and mentees must be established – participation should be voluntary but final selection must be via a formal process
- Mentor preparation/training - mentors must be trained and ready to receive mentees
- Formal mentor/mentee matching strategies which take into account the needs of the target group must be in place
- Mentor/Mentee support - ongoing support must be provided throughout the program.
- Ensure there is a program coordinator (mentoring leader) to drive the initiative forward
- Have a closure policy and a procedure for handling grievances
- Establish a formal program evaluation and assessment process
- The most senior personnel in the organisation must give public support for the mentoring program

One of the most significant predictors of positive mentoring results is whether mentors and mentees share a close, trusting relationship. Such relationships do not just happen. They need ongoing support and monitoring, particularly during the early stages, to ensure that the relationships do not terminate prematurely.

Mentoring needs management effort. The most crucial enabler of workplace mentoring programs is a supportive organisational climate. The best way of doing this is to include mentoring as part of the corporate strategic plan. Employees must be able to see that senior management takes this initiative seriously.

Too many workplace mentoring programs run out of steam within the first few months. Ensuring that they do succeed requires the guidance of a committed coordinator to maintain the momentum of the program and keep it on track.

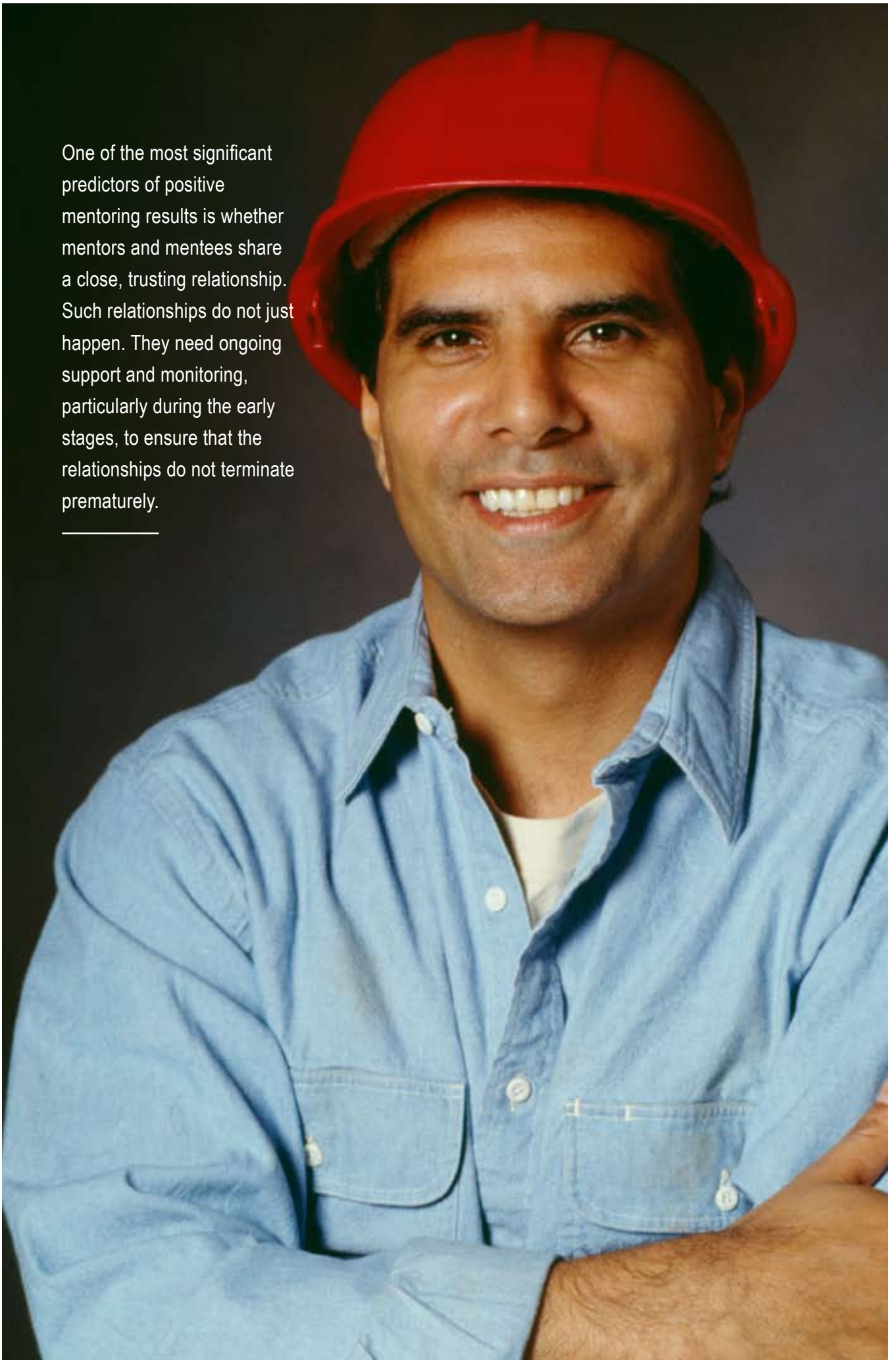
Mentoring programs that succeed provide a host of advantages for both the organisation and the individuals. In order to stay ahead, top organisations are making a concerted effort to grow their future leaders from within. They concentrate on sharing the skills and talents of their people with others so that everyone in the organisation reaches their fullest potential.

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# A Mentoring Model Suitable for the Australian Upstream Oil & Gas Industry



## A Mentoring Model Suitable for the Australian Upstream Oil and Gas Industry

Creating a structured mentoring program requires a solid understanding of mentoring dynamics.

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As specified in the introductory comments of this report, the voluntary and informal practices of many mentoring programs are not considered suitable for the upstream oil and gas industry. The notion that any individual with enthusiasm and desire to help workmates will be able to provide mentoring support does not resonate with the oil and gas industry's exacting and rigorous quality, safety and operating standards. There is no doubt that successful mentors need to be enthusiastic, motivated to help others and committed to the mentoring program, but these qualities need to be harnessed within formal frameworks and processes that guarantee the long term success of the mentoring initiative.

A mentoring model suitable for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry will need to be cognisant of the broader quality, safety and performance expectations of the sector. As such, the information presented in this section of the report focuses on the development and implementation of a formal, structured and well resourced mentoring model.

Formality and structure does not necessarily equate with inflexibility and a 'one size fits all' approach. One of the key advantages of the mentoring process is that it is flexible and can be adapted to suit an individual organisation's specific culture, work practices and available resources.

Creating a structured mentoring program requires a solid understanding of mentoring dynamics. Before deciding to implement a mentoring program, an organisation should decide if mentoring is needed and which mentoring strategies best complement their organisational culture and their workforce development strategies.

The information that follows outlines a suitable mentoring model for the oil and gas industry. This model will allow organisations to develop a mentoring program that caters to their specific workplace needs. Advice is provided on the customisation of the mentoring program to different target groups including young and new entrant workers, women in non-traditional occupations and Indigenous Australian employees, as per the project brief of developing a support framework to assist and increase participants from under-represented groups.

The model is comprised of four distinct phases. These are:

- Program design and planning
- Program management
- Program operations
- Program evaluation

The information is presented as a detailed description of the mentoring process to provide oil and gas operating company and contracting company human resource and training personnel with a template for the development of company specific mentoring programs.

### Program Design and Planning

Mentoring should be an integral part of a company's overall workforce development strategy. Once an organisation has identified that a formal mentoring program will complement other workforce development initiatives and that there is the appropriate level of corporate support, the details of the program need to be designed, planned and established. The following information outlines the elements that need to be considered before moving on to the implementation phase.

Processes and procedures should be developed during the program design and planning stage. These processes and procedures should cover all aspects of program operation and provide guidance to staff on how to handle particular situations. Areas to be considered include:

- How mentors are selected, screened, oriented and trained
- How mentees are nominated and selected
- Where and when mentoring takes place
- How mentors and mentees are matched
- Who coordinates mentoring pairs and how often is that individual in contact with each mentor/mentee pair
- Who should a mentor or a mentee contact when problems arise
- How to handle complaints
- How to resolve problems in mentoring relationships or bring relationships to closure
- How to evaluate the mentoring relationship

The processes and procedures should be integrated into the company's overall workforce development or human resources plan and the details approved by the appropriate levels of management. Once established, the processes and procedures should be made available to all program participants during the orientation.

A program implementation timeline should be established, outlining the major tasks and associated timeframes for completion. This will ensure that the program remains on schedule and will be successfully implemented and operated.

In many organisations the mentoring programs meander along as informal activities unrelated to the strategic objectives that direct overall workforce development. Mentoring becomes a 'feel good' exercise that occurs separately to the normal work activity. Often the mentoring meetings take place during work hours but the content and direction of mentoring discussions is unrelated to the business of the organisation. In the design and planning of a mentoring model for the upstream oil and gas industry, it is important that mentoring is clearly understood by all those likely to be involved in the program as a core workforce development activity designed to achieve specific objectives set by the company and to provide a service and support for the individual employees being mentored.

### Program Management

Once the program design and planning phase has been completed and formal processes and procedures have been established and approved, it is necessary to consider how the program will be managed. The following information outlines what needs to occur to ensure a well managed and successful mentoring program.

A program coordinator should be selected to oversee the mentoring program. In most companies the coordination of the mentoring program is not a full-time role. Most often, the coordination activity resides with staff in the human resource or workforce development area.

There is no set rule about the amount of time allocated to mentoring program coordination. The size of the program, the number of mentoring relationships, the regularity of mentoring sessions, the location of mentors and mentees and a range of other factors influence the time required to coordinate a program. The amount of coordination time varies. However, as a rule of thumb a mentoring program with up to 30 mentoring relationships will require no more than three (3) days per month for formal coordination activities.

In many organisations the mentoring programs meander along as informal activities unrelated to the strategic objectives that direct overall workforce development. Mentoring becomes a 'feel good' exercise that occurs separately to the normal work activity.

The program coordinator should be someone who is perceived within the organisation as a facilitator and listener - a person who generates trust. This person must have strong leadership abilities and management skills who can manage a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- Managing the overall program
- Developing consistent procedures for recruiting and referring people
- Overseeing development and implementation of all promotional and educational efforts
- Cultivating and maintaining all necessary external contacts and relationships for implementing and maintaining the mentor program (eg; with partner organisations)
- Recruiting, screening, training and supervising mentors
- Matching mentoring pairs
- Developing and maintaining all records, policies and procedures
- Coordinating mentoring activities
- Checking in regularly with mentors and offering ongoing support
- Developing a plan to recognise program participants
- Developing a plan to evaluate the program, including soliciting participant feedback
- Tracking program statistics, including budgetary costs, hours etc
- Documenting the development of the mentor program
- Evaluating and assessing the mentoring program outcomes

Organisations will need to consider who will carry out the training, how often, where and when it will take place. There are a number of existing training and professional development organisations that focus specifically on mentoring programs throughout Australia.

In addition to the appointment of a program coordinator, a company should establish an internal senior management team or advisory group to provide vision and leadership for the program.

An advisory group may undertake the following:

- Offer advice on how to design, manage, evaluate and fund the mentoring program and provide final approval of the program
- Approve program processes, procedures and practices
- Provide hands-on operating support
- Champion the initiative throughout the organisation

The program coordinator and members of the management team/advisory group may want to consider the need for initial training on the principles and requirements of mentoring as part of their role. Short training programs for mentors and mentees should also be considered.

Organisations will need to consider who will carry out the training, how often, where and when it will take place. There are a number of existing training and professional development organisations that focus specifically on mentoring programs throughout Australia.

The associated costs of staff training and professional development will need to be incorporated into the program budget.

It is important to document mentor/mentee matches and track relevant information including:

- Mentor and mentee application, intake or preference forms
- Status of the matching process
- Program caseload and waitlist
- Frequency, type and quality of mentor/mentee contact
- Duration of relationships

This information may be recorded on employee personnel files or in a database set up specifically for the mentoring program and maintained by the program coordinator. Other relevant program information relating to activities, contact, training, timelines etc should also be maintained.

Organisations that implement mentoring programs should consider extending their human resource risk management plans to cover the mentoring activities.

It is critical to monitor the mentoring program to make sure it is on track and that the program goals are being met. This monitoring process includes reviewing processes, procedures and practices on a regular basis to ensure that they remain relevant to the mentoring program.

Program information is also utilised to periodically evaluate the program and monitor its ongoing success, ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring program. It is also utilised for the final program evaluation and assessment. The outcomes of these evaluations should also be documented.

The communication of the company's formal mentoring arrangements is a key component of any successful program. It is important to raise awareness of the mentoring program by marketing it both within the organisation and to relevant external stakeholders. This is particularly important when funding is received from external sources, and any marketing activities should include recognition of sponsors or funding sources.

The mentoring program should also be promoted to senior management, particularly in relation to the benefits perceived by the organisation such as increased productivity, reductions in staff turnover, improved job satisfaction levels and so on.

It is imperative to market the mentoring program within the organisation so that all employees know of its existence. This will help create ownership and inspire people to act. If the benefits of the mentoring program are promoted within the organisation, the time commitment will be less of a barrier to all parties concerned.

The value of the program will become evident to all employees. This can be done through information on the company's intranet, staff newsletter or by direct communication with employees through awareness and information sessions.

The contribution made by program participants and in particular the mentors, needs to be recognised in a formal way.

Although individual oil and gas operating and contracting companies may decide to establish mentoring programs, it is recommended that partnerships and networks be established across the upstream oil and gas industry.

It may be appropriate for the APPEA Skills, Education and Training (SET) Committee to take a leadership role in relation to a coordinated oil and gas mentoring program. This approach would provide a forum for the discussion of mentoring issues and allow for the sharing of views, ideas and resources.

### Program Operations

Once the details of the program management have been determined, an organisation may then focus on operational issues. The day-to-day operating procedures that an organisation establishes for its mentoring program will greatly affect the program's quality and sustainability. It is important to ensure formality, quality and consistency.

The communication of the company's formal mentoring arrangements is a key component of any successful program. It is important to raise awareness of the mentoring program by marketing it both within the organisation and to relevant external stakeholders.

While it may be fairly straightforward for many companies to recruit mentees for a mentoring program recruiting suitable mentors may be more difficult. It is important to develop a recruitment plan which focuses on how well each prospective mentor can relate to the mentee and satisfy the overall program goals. Eligibility requirements for participants (both mentors and mentees) must be defined, including the qualities and attributes that mentors should have to successfully create and maintain an effective mentoring relationship.

Awareness and information sessions could be conducted for potential mentors prior to the recruitment phase so that potential candidates have a realistic idea of the program and its requirements.

Once eligibility and attributes have been determined, it is important to develop and write a mentor position description for each target group. The position description may include the following:

- List of qualities and required attributes
- Clear description of the functions the mentor will perform (including the required training for potential mentors)
- Specific time commitments required (including frequency and duration of each visit; minimum length of time the mentor is expected to maintain the relationship with the mentee; time required to provide feedback to the mentoring program coordinator about activities and progress)
- Location of the mentor/mentee meetings.

It is imperative to select mentors who support the objectives of the program, who understand the dual benefits of improved organisational performance and individual development and who are sensitive to the issues faced by the mentees from a particular target group. Successful mentors understand that less experienced persons in tough situations need someone who listens and cares. It is important to discern a potential mentor's motive and personal agenda during the screening and interviewing process.

Potential target groups for mentoring activity such as young and new entrant employees, women in non-traditional occupations and Indigenous Australian employees will need to be clearly identified. Other employees outside of the target groups will need to be advised on why they may be excluded from the mentoring process.

It is important that individuals decide voluntarily to participate in the mentoring program and then decide to proceed through the selection process. Some individuals may not benefit from mentoring (as mentors or mentees) or may not view participation positively. It is essential to determine a potential participant's willingness to be involved in the mentoring initiative before allocating any resources towards their involvement.

The screening process is designed to screen for people who have the sensitivity, commitment and sense of responsibility to be mentors and the openness and acceptance to be mentees. The process will also 'screen out' people who are not committed to the initiative.

The screening process should be documented so that all potential applicants are made aware of the process prior to their engagement. As with most human resource processes, it is important that all information gathered during the screening process is kept confidential. All decisions and action taken in relation to the selection process should be documented by the program coordinator.

It is recommended that the screening process includes a short written application (including a statement of the applicant's expectations), a face-to-face interview and participation in pre-matching training.

The objective of the face-to-face interview is to review and discuss the mentor position description with candidates to ensure that they understand the program's expectations. A list of questions should be prepared prior to the interview and these will vary depending on the particular target group.

It is important to explore both the personal attributes required and the practical expectations. This should include areas such as the time commitment required for mentoring activities and any other job constraints. The candidate should also be given the opportunity to ask questions and receive realistic answers.

Some candidates may not make good mentors or may want to be involved for the 'wrong reasons'. Some examples may include:

- Individuals who cannot commit the time to ensure consistency in their mentoring
- Individuals volunteering for status or job promotion reasons
- Individuals that hold rigid opinions and may have a mindset closed to new ideas
- Individuals that seem too concerned about what a mentee can do for them
- Individuals who want to be a mentor so they can work through their own work or personal problems
- Individuals who do not have the skills that match the program needs.

It is important to advise these candidates in an appropriate manner and focus on the incompatibility of their involvement rather than present their non-involvement as a failure.

When a pool of potential mentors has been established, the identification and selection of mentees may commence. In practice, these processes may operate simultaneously.

When potential mentees have been identified from each of the target groups, an orientation session should be conducted to determine if the mentoring program is appropriate to their needs. If the objective of the program meets their needs and expectations and they accept the dual purpose of the process, potential mentees can be screened through an intake interview.

The individual's attitude and interest in the program can be determined and information gathered can be used to help make an appropriate match. Once the mentee has been screened, he/she should participate in an information session.

Orientation, information sessions and training for mentors and mentees should be built into the program timeline. It is essential for training to be conducted prior to the start of the program, with further training being organised on an as-needs basis. A suggested format is to conduct training sessions for both groups (ie mentors and mentees separately) followed by another short session with mentors and mentees together.

A pre-matching information session can be organised which allows potential applicants to make a more informed decision about whether to participate in the program. This session should cover the following:

- An overview of the program;
- Clarify roles and responsibilities;
- The qualities of successful mentors, including a mentor job description that outlines program expectations and requirements;
- A description of eligibility, the screening process, suitability requirements and length of the screening and matching processes;
- The level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility, frequency);
- Benefits and rewards of participation;
- A summary of program policies, including those governing privacy, communications, liability and evaluation; and
- Provide an opportunity to discuss how to handle a variety of situations.

The investment an organisation makes in the initial and ongoing training of mentors contributes to the success of the mentoring program. The training should be geared towards helping mentors become more skilled at developing mentoring relationships. Ideally, training takes place prior to the mentor and mentee being matched, with additional support being provided to the mentor as required throughout their involvement in the mentoring program.

It is important that individuals participating in the program as mentees understand the program objectives and that the roles and responsibilities are made clear to minimise the potential for misunderstandings. The orientation process for mentees should address issues such as:

Successfully matching mentors and mentees takes preparation and it is important to provide both parties with the opportunity to state their needs and personal preferences.

- Who is the person that the mentee will be spending time with?
- What will the mentoring process offer the mentee?
- How much time will it take?
- What to expect (and what not to expect) from mentors?
- Basic communication skills and how to interact with mentors
- Basic problem solving and conflict resolution skills

Once potential mentors and mentees have been identified for each of the target groups, matches must be made. It is recommended, where possible, that the specific target group be the major determinant when matching mentors and mentees. For example, Indigenous Australian mentees should be matched to Indigenous mentors and women in non-traditional occupations should be mentored by other women in the oil and gas industry. This will ensure that the needs of each of the target groups are met and that cultural sensitivities are respected. Mentors from outside the target groups are acceptable, but care must be taken in the selection of these mentors and in the matching process.

Successfully matching mentors and mentees takes preparation and it is important to provide both parties with the opportunity to state their needs and personal preferences.

After the match has been made between the mentor and mentee, each party should be provided with basic information about the other. The two parties may or may not already know each other depending on the size of the organisation and the geographical location of employment. The program coordinator will determine how and where mentors and mentees are to meet for the first time.

Apart from getting to know each other, the first meeting should also be utilised to discuss the program objectives, frequency of contact, confidentiality and meeting activities.

Where mentor and mentee matches are incompatible, the program coordinator should intervene and discuss issues with each party. The issues will either be resolved or the mentoring agreement terminated and a new matching arrangement established.

Once a mentoring relationship has been established and the process is underway, face-to-face meetings and a mix of group activities that encourage interaction among all program participants may be organised.

Group activities foster a sense of community for both mentors and mentees, providing informal support for the mentors and a strong support system for mentees. Examples of group activities are field trips, social get-togethers and networking events, recreational/cultural events, awards and recognition events and skill building workshops. Such activities could be extended to include mentoring participants from a range of oil and gas companies.

Although the final mix of activities will be decided in part by the mentors and mentees, some activities should be built into the program design.

It is important to provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring for mentoring relationships to ensure they continue successfully. This is generally the role of the program coordinator, who can involve other parties as required. This assistance can include helping mentors and mentees determine and reach goals.

Regular contact with program participants is an essential element of all mentoring programs. It is recommended that the program coordinator contact the mentor and mentee in the first two weeks of the match to see how things are going, then follow up every fortnight for the next few months. As the mentoring relationship develops contact can be reduced to monthly as a procedure to ensure that progress is being made and to address any issues that arise. Contact can be made by phone, by e-mail or in person.

Training opportunities can also be provided throughout the program on an as-needs basis to address any issues raised by either the mentor or mentee.

The program coordinator should schedule regular opportunities for groups of mentors to come together to discuss common problems. Similar sessions can also be organised for mentees. The feedback can be utilised to refine the program and increase retention.

Regular contact with participants will also allow the program coordinator to identify potential problems arising in mentoring relationships. A formal process must be established for managing grievances, re-matching mentors and mentees, solving interpersonal problems, handling crises and bringing closure to relationships that end prematurely. It is important to ensure that all participants clearly understand the process and that relevant documents are maintained in a confidential file. The primary objective when a mentoring pair experiences difficulties is to help them successfully resolve their own differences.

Providing recognition for significant contributions and accomplishments is an important component of a healthy and rewarding mentoring environment. Positive feedback and recognition for a job well done boosts morale, fosters team spirit and raises retention rates amongst all program participants. It also encourages other people to participate in the program.

A formal event could be held to recognise the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in the mentoring program. This could even be extended to become an industry-wide initiative, involving a number of oil and gas companies and other relevant stakeholders.

Both mentors and mentees should be encouraged to tell the story of their involvement, both through organisation-sponsored programs and through their own initiative. The program coordinator should solicit feedback from both mentors and mentees and use this information to refine the program and retain mentors.

Mentoring relationships change over time and may end for any number of reasons: These reasons may include:

- A mentor and mentee do not get along
- Either the mentor or the mentee drops out of the program
- The mentor or mentee changes employment
- Life circumstances make it difficult or impossible to continue the relationship (a mentor is transferred to another city or changes in family responsibilities or living situations occur for the mentor or the mentee)
- The mentee reaches a level of self-sufficiency with the particular mentor so that mentoring is no longer needed
- The mentoring program ends

Providing recognition for significant contributions and accomplishments is an important component of a healthy and rewarding mentoring environment. Positive feedback and recognition for a job well done boosts morale, fosters team spirit and raises retention rates amongst all program participants.

Regardless of the reason for the relationship coming to an end, a formal closure process must be followed by all program participants.

The closure policy developed by the program coordinator should include the provision for conducting private, confidential exit interviews with mentors and mentees. Feedback received in the exit interview can assist the program coordinator improve the program for future participants. This process should also help participants reflect upon what they have achieved during the program.

In order to increase the effectiveness of mentoring programs through a feedback/continuous quality improvement process, it is necessary to undertake regular evaluation and assessment of the program.

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It should be noted that poorly designed and implemented mentoring programs create long-lasting workplace issues that are not easily resolved. If a company cannot commit the necessary resources to a mentoring program as part of an overall workforce development strategy it is best to avoid the process. Some of the major pitfalls issues that arise when a mentoring program is not given the time, input or resources required may include:

- Lack of respect for both parties.
- Lack of clarity or consensus regarding the goals of the mentoring relationship. For example, there may be disaffection among mentees who sign up for a mentoring program with high expectations of being promoted. Employers must make clear whether mentoring programs offer promotional opportunities and a forum for networking and skills development, or whether they are designed to provide individual support as part of a workplace diversity program.
- No commitment on the part of the mentor or if the mentor is unwilling to commit the time and energy necessary to establish and maintain the relationship.
- Morale problems. Those who are not selected to participate may feel alienated and resentful, and those who are chosen may feel embarrassed or self-conscious.
- Reinforcement of stereotypes held by senior members who are selected as mentors. Although mentors may begin the program with high hopes about its value to the organisation, poorly structured programs can inadvertently serve to reinforce negative stereotypes they hold about under-represented groups.

### Program Evaluation

In order to increase the effectiveness of mentoring programs through a feedback/continuous quality improvement process, it is necessary to undertake regular evaluation and assessment of the program.

Program evaluation also enables organisations to identify the benefits and positive outcomes from the mentoring effort and to justify the time and resources that were dedicated to its development and implementation.

It is important to develop a plan to measure program processes, outcomes and finally disseminate evaluation findings.

Once the effectiveness of the program has been assessed, it is possible to determine whether the program goals and objectives have been met. Evaluation also provides the opportunity to address any weaknesses and to build on successes for future programs. A comprehensive evaluation process enables objective feedback to be provided to program staff and participants, identify achievements and milestones and pinpoint problems early enough to correct them. Program evaluation also provides the opportunity to demonstrate for internal budgeting purposes or for external funding sources that the programs objectives are being satisfied.

Process evaluation focuses on whether a program is being implemented as intended, how it is being experienced by the participants and whether changes are needed to address any problems.

In order to measure how well the program has been operating, data must be compiled throughout the program duration. Indicators to be measured may include:

- Number of applicants for program places
- Successful mentor/mentee matches
- Training and professional development hours
- Meeting frequency and duration
- Types of activities
- Relationship duration
- Perceptions of the mentoring relationship

It is important for program participants to record this data throughout the program. Collecting and analysing this information should be the responsibility of the program coordinator.

It is only possible to determine whether the mentoring program has met its expected outcomes if these were clearly formulated at the start of the program. In addition to collecting program data as outlined above, expected program outcomes may be measured by using appropriate instruments.

Outcomes for the mentee participants may include improved workplace performance, reduced absenteeism, acquisition of new skills and competencies, successful completion of training and professional development programs, promotion to higher level positions, greater involvement in other work related activities such as safety committees, social clubs etc.

Program outcomes for mentor participants may include improved workplace performance, reduced absenteeism, successful completion of training and professional development programs, promotion to higher level positions, greater involvement in other work related activities such as safety committees, social clubs etc, commitment to an ongoing mentoring role and an extended stay in the workplace (for those employees nearing retirement age).

If management can clearly see the benefits of mentoring on organisational performance, the initiative is likely to continue into the future. Gaining the support of managers for a mentoring program will have a positive feedback effect - when programs have the active support of senior leaders, they tend to be more successful.

In addition to the organisational benefits the mentoring program will deliver, it is important to determine the actual benefits that mentors and mentees have gained from the program. To assess this individual satisfaction it is necessary to conduct surveys of participants at the beginning and at the end of the mentoring relationship and to measure expectations against actual results.

In addition to the organisational benefits the mentoring program will deliver, it is important to determine the actual benefits that mentors and mentees have gained from the program.



# Customisation



## Customisation

The mentoring model outlined in the previous section details the requirements for a formal generic program that can be utilised for any mentoring initiative. While this model can be adapted to a range of target groups, it is important to tailor mentoring arrangements to the needs of the specific target group prior to the implementation phase.

In more concrete terms, this relates predominantly to the selection of the mentor who needs to have a thorough understanding of the particular needs of the mentee in question. The program coordinator also needs to have a thorough understanding of the needs of each of the target groups and must ensure that these needs can be met by potential mentors. Checks and balances should therefore be in place during the selection and recruitment phase.

The following information provides some brief detail on how a program may be customised for three (3) specific target groups.

### Young Employees and New Entrants to the Industry

Mentoring is a professional relationship in which a more experienced person (the mentor) provides support, encouragement and advice to another person (the mentee). The basis of the mentoring relationship is that one person has more knowledge, expertise and experience relative to the mentoring theme. Mentoring is therefore an ideal process to assist young people or for those people commencing employment in a particular industry sector for the first time.

The model mentoring program outlined in the previous section can be utilised in its entirety for this target group. The only specific requirement is in relation to the selection of mentors. It is imperative that the mentor must be sensitive to the issues faced by a young person or new entrant in the oil and gas industry workplace. The highly technical nature of oil and gas operations, the rigorous safety, quality and operational standards and the highly structured approach to work is daunting for a person entering the industry for the first time.

Mentors chosen to work with this target group need to be experienced and able to present complex information and advice in a way that is easily understood by the mentee. The mentors also need to have an understanding of issues faced at lower levels in the organisation which may have an impact on the young or new employee. Mentoring activities should therefore focus on professional and personal development and gaining an understanding of the company culture and 'the way things are done'.

### Women in Non-Traditional Occupations

As with young and new employees, the model mentoring program outlined in the previous section can be utilised in its entirety for this target group. Again, the only specific requirement is in relation to the selection of mentors.

Women face difficulties within most organisations associated with career progression. This is even more the case for women in non-traditional occupations. In addition, women often lack access to informal organisational networks and a formal mentoring program is a solution to this problem.

While many companies are implementing internal policies to ensure that workplaces better meet the needs of women, mentoring can take this a step further by providing women an additional opportunity for professional and personal development.

Mentoring is a professional relationship in which a more experienced person (the mentor) provides support, encouragement and advice to another person (the mentee). The basis of the mentoring relationship is that one person has more knowledge, expertise and experience relative to the mentoring theme.

Ideally, mentors selected to participate in a mentoring program designed for women in non-traditional occupations would be women with the same or similar profile.

Given the low numbers of women working in these areas it may be difficult to source mentors with these attributes and alternative options will need to be examined. This may include women with significant experience in the oil and gas industry, although not necessarily in non-traditional occupations. Or it may require the sourcing of women from outside the company who are prepared to provide mentoring support for female workers.

In a situation where there are not enough women to take on mentoring roles group mentoring arrangements should be considered or men may also be considered as mentors. Any potential male mentors must have a thorough understanding of the issues women face in the workplace.

### Indigenous Employees

As with previous target groups, the model mentoring program outlined in the previous section can be utilised in its entirety for a mentoring program developed to support Indigenous Australian employees. Once again, the key specific requirement is in relation to the selection of mentors.

Mentoring Indigenous Australian employees presents special challenges, particularly associated with cultural understanding and cultural sensitivities. It is important to plan and tailor the mentoring program to the specific cultural needs of the Indigenous employee while maintaining the integrity of the program in relation to the company's overall workplace development strategies.

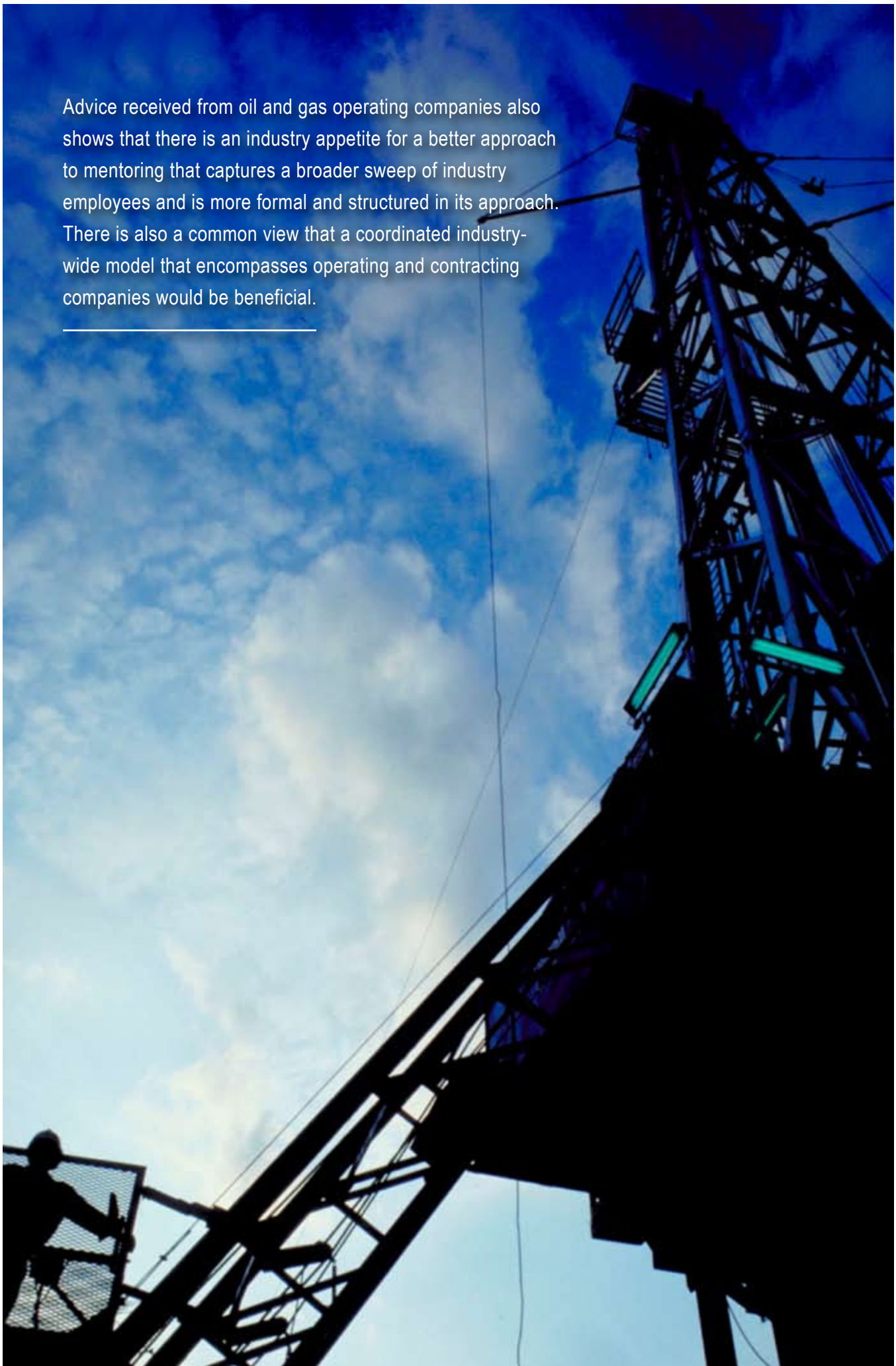
There is a wealth of research to suggest mentoring programs for Indigenous Australian employees need to be meticulously designed and planned and carefully implemented. Mentoring programs for Indigenous employees require adequate consultation with and promotion in indigenous communities, flexibility in remote and isolated areas and sensitivity to cultural requirements in matching indigenous mentors and young people.

While the ideal situation in a mentoring program designed to support Indigenous employees is to have an Indigenous mentor, a non-Indigenous person can also take on this role. However, it is extremely important that all non-Indigenous mentors have a strong understanding of Indigenous issues and recognise those things that are likely to impact on the Indigenous employee in the workplace.

Mentoring Indigenous Australian employees presents special challenges, particularly associated with cultural understanding and cultural sensitivities. There is a wealth of research to suggest mentoring programs for Indigenous Australian employees need to be meticulously designed and planned and carefully implemented.

Advice received from oil and gas operating companies also shows that there is an industry appetite for a better approach to mentoring that captures a broader sweep of industry employees and is more formal and structured in its approach. There is also a common view that a coordinated industry-wide model that encompasses operating and contracting companies would be beneficial.

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## Concluding Comments

Advice received from Australian oil and gas operating companies during the preparation of this report confirms that the use of formal mentoring programs as a standard part of workforce development activity is not common practice. Where mentoring is used the processes are largely confined to professional engineering and technical staff and are mostly informal in structure.

The advice received from oil and gas operating companies also shows that there is an industry appetite for a better approach to mentoring that captures a broader sweep of industry employees and is more formal and structured in its approach. There is also a common view that a coordinated industry-wide model that encompasses operating and contracting companies would be beneficial.

Best practice mentoring programs in place throughout the world exhibit the same common features. Regardless of the target groups or industry sectors, mentoring programs that are successful include the following features:

- A statement of purpose endorsed and approved by senior staff
- The public commitment and support of senior staff
- A program plan and a nominated program coordinator
- A recruitment and selection process that selects those staff who volunteer to participate
- Structured mentor and mentee preparation
- A rigorous mentor/mentee matching strategy
- Coordinated support mechanisms for mentors and mentees
- A closure policy to ensure the formal ending of mentoring relationships
- Appropriate evaluation and assessment procedures

The model for a mentoring program for the Australian upstream oil and gas industry outlined in this report includes the best practice features listed above.

This report suggests that a mentoring program in the oil and gas industry must satisfy the same exacting standards that apply to all other processes, procedures and practices in the industry and must be established as an integral part of a broader workforce development strategy. Furthermore, a mentoring model for the industry must be internally devised, developed and delivered.

The alternative approach to mentoring is to rely on the goodwill and enthusiasm of well-meaning volunteers. This report suggests that the alternative arrangements are not well suited to the Australian upstream oil and gas industry.

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