

Business Research Tips is a monthly email with practical ideas for managing business information and research.

Local and global mentoring

Mentoring brings together an experienced practitioner, and importantly, a mentee who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange to enrich their professional development.

Heather recently had an article published in www.freepint.com on her experience being both a mentor to an Adelaide based librarian and a mentee in an international mentorship program for freelance researchers.

Unlike the usual group learning experience, mentoring is tailored to fit the needs and objectives of the mentee. Mentees come to a mentoring program with some clear ideas on what they are seeking from the mentoring arrangement. This may be to develop their skills or to gain support with change or difficulties they are facing in their professional work. In a larger mentoring program, such as the Australian Library and Information Association program, mentors and mentees were paired up as a best fit to the requirements of the mentee, and the skills and experience of the mentor.

Mentees are responsible for keeping the momentum going in the mentoring relationship, by actively following up on points discussed, and communicating regularly and openly with their mentor. The method of communication isn't important – just as much can be gained through frequent email with a mentor based in a distant location, as through regular meetings with a locally based mentor.

Mentoring can be as beneficial for the mentor as it is for the mentee. Beyond the satisfaction of sharing your experiences, knowledge and skills with your mentee, the mentoring relationship opens up the mentor to new ideas, challenges and an opportunity to reflect on their own practices. Ultimately, the greatest benefit for the mentor is seeing your mentee develop and build on the ideas and experiences that were shared.

Mentoring is a special relationship. The opportunity to be guided by an experienced colleague is a privilege and to share your knowledge and ideas with a mentee is very rewarding.

Links

- "Mentors and Mentees" Structuring a Professional Relationship", [freepint.com](http://www.freepint.com), 24 May 2007
< <http://www.freepint.com/issues/240507.htm#tips> >
- Australian Library and Information Association (SA) Mentoring Program
< <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/mentoring/sa/> >

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