

Mentoring helps to *capture Valuable Knowledge*



SITUATION

United Utilities had an aging profile and valuable knowledge and experience was in danger of being lost to the organisation. There was an urgent need to establish a process to pass this

knowledge to other inspiring managers without 'switching off' the receiver.

OUR CONTRIBUTION

Oakridge and United Utilities embarked upon establishing a mentoring programme and initially began a pilot scheme to establish the viability of such a programme and a way of working. Its aim was to pinpoint the overall objective of the mentoring programme, define goals and see how middle managers would relate to having experienced mentors.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

It was important to establish good mentors who could build trust and rapport with a mentee. Each mentor received two days training and was assessed on key qualities of sincerity, empathy and acceptance.

A half day training workshop for mentees positioned their expectations of the programme. Oakridge delivered personal awareness work to help understand drivers and talked about the equal status of the relationship.

Partners were then matched by the co-ordinator to ensure needs were met and that feedback could be gathered in case the connection wasn't working. Meetings between mentor and mentee

took place usually every four to six weeks.



RESULTS

More than 70 mentoring relationships have been established and a large proportion remains active. Fifteen of those with mentors are in bigger roles or have secured promotions.

Feedback found the pilot programme to be rewarding. It helped to transfer knowledge and ensured that the information distilled was developmental in its own right.

Mentees talked about what worked and provided examples of where they had been able to make better decisions in their work. All said they felt valued and supported within the organisation and that they wanted to continue their mentoring relationships.

WHAT THE CLIENT SAID

Robbie Lightfoot, Head of Organisation Development at United Utilities Contract Solutions division said:

"Mentors found the pilot an enjoyable and beneficial experience with more information coming up through the company which they felt led to better internal communication. Some admitted that it had been initially hard to resist giving advice, but remembering the training had ensured they managed to reduce this as they practiced more."

Some mentioned there had been some positive spin offs for their own management skills from the programme and many said that they had identified how important their role was in the relationship – something they hadn't initially considered."

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