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A qualitative program evaluation of a structured leadership mentoring program at a large aerospace corporation

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A QUALITATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED LEADERSHIP MENTORING PROGRAM AT A LARGE AEROSPACE CORPORATION

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my grandmother, Estelle Nathenia Teller; my father, James Henry Teller; my mother, Martha Elizabeth; my sister, Barbra Johnson; my brothers, James Henry and James Norman; and my extended dad, Alfred Lundy, Sr.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my children, Tychicus Green, Ebony Barton, and Kailey Teller. Dreams do come true; just don't give up. Strive to be the best you can. I will always be there to mentor, coach, support, and most of all love you.

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ABSTRACT

The researcher utilized a qualitative approach to conduct a program evaluation of the organization where he is employed. The study intended to serve as a program evaluation for the structured in-house mentoring program at a large aerospace corporation (A-Corp). This program evaluation clarified areas in which the current mentoring program is lacking and could be improved to align with best practices for mentoring that have been identified in the research literature. As a participant observer, the researcher used telephone focus groups as the main data source. A secondary data source included documents such as the training manual and intranet descriptions of the program. Conclusions are discussed as follows: (a) the formal mentoring program offered several important benefits to mentees, mentors, and the company; (b) areas in which the mentoring program matches the best practices noted in the literature, according to participant responses and training materials reviewed by the researcher, in table format; and (c) a list summarizes what participants stated as the areas needing improvement, and this list is used as the basis for organizing the recommendations for practical applications.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background for the Research Topic

In the world of for-profit organizations and human resource development, the concepts of mentoring and coaching are nothing new. Both have always occurred, usually happening informally, but occasionally designed as interventions to solve particular business issues.

The last 5 years have seen a groundswell in both informal and formal mentoring in U.S. worksites studied or inquired. Organizations have begun to use mentoring and coaching more purposefully than before. Human resources departments (HRD) and Organizational Development (OD) practitioners have worked to utilize mentoring to meet pressing business problems relating to the development and of retention of talent, as well as the growth of future leaders. These interventions have been more systemic, more thoughtful, and more innovative than ever before (Carter, Ulrich, & Goldsmith, 2001, p. 238).

Today organizations face challenges in getting the right person in the right position. More organizations have begun to realize the potential for training and mentoring programs to develop individuals within the organization to assume high-ranking leadership positions.

Carter et al. (2001) stated that in one aerospace company, when the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) arrived, the new CEO was disappointed with the executive development process. He often remarked that the fact that the

company had to bring in an outsider to fill the CEO position was an indication of a systemic problem in internal leadership development.

Mentoring in the workplace has long been recognized in the organization development literature as a powerful tool that assists employees in career advancement, helps create a learning organization, and is a form of on-the-job training (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Yet many organizations have yet to make full use of mentoring. While varying types of mentoring programs have been successful, formal mentoring programs provide structure and help maximize opportunities for all employees to experience the benefits of mentoring relationships, including minorities, women, or those who may otherwise be less likely to obtain a mentor on their own (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). In an effort to increase the retention of potential leaders, companies need to develop effective mentoring programs to provide the proper training to increase their executive leadership base. Leadership at A-Corp recognizes the importance of a mentoring program and has provided funding for a broad implementation of an in-house mentoring program.

Problem Statement

At A-Corp, a mentoring relationship is often part of the structured mentoring program, thus the specific qualities of the program impact the effectiveness of the mentoring. However, at A-Corp it had yet to be determined whether the program was fully implementing practices that (a) meet the needs of mentees and (b) have been shown in the literature to be most effective. Therefore, in order to realize the full value potential of the program, evaluation of

the mentoring program needed to include in-depth interviews of mentees and comparison with the current literature on best practices for mentoring.

Purpose of the Study

The present study was intended to serve as a program review for the structured in-house mentoring program at a large aerospace corporation (A-Corp). This program evaluation clarified areas in which the current mentoring program was lacking and could be improved to align with best practices for mentoring that were identified in the research literature. This study focused on executive level managers who experienced the structured leadership mentoring program.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentees?
2. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentors?
3. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the company?
4. How does the structured leadership mentoring program compare with best practices for mentoring, as noted in the literature?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the structured leadership mentoring program?

Importance of the Study

One business consultancy recommends that an organization monitor and review the entire mentoring program through regular survey of both mentors and mentees (Change Factory, 2008). As with any program, evaluation is an important step to conceptualize needed improvements in order to make effective plans to implement improvements. An evaluation of the mentoring program under study was conducted through surveys by the human resources department, but not through in-depth interviews, although the structured leadership mentoring program has been in operation for 3 years at this site. The present study could be a means of improving the mentoring program, which could ultimately result in a greater benefit to the organization.

Assumptions

The researcher makes the following assumptions:

1. The best practices noted in the literature review are based on (a) authoritative sources considered to offer valid information on adult corporate mentoring programs, based on their areas of expertise, and (b) leading theories of leadership. Although not all of these practices and theories have been empirically tested, the researcher assumes that experience and frequent observation by these authors and practitioners who are widely recognized in their field have led to valid recommendations for best practices.

2. Participants will share their opinions honestly.
3. Opinions of participants reflected their actual experience.

Limitations

1. This study relies on self-report data for answering research question 1. Self-report data is subject to bias and is only as accurate as the perceptions of the participants.
2. Due to the small number of respondents, the study likely left out personnel who could have contributed important ideas to the study.
3. The mentor and mentee responses were analyzed together, rather than being analyzed separately for comparison purposes as was originally planned, because many of the participants were both mentors and mentees in the program.
4. The current structured leadership mentoring program has been in place for 3 years in this site at the time of this study. There may be aspects of the mentoring relationship that are time-dependent; for example, benefits of the relationship that may appear later may not be apparent in this 3-year time-span.
5. This research was conducted individually, although with the permission of the A-Corp administration. The researcher did not have access to the survey questions or results that are used by the A-Corp human resources office to determine what improvements would be desirable and what problems and benefits the participants perceive related to the structured leadership mentoring program.

Delimitations

The scope of the study, or delimitations, are as follows:

1. The results are intended to be relevant and useful for one aerospace organization under study, in which senior employees mentor other managerial-level employees who have been selected as having leadership potential. The results might not be comparable to a mentoring program with voluntary participation that allows self-selection by mentees.
2. The mentoring program at A-Corp involves a relationship between professionals in the same workplace for work-related purposes, thus the results might not be comparable to mentoring programs in organizations with different organizational functions and cultures, such as a and unstructured mentoring, non-profit organizations organization or personal-development related mentorship.
3. This program involves mentor-mentee relationships between adults, thus the results should not be expected to be applicable for youth mentoring. In addition, this study does not cover reverse mentoring.
4. This study is not being conducted to add value to the company.

Definition of Terms

- A-Corp: This is a pseudonym for the organization that was studied, which is a large corporation in the aerospace and aviation industry, employing 160,000 thousand persons at the sites under study.

- Coaching: Hersey and Chevalier (2005) define coaching as the process of equipping people with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to develop and become more effective. Similar to mentoring, the relationship typically does not involve a position of authority over a subordinate. Instead, it implies a voluntary relationship on the part of both the coach and the person coached.
- Mentee: “A person who is guided by a mentor” (Mentee, n.d.). A mentee is one who voluntarily forms a relationship with another person with the intent to receive wisdom, knowledge, or advice in a particular topic area. The mentee may also be referred to as a protégé.
- Mentor: “A wise and trusted counselor or teacher . . . an influential senior sponsor or supporter” (Mentor, n.d.). A mentor is one who voluntarily forms a relationship with another person with the intent to impart wisdom, knowledge, or advice in a particular topic area.
- Mentoring relationship: Mentoring has been defined as a one-to-one relationship between an older or more experienced person and a younger or less experienced person (a mentee or protégé) for the purpose of passing on knowledge, experience, and judgment, or for providing guidance and friendship. It can also be defined as the process of assisting another person in achieving their stated goal. Mentoring relationships can be relationships that have occurred naturally in a given situation, without any assistance, or the mentoring relationship can be a planned relationship as part of a structured program (Floyd, 1993). For

the purpose of this study, mentoring is most often referred to as a sustained relationship between an older and more experienced adult and a younger or less experienced adult who share a similar employment type.

- Formal mentoring: Formal mentoring involves a stated agreement between the mentor and mentee (The Change Factory, 2008). Formal mentoring, though presumably voluntary, may be highly encouraged by an organization's management. If strictly mandated, the relationship technically would not be mentoring but would be advising in the context of a work assignment.
- Structured mentoring: Structured mentoring is a type of formal mentoring that involves set procedures such as assigned matching of mentor and mentee, formalized written goals and protocol, set duration of the relationship, training, and evaluation.

Chapter Summary

In-house mentoring programs can be a great asset to organizations as they can assist employees in career advancement, serve as a form of on-the-job training, and help retain procedural and technical knowledge within organizations. In high-tech fields, these benefits are crucial to long-term success of an organization, yet many organizations have yet to make full use of mentoring. The present study is a program evaluation should clarify areas in which the current mentoring program is lacking and could be improved to align

with best practices for mentoring that have been identified in the research literature.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter presents literature relevant to the purpose of the study. The two main topics of discussion in the literature review are (a) mentoring and (b) leadership in the corporate environment. The literature has been reviewed both to create a list of best practices and to set the stage for understanding and discussing the results of the program evaluation.

Mentoring Defined

Mentoring, which evolved from the Greek word meaning *enduring*, has many definitions (Floyd, 1993). For the purpose of this study, mentoring is referred to as a sustained relationship between an older or more experienced adult and a younger or less experienced adult who share a similar employment type. As noted earlier, mentoring relationships can be relationships that have occurred naturally in a given situation, without any assistance, or the mentoring relationship can be a planned relationship as part of a structured program (Floyd, 1993).

Dondero (1997) states that mentors represent a commitment to values, promote a sense of personal worth, foster self-realization, help broaden opportunities, and assist in making intelligent choices. Mentors may experience both challenges and the rewards throughout the duration of their relationship. This dissertation is especially interested in mentoring as a means of grooming future employees for leadership positions.

Voluntary Nature of Mentoring

Although mentoring at times is part of a job responsibility through a structured program, most often mentoring is undertaken on a volunteer basis even when it is part of a program; hence a discussion of volunteering is appropriate to begin this description of adult-to-adult work-related mentoring. Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or cause (Wilson, 2000). Volunteering is considered by some to be critical to the well-being of the nation. At any given time approximately 50% of Americans are involved in a variety of different types of volunteer work (Van Willigen, 2000).

Values tend to play a part in why an individual volunteers (Clary et al., 1998; Wilson, 2000). Clary and colleagues suggest that volunteer motives can be assessed using a functional approach. Items within this functional framework include values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. They found that motivations may guide avenues that volunteers pursue in regard to their volunteer experience. Individuals tend to look for opportunities that will fulfill motivational needs and provide self satisfaction (Kiviniemi et al., 2002). Consistent with the onset of the generative stage of development, a lot of volunteer work takes place in middle adulthood. However, volunteering is not limited to middle adulthood. Older adults find satisfaction in participating in a variety of volunteer activities as well. These individuals tend to benefit from maintaining an active role in society (Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002; Warburton, Terry, Rosenman, & Shapiro, 2001).

No matter the motive or activity, volunteers are willing to give of their time assuming they will reap benefits from their hours worked. These benefits include almost imperceptible resolution of generative issues by gaining the satisfaction of having helped the next generation or those only a few steps behind. An important area where this may be evident is mentoring. Terry (1999) proposes that the common goal of volunteer mentors is to protect the future by investing in the present through sharing his or her life experiences. Individuals gain a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment from their time spent mentoring (Dondero, 1997) or this feeling of giving back. From their experiences, mentors learn to better understand their past; they gain insight into how other people may live; they build cross-generational relationships; and they develop skills to become exceptional adults (Philip & Hendry, 2000). This is exactly what Erikson called *generativity*. Helping the next generation in turn helps the mentors themselves by allowing them to gain the gratification they desire through generous, selfless service. "Human performance is influenced by one's perceived competence, positive expectancies, perceived control, and willpower" (as cited in Lee & Cramond, 1999, p. 173).

Many volunteers wait for an invitation to do their work and are more likely to participate in the experience once asked. They look for social support and resources in an effort to make this experience a positive one (Wilson, 2000). In the context of this study, this support comes in the form of a formal mentoring program.

Profile of a Mentor

Individuals who mentor tend to be well-educated professionals. The average age of men and women volunteering as mentors is 30 and 28 respectively, with a majority of the mentors being Caucasian. These mentors give of their time on a regular basis. A telephone survey of 2,000 individuals, conducted for the National Mentoring Partnership (2002) found that 57 million adults would consider mentoring, that of individuals currently mentoring, 99% would recommend mentoring to others, and that potential mentors are between 18 and 44 years old, have a household income of $50,000 or more, have some post-secondary education or more, have internet access, and have a child in their home. When asked what it would take for someone to mentor, individuals in the poll indicated they would like options for mentoring. Many potential mentors would like to have access to professional or expert advice. They would also like an orientation and training before mentoring. Some 67% of those polled felt an incentive for mentoring may be his or her employer providing time off. There are some companies who provide incentives for their employees who participate in volunteer service.

According to Rogers and Taylor (1997), older Americans are the fastest growing age group of the population. They continue to look for opportunities that will allow them to keep active, as well as continue meaningful personal contact. With this motivation it seems logical that these individuals would serve well as mentors in either natural or planned mentoring programs. Despite this seemingly obvious fact, most planned mentoring programs tend to target middle age, middle

class, corporate America (Rogers & Taylor, 1997). This can also be seen in the results of the National Mentoring Partnership (2002). Older adults are seen as having a great amount and wealth of experience. This along with their growing cohort group and desire to continue to be involved, make them a great resource for mentoring programs.

Benefits of Structured Mentoring Programs

Schaffer (2008) explains some of the reasons that in-house corporate mentoring programs have become increasingly popular:

> The newest generation of talent brings amazing technological proficiency with them, more than any other generation before them. On the other end of the spectrum, the retiring workforce may be creating an unexpected "brain drain" as incredible amounts of experience and knowledge begin walking out the door. Mentoring programs are increasingly being recognized as the perfect marriage between these two generations, as the sharing of knowledge by your most senior staff with your creatively charged junior staff may just inspire bouts of innovation that could secure your enterprise's future success . . . developing the talent that exists internally can be incredibly rewarding not only for the personal and professional growth of the individuals participating, but can be an invaluable competitive advantage for companies given today's environment. (p. 2)

Childs, recently Vice President of Global Workforce Diversity at IBM, believes stated, "I think that some years down the road, we are going to look back and

see that mentoring was the most effective talent development initiative that we participated in" (as cited in Schaffer, 2008, p. 2). Harabedian (2009) studied mentoring in the aviation field and found one benefit of structured mentoring programs as opposed to informal mentoring: "formal mentoring relationships may expose the mentee to unlikely mentors that will cover niche topics" (p. 59).

According to Performance by Design (2009) and Schaffer (2008), workplace mentoring can bring the following benefits:

- Nurture talent
- Retain talented people, and enhance their development
- Attract talented recruits and make the most of their potential
- Share the benefits of experience (para. 3)

According to the Change Factory (2008), structured mentoring programs can benefit organizations in the following ways:

- Greater productivity through better-skilled employees with improved behavioral traits
- Reduced recruitment costs through higher retention rates
- Better support networks in times of organizational change . . .
- Greater concentration on the goals of the organization in stressful times
- Retention of corporate memory
- Effective knowledge management (para. 5)

Additionally, mentees benefit in the following ways:

- Improved career prospects
- Self confidence
- Greater appreciation of the complexities of decision making
- Self awareness and self regulation
- Improved networking and social skills
- Greater empathy
- Better goal setting and direction (para. 6)

Mentors benefit in the following ways:

- Improved ability to challenge ideas without challenging the person
- Greater empathy
- Ability to reflect on the true value of the skills they hold giving rise to greater self confidence (para. 7)

Best Practices for Mentor Programs

This portion of the literature review is intended to present the best practices for adult-to-adult mentoring programs, based on the experience and considered judgment of experts in the field of organizational change and business consultancy. The lists presented in this section by various authors are compiled into one for the chapter summary. This review does not include mentoring programs that match adults with youth. Although there may be some similar best practices between youth mentoring and adult profession-related mentoring, there are also likely important differences. However, one study on mentoring of young adults as college students is mentioned and one youth

mentoring program is cited. These were interpreted cautiously in relation to the present study.

The Change Factory (2008), a business consultancy, made several recommendations based on their experience and observations of formal mentoring programs within organizations. The main criteria they believe are necessary for success are briefly listed as follows:

1. Support the program through the management line down from chief executive level (also mentioned by Schaffer, 2008).
2. Select mentees with great care. Mentees must be willing and active participants with at least an average level of emotional intelligence.
3. Select mentors with great care. Mentors must be willing and active participants with at least an average level of emotional intelligence.
4. Match mentees and mentors with great care. Match mentee's experience and goals for the mentoring experience with that of a mentor.
5. Create a robust mentoring agreement that clarifies, as a minimum: (a) frequency of mentoring communications, (b) goals of the mentoring arrangement, (c) behaviors that the mentee will abide by, (d) behaviors the mentor will abide by, (e) duration of the mentoring agreement, and (f) milestones review. Schaffer (2008) also mentioned the importance of clear expectations.
6. Mentors should give effective support in setting the rules of engagement.

The mentoring program manager at Apple Computer described the effective elements of that company's mentoring program as follows Coley (1996), many of which are similar to those described by the Change Factory:

1. Selection: Leaders nominate high-potential employees as mentees.
2. Matching: Mentees are given from one to three potential choices to accommodate mentors' and mentees' preferences. Mentees' individual goals are considered. The match is supposed to last for a year.
3. Some mentees request or require mentors inside and outside the division and thus are provided two mentors.
4. Training: external consultants conduct training that involves both mentors and mentees.
5. Mentoring benefits: Mentees develop close ties with other mentees during the program and learn how to solve problems in the workplace. They say that the mentoring program gave them access to people in other groups and increased their understanding of the technical and business aspects of the organization.
6. Role of the mentor: The main role of a mentor is that of coach. Mentors help set personal-development expectations. Mentors serve as sounding boards, are supportive, and provide practical advice. Though mentors and managers have distinct roles, they work together to address mentees development needs.
7. Role of mentees: Mentees are expected to take the initiative in contacting their mentors and scheduling regular meetings. They are encouraged to

be creative in finding meeting times and venues, to accompany and watch their mentors during the day, or attend mentors' staff meetings as observers.

8. Evaluation: The following elements are in place to encourage honest feedback for revising the program: (a) program participants are encouraged to give informal feedback to the program administrator at any time; (b) each pair has a quarterly review to measure the progress of the mentee and of the mentoring relationship, at which time the pair can choose to continue the relationship or opt for a chance to find a better match; (c) yearly self report pre-test and post-test before and after the mentoring term; and (d) yearly one-on-one interviews with the external consultant company that provides the training.

A youth mentoring organization offers the following two important additional suggestions that are applicable to mentoring in general:

> Allow mentors and mentees to state their personal preferences with regard to a match, and these requests should be honored when possible. Important points of compatibility may include attributes such as (a) gender, (b) cultural or ethnic background, and (c) personality and behavior. As an example of cultural or behavioral attributes, an individual may be more comfortable with a nurturing, familial approach or a more businesslike approach (Mentor, 2009a).

The pair should have an avenue for seeking help if difficulties arise and one or both individuals does not feel comfortable directly addressing an important

concern with the other. For example, misunderstandings might be smoothed over with the help of a mediating party that allows the pair to continue the mentoring relationship productively. Both parties should have the opportunity to request a different match if, after a reasonable effort, the original match is not satisfactory. A mediating party can help bring a more comfortable close to a mentoring relationship if there appears to be little benefit or possibility for salvaging the relationship (Mentor, 2009b; Schaffer, 2008). The following sections offer greater detail for some of the listed best practices.

Qualifications for mentees. Selecting mentees with care is an important aspect of a structured mentoring program, such as that of A-Corp, for which one of the main goals is to groom promising employees for leadership positions. Mentees must commit to active participation rather than expecting all the effort to be on the part of the mentor. Mentees must be amenable to mentoring and willing to become more self-aware. The Change Factory (2008) recommends testing mentees for their level of emotional intelligence so that areas of weakness can be identified and worked on through the mentoring relationship. Goleman (1998, 2001) created a popular test for this purpose, which could be of great benefit to mentees personally as well as professionally. As a tool for greater self-awareness, this test can help point out areas of strengths and weaknesses. This can be a valuable tool for identifying and developing abilities that are crucial for effective leadership.

Qualifications for mentors. The Change Factory (2008) recommends several qualifications for mentors: A mentor should have a high degree of

emotional intelligence, ability to communicate the reason behind their successes and failures with equal humility, and ability to keep confidences. In addition, mentors should not be appointed solely based on position or experience and should not approach their mentoring with a directive leadership style.

According to Sweeny (2003) the International Mentoring Association notes that a mentor should be caring, supportive, positive, and insightful, which are attributes likely to correlate with the possession of emotional intelligence, as recommended above. In addition, the mentor should have completed mentor training. Sweeny adds that the mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring.

Matching mentors and mentees. The International Mentoring Association provides a list of criteria for creating the best possible match between a mentor and mentee, from which many of the best practices for matching are drawn. The original list appears to be geared more toward a mentoring as a new employee training aid; however, some of the items could be applicable to corporate mentoring with the goal of leadership grooming, and those items are included in the following list. This list is ordered with the most critically important criteria higher on the list.

1. The mentor should be at the mentee's work site. If necessary for specific technical training purposes, it could be beneficial to have two mentors: (a) one at a different worksite but who has the same assignment to provide specific expertise and (b) one that is located at the mentee's work site (Sweeny, 2003).

2. A mentor should have a set of experiences that are relevant to the mentee's goals (Change Factory, 2008).
3. A similar but slightly different criterion is that mentors should have some strengths that address the apparent needs of the mentee (Sweeny, 2003), which could include needs or potentials identified by a supervisor.
4. The mentor should be of a more advanced certification or rank than the mentee (Sweeny, 2003).

In one study of a university mentoring program matching faculty members with students, the amount of mentor-mentee contact was positively correlated with grade-point average achievement and retention. At the same time, the achievement level was unrelated to gender and ethnicity of the mentor, the mentee, or the gender and ethnic match between the two (Campbell, & Campbell, 1997). Hence, this researcher concludes that although some mentoring organizations are based on the idea that a match on these variables is important and specialize in offering such a match, this researcher does not include this as a confirmed best practice. Admittedly, in some cases demographic variables may be extremely important in matching individuals, and in such cases, the best practice of considering mentee preferences should ensure the desired match.

A summary of the best practices discussed in this section is included in the chapter summary and in Appendix A: Matrix for Showing Agreement Among Authors for Best Practices for Corporate In-House Mentoring Programs. This matrix was used in deciding which best practices are most important (mentioned

by several authors) for comparison with the current practices of A-Corp's mentoring program, as described in Chapter 3.

The next section discusses leadership, which is an important topic for the present study because not only is mentoring a type of leadership, the mentor program for the organization under study is intended to help develop leadership potential in those mentored. Considerations of leadership potential are a prerequisite for being mentored in the A-Corp program.

Leadership

For years authors have tried to provide definitions and explanations of what creates a good leader and leadership; this has led to the development of many theories. In his book *Leadership for the Twenty First Century,* Rost (1993) traced the history of the definition of leaders and leadership theories. Burns stated that leadership is "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (as cited in Rost, 1993, p. 5). Bennis and Nanus similarly concluded that despite many attempts to explain leadership there is "no clear and unequivocal understanding about] what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders" (as cited in Rost, 1993, p. 5). However, over the decades certain themes have dominated the explanations of leaders and leadership.

Trait-Based Leadership Theories

Researchers prior to the 1940s initially tried to define a leader based on the individual's characteristics, an approach known as *trait theories*. The trait

approach to understanding leadership assumed that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders.

Also evident in the leadership literature is the characterization of men and women with stereotypical qualities that they are thought to bring to leadership positions. The gender-centered model of leadership behavior stresses that there are definite psychological and behavioral differences between men and women, and such differences influence leadership styles (Fagenson-Eland, Ensher, & Burke, 2004). This focus is a continuation of trait-based theory. Character traits such as aggressiveness, high self-confidence, low emotionality, task orientation, need for power, assertiveness, and risk taking have been associated with male leaders. In contrast, character traits such as assertiveness, persuasiveness, empathetic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills, and human relation skills have been associated with female leaders. Some researchers asserted that these skills of women enable them to be more effective leaders and team builders (Helgesen, 1990; Lowen, 2005). Over the years researchers have also identified a number of leadership styles. According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1998), the most comparatively studied leadership styles before the 1990s were (a) the task-oriented style versus the interpersonally oriented style, and (b) the democratic style versus the autocratic style. Leaders with the task-oriented style stress structure and the tasks at hand, whereas interpersonally oriented leaders place importance on the consideration of opinions of subordinates. Leaders using the democratic style allow subordinates to participate in decision making,

and leaders using the autocratic style discourage subordinates from such participation.

To examine gender differences and similarities in these styles, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) reviewed 162 studies that compared women and men leaders on relevant measures. These studies showed that women, more so than men, manifested relatively interpersonally oriented and democratic styles, and men, more so than women, manifested relatively task-oriented and autocratic styles. These authors interpreted that women have greater social skills than men and that these social skills may have facilitated a collaborative and democratic leadership behavior in women. This democratic behavior may have been especially advantageous for women because it appeased subordinates and peers who might otherwise have been resistant to female leadership.

In her landmark book *The Female Advantage: Women's ways of leadership,* Helgesen (1990) studied female leaders from diverse fields and discussed her findings on women's leadership styles and practices. Helgesen's work is based on Mintzberg's seminal work in 1973, *How Men Lead.* In his study, Mintzberg observed that male leaders worked without breaks, spared little time for activities not directly related to their work, spent a considerable amount of time networking outside of the office, and were more deadline-oriented than paying attention to long-term planning (as cited in Helgeson). Men in Mintzberg's study preferred face-to-face interactions. The days of these leaders were characterized by interruptions and discontinuity. These men treated information

from both inside and outside of the organization as their sources of power and, therefore, were reluctant to share information with others. Mintzberg observed that these leaders' identities were inseparable from their positions.

In contrast, Helgesen's (1990) women worked at a steady pace, scheduled small breaks in between tasks, did not see unscheduled tasks and encounters as interruptions in their daily schedules, and made time for activities not directly related to their work during their days. Helgesen deduced that these women generally cared for their employees and perceived this caring as being responsible toward them. Unlike Mintzberg's men, they did not suffer from intellectual isolation. These female leaders did not identify only with their jobs; rather, women leaders viewed their identity as complex and multifaceted. The women in Helgesen's study were open to sharing information with others. Helgesen reasoned that "this impulse to share information seemed to derive from the women's concern with relationship" (p. 27). A major difference between Mintzberg's men and Helgesen's women had to do with their long-term planning. While the male leaders in Mintzberg's study were absorbed with everyday matters, women leaders always kept the "long term in constant focus" (p. 25). Women leaders viewed themselves as being in the center of things rather than being on top. Women leaders tended to have a more social vision. They wanted to make a difference. However, Helgesen did point out some common traits among the women in her study and the men in Mintzberg's study. Both male and female leaders preferred live encounters, and both male and female leaders maintained a complex network of relationships with individuals outside of their

organizations. Some researchers in the area of leadership have suggested that traditionally feminine qualities of cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration are important characteristics of leadership (Aldorry & Tooth, 2004).

To relate this discussion of gender-related traits to mentorship, Clutterbuck and Ragins (2002) state that while mentoring is important for everyone, it is even more important for people from non-dominant groups who face barriers to advancement. Women still face a glass ceiling in regards to advancement in management, and mentoring both by senior men and women offers tools to help break through the traditional barriers. Mentors should be made aware of the additional challenges that women and ethnic minorities face in the workplace. In addition, women mentees may have a preference to be mentored by a woman, who could empathize with the specific challenges she faces and guide her from experience navigating in a male-dominated workplace, or alternately a woman may prefer to be mentored by a man who could serve as a political ally in a male-dominated workplace.

The literature also touches on another important trait of leaders: power. Power is described as the ability to influence others' behaviors. The concept of power in effective leadership is shown to involve mutual persuasion between the leader and the followers to influence and achieve the desired goals of the leader (and/or of the organization). Power and authority are described as the key drivers for leaders (Burns, as cited in Rejai & Phillips, 1997). Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2006) explained the relationship between leadership and power as a way of commanding and focusing resources to achieve a particular vision,

change, or goal. On this basis, any leadership influence that allows people to achieve and to remobilize resources, whether through exciting or coercing individuals, is still the exercise of power, despite the fact that it may be felt as positive and motivating.

In the next section, situational leadership theories are discussed. Although situational leadership can be contrasted with the trait-based theories of leadership, these theories are not mutually exclusive. The debate harks back to the centuries-old debate over what shapes human nature: nature or nurture, that is to say, genetics or learning. The current consensus of the debate as it relates to the field of social psychology is that both nature and nurture play a vital role.

Situational Leadership Theories

While trait theories were still enjoying popularity, other authors developed the contingency model (based on task orientation versus relationship orientation and the situational variables used by the leader to influence the outcome) combined with cognitive resource theory (which takes into account the leader's intellectual ability, technical competence, and task-relevant experience) to define a leader and leadership (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). This early model closely relates to the concept of situational leadership that has become influential in recent decades. More recently, leaders have been defined based on their abilities to operate effectively under different situations and social forces (Aldorry & Tooth, 2004) and the leaders' ability to work within a diverse group. The leader must adapt his or her leadership style to fit the needs of each situation.

Situational leadership theory is based upon the principles of egalitarianism, which reflects the trend in movement toward a more flat organizational structure as opposed to the traditional hierarchical structure of corporations. Collaboration, trust, openness, teamwork, insight concerning the needs of colleagues, developing fruitful relationships, empowering others, delegating, providing a sense of ownership to others, and management of human resources are discussed to guide the new definition of a leader and effective leadership (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2007; Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2006).

The situational approach to leadership implies that leadership skills can be taught, rather than simply being innate traits. This applies to the present study's mentoring program in that the mentor can act as a role model and guide to teach and develop leadership skills in mentees. Many theorists now agree that while innate temperament traits may be an advantage, leadership skills can be developed. Innate strengths can be accentuated by instruction or experiential learning while other innate traits that are problematic can be ameliorated. The following paragraphs present some well-known leadership theories that fall under the situational framework.

Bolman and Deal leadership theory. In their research on organizational leadership Bolman and Deal (2008) described leadership under four frames or leadership styles. Each frame is centered on aspects of organizational behavior, and the frames or styles represent the ways leaders think about and respond to problems. The frames proposed by Bolman and Deal are (a) structural, (b)

human resource, (c) political, and (d) symbolic. The structural frame emphasizes formal roles and relationships within the organization.

Organizations create their organizational chart to fit their environment and technology. Rules, policies, management hierarchies, and division of labor characterize the structural frame. The structural approach is focused on roles and responsibilities that help to achieve the organizational goals. A leader using the structural frame looks at the organization as a closed system. Structural leaders pursue clear goals, set direction, value data and analysis, resolve problems, and hold people accountable to rules or restructuring (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The second, or human resource, frame is centered around the concept that organizational effectiveness depends on the leader's ability to understand the characteristics of its people, and his or her ability to tailor the organization to the people. Leaders who use the human resource frame take into account the skills, needs, feelings, limitations, and prejudices of the organization's employees. Leaders using the human resource frame tend to practice a more participatory or democratic style. This approach helps the organization to achieve its goals while making its employees happy. The human resource–oriented leader emphasizes change through training, rotation, and promotion (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The third, or political, frame acknowledges that organizations are complex. The users of the political frame look at organizations as an arena characterized by scarce resources and differential power among its people. Different individual

and group needs, perspectives, and lifestyles collide within the arena. Problems may arise as individuals or groups try to influence the allocation of resources as power is unevenly distributed or so broadly dispersed that it is difficult to get anything done (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In such situations, conflicts are expected. Therefore, bargaining, coercion, compromise, and coalition building are part of the everyday operation. Within such organizational complexity, solutions depend on the leader's political skill and acumen. Leaders using the political frame have to be adept at resolving conflict, bargaining, and coalition building. Political leaders advocate, negotiate, and value pragmatism. They spend time networking, creating coalitions, negotiating compromises, and building a power base (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The idea of the symbolic frame (the fourth frame) as proposed by Bolman and Deal (2008) was derived from a variety of disciplines. The theme for this frame is based on the notion that despite individual and group differences, an organization's culture and shared values hold the organization together. Leaders using the symbolic frame look at organizations as complex and always changing. The users of the symbolic frame forego the assumptions of rationality that the users of the other three frames do not. Organizations are propelled as much by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myth as by rules, policies, and managerial authority. Symbolic leaders use charisma and drama to promote the mission and identity of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Researchers who have used the Bolman and Deal model to analyze leadership styles have

suggested that leaders use these four frames to solve problems, interpret events, and act upon them (DeFrank-Cole, 2003).

Studies have revealed that in today's complex organizations, leaders develop their leadership styles based on one leadership frame. However, effective leaders often use more than one frame to analyze, make clear judgments, and act on events in their leadership roles (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Leaders who use more than one frame are likely to be more flexible in their roles as they have more than one image of the organization and can interpret events in many ways (Bensimon, 1989). Since first published in the 1980s, the four leadership frames developed by Bolman and Deal have been applied extensively to research business, secondary education, higher education, health care, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Kouses and Posner leadership theory. Kouzes and Posner (2002) described leadership as an observable phenomena with a learnable set of practices. According to the authors, individuals who want to lead can substantially improve their leadership abilities can do so through the following practices: Leaders innovate, experiment, and explore ways to improve the organization. Leaders learn from their mistakes and are prepared to meet challenges. To challenge the process, leaders (a) search for opportunities, (b) take risks, and (c) experiment. Leaders envision a positive future. Leaders are skilled communicators, expressive and genuine in dealing with their followers. They help create mutual interest and show how these interests can be achieved

through commitment to a common purpose. Inspiring a shared vision involves: (a) envisioning the future, and (b) enlisting the support of others.

Leaders develop relationships based on mutual trust. Leaders involve others in the planning process, provide them the opportunity to make their own decisions, make sure people are strengthened, and encourage collaboration. Enabling others to act involves (a) fostering collaboration, and (b) strengthening others (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). They model the way through consistent behavior and help to keep projects on course. Leaders help to plan, break goals into achievable steps, and create opportunities for small wins. They help others to achieve the goals while focusing on key priorities. Modeling the way involves (a) setting an example, and (b) planning small wins.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2002) leaders encourage people by linking recognition and accomplishments. They recognize contributions to the common vision and nurture team spirit. They appreciate others for their contribution and show pride in their team's accomplishments. Leaders help celebrate achievements. Encouraging the heart involves (a) recognizing contributions and (b) celebrating accomplishments.

Bass's transformational leadership. Transformational leaders work to inspire fellow workers and ask for commitment and creativity from them. This form of leadership is oriented to the future to a greater extent than to the present. In this style of leadership, the leader needs to establish himself or herself as a role model. Gaining followers' trust and confidence is vital to the success of these leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998). Transformational leadership helps

fellow workers develop their potential to contribute more effectively to their organization through mentoring and empowerment. In contrast, transactional leaders establish exchange relationships with subordinates (Avolio, 1999). Transactional leaders clarify the subordinates' responsibilities, reward them for a job well done, and correct them for failing to meet objectives.

Researchers have reasoned that transformational leadership might be particularly advantageous to women because of its traditionally feminine qualities (Yoder, 2001). Rosener (1990) noted that female leaders encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other's self worth, and get others excited about their work. On the other hand, the competitive, aggressive, and task-oriented characteristics of men make them tend toward transactional leadership. However, in their study, Eagly et al. (2003) indicated that women also engage in reward behaviors, (e.g., exchanging rewards for followers' satisfactory performance). Consequently, leadership studies have suggested that there is no definite criterion of effective leadership; rather, the effectiveness of a leader's behaviors depends upon the specific context, such as the nature of the task and the characteristics of the followers. Some authors have proposed both transformational and transactional leadership styles as relevant ways to lead today's organizations (Madden, 2005; Yoder, 2001).

Supportive Leadership: Coaching

As noted previously, one of the recommendations relevant to selecting and training mentors is that mentors should not approach their mentoring with a directive leadership style. Employees do not answer to mentors in the way they

answer to a supervisor, and thus a different style of leadership is needed. Although the theories described previously have relevance to mentoring, the style often described in the literature as *coaching* is a style that fits the mentoring relationship ideally. This section describes in detail this supportive leadership style, beginning with a description of the theoretical developments in this direction. During the 1940s, leadership definitions combined the trait-based approach with the group theory approach (Rost 1993). Researchers emphasized the leader-follower relationship. In the *group theory* approach, the notion of a good leader was based on the leader's ability to bring people together and influence them to achieve a common goal, according to Rost. During the 1970s, the role of followers or subordinates gained additional importance in the explanation of leadership. Many authors discussed the importance of followers to determine leadership success (Burns, 1978; Hollander, 2008). Zaleznik (1977, 1990) defined leaders as individuals who shape new goals and objectives, take risks, and know how to generate emotions. Leadership involves a relationship of influence; includes both the leader and the follower; and seeks changes that reflect mutual purpose of both the leader and the follower. This relational concept of leadership was further advanced through the 1980s and 1990s, when a plethora of leadership theories were published. Goal accomplishment through the art of influencing, directing, coordinating, and motivating ran as a common theme in explaining leadership during this period. Zaleznik explained that these leadership qualities became more important as the need for human relations and the growing diversity of the workplace challenged leaders to meet group needs

rather than to expect the group to meet the leader's needs. These theorists' work relates to mentoring in that it highlights the need for mentees to be actively engaged in the mentoring process by purposefully asking questions and observing, not passively waiting to be tutored.

Some practitioners (Covey, 2004; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) have made an argument for a nurturing concept of guiding and encouraging people toward an end state or goal. In fact, Covey also spelled out a style of influence under the label of empowerment that helps a subordinate new to a task to grow and learn with the work he or she is performing. He admitted that this approach relies on a basic understanding of psychology in the sense that leaders are attempting to motivate people based on their assumptions of human nature. The more leaders are genuinely happy for the successes, well-being, achievements, recognition, and good fortune of other people, the more likely they are able to guide subordinates toward intrinsically motivating activities. Covey referred to this sense of being secure with one's own position and ability, to the degree one is willing to promote someone else, as the abundance mentality.

Hersey and Chevalier (2005) saw this type of motivational work as another tool in the manager's toolbox of influencing people. In the context of situational leadership, they describe coaching as an effective style of influence. Hersey and Chevalier describe coaching as the appropriate most effective style of influence for an unable but willing follower. For example, when an employee does not yet fully understand the task, but is willing, the situation calls for a greater level of support, guidance, and direction from the leader.

Coaching has been succinctly defined by these researchers as the process of equipping people with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to develop and become more effective. This is consistent with Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller's (2003) operational definition of leadership: facilitating learning to encourage growth and development.

Managers' resistance to coaching. In their analysis, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) found that few managers regard themselves as effective developers of employees. The authors further assert, regarding the concept of developing employees, "Managers often lack the skills, perceive it to be a distraction from work, are not rewarded or recognized, or assume it is the responsibility of the training and human resource departments" (p. 766). Additionally, they quoted one of their study subjects as saying, "the single biggest thing you could do to improve management is teach managers how to teach people, which no one teaches in management school" (p. 767). Although coaching can be a valuable tool for a manager, it is a leadership style ideally suited for a mentoring relationship. Mentoring relationships can provide mentees with the coaching needs that managers most often fail to provide.

The effectiveness of coaching. Further research by Ellinger et al. (2003) also found that an employee's commitment to his or her work improves as managers engage in active coaching, improving employee relations, and building teamwork. A significant contribution of these authors is that of sound empirical, quantitative research on the subject of coaching (although primarily limited to the warehousing industry) by both measuring the prevalence of coaching behaviors

among managers and their impact on employee job satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, Ellinger et al. measured employee and manager perceptions of both the manager's current practice of coaching behaviors as well as coaching as one of the manager's roles and responsibilities.

Long (2004) contends that coaching activity should be process-driven and that it becomes part of the fabric of how a business gets things done. She argues that the "process includes both the nature of the coaching event itself as well as the implementation of how coaching interfaces in the organization on a daily basis" (p. 4). And when effective coaching is not part of employees' expectations on a regular basis, reliance on actual follow-through is potentially diminished.

The next several paragraphs describe activities that are part of coaching. These activities include questioning, listening and observing, feedback and instruction, empowering, goal setting, advocating, follow-up, and interviews.

Questioning. Bivens (1996) claims that "all we have to do is ask the right question" (p. 2) in order to become an effective coaching partner. While this researcher agrees that this type of Socratic instruction can be effective, the overall impact of effective one-on-one coaching is discovered through a combination of targeted behaviors demonstrated by the coach.

Listening and observing. Another quite common theme is the need for an in-house manager-coach's need to really listen, on an empathetic level, to his or her coaching subjects. Brocato (2003) cited behaviors that were likely to have a negative impact on a working relationship in order to emphasize what an

effective coach should do. To fail, he suggested, one must not “get the team member involved; just talk ‘at’ him or her” (p. 18). He then went on to point out that the opposite is the true key learning, to involve the coachee and really listen. LaMantia and Buzzotta (2008) recommend fostering employee engagement and improving employee productivity by listening rather than, as is more common, employing the managerial habit of controlling a conversation by doing all the talking. Ellinger et al. (2003) narrowed down coaching behaviors into eight themes.

The theme that most closely resembles listening is called soliciting feedback from employees. All themes from these recent studies that connote the need for good coaches to truly understand issues and circumstances from the perspective of the coachee are labeled herein as listening. There is some debate as to the proper order of these first coaching habits, questioning and listening. More important than the order in which these behaviors are employed is that each is applied at the appropriate moment, taking into account the unique needs of each new coaching opportunity. Ultimately the person being coached is likely to seek the direct guidance and advice of the coach. At some point, the effective coach figure has something from his or her experience and intuition to offer the learner that will aid in the learner’s growth process.

Feedback and instruction. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach that included semi-structured interviews, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) asked employees and managers to characterize manager behaviors that led to employee learning and growth. The authors isolate and describe three

facilitating behaviors from their analysis that can be categorized as advising. They are providing feedback; broadening employees' perspectives; and using analogies, scenarios, and examples. In another article, Ellinger et al. (2003) define broadening employees' perspectives—getting them to see things differently—as "encouraging learners to think out of the box by encouraging them to see other perspectives, and by providing other perspectives and experiences" (p. 443).

Long (2004) asserted that performance coaching requires four specific conditions surrounding the coachee in order to realize success: (a) desire to change, (b) a knowledge of what to do and how to do it, (c) the right climate, and (d) a reward for changing. She argued that the second condition is inextricably linked to an employee's on-the-job training; this highlights the need for specific instructions that outline the theory and rationale concerning how to actually do the job right. This represents the coach's opportunity, and in some cases obligation, to directly advise, consistent with established standard procedures. As the coachee's understanding of the coach's advice becomes clearer, there exists an opportunity to turn more responsibility to the person being coached and encourage the setting of practical and realistic goals.

Empowering. At some point, an effective coach recognizes the appropriate time to allow the learner to take calculated, potentially career-altering risks. This is where the formal relationship of manager-subordinate can pay off in the coaching relationship by providing immediate experiences that stretch the learner, give him or her new permissions, and set him or her on a road to

significant growth. These are likely opportunities that lie outside of the purview of the professional consultant coach, who has little or no authority to allow the coachee to take on significant business-specific roles and responsibilities.

Yet often the definition of empowering can be confusing and varied. For the purposes of this literature review, empowering shall mean the grant of one-time or possible longer-term authority and responsibility to the coachee, allowing him or her to embark on new and challenging assignments that closely approximate both the understanding and skill of the learner, while pushing him or her to greater expectations (Covey, 2004).

There are two specific behaviors studied by Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) that align with the aforementioned definition for empowering: (a) transferring ownership to employees, and (b) holding back to let employees find answers rather than providing all the answers. The researchers found in their critical incident data "behaviors that appeared to encourage employees to assume more personal responsibility and accountability for their actions and decisions" (p. 758). These were defined as transferring ownership to employees (rather than taking over learner's responsibilities) and holding them accountable. This includes consciously not providing answers, solutions, or telling learners what to do in certain situations (p. 759).

In his four-step approach to coaching, Salters (1997) appeared to build in the step of carefully analyzing and comparing the current capability and understanding of the learner with appropriate developmental activities into his steps two and three. Step two suggests presenting the learner with new

knowledge and information, while also assessing his or her understanding along the way. In step three, Salters suggested the coach demonstrate the job or skill and observe the learner doing so, while correcting his or her behavior as needed. Only then is step four considered appropriate: putting the employee on his or her own and following up from time to time (p. 27). This matches, on its face, the definition of empowering offered earlier.

Goal setting. The other half of this coaching behavior set is that of goal setting. This is to suggest that finite parameters be documented surrounding the new activity the learner is about to undertake. A common acronym, used to outline a success-bound goal, is S.M.A.R.T. (Brocato, 2003). Goals set by the learner, with the guidance of the coach, should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to the desired growth pattern, and timebound (deadline or date driven). A good coach does not allow the developing employee to aimlessly engage in activities that are not defined by these five elements. Goals are carefully reviewed and rewritten to include these parameters in an attempt to ensure their successful execution.

Advocating. There are two categories of advocating that are discussed here. The first includes the interactions a coach undertakes with the learner to generally encourage, inspire, and motivate him or her to ever greater achievement. Bivens (1996) credits the effective mentor with getting learners to believe “in their innate intelligence and will to succeed [and that such autonomous belief creates] an irresistible pull energy” (p. 4) toward achieving their goals. The second type of advocating is finding and using resources

available to the coach to promote growth opportunities for the learner. These are opportunities to which the learner, without the intervention of the coach, might have little to no access. For example, the coach might talk positively and sincerely with other coaches, managers, and senior leadership about the learner's abilities, desires, and goals to advance, all the while seeking access to new avenues to advance the coachee.

Ellinger et al. (2003) describe advocating as being a resource and removing obstacles. This takes such behaviors into account as "providing resources, information, and material to learners, and removing roadblocks and obstacles they perceive to be in their way" (p. 443). Bernthal and Wellins' (2006) systemic model for improving leadership performance includes a central focus on providing management support and online resources. The author sees this step as a form of leveraging a business' resources in that coaching itself is a form of advocacy that draws a return from the organization's investment in people development. However, it should be noted that Bernthal and Wellins' emphasis is on top-tier leaders and actions they can take to effect positive organizational change, not directed toward front-line supervisors who primarily lead individual contributors.

Follow-up. Pervasive throughout much of the contemporary research included herein (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006; Bivens, 1996; Brocato, 2003; Salters, 1997; Sidler & Lifton, 1999) is the argument that successful coaching discussions and goals are reinforced by timely follow-up. Brocato (2003) advocated the use of a plan of action and commitment timetable that includes start and end dates.

Richard (2003) emphasized the long term in his model for achieving intelligent coaching that can unleash human potential. The long term is also reiterated by Bivens (1996), who suggested that coach and coachee must achieve a common understanding of what the end result really should be. Immediate goals for the coaching sessions are established that ensure progress is being made in the coaching itself, as well as helping both parties know when they have achieved what they set out to accomplish. Sidler and Lifton (1999) labeled the third and final stage of their coaching skills model as the review and follow-up stage. Similarly, Salters' (1997) fifth and final coaching model step is simply stated as follow-up.

Although often neglected, perhaps the most important stage is the review and follow-up. This could include scheduling the employee for related training or taking steps to ensure the development plan is put into motion. Neglect at this stage sends a clear message to employees that performance issues are not taken seriously. Coaches need to monitor results through a review process. During this stage, coaches must ensure that corrective measures were adequate and incentives appropriate. If the results are not what were expected, the planning and coaching stages must be revisited.

Interviews. Despite the potential for subjective bias, there are several advantages in using the interview as a means to give or receive feedback. With the coaching sessions, both structured and unstructured interviews can be utilized to assess whether or not the client is on the path to achieving the desired objective (Robson, 2002). Structured interviews have recently been the

preferred and more unbiased forms of interviews than unstructured interviews. As Robson notes, with the structured interviews, there tends to be greater ability to maintain course along the specific questions posed in searching for a clear answer.

Robson (2002) notes additional benefits and limitations of the general interview method. Interviews may be valuable with recognizing communication or social skills, as these skills are extremely valuable when working with others, when building team cohesion, or when involved in decision-making projects. Interviews are also advantageous in that a coach may be able to learn of a client's specific job-familiarity, further allowing the executive client to expand on answers regarding job skills or knowledge (Robson, 2002). In allowing the executive to develop the answers, a coach may unleash different strengths and weaknesses of the executive client. These advantages found with interviews can prove quite useful when initially attempting to assess a situation that has called for employee coaching. When using interviews throughout the coaching process, further self-exploration and guidance regarding the client's progress towards the desired objective is allowed.

Interviews are also important because a coach can use them to build rapport and to explore the perceptions and beliefs of the employee. Especially when coaching someone in a supervisory position, by asking the same questions of an executive and of employees, a coach may find discrepancies with the responses. By incorporating the active listening and observing skills, a coach may be able to pinpoint pressing issues. When these topics are uncovered,

further methods, tools, and feedback can be ascertained in order to recognize changes necessary to resolve the issue.

The interview's benefits within coaching continue to encourage the method's use, yet the disadvantages persuade companies to add complimentary ways to discover potential problems or evaluate employees' performance. Myriad studies have been conducted to examine the validity and use of the interview methods. These studies suggest that the validities are relatively small and extremely variable across interview situations, especially since many interviewers do not field test for reliability or validity when designing interviews (Murphy, 2003).

Robson (2002) also examines several disadvantages to the use of untested interviews for assessment. Not only are untested interviews subjective and therefore lacking in validity, they can also be prone to biases. Bearing this in mind, coaches may utilize the interview method with their sessions to get a personal sense of how the employee perceives his or her level of performance and improvement. With this information, it is also this author's opinion that coaches need to incorporate several other means for obtaining feedback regarding the sessions' effectiveness and the executive's progress towards the specified goals.

In reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of the interview technique, it appears that the interview is a useful method when coupled with other methods of assessment and feedback. By incorporating the interview method in the employee coaching sessions, a greater rapport may be

established, as well as a sense of the employee's self-perceived level of performance.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed mentoring as a volunteer activity, motivations for mentoring, mentoring definitions, a profile of mentors, and the benefits of structured mentoring programs. The most crucial review of mentoring literature was that resulting in a list of best practices for mentor programs. That list was used to generate a data-gathering tool presented in Chapter 3. Three main concepts were discussed in detail as relating to best practices for mentoring programs: qualifications for mentors, qualifications for mentees, and matching of the pair.

This chapter discussed three general types of leadership theories: trait-based, situational, and supportive leadership. Trait-based theories include gender-based differences in leadership style, which have helped highlight some of the ways women's unique abilities can benefit organizations. Situational leadership theories were presented next, including (a) Bolman and Deal's leadership theory, (b) Kouses and Posner's leadership theory, and (c) Bass's transformational leadership. Supportive leadership theories were then described as ideal for the mentoring relationship. Important activities appropriate for this style of leadership are touched on: questioning, listening and observing, feedback and instruction, empowering, goal setting, advocating, follow-up, and interviews. These three main types of theories all have useful elements. A mentoring program that has as a main goal the fostering of leadership potential

would do well to include in it's training an overview of various leadership styles. The author has included these detailed descriptions of leadership in the expectation that the theories can be drawn into a discussion of the results of the study.

The mentoring and the leadership sections were used to create the following list of best practices for corporate in-house mentoring programs. This list also appears in Appendix A: Matrix for Showing Agreement Among Authors for Best Practices for Corporate In-House Mentoring Programs, although in the following list some of the similar elements are grouped together while in the matrix they are separated for clarity. Items 13 through 18 in this list relate specifically to mentor-mentee matching.

1. Support the program through the management line down from chief executive level (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Schaffer, 2008).
2. Programs should have specific criteria for selection of mentors and mentees (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996).
3. Mentees must be willing and active participants (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Zaleznik, 1990).
4. Mentors must be willing and active participants (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996). The Change Factory also recommends that mentors should not be appointed solely based on position or experience, but should have a desire to mentor.
5. Mentees must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence (Change Factory, 2008). Zaleznik (1977, 1990) agrees that leadership

involves a relationship of influence that includes both the leader's and the follower's efforts.

6. Mentors should have at least an average level of emotional intelligence (Change Factory, 2008). Covey (2004) agrees that a coaching style of leadership relies on a basic understanding of psychology as leaders are attempting to motivate people based on their assumptions of human nature.
7. The mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring (Sweeny, 2003). Amount of time to be spent in mentoring should be clarified (Coley, 1996).
8. Create a robust mentoring agreement that clarifies frequency of mentoring communications (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996). Long (2004) agrees that coaching activity should be conducted on a regular basis.
9. A needs assessment should be made by the mentor (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996). Salters (1997) suggests that the leader should analyze and compare the current capability and understanding of the learner.
10. Establish outcome goals for the mentoring arrangement and milestones review (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Zaleznik, 1990).
11. Create a robust mentoring agreement that clarifies (a) behaviors that the mentee will abide by and (b) behaviors the mentor will abide by (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996). Long (2004) and Schaffer (2008) agree that coaching activity should be process-driven.

12. The duration of the mentoring agreement should be established (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996).
13. Mentoring agreement should include periodic review of milestones, goals, and progress (Bivens, 1996; Brocato, 2003; Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Sidler & Lifton, 1999).
14. Mentors should not approach their mentoring with a directive leadership style. Rather, they should make listening and observing an integral part of their leadership (Brocato, 2003; Coley, 1996; Ellinger et al., 2003; LaMantia & Buzzotta; 2008).
15. Mentors should receive training on successful mentoring (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996).
16. The pair should have an avenue for seeking help if difficulties arise and one or both individuals does not feel comfortable directly addressing an important concern with the other (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Mentor, 2009a, 2009b; Schaffer, 2008).
17. Match mentee's experience and goals for the mentoring experience with that of a mentor. A mentor should have a set of experiences that are relevant to the mentee's goals (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996). Zaleznik (1977, 1990) agrees that such a relationship should promote changes that reflect the mutual purpose of both the leader and the follower.

18. Mentors should have some strengths that address the apparent needs and potentials of the mentee as identified by a supervisor (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Sweeny, 2003).
19. The mentor should be of a more advanced certification or rank than the mentee (Sweeny, 2003).
20. Allow mentors and mentees to state their personal preferences with regard to a match, and these requests should be honored when possible (Change Factory, 2008; Coley, 1996; Mentor, 2009a, 2009b).
21. The mentor should be at the mentee's work site. If necessary for specific technical training purposes, it could be beneficial to have two mentors: (a) one at a different worksite but who has the same assignment to provide specific expertise and (b) one that is located at the mentee's work site (Change Factory, 2008; Sweeny, 2003). Coley (1996) makes a similar recommendation that a mentee may request one mentor who serves as a coach in technical matters and another who serves as a coach in managerial or other issues.

Description of A-Corp's In-House Mentoring Program

Beginning in 2003, the A-Corp mentoring program has spread to each of A-Corp's main U.S. sites (Sanders, 2004). Hundreds of employees have entered the program as mentors or mentees, from within engineering and other disciplines.

Program purpose and benefit. Those who are active in mentoring said it benefits all parties. By joining in a learning relationship with a fellow employee,

they not only pass on knowledge, skills and experiences to that person, but they also improve the knowledge sharing and retention process at A-Corp. Training the work force, motivating employees, providing steps for career development, and keeping the corporate knowledge are all benefits of the program (Sanders, 2004).

Training. A-Corp provides a training course for mentors so that their time and efforts will have the most impact, rather than simply assuming that employees will figure out the basics on their own. The mentor training program gives mentors proven tools to use. Mentors learn during eight 3-hour sessions monthly or 17 hour-long sessions twice a month. The instructors are employees who are program graduates and have applied the training in a mentoring relationship. Many of the training material are delivered online (Sanders, 2004).

Program improvement. The present study is only one endeavor in an extensive effort to continually improve the program. At the A-Corp site for this study, the mentoring program was originally designed and begun on a smaller scale in fall of 2005. Since then the program has been extensively updated based upon feedback from participants and research performed by a Best Practice Team. A number of surveys have been utilized to gather feedback on program performance and processes. The Best Practice Team continues to meet bi-weekly, and necessary improvements are made as required to enhance or improve the program based on feedback from users and program leaders. The program has undergone many changes over the years. Process changes have included tool enhancement and the development of additional training (J. L.

Florit, personal communication, May 12, 2009). There is strong administrative support and funding (Sanders, 2004), which is a crucial component for continued improvement.

The author's personal experience as a mentee in the structured mentoring program at A-Corp is what prompted his interest in this topic, leading to this dissertation research. Although the author acknowledges the benefit received from his many advisors, those whose advice was sought out on an as-needed basis was more timely and valuable than that given by the assigned mentor. In addition, the requirements of the structured mentoring program were at times a hindrance to effectively carrying out work responsibilities because of the extra burden they imposed on an already full workload.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. The chapter begins with a presentation of the research design, followed by sections on participants, data collection procedures, data collection instrument, and data analysis.

Research Design

The present study can be classified as a program evaluation based on qualitative interview research. These components of the research design are explained individually in the following sections.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluations can be very helpful to (a) increase understanding of whether a program is providing what is needed or is lacking, (b) make or give input into ways to increase effectiveness, and (c) verify if a program is meeting the program goals. The more focused a program evaluator is about what he or she wants to examine, the more efficient the evaluation (McNamara, 2008). McNamara expounds on these three major types of program evaluations:

1. The first is goals-based evaluation. The goals-based evaluations are evaluating a predetermined program goal or objectives. The present study relates to this type of evaluation as it considers the mentoring program's goal of developing leadership potentials of mentees.

2. The second is process-based evaluation. The process-based evaluations are geared to fully understand how a program works. This study does not fit this type of evaluation.
3. The third is outcomes based evaluation. The outcome-based evaluations help to facilitate asking if the organization is really doing the right program activities to bring about the outcomes it believed are needed. This type of evaluation offers the best description of the present study.

McNamara (2008) also states that there are four types of evaluation information that can be gathered from clients, as follows:

1. Reactions and feelings (feelings are often poor indicators of lasting impact)
2. Learning (enhanced attitudes, perceptions, or knowledge)
3. Change in skills (applied the learning to enhance behaviors)
4. Effectiveness (improved performance because of enhanced behaviors)

The interviews described in this chapter used open-ended questions, thus the responses were expected to result in descriptions that would fall into each of these areas. During the analysis, however, the researcher allowed the findings to guide the formulation of categories (a grounded-theory approach) rather than using pre-determined categories.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentees?

2. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentors?
3. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the company?
4. How does the structured leadership mentoring program compare with best practices for mentoring, as noted in the literature?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the structured leadership mentoring program?

Qualitative Methods

The self-defined purpose of grounded theory is to develop theory about phenomena of interest. Instead the theory needs to be grounded or rooted in observation, hence the term. In the present study, the topic of interest is the A-Corp mentoring program and the theory the researcher seeks to develop is a theory about what improvements would be critical to the present mentoring program (Trochim, 2006).

As the researcher begins to gather and analyze the data, core theoretical concepts are identified and ideas are developed about links between the theoretical core concepts and the data. Later on the researcher engages in verification and summary (Trochim, 2006). The coding process described in the analysis section for research question 2 relates to this theoretical framework.

Data Sources

Data sources for this study included telephone interviews, documents, and information obtained informally as a participant observer. Each of these data sources is described in detail below.

Telephone interviews. This study relied on self-report data for answering research question 1. Although self-report data is subject to bias, it also had the advantage that the participants themselves are the best source of information for the mentoring program outcomes in terms of the multiple areas of learning and development that may result from the mentoring relationship. The researcher considered a telephone interview the most appropriate for the following reasons:

1. One researcher has found that telephone interviews have a great propensity to elicit honest responses to even the most sensitive questions. In addition, a phone interview affords more flexibility to the respondents who are not obligated to take the time to meet physically.
2. An interview elicits more in-depth responses than a written survey because (a) a detailed verbal response is often easier to make than a written response and (b) the person-to-person element makes participants feel more responsible to offer accurate and valuable responses.
3. A survey would likely miss key points because surveys do not allow respondents to speak freely about many related topics as an open-ended interview does. In addition, speaking rather writing the responses is expected to elicit more in-depth answers because of the greater length of time written responses require.

The main data source was the telephone interviews. The data record for this source consisted of the researcher's written notes on participants' verbal responses to the following questions:

1. How has the structured mentoring program and the resulting mentoring relationship benefitted you? (To prompt further discussion, the researcher could ask specifically how the program has benefitted respondents professionally, personally, or otherwise.)
2. How could the mentoring program be improved?
3. Do you believe you and your mentor/mentee is a good match for you? (To prompt further discussion, the researcher asked "why or why not?")
4. Do you believe your leadership abilities have been improved as a result of the mentoring program? (To prompt further discussion, the researcher asked "why or why not?")

Documents. Documents used as a data source included the following:

1. The mentoring manual and other training materials made available to the researcher
2. The intranet description of the program
3. Published articles of best practices contained in the literature review.

The author compared the first two document types to a list of best practices that was created based on literature presented in Chapter 2. See Appendix A: Matrix for Showing Agreement Among Authors for Best Practices for Corporate In-House Mentoring Programs.

Observations. The researcher has experience in the mentorship program as a mentee and has an intimate understanding of the culture of the organization as a departmental manager within the organization. As a participant observer, the researcher has made observations as well as having had discussions with human resources personnel and mentor trainers, which are described by Patton (2003) as important observations. These observations were not analyzed, but helped inform the analysis of the other data sources. Although the researcher, as a past mentee, may have biases that could influence the analysis and interpretation of results, the experience gained from participation in the program also brings an in-depth understanding of the program and the culture of this A-Corp site that should result in more beneficial recommendations related to the program.

Population

Two groups of participants were invited to participate in the interviews; mentors formed one group and mentees formed the other, although there was some overlap, as two participants had been both mentors and mentees in the program. All participants met the following criteria: (a) current employees of A-Corps, (b) current or past participants in the structured mentoring program, and (c) currently in an executive-level management position. The mentors were in positions senior to that of the mentees. The mentees in the program were employees that were placed on a *people to watch* list due to their further leadership potential. Further, all of the participants were assumed to be over 21

years of age. Most likely the participants were over 25 years of age due to the hiring requirement of having a 4-year degree for leadership program participants.

Sampling

This researcher obtained a list of the participants who completed A-Corps structured mentoring program and their contact information, both mentors and mentees. The researcher contacted five willing participants on each list using a random number generator to request their participation. The researcher had planned that if a participant's name were recognized as someone he knows well or has worked with closely, he would discard that name in order to avoid introducing a source of possible bias to the study. As some participants became unavailable for the telephone interview, the researcher used the random number generator to select as many new participants as needed to ensure that there were five participants in the mentor group and five participants in the mentee group.

Data Collection Procedures

This section describes the procedures for collecting data from the telephone interviews and the document sources. The additional data source described previously, the researcher's observations, were not formally recorded and thus are not included in the list of data collection procedures.

Data collection from documents. Data were collected from documents in the following steps:

1. The researcher contacted the mentoring program administrator to gain access to the training materials used for training mentors.
2. The author reviewed the training materials and noted indications of best practices using Appendix C: Data-Gathering Matrix for Documents.
3. The researcher sought clarification about the documents from the mentoring program administrator as needed.

Protocol for interviews. The following list describes the steps the researcher took, in this order, to prepare for and conduct the interviews.

1. Permission was obtained by the appropriate authorities at the aerospace corporation in order to proceed with confidence to present the research proposal before any information that would qualify as research data had been gathered about the organization, aside from informal participant observer information.
2. Potential participants were contacted by phone as described in the Sampling section (see Appendix B: Phone and Email Scripts).
3. Those who agreed to participate were sent an informed consent form with a request to return it to the researcher's office through inter-office mail.
4. After the signed informed consent form was received, the researcher phoned to set up an interview time that would be convenient for the participant.
5. At the appointed time, the researcher greeted and thanked the participant and formally began the interview by reminding the participant of his or her

rights as a research participant that are stated in the informed consent letter.

6. The interviewer asked each interview question consecutively and prompted the participant for further explanation and clarification as necessary.
7. The researcher took notes during the conversation.
8. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. When each of the questions was answered, the researcher asked if the participant would like to make further statements before ending the interview.
9. Participants were reminded that the researcher would email the write-up of the interview notes to ensure that the participant's views were represented accurately.

Data Analysis

Coding of interviews. For research question 1, the researcher followed the analysis methods described by Trochim (2006). Coding is a process for both categorizing qualitative data and for describing the implications and details of these categories. The first step is open coding, considering the data in detail while developing some initial categories. In this case, the core categories might include mentor qualifications, mentee qualifications, and mentor-mentee matching. The second step is that categories that are redundant are then collapsed into one. The third step is more selective coding where the researcher goes back over the data to systematically code with respect to each core category.

A second coder, also a graduate student trained in qualitative research methods, coded the data in the same manner. This coder is also an employee at A-Corp, which has the benefit of allowing inside understanding of the organization described by participants. The names and identifying information from the interview transcripts were removed prior to sending the transcripts to the second coder.

Coding of A-Corp documents and literature comparison. The researcher read the described data sources documents to find information related to each of the best practices used by the aerospace company. The researcher read and re-read the documents with the questions in mind and recorded the results in the appropriate columns in Appendix C: Data-Gathering Matrix for Documents. The researcher and the second coder created a list of (a) strengths and (b) gaps or weaknesses of the program. This formed the basis for the recommendations for practice that were developed in Chapter 5.

Reliability

When analyzing the data and creating meaning from qualitative research, it is important to ensure reliability. This study used the follow reliability procedures recommended by Creswell (2007):

1. Make sure there is not a drift or change in the definition of codes over the time span of the coding process. In the present study, the researcher was attentive to consistency of codes. A helpful aspect was that the data was

gathered and analyzed in a relatively short timeframe, allowing the researcher to keep the codes and categories available to memory.

2. Cross-check codes developed by different researchers by comparing results that are independently derived. In the present study, use of a second coder helped establish reliability.
3. *Member checking* is the term for allowing participants to review the final account of the results so that any discrepancies between their views and the researcher's interpretations can be resolved. In this study, participants were sent their transcripts and invited to comment on or change their responses. None, however, did so, likely because of the busy nature of their work schedules as well as their confidence that the results would be interpreted and handled appropriately by the researcher who was employed in the same organization.

The mentor and mentee responses were analyzed together, rather than being analyzed separately for comparison purposes as was originally planned, because many of the participants were both mentors and mentees in the program.

Validity

According to Merriam (1998), a researcher can use six strategies to enhance internal validity. These six strategies are: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (f) research biases. In the present study, triangulation consisted of using three different data sources: semi-structured interviews, documents created by the structured leadership mentoring program,

and observations by the researcher (in addition to observations offered by the second coder who was also employed at A-Corp). Long-term observation was also a part of the study, due to the participant observer's and second coder's long-term employment in the organization and participation in the mentoring program over several years. Peer examination was a part of the study, due to the contributions of the second coder who was also employed at A-Corp). The researcher was careful to accurately express the views of the participants and to include equally in the analysis statements of a positive and negative nature.

Human Subjects Considerations

The study has safeguards in place to ensure the human subjects rights and privacy were protected. The participants were selected from a list of participants provided by mentoring program. As described previously, participants were selected by a random number generator until five mentor participants had agreed to participate and five mentee participants had agreed to participate. However, when the researcher recognized a participant's name as someone he knows well or has worked with closely, he discarded that name in order to avoid introducing a source of possible bias to the study and a possible source of discomfort to the participant.

This researcher ensured that the interview members were aware of their right not to participate, both in the Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix D) and as part of the interview protocol described previously (see Appendix B: Phone and Email Scripts). Participants were allowed, but not required, to review the results section of the study before its publication and were invited to make

suggestions for revision if they wish to clarify or correct a statement of theirs. This is stated in the informed consent form. In addition, a reminder of this member-checking feature is included in the interview protocol. The researcher secured a signed consent form from each interviewee. (See Appendix D: Informed Consent Letter.)

The researcher also secured the signed consent of the appropriate management level for the division of which the participants and the researcher are a part. (See Appendix E: Supervisor Permission to Participate in Research.)

The signed informed consent letters and the researcher's written notes about responses were accessible only to the researcher and the dissertation committee. The interviews were not audio taped or transcribed; instead, the researcher took notes during the interviews.

The informed consent letters and the researcher's written notes about responses will be kept in a secure location at the researcher's residence (in a safe) for 3 years from the end of the data collection period. After this time, paper records will be shredded and electronic records erased.

Chapter Summary

The present study can be classified as a program evaluation based on qualitative interview research and as grounded theory. The research questions ask in what ways has the program benefitted the mentees, the mentors, and the company. Also, the research questions ask how the structured leadership mentoring program compares with best practices for mentoring, as noted in the literature. Lastly, the research questions ask about the strengths and

weaknesses of the program. Table 1 shows the relationship between the research questions, the data sources, and the analysis methods.

Table 1

Relationship Between Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analysis Methods

Research Question	Data Source	Analysis Method
1. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentees?	Interviews of mentors and mentees	Coding and thematic analysis
2. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentors?	Interviews of mentors and mentees	Coding and thematic analysis
3. According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the company?	Interviews of mentors and mentees	Coding and thematic analysis
4. How does the structured leadership mentoring program compare with best practices for mentoring, as noted in the literature?	1. Program training manual and program descriptions on website 2. Mentoring literature in academic sources	Direct comparison of best practices list with actual practices; results tally
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the structured leadership mentoring program?	Interviews of mentors and mentees	Coding and thematic analysis of interviews; results tally for best practices

Three data sources were used to answer the research questions: (a) semi-structured telephone interviews, (b) documents describing the program (as compared to current academic literature on corporate mentoring programs), and (c) the researcher's observations as a participant observer. Documents used as a data source included the training manual and intranet descriptions of the program.

Participants included both mentees and mentors. Sampling was facilitated by lists obtained from the mentoring program managers.

Data analysis included (a) coding of interviews by the researcher and a second qualified coder and (b) coding of A-Corp Documents and comparison with the literature. Reliability and human subjects concerns were addressed appropriately during all phases of the data gathering and analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter begins with a brief description of the participants who were interviewed about the mentoring program. It presents the data in the form of quotes.

General Description of Participants

Participants in this study were not asked for demographic information such as age and length of time employed by A-Corp. However, by their membership in the mentoring program designed to foster leadership preparation, either as a mentee or mentor, it is assumed that each had been with the company for 5 years at the very least. Two of the participants were female, both of which were mentees in the formal mentorship program, but also mentored others informally.

Profile of Participants' Related to Mentorship Status

Five participants (P1 through P4) were mentees in the formal mentoring program, but not mentors. Two participants (P5 and P6) were both mentees and mentors in the formal mentoring program. Four participants (P7 through P10) were mentors in the formal mentoring program, but not mentees.

Participant 1 (P1). P1 is currently a mentee with his fourth mentor in the structured executive mentoring program. He has also acted as a mentor in the structured program in the past, though he is not currently mentoring.

Participant 2 (P2). P2 is currently a mentee in the structured executive mentoring program. He has not yet served as a mentor in the same program.

Participant 3 (P3). P3 states, **"**My mentor was someone I already I knew as a mentor, who officially selected me through that program. . . . I would say informally I mentor some employees, not formally, not meeting once a month."

Participant 4 (P4). P4 is currently a mentee in the structured executive mentoring program. The mentor was an executive that he did not know and was based in another country. They both had to take a training course on the process, but did not follow the structured program.

Participant 5 (P5). P5 stated, "I have been a mentor and I'm also part of the executive mentoring program as a mentee. Informally I mentor quite a few people."

Participant 6 (P6). P6 participated in the formal mentoring program as a mentee and mentor. He has not yet served as a mentor in the same program.

Participant 7 (P7). P7 stated, "About 1997 was the last time I would include myself in the structured mentoring program. . . . It has been informal since then." In addition, "I've mentored some folks within the department. They don't work directly for me but in surrounding functions, and one from a student engineer working part time, an intern."

Participant 8 (P8). He mentored one person in the structured mentoring program. He is currently acting as an informal mentor to "a lot of other people."

Participant 9 (P9). He is currently a mentor for two employees in the structured mentoring program. He also mentors several people informally. He doesn't have a mentor himself, but "several people I talk to as I need them. I've had mentors in the past but outgrew those relationships."

Participant 10 (P10). P10 participated in the structured executive mentoring program as a mentor, but not as a mentee. He stated, "It was non-structured 20+ years ago when I had been mentored by someone else. . . . I don't have a formal mentor. I just talk to various managers, people I respect."

Research Question 1: Findings for Benefits to Mentees

Participants mentioned many benefits, one of the foremost being advancement opportunities. In addition, important themes were familiarity with the organization's structure and processes, familiarity with the organization's culture, and networking, all of which are important for advancement opportunities. Quotes for each of these themes were presented in the subsections below.

Advancement within A-Corp. Because the formal mentorship program was set up to foster career advancement opportunities in high-potential employees, this aspect is an important focus. Participants clearly perceived the benefits that mentoring offered for advancement. Eight out of 10 reported that their mentor had afforded them advancement opportunities.

- It gave me a thorough understanding of . . . how to take advantage of advancement opportunities" which was "the reason I came to A-Corp. . . . He put me through *skill set leveling*. In this process we filled out oodles of paperwork to give true understanding of my level of experience in relation to A-Corp, which was part of the mentoring process. I had come in at a lower salary, but after the skill set leveling, my earning came

up to the A-Corp expectation. I felt I was advancing and learned how to advance further. He got me into the high-potential leadership program. I still belong to it indirectly. . . . We met at least monthly . . . to talk about career advancement. I can't say exactly how it helped. Starting in year 2000 I considered jobs in management, advancements came quickly and I attribute that to mentoring program. My mentor wasn't interested in me just as a skill to plug into the company, but in my passion for work. He initiated what he called a *service adjustment*. It was his idea; I just kind of followed along. He gave me recommendations on different training for technical skills and leadership. It set my tempo into A-Corp. I'd moved, after mergers and acquisitions by the company, and my mentor was [two states away]. My second mentor led me toward management. He recommended courses related to new managers. Once in management, I had three promotions in 5 years. . . . I've had career advancement and promotions when I didn't expect them, and they all seemed to fit well at the time. (P1)

- You realize the benefit only years later when you see that you've been set up for promotion. I got lucky. If you have passion for your job and you take that passion into the mentorship program and engage in the mentorship. Good networking, communication skills: it pays off big time. (P1)

- A lot of it is the way you deal with people, how people perceive you. If I'd had a mentor, my career would have progressed so much further. . . . "I'm going to the next position what should I do next, these are my concerns." When will I get promoted, the kind of boss I want. If you don't have someone in a senior level, you just don't know. It's always about career goals and they push you to achieve more than you thought you could. (P3)
- Techniques I pretty much always use with mentees is structuring our sessions around the performance management schedule and timeline. We're coming up to interim reviews, document their suggestions for their [progress] goals for the following year, assignments that they have during the year. Understanding, capturing this assignment, and writing the results and actions sets them up to have the stories for their next interview. I keep them on track as far as their professional career, to drive it, to steer it. (P5)
- It benefited me greatly; my career has grown from starting as a clerk and now I'm a senior manager. The structured mentoring program was important and critical in my advancement. (P6)
- The best job I ever got in my life was through the mentoring program. I would never have been recognized for that job. (P7)
- It's been 2 or 3 years and he's progressed up the chain nicely. . . . One I helped move up in the technical ranks. . . . It helps me look at what's

lacking in a department and helps me think about how to help others get into a higher position. (P7)

- I advised him on personal strengths and weaknesses, discussed aspirations, used his current position to get where he wants to go. (P8)
- The formal ones in the [leadership development] program, ask, “Can you help me with presentations? What is leadership expecting? Help me so this goes well.” That’s more specific, the help they get. (P9)
- In the early days, there was either a path of technical or management. The manager I worked for was really good . . . this really benefitted me. I took me 10 years to be a manager and I did utilize those skills. Today I continue to talk to other managers to improve those skills. . . . I get feedback in how to improve, to further my career. (P10)

Familiarity with the organization’s structure and processes. Six out of 10 of the respondents mentioned mentoring benefits in this area.

- [Approximately 40 years ago] I came in from another aerospace company as a level 5 engineer. I was assigned a mentor immediately. I was not familiar with the culture and processes. It gave me a thorough understanding of the company. . . . and tours around different facilities. . . . They’ve focused on the right things; I didn’t know it at the time. (P1)
- The older you get and the farther up, there seems to be less perceived need for mentoring. Everyone’s career path is a little different; you need someone with the big picture to guide you. People out there at different

skill levels and with different skill sets need a different point of view sometimes. (P1)

- I've also had a lot of exposure to other programs. I've benefitted by knowledge and . . . working inside other programs temporarily for special assignments. (P2)
- . . . . I think just having the insight into some of the challenges of the executive leader has helped: decisions having far-reaching effects, organizational structures, why things change and how. (P2)
- My mentor was outside the U.S. I benefitted by getting a better understanding of the international A-Corp. (P3)
- I see the benefit in understanding the breath of knowledge in understanding and knowing the other parts of A-Corp. (P4)
- As I mentor younger folks, I would say that it is for the most part, it's a welcome insight to discuss . . . some techniques . . . cross-functional, cross-site, and cross-organization aspects. It's appreciated. (P5)
- He didn't think he was worthy of the position. One thing I got out of it was when he could see how valuable he was. When he wrote an extensive resume, he was so proud of his accomplishments. I had to explain if he didn't get through the program, it was the process [that was important]. When he got done, he wasn't boastful but was able to articulate what he could do for the company. (P7)
- With constant changes every few years, it does benefit you greatly to have the right mentor. (P10)

Familiarity with the organization's culture. Four out of 10 of the respondents mentioned mentoring benefits in gaining understanding of the organization's culture and internal politics.

- Every encounter has been open and candid and unrestrained in terms of information sharing. I've been in some pretty interesting meetings, pretty eye-opening. I think just having the insight into some of the challenges of the executive leader has helped: decisions having far-reaching effects . . . why things change and how, and how to deal with people at high levels who have very different perspectives. (P2)
- As I mentor younger folks, I would say that it is for the most part, it's a welcome insight to discuss the "ropes" . . . the cultural and political savvy. (P5)
- He would do anything, a hard worker, but some of the tasks weren't being done. He wasn't meeting with people I asked him too. There's a political side too. . . . I told him to have a meeting with someone and understand where they were, some pre-work with the other manager, so he ended up in the final interview. He didn't make it through the candidate process. He learned what happens when you don't push on something politically when you should have. Culturally he was very shy. (P7)
- As you move up things get a little more political. Some things need to be explained if they don't get it. I've had those discussions to tell them "this is how it is," understanding the dynamics of the group you're working with.

Definitely I've had the opportunity to lay it out to individuals, "whether we like it or not, this is the way the world works." (P8)

Familiarity with people in key positions. The relationship with a mentor and those affiliated with the mentor was a valuable networking opportunity mentioned by some respondents.

- It gave me a network of leaders to rely on. (P1)
- Certainly from the standpoint of exposure, I have an executive mentor . . . that has given me guidance and insight into executive leadership. I've benefitted by knowledge and personal relationships as well as by working inside other programs temporarily for special assignments. . . . it's rewarding to know that my mentor holds a fairly senior position, so the people I've been able to meet have been very senior level. It has been rewarding that he has taken time to facilitate my access to these people. (P2)
- I've had various mentors. . . . Open doors, introductions that led to other mentoring relationships. . . . You don't have that access without a mentor. (P3)
- Open doors, introductions that led to other mentoring relationships. . . . You don't have that access without a mentor. (P3)
- . . . networking, visibility. (P5)
- It provided opportunities to meet with other executives who shared knowledge and provided leadership. (P6)

Broader perspective. Imparting a broader perspective was an important goal for some mentors and was recognized as a benefit by mentees.

- Mentors have forced me to look at the bigger picture when I'm looking at the smaller picture. That's what I try to do to those I mentor as well to expand their overall view. . . . Evaluating pros and cons for jobs I was considering, to be open minded about various career paths. (P3)
- The mentees only know this little world, to help them understand, to open up the aperture to broader roles and resources seems to help a lot. There's more out there. I was afforded that. It seems to be appreciated a lot. (P5)
- I like to tell people what they need to do but also give them background, why they're doing it. I had mentors and managers who would just tell us what to do, but not the importance or meaning of the assignment. I give all the background and who do you need to talk to [and explain] what integral part do they play in the whole program. (P10)
- Lot of different books I've read. . . . I have a habit when I'm reading a book or article and something that catches my attention, I throw them at my mentees, to help them think outside their normal work, to see how they can apply it. (P9)

Problem solving. Problem-solving about topics brought up by the mentee was an important task for the mentoring relationship, and was recognized as beneficial by the mentees.

- Everybody's different. Some want to use the time to vent. Sometimes this is the only outlet they get to do that, so it helps them. One of the techniques, part of it is just listening, to reflect back to them, "This is what I hear. . . . What's your solution? When you're out in the work arena, how do you come across as not complaining but having a solution, some ideas when you go out there to meetings." I help them see some of the opportunities. (P5)
- It is beneficial to have that sounding board and some camaraderie. It's reassuring that even at the executive level, he has some of the same trials and tribulations. He's real down to earth and we can have conversations, such as about work-home balance. He said, 'I was hoping you could mentor me on that.' It allowed me to give my solutions. . . . It helped me personally, just that affirmation—-I have to admit, sometimes we get so stressed and frustrated—-to get a good perspective again about this thing we call our professional careers. (P5)
- My techniques with females are slightly different. Understanding the particular challenges of work-life-home balance is more of a topic I spend time on. (P5)
- It helped me deal with conflicts better. (P6)
- I advised him on personal strengths and weaknesses. (P8)
- . . . gave feedback on his ideas. (P8)
- On my whiteboard I have a set of questions I ask. "Why do you want a mentor? What do you want to work on? (P9)

Research Question 2: Findings for Benefits to Mentors

Participants unanimously agreed that mentoring offered clear benefits to the mentor. The benefits to mentors are divided into several main categories: (a) personal relationships and satisfaction of helping, (b) improved communication skills, (c) improved leadership skills, and (d) learning from the mentee. Each of these are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Personal relationships and satisfaction of helping. These benefits included lasting personal relationships and the satisfaction of helping others.

- The relationship bonds never go away. I'm still in contact with my first mentor though he's retired; it's more on a personal level now. (P1)
- Helping someone through their career, you feel good about the relationship and seeing someone succeed. . . a feeling of accomplishment and the relationship. (P7)
- It's rewarding to see people take on new challenges and succeed; it's personally gratifying that way. (P8)

Improved communication skills. Some mentioned how mentoring had helped hone communication skills on the job and off the job.

- Outside the company, how you live your life basically in your community, the communication skills, interpretation skills, those you use on the outside. (P10)
- You can see the struggles they have; you go back and apply that to your team. When the mentor says, "I never see my manager," [I think] well,

maybe I need to go up to my team and start briefing them. Or maybe he comes up with an issue; maybe my group could learn in that area. (P10)

- It helps me hone my listening skills. Typical me, I listen with half an ear and want to jump to the solution, instead of listening for the underlying things, what's really going on. (P5)

Improved leadership skills. Others mentioned how mentoring had helped hone leadership and managerial skills.

- It helps me look at what's lacking in a department and helps me think about how to help others get into a higher position. Helping anybody progress, part of leadership is setting a direction, if they follow. It's a great way to improve leadership abilities. (P7)
- I've honed my skill as a teacher. . . . It made me more sensitive to improving others' skills. . . . In particular it has given me insight, rather than being authoritative I steer and lead. Instead of directing, I give feedback. It's helped me know how the guy on the other side feels. (P8)
- Just by a touch point to remind me of the concerns and issues that I felt when first in the company trying to make my way. When I have my staff meetings it helps me remember their perspective. (P9)

Learning from the mentee. The term *reverse mentoring* describes a situation in which younger employees provide guidance to their mentors or to those in levels senior to themselves. Sometimes the younger employees' more recent training provides updates to those who are experienced in their fields but

have not kept current on advancements in their field. One respondent noted that mentees can help in problem solving.

- Never discount what you've learned as a mentor. There are amazingly smart people if you listen. (P1)
- Mentee relationships can in time prove to be advantageous for the mentor's work success, first as the mentees progress in their own careers, and second in showing them a need for utilizing a mentor of their own.
- As your mentees work their way up in their career, they become peers and allies when you need the help. (P7)
- You know, you learn more when you become a teacher. The advice given, you're looking back at a mirror of yourself. The self reflection. . . . The mentoring process helped me understand what I should be doing in my career; it was a mirror back to me. (P7)
- It's helped me when I look for mentoring. I too use a mentor in my career. (P8)

Research Question 3: Findings for Benefits to the Company

Benefits to the company are divided into two main categories: (a) increased loyalty and (b) improved sense of teamwork.

Increased loyalty. An important benefit of mentoring was fostering loyalty and longevity within A-Corp.

- I've had nothing but positive experiences over the last 15 years. . . . I also gained personal satisfaction. The mentoring helped build a loyalty

factor that's with me today. I've had other opportunities, but after a while you feel you're part and parcel of the company. (P1)

- I would say for me it has promoted loyalty, the quality of the relationship. If those at high level are willing to genuinely invest in you, that's definitely for me promoting of loyalty. . . . A lot of people leave who have potential and they don't know who to talk to. . . . I think the fact that mentoring is a way of retention. (P3)
- The reason is they see that if managers, executives, are willing to take the time to steer their career, absolutely they would stay. I'm sure it's helped this individual. I helped him get a job that he might not have otherwise gotten, and if he hadn't I believe he would have looked at options in other companies. (P8)
- That's one of my key goals, especially if they feel like they're not highly utilized where they're at, that they don't feel they have to look outside the company to find that. (P9)

P7 simply spoke of the need for a sense of loyalty:

> [Late president of company] talked about what's in it for the company. The company does not owe an employee anything. It's up to the employee to find value to the company. That's a hard perspective for some. The relationship can end when the value to the company ends. It has to be a two-way relationship, the way I look at it. They need to feel like they're winning. The company gets a return. (P7)

One agreed that being mentored fostered longevity by helping mentees overcome difficulties and see a different perspective.

> His boss gave him the worst raise he's ever gotten. I knew this guy. He's an amazing person. He was thinking about leaving the company. Part of it was his cultural background. By not being compensated he felt insulted. Just getting into the [training] program [as recommended by mentor] he was recognized by his peers and had a different feeling toward the company. Now he's recognized as someone valuable. (P7)

P1 discussed loyalty to the company as an area in which the company is challenged. He noted that feeling challenged, promotion, and pay increase are factors in retaining talented new workers. P10 agreed that newer workers should be mentored, not only the level 3 (managerial) and above.

- Especially for young folks coming out of college, mentoring is a place to get started. They may see it as a short-term career; they need some help along the way. The younger employees coming in are much less concerned with longevity. They're all excited if you look at the products and resources and locales all over the world. That's attractive. Yet if you can't engage them at the right level, you start to lose them because they're not feeling challenged. They tell you they don't earn enough money and don't get promoted fast enough. My area of expertise is space business, different than airplanes. In my experience, they all want to contribute with big projects, go to the moon, but if they can't they don't feel they're moving fast enough. You can tell them the statistics, but they're

ready to move on. [Private company X] wants new ideas, to create something new. It gives them all the tools. Once they've got basic skill sets refined by A-Corp, if A-Corp doesn't step up and give them the freedom to do that, they leave. It's not the money. At [private company X] they work 80-hour weeks. They are attracted by authority and the freedom to make projects happen. I've lost a couple of guys to them. It's no longer about the money, and A-Corp knows that. There's no secret there. Smaller companies are more agile and can offer freedom and responsibility more quickly. They work 5 years at A-Corp, then the stats say there's an engineering drain at that point. To retain them takes a manager who will give them the challenges needed, and the company needs to have right attitude about projects. They're not interested in company-funded retirement but in pay increase. (P1)

- With work culture, it's so important to catch the level 1 and 2 [personnel]. They have no idea what's going on. Steer them away from all the stories [such as] "don't trust this guy." They form an opinion, an "us and them" type of situation. Mentoring can help in raising them on the facts, in a different direction. Obviously there are politics in the organization, but you've got to look past that, what to expect making a career out of Boeing. They're like sponges, absorb anything, bad or good. Show them opportunities they miss out on because they don't know what's available to them. (P10)

Another discussed a greater sense of trust as a team, stating, “You look at employee surveys; you get a sense of trust as a team. The results of the surveys show that“ (P10).

Improved sense of teamwork. Some mentioned that acting as a mentor improved their work team’s sense of unity and collaboration.

- I know there’s a greater trust toward me and my guidance. Some folks like to pull up a ladder to climb themselves, but if you help then everyone’s successful together. (P7)
- You can see the struggles they have; you go back and apply that to your team. When the mentor says, “I never see my manager,” [I think] well, maybe I need to go up to my team and start briefing them. Or maybe he comes up with an issue; maybe my group could learn in that area. (P10)

Research Question 4: Findings for the Structured Leadership Mentoring Program Compared With Best Practices

This section includes (a) a description of initiating the mentoring relationships, (b) a listing of mentoring techniques and processes used, including communication modes used, and (c) a table summarizing how the structured leadership mentoring program compared with best practices. Each of these topics are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Initiating the mentoring relationship. Various processes were used to initiate the mentoring relationship. This topic was not asked about directly, so some respondents mentioned it, while others did not. P2 stated, “We both

attended the formal training at the beginning. We both decided at the same time that we would use those parts that benefitted us and the general guidance." P4 received an email from human resources in January of this year stating that he was being entered into the executive mentoring program and was assigned a mentor. He stated that he and his mentor both had to take a training course on the process, but did not follow the structured program afterward. He stated, "We reviewed each others biographical information, history, and 360 degree feedback on work experience. This gave us insight on each others' background. We also decided to read a book *Know How* by Ram Charan" (P4).

Mentoring techniques and processes used. Mentoring techniques and processes included relationship building, tours around different facilities (P1), observation of the mentor in action, encouraging additional training (P7), and setting up discussion topics in advance (P5 & P6).

Communication modes and frequency. Respondents mentioned many types of communication between mentors and mentees, including email, phone, and in person. P1, P4, P6, and P9 mentioned talking at least monthly.

Relationship building**.** Relationship-building was an important aspect of the mentoring agenda.

- Every relationship is different. One we've become really good friends and more open and willing to trust. You feel comfortable that everything is between you. Developing that kind of relationship. (P3)
- Listening on both sides . . . a trusting relationship. (P6)
- Basically the interpersonal skills. Talking to the people. (P10)

Learning through observation. For one mentoring relationship that was present while both mentor and mentee were in managerial positions, P1 emphasized the importance of observing his mentor in action, as well as applying *leadership* skills in addition to the *managerial* skills he had mastered.

> My third mentor was a marine for 30 years, a no-fuzz kind of guy, all about leadership. He'd been to Harvard Business School. I gained a lot observing his style of leadership that I'm still using today. He helped me to apply the management skills. He was a really passionate kind of leader. . . . Some of it's learned by example. If you're close enough to watch them in action. (P1)

Feedback on specific tasks. One role mentors took was giving specific direction about current work assignments and performance reviews.

- One of the things in my mentee role . . . he did say we'll work through some of your assignments. (P5)
- Techniques I pretty much always use with mentees is structuring our sessions around the performance management schedule and timeline. We're coming up to interim reviews, document their suggestions for their [program name] goals for the following year, assignments that they have during the year. Understanding, capturing this assignment, and writing the results and actions sets them up to have the stories for their next interview. (P5)
- Gave feedback on his ideas. . . . You don't always have the opportunity to put them on an assignment, so you use the current assignment and get

the benefit of those to grow, learn how to find the learning and teaching moments. (P8)

- People want to know how to design something. I share my personal experiences and help them find someone who has done it or can help them. Then I follow up; do we need to find someone else? Company culture…most of them are technically savvy. They want to know, "I've got great idea; how do I get it implemented, get around obstacles?" (P9)

Two-sided commitment. One discussed the importance of the mentee's commitment to the mentoring process.

- Forcing the mentoring role on someone doesn't mean they're going to have the time. (P1)
- Relationships take two sides to make them work. If someone's not looking for the help it's hard to give it to them. Really different backgrounds and cultures; it was a good match for me. [They] desire to do better. When I try to give guidance they accept it and follow my suggestions. (P7)
- A couple are good matches; a couple we still struggle. [For the good matches] it seems to be just an open communication. [For the not-as-effective matches] not really believing that they need one; they're just doing it to check the box but don't really believe in the advantages. They're in it because they have to be. (P9)

Research Question 5: Findings for Strengths and Weaknesses of the Structured Leadership Mentoring Program

This section includes (a) strengths of the formal mentoring program and (b) weaknesses of the formal mentoring program. Both these topics are discussed in the subsections that follow. The strengths described by participants include the following: successful matches, tools and framework, flexible program structure, developing new skills and abilities, constructive criticism, weaknesses of the formal mentoring program. The weaknesses described by participants include the following: problematic matches, mandatory assignment as a mentor, access to mentoring, inflexible structure, low leadership skill level of mentors, inconsistent availability of mentoring program, lack of promotion or misunderstood promotion of the mentoring program.

Strengths of the formal mentoring program. The following aspects were mentioned as being helpful: successful matches, relationship-building activities and other tools, as well as face-to-face meetings. These and other helpful aspects are described in the following subsections.

***Successful matches*.** The overall impression is that matching has occurred quickly and with good results.

- I came in from another aerospace company as a level 5 engineer. I was assigned a mentor immediately. (P1)
- My overall experience is that matches have been perfect both ways. (P1)

- It was an excellent match. We knew each other prior to the program. He selected me. We had worked together in the same business unit. We had a similar perspective; he was able to see me operate in his organization with the focus and goals of his business unit, so that fostered our relationship. Coming from a common functional background, that was a natural place to start the growth. . . . It continued on beyond the official program, which is 1 year, probably about 3 years now. (P2)
- My mentor was someone I already I knew as a mentor, who officially selected me through that program. . . . Definitely a good match. (P3)
- A successful mentoring relationship comes down to the two people. Mine's been a positive experience. . . . His style and my style are similar . . . less formal in communication. He understands the challenges. We come from different sectors in the business. I like that outside perspective. As a male he provides a different perspective. . . . It is a highly appreciated opportunity that A-Corp has afforded me. (P5)
- a good match. My mentor approached me [during a symposium] and said she heard good things about me and requested me to sign up in the program, planning to request me as a mentee. (P6)
- The folks that I naturally click with that are looking for help, they naturally find each other and that particular bond works the best. We already had that, [he and his formal mentee] so it worked really well. (P8)

One mentee mentioned that the structured program helped her gain access to a mentor relationship that she had not been able to find on an informal basis.

> Even though it's been short [3 months as a mentee], it's benefitted me. . . . I've had a tough time finding someone to mentor me. I told my boss and my boss put my name in and I was contacted by this executive. I finally have the ability to run things by him. (P5)

Tools and framework. The structure of the program was noted as helpful in several ways, according to the following respondents:

- I think the formal program has a lot of tools in it that facilitate developing a relationship between pairs who don't know each other. A lot of people get placed with those they don't know, and many of the focused activities and toolsets were very useful for them that weren't applicable for us. We worked with the general guidelines such as meeting at least monthly, which we've stuck to, and face-to-face meetings. The program was good in that it laid out the basic structure, but apart from that we expanded it to fit where we saw things going. The program ended prior to me working in one of my mentor's divisions, then we took it and ran with it. (P2)
- The program itself provides the framework. . . . There are bureaucratic tendencies and over-administration in A-Corp, but the program provided a good structure. (P5)
- The program is successful and very well structured. You have to put in what you expect to get out of the program. The more formal the structured program, the more you get from the program. (P6)
- I've been part of the mentoring program for quite a while. There's some guidance online. I've been trying to participate in mentoring for 10+ years.

> It was always haphazard, no good guides, that [i.e., the guidance in the formal program] has been incredibly helpful on my side and theirs. It gives focal questions, builds up the background of where they want to go, leads to better disclosure, helps break the ice and the awkwardness. We haven't gone through the signature, but we worked through the worksheets. It adds consistency, so I don't feel that I have favored one person over the other depending on how well we personally connected. Even if I don't have that connection, it helps to go through that process, helps you keep digging and you find the benefit on the professional side. (P9)

Flexible program structure. Some indicated that the structure did not prevent them from selecting and using only those tools that fit their specific needs and preferences.

- We both attended the formal training at the beginning. We both decided at the same time that we would use those parts that benefitted us and the general guidance. Mentorship pairs should be allowed to direct the process, and we did. (P2)
- I filled out the consent program. Other than that, we did not utilize the tools together and I did not utilize them. (P3)
- Some of the materials we used; some we did not. . . . a lot of that we didn't document. (P8)

The quotes in this section indicate that many viewed the structure and tools provided by the formal program as helpful or at least not a hindrance. On

the other hand, others believed the structured aspect of the program was unhelpful to the mentoring process and had a somewhat negative impact.

***Developing new skills and abilities*.** Identifying training and education opportunities was a task mentioned by some mentors to develop in the mentee the skills and abilities needed to become more effective in their work or to seek advancement.

- I urged him to get a master's degree. He's completed it. He was apprehensive about it, but was well underway next time I talked to him. (P7)
- I suggested he sign up for the tech fellowship, a way to climb the ladder. It is recognized throughout the industry; the title carries a lot of weight, like a Ph.D. (P7)

***Constructive criticism*.** Constructive criticism was mentioned by two mentors and one mentee.

- The key was that we developed a relationship through feedback on strengths and weaknesses. . . . Some of the feedback they have given me, may not be pleasant to hear, but really has improved my leadership skills and effectiveness in general. (P3)
- They have to understand the cause and effect. There were some other aspects to mentorships. You have to be heavy on the stick rather than the praise sometimes. (P7)
- I advised him on personal strengths and weaknesses

- . . . . being really honest with him. One of his barriers to advancing was that he would be a little too rough and aggressive and I had to tell him that flat out. To be honest about barriers. I asked what are some of my barriers. They told me and I agreed and had felt the same thing. The person has to trust in you so they're willing to divulge that information. The point is to eliminate weakness and grow your strengths. You learn how to give bad news in a constructive way. (P8)

Weaknesses of the formal mentoring program. The aspects of the mentoring program that were viewed as unhelpful were as follows: problematic matches, mandatory assignment to mentor, limited access to mentoring, inflexible structure, low leadership skill level of mentors, inconsistent availability of mentoring program.

Problematic matches. Though the majority of matches were reported as successful, respondents noted the potential for difficulties in the matching process. In response to the question about any problems respondents might see with the matching process in the existing mentoring program, participants relied as follows:

- Trying to make it a cookie cutter approach. Matching skills between individuals is good, but personalities have got to match too. I've seen a few guys who weren't that great of mentors but were doing it to fit the square. Mentoring is personality-driven. (P1)
- I have two folks that I'm helping because I'd like to and they're worthy of help. . . . I saw potential in them. It can't be forced. . . . We're not

like-minded, but when we discuss issues, it's easy for me to find ideas to help them. (P7)

- "Go pick somebody right now" doesn't work. This person [his mentee] was on the list so I picked him. It was a good match because he'd worked for one of my managers. I had an understanding of his potential and believed he could grow. I don't think just everyone has that potential, and I don't want to spend the time with someone who just won't get it. It was a decent personality match and I felt confident I could help him. (P8)
- Someone looking for a mentor, before one is selected for them, should meet with several potential mentors to get a feel for what they think they would offer before they sign up to use one person as their mentor. If it's their first time they don't know what to look for. It's blind luck if they find a good match. You need to go through three or four different people and then select a mentor. (P9)
- They gave us a list of people to choose from. Half of the people on the list didn't know they were on the list when we contacted the person. (P10)
- I picked a person not in my specific field, aircraft systems. I really didn't understand the details of her field [software] so I thought it wasn't an ideal match . . . couldn't answer all her questions. I could only give general guidance. I think it should be the other way around, the mentee choosing the mentor. I'm not part of the program today. (P10)

***Mandatory assignment as a mentor*.** There was some consensus that making the program obligatory simply based on being at a certain level of

management was not a positive aspect. P1 explained the difficulty with making the program quasi-mandatory and P10 explained the need for selecting mentors based on qualifications such as satisfaction surveys showing their managerial skills.

- I've sat through forced mentorship. For example, "you're level M; you have to do this." Yet sometimes if you get a level M mentor and he's extremely busy, it doesn't do him any favors. The mentor relationship suffers because of lack of contact or lack of passion for a particular person. Forcing the mentoring role on someone doesn't mean they're going to have the time. You can maybe do it at all at one push through the leadership center. There are ways that leaders can pass on their knowledge. Hopefully the mentees are smart enough to figure out if they're getting what they need out of the mentorship. . . . My current mentor is extraordinarily busy and hard to get hold of. It's based on the individual's time. . . . Some mentor because they've been asked to. It's a forced function rather than wanting to do it. Some felt forced into the mentor program when they're incredibly busy with too much training, too many to-dos, and it ends in long afternoons of overtime. (P1)
- It came down as a goal, somehow we had to register in the program, document at least one [session? Relationship?] it became a check-the-box activity. It died and nothing came of it. (P5)
- If you're forced to be a mentor or mentee it's hard to get your heart into it. If you like a person and want them to succeed, you'll go out of your way to

> help them. . . . I'm fearful if it's too structured it will be just a check in the box that you help someone because you have to. . . . You make it so rigid then there's no passion and desire to help, not because your boss told you to. That's where it dies. (P7)

- The program is only as good as the mentors. You're going to get some bad managers and bad mentors. They have employee surveys. You can look at what the manager is doing. Those with high scores you want to have as mentors, not just because they're at a higher level. (P10)

***Access to mentoring*.** Some mentioned the topic of access to mentoring. P1 mentioned that his access to effective mentoring was hindered by having a mentor who had little time or commitment to the mentoring process. P3, P4, and P10 mentioned the need to mentor newer employees instead of only managerial-level employees. There are programs at A-Corp for all levels, but some of the programs have been more recently implemented and these respondents were not aware of them.

> Like every other engineering company, it has been a couple of hard years. . . . The need for mentoring based on what your company is doing. Part of the business is struggling, and that's probably when you need a mentor the most, when you're going through some challenges and could use some advice. Yet the relationship just isn't there. It's a quick phone call now and then. (P1)

> Could be improved by allowing more access. I don't know how I got on it. A lot of people leave who have potential and they don't know who to talk to. (P3)

- We should be developing younger employees. (P4)
- I think it should be opened up to everyone, including the level 1 and 2 people, to start to develop them. By the time they're level 3 they're more set in their ways . . . at lower levels you can make an impact mentoring non-management people, finding out what they want to do in their careers.
- They're floundering and it's critical to reach them at that point. They're not getting the proper guidance from their current managers. (P10)

***Inflexible structure*.** One mentioned the one-size-fits-all approach as being a less desirable aspect of the program. In other words, participants did not want to see too much structure and too little flexibility.

- I was fortunate that I knew my mentor prior to the program. Some of the tools were superfluous, didn't apply. Some were optional, but there were some feedback and ratings that didn't seem useful for us in particular. The program could tailor the tools more to the relationship so they can be very specific to the kind of relationship that's in place. (P2)
- One issue I have with the [northern site] culture—different from the [southern site] culture—just the way of their thought processes in handling an issue. In [northern site] it's very structured, almost a military organization. In [southern site] we're more relationship-based and looser, concerned to get the job done. Both have their place and their strengths and weaknesses. If mentoring is too strict and structured, it takes that element out of it. (P7)

- You have these tools and you end up making an agreement that creates a lot of red tape. It kind of comes naturally; people seek out mentors. The formal structure and steps and recording goals and agreements I don't like. . . . it's kind of a turnoff that you have to agree to do such and such. Some of the materials we used; some we did not. . . . a lot of that we didn't document. (P8)

This problem of increasingly rigid structure, the one-size-fits all approach, is an aspects of large, complex corporations that is to be expected. It is clear that many participants were able to adopt the aspects of the program that were helpful and tailor the mentorship process to their own needs to some extent, as described in the previous subsection describing helpful aspects of the formal mentoring program.

Low leadership skill level of mentors. Participants also mentioned that a possible improvement would be screening prospective mentors and only encouraging those with proven managerial skills to be mentors.

> The program is only as good as the mentors. You're going to get some bad managers and bad mentors. They have employee surveys. You can look at what the manager is doing. Those with high scores you want to have as mentors, not just because they're at a higher level. (P10)

***Inconsistent availability of mentoring program*.** Lack of program consistency and integration of the various A-Corp mentoring programs was noticed as a potential difficulty.

- I'm not sure if there's anything that links all these programs. Maybe over time there will be one central point. (P3)
- In my mentor relationship, it came down as a goal, somehow we had to register in the program. . . . It died and nothing came of it. I applaud the company for recognizing the need; it's just my perception that we have fits and starts. It's all well-intentioned. The company is still trying to find its way through how best to deliver mentoring. Maybe this is the best we can do in a large company. Should there be a czar of mentoring? I don't know. (P5)

Lack of promotion or misunderstood promotion of the mentoring program. P10 stated that he thought the company employees had not been fully informed about the program. P7 similarly stated, "the visibility is low."

- For me, I know there are those newsletters. I don't know what tools are available. Other than that orientation that was kind of a firehose. I do remember they showed the websites, but I've never gone back to look at that. . . . You get so many emails, for me I just don't have time for that, but by this time I already have the mentors and I haven't invested the time for it. I think the fact that mentoring is a way of retention, they started some kind of program. People see the value in it. If you're affiliated with a specific group. I'm not sure if there's anything that links all these programs. Maybe over time there will be one central point. That's on me, because it's out there. I'm working on a Ph.D. I don't have the time. (P3)

- Solicit more mentees, distribute some type of communication bulletins, and increase awareness of the program. (P6)

At the same time, P3 noted that she received almost weekly email notices about mentoring programs. It may be that the promotion materials are selectively sent to employees who are not senior level managers.

One mentioned that the program should not be promoted as an opportunity to get on the fast track to advancement, presumably because this could lead to (a) disappointment and (b) failure to focus on success in the current position because of an emphasis on ladder-climbing.

> The expectation should be to develop people, but the perception is you're on the fast track to success. Mentoring should happen throughout the company to provide a breath of knowledge. . . . It's not good overall to have the perception that you're a fast tracker. (P4)

Chapter Summary

The following list summarizes the findings described in Chapter 4.

1. Advancement within A-Corp was a benefit identified by mentees.
2. Familiarity with the organization's structure and processes was a benefit identified by mentees.
3. Familiarity with the organization's culture was a benefit identified by mentees.
4. Familiarity with people in key positions was a benefit identified by mentees.
5. Broader perspective was a benefit recognized by mentees.

6. Problem solving was a benefit by both mentees and mentors.
7. Personal relationships and satisfaction of helping was a benefit to mentors.
8. Improvement of communication skills was mentioned as a benefit to mentors.
9. Improvement of leadership skills was mentioned as a benefit to mentors.
10. Learning from the mentee was mentioned as a benefit to mentors.
11. Increased loyalty and longevity were mentioned by mentors as a benefit to the company.
12. An improved sense of teamwork was mentioned by mentors as a benefit to the company.
13. There was variation in communication modes and frequency among participants' mentoring relationships.
14. Relationship building was an important aspect of the mentoring agenda.
15. Constructive criticism was mentioned as an important aspect of the mentoring agenda.
16. Learning through observation was mentioned as an important aspect of the mentoring agenda.
17. Developing new skills and abilities (including identifying training and education opportunities) was mentioned as an important aspect of the mentoring agenda.
18. The overall impression is that matching has occurred quickly and with good results, although respondents noted the potential for difficulties in the

matching process and two expressed disappointment in their particular matches.

19. Both mentors and mentees must be committed to the relationship; mandatory assignment to act as a mentor may do a disservice to the mentee.
20. The formal mentoring program offered many helpful structural aspects.
21. Awareness of and access to the mentoring programs could be improved.
22. An inflexible structure is not desirable; many participants noted that they selected only those portions of the program that the pair believed would be helpful.
23. Leadership skill level of mentors should be considered when qualifying someone as a mentor.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents the researcher's conclusions based on the results presented in Chapter 4. Implications for policy and practice are noted. Recommendations will focus on statements made by the interviewees about how the program could be improved. Recommendations will be noted for the benefit of the program managers. To guide future research efforts, recommendations for further study are included.

The present study was intended to determine whether the program is fully implementing practices that (a) meet the needs of mentees and (b) have been shown in the literature to be most effective. In the following sections, conclusions for each research question are discussed individually. The conclusions were organized into three main areas: benefits to mentees (conclusions 1-5), benefits to mentors (conclusions 6-9), benefits to the company (conclusions 10-11), and the mentoring process (conclusions 12-14). Each of these conclusions relates to Research Question 1 and 3.

Research Question 1: Conclusions for Benefits to Mentees

Research question 1 asks: According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentees? The following subsections discuss conclusions related to this question.

Conclusion 1a: Mentees gained advancement opportunities.

Mentees' were (a) encouraged in entering specific training programs and (b) were afforded networking opportunities. Networking was the most often-

mentioned path toward promotions. This political exposure was part of the larger picture of understanding and using the political reality of the company. It is easier to find an opportunity if you are made aware of one by senior management. By meeting the right person, doors were opened and networking expanded their opportunities. This supports the Dondero (1997) findings that mentoring helps broaden opportunities. This also supports Harabedian's (2009) conclusion in a study of mentoring in the aviation field, which found that one benefit of structured mentoring programs as opposed to informal mentoring was that "formal mentoring relationships may expose the mentee to unlikely mentors that will cover niche topics" (p. 59).

Conclusion 1b: Mentees gained familiarity with the organization's structure and processes. This included decision-making processes, change processes, and understanding the far-reaching effects of decisions.

Conclusion 1c: Mentees gained familiarity with the organization's culture. Mentees were able to grasp the unstated and informal political workings of the organization. This helped them gain advancement opportunities.

Conclusion 1d: Mentees gained a broader perspective. Using their greater experience and understanding of the field and of the organization, mentors were able to help mentees see roles and resources that they would not have considered.

Conclusion 1e: Mentees gained help in problem solving. Some mentors intentionally chose this as a goal or technique for their mentoring sessions, and mentees mentioned that they valued this approach. This confirms

the Dondero (1997) findings that mentoring helps assist in making intelligent choices.

Research Question 2: Conclusions for Benefits to Mentors

Research question 2 asks: According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the mentors? The following subsections discuss conclusions related to this question.

Conclusion 2a: Mentors gained satisfaction from personal relationships and helping. Mentors found personal satisfaction in the mentoring relationships. This supports the findings of previous researchers. Volunteers tend to benefit from maintaining an active role in the groups they are part of (Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002; Warburton et al., 2001).

Conclusion 2b: Mentors improved their communication skills. Mentors mentioned improving their listening skills and applying what they learned from the mentee to improve their communication with those they directly supervise on a day-to-day basis.

Conclusion 2c: Mentors improved their leadership skills. This conclusion supports the purpose of the leadership development mentoring program, because the main purpose of the program was to promote leadership capacity in those who had shown potential for managerial positions. The mentoring allowed for various types of effective leadership styles to be applied. Goal-setting, reviewing the data from the self-assessment tools in the formal mentoring program, problem-solving, and follow-up were each mentioned as goals or techniques for mentoring sessions.

Conclusion 2d: Mentors used a human resources frame. Mentors in this study often approached mentoring from the human resources frame. They spoke of the importance of simply listening and getting to know their mentees. Many mentors and mentees in the present study spoke of the importance of establishing a relationship, rather than simply going through the motions of problem-solving and goal setting. Mentors were aware of existing skills, needs, and limitations of their mentees, and suggested learning opportunities to meet the needs and overcome the limitations.

Conclusion 2e: Mentors learned from their mentees. This conclusion supports the statement of Philip and Hendry (2000) that from their experiences, mentors learn to better understand their past; they gain insight into other people's experience; and they build cross-generational relationships. The mentors in this study did state that mentoring helped them remember what it felt like to be newer in the company, thus they adjusted their leadership approach at times with those they managed. The mentors valued the chance to develop cross-generational relationships that at times evolved into or functioned as helpful peer relationships.

Research Question 3: Conclusions for Benefits to the Company

Research question 3 asks: According to the participants in the structured leadership mentoring program, in what ways has the program benefitted the company? The following subsections discuss conclusions related to this question.

Conclusion 3a: The company gained increased loyalty. This result confirms what Terry (1999) proposes, that the common goal of volunteer mentors is to protect the future by investing in the present through sharing his or her life experiences. Mentors unanimously agreed that the mentoring program had improved both loyalty and retention. They noted specific employees who had been considering leaving the company but because of the problem-solving, broader perspective, or advancement opportunities they gained through their mentor, they stayed with A-Corp. The mentors themselves evidenced loyalty to the company, making statements such as “this is a great company.” Mentees also agreed that the mentoring program increased loyalty.

Conclusion 3b: The company gained an improved sense of teamwork in work teams. Some mentioned that acting as a mentor improved their ability to see the perspective of those not in management, thus they were able to communicate more effectively in a way that increased their work teams’ sense of unity and collaboration.

Research Question 4: Conclusions for the Structured Leadership Mentoring Program Compared With Best Practices

Research question 4 asks: How does the structured leadership mentoring program compare with best practices for mentoring, as noted in the literature? Table 2 shows conclusions related to this question, based on participant responses and program documents used as data sources.

Table 2

Areas in Which the Mentoring Program Qualifications Match the Best Practices

Best Practice	Participant Responses	Training Materials
Mentees must be willing and active participants.		yes
Mentors must be willing and active participants.		yes
Mentees must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.		
Mentors must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.		
A mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring.	no	
Formal mentoring agreement establishes frequency of meeting times.	yes	yes
Analyze and compare the current capability and understanding of the learner (needs assessment and listening/observing).	yes	yes
Mentoring agreement should include outcome goals of the mentoring arrangement agreed on by both parties.		yes
Mentoring agreement should include behaviors that the mentee and mentor will perform.		yes
Mentoring agreement should include duration of the mentoring agreement.	yes	yes
Mentoring agreement should include periodic review of milestones/goals/progress.	yes	yes
Match mentee's experience and goals for the mentoring experience with that of a mentor.		

(continued)

Best Practice	Participant Responses	Training Materials
Mentors should have some strengths that address the apparent needs and potentials of the mentee as identified by a supervisor.		
The mentor should be of a more advanced certification or rank than the mentee.	yes	yes
Allow mentors and mentees to state their personal preferences with regard to a match.	mentors choose, but not mentees	yes
Requests for personal preferences should be honored when possible.	yes	yes
The mentor should be at the mentee's work site.	for two pairs, no	
Support the program through the management line down from chief executive level.		yes

Note. For training materials (third column of this table) see Appendix C, from which combined data was inserted into this column.

Research Question 5: Findings for Strengths and Weaknesses of the Structured Leadership Mentoring Program

Research question 5 asks: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the structured leadership mentoring program? The following subsections discuss conclusions related to this question. Overall the mentoring program had a positive outcome. The majority of the people polled were pleased with the outcome. Either the mentee moved up and on or the mentor accumulated additional tools to use in their day-to-day activities. This was also evident in the use of their leadership attributes.

On the other hand, there were also aspects named as negative aspects of the program. Sweeny (2003) adds that the mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring. This was one problem noted by a mentee in one of his mentoring relationships, which related to a mandatory assignment to mentor. This situation, in effect, limited the mentee's access to mentoring. Other areas with need for improvement included low leadership skill level of mentors, inadequate awareness about having been selected as a participant in the program, the inconsistent availability of some A-Corp mentoring programs, and access to the leadership mentoring program by those who have not been selected for the program but may show promise in developing leadership ability.

Conclusion 5a: The mentoring program assisted in effective matching of mentorship pairs. The fact that mentors were able to select their mentee from a list of those qualified for the program fits with the idea that "Human performance is influenced by one's . . . positive expectancies, perceived control" (as cited in Lee & Cramond, 1999, p. 173). Because mentors were able to select those they thought they would have a positive relationship with and had the potential to influence positively, these expectations likely improved the performance of the mentors. In addition, mentors and mentees both reported that utilizing the structured mentoring program did not prevent them from selecting and using only those tools that fit their specific needs and preferences, another area of perceived control that would lead to better performance.

The gender-centered model of leadership behavior stresses that there are definite psychological and behavioral differences between men and women, and such differences influence leadership styles (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2004). Clutterbuck and Ragins (2002) state that while mentoring is important for everyone, it is even more important for people from non-dominant groups who face barriers to advancement. Women still face a glass ceiling in regards to advancement in management, and mentoring both by senior men and women offers tools to help break through the traditional barriers. These authors state that woman may prefer to be mentored by a man who could serve as a political ally in a male-dominated workplace. This statement was supported by the assertion of a female mentor in this study who stated that she appreciated having a male mentor because he gave her a valuable perspective that she otherwise would not have obtained. Helgesen (1990) stated that female leaders did not identify only with their jobs; rather, women leaders viewed their identity as complex and multifaceted. This idea is supported by one female mentees description of seeking her mentor's advice on effectively balancing home and work demands.

Conclusion 5b: The mentoring program assisted in initiating positive mentoring relationships. Wilson (2000) asserts that many volunteers wait for an invitation to do their work and are more likely to participate in the experience if asked. A-Corp makes use of this principle by actively recruiting mentors. In addition, the fact that A-Corp offers a structured mentoring program—with support of personnel and tools such as evaluations of leadership strengths and

weaknesses—fits with Wilson's (2000) assertion that many volunteers look for social support and resources in an effort to make their experience a positive one.

Although some interviewees voiced concerns about whether the mentoring program might be or become overly structured in ways that created difficulties, many viewed the structure and tools provided by the formal program as helpful or at least not a hindrance. Aspects of the formal mentoring program that were perceived as helpful included relationship-building activities for new pairs and tools to increase awareness of one's leadership style, to offer a starting point for mentoring discussions.

Many mentors mentioned meeting once a month as well as using face-to-face meetings whenever possible, as recommended by the structured mentoring program. It appears that the structured program set up an expectation for frequency of contact that kept the mentoring relationship on track; otherwise, given the fact that both mentors and mentees were in managerial positions and had great demands on their time, the frequency of contact and thus the benefit of the relationship may have been diminished. Many researchers have argued that successful coaching discussions and goals are reinforced by timely follow-up (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006; Bivens, 1996; Brocato, 2003; Salters, 1997; Sidler & Lifton, 1999), which supports the idea of frequent mentoring sessions. Similarly, Brocato (2003) advocated the use of a plan of action and commitment timetable that includes start and end dates.

Conclusion 5c: The mentors used a variety of effective mentoring techniques and processes. The mentors' help was imparted by a variety of

techniques and processes that were intentionally used by mentors, including listening, relationship building, setting up discussion topics in advance, constructive criticism, observation of the mentor in action, tours around different facilities, and encouraging additional training.

LaMantia and Buzzotta (2008) recommend fostering employee engagement and improving employee productivity by listening. Mentors in this study also mentioned the importance of listening.

Brocato (2003) states that an important aspect of coaching behavior is goal setting, defined as documenting finite parameters surrounding a new activity. This fits with the mentors' encouragement of additional training to meet specific career goals.

Bivens (1996) states that one type of advocating is finding and using resources available to the coach to promote growth opportunities for the learner. These are opportunities to which the learner, without the intervention of the coach, might have little to no access. This was undoubtedly the case for the mentor relationships in this study. Many mentors provided networking opportunities, seeking to advance the mentee.

Long (2004) contends that coaching activity should be process-driven and that it becomes part of how a business gets things done. For A-Corp, the long-standing mentoring process has provided the structure to be process-driven and the longevity to become part of how the business functions in refining leadership skills. Bivens (1996) claims that "all we have to do is ask the right question" (p.

2) in order to become an effective coaching partner. One mentor mentioned questioning as an important strategy he used to guide his mentees.

Conclusion 5d: Some participants did not use the program in the intended manner. Some participants intentionally used the program simply as a check-the-box program without the intent to meet the company's aim to further their skills as an asset to the company. For mentors, this took the form of signing up as a mentor because they were told to do so, yet not allowing sufficient time to offer a quality mentoring relationship to their mentee. For some mentees, it appears they similarly participated in the basics of the program, but rather than seeking to enhance their skills that would benefit the company, they used the program only as a tool for climbing the corporate ladder, whether or not they might have been the most qualified candidates for advancement.

Recommendations for Practical Applications

Table 3 in the first column indicates what participants stated as the areas needing improvement. For each of these items, possible remediating actions are listed in the second column, as noted by participants. These recommended remediating actions are drawn from findings associated with all five of the research questions, as suggestions for improvement overlapped these areas. In other words, recommendations include benefits to mentees, mentors, and the company, as well as findings for best practices and findings about strengths and weaknesses.

Table 3

Remediating Actions Recommended by Participants for the Mentoring Program

Areas Needing Improvement	Remediating Actions
Mandatory assignment as a mentor or mentee	Some mentors and mentees felt they were involved with the process as a requirement or expectation from their superiors. They were not completely enthusiastic about the program and were going through the motions. Some of the mentees were not aware they were on the list to take part of the mentoring program. It was a surprise to them that a mentor was assigned to them and they were mentees.
Ensuring a good fit for the mentoring relationship	One participant mentioned that the mentor and mentee both should be allowed to interface and dialogue prior to establishing a mentoring contract. This would allow both discuss boundaries and expectations prior to beginning the process, which could ensure a good fit for both before accepting or entering into a mentoring agreement.
Access to mentoring	A-Corp has several mentoring programs. They include mentoring for all employees from beginning through senior executive mentoring. New hires especially should be introduced to the mentoring website.
Inflexible structure perceived by some	Those managing the mentoring programs might point out what aspects of the program are mandatory and which are optional. Another theme was split fairly even. There are numerous tools available to the program. Half of the people used the formal process and half used an informal approach, with similar results for success. This could be attributed to personal preferences for the individual and pair in the process.
Low leadership skill level of mentors	Selecting only the managers with the best feedback, as suggested by one participant, would overwork those managers, prevent under-skilled managers from the leadership benefits to be gained from mentoring, and greatly decrease the number of mentorship pairs. A more positive solution might be to limit the formal program to 1 year. That would allow the best mentors to be more equally shared.

(continued)

Areas Needing Improvement	Remediating Actions
Inconsistent availability of mentoring program	Provide one web site from which all A-Corp mentoring programs can be accessed. Those with selective requirements could use password access. Allow all employees access to training material and information.
Lack of promotion or misunderstood promotion of the mentoring program	Email currently participating mentees to inform them that they are being included in the mentoring program and directing them to a website where they can access information.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following areas appear promising for further research:

1. Some researchers have proposed that employees within generation x and millennials have differing preferences for mentorship and should ideally be mentored in specific ways (Thielfoldt & Scheef, 2004). A mentoring study could ask about (a) age of each participant and (b) whether they noted any difficulty or benefit due to being in the same or a different generational cohort.
2. The human resources department at A-Corp conducts surveys about the mentoring programs. A fruitful area of study might be to identify those mentees who have reported negative experiences and identify through survey the factors that they attribute to the lack of success.

3. In addition, a greater number of participants would allow greater accuracy in the results.
4. A continuation of the structured leadership mentoring program at A-Corp would be enhanced by the researcher gaining access to the surveys administered by that program, thus enabling a comparison between that data and newly-gathered data.
5. Political, philosophical, and cultural differences were noticed between two sites of A-Corp. It was interesting to note there was a big difference within the same company on how business is handled by each site. One site is known for decisive actions that promote resolution. The other site is more concerned about following the process and consensus than providing a speedy resolution to a problem. This provides an example of how there is a disconnect within the company on priorities and direction for current and future leaders. Exploring these differences would be a useful and interesting study.
6. One theme which was disturbing, for long term benefit to the company, was lack of retention of younger employees. There was a concern from a few mentors of how the young and talented mentees were dissatisfied with the challenges and lack of opportunities available to them. This resulted in a trend of many younger high potential individuals staying for a few years and then departing the company for a more challenging opportunity with frequent promotions. A-Corp invested heavily in their training, but did

not reap the benefits. A future study might compare the retention rate of mentored individuals with the retention rate of those not mentored.

Chapter Summary

The conclusions are listed in condensed form as follows, organized by research question:

- Conclusion 1a: Mentees gained advancement opportunities.
- Conclusion 1b: Mentees gained familiarity with the organization's structure and processes.
- Conclusion 1c: Mentees gained familiarity with the organization's culture.
- Conclusion 1d: Mentees gained a broader perspective.
- Conclusion 1e: Mentees gained help in problem solving.
- Conclusion 2a: Mentors gained satisfaction from personal relationships and helping.
- Conclusion 2b: Mentors improved their communication skills.
- Conclusion 2c: Mentors improved their leadership skills.
- Conclusion 2d: Mentors used a human resources frame.
- Conclusion 2e: Mentors learned from their mentees.
- Conclusion 3a: The company gained increased loyalty.
- Conclusion 3b: The company gained an improved sense of teamwork in work teams.
- Conclusion 4: The mentoring program has many strengths but also areas needing improvement.

- Conclusion 5a: The mentoring program assisted in effective matching of mentorship pairs.
- Conclusion 5b: The mentoring program assisted in initiating positive mentoring relationships.
- Conclusion 5c: The mentors used a variety of effective mentoring techniques and processes.

The following list summarizes what participants stated as aspects needing remediating actions recommended by participants for the mentoring program.

- Mandatory assignment as a mentor
- Currently no emphasis on ensuring a good fit for the mentoring relationship
- Access to mentoring
- Inflexible structure
- Low leadership skill level of mentors
- Inconsistent availability of mentoring program
- Lack of promotion or misunderstood promotion of the mentoring program

Areas recommended as promising for further research include the following: (a) mentoring preference differences between generational cohorts, (b) interviews of those who reported negative experience through their A-Corp official survey of the mentoring program, (c) interview a greater number of participants, (d) utilize survey information gathered by A-Corp about the mentoring program, and (e) compare mentoring program results between the two main sites of A-Corp.

Author's Summary

In this study, I provided the viewpoints of five mentors and five mentees in the A-Corps mentoring program and characterized their thoughts on how the program has been implemented, and received their observations. As a participant in two of the mentoring programs as a mentee during my career, my mentor and I failed to engage in the full formal process. We knew of the executive process, but only engaged in the contractual portion. After that, we only had time for two or three face-to-face meetings of general discussion over a three month time period. Each mentor was in a senior leadership position, but was not engaged in the formal mentoring process, nor truly wanted to participate. Each mentor had less than 18 months before retirement, which likely was part of the reason they did not become fully engaged in a process that was planned for a year. It seemed to me that they participated because they had a box to check on their executive to do list.

Pairing of mentor and mentee should not be a required assignment by the program administrators. The programs should be designed to match the mentee with the right mentor, allowing some choice. A mentor should have a passion for the program as well as a willingness to participate and accept the challenges. A mentor should consider the experience, skills, and knowledge wanted by the mentee and the ability to provide guidance in those areas. Before agreeing to mentor someone, a mentor should have some insight into what this role demands in abilities and responsibilities. The mentor should be trained (required training) in A-Corps mentoring process to follow through on the major

components to at least ensure both parties complete a survey about their experiences, which can be used to continuously improve the program. Training can go a long way towards preparing mentors and mentees to avoid some of the potential problems mentoring pairs often experience, such as unrealistic expectations and lack of commitment.

Time commitment to the mentoring process is crucial. If neither the mentor nor mentee can commit to the time requirements to build a working relationship of trust and openness for success, the program will fail. Executive's mentors need to understand their time management requirements, which can be difficult in their position. If it is a requirement for the position, the lack of passion for mentoring will be evident by the lack of time allowed for the program.

Traditional succession planning involves many facets within the organization and the environment. Continuing study of the mentoring programs has revealed some characteristics that are essential for success. One major characteristic is the cultural divide. Cultural differences in pairing mentors and mentees at A-Corp is a big challenge. Given the diversity of culture and ethnicity in the metropolitan west coast of the United States, A-Corp employees have vastly varied traditions, customs, and practices, which may allow for miscommunication or misunderstandings. The cultural divide is so large, A-Corps allows for dozens of mentoring programs tailored to special interest groups (affinity groups) to be displayed on various web sites to meet the cultural differences. As important as addressing diversity is, having separate programs also creates discontinuities and prevents the benefit that could be obtained by

consolidating the program into one, which has the personnel and financial resources to ensure best practices. A-Corp should reduce the number of mentoring programs across all sites and introduce a mentoring program that allows for mentors and mentees to themselves request specific characteristics such as a match with someone of their own or another gender or ethnicity. This would allow diversity and inclusion for all groups. A-Corp should use the LEAN Process to reduce the cost to support, maintain, and participate in mentoring programs across all sites. This will also show employees that everyone is equal in this process. Although many companies have multiple mentoring programs, A-Corp should make a commitment to a program and have a clear understanding of the program and communicate that effectively and consistently to the employees.

In summary, the executive mentoring program should continue to be a stand-alone program, but should insist that both parties adhere to the process for the full year to ensure the mentee gets the full impact of the program. Mentors should be required to take mandatory (required) training prior to becoming a mentor. They should have strong interpersonal skills. They should be able to articulate the company's viewpoints and future endeavors. Great leaders do not necessarily make great mentors. Mentoring may seem simple and easy, but it is very complex. It is different for every individual from the up-and-comer to the 56-year-old aspiring to move higher in the organization. There can be little doubt that mentoring involves the application of certain skills, commitment, time, and

training. Also, if necessary, a facilitator should be assigned to support the team to ensure both parties are getting the full potential impact from the program.

If A-Corps mentoring program is to be used as a tool of succession planning, then the right leaders should be engaged. There are many with high IQs who lack the interpersonal skills required to coach and guide others along the way. Successful individuals will be confident in their abilities to recognize and support individuals with potential. Some leaders make a conscious choice to surround themselves with under-performing people. This serves themselves and not employees or the companies they work for. Successful people find motivated people that can and do perform at a higher level. This serves company leadership and provides a qualified pool of individuals for greater responsibility.

The uses of multiple mentoring programs do not enhance diversity; it sends a mixed message to all employees. The signal or message is that identified groups have their own specific program for mentoring, not one program for all employees to participate in. It dilutes the message of diversity, instead of emphasizing a group of different people and cultures but with equal opportunities within the company.

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APPENDIX A

Best Practices for Corporate In-House Mentoring Programs

Table A1

Agreement Among Authors for Best Practices for Mentoring Programs

	Change Factory (2008)	Coley (1996)	Covey (2004)	Bivens (1996)	Brocato (2003)	Ellinger et al. (2003)	Mentor (2009a, 2009b)	National Mentoring Partnership (2002)	LaMantia and Buzzotta (2008)	Long (2004)	Salters (1997)	Schaffer (2008)	Sidler and Lifton (1999)	Sweeny (2003)	Zaleznik (1990)
Best Practice															
Support the program through the management line down from chief executive level.	x	x										x			
Specific criteria for selection of mentors and mentees.	x	x													
Mentees must be willing and active participants.	x	x													x
Mentors must be willing and active participants.	x	x													

(continued)

	Change Factory (2008)	Coley (1996)	Covey (2004)	Bivens (1996)	Brocato (2003)	Ellinger et al. (2003)	Mentor (2009a, 2009b)	National Mentoring Partnership	LaMantia and Buzzotta (2008)	Long (2004)	Salters (1997)	Schaffer (2008)	Sidler and Lifton (1999)	Sweeny (2003)	Zaleznik (1990)
Mentees must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.	x														x
Mentors must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.	x		x												
A mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring.		x												x	
Formal mentoring agreement establishes frequency of meeting times.	x	x								x					
Analyze and compare the current capability and understanding of the learner (needs assessment and listening/observing).	x	x									x				
Mentoring agreement should include outcome goals of the mentoring arrangement agreed on by both parties.	x														x

(continued)

	Change Factory (2008)	Coley (1996)	Covey (2004)	Bivens (1996)	Brocato (2003)	Ellinger et al. (2003)	Mentor (2009a, 2009b)	National Mentoring	LaMantia and Buzzotta	Long (2004)	Salters (1997)	Schaffer (2008)	Sidler and Lifton (1999)	Sweeny (2003)	Zaleznik (1990)
Mentoring agreement should include behaviors that the mentee and mentor will perform.	x	x								x		x			
Mentoring agreement should include duration of the mentoring agreement.	x	x			x										
Mentoring agreement should include periodic review of milestones/progress.	x	x		x	x								x		
Mentors should not approach mentoring with a directive leadership style.		x			x	x			x						
Mentors should receive training on successful mentoring.	x	x						x						x	
The pair should have an avenue for seeking help if difficulties arise and one or both individuals does not feel comfortable directly addressing an important concern with the other.	x	x					x					x			

(continued)

	Change Factory (2008)	Coley (1996)	Covey (2004)	Bivens (1996)	Brocato (2003)	Ellinger et al. (2003)	Mentor (2009a, 2009b)	National Mentoring	LaMantia and Buzzotta	Long (2004)	Salters (1997)	Schaffer (2008)	Sidler and Lifton (1999)	Sweeny (2003)	Zaleznik (1990)
Match mentee's experience and goals for the mentoring experience with that of a mentor.	x	x													x
Mentors should have some strengths that address the apparent needs and potentials of the mentee as identified by a supervisor.	x	x												x	
The mentor should be of a more advanced certification or rank than the mentee.														x	
Allow mentors and mentees to state their personal preferences with regard to a match.	x	x					x								
Requests for personal preferences should be honored when possible.	x	x					x								
The mentor should be at the mentee's work site.	x	x												x	

APPENDIX B

Phone and Email Scripts

Phone Invitation to Participate in the Study

Hello. This is Romney Teller from A-Corp. I am calling to invite you to be part of a study about the mentoring program at A-Corp. I received your contact information from the human resources department and you were randomly selected from among the members of the mentoring program to participate in an interview if you choose to. The interview would be anonymous and would be a telephone interview. Would you be interested in participating in this voluntary study?

[If no:] Okay. Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

[If yes:] Great. Your participation may be helpful in providing feedback to make the program more effective. I will email you the informed consent form that tells more details about the study. When you receive it, please print and sign the consent form and deliver it through inter-office mail to my office M/C 800-0038.

Email Follow-Up

Thank you for your initial agreement to participate in the study about our mentoring program at A-Corp. As I stated in our phone conversation, I am sending the informed consent letter to indicate your voluntary agreement to be part of the study [see attachment]. Please do the following:

1. Read over the informed consent letter.
2. Print the last page, making sure the signature space and the statement below it are contained on that page. Sign and date it.
3. Return both documents in the to my office M/C 800-0038.

When you have done so I will contact you again to determine a date and time that would be convenient for the phone interview. Thank you for your time and interest in this study.

Introduction to Phone Interview

Hello. This is Romney Teller calling to begin our telephone interview about the mentoring program at our workplace. Is this still a good time for you to participate in the interview? [If yes:] Great. Let me first go over some of the items that were on the informed consent letter to remind you of your rights as a research participant.

1. I am also an employee of [A-Corp].

2. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the structured mentoring program and determine ways that the program could be improved to better meet its stated goals.

3. This telephone interview will include questions about your experience as a participant in the mentoring program at [A-Corp].

4. This telephone interview will be scheduled for approximately 1 hour, but you may take a break or end the interview at any time that you feel you need to.

5. The possible benefits from this research are increased understanding of positive or negative aspects of the structured mentoring program to benefit the company.

6. There will be no monetary or other compensation offered for participation in this study.

7. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Your name and position and any other identifying information will not be used in connection with any of your statements.

8. Information you provide may become part of my dissertation or a future publication.

9. You can review the write-up of the results before the publication if you make a request in writing to review it, such as by email.

10. You can ask me about any questions or concerns about this research, either now or later or during the interview.

APPENDIX C

Data-Gathering Matrix for Documents

Table C1

Quotes From Training Materials That Indicate Evidence of Following a Specific Item of Best Practice

Best Practice	Training Materials		
	Training Manual (Power-point)	Other Training Materials	Personal Communica-tion by Mentoring Program Manager
Support the program through the management line down from chief executive level.		Berge	Alba Florit
Specific criteria for selection of mentors and mentees.		Berge	
Mentees must be willing and active participants.	GD&ER	Berge Zintz	
Mentors must be willing and active participants.	GD&ER	Berge Zintz	
Mentees must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.		Zintz	
Mentors must have at least an average level of emotional intelligence.		Zintz	
A mentor's workload should allow adequate time for mentoring.			
Formal mentoring agreement establishes frequency of meeting times.	GD&ER	Berge	
Analyze and compare the current capability and understanding of the learner (needs assessment and listening/ observing).		Berge Zintz	

(continued)

Best Practice	Training Materials		
	Training Manual (Power-point)	Other Training Materials	Personal Communica-tion by Mentoring Program Manager
Mentoring agreement should include outcome goals of the mentoring arrangement agreed on by both parties.	GD&ER	Zintz	
Mentoring agreement should include behaviors that the mentee and mentor will perform.	GD&ER	Berge Zintz	
Mentoring agreement should include duration of the mentoring agreement.	GD&ER	Berge	
Mentoring agreement should include periodic review of milestones/goals/progress.	GD&ER	Berge	
Mentors should not approach their mentoring with a directive leadership style.	GD&ER	Zintz	
Mentors should receive training on successful mentoring.	GD&ER	Berge	Florit
The pair should have an avenue for seeking help if difficulties arise and one or both individuals does not feel comfortable directly addressing an important concern with the other.	GD&ER		
Match mentee's experience and goals for the mentoring experience with that of a mentor.			
Mentors should have some strengths that address the apparent needs and potentials of the mentee as identified by a supervisor.	GD&ER		
The mentor should be of a more advanced certification or rank than the mentee.	GD&ER	Berge Zintz	
Allow mentors and mentees to state personal preferences for match.		Berge	
Requests for personal preferences should be honored when possible.		Berge	

Training Sources Used to Populate Table

Berge, T. C. (2008). *Global diversity and employee rights*. Long Beach, CA: A-Corp, Corporate HR and Administration.

Global Diversity & Employee Rights. (2006). *Enterprise-wide executive mentoring program: Orientation*. Long Beach, CA: A-Corp, Corporate HR and Administration.

Zintz, A. (2002). *Leaders as mentors*. Hopedale, MA: Federal Training Network.

Personal Communications

“Need to get the managers out of doing day-to-day work and to become leaders”:

J. Alba, personal communication, June 28, 2010

All other personal communications:

J. L. Florit, personal communication, May 12, 2009

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Letter

1. I have agreed to voluntarily participate in a research study conducted by Romney Teller, a doctoral student at Pepperdine University advised by Susan Parks Ed.D. I understand that the researcher is employed by my employer.

2. I understand that the purpose of this research is to evaluate the structured mentoring program and determine ways that the program could be improved to better meet its stated goals.

3. I have agreed to participate in this research by participating in a telephone interview that will discuss the members' experience as a participant in the mentoring program at the place of my present employment. I have been asked to participate because I have been participating in the mentoring program for approximately 3 years.

4. I understand that the telephone interview will be scheduled for approximately 1 hour and that I may exit or take a break from the interview at any time that I feel uncomfortable or feel the need to attend to other tasks.

5. I understand that the possible benefits to myself or my organization from this research are increased understanding (and thereby ultimately improvement) of positive or negative aspects of the structured mentoring program. There will be no monetary or other compensation offered for participation in this study.

6. I understand that because this interview will be conducted by an employee at my workplace, there is a chance that I may recognize him on the job at some time in the future, which might cause uncomfortable feelings. The researcher does not anticipate that there are any other risks or discomforts that might be associated with this research.

7. I understand that I may choose not to participate and that, should I choose to participate, I can end my participation at any time.

8. I understand that the researcher will take all reasonable measures to ensure that my responses will remain anonymous and confidential. My name and position and any other identifying information will not be used in connection with any of my statements.

I authorize the researcher to use the information I provide in his dissertation and any further publication based on the dissertation. I understand that the researcher will ensure that a copy of the completed results section is

available for me to review before its publication if I make a request in writing to review it.

9. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact the researcher if I have questions or concerns about this research at [redacted]. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Doug Leigh at (310) 568-2389, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional IRB at Pepperdine University.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understood. By completing and returning this survey I establish my consent to participate in the research described above.

Signature of participant:

_____ Date: _____

Printed name of participant:_____

By my signature, I have agreed to voluntarily participate in a research study conducted by Romney Teller, a doctoral student at Pepperdine University advised by Susan Parks Ed.D., for a study titled A QUALITATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED IN-HOUSE MENTORING PROGRAM AT A LARGE AEROSPACE CORPORATION.

I do ___ do not ___wish to be provided an electronic copy of the written results of the study before its publication. If I wish to make recommendations or to instruct the author about changes to any statement that I believe was based on notes about my statement(s), I will do so within 2 weeks of receiving the document by email from the author.

I do ___ do not ___wish to be provided an electronic copy of the written results of the study after its publication. If I wish to make recommendations or to instruct the author about changes to any statement that I believe was based on notes about my statement(s), I will do so within 2 weeks of receiving the document by email from the author.

Signature of researcher:

_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Supervisor Permission to Participate in Research

As a supervisor of the division of the company where Romney Teller is currently employed, I authorize him to invite employees under my supervision to voluntarily participate in a research study conducted by Romney Teller, a doctoral student at Pepperdine University advised by Dr. Susan Parks. I authorize this participation (which consists of one teleconference) for a duration of approximately 4 months, whether during or after regular work hours. I have had an opportunity to read the informed consent form. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Romney Teller if I have questions or concerns about this research at [redacted]. If I have questions about the rights of a research participant, I understand that I can contact Dr. Doug Leigh at (310) 568-2389, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University.

Signature of supervisor:

_____ Date: _____

Printed name of supervisor:

_____

Signature of researcher:

_____ Date: _____