



THE VALUE OF MENTORING

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

EMPOWERING
WOMEN

ROBERT WALTERS

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that women represent almost half of the UK workforce, senior roles are still dominated by men.

Mentoring can be a highly effective strategy to support women including those who are keen to develop their career and take on senior positions within an organisation.

Creating a mentoring programme can help to attract and retain top calibre professionals by demonstrating that an employer is committed to assisting ambitious people in building their career, in addition to helping them identify their key ambitions and career goals.

In this research paper we demonstrate the potential value of developing a mentoring programme and the strategies employers can use to connect their staff with mentors who can empower them to develop and guide their career.

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ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS

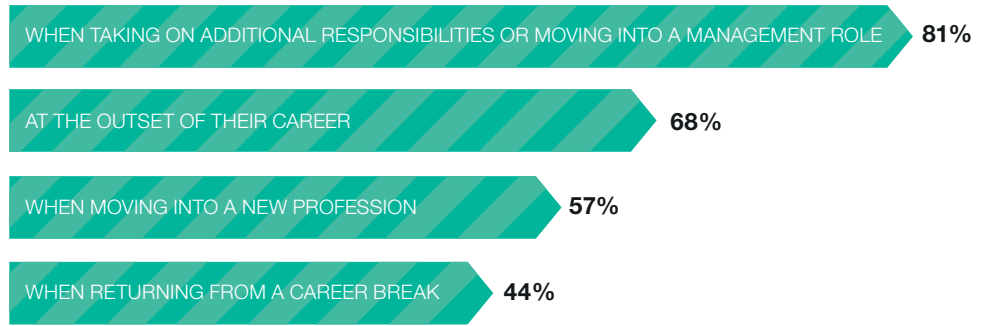
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- Treasury

KEY FINDINGS

94%
OF WOMEN SAY MENTORING WOULD HELP THEIR CAREER

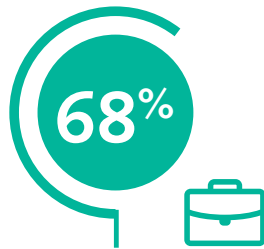
WHEN DO WOMEN BELIEVE A MENTOR IS MOST VALUABLE?



WHAT DO WOMEN LOOK FOR IN A MENTOR?



SOMEONE IN A MORE SENIOR ROLE



SOMEONE IN THE SAME PROFESSION



SOMEONE OF THE SAME GENDER

28%
OF MENTORS DID NO PREPARATION FOR THEIR ROLE



OF WOMEN FELT THAT THEIR MENTOR DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WAS A GOOD USE OF THEIR TIME



OF EMPLOYERS SAID MENTORING PROGRAMMES ARE IMPORTANT WHEN ATTRACTING CANDIDATES



DO NOT OFFER ANY SUCH SCHEMES

THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Mentoring schemes are regarded by women in professional disciplines as one of the most important strategies for achieving career development.

94% of those surveyed said that mentoring programmes were important, compared to just 67% who valued fast track career progression schemes and 75% who valued formal networking opportunities.

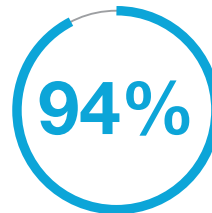
The popularity of mentoring programmes is further reinforced by the fact that some professionals are prepared to organise and fund them privately. Our study found that 14% of professionals had paid for mentoring and career coaching themselves.

According to our survey respondents, the greatest value mentoring schemes can offer is helping women achieve career progression (77%). 63% also said that these programmes were important to help them improve their professional confidence and 62% said that they offered a valuable opportunity to learn from someone else's success. 53% of women also said that mentoring programmes offered a useful opportunity to help them build relationships with senior stakeholders within their organisation.

However, despite this, just 32% said that their employer currently offered a networking programme and 18% of employers offered no career development initiatives whatsoever. In addition, among employers, just half (56%) felt that senior managers in their organisation would support the implementation of a mentoring programme at their company.

WHAT CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO WOMEN?

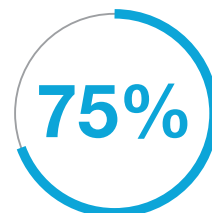
MENTORING OR CAREER COACHING



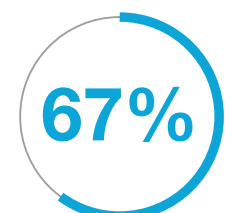
LEADERSHIP TRAINING



NETWORKING EVENTS



FAST TRACK CAREER PROGRESSION SCHEMES





18%

**OF EMPLOYERS OFFER
NO CAREER DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVES WHATSOEVER**



“ WHEN CONSIDERING WHICH MENTORING PROGRAMMES CAN OFFER THE MOST VALUE, EMPLOYERS SHOULD CONSIDER INVOLVING PEOPLE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE BUSINESS.

Consulting with staff can help gain perspectives on which mentoring programmes are most likely to see high levels of engagement and add the most value.

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JANINE BLACKSLEY – ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT ROBERT WALTERS

DEVELOPING A MENTORING PROGRAMME

In order to ensure that a mentoring programme is effective, employers should develop a clear plan as to how such a scheme will be structured and what it aims to achieve.

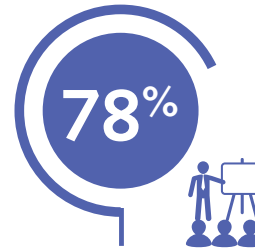
78% of women said that a mentoring scheme which connected them with a mentor outside their organisation was important to them, while 63% said that peer-to-peer mentoring, where they were paired with a mentor at the same level of seniority as themselves, was valuable.

Mentoring programmes for high potential junior staff or graduates were seen as highly important (75%). Notably, while gender specific mentoring programmes were seen as a priority by 64% of women these were not regarded as significant as many other forms of mentoring.

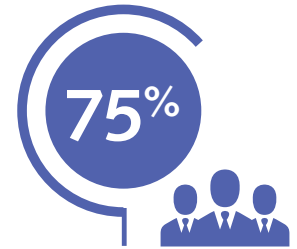
Mentoring programmes aimed at professionals returning from a career break were also considered important, with 59% of respondents saying that these were valuable.

Employers were most likely to offer mentoring programmes for high potential junior staff, with 48% saying that they had these schemes in place. However, just 16% of employers offered mentoring schemes to connect staff with a mentor outside the company and only 8% had mentoring programmes in place targeting professionals returning from a career break. Peer-to-peer mentoring schemes, where staff were paired with someone at the same level of seniority, were also rarely offered by employers, with just 30% saying that they offered these types of schemes.

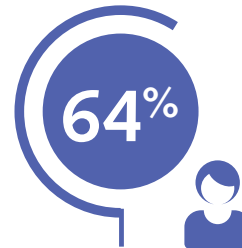
WHAT KINDS OF MENTORING PROGRAMMES DO WOMEN VALUE?



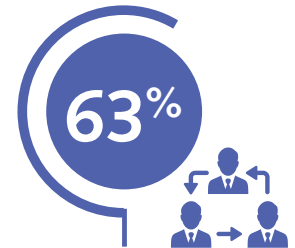
BEING MENTORED BY SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE BUSINESS



MENTORING PROGRAMMES FOR HIGH POTENTIAL JUNIOR STAFF OR GRADUATES



GENDER SPECIFIC MENTORING PROGRAMMES



PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING PROGRAMMES



PROGRAMMES FOR PROFESSIONALS RETURNING TO WORK

CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS WITH MENTORS

Determining how to connect a mentor with the person they are mentoring is an important aspect of planning and executing an effective programme.

While 20% of women said that they would prefer the freedom to select their own mentor without any involvement from their employer, 64% said that they would want their employer to provide a shortlist of potential mentors that they could choose from.

48% of employers agreed with women that they should provide staff with a list of potential mentors to choose from. However, over a third (36%) said that the employer should simply assign a mentor to a mentee based on their own assessment of who could best serve in this role.

Employers should also consider the potential value of partnering with other organisations to connect their staff with mentors from other businesses. 59% of women said that they would consider it important that their employer helped them connect with a mentor from another organisation.

When connecting people with a mentor, employers should consider the qualities professionals look for in a mentor. 68% of women said that they would consider it important to have a mentor who works in the same profession or field as themselves and 77% would prefer a mentor who was in a more senior role. 20% of women said it was important that their mentor came from another organisation.

Notably, just 13% of women said that it would be important to have a mentor who was the same gender as them.

WHAT DO WOMEN LOOK FOR IN A MENTOR?



A MENTOR IN A MORE SENIOR ROLE **79%**



HAVING A MENTOR IN THE SAME PROFESSION **68%**



THAT THEIR MENTOR HAS A SIMILAR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND TO THEM **28%**



THE GENDER OF THEIR MENTOR **12%**



PARTNERING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO BUILD CROSS COMPANY MENTORING PROGRAMMES CAN OFFER SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES FOR BUSINESSES.

By engaging in these types of programmes you can give your staff the opportunity to learn valuable skills from senior professionals in other industries and sectors.



HABIBA KHATOON – ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO MENTORS IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF A MENTORING PROGRAMME.

By determining the areas of discussion that are important for mentees, mentors can prepare effectively and ensure that they are able to offer constructive, considered advice.



GILLIAN OWEN – MANAGER

STRUCTURING A MENTORING PROGRAMME

When asked how often they would want to meet with a mentor, 62% of women said that they would want to meet once per month.

Employers largely agree, with 55% saying that meetings between a mentor and mentee should be this frequent.

When questioned on when they felt they would benefit most from a relationship with a mentor, 81% of professionals said that they would value it most when they moved into a management role. In addition, 68% of professionals felt that a mentoring programme would be useful to them at the outset of their career or when starting a role with a new employer.

WHAT DO PROFESSIONALS WANT TO DISCUSS WITH THEIR MENTORS?

Employers who are implementing a mentoring programme may want to consider advising their mentors on what they are likely to need to discuss.

Among women who had participated in a mentoring programme, 81% reported that they had discussed how to achieve career progression. How to address conflict at work was also an important area for many women, with 56% reporting that they had discussed this topic with their mentor.

WHEN DO WOMEN BELIEVE A MENTOR IS MOST VALUABLE?

WHEN TAKING ON ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OR MOVING INTO A MANAGEMENT ROLE

81%

AT THE OUTSET OF THEIR CAREER

68%

WHEN MOVING INTO A NEW PROFESSION

57%

WHEN RETURNING FROM A CAREER BREAK

44%



55%

OF EMPLOYERS FEEL THAT MEETINGS BETWEEN MENTOR AND MENTEE SHOULD BE MONTHLY



ATTRACTING CANDIDATES WITH A MENTORING PROGRAMME

Mentoring programmes are held in high regard among professionals and have the potential to be an important part of a strategy for attracting high calibre candidates.

61% of women said that an employer's mentoring programme would be important to them when considering whether or not to apply for a role. Employers also recognise the potential of mentoring schemes when attracting candidates. 75% said that they considered such schemes to be important in the recruitment process when looking to attract top calibre professionals and 64% said that they thought professionals would be likely to change jobs to find an employer who offered mentoring or career coaching.

However, the fact that 45% of employers said that they currently do not offer any such schemes suggests that opportunities to attract professionals in this way are being missed.

In addition to attracting candidates, mentoring programmes can also play an important role in staff retention. 77% of women who had not yet been mentors said that they would like to become a mentor later in their career and over a third (35%) said that they would be more likely to take a role if it offered them the opportunity to become a mentor.



**75% OF EMPLOYERS SAID THAT
THEY CONSIDER MENTORING
PROGRAMMES TO BE IMPORTANT
WHEN ATTRACTING CANDIDATES**

**BUT 45% DO NOT OFFER ANY
SUCH SCHEMES**



**DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF PROMOTING YOUR
MENTORING PROGRAMME WHEN RECRUITING.**

Given the high priority professionals place on mentoring this can help to give you an edge over competitors when looking to secure top talent. If you are working with a recruitment consultancy, making them aware of any mentoring programmes you have in place will give them the opportunity to communicate this information to candidates.



DANIKA JARMER – ACCOUNT DIRECTOR

BECOMING A MENTOR

For companies that offer mentoring programmes, providing support and training to staff who volunteer to participate as mentors can help to ensure that these programmes are as effective as possible.

However, just 48% of people who had been mentors received training from their organisation on being an effective mentor. In addition, 19% did their own research online while 23% asked other professionals who had previously been mentors.

Almost a third (28%) of professionals who had been mentors said that they did not do any particular preparation for their role, potentially hindering the effectiveness of any scheme.

Ensuring that staff are aware of the opportunity to take on a mentoring role is also important. While 53% knew that it was possible to become a mentor at their organisation, 12% were uncertain whether their organisation offered such an opportunity.

HOW DID MENTORS PREPARE FOR THEIR ROLE?



48% were provided with training by their company



28% did not do any specific preparation for their role as a mentor



23% asked other professionals who had been mentors



19% did research online



12% engaged with professional bodies for advice



53%

**OF WOMEN KNEW THAT IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO BECOME A MENTOR
AT THEIR ORGANISATION**



16%

OF EMPLOYERS OFFERED
MENTORING SCHEMES TO
CONNECT STAFF WITH A
MENTOR OUTSIDE THE
COMPANY

MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF A MENTORING PROGRAMME

When a mentoring programme is put into place, it can be challenging to determine its effectiveness as the benefits may not be immediately apparent. As such, it is important for employers to gain feedback from both mentors and mentees throughout the course of a mentoring programme.

Women are clearly in favour of having the opportunity to give feedback on the effectiveness of a mentoring programme, with 90% saying that it is important that they can do so.

However, just 47% of employers who operate mentoring programmes currently gather feedback on their effectiveness.

By obtaining regular feedback, employers can identify any particular weaknesses in their mentoring programmes as well as capitalising on their successes. This approach can even be applied by employers who have had mentoring programmes in place for some time. As the priorities of professionals change, refining and adapting a mentoring programme may be vital to ensure that it remains effective.



47%

OF EMPLOYERS COLLECT
FEEDBACK ON THE SUCCESS
OF THEIR MENTORING
PROGRAMME

AVOIDING MISTAKES

Ensuring that a mentoring programme is properly planned and structured so that the needs of both the mentor and mentee are met can help to avoid any potential problems.

Among professionals who had taken part in a mentoring programme, 12% said that they felt that it was a waste of time and 10% said that it did not offer them any notable benefit. By clarifying precisely what professionals want to get out of a mentoring programme, employers can structure any programme to meet these needs and manage the expectations of those involved.



OF WOMEN FELT THAT THEIR MENTOR DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WAS A GOOD USE OF THEIR TIME

Employers should also ensure that staff who volunteer as mentors are committed to their role. 7% of women felt that their mentor did not believe that the arrangement was a good use of their time and 9% were disappointed that their mentor did not commit the amount of time to the relationship that they originally agreed.



“

PART OF THE ISSUE AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF MENTORING PROGRAMMES IS A LACK OF CLARITY ON BOTH SIDES ABOUT WHAT THE PROGRAMMES ARE DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE.

By developing clear goals and arranging a calendar to confirm the date and frequency of meetings employers can ensure that these programmes are as effective as possible.

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LUCY BISSET – ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 1** Employers and women recognise the value of mentoring programmes, both in terms of upskilling staff and attracting new talent. However, almost half of managers do not believe that senior executives at their organisation would support the implementation of a mentoring programme. Engaging senior managers to demonstrate the value mentoring can offer may be the first step to putting effective mentoring programmes in place.

 - 2** Mentoring programmes come in various forms and determining which is effective for your organisation is an important part of creating a programme which can add value. Surveying your staff when developing a scheme will help to determine which type of programme will best meet their needs and help to ensure that mentees are engaged.

 - 3** The majority of professionals want a choice in terms of being assigned a mentor, but appreciate their employer recommending a selection of senior professionals that they can connect with. By taking the lead in identifying potential mentors in this way, employers can ensure that those mentors are committed to their role while also encouraging mentees to be active and engaged in their own mentoring relationship.

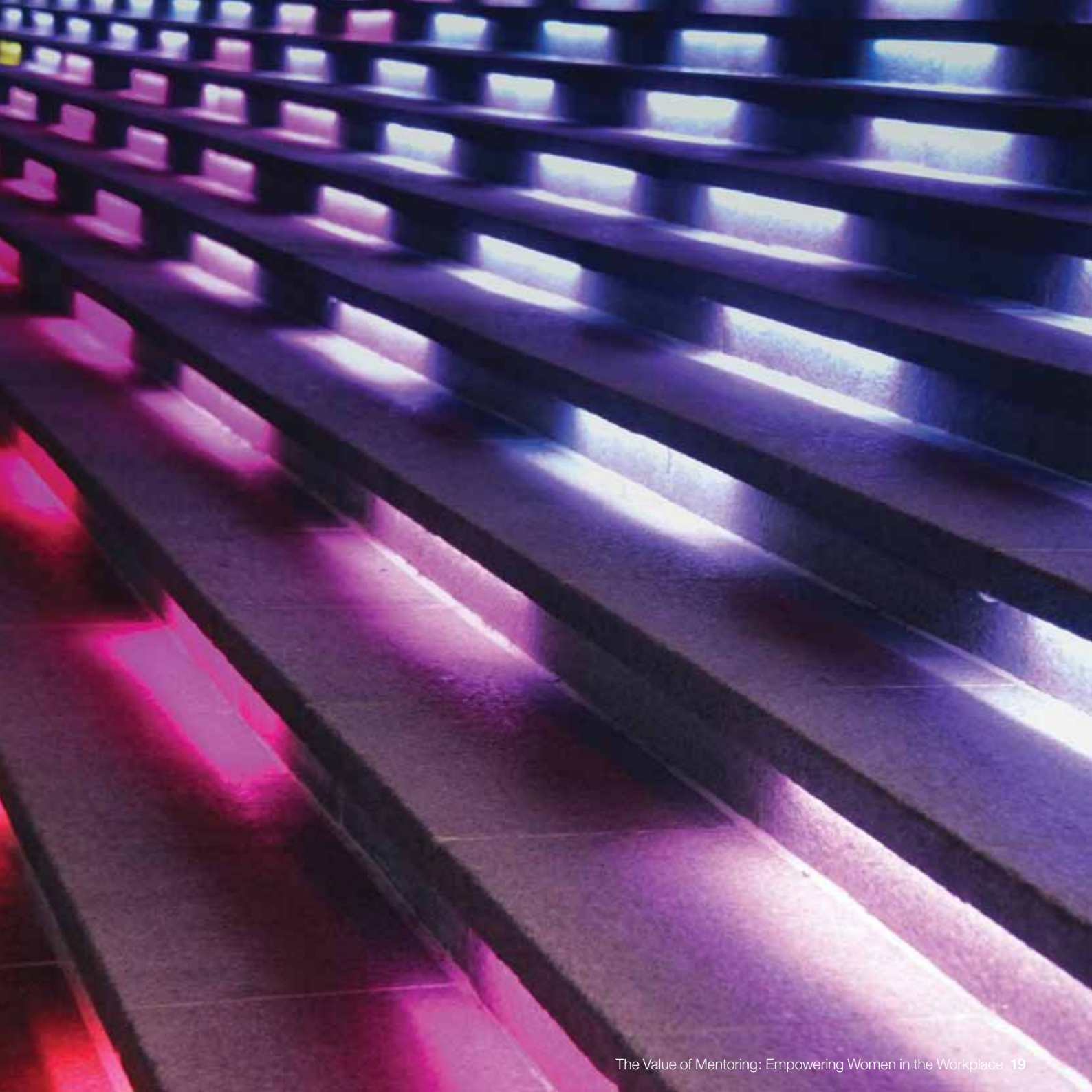
 - 4** Determining the practicalities of how a mentoring programme will work may seem like micromanaging but it can be highly effective in ensuring that a scheme runs well. By establishing a clear schedule of when the mentor and mentee should meet and providing guidance to both on potential areas they can discuss, employers can help mentoring relationships run smoothly.

 - 5** The popularity of mentoring programmes is clear and employers should leverage this when looking to attract candidates. Communicating the details of any mentoring scheme to a recruitment agency will allow them to highlight this information when promoting the role to candidates.

 - 6** Providing training and guidance to staff prior to them becoming a mentor can also help to ensure that mentoring programmes are effective. In many cases, professionals may have no prior experience in teaching or similar roles, and this may hamper their ability to effectively communicate their skills and experience.

 - 7** Employers should consider the importance of having a mentoring programme which is adaptable, responding to the changing needs of their staff. Giving mentees and mentors the chance to provide regular feedback will help you to refine a mentoring scheme to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

 - 8** Frequently, issues with mentoring programmes stem from a difference of expectations on the part of the mentee and mentor as to the purpose and structure of the programme. By clarifying at the outset the goals of the scheme and responsibilities of those involved, these problems can be minimised.
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CONTACT US

For more information about the Empowering Women in the Workplace programme or to discuss your recruitment needs, please contact your Robert Walters recruitment consultant, email us at contact@robertwalters.com or get in touch with one of our offices below:

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ABOUT THE EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE PROGRAMME

The Robert Walters **Empowering Women in the Workplace** programme is designed to create conversation and connect professionals, provide advice to help women achieve career success, as well as deliver insight to employers and businesses on how they can best create strategies and policies to ensure gender diversity in the workplace.

www.robertwalters.co.uk/empoweringwomen

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