7 Introduction

Setting up and running a mentoring scheme involves behind the scene tasks upon which not only the success of the particular initiative depends, but also probably the reputation of mentoring within the organisation for the foreseeable future. Mentoring is often still one of those ‘fringe’ organisational activities which depends upon good feedback from all stakeholders in order to survive and thrive, and the programme manager is a critical part of this equation. If the infrastructure of a mentoring programme is solid, then it can take a few mismatched relationships or frustrations.

This section looks at the tasks involved in setting up and running a scheme, including getting the buy-in from the business to support it. It is important not to underestimate the amount of time it can take, initially and once the scheme is up and running. A further point is that if the first mentoring programme is a success, it is likely that word will get out and other parts of the organisation will also want to do it. This is a great outcome, as long as there is an infrastructure to support it. The clearer the setup for the first scheme, the better the chances of mentoring spreading through the organisation to become part of the culture. It is important to make it as easy as possible for other people to replicate the original process for setting up and running a mentoring scheme. The critical stages to this, which are covered in this section, are:

- ▶ Influencing key stakeholders
- ▶ Marketing the scheme
- ▶ Defining the mentoring process and planning
- ▶ The matching process
- ▶ Training the participants
- ▶ Maintaining, concluding and developing a scheme
- ▶ Evaluation and review of the scheme
- ▶ A summary of scheme manager activities.

Much of the literature around learning shows that the most cost-effective and powerful learning interventions are often mentoring, coaching and action learning. This and the large number of company case studies available should help you put a business case together. Useful references to support your case include Hamel et al. (1996), Wilson & Elman (1990) and Pearn et al. (1995).

J. Cranwell-Ward et al., *Mentoring*

© Jane Cranwell-Ward, Patricia Bossons and Sue Gover 2004