

# IS NOW THE TIME TO INVEST IN CREATING A MENTORING CULTURE?

One of the greatest truisms is that the world of work is constantly evolving. This has been the case ever since people first stepped out of the factory and into the office. One of the characteristics of the post-COVID era is the pace and scale of that change. Organisations and their leaders were forced to pivot 180 degrees on almost everything they once held true, from strategy to leadership style.

As the dust has started to settle, one of the significant shifts has been the need for organisations to find new ways of attracting, developing and retaining people. The talent war is well and truly alive. It poses an existential threat to many organisations that have not been able to adapt quickly enough to the new post-COVID reality.

This is why mentoring is becoming a popular methodology, as it can directly address these thorny organisational challenges. There are many examples of organisations changing how they approach their traditional people processes. The underlying enabler of these changes seems to be moving to a more conversational culture.

It is well documented that a lack of career development is one of the biggest reasons people leave organisations nowadays. Furthermore, a career and career progression look very different in today's world. Organisations have to think differently about how they move people around, what opportunities they can provide, re-think job roles and create enough development opportunities to keep people satisfied. Those organisations that can offer people a varied and broad career journey are the ones that are going to attract and retain the right people.

Another important consideration in the post-COVID world is that the workplace demographics have significantly shifted once again. We now have many different generations of people in the same organisation. All of them want different things out of work, given the different stages they are in, in their lives. From an organisational perspective, this drives a greater need for knowledge transfer and cross-generational learning than ever before.

Finally, the pace of change and the fluid nature of the modern workplace require leaders and managers to be able to communicate this change clearly and effectively. This requires them to develop excellent listening, questioning and feedback skills – the bedrock of effective mentoring and coaching conversations – to create engagement, commitment, and accountability to implement the latest strategy and shifts in organisational culture effectively.

These are just some topical areas that HR departments and organisations need to address, and mentoring can support all of them. We know there is a greater need for organisations to create the right culture, and as a result, we are seeing a shift in what organisations want to do with mentoring. Rather than just design a one-off mentoring programme, more and more organisations are asking how they can create a mentoring culture, a sustainable environment where conversations facilitate continuous individual and organisational learning.

## HOW MIGHT YOU ACHIEVE A MENTORING CULTURE?

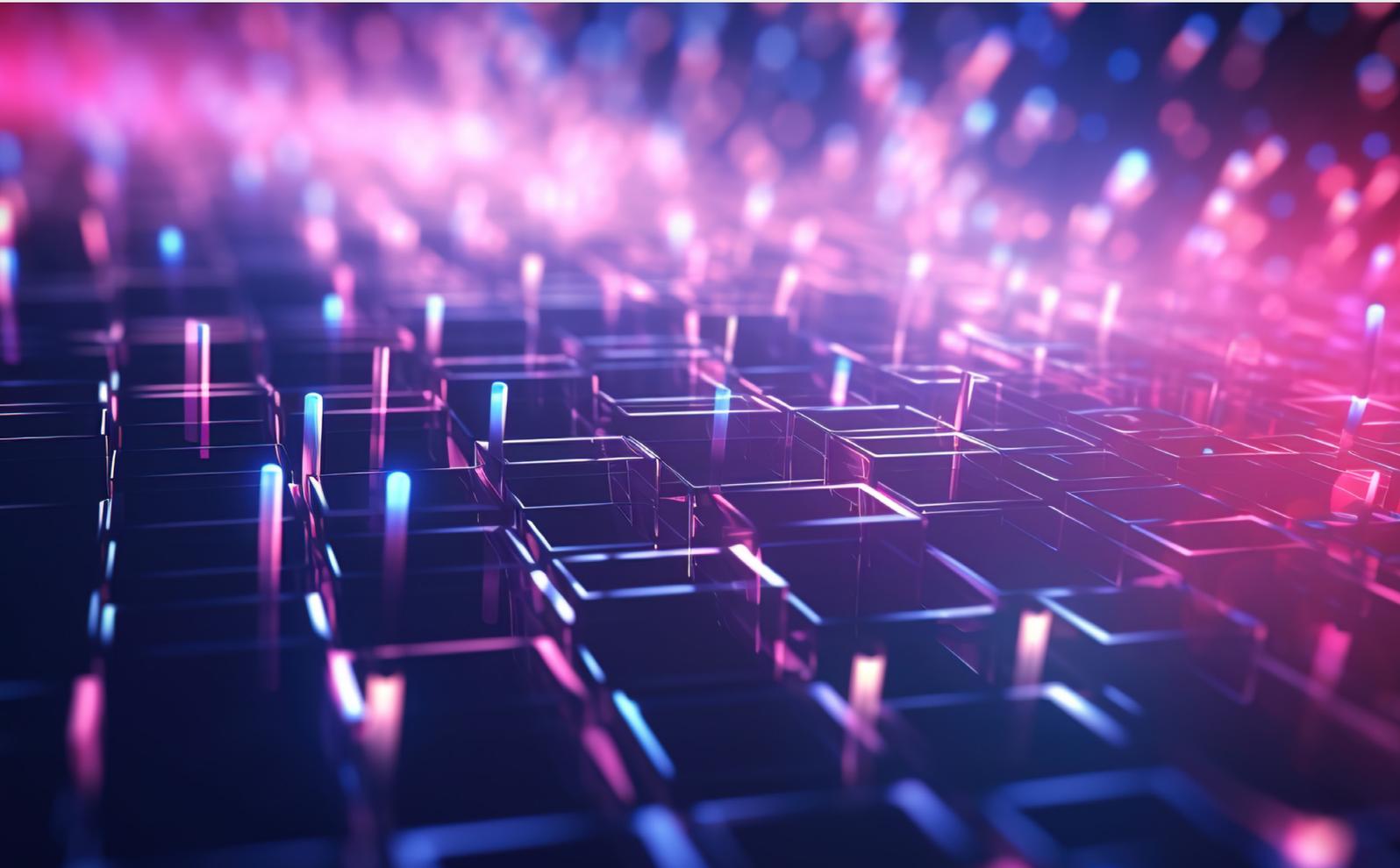
Creating and embedding a mentoring culture takes time and won't happen overnight. However, you will know when you have created a mentoring culture as you will regularly see and hear the following:

1. People of all levels are generous with their time and willing to pass on knowledge, insight and expertise to others freely.
2. Managers having regular conversations with their team about performance and development throughout the year.
3. A move from a directive to a more non-directive culture.
4. Employees at all levels have open, honest and supportive conversations, including giving each other regular feedback.
5. Employees own and drive their own career development and progression, leading to the emergence of more career and development opportunities.
6. Higher engagement scores around personal and career development
7. HR responding proactively rather than reactively to organisational learning and feedback with visible links between feedback and intervention.
8. Senior leaders talking passionately about the benefits of mentoring and how it has helped them.
9. Teams working collaboratively.
10. Higher levels of trust within the organisation.

What organisation wouldn't want to see and hear all of those things? We know that integrating all of the above into an organisational culture isn't easy and takes time, but if organisations are going to address many of the talent and leadership-based challenges created in the post-COVID workplace and tap into the potential of knowledge transfer across a multi-generational workplace, what better way to try than by creating a mentoring culture based on human conversation, one where mentoring sits at the heart and centre.

## HOW MIGHT YOU ACHIEVE A MENTORING CULTURE?

Our new Level 4 Learning and Skills Mentor Apprenticeship is a blended learning programme that develops core mentoring skills of questioning, listening and giving feedback for anyone with people development or leadership and management responsibilities. Learners will understand how to set up successful mentoring relationships, including how to monitor and evaluate progress, alongside a range of approaches to develop talent and support knowledge transfer, to name a few. Organisations who pay into the Apprenticeship Levy can use this to fund the course.



Contact Ed Parsloe to find out more about our apprenticeship and the other options we have for building a mentoring culture in your organisation [ed.parsloe@theoem.co.uk](mailto:ed.parsloe@theoem.co.uk)