Thesis for PhD Degree

The Mentor and the Entrepreneur

A study of mentors and mentoring through the lens of entrepreneurs

Marian E. Tye

Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship
Swinburne University of Technology

Supervised by
Emeritus Professor L. Murray Gillin

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Abstract

It has been estimated that in excess of 1,000 publications on the topic of mentoring have been produced in the last 25 years (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007) with the concentration of that work being in the three primary areas of youth, student-faculty, and workplace mentoring, and with the greatest proportion of that literature having its origins in the United States of America (Allen & Eby, 2007). However, despite the popularity of the topic and the use of the terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentoring’ being increasingly transposed to the world of the entrepreneur, particularly with regard to support provided to entrepreneurs through programs aimed at business development, little research has examined the concept from the entrepreneurs’ standpoint.

This thesis reports an exploratory study into the nature of mentors and mentoring, viewed through the lens of the entrepreneur.

The research approach involved in-depth interviews supported by an embedded survey, with 32 founder owner-managers of small or medium sized enterprises based in the US, Canada, UK, or Australia. The interviews, being the stories of the entrepreneurs, were fully transcribed and NVivo7 software utilised to organise and interrogate the data.

Analysis of the stories identified the sources of assistance for the entrepreneurs and, from those sources, who or what was designated a mentor and the nature of the mentoring provided. The findings revealed that the term ‘mentor’ was not freely used or lightly applied by the entrepreneurs in this study. Of particular note was the finding that only three of the eight Australian entrepreneurs elected to designate a mentor, suggesting the need for further research into cultural meaning of the term.

Five clusters of mentoring contributions made by the mentors were identified and named confirming, corporeal, experiential, attributional, and affinial. Whilst there were similarities with descriptions of mentoring in the literature, there were also subtle differences; in particular, the attributional and affinial clusters emerged to be points of difference as was the transactional nature of the activity. Two particular characteristics of the entrepreneurs also emerged, namely reciprocity and the ability to communicate and ask for help. When these findings were combined with the survey data, the nature of mentoring received from mentors and other sources of assistance could be identified for each entrepreneur.
Acknowledgements

Professor Murray Gillin, whose wisdom, encouragement and empathy provided the light at the end of the tunnel.

The entrepreneurs who provided such stimulating stories to explore and gave so willingly of their time.

All the business practitioners and general acquaintances who provided the assistance, insights and feedback along the way.

My sister Andrea, who flew to my side during the dark times.

And Paul, who with love and strength picked me up, dusted me off, to start all over again!

Declaration by Candidate

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed..................................................

Dated..................................................
# Table of Contents

**ABSTRACT**  
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. I

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................. II

**DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE**  
DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE ..................................................................................... II

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................................................... III

**TABLE OF FIGURES**  
TABLE OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................... VIII

**TABLE OF TABLES**  
TABLE OF TABLES ......................................................................................................... VIII

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**  
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................ 1

  - **PREAMBLE** ........................................................................................................... 1
  - **STRUCTURE** .......................................................................................................... 4

**CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT**  
CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT ................................................................................................... 5

  - **THE STARTING POINT** .......................................................................................... 5
  - **THE RESEARCHER** ................................................................................................ 7
  - **DISCLOSURE** ........................................................................................................ 9

**CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**  
CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK .................................................................. 13

  - **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK** ............................................................................. 13
  - **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK** ................................................................................ 14

**CHAPTER 4: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**  
CHAPTER 4: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .................................................................. 17

  - **COMPONENT ONE - MENTORS AND MENTORING** ....................................... 18
    - **History of mentoring** ......................................................................................... 22
    - **Definitions of mentoring** .................................................................................. 23
Categories of mentoring
Mentoring relationships
Phases of mentoring
Dispersed mentoring
Planned mentoring
Gender considerations

COMPONENT TWO - RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MENTORING THINKING

Research reflection and research opportunities

COMPONENT THREE - THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CONTEXT

Networks and the entrepreneur
Mentors and the entrepreneurial process
Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurial characteristics
Entrepreneurial personality
Gender and entrepreneurship
Gender differences

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

SECTION ONE – FRAMING THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Definitions
Research paradigms
Method informers
The case study method
Criticisms of the case study method
Corroboration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application of the case study method</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling considerations</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION TWO – THE DATA GATHERING PROCESSES</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of cases for study</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The preparatory process</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection process and protocols</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION THREE - DATA ANALYSIS</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on NVivo 7 Qualitative Analysis software</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to the analysis</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: DATA EXPLORATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE RESEARCH DATABASE</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER PLAN</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART ONE – THE MENTORS</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors revealed</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1 – Designating a mentor</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2 – Identifying the sources of designated mentors</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3 – Defining and categorising mentor functions</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of findings Part One</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART TWO – MENTORING</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results of the survey</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey scores: Mentor</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey scores: Associations</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey scores: Books etc.</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey scores: Courses ................................................................. 183
Survey scores: Customers........................................................... 185
Survey scores: Employees ......................................................... 188
Survey scores: Family ............................................................... 190
Survey scores: Friends ............................................................. 192
Survey scores: Peers ............................................................... 194
Survey scores: Programs ......................................................... 197
Survey scores: Specialists - Accountant .................................... 199
Survey scores: Specialist - Bank ............................................... 202
Survey scores: Specialist - lawyer .......................................... 204
Survey scores: Spouse/partner .................................................. 206
Survey score: Suppliers ........................................................... 208

Summary of findings Part Two .................................................. 210

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS PART ONE AND PART TWO .................... 220

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS .................................. 228

REVISITING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK ................................. 228
PERSONAL LIMITATIONS ........................................................... 229
REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .................................... 230

The sources of the mentors ....................................................... 231
The mentors ............................................................................ 231
Use of the term mentor ........................................................... 234
The mentors’ mentoring ......................................................... 238
Mentoring contributions ......................................................... 238
Attributes of the entrepreneur .................................................. 243
Other mentoring ..................................................................... 246

LIMITATIONS ....................................................................... 248
IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ................................................................. 250
CONCLUSION AND IMPACT ............................................................................... 251
REFERENCES .................................................................................................. 254
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATIONS ............................ 274
APPENDIX B: CASE SELECTION CRITERIA ...................................................... 280
APPENDIX C: COPY OF SURVEY INSTRUMENT .............................................. 281
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................................................... 283
APPENDIX E: EXAMPLE COPY OF TIME-GRAH ................................................ 286
APPENDIX F: CASE PROFILES (32) ................................................................ 287
Table of figures

FIGURE 1: SCHEMATIC OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ................................. 15
FIGURE 3: COMPARISONS OF MALE AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS (HISRICH, 1998, p.79, TABLE 3.4). ................................. 72

Table of tables

TABLE 1: SPREAD OF CASES ACROSS GENDER AND COUNTRY OF INTERVIEW ........................................................................................................ 90
TABLE 2: NUMBER OF CASES CODED AT TREE NODE ‘SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE’. ........................................ 108
TABLE 3: RESULTS OF NVIVO7 WORD SEARCH 'MENTOR'. ..................................................................................................................... 110
TABLE 4: APPLICATION THEMES FOR THE WORD 'MENTOR'. ............................................................................................................. 111
TABLE 5: MENTORS DESIGNATED BY CASE NUMBER. ........................................ 113
TABLE 6: SOURCE CATEGORIES AND THE CASE NUMBERS DESIGNATING A MENTOR(S) AT THAT SOURCE. ............................. 117
TABLE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF THE 23 CASES DESIGNATING MENTORS BY GENDER AND COUNTRY OF INTERVIEW. ......................... 118
TABLE 8: SOURCE CATEGORIES AND CASE NUMBERS DESIGNATING A MENTOR(S) FROM THAT SOURCE ................................. 119
TABLE 9: CASES DESIGNATING A FAMILY MEMBER AS A MENTOR, HIGHLIGHTING THOSE WITH FAMILY AS THEIR ONLY DESIGNATED MENTOR AND THOSE HESITATING BEFORE DESIGNATION. ...................................................................................... 129
TABLE 10: CASES DESIGNATING ALLOCATED MENTOR, HIGHLIGHTING THOSE WITH THIS SOURCE CATEGORY AS THEIR ONLY MENTOR. ........................................................................................................................................ 136
TABLE 11: CASES DESIGNATING ONLY ONE SOURCE AS MENTOR AND EITHER HESITATING TO DESIGNATE, OR DESCRIBING AN ALLOCATED MENTOR AS 'NOT A MENTOR'. ..................................................................................................... 152
TABLE 12: TREE NODE 'MENTOR CONTRIBUTIONS'. ........................................................................................................ 157
TABLE 13: MENTORING CONTRIBUTION CLUSTERS. ...................................................................................................................... 161
TABLE 14: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS OF MENTOR SOURCES DESIGNATED BY CASE. ...................................................... 163
TABLE 15: FREQUENCY AND VALUE % OF OTHER SOURCES. ———————————————————————————————————— 173

TABLE 16: COMPARISON OF FREQUENCY AND VALUE % SCORES FOR MENTORS AND NON-MENTORS*. ———————————————————— 175

TABLE 17: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY ASSOCIATIONS. 181

TABLE 18: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY BOOKS ETC. ——— 183

TABLE 19: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY COURSES. ——— 185

TABLE 20: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY CUSTOMERS. —— 188

TABLE 21: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY EMPLOYEES. ——— 190

TABLE 22: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY FAMILY. ———— 192

TABLE 23: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY FRIENDS. ———— 194

TABLE 24: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY PEERS. ———— 197

TABLE 25: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY PROGRAMS. ———— 199

TABLE 26: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY ACCOUNTANT. 202

TABLE 27: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SURVEY CATEGORY BANK. ———— 204

TABLE 28: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SURVEY CATEGORY LAWYER. ———— 205

TABLE 29: CASES WITH HIGH VALUE SCORES FOR SPOUSE/PARTNER ———————————————————————————————————— 207

TABLE 30: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SOURCE CATEGORY SPOUSE/PARTNER. ———————————————————————————————————— 208

TABLE 31: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, SURVEY CATEGORY SUPPLIERS. ———— 210

TABLE 32: % OF CASES (N=32) WITH HIGH VALUE SCORES (4 OR 5) FOR EACH SURVEY CATEGORY ———————————————————— 211

TABLE 33: % OF CASES WITH HIGH VALUE SCORES (4 OR 5) FOR M (N=23) AND NM* (N=9) CASES. ———————————————————— 212

TABLE 34: MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS IDENTIFIED FOR ATTRIBUTED HIGH VALUE SCORES, BY SURVEY CATEGORY. ———— 214

TABLE 35: SOURCES OF MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EACH ENTREPRENEUR. ———————————————————— 218

TABLE 36: SUMMARY FRAMEWORK OF MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS. ———————————————————— 241
Chapter 1: Introduction

Extensive literature exists pertaining to the topic of mentors and mentoring (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). To date by far the bulk of mentoring literature reflects activity in intra-organisational and corporate settings. The largest proportion of this literature and the resultant application of the term mentor in the workplace context had its origins in the United States (Allen & Eby, 2007). The limited empirical research reflects this aforementioned agenda. However, the principles and concepts applied to the term ‘mentor’ within such settings are increasingly being transposed to the environment of the developing entrepreneur despite little research being undertaken in this specific area (Waters, McCabe & Kiellerup, 2002). This thesis documents the process of discovery to explore the existence, or otherwise, of such significant others within the entrepreneurial context.

PREAMBLE

This research has evolved from my experiences in providing education and training programs and experiences for Australian entrepreneurs. The use of mentors in entrepreneurship education programmes, as well as a method of providing assistance to owner-managers and individuals seeking to start a new venture, is receiving increasing recognition to the point that it is almost de rigueur to include such an element in the offering of services. And yet, from my observations, whilst there is much hyperbole around the term mentor there is very little of substance written in relation to how entrepreneurs
themselves acknowledge mentors and mentoring, or attribute them as a source of assistance.

It was with more gut feel than encouragement that I embarked on an iterative process of gaining greater insight into mentoring in the entrepreneurial context. At the outset it was apparent that there was abundant literature on the topic of mentoring, and indeed colleagues made noises along the lines of the topic being ‘old hat’. However, the more I read and the more I observed and listened to the way entrepreneurs spoke of assistance gained along the way that they had valued, the more sensitised I became to the absence of the use of the terms mentor and mentoring. Going back to the mentoring literature it also became apparent that there seemed to be a transposition of mentoring concepts from work related environments and that the research was largely based on cross-sectional survey data, primarily emanating from the USA (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007; Allen & Eby, 2007). The language I read and the contexts in which it was set bore little resemblance to that of the individual entrepreneur.

I therefore decided to back my own intuition and embark on a means of capturing the stories of entrepreneurs in order, if nothing else, to satisfy my own curiosity. The research framework developed is articulated in the following chapter, but in order to best capture the insights required, particularly as I was interested in capturing what I could hear and see, it was decided to use a predominately qualitative approach complemented with corroborative survey data.
Having set off by seemingly beginning backwards, that is, identifying the sources of assistance acknowledged by entrepreneurs, finding out if any of these sources would, in the eyes of the entrepreneur, warrant the term mentor, and what if any mentoring could be attributed to the various other sources of assistance, new literature began to emerge which gave me confidence to continue, knowing that I would indeed be making a contribution to the body of mentoring research knowledge. The timing of this may have been more luck than good judgement (I like to think of it as good timing) but the result was considerable encouragement to complete my research.

In particular the work of mentoring research pioneer Kathy Kram and her research colleagues published in 2007 flagged the need to change paradigms and move mentoring research from the context of white, male organisational constructs to explore the meaning of mentoring in different contexts. To do this she advocates the need to include qualitative and observational methodologies into the research structure. Additionally, as the workplace becomes increasingly transient and turbulent, and away from the hierarchical structure of the world in which mentoring was initially constructed, the move to better understand the developmental networks of individuals is advocated. Although starting out hesitantly, wondering what could be added to the body of literature produced during the 20th century I was able to finish this thesis with confidence knowing I was adding to the new directions advocated for the 21st.
STRUCTURE

This report documents my journey of exploration.

- Chapter 2 - Presents the context for the research and includes the starting point, and an introduction to the researcher (me) and a disclosure of any pre-conceived preferences or baggage.

- Chapter 3 - Outlines the research framework, including the purpose of the study, the research questions to be explored and the conceptual and strategic frameworks that drive and action the process.

- Chapter 4 - Lays out the literature which informed the topic and its direction. It covers the mentoring literature of the last 20 years and the most recent observations regarding new directions for research in the field.

- Chapter 5 - Describes the methodologies employed, the rationale for their selection and the process of data collection.

- Chapter 6 - Discusses the data analysis process and the data findings.

- Chapter 7 - Discusses the results of the data analysis findings, implications, and limitations, and a conclusion
Chapter 2: Context

THE STARTING POINT

The context for the start of this research is the entrepreneurial small business sector in 21st century Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines private sector, non-agricultural small businesses as those employing less than 100 employees in the manufacturing industry and less than 20 employees in other industries (i.e. the services sector). At the time of writing, these businesses comprise around 97 percent of Australian businesses (ABS, 2002) and are therefore as critical a component of the Australian economy as they are elsewhere in the world.

In most instances, the key to the survival and growth of these enterprises is the owner manager. As far back as 1994, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training Employment and Skills Formation Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) report ‘The Shape of Things To Come: Small Business Employment and Skills’ (1994), concludes the reputedly high failure rates of small businesses are attributed to management skill deficiencies as well as reported difficulties in accessing finance. Australian small business owner-managers have traditionally been described as having low education levels, poor management skills in general and little expertise in financial management.

The Council notes that in addition to formal training, mentoring arrangements, whereby experienced business people provide advice to those starting a small business or owner-
managers of existing businesses, are being widely regarded as a fast, effective way to assist entrepreneurs and small business operators to quickly build up their business and management skills. Subsequent to the Council publication (but not necessarily as a consequence of its recommendations) the last decade has increasingly seen the emergence of mentoring concepts applied to entrepreneurial support activity, particularly for the start-up and growth phases of new venture formation, although the role of mentoring in this context has received scant empirical investigation (Waters, McCabe & Kiellerup, 2002).

Increasingly used, the word mentoring would appear to have become a generic term used to describe a source of assistance given to an entrepreneur by a more experienced practitioner (the mentor). Experiences have indicated that prior to continuing investment in the notion of mentoring and business mentor programs, there is a need to better understand how entrepreneurs have accessed help, particularly during the start-up and growth phases of their business, including the use (if any) of mentors.

For the purpose of this study the term entrepreneur implies an individual who has perceived an opportunity and created an organisation to pursue it (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991). Further, this study has limited the investigation to successful entrepreneurs in order to better understand how these individuals have accessed assistance in their journey to success. The rationale for choosing entrepreneurs who are owner-managers of small businesses relates to the lack of an in-house management team, generally available in larger enterprises, and
therefore the need for the individual entrepreneur to look beyond his or her business for assistance.

THE RESEARCHER

My interest in mentoring as a vehicle for providing assistance to entrepreneurs commenced in the late 1980s when, as a participant in an entrepreneurship programme, I was allocated a mentor. In many respects the relationship was both positive and productive. The interaction was hierarchical in nature, that is, as a person wishing to improve my business skills I was in awe of having an experienced, senior business-person willing to assist me.

Although capable of planning and identifying problems and needs, I always assumed that the mentor must know more than me. The relationship, at least from my perspective, was that of superior and subordinate, or, master and apprentice.

After three to four meetings a number of aspects began to intrude on the relationship. One was the need to have access to help and information on an ‘as needs’ basis. This was almost impossible due to restrictions regarding the availability of the mentor. A second was the changing nature of the business, as I wrestled with what it should be when it grew up. The difficulty arose from not being able to frequently share the developing picture with the mentor. The third of the major problems was working with someone whose experience was framed within large organisational constructs, compared to the needs of the sole operator to perform many functions simultaneously.
Overall, we enjoyed each other’s company when we met, but the mentoring role could at best be described as an occasional sounding board. It was only much later that I discovered the mentor had also been struggling with his role and had felt intimidated and confused by the term (mentor).

As time progressed my career became more focussed in the business of the design and management of entrepreneurship training. Included in this was the decision to utilise mentors in the learning process, mostly, with hindsight, as a consequence of the trend towards using mentor programs in organisational settings.

In 1994 my experience was called upon to develop a guide to assist managers of Business Enterprise Centres (BECs) in the setting up of mentor programs for their clients (i.e. small business owner-managers or people wishing to consider self employment). Despite being convinced that a planned mentor program, designed to benefit small business owner-managers through guidance from established business managers, was a constructive way to approach providing help to the small business sector, there always remained a niggling doubt about the actual, versus perceived, value of such an approach.

The opportunity for hindsight, provided when developing the guide, began to stir some questions not the least of which was: Considering the time and effort involved, is the development and implementation of a scheme utilising mentors an effective and appropriate method of providing assistance? In an endeavour to seek answers to this
question, I resolved to observe first-hand the experiences of others working in the mentoring field.

Mentoring programmes have been reported (Ragins & Kram, 2007) to be a successfully accepted and conducted (particularly in North America) means of improving and increasing opportunities for attaining employment, increasing business skills and enhancing career opportunities. Whilst mentoring schemes exist in Australia, the term (and therefore the role of the mentor) is often ambiguous and I resolved to use the opportunity of breaks during international business travel to visit a number of people involved with mentoring. This was undertaken on an informal and serendipitous basis in the late 1990s thus beginning what was to eventually stimulate this research.

Prior post-graduate research preparation and post-graduate research experience in both science and the social sciences gave me both the grounding and the confidence to develop a conceptual framework to embark on an iterative process of discovery, stimulated by the participant observations gained during the international visits. These observations (Appendix A) had a practical output of two publications based on the notion of a ‘portfolio of mentors’ (Tye, 1997; 1999a).

**DISCLOSURE**

Together with my background in developing programs of education for entrepreneurs the observations mentioned above are the insights, or perhaps baggage, that were brought to the
research and formed the base for the first phase of the research framework. As recommended by Miles and Huberman researchers should disclose their personal preferences, or preferred paradigms, so that readers should ‘know their conversational partner’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.4). Whilst preferred paradigms will be addressed in the context of the methodology (Chapter 5), it is important to state at this point that prior to the research I had already formed an opinion that individuals would benefit from accessing mentoring from multiple sources. Later to be defined as mentoring episodes (Kram, 2007), I had to remain cognisant of the fact that I might ‘see what I wanted to see’ in the data. However, having been well schooled in social science methodologies, I felt confident in my ability to be aware of and declare any bias as it arose.

However, unlike Denzin and Lincoln’s (2003) assertion that the research questions lead to the paradigm, Hindle (2004) argues that personal preferences, or axiology, of the researcher may lead them to adopt a paradigm which results in them defining the types of research questions they might be interested in attempting to answer. I put up my hand to admit to this second line of thinking as I wanted to find out answers to the how, why and particularly who type questions associated with mentors and entrepreneurs. It was with great relief that Gartner and Birley (2002) had already paved the way for the justification of a qualitative approach in entrepreneurship research, saving me the long task of explaining what could possibly be seen as a one-eyed view, but in reality is the need to get into the world of the entrepreneur:

*It is our opinion that many substantive issues in entrepreneurship are rarely addressed, and that many of the important questions in entrepreneurship can*
only be asked through qualitative methods and approaches. This is not to suggest that the quantitative studies currently published in our scholarly journals are deficient in some manner, but rather, that quantitative studies are what they are: numbers-counts, accumulations, averages, deviations, etc. The rules and procedures for engaging in quantitative research are, for the most part, institutionalised and accepted as the standard for how academic scholars will agree that a finding is fact, rather than an opinion.

We believe that quantitative research has tended to drive out what for us would often seem to be common sense, i.e., some concern for the intuitions we have in our experiences of working with and studying entrepreneurs. Moreover, this averaging process is curious since the study of entrepreneurship involves the process of identifying and understanding the behaviour of the ‘outliers’ in the community – the entrepreneurs. To us the ‘numbers’ do not seem to add up to what would seem to be a coherent story of what we believe to be the nature of entrepreneurship, as experienced. We are not suggesting that the debate is between entrepreneurship research that is descriptive vs. Research that is theoretical, or that we think that qualitative research is ‘good’ scholarship. This is not a debate about whether qualitative research is more ‘truthful’ than quantitative research. Our inkling about quantitative research is more of: ‘There is something missing here’. Some questions simply do not get asked, or cannot be asked, when undertaking quantitative studies’ (Gartner & Birley, 2002, pp. 387-388).

Aside from feeling confident and competent in working in both quantitative and qualitative modes, I admit a preference for undertaking qualitative research. When considering why this should be so I believe it to be because I am not a ‘straw man’ type of person – I don’t put up ideas in order to have something to aim at or knock down, but rather I doodle and therefore have a natural leaning to collecting and analysing data using techniques that allow concepts or theory to emerge over time.

Time, as events turned out, was something that suddenly took on a whole new meaning during the course of this research. Whilst personally confronting and challenging to deal
with, the time taken for recuperation from illness was in itself an unwitting attribute to the relevance of this study, for the literature which emerged in parallel with the recommencement of the final stages justified and gave confidence to both the topic and the processes followed.
Chapter 3: The Research Framework

Despite the widespread acceptance of mentoring as a means for assisting an individual’s development, most examples of mentoring in the business context are those that exist in an organisational environment and/or form part of a structured program.

Increasingly, the term mentor is being applied to individuals and programs providing assistance to entrepreneurs. There is need to better understand how successful entrepreneurs have accessed assistance from others during the start up and growth phases of their business and, in particular, the nature of relationships with individuals acknowledged as mentors.

A conceptual framework was developed from both the experience of the writer and preliminary exploration of the literature.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The specific research questions shaping the initial conceptual framework were as follows.

For entrepreneurs, who are founder owner-managers of small to medium enterprises:

- What sources of assistance do they acknowledge as providing help, in particular during the start up and growth phases of their business?

- Are any of these sources designated as mentors?
• Why are these sources considered mentors – what is the nature of the mentoring received?

• What is the nature and value attributed to the mentoring received from sources of assistance other than those designated mentors?

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A strategic framework was formulated to identify methodologies suited to:

• Building upon the researcher's experience and knowledge
• Utilising prior theory obtained through the literature and gaining new insights.
• Gathering information pertaining to the specific research questions originating from the conceptual framework

A decision was made to address the propositions utilising a four-phase approach each with a specific aim:

• Phase 1 - obtaining insights from participant-observations and the literature, relating to mentors, mentoring and the entrepreneurial process.
• Phase 2 – establishing relevancy and protocols for data gathering
• Phase 3 - gathering information relating to sources attributed with assisting selected entrepreneurs.
• Phase 4 - exploring and synthesising the data and its findings.

As suggested in the strategic framework, the study utilised a combination of both inductive and deductive processes, moving along a continuum between the two extremes. Preliminary
investigations (Phase 1) entailed inductive reasoning utilising the tacit decisions of the researcher, in an effort to accumulate sensitising concepts and increase theoretical sensitivity (Jensen & Janowski, 1991) in relation to mentoring and entrepreneurs. These investigations commenced with the exploration (through prior participant-observation) of current practices in providing assistance to small to medium size businesses through mentor schemes, and through extensive reading. Phase 2 commenced with preparatory discussions and workshops with individual entrepreneurs in order to establish the relevancy and protocols for gathering data, the results of which produced the interview guide, supporting tool and the survey instrument. Phase 3 comprised the identification of 32 cases and subsequent data gathering and the final phase (Phase 4) involved the systematic exploration of the data which focussed on the nature of mentors and mentoring through the lens of the entrepreneurs. Figure 1 outlines the resultant schematic of the strategic framework.
This study, whilst fitting within the interpretive paradigm, has combined both inductive and deductive processes. The ‘spinning top’ configuration of the strategic framework illustrates three aspects of the design of this study:

1. The accumulation and then refinement of information related to the research propositions - illustrated by the overall shape

2. The acknowledgment that the data collection will both benefit from and be influenced by preceding experiences - represented by the iterative nature of the spiral.

3. The capacity for the study to remain dynamic in order to be flexible in its progress and focus - captured by the turning motion

The aim has been to achieve a balance of inductive and deductive processes in order to benefit from both existing theory and the development of new knowledge. Justification of this choice of methodology, together with specific details regarding procedures, is outlined in Chapter 5.
Chapter 4: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this research was to gain greater insight into the concept of mentors and mentoring within the entrepreneurial context. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, it has been observed that whilst extensive literature has been generated regarding mentors and mentoring within an organisational context, little exists pertaining to the concept of mentoring within the entrepreneurial context.

The literature reviewed is therefore drawn from mentoring literature from the last two decades of the 20th century which laid the ground work for much of the activity in action today, followed by the call for new thinking in the 21st century. The context of the individual entrepreneur is then considered.

CHAPTER PLAN

The objective of the review is to set the scene of the work and thinking to date in order to inform, justify and ground this research. The chapter follows the three components.

Component One examines literature of the two decades to the end of the 20th century. The component examines mentors and mentoring and groups the literature into sub-components relating to:

- History of mentoring
- Definitions of mentoring
- Categories of mentoring
• Mentoring relationships
• Phases of mentoring
• Dispersed mentoring
• Planned mentoring
• Gender considerations

**Component Two** examines literature of the new century. The readings reflect recent developments in mentoring thinking and in particular research reflection and research opportunities.

**Component Three** examines literature relating to the entrepreneurial context. Sub-components include:

• Networks and the entrepreneur
• Mentors and the entrepreneurial process
• Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship
• Entrepreneurial characteristics
• Entrepreneurial personality
• Gender and entrepreneurship
• Gender differences

A summary provides a conclusion to the chapter.

**COMPONENT ONE - MENTORS AND MENTORING**

The interest in mentoring initially achieved prominence in the period 1975 – 1990 when it was estimated in excess of 900 articles were written on the subject (Segerman-Peck, 1990).
The majority of literature in this period originated in the United States and has been the subject of study by many academic disciplines and professional groups (Carsrud, Gaglio, & Olm, 1987). Predominantly featured in the literature of this period are the traditional professions such as medicine, law, education and the general categories of government and corporate management. The next ten years saw a significant increase in the application of the notion of mentoring.

The rise of the mentor within the organisation is often seen as coinciding with the rise of the Human Resource Development movement (Monaghan & Lunt, 1992). Interest in mentoring was boosted significantly by the introduction of equal employment opportunity legislation, when mentor programs were identified as a means of addressing opportunities for women and individuals of minority groups.

A catalysing point during this period was the research and subsequent publishing of *Mentoring at Work* by Kathy Kram (1985). This publication offered a theoretical understanding of developmental relationships at work for both men and women. The book captured and defined the construct of mentoring, framed the theoretical foundation for the field and initiated a program of research that moved the academic construct into a household word. For the next two decades, and bringing us to the present day, scholars grappled with the myths and meaning of mentoring. In 2007 Baugh and Fagenson-Eland reported that their search of the PsychInfo database using the keyword *mentor* resulted in over 1,000 publications appearing in the previous 25 years, with over 25% published in the last three years of that time period.
A present day (2008) internet search using the key word *mentor* identified 50,100,000 references (www.google.com), key words *mentor program* resulted in 390,000, *mentor program entrepreneur* 310,000 and *research mentor entrepreneur* 160,000. On investigation the references include names of companies, press coverage, journal articles and in particular management related publications, and advertisements for individuals, companies and organisations offering mentoring services or programs as part of their business, employment or course of study. While such a search points to little of academic standing it is useful as an indicator of the prevalence of the word in today’s psyche.

However, as Clawson (1985) had already concluded over twenty years ago, the references portray mentoring as the best (and sometimes worst) thing to happen in career development and almost all refer to formal mentoring programs or some form of mentoring service.

The bulk of the literature of the 1990s was designed for casual reading, much along the lines of articles in life-style magazines and provides limited insights to formal mentor programs and is generally articulated from the perspective of the program coordinator, whose ongoing position may well be dependent on positive reporting. More recently mentoring has increasingly been associated with diversity programs and assistance for disadvantaged individuals, with works continuing to be based largely on the references of the 1980s and 1990s. Few academic references are specific to entrepreneurs, a conclusion also expressed by Waters et al. (2002) in highlighting the rationale for their research into small business mentoring.
A common theme running through the literature is that effective mentoring relationships provide career development and psychosocial support to the protégé. Much of the more substantial career and professional development literature (e.g. Bahniuk, Dobos & Hill, 1990; Chao, Waltz & Gardner, 1992; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Hamilton, 1993; Murray & Owen, 1991; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Viator, 1994; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004) has linked effective mentoring relationships with numerous beneficial individual and organisational outcomes. In particular, mentoring has been identified as perhaps the most important factor in the career success of women moving into senior management positions (Missirian, 1982; Limerick, Heywood & Daws, 1994; McKenzie, 1996).

To date, by far the bulk of mentoring literature reflects activity in intra-organisational and corporate environments. The past two decades has seen considerable activity in research examining the impact of mentoring at work (see Noe, Greenberger & Wang, 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003, for recent reviews) and at the start of the 21st century it was estimated over a third of the major U.S. corporations had established formal mentor programs (Nemanick, 2000). The mentoring literature to this point of century change largely relates to a traditional mentoring relationship, that is an intense personal exchange between a senior, experienced and knowledgeable employee (i.e. the mentor) who provides advice, counsel, feedback and support related to career and personal development to a less experienced employee (the protégé) (Kram, 1985; Noe et al., 2002; Turban & Lee, 2007).
The last decade has seen the general appeal of mentoring at the personal level and the emergence of mentoring concepts applied to entrepreneurial activity, particularly in relation to start-up and growth phases of new venture creation. However the role of mentoring in this context has received scant empirical investigation (Waters et al., 2002). According to Doughty and Dreher (2007), no studies are known to have explicitly hypothesised and systematically studied the moderating effect of industry or occupation, and yet assumptions are carried from employee environments to the world of the individual entrepreneur.

**HISTORY OF MENTORING**

The story of Mentor first appears in Greek Mythology. Carruthers (1993, P.9) provides a summary of the role of Mentor describing him to be ‘a father figure, a teacher, a role model an approachable counsellor, a trusted adviser, a challenger, an encourager’.

The use of the word protégé (from the French verb *protégér*, to protect) has arisen from the notion of protection afforded by Mentor to his charge and is used today to describe the recipient of mentor interest (Carruthers, 1993, p. 9). Development and protection of the protégé have historically been at the core of mentor activities.

Much of the contemporary work related to mentoring is founded on the work of Levinson who, with his colleagues, perhaps first popularised the concept of mentoring through publication of the book *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (Levinson, Klein, Levinson, & Mckee, 1978). In this work the mentor is portrayed as usually several years older than the protégé, possessing greater experience in the areas of need of the protégé, and who acts as a teacher, adviser, sponsor, host or guide, exemplar and counsellor. In addition, he (and
specifically ‘he’) should ‘support and facilitate the realisation of the Dream’ (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 98). The true mentor is viewed as a mix of parent and peer.

Although generally assumed to be a one-on-one relationship, Levinson et al. acknowledge mentoring can take a variety of forms and vary in intensity and degree. Mentoring therefore may be more complex than the primary (one-on-one) model might suggest. The true value of the mentoring relationship ‘may be realised – as with love relationships generally – after the termination’ (Levinson et al., 1978, p.101).

DEFINITIONS OF MENTORING

Levinson et al. (1978, p.98) hinted at the definitional problems surrounding mentoring, suggesting ‘no word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here’ and ‘mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles, but in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves’.

As indicated previously, mentoring has traditionally been understood as a one-on-one relationship in which a newer, less experienced individual (most usually referred to as the protégé, but occasionally as mentee) learns and obtains help from an older, more experienced individual (the mentor). However, time has seen changes made to the classical interpretation of the word mentor and the act of mentoring. In his 1988 review of literature on mentoring, Fagan (1988) concludes that mentoring is hard to define but easy to recognise and suggests that one of the problems in defining mentoring has to do with the ‘intensity of the relationship’. In Fagan’s (1988) opinion, when strict criteria are used to define mentoring, it is not found to be a common experience.
This reflects the findings of this researcher (Tye, 1999). In an attempt to determine how people responded to the word *mentor* the opportunity was taken during attendance at a mentoring workshop to ask participants to define the term. The group comprised 19 individuals (7 male and 12 female) who in various ways were involved in training for small businesses.

The findings were representative of Fagan's in as much as all agreed that there had to be a ‘chemistry’ in order for the mentor-protégé relationship to work, however, no two responses were exactly alike.

The following is the final summary of terms agreed upon by the group:

> A mentor is a person who shares, provides advice, listens, pushes, encourages, supports, inspires, takes an interest, shares their time, gives attention, clarifies a direction, gives suggestions for action, questions, pushes you past the point of procrastination, provides you with alternatives, can be trusted, provides constructive criticism, opens doors, guides, encourages, supports, builds self confidence, inspires, has attained a level of maturity, can empathise, is likened to a tribal elder.

When the ‘chemistry’, or closeness of relationship, factor was added to the above list, only 25% of the group considered they had a ‘true’ mentor - when the chemistry element was removed, 90% could relate to having had what they then described as ‘a mentoring experience’.

This echoes Fagan's (1988) findings of 30% reporting ‘true mentoring’ experiences whilst two thirds of the respondents claimed to have had mentors, when not required to consider if it was a ‘close one-to-one relationship’.
Building on this notion of the presence or absence of chemistry, Murray and Owen (1991) divide the literature into two schools of thought, one relating to the belief that mentoring can be structured and the other the belief that it can only ‘happen’.

Baum (1993, p.225) adds an additional dimension when suggesting ‘effective mentoring requires an intense, emotional relationship, in which the protégé is not only interested in work but also willing to become a new person. The mentor will engage a younger person so intimately because the mentor, too, can and wants to develop, by passing on some of him or herself to the next generation’. Baum contrasts this view with the generally less tempestuous mentoring objectives of formal programs which tend to diminish the relationship factor.

Much of the early literature and descriptive references characterise a mentor in terms of attributes (wisdom, experience, knowledge), roles (coach, guide, patron) and functions (teaching, assisting, counselling) and generally perpetuates the assumption that the mentor is a single individual.

Shapiro, Haseltine and Rowe (1978, p.54) suggest mentors are part of a continuum of career support relationships (referred to as a patron system) with mentors, resembling godfathers or rabbis, at one extreme and ‘peer pals’ at the other. In between are guides and sponsors. The extremes can also be defined as a continuum from elite, intensive, paternal and hierarchical, to democratic, less intense and less exclusive.

By far the most rigorous and detailed examination of mentoring, in the organisational context, is the work of Kathy Kram. Kram (1985) distinguishes between personal help mentoring functions (psychosocial) that enhance an individual’s personal growth and identity, and those that enhance career advancement. Personal help functions include role
modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship. Career functions include sponsorship, facilitating exposure and visibility, coaching, protecting and providing challenging assignments. In a one-on-one relationship, the closer the mentor is to providing all of the functions, the closer they are to Levinson’s prototype mentor. She also suggests that the range of functions served by a mentoring relationship may be influenced by the capacities and interpersonal skills of the participants.

**CATEGORIES OF MENTORING**

Some authors describe levels or categories of mentoring.

‘Good enough’ mentorship is the term used by Levinson et al. (1978) to describe mentoring which was helpful but not ideal.

‘Life mentor’ and ‘quasi-mentor’ are the terms used by Clawson (1986) to distinguish between those relationships in which the mentor had a comprehensive interest in a protégé and those described as career-only mentors.

Primary and secondary are terms developed by Phillips-Jones (1982) to describe two levels of mentoring, the distinction between them being the active personal interest, versus a business-like approach, adopted by the mentor.

Gray (1988) distinguishes three types of mentoring described as informal life mentoring; informal and planned career mentoring; and planned project mentoring. Similar in functions and roles, the three differ in terms of duration and focus. Gray (1988, p.10), unlike many others, does differentiate mentoring and coaching. ‘While each provides on-the-job training/help in the form of instruction, demonstration, opportunity to practise new skills,
and constructive feedback, mentors fulfil many additional roles and functions for the broader purpose of helping protégés to develop as people and advance their careers’. This view again leans towards the more personal involvement by someone adopting a mentor role.

Carruthers (1993, p. 11) summarises the variations in the definitions of the term mentor by suggesting that most mentor interpretations fall into one of two categories namely ‘those which emphasise the professional development of the protégé only and those which emphasise professional and personal development of the protégé’. Monaghan and Lunt (1993) call this first type of mentor a ‘contract mentor’, emphasising the short term, specific nature of the mentor’s functions.

The expectation of having only one individual as a mentor is questioned by some and it is of interest to note the implication of a protégé having several mentors, each performing a specific function. Fagan (1988) uses the term ‘diffuse mentoring’ to refer to a situation where an individual may be helped by two or more veterans (Fagan’s term) but who does not have a close one-to-one relationship with any particular mentor.

Caruso (1992) discusses mentoring in terms of ‘open’ and ‘closed systems. He highlights that much of the literature assumes mentoring is the one-on-one relationship between two individuals and that this is an unduly narrow view. Caruso (1992, p.5) suggests a more realistic view would acknowledge that the essential functions of mentoring are often provided through a dispersed system of social activities driven by the protégé.

On the basis of reviewed mentoring literature, Caruso (1992, p.68-9) identifies 20 primary help functions mentors reportedly perform and grouped them into the three broad categories of specific learning functions (teaching), general career development functions and
personal help functions. Caruso (1992) acknowledges that mentors may well perform other functions, but believes those listed are representative of the assistance protégés receive from mentors.

Applying this open system, Caruso’s (1992) concept allows for the possibility of the protégé seeking and receiving help from more than one individual source. It also insinuates the protégé has the opportunity to become an active seeker of assistance versus a passive recipient of someone’s gift of mentorship, expanding the earlier notion of Fagan (1988) that is, mentoring functions may be performed concurrently by several individuals.

This category of mentoring through an ever-changing series of dyadic relationships embraces what has been referred to as networking-mentoring (Khan, 1992). Characterised by information sharing and mutuality, the participants each assume, to different degrees, the roles of both mentor and protégé.

Within an organisational context, networking-mentoring ideally includes individuals from all levels of a hierarchy and provides protégés with a wider range of role models and leadership styles than available through the more usual pairing. It has been suggested that this form of mentoring better provides for women who may otherwise have difficulty in sourcing a single mentor and includes the notion of ‘peer mentoring’.

Kram and Isabella (1985) empirically investigated peer mentoring as a mentoring alternative and concluded that while there were similarities between peers and traditional mentors, peer mentors delivered benefits at all career stages but a traditional mentor was important in the early career stage of an individual.
MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Irrespective of the intensity, some form of relationship must be formed between two (or more) individuals before a mentoring experience can be said to have occurred.

Four ways of forming a relationship emerge as recurring themes and are best described as those initiated by the protégé; those initiated by the mentor; serendipity; and the partnering with a mentor through a formal program.

Formal and informal mentoring are terms used by Gray (1990) to distinguish between mentoring which occurs as part of a planned program in contrast to mentors and protégés choosing each other freely.

Zey (1989) has reported that the most effective relationships are those in which there is a free choice of partners, a view supported by the experiences of this researcher in the observation of numerous formal mentor programs.

The benefits of formal versus informal mentoring relationships were explored extensively by Ragins and Cotton (1991a, 1991b, 1993). In their research 1,162 men and women protégés were surveyed across three occupations (engineering, social work and journalism). The researchers examined both the mentoring behaviours performed by the mentors and the outcomes the protégés experienced as a result of being mentored.

The study concluded that informal mentoring relationships were much more beneficial to protégés than the formal mentoring programs, largely because the two groups of mentors provided quite different levels of career guidance and psychosocial support. Informal mentors provide higher amounts of career development functions, including coaching, providing challenging assignments and increasing visibility. Informal mentors were more
likely to engage in counselling, facilitating social interactions, role modelling and providing friendship.

Ragins and Cotton (1991a, 1991b, 1993) believe these differences between formal and informal mentoring relationships may result from the underlying differences in the actual relationships. The researchers note that informal mentoring relationships often develop because mentors and protégés readily identify with each other; the mentor may see something of him or herself in the protégé and the protégé may see qualities in the mentor they wish to emulate.

In addition, the mentors and protégés in informal relationships can be selective about who they wish to approach. Mentors are likely to select protégés they see as having potential and protégés select mentors with the desired expertise or connections. Such pairing is difficult in a formal program where the pairing is made by a third party.

The duration of the relationship is suggested, by Ragins and Cotton, as a further possible reason for the greater benefits of informal mentoring over formal mentoring. The relationship is generally of a shorter duration in the instance of formal mentoring, with a lesser commitment of the mentor to the protégé possibly resulting from a mentor feeling an obligation to mentor in a formal program. This lesser commitment may result in the mentor and the protégé never developing a fully trustful relationship.

One key finding of the Ragins and Cotton (1993) study was that individuals with formal mentors did not gain any career advantages over those not mentored at all. In contrast, those with informal mentors received higher compensation and more promotions than those both formally mentored and non-mentored individuals.
When contrasting the mentoring experiences of female and male protégés, Ragins and Cotton (1993) found that female protégés received fewer of the career mentoring benefits such as coaching, role modelling and social interactions in formal mentoring programs. Additional gender based differences were noted in the outcomes associated with mentoring programs. For example, male protégés with male mentors received most compensation, followed by female protégés with male mentors, male protégés with female mentors and female protégés with female mentors. In contrast to the compensation findings, female protégés received more promotions than their male counterparts, but without the corresponding compensations.

Ragins and Cotton (1993) conclude that, though well-intentioned, formal mentoring programs are unlikely to duplicate the strong relationships, based on mutual attraction and respect, of the informal mentoring relationships. They finally caution that formal mentoring programs do not appear to benefit women as much as men.

The notion of ‘chemistry’ re-emerges throughout the literature in relation to the formation and development of mentoring relationships and generally concludes that mentors can only function when protégés permit them to do so, that is, when then protégés seek input or are willing to listen.

Clawson and Blank (1990) expressed it this way ‘Subordinates concerned about learning from superiors or mentors should realise that, while they can learn from people they respect but do not like, fostering relationships with people they both respect and like will enhance the likelihood of learning on the job’.

Kram and Brager (1991a, 1991b, 1992) suggest that formal mentoring has considerable limitations by perpetuating the myth that fully developed mentoring alliances can be
expected. Other kinds of relationships with superiors, peers and subordinates can also substantially aid development. They suggest the implicit message communicated through planned programs is that one mentoring relationship will suffice in enhancing participants’ development.

Phillips-Jones (1982) has gone as far as suggesting that before seeking a mentoring relationship, protégés first evaluate themselves and identify what (in contrast to whom) they need, as some needs can be met without the help of a mentor.

It is also acknowledged that not all mentors are effective (Ragins, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1993) and organisational researchers have become more interested in examining the influence of a mentor’s behaviour on the quality of the mentoring relationship (Heinmann & Pittenger, 1996; Scandura, 1998; Eby, Butts, Lockwood & Simon, 2004; Lyons & Oppler, 2004; Allen, Day & Lentz, 2005).

**PHASES OF MENTORING**

In her earlier work, Kram (1985) suggests that a mentoring relationship progresses over time through periods described as initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. What occurs in the relationship over that time is described by Gray (1988) who outlines phases of mentoring during which the mentor-protégé relationship evolves. During the first (prescriptive) phase, the protégé is assisted by a mentor who tells them what to do and how to act. This may be of particular value when inducting someone into an organisation. Phase two is described as the persuasive phase. Protégés may demonstrate more initiative and mentors may find it more effective to be suggestive and persuasive rather than prescriptive. In phase three (collaborative) the protégé demonstrates skill application and problem
solving capabilities but still may require the guidance and counsel of a mentor for direction and confirmation. At this time the protégé is seeking greater independence. Subsequently, the fourth phase (confirmative) sees the protégé being more entrepreneurial with mentors encouraging them to develop and contribute new ideas to the organisation. The final phase sees the protégé complete their development and, in turn, begin to serve as mentor for new phase one protégés.

However, Gray (1988) also indicates that protégés may experience several phases of mentoring simultaneously, additionally, not all protégés will need to commence at the first phase.

Regardless of the number of phases, this model highlights an important characteristic of mentoring relationships, that is, they are transitional.

**DISPERSED MENTORING**

In commenting on the work of Gray, Caruso (1992, p. 52) posits that as it is possible for protégés to be in several phases at the same time, it is therefore reasonable to suggest that protégés may have more than one mentor at any given time, revisiting the contradiction of the myth of the mentor as a single individual.

Indeed Caruso (1992) develops a dispersed theory of mentoring in contrast to the conventional view of the mentor as one person.

Although developed with an organisational context in mind, Caruso (1992) opens up the debate on the roles and responsibilities of the protégé. The view of an ‘open system’ of mentoring, in which an individual actively seeks out assistance, quite possibly from a
number of sources, is one which has implications for mentoring in a non-organisational context and therefore of particular interest to this study.

Curuso suggests the following:

‘Many studies do not attempt any specific definition of the nature of the mentor, merely referring to the mentoring relationship and its help functions. Yet from a developing protégé’s perspective, the mentoring function may be provided by a combination of individuals and institutions representing a collective source of help. Since mentoring is described primarily as a relationship and not a process, one would assume that the help received by a protégé and the nature of the relationship activity depend on the relationship participants, their efforts, capabilities, and needs; the content of each relationship would be unique. By implication, fulfillment of the role of the mentor requires not only having the appropriate characteristics but also setting them into appropriate action by providing mentoring help to a protégé in a mentoring relationship. It may well be the responsibility of the protégé who needs mentoring help to seek the mentor’s characteristics and spur them into action. There is nothing inherent in the definition or general understanding of the term relationship that would limit mentoring to an exclusive one-on-one closed system’ (Caruso, 1992, p.65).

It may not be as simple as the individual just identifying a source of assistance, the implication of Caruso’s (1992) hypothesis is that the source would need to be communicated with in such a way as to be stimulated to respond with appropriate action.

He continues, ‘….mentors and mentoring relationships can be identified by discovering the source of mentoring help needed, sought and received by a protégé. Thus, the nature of each protégé’s mentoring relationship and extent of mentoring activity become variables determined by the needs of the protégé in his or her effort in seeking help, the needs nature and characteristics of the mentor and the protégé’s ability to identify mentor’s characteristics and spur them into action. The mentor, then, is that which provides needed mentoring help functions for a seeking and able protégé’ (Caruso, 1992, p.66).
Caruso (1992) is critical of research designs that oblige protégés to identify a single mentor as they do not attempt to determine whether protégés either need or seek mentoring help, or obtained mentoring help from a variety of sources. He concludes that to focus on one-on-one relationships is a potentially misleading way to examine mentoring. Mentoring as a protégé driven open system is one in which potential mentors are set into action once they provide mentoring help in response to a protégé’s request. Those who receive much of the help they need and request would be seen as participating in successful mentoring relationships. ‘… we suggest that mentoring occurs when a protégé, in need of help, expends effort to obtain such help and receives assistance’ (Caruso, 1992, p.83).

Viewed from the mentor’s perspective, Ragins (1997) suggests that mentor behaviours vary as a function of the composition of the relationship and posit the nature of the mentor-protégé relationship may influence the mentor’s behaviour, which in turn will affect the protégé’s realized career-related outcomes. ‘The mentor’s behaviour is influenced by the protégé’s needs, the mentor’s perception of the protégé’s needs, and the ability and motivation of the mentor to meet the needs of the protégé’ (Ragins, 1997, p.502).

**PLANNED MENTORING**

It is an opinion of this researcher that almost all planned (formal) mentoring programs, if successful, will assist participants with their career planning and organisations with their management planning. In an organisational context, a formal mentoring program is
intended to attract, facilitate and advance the careers of selected employees, for the benefit of the organisation. The act of describing the activities as a program may well influence expectations and therefore the likelihood of success.

The early investigation of planned mentor program case studies by Klauss (1981) highlighted that developing an effective working mentor-protégé relationship does not automatically happen and that considerable care and personal investment needs to be built into the establishment of such relationships.

A decade later, Caruso’s (1992) research suggests that protégés and mentors may well take a different view of the nature of their formal relationship. Caruso’s (1992) work identified that protégés believe the assigned mentors provide much less help than the mentors believe they provide. Mentors believe protégés make less effort to obtain help than protégés believe they make. Additionally Caruso (1992) suggests that protégés believe that a principal role of the assigned mentor is to act as a safety net and that the mentors were not the primary source of help.

Murray and Owen (1991) identified two basic schools of thought about mentoring that exist in the business world. One is the belief that mentoring can be structured or facilitated, the other is the belief that it can only ‘happen’. In Murray and Owen’s (1991) definition, facilitated mentoring is a structured series of processes designed to create effective...
mentoring relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the result for the protégés, the mentors, and the organisation.

The second school of thought identified by Murray and Owen (1991), is upheld by representatives who suggest that true mentoring is spontaneous or informal and caution that it cannot be structured or formalised. In this opinion, structured mentoring relationships lack a critical, magical ingredient. In this context Murray and Owen (1991) refer to a two-year study which concluded, ‘mentoring seems to work best when it is simply allowed to happen’.

The extensive research of Kathy Kram (1985, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1995, 2007), in conjunction with a number of research partners, has resulted in the identification of six core components for maximising the potential for success of a planned mentor program. Kram and Bragar (1991a) list these components as the need to identify and clearly articulate objectives, guidelines, training/education, communication strategy, monitoring/evaluation, and coordinator role. The authors conclude however that formal mentor programs present only one alternative with considerable limitations that must not be overlooked. Their survey data indicate the majority of relationships do not achieve the level of depth, scope and commitment comparable to what is experienced in informally developed mentoring alliances.
In arguing that formal relationships tend to be more task-focused, Kram and Bragar (1991a, 1991b, 1992) purport that what results is more a coaching function, without the long term impact on self-esteem and identity, characteristics of informal partnerships. They argue that planned programs should define themselves in terms of coaching objectives rather than perpetuating the expectation of fully developed mentoring alliances and encourage individuals to build a number of alliances which will support them.

Wilson and Elman (1990) draw attention to the development phenomenon; that is, as a protégé gains competence they may surpass their mentor, and reinforce the notion that a mentor relationship is not a life-time one, nor is it exclusive. Attention is also drawn to the possibility of some unintended consequences including the ability to stifle innovation through the passing on of obsolete or biased values and practices.

Nemick (2000), in The Academy of Management Executive, continues to reinforce the viewpoint of many over the last two decades. That viewpoint being that for many individuals working their way through the organisational ranks, a good mentor can be a valuable career asset. This body of literature suggests that not only do mentors provide their protégés with important career advice and emotional support, but they can also open doors that might otherwise remain closed. As a result Nemick (2000) suggests mentored individuals tend to enjoy more advancement opportunities and higher wages than their counterparts. He questions whether formal mentoring or informal mentoring affects overall value.
A decade after her original research into mentoring Kram’s (1995) work calls for additional research into how mentoring processes relate to the processes of organisational adaptation to a dynamic environment, given the current business climate of diversity and turbulence. She highlights mentoring theory is rooted in a world which no longer exists, a world of more stable and homogeneous organisational environments. To accommodate for this change, Kram (1995) purports more attention needs to be given to a variety of developmental relationships, in particular, how learning occurs in networks and embracing the concept of mentors as co-learners.

**GENDER CONSIDERATIONS**

Much of the early hyperbole surrounding mentors and mentoring can be attributed to events of the late 1970s and early 1980s which, as indicated previously, were stimulated through introduction of equal opportunity (EO) agendas.

The work of Reich (1985), which identified over 90% of participants (93% of whom were male) in an executive business development program had benefited from a mentoring experience, was one of the research papers that contributed to the myth that to get ahead, one must have a mentor. Reich’s (1986) subsequent work entitled ‘The Mentor Connection’ expanded this view to women. What is unclear in this work is the actual definition of a mentor versus an individual performing some of the mentoring functions.
Other studies identify gender differences in the mentoring experience. Reich (1986), observing both similarities and differences, noted that females in mentoring relationships were more likely than males to report benefits to gains related to self-confidence, useful career advice, counselling on company politics and feedback about weaknesses. McKeen and Burke (1988, p.33) went as far as to say that ‘for women, the mentoring process might be even more critical for success than it is for men’. Burke (1984) reported that females indicated mentors served more psychosocial functions whilst their male counterparts reported their mentors influenced career choices. As with a number of comparative studies, results have limited application due to the generally (comparatively) small sample size for women.

In examining this push for mentoring as a solution for advancing women in organisations, Noe (1998a,1988b), resulting from his review of literature available to that date, formed the opinion that the number of mentorships available to women had not kept pace with the increasing number of women needing mentors. The barriers to cross-gender mentoring identified by Noe (1988b), continue to form the basis of subsequent reviews and research related to women and mentoring. Two of the barriers identified are particularly applicable to women outside a formal organisational structure and include lack of access to information networks (and/or the lack of knowledge to form informal networks, and/or preference to network with individuals of similar status) and norms regarding cross-gender relationships.
In their examination of why mentoring can be critical to the success of women managers and professionals, the research of Burke and McKeen (1990) progressed the examination of why it is more difficult for women to find mentors than it is for men. The research concluded with more questions than conclusive findings most specifically, related to the non-organisational context, who or what makes an effective mentor and what factors explain the spontaneous formation of mentor relationships for men and women.

The perceived barriers to gaining a mentor were researched by Ragins and Cotton (1991a, 1991b, 1993). The findings, resulting from responses to 510 surveys (229 women, 281 male) administered in three US research and development organisations, indicated that although the women reported more perceived barriers than men, they did not differ from men in reporting fears in adopting an assertive role to initiate mentoring relationships. This finding does not support the typical gender role stereotypes which would prescribe women as being more passive in initiating relationships. The greater perception of perceived barriers to gaining a mentor for women could well be attributable to the requirement of developing cross-gender mentor relationships due to the shortage of female mentors. Age is introduced as an additional barrier for older women, by Paludi, Meyers, Kindermann, Speicher, and Haring-Hidore (1990).

In response to the enthusiasm being displayed for mentoring and especially for women which LaFrance (1987, p.1) referred to as ‘one of the most notable phenomena in professional women’s circles has been the rapid dispersion and acceptance of the mentoring
notion’, attention has also been drawn to the ‘problems, paradoxes and prospects for women and the mentoring process’ (LaFrance, 1987, p.1). Amongst the paradoxes, LaFrance (1987, p.7) discusses a number of hypotheses including ‘the extent that women receive the mentoring that they need they will be seen as needing the mentoring they get’. This pertains to the possible perception that women lack competence and therefore must need support to move ahead. Over dependence on a mentor at the expense of building other weak-tie connections (in contrast to men who continuously build a wide network of linkages) is a second paradox noted. This, LaFrance suggests, may leave women vulnerable if the relationship were to end and risks isolating them from peers and other contacts. Mentoring tends to downplay the importance of other connections. The process of mentoring can also build dependency and duplication at the expense of vision and alternatives.

Amongst these problems is the notion of socialisation, where the mentor is usually older and male, and both parties see the woman as the protégé but never as the equal or partner. Access to women mentors is made difficult due to the shortage of women in higher status positions. Those women making themselves available as mentors are frequently overloaded by explicit and implicit requests for their assistance. The female mentor is also expected to be ‘special in every way’, an onus not attributed to their male counterparts. As a result, women often discover that mentoring relationships with other women are seldom satisfying (Parker & Kram, 1995).
Building on the original work of Kram and Isabella (1985) and Noe (1988a, 1988b) it has been suggested that peer relationships may be as important to women as mentoring relationships and may even be preferable. The notion of peer relationships brings the concept of networks, discussed earlier, once again to the fore.

As stated previously, networks link individuals to broader social structures such as occupations, markets and economic sectors. These networks comprise close relationships (family, friends) and non-close interactions, referred to as ‘weak ties’ in the leading work of Granovetter (1973; 1982). Central to Granovetter’s strength of weak-tie argument, is the importance of the range and diversity of the contacts within an individual’s network. Weak ties are more valuable than strong ties because they connect a person to individuals unlike themselves, resulting in access to diverse information. Strong ties are connections with family and other close acquaintances which result in the perpetuation of shared knowledge and values rather than exposure to diverse information.

Campbell (1988) examined gender differences in networks in relation to occupational outcomes. Citing the work of several authors, Campbell builds on the findings that women’s networks have a tendency to comprise a higher proportion of kin compared to men’s networks and women belong to fewer and smaller business organisations. As a result, women would be restricted in access to network resources, revisiting a point highlighted earlier as a barrier to finding a mentor (Noe, 1988a). Smeltzer & Fann (1989), in their study of small business owners, noted that while none of their female subjects
mentioned membership in a male formal network, they were making a special effort to gain information from and share information with other women, preferring a more reciprocal relationship.

The main differences between networking and mentoring are the intensity of the relationship, the hierarchical position of the mentor and the unequal nature of the exchange (Limerick et al., 1994). It has been questioned whether, given their own devices, women would actually chose to form a hierarchical relationship such as mentoring (McKeen & Burke, 1989). Swoboda and Miller (1986) went as far as to urge women to consider networking over mentoring because of potential hazards resulting from mentoring relationships such as sexual innuendo and participation in a non egalitarian relationship. Even Levinson et al. (1978) alluded to relationships that dissolved into bitterness and unfulfilled expectations.

Peer relationships may offer an alternative and be preferred by women (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Shapiro et al., 1978) however, given the findings related to the composition of women’s networks, this option might provide good support and friendship but have limited power enhancing functions and restricted access to diverse information and perhaps supports the status quo.

It is, however, to be remembered that much of the research relating to the importance of mentors for women, was conducted within the organisational context. It is the opinion of
this researcher that it is the findings in this body of literature which continue to be extrapolated into the world of the entrepreneur.

COMPONENT TWO - RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MENTORING THINKING

Moving towards the 21st century thinking, Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007) note that despite the lack of formal research relating to formal programs many organisations have developed mentoring programs in order to capture the benefits of informal mentoring, and some formal relationships that endure beyond the time boundaries of a program may well evolve into informal mentoring relationships.

To recall, much of the mentoring research leading up to the turn of the century has focussed almost exclusively on the instrumental role of mentoring in career development and the achievement of career success (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007). However, as Kram was flagging in 1995, if mentoring is defined to include the notion of personal growth it supports research along the lines that mentoring is a relational activity (Fletcher, 1998; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Ragins & Verbos, 2007) or a sub set of social network relationships (Higgins & Kram, 2001). If mentoring is received from many people at any one time, fresh research needs to commence to consider mentoring from different viewpoints (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007). This variety of mentoring (or developmental networks) for any one individual has been called ‘mentoring constellations’ by Van Emmerick (2004). These constellations or
networks comprise two variables, being diversity or the number of contacts, and strength. Strength is described as the level of emotional affect, reciprocity and frequency of communication (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007).

This view regarding the need to initiate new research is supported by others. McManus and Russell (2007) also suggest that while much has been written about dyad (one-on-one) mentoring (Waneberg et al., 2003; Eby et al., 2004; Allen et al., 2005; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007), little is known about the value of alternative sources, such as peer mentoring. Citing relatively recent literature that suggests that in addition to mentors others such as family, work colleagues, friends and professional associations (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Eby, 1997; Higgins & Kram, 2001) all contribute to an individual’s development network, McManus and Russell (2007) support the need to better understand how potentially all sources could play a role in fulfilling traditional mentoring functions. This is reiterated by Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007) who add the concepts of team mentoring or mentoring round tables, as well as the introduction of electronic rather than face-to-face communication, to the list of sources.

As the role of peer mentoring and developmental networks is only just receiving attention in mentoring literature (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Chandler & Kram, 2005; Dobrow & Higgins, 2005; Molloy, 2005) new research is needed to address the gap between old theory and new practices (Ragins & Kram, 2007). In recommending future directions for mentoring research, Turban and Lee (2007) suggest researchers should gather data on a full
range of relationships and then collect more detailed information describing the relationships. Using this approach would allow researchers to capture the full range of mentoring relationships and provide a more precise analysis. This point is inherent to the rationale and approach of this study.

As the notion of a developmental network is considered as a relational activity, other aspects are emerging for research consideration. These largely stem from the move away from thinking of mentoring as a one way process (from mentor to protégé) to be based on attributes of relationships. Concepts to be raised include complimentarity, mutuality, reciprocity, and trust and mutual respect (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Dutton & Ragins, 2007). Complimentarity in this context is described as the complementary knowledge, abilities and skills which offset weaknesses (McDougal & Beattie, 1997; Miller & Stiver, 1997; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007) and also empathy or the mirroring one’s own experiences in another (Kram, 1985). Mutuality, or sharing things in common, was translated to mean the ability to trade roles of learner and expert (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Reciprocity is the perception of equal give and take in a mentoring relationship (Ensher, Thomas & Murphy, 2001). Trust and respect (psychological safety) are seen as characteristics of a context needed for learning to take place (McManus & Russell, 2007). Boyatzis (2006) identified two constructs of trust and compassion that have been examined in management literature but neglected in mentoring literature and research (Higgins, Chandler & Kram, 2007). Fletcher and Ragins (2007), applying the Stone Centre
Relational Cultural Theory (RCT), suggest the quality of a mentoring relationship is not derived from initial attraction but from the relational skills of those involved.

At the heart of developmental network or multiple mentor thinking, is the notion of developmental initiation or the ability of the individual to seek out and form relationships that will contribute to their development (Higgins et al., 2007; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). For example, an individual who exhibits high developmental initiation will frequently engage with others to ask for assistance, help, advice and feedback. This perspective is only just surfacing (Ragins & Verbos, 2007).

With the introduction of more diverse concepts of mentoring, the notion of mentoring episodes has become an important concept (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Mentoring episodes describe specific events when mentoring can be said to have taken place without individuals being in a mentoring relationship – that is, all mentoring relationships comprise mentoring episodes but not necessarily vice versa. This is highlighted as another area for future exploration in the context of developmental networks.

**RESEARCH REFLECTION AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

Over the past 20 years, since the publication of Kram’s 1985 work, mentoring researchers have studied a wide array of mentoring topics. A number of points that have methodology implications have been noted in the review of work of that time. Dougherty, Turban, and Haggard (2005) performed an assessment of the variety of definitions and approaches to
defining mentoring in empirical articles on workplace mentoring for the period 1990–2005 in the five major journals in which the majority of workplace mentoring have appeared (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). The assessment revealed many variations in the definition of mentoring. Many studies, whilst providing respondents with a definition for the purpose of the research, proceeded to ask ‘Do you currently have a mentor?’ This assumes that a) only current mentors are to be considered and b) the respondent only has one mentor, and c) that the person who provided mentoring functions was in fact a mentor (an example of a mentoring episode occurring without a mentoring relationship). The results of such research questions resulted in studies recording between 23% and 81% of cases identifying themselves as having a mentor, a likely result of differing mentoring definitions or characteristics (Turban & Lee, 2007). About one fourth of the studies reviewed measured mentoring functions using scales, without an explicit definition of mentor. These researchers avoided connotations associated with the term mentor however; the degree to which these scales ask about a particular mentor versus mentoring functions received raises the issues of whether the mentoring relationship or the mentoring functions (or mentoring episode) were received from a number of sources. It is likely that one agreed upon uniform definition would be difficult, but whether studies include or do not include specification of the scope of mentoring is likely to have implications on their results (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007).

In their discussion on methodological implications, Turban and Lee (2007) noted the influence of several internal and external moderator variables. Whilst the majority of
validity issues were related to career mentoring a number were of relevance to this study and include:

- **Positive and negative affectivity** of respondents – this pertains to the relatively stable characteristic of how people view themselves and the world around them in positive or negative terms. Respondent with high negative affectivity are likely to report having no help from mentors.

- **Correlation or cause-effect relationships** – i.e. relationships that can be generalised beyond the group in the initial research. In particular, little is known about the moderator variables such as gender, race, age, and social and geographical differences. Dougherty and Dreher (2007) note a striking observation that 81% of the studies in the review of Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004), 81% were US based samples. There were singular representations from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Canada, Singapore, Ireland and Hong Kong, and two from Australia. Geographical location may be relevant because of cultural-value differences in the definition of mentor.

- **Settings** – this refers to the organisational, industrial or occupational settings. As mentioned elsewhere no studies are known that have explicitly hypothesised and systematically studied the moderating effect of industry or occupation (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007; Turban & Lee, 2007) and yet assumptions are carried across from employee environments to the world of the individual entrepreneur.

In describing the paradigm shifts to have emerged through the works comprising their latest publication ‘The handbook of mentoring at work – theory, research and practice’ Ragins
and Kram (2007) summarise the paradigm shifts to have occurred in the 21st century to date. They note in particular:

- Over the 20 years the conception of mentoring has emerged from ‘constellations of relationships’ to an emphasis on ‘developmental networks’.
- An increasing recognition of the critical role that mutuality and reciprocity play in relationship structure, processes, learning and outcomes.
- The recognition that mentoring relationships fall along a continuum of quality.
- There is emerging awareness and understanding of the multiple and range of sources of support as a developmental network and the identification of mentoring episodes.
- The need to better understand how relational skills and developmental initiation contribute to mentoring relationships.
- The need to place research in context.

The book concludes with a number of recommendations for next steps. Included in these is the need for research which employs qualitative and observational research methods. The justification for this is the realisation that traditional methods (in particular cross-sectional survey, which to the point of writing comprised the majority of research) capture only a limited snapshot of what constitutes mentoring. ‘Qualitative and observational methods are critical tools for uncovering the rich array of processes and outcomes of mentoring relationships’ (Kram & Ragins, 2007, p. 684).
COMPONENT THREE - THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CONTEXT

NETWORKS AND THE ENTREPRENEUR

Whilst the literature relating specifically to research into the relationship of mentors with entrepreneurs is negligible, there exists a body of work relating to entrepreneurs and networks.

Networks link individuals to broader social structures such as occupations, markets and economic sectors. Hisrich (1998, p.75) states: ‘Since entrepreneurship is a social role embedded in a social context, it is important that the entrepreneur establish connections to these support resources early in the new venture formation process.’ The properties of these network connections are similar to those of a social network, that is, the strength of the ties between the entrepreneur and any one individual in the network is determined by the frequency level and reciprocity of the relationship (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Hisrich, 1998).

Hisrich (1998) recommends the formation of both a professional-support network, drawn from a number of sources including a mentor, business associates (including clients and suppliers), trade associations, or personal affiliations, and a moral-support network of family and friends.

Network range, or the diversity of others in a personal network, is central to Granovetter’s (1973, 1982) strength of weak ties argument and provides the basis upon which most
subsequent networking literature is built. The value of weak ties is the access or exposure
they provide to sources of new (diverse) assistance or information. Wide-ranging networks
facilitate an individual’s ability to reach well positioned contacts; they provide access not
only to information but also to people of influence.

Ventures are not started by people in isolation. Typically, vital roles, including finding the
idea for the business, are played by connections with other people, particularly during the
initiation, start-up and early growth phases. Birley (1985) was one of the early researchers
to identify the importance of networks. Her work entitled *The Role of Networks in the
Entrepreneurial Process* described informal and formal contacts. The informal contacts
occurred early in the process and include family, business and personal contacts with
family and personal contacts assisting with employees, location and sales, whilst the
business contacts were seen generally to be the most helpful in structuring the business
processes. The formal contacts comprised lawyers, accountants, bankers, government
officials, realtors and chambers of commerce.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) often have, particularly in the start-up phase, a
lack of management capacity. Many entrepreneurs overcome this by engaging the
assistance of consultants. Management consultant is a term usually applied to a service
supplied by an external and independent professional source, utilised to address a problem
or deficiency in the management of the company. The term ‘management consultant’ is
used to embrace many professional service providers and generally includes tax advisors.
and accountants, lawyers and technicians (Frank, 1993). Lawyers and accountants are the most frequently used external advisors however, significant differences in expectations for the types of service occur between the entrepreneur and the consultant (Knight, Johnson & Leduc, 1991).

Personal business advisors are individuals who provide advice in a number of roles, namely helper – where the advisor takes a hands on approach, facilitator – where the advisor undertakes a holistic analysis of the business and offers a range of solutions, and a consultant – which requires undertaking specialist tasks. The area of consulting help also embraces a number of other advice sources and includes government services, banks, industry associations and suppliers (Knight et al., 1991).

The importance of contacts was described by Johannisson (1986) as a way of gaining control of resources, particularly where formal contracts do not operate. Johannisson (1986) coined the term ‘extrapreneur’ to describe individuals who launch new ventures based on contacts made through previous employment. The crucial role of business contacts has long been known. But the varied and idiosyncratic nature of the type of contacts, including the fact that many contacts might have been established prior to the commencement of a venture being foreseen, has resulted in very few systematic studies being undertaken (Vesper, 1994).
Obtaining the use of other people’s resources, particularly in the start up and growth phases of a venture, is an important approach for entrepreneurs. It contrasts significantly with a larger institutional view where managers seek to have initiatives adequately resourced before commencement, usually including a contingency budget. The entrepreneur does not seek to own the resources, but rather have control over their access. The research by Woodward (1988), aimed at testing the general proposition that social networks played active roles in founding and maintaining businesses, also found that successful entrepreneurs spent more time developing network contacts. The research was based on social network theory which predicted that entrepreneurs would be successful to the extent that they could obtain adequate and timely resources through their social networks. Tapping into these resources (which may comprise a range of assets such as finance, space, equipment etc), is done through the entrepreneur’s network (Stevenson & Sahlman, 1992; Dubini & Aldrich, 1991) and is combined with the employment of social assets such as friendship, trust, liking and gratitude (Starr & McMillan, 1990), although neither the size of a personal network, nor the time spent in developing and maintaining the network have been directly attributable to the success of a business (Aldrich, Reese & Dubini, 1989). The use of advisors or quasi boards has been found useful and the entrepreneur can gain valuable counsel and advice from outsiders (Timmons, 1994).

However, an interesting issue arises with the belief that there may be gender differences in network composition. In 1988 Campbell (1988) provided a summary of the literature to that date suggesting women’s networks are composed of higher proportions of kin than men’s...
networks. This difference is attributed to both the opportunities for making contacts and gender-based preferences for certain kinds of contacts. However, Cromie and Birley (1992) found the networks of women entrepreneurs to be just as extensive and diverse as those of men and the women were equally active in their networking. The mentor, as a specific form of network contact, was identified by Carsrud et al. (1987). In this study the authors were surprised to find that of the 246 women entrepreneurs studied, the use of a mentor was negatively correlated with success.

**MENTORS AND THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROCESS**

As iterated throughout, much of the mentoring based literature and models for mentoring have their origins in organisational hierarchies. Many deal with the aspiring young professional being guided through the formal and informal structures of their environment. The role of the mentor is that of guide and role model teaching the protégé ‘critical trade secrets’ (Carsrud et al., 1987).

As suggested by Carsrud et al. (1987), it is questionable as to whether there are similarities between the novice office manager and the budding entrepreneur and this work partially supports the theoretical viewpoint that ‘strong-tie’ or ‘single-tie’ networks, as exemplified by the use of mentors, may well be inhibitory to the successful development of entrepreneurial ventures.
In his longitudinal study of the creative processes of the entrepreneur, Beattie (1999) found few of the 50 entrepreneurs interviewed indicated receiving benefit from mentors or role models in the early stages of their entrepreneurial development. Of significance in the aforementioned study was the finding that the entrepreneurs had strong belief in their own abilities and were confident in their ability to influence their environment. In particular they were unwilling to discuss their ideas with others until they themselves were convinced of its merit however, they all recognised and paid tribute to the value of accumulating experience and making mistakes at someone else’s expense. This finding would suggest that the entrepreneur may well respond differently to the notion of mentoring compared to the non-entrepreneur. An exploration of the literature pertaining to the nature of the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial process is of value at this point.

**ENTREPRENEURS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Bygrave and Hofer (1991) identify the inability for researchers to agree on a definition of entrepreneurship and the definition of an entrepreneur since the early work of Schumpeter (1934); they recommend a shift from the traditional focus on the characteristics and functions of the entrepreneur to a focus on the nature and characteristics of the entrepreneurial process. Their definition of the entrepreneurial process is one which ‘involves all the functions, activities, and actions associated with the perceiving of opportunities and the creation of organizations to pursue them’. An entrepreneurial event is one which ‘involves the creation of a new organization to pursue an opportunity’ (Bygrave
Based on these two definitions, Bygrave and Hofer (1991, p.14) propose that it is then possible to define an entrepreneur as ‘someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it’.

What is agreed is that entrepreneurship is holistic, that is, it is a relationship of the business and its founder(s)/managers. ‘Entrepreneurship is creating and building something of value from practically nothing. That is, entrepreneurship is the process of creating or seizing an opportunity and pursuing it regardless of the resources currently controlled’ (Timmons, 1994, p.7). ‘Entrepreneurship is holistic and integrated; that is, entrepreneurship concerns the business and its managers/founders in their entirety, not just piecemeal’ (Timmons, 1994, p.8).

**ENTREPRENEURIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The last two decades have seen much research exploring the influencing factors of the entrepreneur and a popular approach to the study of new venture creation has been to examine the characteristics, attitudes and skills, of the founder (Petrov, 1980; McClelland, 1987; Perry, Meredith & Cunninngton, 1988; Timmons, 1989; Sapienza, Herron & Robinson, 1993; McGrath & MacMillan, 1992; Hisrich & Peters, 1992; Ray, 1993; Stevenson, Grousebeck, Roberts & Bhide, 1999). The following are some of the research themes.

Brockhaus (1980) and Muzyka (1992) report a relationship between entrepreneurs’ characteristics and locus of control and risk tendencies. Other investigations have compared

Other research themes have included assessing the likelihood of success against the relative proactiveness of the founder (Miller & Friesen, 1984), studies of psychological characteristics (Jones, 1983; Brockhaus & Horwitz, 1986; Begley & Boyd, 1987; Rice & Lindecamp, 1989; Katz, 1992), entrepreneurial traits (MacMillan, 1986; Bennis, 1988; Gartner, 1989; Heilman, Block, Martell & Simon, 1989; Birley & MacMillan, 1993; Herron, 1993; ), personality types (Hollenbeck & Whitener, 1988; Ginn & Sexton, 1990; Chell, Haworth & Brearley, 1991) and learning styles (Bailey, 1986).

Specific examination of problem solving styles (Naidu & Narayana, 1990; Buttner & Gryskiewicz, 1993) values systems (Fagenson, 1993) motivation and behaviour (Hamilton, 1987; Bird, 1989; Dubini, 1989) have offered a variety of profiles, including the perceptions of entrepreneurs’ characteristics by others (Buttner & Rosen, 1988). Others
extend the list of characteristics to include desirable attitudes such as aspirations not constrained by current capabilities (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990), a team orientation (Starr & MacMillan, 1990) innovativeness (Hisrich & Peters, 1986) and strategic vision (Westley & Mintzberg, 1988).

Much criticism has been levelled at the majority of the research related to the personality attribute approach (Carsrud et al., 1986; Gartner, 1989; Chell et al., 1991; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004). The identified weakness of the research has focussed on the lack of definition and weak concept formation; lack of understanding of trait-based psychology and poor definition of the object of study (the entrepreneur), with some studies focussing on the founder and others the owner/manager. All the criticism lends itself to support the view that the decision to become an entrepreneur results from a complex interaction of personal attributes and the situation faced by the individual. Ray (1993) expresses the opinion that whole bodies of reputable scholarship, such as that relating to physical appearance and likeability contributing to successful networking, have been completely ignored.

Gartner (1990, p.21) examined the entrepreneur theme described as ‘the idea that entrepreneurship involves individuals with unique personality characteristics and abilities’ and his studies confirmed that most attributes that described the entrepreneur (risk taking, locus of control, perseverance, commitment, vision, creativity) correlated with that factor. Interestingly the rankings, identified through Gartner’s (1990) work, indicated polar beliefs in regard to the importance of the entrepreneur as a major theme in the definition of
entrepreneurship. At one pole was the belief that personality traits were a hopeless indicator whilst at the other was the opinion that entrepreneurship was that special, unteachable skill. Irrespective of the polarisation, the notion of the entrepreneur as a central theme to the study of entrepreneurship was highlighted.

The outcome of Gartner’s (1990) study was the emergence of two viewpoints. One cluster of responses focussed on the characteristics of entrepreneurship, where participants rated the entrepreneur, innovation, growth and uniqueness elements significantly higher than the second group who focussed instead on the outcomes of entrepreneurship i.e. creating value, for profit and the owner manager. Stevenson et al. (1999) describes these views as focus on personal characteristics vs. economic function. The implications drawn by Gartner (1990) were that, given the difference in beliefs about entrepreneurship, researchers will develop research questions from a number of stand points.

‘For example, researchers who believe that entrepreneurship requires individuals with special personality characteristics are probably going to do research that explores those beliefs. Individuals who consider entrepreneurship to be the domain of owner managers are likely to do very different research from individuals who believe that innovation and growth are important. Yet none of these domains are exclusive of others, and a concern about one theme probably will overlap another’ (Gartner 1990, p.28).

What an examination of the research does conclude is that successful entrepreneurs have a wide range of personality types. Timmons & Spinelli (2004) summarise the research thus:

‘Most research about entrepreneurs has focused on the influence of genes, family, education, career experience, and so forth, but no psychological model has been
supported. Studies have shown that an entrepreneur does not need specific inherent traits, but rather a set of acquired skills’ (Timmons & Spinelli, 2004 p.63).

Timmons & Spinelli do agree, however, that successful entrepreneurs share common attitudes and behaviours:

‘They work hard and are driven by an intense commitment and determined perseverance; they see the cup half full, rather than half empty; they strive for integrity; they burn with competitive desire to excel and win; they are dissatisfied with the status quo and seek opportunities to improve almost any situation they encounter; they use failure as a tool for learning and eschew perfection in favor of effectiveness; and they believe they can personally make an enormous difference in the final outcome of their venture and their lives’ (Timmons & Spinelli, 2004 p.63).

Kuratko (2004) concurs with others (Sexton & Bowman, 1984; Vesper, 1994; Hisrich, 1998; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004) that there are a number of entrepreneurial characteristics that can be agreed upon, identifying the following as the most frequently cited:

- Commitment, determination and perseverance
- Drive to achieve
- Opportunity orientation
- Initiative and responsibility
- Persistent problem solving
- Seeking feedback
- Internal locus of control
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Calculated risk taking
- Integrity and reliability
- Tolerance for failure
- High energy level
- Creativeness and innovativeness
- Vision
- Self-confidence and optimism
- Independence
- Team building
What emerges, and is perhaps best expressed by Bygrave and Hofer (1991), is a belief that the act of becoming an entrepreneur involves changing the state of the external environment, requiring the ability to respond continuously to changing contexts. This interaction with resources external to the venture would naturally embrace the need to continuously communicate and form relationships with other individuals. New enterprise creation therefore incorporates both individual characteristics and environmental influences, a model portrayed as an interactive process in which personal characteristics, including personality, interact with an interpretation of relevant events in the environment to influence decisions.

Others, most notably Timmons and Spinelli (2004), argue there is increasing evidence to suggest successful entrepreneurs emerge from a combination of work and study experience and the development of appropriate skills and entrepreneurial research has, over time, identified a number of particular factors which are believed to contribute to entrepreneurial success. High on the list of entrepreneurial attributes is the entrepreneur’s total self-belief in what they do and their ability to do it (Beattie, 1999). This combines with the ability to bounce back from the abyss of failure and setbacks.

Whilst the role of experience and know-how is central to the successful creation of a new venture, Vesper (1992) believes the most critical factor is the ability of the entrepreneur to gain information and act on it, inferring that contacts and ‘know who’ are integral to knowledge and experience acquisition. Of particular interest to this research is the use of
mentors or advisors. Gartner, Starr and Goodman (1994) identified one of the factors contributing to the likelihood of success of an entrepreneur was the amount of time and intensity devoted to specific activities including finding mentors (i.e., helpful non-paid experts). In contrast, the contribution of outside advisors was found to be minimal by Keeley and Kapp (1994). In their sample, founders of successful businesses were drawn by the challenge, the independence and the desire to not simply hold a job. The process of starting the business involved little exploration of options. The founder did not systematically search for a business idea, did not develop a business plan and outside advisors and/or investors played essentially no role in in the founder’s choice of business or mode of entry. The importance of on the job learning varied. Some had learned about their business from prior industry experience, but others began the company and simply learned as they went. The latter group expressed a greater tendency to rely on outside advisors/mentors – but generally after the formation of the business.

Vesper (1990, p.12) raises an interesting question resulting from a synthesis of works demonstrating differences in the characteristics of founders and non-founders, that being, were the differences ‘a cause of the entrepreneurial initiative or an effect of it. Whether the differences between the two groups existed before the founders started their firms cannot be determined’. Vesper (1990 p.12) did however go on to cite the work of Sexton and Bowman (1984) which showed some support for parallels between pre-founding and post-founding differences and reported that entrepreneurship students and business students differed in the same way that entrepreneurs and managers differed on a list of psychological
characteristics. In brief they found that entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial students scored higher on energy level, willingness to take risks, persuasiveness, desire for autonomy and freedom, dislike of routine, and acceptance of change. They scored lower on emotional responsiveness, compassion, preference for personal relationships, avoidance of danger and desire for support, sympathy, advice, reassurance, and love’. However, Vesper (1994) concurs that studies of psychological attribute have generally proven inconclusive.

**ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSONALITY**

Over time, the conclusion that no one particular psychological model has emerged, with successful entrepreneurs comprising a mix of age, sex, background and experience (Churchill & Lewis, 1983; Carland et al., 1984; Miner, Smith & Braker, 1992; McGrath et al., 1992; Chandler & Jansen, 1992).

However, commencing with the early work on achievement motivation of McClelland (1965, 1969), there is agreement that while there is a core of inborn attributes, such as energy and intelligence, some of the attributes and behaviours typically demonstrated by successful entrepreneurs can also be acquired through experience and learning. Again, from his personal work in the study of entrepreneurship and through a synthesis of research, Timmons (1994) identifies consensus of six themes underpinning what entrepreneurs do and how they perform.

Rather than dwelling on attempts to identify personality types, Timmons (1994, p.24) prefers to ask the question ‘what do entrepreneurs do?’ in order to better understand the
attitudes and behaviours and identify some benchmarks. The following summary was compiled by Timmons as a result of synthesising in excess of 50 research studies:

‘Successful entrepreneurs share common attitudes and behaviours. They work hard and are driven by an intense commitment and determined perseverance; they see the cup half full rather than half empty; they strive for integrity; they burn with the competitive desire to excel and win; they are dissatisfied with the status quo and seek opportunities to improve almost any situation they encounter; they use failure as a tool for learning and eschew perfection in favor of effectiveness; and they believe they can personally make an enormous difference in the outcomes of their ventures and their lives’ (Timmons, 1994 p.24).

The following (Figure 2) is Timmons’ summary of those six themes and their corresponding attitude or behaviour:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Attitude or Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment and Determination</td>
<td>Tenacity and decisiveness, able to de-commit/commit quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence in solving problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willingness to undertake personal sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total emersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Self starter; high standards but not perfectionists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team builder and hero maker; inspired others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treat others as you want to be treated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share the wealth with all the people who helped to create it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity and reliability; builder of trust; practices fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a lone wolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superior learner and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patience and urgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Obsession</td>
<td>Having intimate knowledge of customers’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obsessed with value creation and enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of Risk, Ambiguity and Uncertainty</td>
<td>Calculated risk taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk minimiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk sharer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manages paradoxes and contradictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance of uncertainty and lack of structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance of stress and conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to solve problems and integrate solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, Self-reliance, and Ability to Adapt</td>
<td>Nonconventional, open-minded, lateral thinker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restlessness with status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to adapt and change; creative problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to learn quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of fear of failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to conceptualise and ‘sweat details’ (helicopter mind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Excel</td>
<td>Goal and results orientation; high but realistic goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drive to achieve and grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low need for status and power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonally supporting (versus competitive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aware of weaknesses and strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having perspective and sense of humour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Six Themes – Desirable and Acquirable Attitudes and Behaviors (Timmons, 1994 p.191).
Whilst there is much agreement that the above attitudes and behaviours are to a greater or lesser extent manifested by most entrepreneurs regardless of gender, there is also awareness that there may be differences between male and female entrepreneurs.

**GENDER AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Resulting from increasing numbers of women involved in entrepreneurial ventures, although still at a ratio of 1:2 when compared to men in the 2000 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, research has begun to explore why the disparity in numbers exists. Amongst the questions being posed is whether there are inherent differences between female and male entrepreneurs. Timmons and Spinelli (2004) acknowledge that there are many confounding factors that would contribute to the finding of any gender differences, listing them as biology, environment, cultural background, power and economic status. They conclude however that the combination of these elements could result in overall differences between female and male entrepreneurs.

Much research has been conducted on female entrepreneurship, with a tendency to focus on individual characteristics, gender differences, business and management practices (Stevenson, 1987; Bird, 1989; Carter, Stearns, Reynolds & Miller, 1992). Individual and biographical characteristics of female entrepreneurs have initiated studies in personality types, family and education backgrounds, values systems and motivations (Fagenson & Coleman, 1987; Hisrich & O'Brien, 1981, 1982; Hisrich & Brush 1983, 1984, 1987; Brush,
1990a, 1990b; Miskin & Rose, 1990; Olsen & Currie, 1992). Whilst concluding women’s and men’s motivations for business initiation were quite similar Buttner (1993) notes one difference, namely, that men most usually cited economic reasons whereas women cited family needs. Buttner (1993) also comments that it appears women have to create alternative network strategies and work harder to prove their competence, attributing this belief to exclusion from the ‘old boys’ networks’.

In contrast to men, whose personal networks are predominantly same sex, the personal networks of women are predominantly opposite sex, that is, they include more men thus reducing the likelihood of meeting female advisors (Aldrich et al., 1989; Buttner, 1993). Women are, however, more likely to consult multiple sources of professional advice on start up and minimise risk by doing homework to learn from experiences of others (Nelson, 1987; Brown & Segal, 1989). There is also a suggestion that women go about networking more formally, through clubs and networking organisations (Bird, 1989). It is interesting to note here, that the initial work into the importance of networks suggested, in research focussing on women entrepreneurs, that networks have minimal impact on the development of ventures (Carsrud et al., 1989), which contrasts with the findings of research based on data collected mostly from men (Birley, 1989).

Other differences noted in the research suggest female entrepreneurs have more female customers, employ more labour but use fewer family members as employees, and start up more slowly (Birley et al., 1986). Other studies have noted that differences between female
and male entrepreneurs relate more to access to resources, type of relationship with employees and type of business (Bird, 1989). With respect to accessing resources, women express they suffer from sex role stereotyping manifested as perceived lack of attributes for successful management (Sexton & Bowman, 1990; Buttner, 1993) and less favourable treatment from advisors and service providers such as banks (Hisrich, 1986; Riding & Swift, 1990). In a study to examine the differences in advice received by women and men entrepreneurs, the advice hypothetical women business owners received from a sample of consultants differed both qualitatively and quantitatively from that received by hypothetical men facing the same situation (Reuber, Dyke & Fischer, 1991).

Some authors note that women rate ‘significant others’ as their most useful and most used source of advice. ‘Significant other’ is defined as a ‘close personal associate, familial or not, whose opinion is of such value it would be specifically sought and could cause one to change a decision’ (Nelson, 1987, p.43). Hisrich and Brush (1986) and Nelson (1989) found women sought assistance first from family, then close friends and last from knowledgeable business sources.

Self-fulfilment through personal growth and achievement is a strong motivating factor for women starting businesses (NFWBO, 2001) as is frustration with prior work experience, and inspiration for a new venture (Kamau, McLean & Ardishvili, 1999). Singh, (2000) believes that social networks play an important part in opportunity recognition. The networks important to starting a venture, including access to professional services, are
predominantly male-centric, limiting the informal introductions for women entrepreneurs. The socialisation process of women is believed to contribute to the importance they place on relationship development with employees, professional service providers and clients. It is also likely to result in the tendency of women entrepreneurs to be more conservative when planning for growth (Kamau et al., 1999).

The result of a survey of U.S. women business owners, released in 2001 by the Centre for Women’s Business Research, Washington, DC, (NFWBO, 2001) indicated that women business owners are less likely than their men counterparts to have a mentor before opening their business. Women however are more likely to consult outside sources on business management and growth issues. Of the 602 women owners of fast growth companies, less than half (43%) had a mentor or role model when starting or acquiring their company compared to 59% of the men (n=592) surveyed. The women were also less likely than men to have had an entrepreneurial role model when growing up. It was proposed that women may compensate for this lack of mentors by consulting more with outside sources while they grow their businesses, citing accountants, family members and fellow business owners as their most frequent contacts. The findings indicated that 60% of the women consulted accountants compared to 44% of the men; 49% of the women, compared to 36% of the men, discussed business management issues with family; and 31% of the women conferred with fellow business owners compared to 26% of the men.
The earlier work of Carsrud et al. (1987) actually questions the importance of the mentor for female entrepreneurs as their research, when examining female entrepreneur start up success and mentor support, found mentors stifling business creativity.

There appear to be no gender differences to determine success of business, however, there seem to be differences in motivation for the creation of a new venture with men expressing economic needs and women family, meaning, for men entrepreneurship is a business strategy, for women it is a life strategy (Miskin & Rose, 1990; Buttner, 1993; Fischer, Reuber & Dyke, 1992).

Bird and Brush (2001) take the view that, historically, literature relating to the creation of organisations is often cast within a masculine framework. They distinguish between the biological (sex) and socialised (gender) perspectives and theorise that the gender perspective of founders (i.e. irrespective of sex) may influence the processes and attributes of new ventures. They distil three perspectives on masculine and feminine types to propose five dimensions of gender perspective applied to new venture creation, based on extremes of masculine/traditional and feminine/personal characteristics.

Of particular interest to this current study is the notion that when knowledge is associated with caring (feminine/personal) rather than control (masculine/traditional) the process of organisational development may be more open and shared, particularly with those seen as caring about the venture, for example family, friends, customers, investors.
**GENDER DIFFERENCES**

There are strong personality similarities between men and women entrepreneurs, both being considered energetic, independent and goal oriented. However, although the characteristics of male and female entrepreneurs are generally not thought to differ significantly, some agreement indicates female entrepreneurs differ in terms of motivation, occupational backgrounds and business skills (Hisrich, 1998; Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2001; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004;).

Hisrich (1998) summarised the comparisons of male and female entrepreneurs as follows (Figure 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Male Entrepreneurs</th>
<th>Female Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Motivation                  | Achievement - strive to make things happen  
                          | Personal independence – self-image as it relates to status through their role in the corporation  
                          | unimportant  
                          | Job satisfaction arising from the desire to be in control  
                          | Achievement – accomplishment of goal  
                          | Independence – to do it alone  
                          | Job frustration  
                          | Interest in and recognition of opportunity in the area  
                          | Change in personal circumstances  
                          | Departure point  
                          | Dissatisfaction with present job  
                          | Sideline in college, sideline to present job, or outgrowth of present job  
                          | Discharge or layoff  
                          | Opportunity for acquisition  
                          | Sources of funds  
                          | Personal assets and savings  
                          | Bank financing  
                          | Investors  
                          | Loans from family and friends  
                          | Personal assets and savings  
                          | Personal loans  
                          | Occupational background  
                          | Experience in line of work  
                          | Recognized specialist or one who has gained a high level of achievement in the field  
                          | Competent in a variety of business functions  
                          | Experience in area of business  
                          | Middle management or administrative-level experience in the field  
                          | Service related occupational background  
                          | Personality characteristics  
                          | Opinionated and persuasive  
                          | Goal oriented  
                          | Innovative and idealistic  
                          | High level of confidence  
                          | Enthusiastic and energetic  
                          | Must be own boss  
                          | Flexible and tolerant  
                          | Goal oriented  
                          | Creative and realistic  
                          | Medium level of self-confidence  
                          | Enthusiastic and energetic  
                          | Ability to deal with social and economic environment  
                          | Background  
                          | Age when starting venture: 25-35  
                          | Father was self-employed  
                          | College-educated – degree in business or technical area (usually engineering)  
                          | First born child  
                          | Age when starting venture: 35-45  
                          | Father was self-employed  
                          | College educated – degree in liberal arts  
                          | First born child  
                          | Support groups  
                          | Friends, professional acquaintances (lawyers, accountants)  
                          | Business associates  
                          | Spouse  
                          | Close friends  
                          | Spouse  
                          | Family  
                          | Women’s professional groups  
                          | Trade associations  
                          | Type of business started  
                          | Manufacturing or construction  
                          | Service-related – educational services, consulting or public relations  

*Figure 3: Comparisons of male and female entrepreneurs (Hisrich, 1998, p.79, Table 3.4).*
Hisrich and Brush (1983; 1984; 1987), Hisrich and O’Brien (1982;1984) and Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (1997) investigated the possible influence of internal owner/founder factors compared to external industry and environmental conditions on performance and any differences in performance of women-owned businesses compared to their male counterparts. Major findings of the study showed that goals in business ownership were similar across achievement and independence, yet women rated economic necessity and recognition significantly higher than men. Women rated themselves higher on dealing with people, in oral presentation and motivation. Industry, resources and environment reflected gender similarities and differences except that women viewed their access to debt less favourable and viewed regulation to be more unfavourable than men. A higher percentage of women were satisfied with the way they did their job compared to men.

A number of studies indicate differences in the way women and men approach start-up (Hisrich & Brush, 1985; Cooper, Woo & Dunkelberg, 1988; Cooper, Folta & Woo, 1991). Differences include taking longer to start-up as a result of a longer research and preparatory period; making use of professional advisors in the start-up period; having a background in business related courses; staring with more modest sales expectations; and having a lower initial debt to equity ratio. These characteristics could be the contributing factor to a higher success rate for female driven start-ups.

Research conducted by the National Foundation of Women Business Owners (1994a, 1994b) concluded that, while there are some differences, men and women entrepreneurs are
more like each other than they are to non-entrepreneurs. The differences noted between women and men related to approaches to business ownership, their perceptions of their business and employees, modes of management and definitions of success. NFWBO (1994b) categorises these differences as modes of thinking, styles of management and definitions of success.

In relation to modes of thinking, NFWBO suggests where women entrepreneurs differ from men entrepreneurs is that women tend to place greater emphasis on intuition and relationships, while men place greater emphasis on logical problem solving and hierarchy. They suggest women tend to reflect more when making business decisions and more readily seek outside opinions and advice. This is manifested in women spending more time in thinking things through, reflecting and weighing up options before making business decisions. However, the study points out that the most significant finding is not so much the differences between thinking styles of men and women entrepreneurs, but rather that the entrepreneurs as a group are more similar to each other than to the working population as a whole. That is, they think more logically, focussing on reasoning, measurement, procedures and projected outcomes and emphasise conception over perception when gathering information. Conception gives preference to principles, ideas, plans and the big picture, whilst perception focuses on the now, rather than what could be, focussing on details and specifics; an interesting observation of how information might be received if put into the context of advice proffered by specific information providers such as banks and accounting practitioners who tend to deal with the minutiae.
It is in styles of management was where significant differences are to be noted between men and women entrepreneurs NFWBO (1994b). Women entrepreneurs typically describe organising their business relationships, both inside and outside the actual business, in a network which includes employees, customers and suppliers. Contrastingly, men entrepreneurs describe a hierarchy in which sets of relationships are compartmentalised. Women express a concern for their employees’ personal needs and professional development, whereas the men are more likely to describe the need to set up rules and procedures. Women see men as better able to delegate.

The NFWBO (1994a, 1994b, 2001) research highlights divergent thinking of women and men entrepreneurs in relation to definition of success. They note that while there is agreement that success does have a monetary component but is only a small part of being successful. Women define success as having control over their own destiny, building relationships and doing something worthwhile, while men describe success in terms of achieving goals and satisfaction of a job well done.

**SUMMARY**

The literature reviewed in this chapter has both informed the research and validated the need to explore mentoring in new contexts, beginning with a fresh mind regarding what the construct might mean within such environments. In particular the notion of entrepreneurs being more like each other than other sectors of the population would suggest and justify a fresh investigation of mentoring from the entrepreneur’s perspective. The agreement that,
in general, an entrepreneur sees and approaches life somewhat differently to those in a managed organisational environment could well result in the notion of mentors and mentoring including different meanings, expectations and attributes to the individual entrepreneur.

Both the mentoring and entrepreneurship literature encouraged the undertaking of qualitative and observational research to gain greater understanding of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ nature of reality, from the participant’s perspective. In particular, the need to learn from the stories of entrepreneurs has been noted.
Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter comprises three sections. Section One begins by framing the research approach. Some distinctions of qualitative research are presented together with literature references which informed decision making related to the methodology employed. As noted by many authors of qualitative research literature (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), it will become apparent that this research has been an iterative process. Section two comprises a description of the data gathering processes and section three outlines information relating to the analysis of the data.

SECTION ONE – FRAMING THE RESEARCH APPROACH

DEFINITIONS

Qualitative methodology literature contains terms which appear to be used inconsistently and contradictorily. Collis and Hussey (2003, p.47) for example, suggest the terms qualitative, phenomenological, humanistic and interpretivist are used synonymously. They also suggest there are two main research paradigms – positivist, otherwise commonly known as quantitative research; and phenomenological, or qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (2000, p.20) suggest phenomenology is a research strategy not a theoretical paradigm or perspective.
RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Different people hold different beliefs and values and in research these beliefs and values are called paradigms. There is wide agreement that a paradigm encompasses three elements: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Ontology answers the question ‘What is the nature of reality?’ Researchers must decide whether they consider the world objective, measurable and external to the researcher, or socially constructed (Snape & Spenser, 2003, p.11; Collis & Hussey, 2003, p.49). Qualitative research assumes the latter, that reality is subjective and multiple as seen by the people being researched.

Epistemology answers the question ‘What is the relationship of the researcher to the researched?’ In quantitative research the researcher is expected to distance him or herself from the research and the researched, remaining as objective as possible. In qualitative research, the researcher interacts, often directly, with those being researched (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Methodology answers the questions, ‘What is the process of research?’ and, ‘How do we gain knowledge?’ In qualitative research this typically involves small samples and may include interviewing. It seeks to understand what is happening in a situation and looks for
patterns or themes which may be repeated in other situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Collis & Hussey, 2003).

In research there are many paradigms of inquiry that may be broadly categorised into three principle paradigms of inquiry, namely positivist (and post positivist); critical theory; and constructivism/interpretivism.

The positivist paradigm is typically associated with quantitative research. The ontology suggests that the purpose of the research is to discover the true meaning of reality, with the aim to predict and control. The epistemology suggests the researcher must be objective and not influence in any way the study or its participants. The positivist methodology requires the researcher to state hypotheses or propositions and then test to see if they are true.

The critical theory paradigm amounts to a set of theories that are critical of the status quo. The ontology is typically shaped by factors that create oppression and focuses on phenomena such as media, culture, language power and desire (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The epistemology focuses on the researcher and the researched coming together with histories and values that cannot be ignored. It produces ‘value-mediated findings’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.165). The methodology is transactional and subjective with methods that are both participative and dialogical (Kinchenloe & McLaren, 1998).
The third commonly discussed researched paradigm is that of constructivism/interpretivism (CI). Versions of this paradigm are variously known as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, ethnography, autoethnography, cognivist, idealist, subjectivist, naturalistic inquiry, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, and qualitative sociology (Cohen et al., 2000; Neuman, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Flick, von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). These traditions each have distinctive elements and distinctions but fundamentally this paradigm seeks an understanding of the ‘actors’ inner state’ (Brower, Abolafia, & Carr, 2000, p. 369).

The focus of CI is how the researched person(s) constructs their reality. This paradigm tends to be observed through text, conversations or pictures. The ontology suggests that reality is socially constructed and involves multiple realities. The epistemology focuses on the researcher and the research within the inquiry. It requires a process of interaction between the two, so that findings are created as the work proceeds. The conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The methodology is hermeneutical and interpretive. Hermeneutics concerns the interpretation of text. In this thesis ‘text’ relates to the transcribed interviews. It tries to absorb or develop an understanding of the perceptions of the researched and to develop a deep understanding of these (Neuman, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2000). The aim is to synthesise a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the single constructions.
Denzin & Lincoln (2000) warn researchers of the perils of moving, without difficulty, between paradigms. Due to the prior research experience of this researcher and the intent of the research, i.e. to discover and share what was meaningful and relevant to entrepreneurs, it was felt that this study should sit within the CI paradigm and agreeing with Hindle (2004) that personal preferences (axiology) have probably influenced the adoption of this paradigm resulting in the research questions to be pursued.

**METHOD INFORMERS**

From the outset, the iterative nature of this research has had to acknowledge the divergent opinions related to the ideographic approach to methodology (premised upon a research process that forms knowledge via first-hand experience) and the nomothetic approach (based on systematic protocols and techniques).

This research is cognisant of Bygrave’s (1989a, 1989b) criticism of the bias toward mathematical and numerical quantification in entrepreneurship research, which he described as “physics envy”. Similarly, Bygrave’s comparisons of entrepreneurship with physical science note that while physical science has models that are robust and parameters that remain constant, entrepreneurship models are fragile and parameters are always changing. This research draws extensively on my prior experience in both the physical and social sciences to find a balance through research methodologies that are proven, trusted and repeatable.
An approach such as Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is an example which combines positive aspects from the extremes of the methodology dimensions. Most important for this research is the scientific rigour identifiable in grounded theory which enables value to be extrapolated from individuals’ subjective experience and the approach most suited to the use of N-Vivo® software as the primary tool for data organisation (Punch, 1998).

The work of Eisenhardt (1989) is of particular influence in informing this research and in particular the rigorous use of case studies to produce stable, relevant and valid theory. Case studies can be used to generate or test theory or to provide description (Eisenhardt, 1989 p.535). Eisenhardt’s work synthesises and builds on the previous work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Strauss (1987) in grounded theory, methodologists Yin (1984) and Miles and Huberman (1994), and researchers conducting case study research such as Harris and Sutton (1986), Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988), and Gersick (1988).

This study has in particular followed Eisenhardt’s (1989) model of inductive research. The principal method for gathering data is a semi-structured interview with the founder of each business, in which the founder is asked to play the role of an objective historian for the business. The interviewer uses a checklist of questions to assure that certain common information is obtained and an historical time-graph (to be explained in Section Two) which the entrepreneur is invited to construct as a visual representation of the ‘ups and downs’ of their business progress from its inception.
This research is designed as a multiple case study. Yin (1994, p.13) defines a case study as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’. The case study method has been an essential form of research in the social sciences and management. It has been used in research involving business and organisational issues, education, child development and youth policy, family studies, international affairs, evaluation, technology development and research on social problems (Yin, 1983). The decision for carrying out case studies is that they are valuable as preliminaries to major investigations from the generation of rich data that may suggest themes for more intensive investigation (Burns, 1990).

THE CASE STUDY METHOD

Yin (1993, p.1) notes that the case study is the method of choice when the phenomenon understudy is not readily distinguishable from its context. A case study is considered a more appropriate strategy for answering research questions which ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ and which do not require control over the events (Robson, 1996). This is because such questions deal with operational links that would need to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidents.

Case studies can be classified by purpose. Purpose can be differentiated in terms of descriptive, explanatory or exploratory (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Robson, 1996). When
the purpose is descriptive, the researcher looks for constructs to organise data and relate them to other research findings and for themes that identify the salient features of a case. The purpose of descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations (Robson, 1996). This requires extensive knowledge of the research subject in order to identify appropriate aspects on which together information. However, Yin (1994) cautions that descriptive case studies should not be used simply to describe everything but to focus on answering the purpose of the study.

In an explanatory case study, the operative dynamic is the identification of patterns, in which one item of absurd variation is systemically related to another (Gall et al., 1996). If causality is claimed, the pattern is termed causal; if not, it is termed relational. Evaluative case studies refer to those in which the researcher makes judgments (Gall et al., 1996).

The exploratory case study seeks to find out what is happening, to seek new heights, to ask questions, and to assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, 1996). This is perhaps the most pure hypothesis or theory building form of case study. Consequently, an exploratory case study normally focuses on current issues and seeks to answer questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’. Yin (1994) favours exploratory case studies only when the available literature or existing knowledge base is poor. Once the uncertainty has been investigated and resolved, the exploratory phase is complete and the real study should be undertaken.
**CRITICISMS OF THE CASE STUDY METHOD**

Case studies can be used to generate or test theory, or to provide description (Eisenhart, 1989, p. 535) and in this research all three are relevant as new insights are sought. However, although the case study is a distinctive form of empirical inquiry, many research investigators have regarded it as a less desirable form of inquiry than either experiments or surveys (Yin, 1994). Perhaps the greatest concern has been over the lack of rigour of case study research. This has largely been attributed to the investigator allowing equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions (Yin, 1994).

The most common criticism of the case study method, however, is that it provides little basis for scientific generalization and in particular, generalization from a single case. Yin (1994) points out scientific facts are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually founded on a multiple set of experiments, which have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions. The same approach can be used with a multiple case approach, but with a different concept of the appropriate research designs. Yin (1994, p. 10) further asserts, ‘case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universe’.

In this sense the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a sample, and the investigator's goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation). Understanding that distinction between
the two types of generalisation may be the most important challenge in undertaking case studies (Yin, 1994). In statistical generalisation, an inference is made about a population (or universe) on the basis of empirical data collected about a sample. This method of generalising is commonly recognised because researchers have ready access to formulas for determining the confidence with which generalisations can be made, depending mostly on the size and internal variation within the universe and sample. Moreover, this is the most common way of generalising when doing surveys and experiments.

The flaw in doing case studies is to conceive of statistical generalisation as the method of generalising the results of the case (Yin, 1994). This is because cases are not sampling units and should not be chosen for this reason. Instead, case studies are to be selected as a laboratory investigator selects the topic of the new experiment. This method of generalisation is known as analytic generalisation, in which a previously developed theory is used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed.

**CORROBORATION**

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. Further, the need to use multiple sources of evidence far exceeds that it other research strategies, such as experiments, surveys, or histories (Yin, 1994). Experiments, for instance, are largely limited to the measurement and recording of actual
behaviour in the laboratory and generally do not include the systematic use of survey or verbal information. Surveys tend to be the opposite, emphasising the verbal information but not the measurement of recording of actual behaviour. Finally, histories are limited to events in the past and, therefore, seldom have any contemporary sources of evidence, such as direct observations of a phenomenon or interviews with key actors.

The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address the broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues (Yin, 1994). This present study used evidence corroboration to verify the interview by collecting additional information utilising a survey instrument and time-graph embedded within the interview process; to be addressed in Section Two of this chapter.

**APPLICATION OF THE CASE STUDY METHOD**

For this study it was decided that the multiple case approach would be suitable as it allowed both theoretical and literal replication approaches to be used. According to Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (1994), replication logic enables a researcher to identify the subtle similarities and differences within the group of cases as well as inter-group similarities and differences. Replication logic also encourages the researcher to go beyond the initial impressions. These forced comparisons allow new categories and concepts to be identified.
As this study contains ‘how’ and why’ questions the use of multiple case studies, as has been considered by Yin (1994), was chosen to be the preferred research strategy.

**SAMPLING CONSIDERATIONS**

One of the most notable differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods is found in the approach to sampling (Yin, 1993; 1994). Unlike in quantitative research, random sampling is not a requirement for qualitative works. The purpose of ‘theoretical sampling’ in qualitative research has as its aim the discovery of categories and their properties and then to place these categories in relationship to one another in order to form a coherent theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The question of an ‘adequate sample’ is also determined by each of the two approaches. A statistically adequate sample, usually in the hundreds, is fundamental to quantitative studies whereas for qualitative research it is the adequacy of the sample itself that is paramount, not its size (Yin, 1993, 1994). Yin recommends a range of 5 to 15 cases; Eisenhardt (1989) suggests a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10. Rather than specifying numbers of cases, Grounded Theory proponents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) focus on achieving ‘saturation’, that is, when no additional information can be added by increasing the number of cases.

One limitation on the number of cases has until recently been that of information management. A consideration for this study was the availability of NVivo® software,
enabling greater management of large volumes of content. This gave confidence to setting the number of cases for inclusion for interview in this study at 32, ensuring both saturation and manageability. However, corroboration evidence in the form of a survey and time-graph was also embedded to ensure maintenance of focus and limit drift.

The views of Eisenhardt (1989) also guided the selection method of cases for this study, that is, in using case studies there is not the requirement for random selection in qualitative studies as is necessary for quantitative analysis utilizing statistical techniques. The selection of the final cases for this study (outlined in more detail in the following section) was guided by the preliminary process of iteration which resulted in some particular decisions, for example, the inclusion of cases from four different countries and particular criteria for eligibility.

SECTION TWO – THE DATA GATHERING PROCESSES

SELECTION OF CASES FOR STUDY

Purposeful sampling techniques are typically used by qualitative researchers as opposed to random sampling (Patton, 1980; 1990). Researchers use judgment to select individuals or groups where the phenomenon they are studying is most likely to occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Neuman, 2000, Collis & Hussey, 2003; Flick et al., 2004). In this research, it was important to identify ‘successful entrepreneurs’ (being the criteria set
for this study) and, as guided by the preliminary observations (Appendix A), desirable to have both cross-cultural and male/female perspectives.

To remain within the case number range of 5 to 15 (Yin, 1993; 1994) and 4 to 10 (Eisenhardt, 1989) for this study, eight entrepreneurs were selected for each of four countries with a balance of male and female representation (Table 1).

Table 1: Spread of cases across gender and country of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was felt the total number and spread would allow informed observations to be drawn from both within each group and across the total range of 32.

The list of 32 cases derived from access to contacts developed through the initial discovery phase of researching mentor programs and through the professional and academic networks of Professor Murray Gillin and the Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship, Swinburne University of Technology. The contacts were all experienced practitioners in the provision of services and/or education to entrepreneurs. After a telephone introduction, an outline of case selection criteria was forwarded (Appendix B). This was followed up with a second telephone call to discuss particulars including clarifying what constituted a ‘successful’ entrepreneur. Success was determined by the selected entrepreneur meeting the
guidelines of Appendix B, the selector drawing on their personal expertise in the area, and generally some external recognition of the achievements of the entrepreneur’s capability and/or achievements.

The subjects for interview and the interview schedule were organized around my travel schedule which covered a period of four weeks commencing in Boston, USA, followed by Toronto, Canada and Milton Keynes in the UK. The Australian cases were organised to take place a week after my return to Perth, Western Australia allowing for all data to be collected in a period of six weeks. The rationale for the selection of locations was based on both recommendations but all locations were known to have one or more entrepreneur development program with mentoring as a component that would be known within the local business network. The four locations had a range of such programs offered through universities and/or government related services and local business associations.

The selection process was therefore a combination of two purposeful sampling types as outlined by Patton (1990, pp. 169 – 183) and being maximum variation sampling, evidenced by the spread across four countries and snowball sampling (also called chain, network, referral or reputation) where specific individuals were asked to draw on their experience and network to identify suitable cases. Some writers have cautioned against snowball sampling as it may lead to a clustering of samples because nominations may take place within a circle of acquaintances (Flick et al., 2004). However, in this research it was considered a valid technique as the referrals would have been made by an objective source
(professional business authority) in contrast to a friendship or collegiate point of reference. Any coincidences of, for example, overlapping networks were considered to be a bonus as they would possibly provide opportunities for comparison of data between cases.

The criteria for case selection were formulated in response to the nature of the enquiry, that is, to better understand the sources of assistance for entrepreneurs and whether any of the sources were designated as mentors. This necessitated a set of primary parameters related to the notion of ‘success’, and was operationalised as the entrepreneur having succeeded in both establishing and growing a venture. This resulted in the consideration regarding how to define success. Rather than utilizing indicators such as turnover, profit, number of employees, or speed of growth, and as a primary objective was to capture insights from the stories of entrepreneurs, it was decided to rely on experienced individuals in the chosen cities to select cases of local ‘success stories’. An essential criterion was however that there was a ‘clear entrepreneur’ and for the purpose of this study it was the founding entrepreneur who remained in the position of owner-manager. The rationale for this was a particular interest in gaining insight into how the key decision maker (the entrepreneur) accessed assistance from a variety of sources over time. It was and is acknowledged that a limitation of this study would be that the interpretation of ‘success’ would likely have some variance between those ultimately making the selection in each of the four locations, however it was thought that identifying local success stories i.e. those entrepreneurs acknowledge by their peers and recognized for their achievements through the local small business community, would control for any significant variations. As there was no intention
to make comparisons between cases based on statistical measures it was felt that any variation would add to the richness of information gathered rather than detract from the rigour. Entrepreneurs were therefore selected based on the criteria given to participating organisations in each country (Appendix B).

**THE PREPARATORY PROCESS**

Having made the decision to attempt to gather data first hand from entrepreneurs in four countries, a number of logistical as well as methodological implications immediately presented themselves. One was related to the selection of the cases for study which was controlled to the best ability by engaging the cooperation of credentialed organisations and individuals in the selected locations; two was the ‘no second chance’ scenario, meaning there would be only one opportunity to meet each entrepreneur with the possible exception of the Australian cases; and three was methodology protocol relating to consistency in interview processes and the structure, content and implementation of the survey. To recollect, the rationale for embedding a survey into the interviews was to provide a means of capturing corroboration data.

The result was a two-step preparatory process. Step one comprised two Australian entrepreneurs (one male and one female), identified from within my own network and who met the case selection criteria, joining with me to compile and agree on categories of sources of assistance they would have used and would expect to be represented in the survey instrument. The rationale for selecting entrepreneurs known to me was a) I did not
have to establish credibility with them, b) they would give me feedback, warts and all, and c) they were willing to expend whatever time was necessary. These entrepreneurs also guided the decision to capture the value attributed to each source and the frequency of use in a simple Likert scale of 0 – 5. When asked if they need a definition of ‘value’ they responded that value (in the context of the survey) is a subjective attribution of worth for the individual and as such what needed to be captured was the ‘attributed value’ or frequency in the case of how often a source was used.

The result largely mirrored the categories of assistance identified in the literature (Birley, 1986; Hisrich & Brush, 1986; Aldrich et al., 1989; Frank, 1993; Hisrich, 1998; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004). The entrepreneurs also advised that I should consider filling in the survey in response to the entrepreneur reading it and allocating a score – their rationale was that their experience suggested they (and therefore by implication their peers) would slow down and think more deeply about their score if they knew they had to respond, rather than the pencil doing the talking. The result of this exercise was the survey instrument eventually used with each case (Appendix C) and the development of the interview guide to include instructions regarding the completion of the survey (Appendix D) (Patton, 1990; Flick, 1998).

Step two was to trial the interview and administration of the survey. A major part of this process was to establish how much time was to be required in order that cases agreeing to interview could be aware of the time they would need to dedicate to being with me. The test
run was done with an entrepreneur who again met the case selection criteria but who, in this instance, was not known to me. The outcome was a satisfactory ‘dry run’ including allowing time to establish rapport, use of the interview guide and completion of the survey.

What was an unexpected outcome of this trial was the emergence of a useful tool that was incorporated into the final interview guide. This tool was that referred to in an earlier section as a time-graph. The time-graph comprised a sheet of paper with a horizontal axis representing time and a vertical axis business growth. Growth in this instance could be determined by the entrepreneur and could be, for instance, profitability, revenue, sales or whatever their preferred criterion. It developed from the entrepreneur in the test interview grabbing a pencil and saying ‘OK, this is when I started’ and starting to doodle (Appendix E). The visual image proved invaluable in enabling the conversation to move backwards and forward in time and for the two of us to know where we were at any point in the conversation. Having a point of reference to come back to also prevented the entrepreneur going off on long tangents, thereby conserving precious interview time without the need to become rigid in questioning and losing the richness of the conversation. It also provided a valuable tool for asking questions about a particular source that had been mentioned in passing but worthy of more detail. For example, it was possible towards the end of the interview to revisit a particular source with a question such as ‘you spoke of your colleague here (pointing to the graph) as a mentor - you described this other person back here as helping you in a similar sort of way, would you use that term to describe him?’
The eventual output was an illegible doodle but the activity had the added benefit of the interview becoming a shared venture which engaged the entrepreneur in the descriptive process of story-telling. An additional bonus was the necessary proximity of interviewer and interviewee sitting heads together sharing a pencil. thus eliminating any initial awkwardness associated with the interview processes. The advice of the first two entrepreneurs, that I should take control of the pencil when completing the survey, also proved sound as it gave a second opportunity to ask for points of clarification, even though completing the survey took several minutes longer.

In total, the trial run gave me the confidence that I would be able to undertake the task at hand, confident in the methods chosen and the tools to be utilized, further more it concluded that at least two hours would be needed for each case interview.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS AND PROTOCOLS

Data were collected primarily through index interviewing with corroboration survey. With few exceptions, interviews were conducted at each entrepreneur’s place of business allowing for context observations to be noted.

The interviews were pre-arranged by the contact in each city. These contacts as mentioned previously were identified through networks associated with the Australian Graduate
School of Entrepreneurship, Swinburne University of Technology. With few exceptions I
was not introduced personally to the interviewees by the local contact, it was therefore both
courteous and accepted interview protocol to initiate general conversation with each
individual prior to commencing the interview proper. This generally took some five to ten
minutes and the time was used to establish my credentials, develop rapport and to outline
how the time would be spent. At commencement of the interview proper I followed the
interview guide (Appendix D) to briefly explain the purpose of the interview and that the
time together would comprise both the interview and completion of a survey.

As described, index (face-to-face) interviewing was the data collection method relied on
extensively in this study. The interviews were conducted with the 32 entrepreneurs who
were also the founding owner managers of the business. All the interviews were recorded.
The typical interview lasted two hours; the length varied from 90 minutes to three hours. A
brief profile of each of the 32 entrepreneurs is presented in Appendix F.

At all times the aim was to engage in an interactive partnership during the interview
process. As suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the interview was a conversation
between two people. Knowing the interview was being recorded enabled me to remain
focused throughout, and allowed any note taking to be confined to responses and
observations in order to further explore or revisit certain topics at a later point in the
interview.
The interview guide comprising a number of open-ended questions was used to start the interviews and the time-graph introduced and explained with the entrepreneurs choosing to use (or not) as appropriate. Each question, however, was only a point of reference and interviewees discussed points that were in addition to the guide. During the interviews, questions were neither repeated verbatim nor in a given order. The importance of this guideline was that it provided some directions for the interviews and assisted the researcher to use the interview time effectively by keeping the interaction focused, yet allowing different perspectives to emerge. Typically the interviews began with questions similar to the questions suggested in the guideline, and then depending upon the responses received, moved into probing questions. Probing questions were useful in gaining more insights and clarifying the answers from the respondents.

Occasionally I explored a few general topics to help uncover the respondents’ meaning and perspective, but otherwise respected how the entrepreneurs framed and structured the responses and generally told their stories. This was to ensure that the respondents’ perspective on issues unfolded as they viewed it, not as the researcher viewed it. On occasion it was necessary for clarification, this was done with phrases such as: ‘can I just check with you...’; ‘it sounds like..., is that how you interpret it?’ or ‘so are you saying...?’ The aim of this approach was to obtain the story or interpretation of the entrepreneur and demonstrate genuine listening on my behalf.
In order to provide a means of corroborating information, the survey was administered at the conclusion to the interview. The entrepreneurs were asked to reflect on the aspects covered during the interview conversation and provide ratings for each of the categories designated in the survey. The scores were designated by the participant and entered by the interviewer. A journal and memos were also kept by the interviewer and called on to reflect the context and content of the interview.

**SECTION THREE - DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data. Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) contended that data collection and data analyses must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research design. However, face-to-face interviews need to be transcribed and as the nature of the data gathering process in this research revolved around international travel to a deadline the above approach requiring simultaneous data collection and analysis was not achievable. Glaser (1978) has argued that transcription is unnecessary he is however in the minority with others, for example Patton (1990), insisting on verbatim transcript, complete with pauses and unfinished or ungrammatical sentences.

Yin (1989) proposed a data collection approach in which all data should be collected in the same way for all cases in a study, and that analysis and comparison should be deferred until data collection was complete. The rationale for this was to guard against subconscious
filtering of findings. This recommendation was adopted for this research as it not only offered the most practical solution, that is waiting until all data collected before commencing analysis, but also supported the constructivism/interpretivism (CI) approach as identified elsewhere and allowing themes to emerge from the data.

The process of data analysis was informed by both Ezzy’s (2002) and Miles and Huberman’s (1994) frameworks for the process of qualitative data analysis entailing the three activities of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selection, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes and all transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The primary data in this study comprised the 32 interview transcripts.

The qualitative analysis consisted of thematic coding of transcribed interviews and (where available) personal field notes. In the transcription of the interviews every effort was made to capture the emphasis, fluency and nuance of the story telling. Long pauses were noted (pause) and unfinished sentences indicated with an ellipsis (…) and a hyphen used to indicate change of direction in a sentence. After transcription the 32 case documents were entered as sources into NVivo7 software.

NOTES ON NVIVO 7 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS SOFTWARE

NVivo software (version 7) has been designed specifically to allow the analysis of textual data. The software is a tool, not a method, which supports any analysis that requires thematic coding. Although I was familiar with a much earlier version (NVivo 2), I
undertook training in the (at the time) latest version prior to undertaking the textual
analysis, and identified and experienced post doctoral research fellow who was a registered
user and tutor of the software, to be on call to assist if needed.

The software requires the researcher to decide how they wish to go about the task of coding
and examining the data however, a result is a more flexible approach and greater scope of
analysis than with the traditional manual methods would permit in any given time. The
following is a snapshot of the software and the benefits it brings to the analysis of large
volumes of text in particular.

Historically, the recommended approach to analysis advised extensive and time consuming
duplication of data. Glaser (1978) advised typing up multiple copies of research notes, so
that sections could be literally cut and pasted into coding categories. Many researchers use
coloured pens to highlight and code different themes. With the advent of word processors,
computers and eventually the development of specific software, all the manual tasks
became electronic.

Software programs specifically developed to assist coding emerged in the early 1980s.
With each new product and version the objective has been to increase productivity of the
thematic coding process; NVivo produced by QSR is one such product. NVivo 7 (the
version available at the time of this study) works with textual data as well as video and
other media sources that can be imported into the software as data sources for analysis.
The researcher is able to create coding themes, or categories as Glaser and Strauss (1967) called them, as ‘nodes’ which can be arranged and rearranged freely or in hierarchies as the process of analysis evolves. Text searches can be conducted to identify passages containing key words or phrases and all text used is able to be traced back to its origins within the original interview text in order to verify its application and context. In short, NVivo allows the researcher to develop a data base of coded passages that can be interrogated in many different ways. The extent to which the data is able to be explored for patterns and themes is significantly increased compared to manual techniques.

Advantages identified in the process of this study included:

- The ability to set and then revise or re-order coding themes, including sub-dividing (or creating child-nodes) or combining categories.
- Coding-on or multiple coding of passages, previously limited by the number of coloured pens at hand.
- Identifying the intensity of themes, for example the number of cases in which they appear.
- The ability to continuously reduce the data without losing its context.
- The value of always being able to go back quickly to the original data source to validate context.

In summary, this software made the exploration of the large volume of data from the 32 interview transcripts manageable and exciting to explore.
**APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS**

Although, for reasons outlined previously, it was not possible to alternate the data collection and analysis (as recommended by Glaser & Strauss, 1967) it was always at the forefront of intent to apply one of the key concepts of grounded theory namely the emergence of themes from data. Apart from using the source categories of the survey as a starting point in analyzing the textual data, the themes were allowed to emerge relating to the nature of the assistance received. This was of importance as the most recent mentoring literature in particular identified the need for future research to allow the notion of mentoring to emerge from its own context and not be bound by the specific (white, male, organizational) constructs that have underpinned the research to date. The research topic however defined the boundaries of exploration and meaning was generated through a process of reduction and displays to identify key themes and patterns and to narrow the focus around these themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The writings of Miles and Huberman (1994) were drawn on for techniques of data display. They suggest that data displays should be designed to assemble organised information in a compact form that is immediately accessible. One of their techniques, used in this study, was to arrange empirical evidence in tables in the forms of words, rather than numbers. By looking at these tables, themes that agree or disagree across cases would emerge.

Once the textual data had been analysed, the survey data was tabulated and converted to percentages for ease of reference. This data was called on to verify and expand the themes
emerging from the stories and to provide pointers for further exploration. The survey data was also used to ascribe the notion of ‘attributed value’ to the sources of assistance identified by the entrepreneurs.

**VALIDITY**

The primary strategies that were utilised in this study to ensure validity included:  a) providing the provision of rich, thick, and detailed description so that anyone interested in transferability will have a base of information appropriate for comparison (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and; b) by conducting a cross case analysis.

To ensure reliability, three strategies were employed in this study:  a) the researcher provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher’s role, the participants’ position and basis for selection (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984); b) more than one method of data collection and analysis were utilized to strengthen reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988) and; c) data collection and analysis process were reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in this study (Merriam, 1988).

Data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions were activities of data analysis occurring interactively during the study. All three activities were, therefore, combined to produce a comprehensive analysis of the study.
Chapter 6: Data Exploration, Analysis and Findings

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the basis on which this research is founded. It also outlined the justification for the approach. A rationale was provided for the purposeful sampling of the 32 entrepreneurs.

This chapter provides details of the data exploration and analysis processes, and outcomes. Continuing the iterative research framework, the exploration builds on each of the iterations with points noted along the way that will form the basis for a final discussion of findings in the Discussion and Implications (Chapter 7) to follow.

The data is explored to gain insight applicable to the research questions of the Conceptual Framework of this study namely, for entrepreneurs, who are founder owner-managers of small to medium enterprises:

- What sources of assistance do they acknowledge as providing help, in particular during the start up and growth phases of their business?
- Are any of these sources designated as mentors?
- Why are these sources considered mentors – what is the nature of the mentoring received?
- What is the nature and value attributed to the mentoring received from sources of assistance other than those designated mentors?
THE RESEARCH DATABASE

Altogether 32 individual in-depth interviews were conducted, polling the views of the 32 entrepreneurs. For each interview there were also corroboration data captured in survey form. Added to these sources were notes and memos from prior workshop and participant observations captured during the formative phase of the iterative framework.

The initial process of data sorting comprised the construction of a case book in NVivo7 to contain all data for each case.

CHAPTER PLAN

For ease of reporting and clarity of reading, the remainder of this chapter is divided into two parts.

Part One is about ‘Mentors’ - it follows the exploration and analysis of the interview data, examining the stories of the entrepreneurs in order to:

a) Identify the sources of assistance acknowledged by the entrepreneurs in this study
b) Identify those sources designated as mentors by the entrepreneurs, and
c) Determine the nature of the mentoring attributed to those designated as mentors by the entrepreneurs.

Part Two is about ‘Mentoring’ – it outlines the exploration and analysis of the survey results and draws on the findings of Part One in order to gain insight into:

a) How sources of assistance other than mentors are valued by the entrepreneurs, and
b) What, if any, mentoring may be attributed to the various sources.

PART ONE – THE MENTORS

Part One relates to gaining greater insight into the mentors of entrepreneurs, and what they do.

The first questions of the Conceptual Framework ask:

1. What are the sources of assistance accessed by the entrepreneurs in the start up and growth of their businesses?
2. Do the entrepreneurs acknowledge any of these sources as mentors?

and:

3. What is the nature of the mentoring attributed to the mentors?

The first two tasks associated with finding answers to the above involved coding the interview data to: a) identify the sources of assistance referred to by the entrepreneurs and b) identify which of those sources had been designated the term ‘mentor’.

Task 1 - to initiate a first coding of the data, a tree node called ‘Sources of assistance’ was established in NVivo7 with child nodes reflecting the likely sources of assistance as identified prior to interview and used in the survey instrument. As the data was coded at the corresponding child nodes, two iterations to the initial list were made. The first was to add two child nodes called ‘Other companies’ and ‘Successful business people’; the second was to create an additional child node called ‘Specific expertise’ to which the sub child nodes
‘Accountant’, ‘Banks’ and ‘Legal’ were added along with an additional category of ‘Other’.

Table 2 shows the results of this first coding process and indicates the number of cases making reference to the various sources of assistance coded at each node.

Table 2: Number of cases coded at tree node 'sources of assistance'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREE NODE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CASES CODED AT NODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total cases (N=32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Sources of assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books / References</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other companies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Specific expertise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful business people</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 2 - having identified the general sources of assistance categories and the number of cases referring to each source, a separate free node was created called ‘Term mentor’. To recollect, a stimulus for this research was an observation that while the term ‘mentor’ in recent times has been increasingly associated with a source of assistance for entrepreneurs, it was perhaps not a term frequently applied by the entrepreneur. The data analysis therefore continued with an NVivo7 word search of the 32 interview transcripts representing in excess of 60 hours of interview dialogue. The objective of this search was to identify all references to the term ‘mentor’ as used by the interviewed cases, and code them at the ‘Term mentor’ node irrespective of the assistance source. To ensure no use of the term by the interviewer was included in the result count, a check of the case source for each reference to the term was undertaken.

The search resulted in the identification of 73 incidences of the stem word ‘mentor’ comprising 59 references to the word ‘mentor’ and 14 to the term ‘mentoring’. A review of the case sources showed that of the 32 cases interviewed, 20 cases (62.5%) spontaneously applied the words ‘mentor’ to designate a specific source(s) and/or ‘mentoring’ to describe the process of receiving assistance. Of the remaining 12 cases (37.5%), eight (25%) used the term only in response to a question from the interviewer and four (12.5%) revealed no use of the term at all. The ratio per case to the use of the stem word mentor is 1: 2.28. These findings are summarised in Table 3.
Table 3: Results of NVivo7 word search 'mentor'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of word search results for stem term ‘mentor’:</th>
<th>73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases:</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>1 : 2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases using term:</td>
<td>28/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of cases identified spontaneously using term</td>
<td>20/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of cases identified using term, but only in response to question</td>
<td>8/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases identified with no use of term:</td>
<td>4/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to provide a contrast within the context of frequency of word usage, a second word search (again by interviewees only) for the term ‘Accountant’ was conducted. ‘Accountant’ was selected as a clearly recognisable term and presumed to have similar meaning for all cases. This resulted in a finding of 29 cases spontaneously using the term a total of 257 times, being a ratio of 1: 8.9 for the total cases (n=32). This initial word search was revealing, in as much as it illustrated the term ‘Mentor’ was not freely used as a designated term for a source of assistance within the context of the interviews.

At this point in the exploration of the data, the findings of the word search were used to identify the 28 cases that had used the term mentor and examine in more detail the context surrounding the term.
MENTORS REVEALED

A preliminary examination of the 28 cases for context immediately surrounding the use of the terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentoring’, revealed firstly a variety of themes in the application of the word. The terms chosen to represent the themes were: designating or naming a mentor, identifying the source of the mentor, and defining and categorising mentor functions. Table 4 provides example transcript text illustrating the interpretation of the three theme applications.

Table 4: Application themes for the word 'mentor'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Theme</th>
<th>Example Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Designating a mentor</td>
<td>• Mentor, my uncle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I had a guy four years older than me who was a really wonderful mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identifying the sources of designated mentors</td>
<td>• I suppose the consultant given by the Enterprise Centre came close, so I suppose I had a mentor for about a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The companies I follow are another mentor for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Defining and categorising mentor functions</td>
<td>• He encouraged me...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• He was knowledgeable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above three application themes of the term ‘mentor’ reflected the questions of the Conceptual Framework and were chosen as the starting point for further exploration of the data, beginning with establishing who the entrepreneurs designated as their mentor(s).
THEME 1 – DESIGNATING A MENTOR

This section explores the theme of identifying what specific sources of assistance had been designated as a mentor by the entrepreneurs in this study. In order to do this, a free node was created called ‘Mentoring discussed’ and context surrounding the discussion of mentors and/or mentoring was selected in the 32 complete transcripts and coded at this node. The rationale for re-visiting the complete portfolio of 32 cases, rather than just the 28 cases identified as having used the term mentor, was to ensure that no related conversation was overlooked in the instance of the four cases identified as not using the term mentor in the process of the word search. For example, a word search would not have picked up a case responding to the question ‘would you call her a mentor?’ with a simple ‘no’, but the discussion around that answer might provide valuable insight.

The closer investigation of the data was warranted as it revealed 23 cases (72%) had designated the term ‘mentor’ to specific sources of assistance, five (15.5%) had used the term but in the context of declining to designate any source as a mentor and four (12.5%) declined to designate any source of assistance as mentor (in answer to a question) without using the term. In summary, this process identified 23 cases that designated mentors and nine cases (28%) that declined to apply the term mentor to any source of assistance.

The mentors designated by the 23 cases are outlined in Table 5. The table identifies the case number for each of the 23 cases as allocated at the start of the research to each case
(numbers 1 – 32); the number of mentors designated by each case; and example text extracted to identify the designated mentor.

Table 5: Mentors designated by case number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case number</th>
<th>Number of mentors</th>
<th>Designated mentors identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1           | 4                 | 1. I guess a significant person early on was – is, now my ex-husband  
               2. Plus one of the fellows, the man who was in charge of (name of company) that I was working with before  
               3. They teamed me up with a woman who was my mentor  
               4. Current partner |
| 2           | 1                 | 1. My mentor was designated as a mentor (Speaking of her experience of joining a program for women in business).  
               2. I never thought of the (university) Dean at the time - but he really was. |
| 4           | 1                 | 1. Maybe my husband. (In response to question ‘do you have a mentor?’). |
| 5           | 2                 | 1. Those were the people where I was getting my mentoring from. We were mentoring each other. (Speaking of a group of emerging businesses who located into a converted building at approximately the same time).  
               2. Yes. I suppose I had a small advisory board which included probably most usefully the guy who was my second boss when I started university. (Response to the question ‘have you had a mentor?’). |
| 6           | 2                 | 1. The person I credit with most help and mentor to me has always been and continues to be, my husband  
               2. Hmm ... but not nearly in the same way as my husband, because it was part of his job really. (In response to a question regarding whether a semi-retired manufacturer’s distributor, who provided help on a commission basis, would also be classed a mentor). |
| 7           | 1                 | 1. Yes, role model, friend and perhaps a mentor too. (Speaking of a successful photographer he visited while in the UK when he was 17, and with whom he still corresponds). |
| 9           | 4                 | 1. I had a mentor at (university).  
               2. I had a (women’s business program) mentor  
               3. The companies I follow are another mentor to me. (Describing the companies in an investment portfolio).  
               4. So in business having a mentor helps you keep your grades... and I think that is what my CPA (accountant) has done for me. |
| 10          | 1                 | 1. ... an individual who became my mentor. He is a local business man here. |
| 12          | 2                 | 1. I wouldn’t say I had a strong mentor..... (Describing a prior work colleague).  
               2. I would say if anyone, my mentoring came from my father. |
| 13          | 1                 | 1. What is this thing mentor? I guess (name) our accountant. |
| 14          | 2                 | 1. I had a fabulous guy four years older than me who was a really wonderful mentor. (Describing a senior research scientist employed by the company in its early stage). |
2. *My husband I think in many ways has been my mentor.*

15 4 1. *One of them is a client, he owns privately a small company. He is also CEO of a multinational company... so he has agreed to be my mentor.*

2. *One (CEO) we interviewed for a newsletter – he loved it and stayed in touch.*

3. *The third person is now a retired CEO and has a foundation.*

4. *And there is a fourth person who is a consultant to CEO’s and Board stuff... I call them all mentors in one way or another.* (Speaking of the four members of 15’s advisory board).

16 2 1. *One of the past chairs (of a business association round table syndicate). (Name) is acting as a consultant and a sort of mentor.*

2. *(Name) – now on Board. (Speaking of a lawyer who was originally consulted to assist with a specific issue and then joined 16’s Advisory Board).*

17 1 1. *I would certainly say that (name) was certainly a mentor and not just a counsellor.* (Describing a person allocated as part as a university business program).

18 1 1. *He died very suddenly and that was another thing – he was my mentor you see.* (Speaking of father).

19 1 1. *What do you mean by a mentor? I suppose the consultant given by the Enterprise Centre came close.* (Describing a person allocated as part of a government business program).

20 1 1. *My mentor was a woman called (name).* (Describing a person allocated as part as a university business program).

22 2+ 1. *Fellow businessmen – and a woman.*

2. *(Name) who we haven’t met yet but who we have been told will be our mentor in the program*

23 1 1. *(Responding to a question from the interviewer regarding whether 23 would consider any one to have been a mentor).*

24 1 1. *Mentor – my uncle.* (Responding to a question from the interviewer regarding whether 24 would consider any one to have been a mentor).

25 1 1. *I did have a mentor actually assigned to me when I did the (government business program) who was an ex accountant, retired ....*

28 1 1. *My husband. We are separated now for 6 years, but I still see him once a week.* (Responding to a question from the interviewer regarding whether 28 would consider any one to have been a mentor).

29 1 1. *I don’t really know what a mentor is – my brother-in-law if I stop to think about it.* (Responding to a question from the interviewer regarding whether 29 would consider any one to have been a mentor).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 client, 1 CEO of multinational company, 1 retired CEO, 1 consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 past chair of business association, 1 lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 person from university business program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 consultant from Enterprise Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 woman mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>1 businessman, 1 woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 person from father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 retired accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 husband, separated for 6 years, still sees once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 brother-in-law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table illustrates that, while three cases have designated four mentors (case numbers 1, 9 and 15) and five cases designated two mentors (case numbers 5, 6, 12, 14, and 16), the majority of 13 cases equating to 56.5% of those designating a mentor source (n=23)
identified only one mentor. The exception being case 22 who chose to nominate ‘fellow businessmen and a woman’ as a collective as well as someone they had yet to meet.

A review of the mentor list also necessitated an amendment of the question from ‘who has been designated as a mentor by the entrepreneurs in this study’ to, ‘who/what has been designated as a mentor by the entrepreneurs in this study’. This was as a consequence of case 9’s comment: ‘The companies I follow are another mentor to me’ - describing the companies in an investment portfolio.

**Findings of Theme 1**

The findings of Theme 1 include:

- The word mentor is not frequently used as a term by the entrepreneurs in this study
- 23 cases (71.8%) used the term to designate a source as mentor
- Over half (56.5%) of the 23 cases designating a mentor acknowledged only one source of assistance as a mentor, suggesting the term is not only not frequently used but also infrequently attributed to sources of assistance
- A mentor is not necessarily a person - in this instance ‘Other businesses’ referring to tracking the progress of companies in an investment portfolio, have also been designated a mentor source.
THEME 2 – IDENTIFYING THE SOURCES OF DESIGNATED MENTORS

Having identified the designated mentors, the second theme explores the data further to establish the sources of the designated mentors for the same 23 cases identified. To do this the interview data coded at the free node ‘Mentoring discussed’ was revisited and coded on to a tree node called ‘Mentor source category’, with child nodes created as decisions were made relating to the source or ‘category’ of each mentor. These child nodes largely reflected those of the tree node ‘Sources of assistance’ as illustrated previously in Table 2, but they were created to serve two purposes: 1) to code only information related to sources designated as mentors at each node, and 2) to enable subtleties of categorisations to eventuate. For example, an accountant may be a general source of assistance for some, but may also be designated as a mentor by others.

As noted in the literature review, there are few occurrences of mentors being discussed in relation to entrepreneurs and where there is reference, the mentor is given a category along with other sources of assistance. For example, Hisrich (1998) recommends the entrepreneur forms a personal support network drawn from a number of sources including a mentor, business associate (including clients and suppliers), trade associations, or personal affiliations, and a moral support network of family and friends. That is, there is a source of mentors as there is of accountants, clients etc. This research suggests that a mentor will be found from within the sources of assistance accessed by the entrepreneur and aims to add to the knowledge of what source the entrepreneur acknowledges as a mentor (if at all) and
why they are designated as mentors. This approach is justified as a recommendation of Ragins and Kram (2007) summary of directions for future research.

As can be noted from the text extracted and displayed in the previous Table 5, the interviewees identified a variety of sources of mentors. The designated mentor sources were categorised and coded at child nodes labelled: family (spouse/partner, ex-spouse, father, uncle, brother-in-law); early employer or work colleague; allocated mentors; peers; successful business people; specific expertise (accountant/lawyer); and other companies. Table 6 outlines the categories of mentor sources, the case numbers citing those sources and the total number of cases for each source category. The information is presented in descending order of number of designations.

Table 6: Source categories and the case numbers designating a mentor(s) at that source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree node - Mentor source category</th>
<th>Case ID’s coded at source category</th>
<th>Total designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Family:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spouse/partner</td>
<td>1; 4; 6; 14; 28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ex-spouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• father</td>
<td>12; 18; 23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uncle</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• brother-in-law</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allocated mentors</td>
<td>1; 2; 9; 19; 17; 20; 22; 25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Early employer or work colleague</td>
<td>1; 2; 5; 9; 12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Specific expertise:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accountant</td>
<td>9; 13; 16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lawyer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Successful business people</td>
<td>7; 10; 15; 16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peers</td>
<td>5; 22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employees</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other companies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The previous table (Table 6) highlights ‘Family’ as the most allocated overall source category within the 23 cases designating mentors in this study. A total of 8 cases reported experience of a mentor allocated by some form of organised activity or program, and 5 cases named individuals (employer/work colleague) who had significant influence during their early career years.

It was at this point that the researcher called on the casebook set up within NVivo7 to allocate the attributes ‘Gender’ and ‘Country of Interview’ to each of the identified cases. To recollect, there was a balance of four females and four males interviewed for each country. The following Table 7 displays the outcome.

**Table 7: Distribution of the 23 cases designating mentors by gender and country of interview.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of interview</th>
<th>Number of female cases designating mentors</th>
<th>Number of male cases designating mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada (total 8 cases)</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (total 8 cases)</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>4/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (total 8 cases)</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (total 8 cases)</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cases 32</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total 13/16</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total 10/16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be noted that while the number of cases designating mentors is similar for Canada, the USA and the UK, the results for Australia are considerably different. In particular Table 7 notes:

- 13/16 female cases (81.25%) have designated individuals as mentors
• 10/16 male cases (62.5%) have designated individuals as mentors

• Only 3/8 Australian cases (37.5%) have designated individuals as mentors, only one case of which (12.5%) is male.

The attributes of ‘Gender’ and ‘Country of Interview’ were then applied back to Table 6, which had identified the source categories for each of the mentors that had been designated mentors by the 23 cases. The outcome is presented in Table 8.

### Table 8: Source categories and case numbers designating a mentor(s) from that source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree node: Mentor source category</th>
<th>Case numbers coded at source category:</th>
<th>Total case allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Family:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spouse/partner</td>
<td>1C; 4C; 6C; 14US; 28AUS</td>
<td>12US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ex-spouse</td>
<td>1C</td>
<td>24UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• father</td>
<td>18UK; 23UK</td>
<td>29AUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uncle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• brother-in-law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allocated program mentors</td>
<td>1C; 2C; 9US; 19UK; 20UK; 25AUS</td>
<td>17UK; 22UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Early employer or work colleague</td>
<td>1C; 2C; 9US</td>
<td>5C; 12US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Specific expertise:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accountant</td>
<td>9US; 13US</td>
<td>16US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lawyer</td>
<td>6C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Successful business people</td>
<td></td>
<td>7C; 10US; 15US; 16US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peers</td>
<td></td>
<td>5C; 22UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employees</td>
<td>14US</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other companies</td>
<td>9US</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total designated mentors</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this point, a number of elements of interest are revealed. In particular:
1. General

- The 13 female cases designated 22 mentors from six sources. The 9 male cases designated 14 mentors from six sources.

2. Gender

- Five females designated their husband/partner as a mentor. No males name their wife/partner as a mentor.
- The females designated immediate family as mentors (spouse/father), males more remote members (uncle; brother-in-law)
- Six females designated individuals allocated through an organised program as mentors. Two males provided a similar designation.
- No females designated successful business people as mentors.

3. Country of Interview

- All four Canadian females designated the term mentor to at least one source. Two of the four Canadian males did likewise.
- Three American females designated the term mentor to at least one source. All four American males designated at least one source of mentor.
- Four UK females designated the term mentor to at least one source. Three of the four UK males did likewise.
- Two Australian females designated the term mentor to at least one source. Only one Australian male did likewise.
- When examined collectively, eight of the thirteen combined cases from North America (Canada and the US) designated two or more sources as mentors. In contrast when
examined collectively, only one of the ten UK and Australian cases combined designated more than one source as mentor.

**Findings for Theme Two**

Findings from Theme Two would suggest that for the cases in this study:

- Females somewhat more frequently designate a source as mentor compared to males
- Family is overall the source of the greatest number of designated mentors
- Whilst females designate their husband/partner as a mentor, males do not attribute the same term to their wife/partner
- Women are more likely to have experienced a mentor allocated as part of a program compared to the men
- Either the term ‘Mentor’ is not well understood in Australia or Australian men in particular do not find it an appropriate term to apply to a source of assistance they have received. This is in contrast to the US cases where all males designated at least one source, and suggests the possibility of some cultural connotations regarding use of the term.

**THEME 3 – DEFINING AND CATEGORISING MENTOR FUNCTIONS**

Having identified the sources of designated mentors, the task of trying to understand why the entrepreneurs in this study designated particular sources as mentors began. It commenced by looking at each specific source identified and comparing the stories of the cases coded at that node to better understand the functions provided by the mentors for each
entrepreneur. The driver underpinning this theme is therefore the application of a lens to the stories of the entrepreneurs, in order to understand the nature of mentors and mentoring in their context.

As identified in the literature, various authors have described mentors in terms of ‘what the mentor does’, generally referred to as ‘mentoring functions’. There is general commonality in a differentiation of the personal help (psychosocial) functions such as role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship; career mentoring functions including sponsorship, facilitating exposure and visibility, coaching, protecting, and providing challenging assignments (Kram, 1988; Ragins & Kram, 2007); and specific learning functions transferred through teaching or knowledge/skill transference (Caruso, 1992). There is also general agreement that the closer the mentor is to providing all of the functions, the closer they are to Levinson’s (1978) prototype mentor. However, as Waterset et al. (2002) emphasised, very little is understood regarding the function of mentors for entrepreneurs as the predominance of research has been undertaken in an organisational context, where career mentoring is the primary objective, and not in the world of the entrepreneur.

The temptation at this point of the data analysis was to reduce the data findings to a series of numeric or check list representations. However, as Gartner (2004) points out, much is to be learned from the stories of entrepreneurs, in this instance how they described their designated mentors. Theme 3 is therefore presented in two sections. The first section,
Section A, draws on the entrepreneurs’ stories and unashamedly uses quite large extracts from the interview data in order to add richness to the summaries of findings, and illustrate the process of synthesis presented in the second section, Section B.

**Section A – The entrepreneurs’ stories**

This component outlines extracts from the entrepreneurs’ stories that have been selected to illustrate how they talk about their mentors and to better understand the inherent mentoring functions. Information is presented by node source title (family; allocated mentors; early employer/work colleague; specific expertise; successful business people; peers; employees; and other companies); case, as identified by case number (1 – 32); country of interview (C = Canada; US = USA; UK = UK; and AUS = Australia); and gender ( F = female; M = male). Example: 1CF is case number 1, Canada, Female. Findings are presented following each source category and an overall summary of findings for Section A at its completion.

**Source: Family**

A total of 10 cases designated family members as mentors with 1CF designating two people in this category. Of these cases, five women named their (current and/or ex) husband or partner as a mentor. No men chose to nominated a wife or partner. Other sources of family were father, uncle and brother in law. These sources will be illustrated in order.

*Spouse/partner*

1CF chose to designate both her ex-husband and current partner as mentors. 4CF had to think twice about naming her husband as mentor but eventually did so. 28AUSF also had to
think before naming anyone as a mentor. After a lengthy pause, she designated her husband. 6CF was not hesitant at all in designating her husband as her primary mentor. 14USF said (after reflection): *My husband I think in many ways has been a mentor.*

4CF, 14USF and 28AUSF all hesitated at length before designating ‘husband’ as their only mentor. This was interpreted not that they were hesitating about the appropriateness of their husbands being designated as mentor, but rather designating anyone as a mentor. However, the notion of ‘many ways’ as expressed by 14USF came through in all the women’s stories of their husbands or partners and this was despite 1CF and 28AUSF being separated from their spouses for at least six years, although both continued to meet with their ex-husbands and considered them still as mentors.

The ‘many ways’ articulated by the women reflected a number of the mentor functions previously noted in the literature, in particular psychosocial (support; encouragement) functions. However, subtle differences were sensed, in particular the element of ‘companionship’ (as an extension of friendship) and ‘instilling confidence’ (rather than acceptance and confirmation). However, the career teaching functions were manifested more as a source of information to be accessed (a source of experience) by the entrepreneur rather than the function of the mentor being that of teacher. In the instance of these women, it was interpreted as the husband having business experience or specific skills that the entrepreneur could question him on, or learn from, as opposed to being ‘taught’. 14USF
expressed this as: *I learned a lot from him about science. He also is a very exacting writer.*

This information resource function also tended to be two way (reciprocal):

> *He is in a completely different business but we are both business people and we are both very entrepreneurial and although our businesses are completely different we can talk to each other about processes and procedures. The content will be different* (6CF).

Being a sounding board *I can bounce ideas...* (14USF) was also a recurrent thread, as was a tacit inference of having someone to give updates or report to.

6CF captured much of the above when she said:

> *The person that I credit with the most help and mentor to me has always been and continues to be my husband. He has an engineering degree and a marketing degree so he was very instrumental in pushing me off the ground. He gave me basic information plus support and he has always had a lot more confidence in me than I had in myself in the beginning. Now he comes to me for advice which is wonderful. In the beginning he had all the knowledge and now I have my own experience and we share a lot* (6CF).

What also came through the stories was not so much a function but a series of mentor attributes. These were interpreted as appreciating having someone who was easily and willingly accessible, made time when needed, and able to be trusted.

> *It’s nice being in the same profession with my husband and involved in business because we can talk till late in the night and on the other hand it’s not nice because who wants to talk till late in the night about work. He has been an incredible source of support. You panic and then you get back to work* (14USF).

*Father*

12USM, 18UKF and 23UKF all designated their father as a mentor and in the instances of the two women, their only mentor.
Neither 18UKF nor 23UKF were married. Both spoke extensively of the role their fathers played, particularly in the start-up years. Both began by qualifying the credibility of their fathers’ business knowledge, one running his own (but not related) successful business and the other described as: … an ex-director of (multinational company), he’s been retired 16 years now but what he doesn't know about business isn't worth knowing (23UKF).

As with the women describing their husbands as mentors, 18UKF and 23UKF spoke of the unquestionable support, encouragement and confidence engendered by their fathers; having access to their knowledge expertise and experience; using their fathers as sounding boards: and accepting words of wisdom:

*I think it was him who told me to have a separate bank account for my own personal use. Little things like that, that were quite typical issues that I would have learnt in time but it saved me that learning curve (18UKF).*

*... he's got a pad like this, and he sits at home on his recliner and just sort of writes me these letters to tell me what to do, not what to do next, but advice from the old head… so again my father had torn something in the Telegraph which he sent me… pointers and things (23UKF).*

The inference of having someone to report to (as indicated in the previous observations on husbands as mentors) was given more clarity by 18UKF - she called it the ‘headmaster effect’:

*... he would say ‘have you sorted out that supplier’ and have you done this and that and I would say ‘yes, it’s all done’ and I would almost treat him like the headmaster effect (18UKF).*
12USM designated two individuals as mentors and was the only male nominating his father, but only after much consideration... *I would probably say, if I had a mentor, it would be my father.*

He attributed his father with setting the standards for hard work, achievement resulting from own efforts, and moral guidance - very much a combination of guiding, teaching and role modeling functions:

> But I think it is his constant drilling in of – you’ve got to do this – and he always had the right mix of when to back off and when to push and stuff like that (12USM).

Although declining to designate anyone as a mentor for the purpose of the research, 27AUSM spoke similarly of his father as follows:

> I mean, my dad was a terrific mentor but not of course in a business sense or a technical sense, because he was a carpenter, but in an ethics sense (long pause) support for me as a person.... And that’s a moral learning, not an individual (pause) thing (27AUSM).

**Other family**

24UKM and 29AUSM each nominated only one individual as a mentor, both designating family members (uncle and brother-in-law respectively). Both men had described the people concerned during the course of their interview, citing them as sources of assistance, but had to think hard before designating them as mentors in response to a question from the interviewer - the question was posed towards the end of the interview and after no designated mentor had eventuated to that point. 24UKM spoke of his uncle rather as 12USM and 27AUSM had spoken of their fathers:
... I do have an uncle - I did have an uncle, he has passed away (pause) who always used to come out with little words and phrases of superior wisdom which used to make me think about a lot of things in life. But that would be my only mentor (24UKM).

29AUSM spoke at length about his brother-in-law, who was a young and extremely wealthy entrepreneur. The functions identified in his description were expressed less effusively compared to those of the women when describing their husbands as mentors, but identified many of the same psychosocial functions of support, encouragement and confidence; functions related to accessing information, knowledge and experience; the functions of a sounding board and someone to report ‘how you are going’ to; and a primary function of role model. The status assigned to the brother-in-law and the frequent comments regarding his business capabilities was similar to the implied trust and credibility assigned to the husbands and fathers of the women designating mentors in this family source category. Much was made of the belief that ‘having been there’, implying starting and running a business, helped the brother-in-law to appreciate where he (29AUSM) was at. Although restricted in his time as a result of the nature of his business and extensive international commitments the brother-in-law, as with all family members designated as mentors in this source category, took every opportunity to give willingly of his time and experience and made 29AUSM feel as though he was approachable whenever the need arose. Despite all this, 29AUSM also had to think deeply before saying: I don’t know what a mentor is – my brother-in-law if I think about it, I suppose.
Findings: Source category Family

- Of the 10 cases designating a family member as a mentor only two (1CF and 6CF) did so without being prompted and with little, if any, hesitation. The other eight cases only made the designation after much contemplation. Of these eight, the mentor designated by six cases was their only nominated mentor. Table 9 identifies the cases that showed significant hesitation in attributing the term to their only designated mentor source.

Table 9: Cases designating a family member as a mentor, highlighting those with family as their only designated mentor and those hesitating before designation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor source:</th>
<th>Case ID</th>
<th>1CF</th>
<th>4CF</th>
<th>6CF</th>
<th>14USF</th>
<th>28AUSF</th>
<th>18UKF</th>
<th>23UKF</th>
<th>12USM</th>
<th>24UKM</th>
<th>29AUSM</th>
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<td>Only Mentor</td>
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<td>Hesitation in designation</td>
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The finding relating to hesitation tends to reinforce the assumption resulting from the word search, namely that the term ‘mentor’ is neither frequently nor lightly applied to sources of assistance by the entrepreneurs in this study. This finding would also suggest that, to this point in the analysis, of the 23 cases designating sources of assistance as mentors 6 cases did not readily attributed the term to anyone.

- The majority of the mentors designated in this source ‘Family’ would appear to provide many of the mentoring functions of the literature. In particular they all offer the psychosocial functions related to emotional support and performed the role of sounding
board With the exception of 24UKM’s designated mentor (his uncle) all other family mentors contributed business related expertise resulting from their own business experience and competencies. This experience and competence was recognised and respected by the entrepreneurs. The other elements in common to each mentor related to them mentor being easily and readily accessible to the entrepreneur when needed, and an apparent sense of comfort on the part of the entrepreneur in knowing the designated mentor understood their needs and issues or, colloquially, where they were coming from. In the case of the fathers and uncle, the role of the mentor would also have embraced the traditional mentor function of a ‘wise elder’, and for the male cases with the exception of 29AUSM this would have been the primary function of the family member.

- It is particularly notable that while the women designated their husband/partner as a mentor, no men designated the term to their wives.

**Source: Allocated mentors**

The experiences of the eight cases that designated the term mentor to an individual assigned as part of a business program varied. The associated stories are interesting as they begin to provide insight as to why some individuals might be considered as mentors by the entrepreneurs and others might not. They also highlight that there are certain un-articulated expectations of what someone allocated the title ‘mentor’ must ‘do’ or ‘be’ and the disappointment when those expectations are not fulfilled. As with the previous section, it is felt to be of benefit for this component of the data analysis to use a number of significant interview extracts.
One of the most positive stories was the account given by 20UKF in her description of the mentoring she received as part of a 12 month business growth program conducted by the local university. 20UKF had experienced success from the outset of opening her retail business, had expanded rapidly and was now suffering from a lack of knowledge (and motivation) to scale back and refocus the business to return to profitability. The story starts at the first residential weekend:

*We had been told that right through the program we would be mentored because research had shown that owner managers who have a mentor have a far better chance of success (20UKF).*

Describing meeting her (female) mentor for the first time, 20UKF explained what happened:

*... she looked at my accounts and said ‘tell me what you do and how you do it’ and I looked at her and tried to speak and nothing came out, and eventually she looked at me and said its okay you're allowed to cry. And for the next 10 minutes I wept and I wept and I wept (20UKF).*

As the story unfolded it became apparent that the mentoring provided to 20UKF gave her not only the tools for moving forward but reinforcement of her own capabilities and a literal shoulder to cry on when needed at the outset. In her story she described not only the knowledge but the confidence gained, and the value of having someone who listened, challenged, who had business credibility and, within certain pre-determined guidelines, was willingly accessible and available. Some years on from the program 20UKF was still in contact with the mentor and, at the time of interview, continued to use her as a sounding board for future directions in her business.
Coincidentally, though at different times, two other cases 17UKM and 18UKF had been involved with the same institution and the same mentor designated by 20UKF. It was through the comparison of these three transcripts that it became apparent that 20UKF applied the term mentor from the outset, whereas 17UKM and 18UKF used the terms ‘business advisor’ and ‘counselor’ (also descriptions used by the program) for the same person, until questioned. These are the comments recorded for 17UKM:

_I was in a syndicate with an excellent business adviser... We came out on top of the pile in terms of having the best business adviser. She is very pragmatic, very tough but very supportive. Basically what that gave was the non executive director.... and we still meet. We still keep in touch with each other to talk about business issues (17UKM)._

When asked if he would call (name) a mentor, the response was:

_Very much. A business counselor might not have that edge as a mentor. I am not sure that word is really understood in this country. I would certainly say that (name) was certainly a mentor and not just a counselor (17UKM)._

When questioned by the interviewer if there was ‘Anyone else you would give that title to?’ the response was ‘None that I can think of’.

At a later point in the interview 17UKM reflected on a particularly difficult time in his business, but what he had to say gives insight as to how he differentiated the assistance received from his designated mentor, to other sources of assistance. The passage also adds to the picture of the entrepreneur needing to control their learning and the trust and credibility that is needed to be developed with someone before they feel able to listen to criticism:
I think it would have been an enormous help if someone like (allocated mentor) had been around at the early start of this process because then I would have felt there was somebody who was going to confront me on things but not undermine my confidence which was pretty bloody fragile in the early stages and that I think is the key issue. That is the problem with accountants or management consultants. All they do is rip you apart. Whereas you actually need at that early stage somebody who is very supportive but build a relationship where you are willing to listen to the nasty things they want to tell you, to the things you are doing wrong. I'm not sure how you'd crack that. It takes a great act of faith and personality to be able to listen to people because the very nature of being an owner manager means you're incredibly pigheaded and dictatorial a lot of the time ... (17UKM).

18UKF had a different response however. She declined the opportunity to designate the same allocated individual the status of mentor, although she also struggled with the term ‘business counselor’, preferring the term ‘consultant’:

Consultant (also) has a funny ring about it. Although I prefer consultant to counselor because I do think of a counselor as someone who is actually pulling my mind apart although I know they don't. I would rather say I am seeing a business consultant (18UKF).

However, 18UKF had previously spoken of her father as her mentor and although indicating the allocated mentor ‘came close’ and offered many of the elements of her relationship with her father, there was a subtle difference. This difference was most likely attributable to the closeness and duration of the relationship with her father and the availability and accessibility that relationship had offered, rather than the specific functions performed. Speaking of her father she said:

... he died very suddenly that was the thing. He was my mentor you see. All of a sudden that was gone and then I went to (the program) within six months of that and all of a sudden I had someone to replace it. It wasn’t the same but it was something that you could ... because I do believe you need to talk to somebody about things (18UKF).
19UKF had quite a different experience however, providing further evidence of the importance of the attributes of availability and accessibility in the mix of expectations of a mentor:

*I suppose the consultant given by the (government business centre) sort of came close... So I had I suppose a mentor for a month - she was very helpful but I always felt as though she had a timer switched on 'brrrrring, right, must be gone now' (19UKF).*

Of the other four cases designating allocated mentors, the response was also mixed. 1CF and 2CF describe their experiences, although at different times, in the same women-in-business program as follows:

*... and they teamed me up with a woman who was my mentor - and that was the turning point for me. Really a major turning point... (name) my mentor has been really good. If I have a problem I will (still) call her up (1CF).*

1CF spoke of the mentor’s credibility and understanding as a consequence of commencing and growing a substantial manufacturing enterprise. Although not in the same industry, 1CF felt that her mentor understood and had affinity with both the requirements of her business and her needs as an entrepreneur as demonstrated by the mentor’s own track record in business. The relationship was described as ‘sharing and caring’ with the most important role being that of ‘a sounding board’. Although not spending great amounts of time together, 1CF understood her mentor was willing to be available and commit time as needed.

In the same program as 1CF, but at a different time, 2CF’s story of her experience is quite different:
My mentor was designated as a mentor, but she really wasn’t a mentor. She didn’t have the business experience. Not much (help). She had never started her business herself. It was not a good marriage for me. Her business was a good marriage for my business but she had never started a business. She had actually gone into a partnership. She had never been through the process and when I talked about it, she had not been through the process so she didn’t know the process I was talking about (2CF).

These comments reinforce the importance of ‘credibility’ and ‘affinity’ within the mix of mentor elements. It would also seem from the case of 2CF, no matter how much she may have liked her mentor, or even how much her mentor knew or had experienced, she would never meet the expectation of a mentor as she had not ‘been there’. These elements of credibility and affinity, as evidenced by having an identifiable and relatable track record, emerge again in the story of 9USF. 9USF designated four mentor sources, including an allocated mentor. However, this was another instance of someone being given the title of mentor not meeting up to expectations:

... in the (women’s business organization) I had a mentor – but it didn’t work as we were unable to find a common factor in business to discuss. We enjoyed each other’s company, but I wanted to talk business (9UF).

The story of 25AUSF gives additional support to the expectation of the mentor being willingly available and readily accessible:

I did have a mentor actually assigned when I was working with the (government business program) who was an ex-accountant, but he lived (some distance away) and he really wasn’t available. I didn’t feel he was available.... I think I only contacted him once and he never came over here (to the business). He might have visited at first but after that it was just one phone call and I had that advice available to me for a year... but then, he just wasn’t available. It was OK but it wasn’t really working... (25AUSF).

The final case in this source category was 22UKM who was waiting with anticipation the start of a business growth program offering the service of a mentor.
We have been told we will be given a mentor in the program. We will be looking forward to meeting (name) who we have been told will be our mentor in the coming weeks (22UKM).

Findings: Source category Allocated mentor

This section on allocated program mentors has provided interesting insights into when a mentor is not a mentor. In particular:

- Of the nine cases designating the term mentor to an individual in this source category, only three (1CF, 9UF, 22UKM) designated other sources as mentors. That is, six of the nine cases designated the allocated mentor as their only mentor.

- Of those six cases only designating the term mentor to an individual in this source category, three considered the individual to have not been a mentor. In other words, although applying the term because it had been used by the program to describe the source of assistance provided, these three cases did not consider anyone as having been a mentor thereby reducing the overall number of cases who can really be considered to have ‘had a mentor’ from 23 to 20 cases, equating to 62.5% of the total cases in this study (n=32). These cases are represented in Table 10.

Table 10: Cases designating allocated mentor, highlighting those with this source category as their only mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor source: Allocated program mentor</th>
<th>Case ID 1CF</th>
<th>2CF</th>
<th>9USF</th>
<th>17UKM</th>
<th>19UKF</th>
<th>20UKF</th>
<th>22UKM</th>
<th>25AUSF</th>
<th>25AUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Only Mentor</td>
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<td>Not a mentor</td>
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Note to Table 10: '?' represents case yet to meet allocated mentor at time of interview.
• The positive mentor experiences reflected many of the functions attributed to the mentors in source ‘Family’ including appreciation of the psychosocial elements of support, encouragement, confidence building, gaining knowledge and experience, and appreciating having a sounding board and someone to report to. Highlighted were the importance of the mentor being available and accessible, and also the key ingredients of credibility and trust.

• The essence of ‘comradeship’ emerged and is interpreted as the need to know a mentor can relate to the entrepreneur through having ‘been there’, meaning affinity, or having experienced similar things.

Source: Early employer/work colleague

This source category refers to support and assistance received prior to, or in the early stages of, the entrepreneur starting the business. A total of five cases (n=23) designated employers or work colleagues as mentors.

Having already nominated her ex-husband as her first mentor and later speaking of her positive experience with an allocated program mentor 1CF, after additional reflection and consideration, described the encouragement given by a company colleague she had worked with (in a consultancy capacity) when first starting her business, as someone who had significant impact on 1CF’s personal and business growth in the start-up years:

... one of the fellows, the man who was in charge of the program at (name), a company that I was working with before, had encouraged me to give a talk (at a conference). I was young and he said ‘Why don't you do this talk? Why don't you present a paper?’ So I did. Through that it opened up contacts and then it
gave me some credibility. So therefore I was able to market myself to these companies. Plus I had contacts that I had made... (speaking of the companies and their representatives who attended the conference) (1CF).

Having previously described the mentor allocated as part of a women’s business program as...

my mentor was designated as a mentor, but she really wasn’t a mentor; the use of the word ‘mentor’ in this category context prompted 2CF to continue after a long pause to say… I never thought of the Dean (employer at a university) as a mentor at the time, but he was. Referring back to the interview source, it was clarified that 2CF had spoken about the Dean in a general context regarding her early explorations into starting her own business:

... I had a Dean who was spectacular, very innovative and he encouraged me - was very energising and when another opportunity came up he said ‘yeh, go for it’ (2CF).

The sense gleaned from this part of the story was that the Dean had indeed provided support, encouragement, instilled confidence, had been both a sounding board and someone to report to, and was willingly available and accessible. He was obviously someone 2CF respected and admired who perhaps had taken her ‘under his wing’ and certainly opened up opportunities for her. In fact, the Dean seemed to do for 2CF all the things that she described her allocated mentor as not doing or, as may be closer to reality, wasn’t able to do as a consequence of not fulfilling the expectation of having a mentor who had ‘been there too’.

9USF designated four sources of mentoring. The first she identified was a fellow mature age student (colleague) in her MBA program. Rather as 1CF and 2CF had described their
designated mentors in this source category of early employer/work colleague (in terms of
the mentor taking an interest in them, showing confidence in their ability and encouraging
and pushing them to achieve with the outcome being skills, knowledge, confidence and
contacts that they believed paved their way in business), 9US attributed her current
confidence in communicating and public speaking to this fellow (mature age) student:

So this woman who was a second year student in my business law class took me
under her wing and said ‘I’d like you to be on this committee with me’… So I
said ‘OK’ and she got me to come to this meeting and she said - you’d really be
a good person to chair the event, I’ll supervise but I want you to chair… She
really forced me into doing it… I was really pathologically afraid of public
speaking at the time and also naturally shy. There was no way I was going to
do this… She said I have already submitted your name. So she really pushed me
into it. It turned out to be a great opportunity for me (9USF).

The experiences of the three women were in many respects similar and in particular they
reflect an older or more senior person taking an interest in the progress and achievements of
a younger person.

5CM designated his second ‘boss’ of jobs he undertook to fund himself through university,
as a mentor. He had kept in touch with him on and off for many years, finally inviting him
to join an advisory board he established for his company probably, at least initially, in the
role of a ‘wise elder’. At first glance 5CM’s description seems to contradict what has
emerged to this point in the data findings (particularly in regard to the allocated mentors)
regarding the need for the mentor to establish credibility and affinity through similar
experience. However, 5CM’s story highlights the role of the mentor in taking a related
interest and having (new as well as previously acquired) knowledge that was of value to
It presented itself very much as a reciprocal relationship, adding to the emerging element of ‘reciprocity’ in the mentoring stories:

*I kept seeing (name) regularly. I enjoyed talking to him.* (Explains why the Board dissolved). *So I suppose (name) continued to perform as mentor but he had never run a business like this. He was knowledgeable. He kept up with the literature and as a matter of fact he ran a little business which summarised the most important articles in the field. After he retired he continued to read and issue this bulletin... so we ended up discussing that type of thing as opposed to aspects related to this business (5CM).*

The last of the cases designating a mentor from this source was 12USM, who was also the only male to designate his father as a mentor. After designating his father and after much contemplation, 12USM also designated an early work colleague who assisted him at a time of a major transition to a different area of his (then) employment. He qualified his selection by saying: *I wouldn’t say I had a strong mentor. I certainly had people who were very helpful along the way.* The possible explanation for this qualification could be that the relationship was (for 12USM) of short duration, *only two to three years.*

**Findings: Source category Early employers/work colleagues**

- The common finding linking the cases designating this source category is that in each case the term mentor was attributed to an individual who, it would appear, chose the entrepreneur.
- With the exception of 9USF, the other cases again showed hesitancy in identify an individual and applying the term. However, as these case had also designated at least one other mentor source, the hesitancy was interpreted as both a contemplation of whether the term was applicable to the person in question and almost a surprise
to discover the person was – in effective a retrospective application of the term ‘mentor’.

- As with the previous source categories, the mentors in this component were credited with providing personal support and encouragement, being a sounding board and passing on skills, information and opportunities. They were clearly respected by the entrepreneurs, although this was less apparent in the instance of 12USM, and willingly gave their time and attention both when needed and when something came to their attention that they believed would be of benefit.

Source: Specific expertise

Four cases (6CF; 9USF; 13USF; 16USM) designated the term mentor to paid consultants. 6CF had nominated her husband as her primary mentor, but also designated the term to a semi-retired manufacturer’s distributor who she hired on commission to help her get product to market. Although designating him a mentor she did not however consider him being a mentor … in the same way as my husband because I think it was part of his job really. She did attribute him with being supportive, encouraging, knowledgeable and valuable as a sounding board. Presumably he was also readily available and accessible. The only perceptible differences with how she had previously described her husband as a mentor were the closeness of the relationship and the fact that the more obvious functions related to providing expertise and knowledge were expected as a result of her decision to employ him. The fact that the contractor also offered her the more psychosocial aspects such as support and encouragement were probably a bonus and what made her designate him as a mentor, although not in the same way as her husband.
9USF and 13USF both designated accountants as mentors, but for different reasons. 9USF describes the contribution of her accountant (CPA, female) in two ways. Firstly:

*She basically took me aside and said ‘what's your problem’. I was doing my ‘oh I'm such a failure’ routine. She said ‘I beg your pardon, I've seen your taxes, I've seen what your income looks like, just because revenue is going up and just because you don't have the income growth. You are hiring expensive talented people but it is an investment’. And then she also made me realise indirectly how much the company was worth (9USF).*

And secondly to:

*Have somebody that you have to report to. I think that is a real value of a mentor. It can be one of the major values of a mentor. I knew that when I had to go in and give my report to my mentor I could not put it off. I think that you don't have that kind of feedback. Part of our educational system here is that you are constantly getting feedback. When you are in school you get a grade almost every single week. In business you don't. In business you could have done an A+ presentation and the client still hired somebody else. There was nothing wrong with you it’s just that they had brown eyes and you have green eyes. So in business having a mentor helps you keep your grades. You are doing it right and it’s not working but keep doing it. And I think that is what my CPA has done for me (9USF).*

13USF was one of the cases who asked … *What’s this thing ‘mentor’?* Answering her own question she said… *I guess (name) our accountant.* 13USF credits him with steering her out of a crisis in an earlier business resulting in the establishment of the successful enterprise she was running at the time of interview:

*So we had to get out of the business. So at that time I said to my husband ‘go work for someone, I don’t want the headaches’. Our accountant who happens to be our best friend said ‘you are crazy, you have all the accounts, you can do it yourself’. So he convinced us (13USF).*

The accountant had been chosen initially because of his expertise in working with small firms and the fact that he ran his own small accountancy practice would suggest he would
be perceived to have an affinity with the needs of a smaller business. Confidence and trust in the ability of the accountant (credibility) saw him continue to provide his services to the company despite moving into a different area of specialization. He became a close family friend.

Although the stories for 9USF and 13USF seem quite different, they have elements in common. In both instances the accountant has offered personal understanding, support and encouragement to the entrepreneurs; they have demonstrated their professional capabilities in a way which gives the entrepreneur confidence in their understanding of the nature and needs of their business; they have assisted in helping the entrepreneur understand the financial scenarios possible for positioning the company for the future; acted as a sounding board and as someone to report to; been available and accessible when needed; have demonstrated an affinity with the needs of the entrepreneur, and have left the entrepreneurs with a feeling of extra value for service. They have gone on to be friends.

16USM belonged to the local small business association where he had got to know one of the past chairs of the association who had taken an interest in him and stayed in contact. Finding himself in need of advice, 16USM turned to him for assistance:

I am involved in a very tricky negotiation now. A company that wants to buy us, has an option to buy. (Name) is acting as a consultant and sort of mentor. He is the one that bought and sold some companies (16USM).

The reason 16USM had been attracted to the person designated a mentor was as a result of the mentor initially taking an interest in his progress. The mentor however was also
observed to have competencies and expertise particularly useful to the entrepreneur and an affinity based on ‘having been there’. The term ‘a sort of mentor’ could be interpreted in two ways either that he couldn’t be a ‘proper’ mentor because he was being paid, or that he was adding value to his consultancy role by ‘mentoring’. The intonations of the story would tend to lean more towards the former interpretation.

**Findings: Source category Specific expertise**

- The findings from the stories of the four cases designating this category as a source of mentor, adds further focus to the elements emerging which define the contributions of the mentors in this study. In particular these case stories reinforce the retrospective allocation of the term ‘mentor’.

- Other aspects to emerge include the collection or package of contributions attributed to a mentor in contrast to the provision of a particular service as performed by a consultant. The differentiation is distinguished by the additional and residual value placed on the contribution made by the source of ‘Special expertise’. It is these notions of residual or lasting value, an appreciation for what has been contributed, and an affinity with and support for the needs of the entrepreneur that starts to define the points of differentiation between what is considered a mentor as distinct from a source of help.

**Source: Successful business people**

It is noted that no women designated anyone in this source category as a mentor. It is also interesting that in three of the four cases coded at this node (7CM, 10USM, and 16USM),
an older person (subsequently, after consideration, termed a mentor), took an interest in helping a younger entrepreneur.

7CM only allocated the term mentor to one individual, and that was after being asked if he would consider designating any of the people who had provided him with assistance a ‘mentor’. The person selected was a young man (about 4 years older than 7CM) that he had met on leaving school, but who had moved to Europe to set up a business. This person took an interest in and stayed in contact and 7CM stayed for a while with him during his travels, and was inspired by what he saw to set up his own company on returning home:

Yes, he definitely was a good role model because he was very heavily into business. I mean, he is a multi-millionaire... he has probably given me good advice along the way. The sort of person who says there are 24 hours in the day, six of them for sleeping. And it’s good to have people saying things like that instead of ‘oh, do you have to work tonight, oh isn't that terrible’ (7CM).

10USM also only designated one individual as a mentor who, like 7CM’s mentor, also took an interest in the progress of a younger person. The (later to be called) mentor noticed 10USM when he was trying to find a way to settle inherited company debt.

An informal mentor began in (pause). The debts of the corporation actually were far greater and we ended up selling the building that we are now sitting in to an individual who became my mentor. He is a local business man here ... (He) became like an older brother to me (10USM).

He described how his mentor found him while he was having to publicly negotiate the sale of his building:

But (Name) was sitting back watching all of this and afterwards he said ‘if you have some time tomorrow I'd like to sit down and talk with you’... So he liked
that attitude (the way 10USM had handled the negotiations) and he started dropping by once a week to say ‘what are you doing’ and ‘why don't you try this’. And that type of association was immensely helpful (10USM).

16USM had designated two people as mentors. In this category, as with 7CM and 10USM, the mentor found him:

What happened was that when I came here I got involved through flying gliders with an older guy who was about 12 or 14 years my senior... He was a senior vice president of (a large international company)... Mentor – yes (name), now on Board (16USM).

15USM was the only case who indicated he had actively sought out the actively sought out the four people who he terms collectively his group of advisors. However, they function individually and have never met each other and he designates each of them as a mentor in this category:

15 USM...what I have done is go out and find three CEO's that I know. These people came to me through other clients, one of them is a client - he owns privately a small company. He is also CEO of a multinational company and a few years ago my partner and I had done work for a division of that company. Never met him. So he has agreed to be a mentor. Two others, one we interviewed for our newsletter... He loved the interview and loved the dialogue and kept in touch with us... The third person is now retired CEO and has a private foundation. And there is a fourth person who is a consultant to CEO's and Board and stuff... I call them all mentors in one way or another... I would just call them mentors because that is how I see them to be...(15USM).

Findings: Source category Successful business people

- As for the previous source category, the majority of mentors (three out of four) named by the cases in this category had been proactive in taking an interest in the entrepreneur. The term ‘mentor’ was again interpreted as being a retrospective application.
• The exception was 15USM who was the only case to indicate he had deliberately set out to find a mentor. In 15USM’s instance he had actually targeted four individuals who individually and collectively provided a range of mentoring functions comprising both personal support functions as well as passing on experience and acting as a sounding board. The selection of each person was based on the professional credibility of the individual and a reciprocal respect formed as an outcome of prior business dealings. Together the four mentors provided a range of expertise in areas that 15USM felt to be lacking or would benefit from improving in his own capabilities, and also a network of contacts to organizations with which he wished to do business.

• No female cases designated a mentor from this source category.

Source: Peers

Two cases 22UKM and 5CM designated mentors in this source category. 22UKM described his mentor (singular) as other businessmen (pause) and woman. This notion of a number of individuals ‘mentoring’ each other is also highlighted by 5CM. Although not a formal/organized group, the result of a natural clustering of a number of emerging businesses into one location was described as follows by 5CM:

_I don't know whether birds of a feather flock together..._  
_I did form a lot of relationships there which I do still rely on (some ten years later)... At one point there were four companies that went down and they were right in this neighbourhood. We all independently bought buildings in the area... And so we used to get together and discuss all the problems of running a business. We used to do it regularly in our office or at lunch time or downstairs. We had that period of 8 years doing this all the time and then it continued because they were there. I still see them and I still talk to them frequently about business decisions and problems with accounts or problems with employees and so on... So that was very much a source of help. Those were the people_
where I was getting my mentoring from. We were mentoring each other. We were all struggling together (5CM).

Findings: Source category Peers

- This source is collectively able to contribute ‘mentoring’ but with no one individual specifically designated a ‘mentor’.

- Of all the source categories, this category highlights best the notion of reciprocity, in whatever form, that is interpreted as being inherent in all the mentor relationships in this study. It is presumed that in this particular category, the entrepreneur also contributes mentoring.

- This giving and receiving mentoring is the same as the concept of the ‘peer mentoring’ referred to extensively in the mentoring literature (Kram, 1995; Ragins & Kram, 2007) with one exception. That exception pertains to the underlying importance of the mentor having affinity with the needs of the entrepreneur and the benefits derived from sharing experiences as a result of having been there or indeed, still experiencing the highs and lows of being an entrepreneur.

Source: Employees

Only one case, 14USF, designated an employee as a mentor:

*When I started most of our work that I brought in it was related to (special process) and I had a fabulous guy four years older than me who was really a wonderful mentor who formulated a lot of my standards for how I approach business and science and work and then he retired, he moved to California and that was a big blow (14USF).*
14USF had developed a company around a highly specialized area of expertise. From the outset the company needed to call on leaders in their field to work on company projects. The individual designated as a mentor, understanding the direction in which 14USF wanted to take the company, undertook to assist her in understanding and learning from his wealth of specialist experience. The relationship was a combination of ‘wise elder’ and colleague’ but was differentiated from both by the employer – employee relationship, with 14USF very firm and very clear in who was at the helm of the company.

In some ways this relationship mirrors that of 1CF in source category ‘Specialist expertise – other’. The subtle difference being that the ‘employee’ was embedded in the company and passed on his skills, knowledge and standards both overtly by applying them to the business and covertly by example.

Findings: Source category Employees

- The only case in this category was also an instance in which the mentor initially took the lead in encouraging the entrepreneur.

Source: Other companies

One last, but interesting category was described by 9USF. Being in the investment industry she needed to keep an eye on the performance of a number of companies. She described this process of observation and analysis as follows:
The companies I follow are another mentor for me because I see how they market and how they do their finances and how they staff their people and see what mistakes they make. So because of the nature of my business I see a lot of what makes businesses successful and what makes business failures (9USF).

This category is seen to differentiate itself from, for example, learning from the businesses of peers, as it involves observing from a distance and learning from secondary data as opposed to first hand interaction. In mentoring function terms, it is probably more akin to the career mentoring function of ‘shadowing’ that is, observing from a distance and learning by example. In this instance the entrepreneur observed company structures, management practices and their impact on company performance, and the performance of key individuals. Although it would be expected that the mentoring functions performed by ‘Other companies’ would gravitate toward those relating to information and knowledge, and to some extent role modelling, 9US also describes gaining personal confidence from comparing her own performance or decisions against that of the companies she follows.

**Findings: Source category Other businesses**

- This was the only example of a mentor being a ‘what’ rather than a ‘who’. It provides valuable insight into how entrepreneurs learn through observing and studying other businesses. In the instance of 9USF the observations served as benchmarks for her own business and her management of it.

**Summary of findings Section A**

The findings for Section A are summarised as follows:

- Use of the term ‘Mentor’:
The word mentor is not a word used frequently or freely by the entrepreneurs in this study, evidenced through the results of a word count but also in the incidences of hesitation before use of the term and the retrospective nature of its application.

The retrospective use of the term may reflect instances where the mentor initiates the mentoring relationship through taking an interest in the entrepreneur.

Of the total 32 cases, 23 (71.8%) designated one or more mentors with over half of the 23 cases (56.5%) designating only one mentor.

Of those 23 cases, three used the term to describe a mentor allocated as part of a business program but did not consider them to ‘have been a mentor’. As these cases named no other mentor, this could be interpreted to mean that in reality 20 cases (62.5%) had a mentor considered to fulfil the expectations of a mentor.

Table 11 illustrates the number of cases with only one designated mentor who either hesitated significantly before applying the term or who considered their allocated mentor to not be a mentor.
Table 11: Cases designating only one source as mentor and either hesitating to designate, or describing an allocated mentor as 'not a mentor'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case ID</th>
<th>2CF</th>
<th>4CF</th>
<th>18UKF</th>
<th>19UKF</th>
<th>23UKF</th>
<th>25AUSF</th>
<th>28AUSF</th>
<th>29AUSM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only Mentor</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>Hesitation in designation</td>
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<td>Not a mentor</td>
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- Sources of mentors:
  - Family is the most cited source of mentors.
  - A mentor is not necessarily a person. “Other businesses’ was a designated mentor by one case.
  - Peers and other businesses are only designated by two cases.
  - Friends are not a source of designated mentors by any case.

- Mentoring functions of the mentors:
  - Mentoring functions similar to those described in the mentoring literature relating to personal (psychosocial), career and teaching functions were identified. However there were subtle differences, particularly in the notion of teaching. In general, but with the exception of the allocated mentors where some teaching took place, it was interpreted that the entrepreneur sought out information from the designated mentor.
  - Additional elements were identified and included the need to encompass:
• The reciprocal nature of the relationships.
• The notions of credibility, trust and comradeship/affinity and the willingness of the mentor to be available and accessible.
• The sense of residual value of the contribution of the mentor as recognised by the entrepreneur.
  o Each of the designated mentors contributed most of the mentor functions and elements.
  o When a person named a mentor (as in those allocated as part of a program) does not fulfil (or are perceived not to fulfil) expectations relating to credibility and affinity, and are not readily available or accessible, it is unlikely they would be designated a mentor.
• Gender:
  o Females would appear to use the term mentor more frequently than males to describe a source of assistance.
  o Whilst females designate husbands/partners as mentors males do not designate wives/partners.
  o More women are more likely to have experienced a mentor allocated as part of a business program compared to men.
• Cultural:
  o Only three of eight Australian cases designated a mentor. Only one of these was male.

Section B – Synthesising the stories

This section draws together and gives meaning to the findings from Section A. The exploration of the data to this point has identified:
• The cases that designated the term mentor to one or more source of assistance.
• The source category(s) of the assistance for each instance.
• How the entrepreneurs expressed their mentor experience(s) and the nature of the assistance received.

The stories have given clarity to the mentoring functions provided by the sources acknowledged as mentors by the entrepreneurs and also identified mentors not considered to be mentors – an examination of this latter category in particular provided valuable insights. During the exploration of the stories, like ideas and expressions were selected and coded at a node called ‘Mentoring functions’. The term ‘function’ was chosen initially as it was the term most commonly used in the literature to refer generally to ‘what a mentor does’.

From within the node ‘Mentoring functions’ nine functions were initially identified and named by the researcher and coded on. The names allocated to these nine child nodes were support; encourage; instil confidence; sounding board; role model; accountable other; sharing experiences; providing expertise; opening up opportunity. These titles by and large reflect the mentoring functions of the literature. However after further consideration it was felt that, although an appropriate description, using the term ‘mentoring function’ did not adequately capture what was expressed in the stories. It was at this point that the data analysis reveals a digression from the main stream literature which refers to the functions
performed by a mentor or, conversely, the individual (protégé) seeking out a range of sources to provide one or more mentoring function.

Apparent in the stories was also the need for particular mentor attributes to be present, in particular the need for the mentor to be available and accessible to the entrepreneur and the importance of the mentor establishing credibility and trustworthiness with the entrepreneur. Three more node titles were added and called accessibility, credibility and trust, and availability. Additionally, the pervading essence of relating to someone because they had experienced similar issues of ‘being’ an entrepreneur or at very least had recognisable empathy with the world of the entrepreneur was not felt to have been captured – as a consequence an additional (thirteenth) node was created and given the working title of ‘comradeship’, later revised to ‘affinity’.

At this point it was felt necessary to revise the term ‘Mentoring function’. The word ‘function’ defined means ‘a proper or necessary role, activity or purpose’ (Oxford Dictionary). Whilst this is undoubtedly appropriate, it does not best describe the transactions or relationships articulated by the entrepreneurs in relation to the descriptions of their designated mentors. The elements not captured in the word ‘function’ are the sense of willingness to contribute by the designated mentor and the residual value that has been added, as recognised and appreciated by the entrepreneur. This notion of ‘residual value’ is felt to be an essential ingredient in understanding why a mentor is designated a mentor by the entrepreneur, for it is the recognition of someone having contributed something valued
by the entrepreneur that is the key to the entrepreneur being able to identify that source as a mentor. This point of difference is why someone can be called a mentor, as for example the allocated mentors, but not considered a mentor.

The term ‘Mentor contribution’ was therefore chosen as the replacement for ‘Mentoring function’. Contribution is defined as: ‘the act of: a) giving towards a common purpose; b) helping to bring about a result’ (Oxford Dictionary). The notion of ‘contribution’ is felt to better represent the relationship between the mentor and the entrepreneur and also captures not only what the mentor does, but also the essential attributes they must possess. As a consequence, the 13 initially termed mentor functions that emerged from the data have been clustered into five groups of ‘Mentor contributions’.

The following terms have been chosen to best represent the clusters of contributions identified through the interpretation of findings from the stories:

Cluster 1. Confirmational Contribution - to give support; encouragement; confidence

Cluster 2. Corporeal Contribution - to act as a sounding board; role model; accountable other

Cluster 3. Experiential Contribution - to assist by sharing experience; providing expertise; opening up opportunity

Cluster 4. Attributional Contribution - to ensure accessibility; credibility and trustworthiness; availability
Cluster 5. Affinial Contribution - to have affinity; to be a comrade, companion, mate

Table 12 illustrates the relationship of these clusters.

Table 12: Tree node 'Mentor contributions'.

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<th>TREE NODE</th>
<th>Mentor contributions</th>
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<td>instil confidence</td>
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<td>accountable other</td>
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<td>opening up opportunity</td>
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<td>accessibility</td>
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<td>credibility/trust</td>
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These clusters of ‘contributions’ both reflect and differ from previous descriptions of mentoring functions outlined in the literature with Clusters 1, 2 and 3 most closely resembling them and embracing the personal (psychosocial), career and teaching functions most frequently referenced. However, subtle differences are noted. The following outlines the characteristics for each cluster:
Cluster 1. Confirmational Contribution – is the first of the terms coined specifically for the purpose of describing a set of findings of this research. The intent of the term confirmational is to capture that which is given by the mentor to the entrepreneur; it embraces elements of the personal or psychosocial functions, in particular those identified as support and encouragement, to be found in the mentoring literature. Instilling confidence is an adaption of ‘acceptance and confirmation’ as expressed in career mentoring and which refers to the positioning or belonging of an individual within an organisational or work setting. Instilling confidence, as expressed by the entrepreneur, has been interpreted to mean the contribution of the mentor in affirming the entrepreneur’s innate belief of personal competence.

Cluster 2. Corporeal Contribution - encompasses the physical presence of the mentor. It captures the value of having an animate being (person) that the entrepreneur can use as a sounding board, emulate (as for a role model), or be a figure to report or be accountable to. This notion of physical presence again reflects, but does not mirror that of the mentoring literature, the difference being the entrepreneur can literally, in some instances, work in isolation and as such welcomes the actual physical proximity of someone they can talk to.

Cluster 3. Experiential Contribution - again has elements of the career mentoring functions of the literature and embraces the notions of teaching, coaching, guiding and the wise elder. The perceived difference, and hence the choice of word ‘experiential’, is
the action of seeking out specific knowledge or expertise that the entrepreneur engages in, and includes the often transactional nature of the experience where the entrepreneur is cognisant of the value of the assistance they are receiving and (generally) consciously endeavours to reciprocate in some way. These notions of attributed value and reciprocity come across strongly throughout the stories and will be discussed separately elsewhere.

Cluster 4 and Cluster 5 are perhaps the keys to understanding why, in the world of the entrepreneur, a mentor is a mentor - or not as has become apparent in some instances.

• Cluster 4. Attributional Contribution – attributional is the second term coined for this research; it relates to the mentors willingly making themselves available and accessible to respond to the needs of the entrepreneur and captures the attributes required of a mentor in order to engender credibility, trust and respect with the entrepreneur. As one of the agreed upon traits of an entrepreneur, and a point which differentiates them for an organisational approach to doing business, is their ability to access and operationalise resources not under their control (Gartner, 1990; Bygrave & Hofer, 1991; Hisrich et al., 1997; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004), it can be surmised that a source of assistance (or mentor) must be perceived to have the appropriate attributes needed and/or valued by the entrepreneur in order for them to be acknowledged as a mentor.
Cluster 5. Affinial Contribution- the third term created, and applied to describe this category; it represents the concept of ‘affinity’. Affinity defined is: ‘a spontaneous or natural liking or sympathy; a close relationship based on a common origin or structure’ (Oxford Dictionary). In the context of the stories, affinity relates to the need for the mentor to establish accord with the entrepreneur. This bond is founded on more than a set of credentials. It also differs to the notions of ‘compatibility’ and ‘complimentarity’ noted in the mentoring literature. Compatibility or complimentarity in that sense is the recognition of something of one’s self in another, or a complimentary fit (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Affinity is best described as that similar to the tacit knowing shared between service men and women who have returned from war, or the unspoken understanding between individuals who have suffered similar traumatic experience, for example cancer. The mentor’s credentials are established not only as a consequence of their knowledge and experience, but also because they have ‘been there too’ (in the trenches). In the stories there are no words which actually describe this essential ingredient, but it would perhaps translate to ‘comradeship’. It was often the comments indicating an absence of affinity rather than expressions of it that pointed to this important ingredient.

The clusters and description of each contribution, together with an example of interview text capturing the intent of the contribution, are provided in Table 13.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER</th>
<th>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>An emotional relationship which allows a range of engagement from a literal ‘shoulder to cry on’, to a task understanding that someone believes and has confidence in the entrepreneur’s capability</td>
<td>28USF... I mean, if I had a problem I would talk with him about it initially.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6CF... He was very supportive and he said ‘OK, we have x amount of dollars to invest, let’s see how far it will go’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ENCOURAGE</td>
<td>An overt expression of enthusiasm, challenging the entrepreneur to new levels</td>
<td>1CF... he always encouraged me to go for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2CF... he encouraged me – was very energising and when another opportunity came up he said ‘yeh, go for it’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>INSTIL CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>The ability to lift the feeling of self-worth and competence in the entrepreneur</td>
<td>17UKM... I think it would have been an enormous help if someone like (name) had been around at the start of this process because then I would have felt there was someone who would confront me on things but not undermine my confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>SOUNDING BOARD</td>
<td>An individual who acts as an active ‘listener’ to ideas and issues, who may or may not provide a response or feedback</td>
<td>18UKF... I do believe you need to talk to somebody about things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>ROLE MODEL</td>
<td>An admired ‘other’ with one or more attributes the entrepreneur desires to emulate. Includes the notion of ‘wise elder’.</td>
<td>14USF... He has very exacting standards towards himself and he is smart and imaginative, so he has been a strong influence.</td>
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<td>26AUSM... he would be the inspiration in my life...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE OTHER</td>
<td>Referred to in several instances as the ‘headmaster’ effect, or non-executive director. An individual to whom the entrepreneur reports their activity and progress</td>
<td>18UKF... I would say ‘yes, it’s all done’ and I would treat him like the headmaster effect.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>12USM... he had the right mix of to drive and when to back off...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>SHARING EXPERIENCES</td>
<td>A two way exchange of information without either party necessarily undertaking the role of ‘advisor’ to the other</td>
<td>5CM... I enjoyed talking to him, but he has never run a business like this. He was knowledgeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>PROVIDING EXPERTISE</td>
<td>The provision of knowledge, experience or advice with or without a request for assistance</td>
<td>20UKF... at last somebody was giving me the tools to control the machine that I had somehow found myself at the helm of...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10USM... he started dropping by to say ‘what are you doing’ and ‘why don’t you try this’...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>OPENING UP OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td>The ability to make introductions and/or gain entry to otherwise closed networks, new business, and/or introduce new thinking</td>
<td>1CF... he has always tried to throw me business, give me business, send business my way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16USM... He is very well connected with them. So no doubt it helped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>ACCESSIBILITY</td>
<td>The willingness to be contacted and be responsive to the entrepreneur</td>
<td>15USM... I said ‘I would love to have you as a client but I would really rather have you as a friend and a mentor right now - giving me some free advice on the phone’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10USM... you go to someone in business and say ‘I really respect what you do in business and I’d like your help may I have an hour of your time once a month’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>The recognisable competence, status and good standing of an individual</td>
<td>23UKF... what he doesn’t know about business isn’t worth knowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15USM... Now this (speaking of [his own]) is a company that doesn’t have credibility with [CEOs] - what I have done is gone out to find three CEOs (who have credibility with other CEOs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>AVAILABILITY</td>
<td>The ability to be on call or easily at hand for the entrepreneur</td>
<td>18UKF... I found every night he’d dial me, or I would ring him, particularly when I was going through a dodgy stage...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5CM... so we used to get together and discuss all the problems of running a business. We used to do it regularly in our office or at lunch time downstairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>AFFINITY</td>
<td>To have affinity. To be recognised as having undergone similar experiences or at minimum demonstrate empathy with the world of the entrepreneur.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the insights gained from the iterations to this point the contributions of the sources of designated mentors identified for each of the 23 cases were able to be categorised. The results of this exploration are displayed in Table 14 on the next page.
Table 14: Mentoring contributions of mentor sources designated by case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designated mentor categories:</th>
<th>Table 14: Mentoring contributions of mentor sources designated by case.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPU</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated mentor</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed/comprise</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful bus. people</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other companies</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of cases designated to category:</td>
<td>5 3 2 8 5 4 4 2 1 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER</th>
<th>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>To give:</th>
<th>1CF; 4CF; 6CF; 14USF; 28AUSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE MODEL</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARING EXPERIENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVIDING EXPERTISE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPENING UP OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESSIBILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDIBILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVAILABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity</td>
<td></td>
<td>1CF; 2CF; 6CF; 18UKM; 29AUSM</td>
<td>24UKM; 17UKM; 10USM; 16USM; 5CM; 13USF; 12USM; 9USF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the Table 14, most of the sources designated as mentors provide the majority of mentoring contributions, with a few exceptions. For the category ‘Spouse/partner, 28AUSF spoke of her husband as being extremely supportive, giving her lots of what has been interpreted as confirmational mentoring, but was described as not being really interested in her business and busy with his own career and circle of friends. As such she felt disinclined to talk business specifics with him. In describing his father as a mentor, 12USM spoke of him as a role model for his formative years, framing his beliefs and attitudes to work and life. As such, his father made significant confirmational and attributional mentoring contributions but did not play a role in business related mentoring. This was similar for 24UKM who spoke of the mentoring contributions of his uncle much in the same way 12USM had described his father.

The table shows a difference in the way the mentor contributions for the source category ‘Allocated mentor’ has been attributed. It can be noted that while 1CF’s experience has been interpreted to show her mentor contributing in all aspects of mentoring, 20UKF and 17UKM do not attribute contributions of ‘sharing experience’ and ‘role model’. This may be explained by 1CF being mentored by a fellow business person who she admired and respected, whilst 20UKF and 17UKM were mentored by a professional business consultant, who, while having credibility and able to demonstrate affinity, was a teacher rather than a comrade. The other allocated mentors of 2CF, 9USF, 19UKF and 25AUSF do not feature at all, not because they were unable to make contributions in one or more categories, but
rather as a consequence of them not meeting the expectation of a mentor in the eyes of the related cases. 22UKM had yet to meet his allocated mentor.

For the source category ‘Employer/colleague’ no cases were noted as receiving contributions of ‘role model’ or ‘sharing experience’. This was interpreted as a consequence of the designated mentors taking an interest in and guiding, rather than being either a specific role model (as chosen by the cases in question) or sharing as equals. “Consultants’ were seen to vary in the way they were perceived. All made conformational, attributional and affinal mentor contributions, which is probably why they were designated mentors but the most noticeable differences appear to be in the lack of sharing experiences and role modelling. This can perhaps be explained through the attitude of the entrepreneur having paid someone to do a job and therefore there is an expectation of someone being or doing something because that was why they were selected, as opposed to the sense of having to emulate them. The exception being 16USM, who designated as a mentor someone he also paid to assist with a particular issue. Peers would appear to make all mentor contributions except role modelling and this is interpreted as a simple case of being perceived as equals. The lack of contribution ‘accountable other’ in the case of the employee is interpreted as an employer not perceiving themselves to be accountable to a member of their staff, and likewise the role of that employee was to do a particular job and not open up opportunity.
The instance of 9USF designating *the companies I follow* as a source of mentor is particularly interesting. By investigating and tracking the companies 9USF gained not only experiential and attributional contributions, which could be expected, but she also selected role models of both company management and individuals. She also expressed the confidence she took from her insights.

**Attributes of the entrepreneur**

Having analysed the stories and identified five clusters of mentoring contributions, including one subsequently termed the ‘Attributional’ cluster, two particular attributes of the entrepreneurs also became evident as a consequence of the process. The attributes were:

- **Reciprocity** - the notion of ‘reciprocity’ interpreted as a conscious giving back in some way, or at the very least acknowledgement of help received. This differs to the reciprocity and related concepts noted in the mentoring literature (McDougal & Beattie, 1997; Miller & Stiver, 1997; Ragins et al., 2000; Ensher et al., 2001; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Dutton & Ragins, 2007; Higgins et al., 2007; McManus & Russell, 2007) which referred to the giving and receiving of mentoring, for example as between peers where each player is both a mentor and a protégé. Reciprocity in the case of the entrepreneurs is expand to include the conscious awareness of the need to ‘give back’, but as will be seen in the examples provided in the following story, this may take a variety of forms.
• Communication/Asking for help – this refers to the ability of the entrepreneur to communicate and, explicitly, to ask for help.

Related text for the above attributes was selected from the total (n=32) stories and coded at two tree nodes called ‘Reciprocity’, and ‘Communication/Asking for help’ and the following was noted:

• Reciprocity - 25 cases (78.1%) were interpreted as having the essence of reciprocity engendered in their stories and was interpreted as taking a number of forms including:
  
  o A specific contribution in appreciation of assistance:

    ... you go to someone in business and say ‘I really respect what you do in business and I’d like your help may I have an hour of your time once a month’ ... you say I ‘what I'd like to do - you tell me if I'm crazy - I can't pay you for that but I will provide some sort of a meal’... 10USM.

  o A deliberate network of reciprocity, contributing and receiving as and when needed:

    There are canny people around that you draw out of the woodwork when you need them. And they come to me for advice - it's reciprocal (22UKM).

  o A delayed general contribution to other entrepreneurs in recognition for assistance along the way:

    I see myself as a sort of mentor as well (6CF).
    I joined these organisations for two reasons - one is to become active and I do believe in giving back and small business should watch out for themselves - nobody else is going to (12USM).

  o The awareness and acknowledgement of receiving something of value as illustrated in a comment to the interviewer by 1CF:
You might think you're using up all my time but what I get in return is it gives me an opportunity to look back and reflect and I don't think you can ever do that because you work (ICF).

- Communication/Asking for help - 32 cases (100%) had information selected and coded at the node ‘Communication’. Although not a necessarily a natural attribute for some entrepreneurs at the start up of their businesses, all recognised the need to communicate effectively, and 23 cases (71.9%) had undertaken some form of communications course. Communication was recognised as:
  - The foundation for both running and growing the business and included a number of cases describing how chance meetings have lead to business opportunities and assistance:
    
    I’ve been extremely lucky all my life in that people have told me things… I would sit on the plane... all my life... and sit next to someone who was so wise... and wrapped in just an ordinary package... and that's happened all my life (32AUSF).

  - Encompassing the awareness of establishing and maintaining relationships:
    
    I have always adopted the principle of sending management accounts and if they are appalling I put a note on the top saying next month is going to be as bad or next month should put it right, just have a guess at what is happening. It's like anything else. It's to do with relationships - what you build up with someone (17UKM).

  - Paramount and all cases expressed the need to have, or acquire, the ability to ask for help. 21UKM described this ability as the most important attribute for an entrepreneur:
    
    ...it's the one thing that I would say to everybody, you have to have the confidence to walk up to somebody and say ‘Hello’, you know, ‘I need help’, or ‘I want this’ or ‘I'm told you're the expert in this area, can you
give me five minutes?’ and ‘can I check something out on you?’ You've got to have that, you've got to walk to the very top (21UKM).

The above findings would suggest that the entrepreneurs are aware of the need to seek out assistance and are cognizant of the value of assistance received.

**Summary of findings Section B**

Section B drew on the stories in Section A and synthesised the findings, the result being the:

- Redesignation of the term ‘Mentoring functions’ to ‘Mentoring contributions’ to better reflect the transactional nature of how the entrepreneurs discussed their relationship with the mentor.

- Identification and naming of 13 mentor contributions, subsequently allocated into five clusters (Table 13). Clusters 1, 2 and 3 reflected many of the mentoring functions as described in the literature with subtle differences, but clusters 4 and 5 introduced new elements including the mentor contributing willingly time and accessibility, as well as trust and credibility, and the important ingredient of affinity.

- Creation of Table 13, which enabled the mentoring contributions made for each of the sources designated as mentors by the 23 cases to be tabulated.

- Creation of Table 14 which represents the outcome of Section B and highlights a number of findings for noting:
  - The majority of designated mentors provide most of the mentor contributions.
With the exception of the source ‘other companies’, all provide the range of confirming contributions and that of sounding board.

One particular exception is in the source ‘allocated mentor’. It is to be noted that while eight cases designated the term mentor to an individual allocated to them as part of a formal program, only three received positive descriptions relating to their contributions against any of the 13 categories.

In contrast, the source ‘successful business person’ emerged to make contributions in each category.

- The presence of two particular attributes of the entrepreneur related to seeking and recognising the receipt and value of assistance.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS PART ONE**

The aim of Part One was to examine the interview data to get an understanding of who (or what) the entrepreneurs designated mentors and why. An early finding was that the term ‘Mentor’ was not freely used or applied by the entrepreneurs in this study. Part One has provided a number of findings which have identified the mentors and their mentor contributions. Of most significance was the framing of five clusters of mentor contributions built from the analysis of the stories of the 23 entrepreneurs who had designated a variety of sources as mentors. These clusters which reflect but do not mirror the mentoring functions of the literature, and point to other elements that would appear to underpin the choice by an entrepreneur to designate someone, or something, as a mentor. Aligned with this was the finding of two particular entrepreneur attributes subsequently termed
‘Reciprocity’ and ‘Communication/Asking for help’, and again, while these elements partly reflect the terms as used in the mentoring literature, they are interpreted as having subtle differences and greater depth of application.

Part One also raised a number of questions including:

- When is a mentor not a mentor?
- Why is a husband a mentor but not a wife?
- Why do only three of eight Australian cases (37.5%) designate a mentor?

PART TWO – MENTORING

As identified in the literature, an individual may get assistance from a specific source designated a mentor or they may receive mentoring assistance from a variety of sources. Part One was dedicated to finding out who the mentors were for the entrepreneurs in this study and what made them mentors. Part Two aims to gain greater insight into the mentoring entrepreneurs in this study may have gained from sources of assistance other than those acknowledged as mentors.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Having identified those cases designating mentors, the sources of those mentors and the contributions made by the mentors, the results of the survey were called on to establish the frequency and more particularly the value placed on each of the sources of assistance
featured in the survey by the entrepreneurs. The purpose of this was two-fold, that being, to corroborate findings from the exploration of interview data and identify any anomalies, and to form a general picture of the mentoring received from the listed sources of assistance as identified by the frequency of access and in particular the value attributed to them by all the entrepreneurs in this study (n=32).

As justified in the methodology, the survey was chosen as the best means of providing an indication of how often the entrepreneurs accessed (frequency) and in particular what value was placed (value) on assistance from the sources listed. The survey categories, set prior to the interviews, differ slightly from those identified during the interview and coded at the tree node ‘Sources of assistance’. The survey sources include ‘Mentor’ but do not include ‘Other businesses’, ‘Successful business people’, or ‘Other’ specific expertise.

To recapitulate the methodology of administering the survey; the definition of each source category was explained to the entrepreneur who was then requested to allocated a score of 0 – 5 to each survey source category, with 0 representing never or almost never (frequency) and no value or very little value (value), and 5 representing very frequently (frequency) or very highly valued (value). As the intention of the survey was to provide indicative scores only, and principally the values of each source of assistance as perceived by the entrepreneur, it was acceptable that the scores would be subjective by nature. Apart from acting as a guide for further exploration, no scores were intended for statistical interpretation. The entrepreneur was able to seek clarification of any category as needed.
Assuming all 32 entrepreneurs nominated a score of 5 for any one category, the maximum score for frequency and value per category would be 160 (32x5) or 100%. The result of the survey converted to percentages (%) is displayed in Table 15.

**Table 15: Frequency and value % of other sources.**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

For the purpose of interpretation in the following analyses a score of 50% or above is viewed as a range indicating moderate to very high frequency and value. A score of below 50% is interpreted as being used not very often, to infrequently or never, and some to little or no value. Using this scale it can be observed that books and other inanimate resources (trade journals, professional magazines and journals, internet) are used frequently and are
well thought of as a source of assistance. Customers, Employees, Mentors, Peers, Accountants, Lawyers and Spouse/partner, all feature above the 50% indicator. Books etc, Customers and Employees are seen to be used relatively frequently but with a lesser though still high score for value, whereas the categories mentor, peers, accountant lawyer, spouse/partner and suppliers are moderately to highly valued but have a lower frequency score.

Table 15 notes that source categories Associations, Family and Friends do not receive moderate to high frequency or value scores. Programs received scores below 30%. What is somewhat surprising is that the sources Friends and Family have not been attributed even moderate frequency or value scores, which could perhaps have been expected from the literature.

To recollect, of the 32 cases in this study, nine cases did not designate the term mentor to any source of assistance. To differentiate between those cases designating individuals as mentors (M) (n=23) and those declining (NM*) (n=9), the previous table (Table 15) was reconfigured to separate the two sets of cases. The frequency and value scores for the NM* cases (n=9) are marked *. Table 16 presents the frequency and value scores for both case sets.
Table 16: Comparison of frequency and value % scores for mentors and non-mentors*.

In order to establish a benchmark against which assistance from other sources can be valued, the survey source scores were extracted for the source Mentor. For ease of reference survey scores, (F = Frequency; V = Value) attributed to each source of assistance for each case, are embedded in the corresponding text.
SURVEY SCORES: MENTOR

As illustrated previously in Table 16, the mentor is the most highly valued source (74.8%) of assistance for those designating a mentor – this was despite low scores by 2CF, 19UKF and 25AUSF who had all indicated dissatisfaction with their only designated mentor and identified elsewhere as allocated mentors. However, the scores for this category, as shown in the extract left, showed a particular anomaly, namely that three of the nine cases choosing not to designate a mentor* (NM*) allocated scores in this survey category. Investigation of the transcripts would suggest that in the instances of 3CM* and 32AUSF* the designation would most likely have been attributed to the father in both instances but, as for cases 21UKM* and 27AUSM*, the fathers would have been considered as the figurehead of the family responsible for guiding their moral development as a child, but were not considered as ‘mentors’ within their interpretation of the context of this study. 8CM* was somewhat different in as much as he believed an early busy failure could be attributed to a lack of business mentor. He subsequently offers assistance to others when appropriate and considers himself to ‘be’ a mentor and his value score of five (5) may either be attributed to wishing he had been able to have had someone
he could called a mentor at a particularly difficult time, or the value he believes he can now add to assisting others.

Discounting the scores for the nine NM\textsuperscript{*} cases, the value scores generally attributed to the source mentor by the 23 M cases indicate a high to very high value placed on assistance from their mentor as indicated by a majority of scores of 4 or 5. This value score allocation (4 or 5) is therefore selected as the benchmark for value placed on assistance from other sources as it is interpreted as being assigned values on a par with the assistance received from a mentor. There is one noticeable anomaly however. Case 20UKF shows a score of zero (0) attributed for survey category Mentor despite having spoken so highly of an allocated mentor in her story. The mentor was part of a course to which 20UKF attributed a value of five (5), however, an examination of notes taken at the time of interview point to the fact that she had only wanted to allocate one score to her mentor source and subsumed it into her “Courses’ category score. For the purpose of accuracy her mentor score was recorded as zero (0) but none the less, even allowing for the low value scores for the cases dissatisfied with their allocated mentors and the anomaly of 20UKF, Table 16 still shows the survey category Mentor to be the highest valued source of assistance by the 23 M cases.

Having established a benchmark for value akin to that attributed to the mentoring received from mentors, the following sections consider the results for each of the survey categories in turn, drawing on interview data to add insight and inform further the findings so far relating to the nature of mentoring contributions as formulated in Part One. Individual case
survey scores are referred to for each category in order to gain pointers for discussion and, as indicated, of particular interest are the sources attributed with value scores of 4 or 5. The sources are presented in alphabetical order and rather than present them as separate tables, the scores for each source are embedded in the corresponding text for reference. A summary of findings is presented at the conclusion of Part Two.

SURVEY SCORES: ASSOCIATIONS

This source was accessed at some stage by 84% of all cases but only 22% indicated frequent or very frequent use with scores of 4 or 5, and 31% valuing the assistance received through that source with the equivalent score rating. Interview data identified differences in the way individuals thought of and used associations. Most at some stage had belonged to one or more professional associations - these varied in nature and purpose and included small business associations, women in business groups, trade specific organisations (such as the motor trades industry), and broader groups such chambers of commerce and industry, and Rotary.

The previous table, Table 16 (p.173), shows M cases indicating and valuing this source more highly (F=47% and V=47.8%) than NM* cases (F=42.2% and V=40%).
Within the total case group (n=32) ten cases allocated value scores of 4 or 5. The highest scores in terms of value (5) were allocated by 16USM and 13USF. 16USM had participated in peer round tables, a service offered annually by his local small business association. It was from this source that 16USM had made contact with one of the two people he designated as mentor. 13USF took the lead in forming a women-in-business group when dissatisfied with the assistance she felt she received (as a female) by her local business association. This women’s group worked together as a self-formed round table, alternating the role of chair and bringing in speakers and arranging training to suit the needs of its membership.

Of those allocating a slightly lesser value score (4) 1CF, 2CF, and 9USF all expressed value in the organised round table and educational elements offered by their business associations, despite 2CF and 9USF gaining little from mentors allocate by those groups. 1CF, 2CF, and 13USF all belonged to a women-in-business association and expressed appreciation of the affinity with women who had experienced a similar journey. 10USM and 22UKM believed in contributing back to their profession and peers through undertaking a specific role within the association. 10USM also appreciated the opportunity to learn and be able to have input into a voice for lobbying government for changes related to specific industry policy. 23UKF, like 10USM joined to contribute back to her profession and 28AUSF, like 13USF, took the lead in bringing women business owners of her
particular industry sector together when dissatisfied with the contribution made by the professional association under which umbrella her business type was categorised.

The 10 cases outlined had many elements in common relating to the value attributed to this source of assistance. In particular the cases either joined, or in the instance of 13USF and 28AUSF formed their own, peer round tables. 10USM, 22UKM and 23UKF also chose the opportunity to learn by working alongside experienced others on specific projects. A second aspect was the notion of ‘giving back’ in appreciation of assistance received. The assistance these cases received from the category ‘Association’ went a long way to meeting many if not most of the mentoring contributions identified previously, but no cases used the term mentor in the context of this source. It may be that the term did not sit naturally as a designated term for a group or group function such as ‘round table’, where the mentoring contributions result from a collective input. It may also be as a consequence of the primary reason for belonging being, as expressed by most cases, ‘to learn about business’. However, the importance of ‘affinity’ was well reinforced through the use of terms such as ‘collegiate’, ‘fellow business men’ and ‘peers I can talk to’. Although referred to later in the category Peers, 5CM did refer to getting most of his ‘mentoring’ from a group of peers.

30AUSF* was the only NM* to attribute a high value (4) to this source. 30AUSF* belonged to both Rotary and was a board member of a charitable association. She valued the collegiate nature of Rotary and the business experience, expertise and networks available to her through the other board members.
Of the 32 cases, the majority (18 cases) (56.3%) assigned a score of 2 or less. The stories identified an interesting negative connotation of Associations with ‘networking’. Whilst understanding the need for a network of contacts, Associations were often seen to be dominated by people who were ‘networking’ – in this instance the term was interpreted to mean either people making overt approaches to secure business or using the forum for social exchange. 19UKF expressed her frustration with a particular group:

_I am interested in my business. I just want to get on with things and if people can’t talk about something to do with that then I am wasting my time. I don’t want to go and have lunch and talk about the weather (19UKF)._  

Table 17 summarises the mentoring contributions valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Associations.

**Table 17: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Associations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</td>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>SOUNDING BOARD</td>
<td>ROLE MODEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVEY SOURCE CATEGORY:</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

181
SURVEY SCORES: BOOKS ETC.

As noted earlier, 60% of the total cases allocated scores of 4 or 5 to the value they placed on the category ‘Books etc’. This category describes the collective resources including books, trade journals, internet etc. that the entrepreneurs accessed to gain assistance. Cases 16USM, 26AUSM* and 27AUSM* indicate high frequency and low value. Examination of the related interview data shows this to refer to use of trade journals to keep abreast of their particular industry which was more for general information than assistance. This source is the most frequently accessed by all cases (F=81.3%) and also well valued (V=67.5%). It is the source most frequently accessed by those cases choosing not to designate a mentor* (F=88.9%) and these NM* cases describe themselves as avid readers of business related information, but not of other information. Generally as would perhaps be expected, the source is primarily used to provide information and knowledge, but it is also a source of gaining confidence and reassurance both from reading about other business experiences and in dealing with others:
I mean I'll read business books as a matter of course. I read magazines... I read the business section of them always... automatically. A lot of it I find a bit ho hummy because I have read it before and I don't want to know specifically. I want a general feel. And really in my ideal, I've got a general feel and then I want to be able to go to experts on specifics..... because they are going to do an enormous amount of study that I am simply not prepared to do (28AUSF).

In some respects the mentor source ‘Other businesses’ as identified by 9USF could be located in this category and certainly the very high scores (F=5 and V=5) attributed to the information available on companies would reflect the overall value 9USF placed on this source. Table 18 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 19 cases (60%) for the survey category Books etc.

Table 18: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Books etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUNDING BOARD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE/MODEL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARE/FRAME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVIDE/REFERENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN UP OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIGIN/ABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVAILABILITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFINITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of cases
(n=32) attributing high-value scores

SURVEY SOURCE CATEGORY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOKS ETC</th>
<th>YES (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 (60%)</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: COURSES

In the context of the survey this category referred to seminars and short (1-2 day) courses as well as initiatives requiring a regular commitment of several months.
9 cases (28%) allocated scores of 4 or 5. Cases 1CF and 20UKF spoke at length of the value of the business growth courses they attended and through which they received significant benefits from their allocated mentors. Although almost a year in duration 20UKF indicated a score of 0 (rarely) for frequency – this is interpreted as a consequence of it being the only course she attended. 9USF, 10USM and 14USF spoke of the value of attending courses initiated by their business association and in particular the value of the annual round tables and described in the previous section. 28AUSF, 29AUSM, and 30AUSF* spoke of the value gained from courses relating to updates in their specific industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses scores</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3CM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5CM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7CM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8CM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>9USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11USF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>17UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19UKF</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21UKM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22UKM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>25AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30AUSF*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31AUSM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32AUSF*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 (p. 173) previously illustrated those cases choosing not to designate a mentor (NM*) as indicating ‘Courses’ as having lower frequency (F=35.6%) of use and lower value (V=33.3%) compared to those designating mentors (M) (F=54.8% and V=55.7%), this is attributed to the positive connotation of the M set with the associated allocated mentor. Courses however were assumed to not be a valued source of assistance for cases NM* and despite three NM* cases attributing value scores of zero (0) interview data would suggest they had
attended courses but not found the experience of sufficient benefit to value. 3CM* provides a general summary of their opinion:

(I went) Because I had no formal training in it. So I thought here I’ll go and get some interesting perspective - having said that I still plan on going to more of them. Just because you didn't like coffee the first three times doesn't mean you're not going to be addicted to it. So I will still go to these things and, like I said, you are never too important to go and listen to somebody

Table 19 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 9 cases (28%) for the survey category ‘Courses’.

Table 19: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Courses.

Table xyz: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores for survey source category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</td>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>SOUNDBINGBOARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF CASES ✓9 (28%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: CUSTOMERS

An examination of the interview data identified 29 cases (90.6%) that made reference to clients in their stories. From survey results this source is observed to be highly valued as a source of assistance by 14 cases (43.8%) with a similar number of cases for frequency although, as evidenced in the embedded scores provided in this section, instances such as 6CF, 7CM and 24UKF have high frequency but low value scores. The results would
indicate that in these instances the entrepreneurs communicate often with their clients but not specifically to request (or receive) assistance. An additional six cases (9.7%) indicated customers as a moderate value (V=3) source of assistance.

In this category seven of the nine NM* cases attributed moderate values of three (3). For 3CM* (F=5 and V=4) and 26AUSM* (F=4 and V=4) this source was frequently used and highly valued. 3CM* articulates how customers assist him in refining new product and new business directions:

We had vice president from a very large company here, one of our better customers, last week and we are developing this new product line coming up. I sat him down and I said ‘here is what we are coming up with. What would you want to see this thing do in addition to what we have shown you or what is wrong with it?’ So we will go to our customers and say this is what we are doing, can we get some input from you now and when this thing is ready can we send you or bring to you a model for you to work with this so we can get your input and advice into what you really need (3CM*).

Aside from product development, which could also be considered market research or client communication, the entrepreneurs also talk about the relationship and sense of reciprocity they actively develop with their customers. Describing his habit of just calling or dropping by to his clients premises to ‘just say hello’ 15USM said:
I often ask clients for advice because we have a long relationship with our clients, a very intimate, a very personal relationship. At the same time we know that they are our clients and we know that we work for them. We have a long history with our clients and they tell us everything that is going on in their companies (15USM).

Expanding on this relationship with clients, 24UKM explains it is not just information or knowledge that is to be gained but also emotional mentoring contributions:

I think we all need reassurance. We are funny people - people. It’s nice to be reassured and nice to get praise (24UKM).

As touched on in the literature (Vesper, 1992; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004), it is not yet fully understood how the value of contacts in life prior to entering business for themselves, adds to the entrepreneur’s resources. In the instance of 1CF it was not only the financial contribution and guarantee of work that enabled her to move to her own premises and begin her own operation, but confidence gained from the support, trust and faith shown in her abilities by a client.

I had two clients. One client said I have six projects that I want you to work on - I don't care how you do it. I trust that you will do it properly and I will give you money to get started (1CF).

For the entrepreneurs in this study, customers were an important source of assistance, and many of the mentoring contributions across all five categories could be attributed to this source category.

Table 20 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 14 cases (43.8%) for the survey category Customers.
Table 20: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster:</th>
<th>Confessional</th>
<th>Corporeal</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Attributional</th>
<th>Affinial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Contribution:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Confide</td>
<td>Sounding Board</td>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>Accountable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases (n=32) attributing high value scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Source Category:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>14 (43.8%)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: EMPLOYEES

28 cases (87.5%) had spoken about employees during the course of their interviews. It was one of the four categories in which the NM* cases attributed higher frequency (F=64.4%) and value (V=60%) scores than the M cases (F=56.5% and V=51.3%). Overall 10 cases (31.3%) attributed high score values of four or five (4 or 5) and six cases (18.8%) attributed a moderate value of three (3). Of particular note are the high attributed values of 3CM*, 26AUSM*, 31AUSF* and 32AUSF* and an examination of their interview data highlights the value and reliance placed on key employees. 31AUSM* in particular, speaks of his employees as his main source of assistance:

*I think that one of the first things is and maybe it is peculiar to our business. There is a range of skills and experience and backgrounds here and when we sit around the table, whatever we are discussing, somebody will have had first or second-hand experience of most things. There would be very few things that are relevant to our business even on the extremes that at least one of us would not have personal experience (31AUSM)*.
31AUSM* provides some insight as to why he relies almost totally on his team and rarely goes for outside assistance:

*If you are a specialist, and particularly if you are a market leader, it's hard to identify who you feel knows more about things than you do, except in very peripheral specialist areas. So I guess sometimes it's hard to know where to go for help (31AUSM*).*

His perception of other businesses leads him to comment that his approach is common to many small businesses:

*So we have had a few people in to chat to us about the way in which we should go about it. But I see us, in fact I would see - we deal a lot with small businesses - as seeing themselves as very self contained (31AUSM*).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees scores</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3CM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5CM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7CM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8CM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>9USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11USF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>17UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19UKF</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21UKM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22UKM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>25AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29AUSM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30AUSF*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31AUSM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32AUSF*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of building a team of expertise around the entrepreneur was supported by 32AUSF* who described herself in the early years as carrying the burden until she built a team of trusted employees:

*...and now what I tend to do is vent that along the way... So I actually run things past people constantly. 'OK, what about this, this, this and this? No, we'll try five of those things... let's try this one, this one, this one, this one and this one and then we will see which one's going to work the best', whereas before I'd try and find every possible nuance to a solution and then implement the perfect one. Where now I am quite happy to have small incremental changes, not expect so much of myself and I*
delegate far better than I used to. Before it (the burden) was all mine (32AUSF*).

Answering a question regarding whether his employees are an important source of assistance for him, 3CM* answered:

*Always... I have done every single job in this place myself and I haven't done it as well as anyone here, so the fact is that if they tell me this is the way - I certainly offer advice on my experience but I defer to their judgement. It is just hands off. So that is a winning formula when it comes to our business. With regard to asking for advice, that is all that I will do. Even if I have the answer I will still ask because I probably have the answer, I probably do - and they want to see how smart their boss is, but always get another view point. It is my decision to accept the way they want to do it. I have the ultimate authority to do that (3CM*).

For at least four of the NM*cases, this source was obviously a very important source of mentoring contributions. Table 21 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Employees.

Table 21: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFILIATIONAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>PROVISIONAL</th>
<th>CONFIDENCE</th>
<th>SOUNDING BOARD ROLE</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABLE FOR OWN PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABLE FOR OTHERS</th>
<th>OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>ACCESSIBILITY</th>
<th>CREDIBILITY</th>
<th>AVAILABILITY</th>
<th>AFFINITIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases attributing high value scores (n=32)</td>
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</table>

SURVEY SCORES: FAMILY

Family, within the context of the survey, does not include spouse or partner, which have a separate category. Despite 27 cases (84.4%) making reference to the source Family in their
interviews, Table 15 (p. 171) illustrated the total scores for the category Family are below 50% for both frequency and value. In some instances this can be partly explained by cases such as 31AUSM* who has no immediate family. In contrast, 30AUSF* does have family but feels they make little contribution in relation to either personal support or business assistance. 32AUSF* appreciates the support of her family for ‘just being there’:

My family have been extraordinarily supportive, even at times when I think that I am sure that they have thought ‘my god, she's pushed it too far this time’ and I think that's just family... and they have also been very good in that they are an absolute normalising influence....(32AUSF*).

The survey data is somewhat polarised between high and very low values. The stories of the 10 cases (31.2%) that attributed high value scores (4 or 5) to ‘Family’ identify the individuals nominated as either in business for themselves or, in the case of 13UKF who speaks of her son and daughter in law, working with the entrepreneur. These ten cases described the importance of being able to ‘talk business’ (affinial contribution) as well as receiving emotional support. In the instances of parents, as for 23UKF, there was also financial support at the outset. Largely though, the
‘talking business’, at least in the early years, was more of an absorbing of the prior experience of family members, rather than a sharing of experience.

However, 20UKF (F=5 and V=1) and 28AUSF (F=4 and V=0) both indicated that they were actually hindered by the opinions of particular family members and this is reflected in the high frequency but low value scores attributed.

The findings of this source are interesting as they somewhat contradict the literature indicating family to be a primary source of assistance for entrepreneurs. Table 22 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Family.

Table 22: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPORAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGE</td>
<td>SENDING BOARD</td>
<td>ROLE</td>
<td>MODEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGE</td>
<td>SENDING BOARD</td>
<td>ROLE</td>
<td>MODEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: FRIENDS

Despite 27 cases (84.4%) referring to the source Friends in their interviews, the scores for this category would indicate that friends are not a major contributor of assistance for the entrepreneurs in this study and none were designated mentors. Table 15 (p.171) illustrated
Friends are slightly more valued than Family but in neither instance do they feature as a frequently accessed or highly valued source of assistance. Nine cases (28.1%) indicated high value scores (4 or 5) and four cases (12.5%) attributed moderate value scores (3). Of those allocating the higher value scores (4 or 5), such as 10USM, 13USF, 22UKM and 25AUSF, reference is made to individuals who have become friends as a consequence of receiving assistance from them at some point.

Interview data for 3CM* suggests that friends should be just that, friends, a sentiment echoed by others, including 21UKM* and 30AUSF*:

*I believe that when you’re in your leisure time that is what it is for. At some point you have to leave your work behind, also if you meet people in that context I feel that it is an imposition. What I have done is if I find someone in my leisure activities that I feel has professional advantage I will make an appointment to see them in their place of business. It is like meeting a doctor at a picnic and saying ‘oh my arm hurts, will you look at it’. You would be amazed at how many people do that - that doesn’t make it right (3CM*).

It would seem that mentors can become friends, but friends are not mentors. Table 23 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 9 cases (28%) for the survey category Friends.
Table 23: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster:</th>
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<th>Corporal</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Attributional</th>
<th>Affinal</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Guiding hand</td>
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<td>Pose model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing experience</td>
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<td>Opening opportunity</td>
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<td>Authentic</td>
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</table>

| Number of cases | (n=32) attributing high value scores | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------| |
| Survey Source Category: | Friends | 9 (28%) |

SURVEY SCORES: PEERS

This source was referred to in 31 (96.9%) of the case interviews and is scored as the third most valued source of assistance (66.9%) by the total group, and yet only two cases designated mentors from this source. A separation into the two case sets (Table 16, p.173) showed those cases choosing to designate a mentor (M) to have scores of F=64.3% and V=70.4%, and those cases choosing to not designate a mentor (NM*) to have attributed scores of F=73.3% and V=68.9%. An examination of the embedded scores shows 19 (59.4%) of the total cases, including six of the nine NM* cases (66.7%), to have allocated high value scores (4 or 5). A review of the interview data for these cases gives a sense that this source, as a collective i.e.
a group of peers, would provide between them the majority of mentoring contributions for
the NM* cases. Interestingly, given the assumed potential threat of competition from within
such a group, it might be expected that the attributional contribution of ‘trust’ would not
feature highly. However, in several instances reference is made to the value of sharing
experiences and learning from peers in competing businesses. 28AUSF went as far as
bringing all the competing businesses in the same industry together in order to share
experiences, support and encourage each other and work collectively to grow the market
and introduce processes and procedures to improve the regulation of the industry – in turn
influencing policy.

They were all competitors, yes... and I had to say to them because they were all
playing their hands close to their chest, and I would say ‘look our competitors
are not each other, there’s a whole big market out there’...The six of us in the
end were freely sharing information (28AUSF).

It would be expected that the affinial contribution of fellow business people would be high,
but the emotional contributions of support, encouragement and instilling confidence are
also recurrent themes. 32AUSF* spoke of how she realized that she had to get herself
noticed and taken seriously with significant business and government individuals in order
grow her company. To this end she worked hard to get invited onto business decision
making boards alongside executives from major corporations:

...and it seemed to me that if (her company) was going to have any opportunity
at all, I had to go out there and build networks... and so I think the past four
years, and we have only been going seven years, has really focused on me
broadening contacts and me getting in touch with other people and seeing how
they do it and listening to why they make decisions the way they do and listen to
how government policy impedes things or provides an opportunity. Seeing how
bureaucracy worked (32AUSF*).
The outcome, however, was surprising (even to her) in the mentoring contributions made by her board peers:

*I would have to say lots of the blokes I have come in contact with through boards have been extraordinarily supportive through (her company) in ways that I would never have expected and ways that whilst haven't contributed a percentage point in growth, gave encouragement and confidence and inclusion along the way (32AUSF*).

She gives the example of people going overseas sending her samples of materials with messages saying they had seen it in for example New York or Japan and thought it might work for her:

*Just the fact that you actually think well, I am in someone's headspace, they can’t think we are a complete idiot that they actually thought about us... Those sorts of things are just small tokens that say you are accepted as a business person and that to me (is) far greater than any award that you could get, you are accepted as a business person and that other people are out there thinking about your business and ways you could make it better (32AUSF).*

In examining the stories around the source Peers, and in particular those of cases electing not to designate a mentor* it became apparent that the development of a network of peers was in many instances: a) deliberate versus serendipitous with regard to both its formation and mix, and b) built on a fundamental premise of reciprocity:

*...because what I've tried to build into that was cross support network people who had different skills and different abilities because without them nobody can be all knowledgeable - the thing to do is to link the people with the necessary skills and to treat with them enough that they like working with you, they get enough out of it to respond -, if they don’t make enough - it has to be a mutually beneficial society and otherwise it won't work (21UKM*).

Although not a complete fit in this category the mentor source Successful business people identified from the interview data for cases 10USM and 16USM, would sit comfortably in
this category of Peers. The difference would be the respect held for the mentors as having experience beyond that current for the entrepreneur. Table 24 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 19 cases (59.4%) for the survey category Peers.

Table 24: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: PROGRAMS

This category refers specifically to programs and services offered by government (local, state and/or federal). Only 20 cases (62.5%) made reference to this source in the interview data and this category received the lowest scores for both frequency (F=28.1%) and value (V =24.4%) comprising M scores of F=28.7% and V=25.2%, and NM* scores of F=26.7% and V=22.2%. Only three cases (9.4%) attributed value scores of 4 or 5 and none of the cases were NM*. Interview data for the three identified high value cases showed 24UKM had received a visit from an agent of the local enterprise centre which resulted in assistance from a consultant to undertake a specific business accreditation process, and 23UKF had received assistance from a consultant specialising in selling which she attributes to a contact through the local enterprise centre. On arrival in Australia and intent on starting her
own business 25AUSF described appreciation of the initial assistance she received from a government program to find her way through the red tape and she still uses the business plan outline she was given as the basis for her ongoing planning. The contributions can be narrowed to those within the experiential category.

The reasons for the low scores were interpreted as largely due to the lack of attributional and, to some extent, affinal contributions. The emergent themes primarily focussed on the programs and associated services as being too general or too focussed on micro business, and the lack of credibility of the staff (i.e. they haven’t been in business for themselves).

**Government business organisations - nah, hopeless, waste of time. Information is too general (16USM).**

Had government services offered - but I found them incompetent, they weren't in touch with my needs. A lot of people are cynical of the experts - mostly because they come from large corporations. They can't run the bloody country - how are they going to help me run my business. Out of touch with reality (21UKM*).

Whilst the nature of the specific services is not known, none the less the perception of the government programs as held by the entrepreneurs in this study is sufficiently low for them to either not approach or not value them as sources of assistance. It is suspected that the
barrier formed by a perceived lack of credibility and/or affinity is sufficient to deter the entrepreneurs from valuing any assistance that may be on offer.

Table 25 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 3 cases (9.4%) for the survey category Programs.

Table 25: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>SOURCING BOARD</td>
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<td>ACCOUNTABLE/OTHER</td>
<td>SHARING CONFIDENCE</td>
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<td>SOURCING BOARD</td>
<td>ROLE MODEL</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE/OTHER</td>
<td>SHARING CONFIDENCE</td>
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<td>ACCOUNTABLE/OTHER</td>
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SURVEY SCORES: SPECIALISTS - ACCOUNTANT

The number of cases making reference to this source in the interview data was 29 (90.6%). The total value score of V=75% was the highest of all source value scores. The value score for M cases was V=76.5% which was second only to the value scores for source category Mentor for this set. The value scores for NM*cases was V=71.1% being equal to the value score allocated to source category Books etc. and with only the source category Spouse/partner receiving higher value scores. Overall, 19cases (59.4%) attributed value scores of 4 or 5.
However, the scores for this source category highlighted somewhat of a contradiction between the stories and the value placed on the source category Accountant. Just seven of the total (n=32) cases (21.9%) had spoken completely positively about their experience with accountants in their stories. Two of these, 9USF and 13USF, had designated their accountants as mentors.

All 29 cases understood they needed that source of specialist expertise from the outset and the majority of the cases had tried several individuals and/or accounting firms in order to find one they felt comfortable with, and many were still dissatisfied. Comfortable is interpreted to mean they felt the person was competent and had a ‘feel’ for the size of their business. ‘Feel’ is interpreted to mean a demonstrated understanding for both the needs and issues relating to the size of the business, and an empathy with the entrepreneur as the owner of the business. In many instances the entrepreneur was still looking for a match:

**Definition of a good accountant.** Got to be compatible - laugh at the same jokes - be on the same wave length. You’ve got to be compatible. You need a degree of mutual trust. Recommendation - must understand small business. We’ve now really grown out of our accountant. But I like the guy - he gives me confidence - got to be at ease with
your experts…. (The accountant) Has given me nil advice on growth. Growth comes from within - it doesn't matter how many experts are there (22UKM).

From the survey scores, the source Accountant is highly valued, but perhaps this could be attributed more to necessity than from the mentoring contributions received. Whilst the accountant is not expected to make emotional contributions, an individual with whom the entrepreneur could feel at ease was appreciated. In some instances accountants are valued as sounding boards and a theme that emerged in the interviews reflected that, in some instances, a more pro-active role in contributing to forward planning (as opposed to only compliance work) would be welcomed. It was to be expected that accountants are valued for their contribution of expertise and in most instances were available and accessible as needed.

The weakest element interpreted from the comments surrounding the reasons for (in some cases multiple) changes of accountant, was that of affinity – the ability of the accountant to put themselves in the shoes of the entrepreneur.

Table 26 summarises the mentoring contributions valued highly by the 19 cases (59.4%) for the survey category Accountant.
Table 26: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Accountant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
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<th>EXPERIENTAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINAL</th>
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</thead>
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<td>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</td>
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<td>CONFIDENCE</td>
<td>SOUNDING BOARD</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>(n=32) attributing high value scores</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTANT</td>
<td>19 (59.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: SPECIALIST - BANK

This source category relates to assistance from banks and was referred to by 25 cases (78%) of the total (n=32) and received the second lowest scores after source Programs with scores of F=40.6% and V=40.6%, comprising M scores of F=35.7% and V=41.7% and NM* scores of F=53.3% and V=37.8%. Eight cases (25%) of the total (n=32) allocated high value scores of 4 or 5, with five of those cases being Australian, two UK, and one Canadian. Three of the eight cases were female. The expectations and weaknesses outlined for source Accountants, were not dissimilar for the source Banks – many entrepreneurs had changed financial institutions for many of the same reasons as they had...
changed accountants. However, where accountants were perhaps valued for the contribution they made to the business (if for no other reason than compliance at the end of a financial year), the same was not apparent for banks. 19UKF sums up the general relationship of the entrepreneurs with their bank:

Banks - I just tried to keep up a good relationship - I never know when I'll need them. I keep him up to date with what I am doing whether he wants it or not. He's very friendly - he's not patronising, well, not too bad. I have a certain tolerance up to a point. He is quite nice, he tries very hard. They are not terribly efficient at the bank anyway (19UKF).

29AUSM*, one of the cases attributing high value scores gives an insight as to why these high values were attributed:

The bank, I need them so I guess they are high value, but I don't like their attitude quite frankly. Actually I think their attitude is disgusting. I am totally amazed when bankers speak, how they have the hide to sit there in front of you and tell you that they are going to do this or that or charge interest rates when they make X million. And they say 'oh, but our poor shareholders'. I don't believe them, I just don't believe them... I really don't care if you are a pie maker or a small borrower, or a very large company, but you still need a good working relationship with the bank manager. Because they can make you or break you (29AUSM*).

These last comments justify why a combination of interviews and survey instruments provide a clearer picture of the reality of the entrepreneur. The high value score (5) would indicate not so much the value of assistance attributed to the bank, but rather the need to value (respect) the source as they have the potential to cause problems. Table 27 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 8 cases (25%) for the survey category Bank.
Table 27: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, survey category Bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases (n=32) attributing high value scores</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFIDENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE MODEL ACCOUNTABLE OTHER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY ACCESSIBILITY AUTHORITY CREDIBILITY AVAILABILITY INTEGRITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVEY SOURCE CATEGORY: BANK</td>
<td>8 (25%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SURVEY SCORES: SPECIALIST - LAWYER

Only twelve of the total cases (37.5%) made reference to this source in their interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lawyer scores</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2CF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3CM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5CM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7CM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8CM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>9USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11USF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14USF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15USM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>17UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19UKF</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21UKM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22UKM</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23UKF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24UKM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>25AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27AUSM*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29AUSM</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30AUSF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31AUSM*</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32AUSF*</td>
<td>M/S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey scores for the total cases were F=42.5% and V=53.1%. Those cases designating mentors had scores of F=42.6% and V=52.2%, those choosing not to designate a mentor* had scores of F=42.2% and V=55.6%. 10 cases (31%) overall attributed high value scores. In most instances lawyers and solicitors were used for preparing company deeds and for personal (family) matters. However, those who needed assistance, particularly with patents or with indemnity for their practice, expressed
appreciation of the assistance they received, in particular when the legal practitioner worked to help them understand the process and assist in enabling the entrepreneur to undertake some of the work:

"It wasn't so much that it was large or small (speaking of the size of the law firm), it was that they didn't need to do the work themselves, they were willing to help me learn. So that is what was unusual about them (14USF)."

And to be proactive:

"Well he certainly put out some fires. Forward thinking. Probably doing a bit of that now. He is a hell of a tactician. Ideal with the strategy - he deals with the tactics (16USM - Speaking of his lawyer who he now counts among his friends)."

Table 28 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Lawyer.

**Table 28: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, survey category Lawyer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster: Confirational</th>
<th>Corporal</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Attributional</th>
<th>Affinal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring CONTRIBUTION:</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Sounding Board</td>
<td>Role Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases (n=32) attributing high value scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey SOURCE Category:</td>
<td>LAWYER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SURVEY SCORES: SPOUSE/PARTNER

As with the source category Accountant, the scores for this category produce some interesting results. 25 cases made reference to their spouse/partner during the interviews. Overall the frequency scores were $F=69.4\%$ and value scores $V=72.7\%$. However, separated into the two sets the scores show $M$ scores to be $F=64.3\%$ and $V=63.5\%$, and $NM*$scores to be $F=82.2\%$ and $V=80\%$. Within the set choosing to designate mentors ($M$) the value scores of zero ($0$) can be explained as those cases that did not consider themselves to have been in a permanent relationship or had undergone separation, during the start up and growth of the business. Similarly the low attributed value scores ($1$ and $2$) reflect a breakdown in relationship and moderate scores ($3$) a new relationship. The remainder, $13$ $M$ cases and six $NM*$ cases have high attributed value scores ($4$ or $5$).

To recollect findings from the interview data, of those cases designating mentors ($n=23$) five ($5$) cases designated the category ‘Spouse/partner’ as a mentor source. All five cases were female.

However, as can be seen from the embedded scores from the survey data, $19$ cases ($59.4\%$) of the total ($n=32$) attributed high value scores ($4$ or $5$), with the lower scores of the remaining $13$ being accounted for as above. When the $19$ cases are
examined as the two sets (M and NM*) and by gender, it can be seen that 10 male cases have attributed high value scores to their Spouse/partner, and yet none of them (0%) have designated that source as a mentor. In contrast, of the nine (9) female cases allocating high value to the source Spouse/partner, five (5) cases (55.6%) designate their Spouse/partner as a mentor (Table 29).

Table 29: Cases with high value scores for Spouse/partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Designating mentor set (M) (n=13)</th>
<th>Not designating mentor set (NM*) (n=6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse mentor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse not mentor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This finding, as was the instance in Part One of this chapter, poses the question of why is a husband a mentor but not a wife – in particular as the value score allocated by those cases choosing not to designate a mentor (NM*) is 8.9% greater in value over the second most valued sources of assistance identified as Books etc. and Accountant.

Table 30 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Spouse/Partner.
Table 30: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, source category Spouse/partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPORAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFERENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE ACCOUNTABILITY OF HER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING EXPERIENCE OPENING UP OPPORTUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY OBERITY AVAILABILITY AFFINITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT ENCOURAGEMENT CONFERENCE SOUNDING BOARD ROLE ACCOUNTABILITY OF HER SHARING EXPERIENCE PROVIDING EXPERIENCE OPENING UP OPPORTUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY OBERITY AVAILABILITY AFFINITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of cases (n=32) attributing high value scores

| SURVEY SOURCE CATEGORY: Spouse/partner | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

From the above table, the only element that possibly differs between the instances of the women designating their husbands as mentors is the prior business expertise brought by the husband to the relationship at the start of the business, with the women generally starting their businesses after they were married. It could also be that the female cases had a general tendency to use the term more frequently than the males or simply, as articulated by 5CM whose wife was an integral part of the business, there is no term to describe the unspoken bond between a husband and wife.

SURVEY SCORE: SUPPLIERS

Interview data has identified 15 cases making reference to assistance from the source Suppliers. Frequency and value scores for all cases were F=50% and V=51.3% comprising M scores of F=43.5% and V=44.4%, and NM* scores of F=66.7% and V=57.8%. Those cases allocating high value scores to this source had mostly developed the relationship at the outset of their business with many commenting on the assistance given in particular
lines of credit, or in the instance of 2CF providing her with space and supplies in order to get started.

These relationships were often formed prior to the commencement of business, again confirming the literature where prior business connections need further investigation to understand how they bring value to the entrepreneur. In the cases in this study, the entrepreneurs’ stories attribute more than just ‘supplies’ with the value associated with the source Suppliers. 10USM commences by describing how: My growth was fuelled primarily by the indulgences of my creditors, the suppliers, the trade members that we did business with. He adds that as they (his suppliers) understood what he was aiming to do they: actually started to produce leads for me as well. More than that: you reach out and ask for their help and I found that most people when you ask for help are there to extend it.

Speaking of a time when he didn’t know who to trust in a major situation 10USM said:

I went to my vendors and said I need your help - they were there to offer to help. When you go to someone in business and say I really respect what you do in business and I’d like your help may I have an hour of your time once a month. They are not consultants and they say that. But you say: ‘what I’d like to do is - you tell me if I’m crazy (referring using someone as a sounding board). I can’t pay you for that but I will provide some sort of a meal ’... All businesses are similar because it is the flow of goods and services, more specifically cash.
Other stories included instances of a case who lost all his specialist equipment in an accident being offered replacement gear free of charge by a supplier and others of appreciating the trust awarded to them in times of difficulty and confidence gained in knowing others were behind them. In all the stories the identified mentoring contribution of ‘affinity’ came through strongly. Source category Suppliers is interpreted to be attributed with the provision of many mentoring contributions, and would cover one of the broadest ranges of assistance, of all source categories. It could be imagined that good suppliers would take an interest and support their customers if for no other reason than if businesses succeed they will in turn reap the benefit.

Table 31 summarises the mentoring contributions interpreted as being valued highly by the 10 cases (31%) for the survey category Suppliers.

Table 31: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, survey category Suppliers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>COMPORTAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCOURAGEMENT</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>SOUNDBOARD</td>
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<td>ACCOUNTABILITY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBLIGATION SHEER</td>
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<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td>√</td>
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<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHORITY</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFINITY</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS PART TWO**

Part Two aimed to gain greater insight into the sources of mentoring for the entrepreneurs in this study and comprised an analysis of the survey data in order to ascertain the attributed
values placed on sources of assistance other than a particular source designated as a mentor.
An analysis of the attributed value scores for the source ‘Mentor’ resulted in setting value scores of 4 or 5 to be the benchmark against which the values of other sources would be set. The rationale for this was that those cases designating a source as a mentor (n=23), awarded the highest overall value scores to the assistance, or mentoring contributions, received from the mentor. Equivalent high value scores (4 or 5) attributed to other sources were therefore judged to be on a par in value to that attributed to a mentor.

Value scores attributed to other sources for all cases (n=32) were thus identified and examined in relation to the context found in the interview data, and with particular attention given to those instance where a score of 4 or 5 was allocated. The following Table 32 is a summary of those findings.

Table 32: % of cases (n-32) with high value scores (4 or 5) for each survey category

![Bar chart showing % of cases with high value scores for each survey category]
• Table 32 illustrates that each of the survey categories was found to be a high value source of assistance for at least some entrepreneurs in this study. In some instances, such as Programs, few entrepreneurs valued the contributions of that source.

• Table 32 shows the sources Books etc., Peers, Accountant and Spouse/Partner had high value scores attributed to them by almost 60% of the total group. The survey source Mentor was the only other category to receive high value scores from at least half the cases in this study.

Table 33 re-presents the data of the previous Table 32 to show the differences between the 23 cases designating mentors and the nine cases declining to designate a mentor* for the purpose of this study.

Table 33: % of cases with high value scores (4 or 5) for M (n=23) and NM* (n=9) cases.

Presented as the two sets it can be seen that:
• The highest attributed values are for the source Mentors with almost 90% of those designating mentors allocating high value scores. The low scores attributed in the instances of three of the four M cases were explained as a result of dissatisfaction with an allocated mentor. The fourth case had given a score for her mentor elsewhere.

• Some NM* cases had allocated a high value score to the survey source Mentor whilst declining to designate a mentor in the interview. These anomalies were addressed elsewhere and can be explained by one case describing the value of a mentor he wished he could have had, and two other mentioning the role of their fathers in their general upbringing, but not in business.

• Over 50% of the NM* cases attributed high value to the sources Books etc., Peers, Accountant and Spouse/Partner. With the exception of category Mentor, this reflected the trend of the M cases.

• Spouse/Partner and Books etc. were valued more highly by the NM* cases, as were the categories Employees and Suppliers.

The previous tables (Table 32, Table 33) have identified that for each of the survey sources, some entrepreneurs found them to be a valued source of assistance. The stories of the entrepreneurs attributing high value scores (4 or 5) to the various sources were revisited in order to determine what, if any, mentoring contributions could be attributed to the relationships with each source. The results interpreted as those mentoring contributions generally present and valued for each source, are summarised in Table 34.
Table 34: Mentoring contributions identified for attributed high value scores, by survey category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUSTER: EXPERIENTIAL AFFINIAL</th>
<th>MENTORING CONTRIBUTION:</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>CONFIRMATIONAL</th>
<th>CORPOREAL</th>
<th>EXPERIENTIAL</th>
<th>ATTRIBUTIONAL</th>
<th>AFFINIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BOARD</td>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE</td>
<td>SHARING</td>
<td>OPENING OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td>ACCESSIBILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ROLE</td>
<td>ACCOUNTABLE</td>
<td>ORDER</td>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases (n=32) attributing high value scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVEY SOURCE CATEGORY:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSOCIATIONS</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOKS ETC.</td>
<td>19 (60%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COURSES</td>
<td>9 (28%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUSTOMERS</td>
<td>14 (43.8%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYEES</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIENDS</td>
<td>9 (28%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEERS</td>
<td>19 (59.4%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAMS</td>
<td>9 (28%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTANT</td>
<td>19 (59.4%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANK</td>
<td>8 (25%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAWYER</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOUSE/PARTNER</td>
<td>19 (59.4%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPLIERS</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of Table 34 reveals:

- The sources valued by the highest number of cases (n=19) were Books etc, Peers, Accountant, and Spouse/Partner. With the exception of Accountant, all the sources were interpreted as providing the majority of mentoring contributions.

- A particular anomaly between the stories and the percentage of cases attributing high value scores to the survey source Accountant. The stories, with the exception of two cases that designated their accountant as mentor, would have expected a low value to be placed on the source. The number of mentoring contributions generally identified would have also lead to this expectation. However, Accountant was overall one of four sources attributed high value scores by some 60% of the cases.
Those sources making no affinial contribution (Programs, Accountant, Bank, Lawyer) were not interpreted as making many other mentoring contributions.

A snapshot of the mentoring contributions made by each source suggests that:

- **Associations** are very similar to Peers with the additional contribution of ‘providing expertise’ as a result of running formal programs.
- **Interestingly**, Peers are not noted as making ‘role model’ or ‘accountable other’ contributions, perhaps as a result of the nature of peers being equals.
- **Books etc** do however appear to have a ‘role model’ contribution – this is interpreted as the entrepreneurs in this study using a variety of materials to study and learn from case studies of profiled leaders and companies. A sense of ‘affinity’ was also noted, most likely as a direct consequence of the deliberate choice of resource selected.
- **Courses** are interpreted as providing psychosocial contributions, although much of this might be attributed to the entrepreneur internalising and affirming confidence gained in their own abilities. Knowledge gained and shared is valued but the lack of attributional and affinial contributions perhaps reflects scepticism of the real-life experience of the presenters.

- **Customers** are interpreted as being a source of many of the mentor contributions. As for Associations and Peers, Customers appear not to be role models neither are they a ‘headmaster’; which is to be expected. The same for Employees.
Family make many mentoring contributions, but with two exceptions namely ‘sharing experiences’ and ‘opening up opportunities’. It was noted that, for the entrepreneurs in this study, none indicated their families being in similar businesses, if in business at all. Experience was provided in the form of advice given, but not noted as a sharing of experience as with, for example, Peers. Although noted for some, and therefore included in the mentoring contributions for family, affinity took more the form of empathy than of an actual understanding from having been in business too.

Friends were very much friends, being there if needed but not a primary source of mentoring contributions - however, they did play a key role in ‘opening up opportunities’. Whilst credible, available and accessible in their own fields, many friends were not in business for themselves and therefore there was little affinial contribution.

Programs offered by government were poorly valued and seemed to offer few mentoring contributions. This was interpreted as being largely a consequence of the lack of perceived affinity with the world of the entrepreneur.

Accountants were recognised as being essential to all the entrepreneurs in this study. The two mentoring contributions attributed to this source of assistance were ‘providing expertise’ and ‘accountable other’. The stories indicated the desire of the entrepreneur for the account to play a greater role
in providing assistance but primarily in better understanding the business from the point of view of the owner.

- Banks were not seen to provide any opportunity for receiving mentoring in any form, other than to report to.

- Lawyers, unlike the Accountants, were attributed with the ability to understand, inform and support the entrepreneur in a particular endeavour.

- Spouse/Partners were highly valued by the majority of entrepreneurs in a relationship at the time of interview. Unlike the more removed members of Family, a Spouse/Partner appeared, with one exception, to have affinity with the entrepreneur. Again unlike Family, the partner was interpreted as ‘sharing experiences’ with the entrepreneur, rather than ‘providing experience’. However, like Family, they were not considered ‘role models’.

- Suppliers were interpreted as providing all mentoring contributions with the exception of ‘role model’. This spread of valued assistance may well reflect the symbiotic nature of an entrepreneur with the owners of external resources essential to the business. It could also be attributed to the relationship of many of the entrepreneurs with particular suppliers who were instrumental in encouraging them to start up at the outset.

Having identified the mentoring contributions interpreted as being attributed to each source, each of the 32 cases was revisited to plot high value scores (4 and 5) against each source of
assistance - the objective being to identify the likely sources of mentoring for each entrepreneur. The following table (Table 35) displays the outcome:

Table 35: Sources of mentoring contributions for each entrepreneur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3CM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5CM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6CF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7CM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8CM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11USF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14USF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21USF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22USM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23AUUF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24AUUF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25AUFM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26AUFM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27AUSM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28AUSM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29AUSF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30AUSF</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31AUSM*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32AUSF*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a number of aspects to note from the above table:

- The first relates to the nine cases not designating a mentor*. The table shows that seven of the nine attributed high value scores (4 or 5) to four or more sources - the exceptions being 32AUSF* who attributed two and 27AUSM* who attributed one. Of the nine, the range for the number of sources attributed with high value scores by any one case was from one to nine. The range for the 23 cases designating mentors was one to twelve.
• There is one anomaly in the set of nine NM*, that being 8CM* who gave a high value score to the source Mentor in the survey, despite choosing not to designate a mentor for the purpose of this study. The explanation of this has been provided earlier.

• Of particular interest is the finding that two of the three Australian male cases choosing not to designate a mentor (31AUSM*; 26AUSM*) have six and nine sources respectively that have received high value scores, and which between them are able to make a variety of mentoring contributions.

• Whilst only three Australian cases designated mentors the spread of sources attributed high values would appear at least as dense, if not more so, as for any other cluster of country cases.

• The range of sources attributed with high value scores by females was one to twelve; for males it was one to eleven.

• Four cases attributed high value to only one or two sources (4CF; 20UKF; 27AUSM*; 32AUSF*) - three are female, and two Australian.
SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS PART ONE AND PART TWO

This section brings together the findings of the two parts of Chapter 6. To recollect, the aim of Part One was to reveal and put under the microscope the sources of assistance for the entrepreneurs in this study, and from those sources who (or what) would be designated the status of mentor. Once identified, the mentoring attributed to the mentors was teased from the stories of the entrepreneurs. Having gained an understanding of what constituted mentoring for the entrepreneurs, based on the nature of the mentoring attributed to the mentors, Part Two explored the aspects of mentoring that could be attributed to the other sources of assistance valued by the 32 cases, but not designated as mentors. The combination of Part One and Part Two was aimed at gaining greater insight into the mentoring accessed and valued by the entrepreneurs in this study, in order to provide a view of mentors and mentoring through the lens of entrepreneurs.

To commence Part One the interview data (stories) of the 32 cases was examined in order to get an understanding firstly of what sources of assistance were identified by the entrepreneur, and within those sources who (or what) the entrepreneurs designated as mentors.

The sources of assistance generally reflected those identified in the literature and during the preparatory phase of this research, and subsequently listed in the survey instrument. The exception being a source termed ‘Other businesses’ – this was as a result of one case selecting a variety of successful business and closely analysing and following their
operations as live case studies, with the objective of implementing aspects into the entrepreneur’s own management practice. This finding had the consequence of refining the thinking of a mentor only as ‘who’, to ‘who or what’.

An early finding was that the term ‘mentor’ was not freely used or applied by the entrepreneurs in this study despite 23 (71.9%) of the cases designating a source as mentor. Subsequent analysis determined that eight of these cases had received an allocated mentor as part of some form of business course and five of these mentors were not considered to have been mentors. Of these eight cases, three had designated the allocated mentor as their only source of mentor, potentially reducing the number of cases considered to have actually had mentoring from a mentor to 20 (62.5%). The identification of these mentors (as labelled by the course) who were not considered mentors (by the entrepreneur) despite their title, later provided valuable insight into why some sources were designated mentors and perhaps others not.

Once the country of origin was assigned from the NVivo casebook, it was noted that only three of the eight Australian cases had designated a mentor. Additionally, whilst of the combined total of ten UK and Australian cases designating mentors only one UK case designated more than one mentor, seven of the thirteen combined Canadian and US cases designated two or more sources as mentors. This would suggest there may be a cultural differentiation in the use of the term in North America compared to other countries.
Once gender was assigned to the cases, only one male Australian case was noted to have designated a mentor. Of the overall 23 cases designating mentors 13 were female and 10 male, however, taking into account only one male from Australia designated a mentor, it could probably be interpreted that the difference in numbers for females versus males could be attributed more to cultural than sex differences.

Part One provided a number of findings which identified the mentors and their mentoring. This resulted in the framing of five clusters of mentoring contributions built from the analysis of the stories of the 23 entrepreneurs who had designated a variety of sources as mentors. The term ‘mentoring contribution’ was created to best reflect the transactional nature of what was interpreted as occurring in the stories, that is, the entrepreneur tacitly understood they were in receipt of something of value to them as contributed by the source designated as mentor. It is this understanding and acknowledgement of the contribution and its worth that would appear to underpin the initial decision related to designating a source as a mentor, or not.

The five clusters of the framework evolved to both reflect some of the mentoring functions of the literature and point to other essential elements that would appear to underpin the choice by an entrepreneur to designate someone, or something, as a mentor. Clusters 1, 2, and 3, assigned the titles Confirming, Corporeal and Experiential, generally reflected the mentoring functions of the traditional mentoring literature and incorporated many of the
psychosocial and learning functions to be found in the majority of the workplace and career development studies.

The rationale for coining and assigning the particular titles again relates to the subtle differences that emerged as a consequence of allowing me to look at the mentors through a lens provided by the entrepreneurs. Although tinted by my prior reading, the lens provided a focus and magnification of the nature of the mentoring contributed by the designated mentors. The result was that while the contributions identified as indicative of the nature of the mentoring taking place within each of the first three clusters were similar to those of the literature, Clusters 4 and 5 entitled ‘Attributional’ and ‘Affinial’, titles again specifically coined to capture their meaning, emerged to be clusters of critical contributions for the entrepreneur. Being able to recognise someone as being credible and trustworthy from the outset; for that person to willingly make themselves available and give of their time; and to be recognised as having been in the position of the entrepreneur or at very least something similar would appear to be the tipping point in determining the designation of the term mentor to a particular source.

Aligned with the development of the mentoring contribution framework was the finding of two particular entrepreneur attributes subsequently termed ‘Reciprocity’ and ‘Communication/Asking for help’. Reciprocity, in this instance is interpreted as being an inherent trait of all the entrepreneurs in this study, but one which is manifested in a variety of ways. Generally speaking it is the conscious looking to ‘give back in some way’ as a
result of valuing the receipt of a mentoring contribution. The ‘giving back’ does not necessarily mean ‘returning the favour’ to the person who has made the contribution but rather a more open approach of putting back into community good.

The most standout characteristic of the entrepreneurs was the understanding of the need to be able to communicate and ask for help. This manifested itself in a number of ways including coming to an understanding of what help was needed, and identifying and securing that assistance. In many instances the entrepreneur undertook some form of communication skills development training and put themselves into situations outside their comfort zone in order to improve any weakness they perceived in that area.

Part One also raised a number of questions including:

- When is a mentor not a mentor?
- Why is a husband a mentor but not a wife?
- Why do only three of eight Australian cases (37.5%) designate a mentor?

Having identified the mentors designated by the entrepreneurs and the mentoring contributions attributed to the those mentor sources Part Two aimed to gain greater insight into the mentoring which could be attributed to all the sources of assistance identified. To commence this investigation an analysis of the survey data for all 32 cases was undertaken in order to ascertain the attributed values for the sources of assistance identified in the survey. With the exception of ‘Other businesses’, the sources of assistance as set in the
survey during the preparation phase of this study corresponded with those identified through the stories of the entrepreneurs.

To commence the analysis, the attributed value scores for the survey source ‘Mentor’ were examined. The high value scores attributed to this source resulted in setting value scores of 4 or 5 to be the benchmark against which the values of other sources would be set. The rationale for this was that those cases (n=23) designating a source as a mentor, awarded the highest overall value scores to the assistance, i.e. mentoring contributions, received from that source. Equivalent high value scores (4 or 5) attributed to other sources were therefore judged to be on a par in value to that attributed to a mentor.

Value scores attributed to the survey sources for all cases (n=32) were identified and examined in relation to the context found in the interview data, with particular attention given to those instance where a score of 4 or 5 was allocated. Findings included:

- Each of the survey categories was found to be a high value source of assistance to at least some entrepreneurs in this study. In certain instances, such as Programs, very few entrepreneurs valued the contributions of that source.
- The sources Books etc., Peers, Accountant, and Spouse/Partner had high value scores attributed to them by almost 60% of the total group. The survey source Mentor was the only other category to receive high value scores from at least half the cases in this study.

When the results are presented as the two sets M and NM* findings included:
• The highest attributed values are for the source Mentors with almost 90% of those designating mentors (M) allocating high value scores. The low scores that three of the four cases had attributed to their designated mentor were able to be explained as a result of dissatisfaction with an allocated mentor. The fourth case had given a score for her mentor elsewhere.

• The cases declining to designate a mentor (NM*) were somewhat less inclined overall to attribute high value scores and no case in this group attributed a high value score to a government program or service.

• Over 50% of the NM* cases attributed high value to the sources Books etc., Peers, Accountant and Spouse/Partner. With the exception of category Mentor, this reflected the trend of the M cases.

• The greatest numbers of NM* high values were for the survey categories Spouse/Partner and Books etc. and the percentage of these cases exceeded that of the M cases.

• A particular anomaly was noted between the stories and the percentage of cases attributing high value scores to the survey source ‘Accountant’. The stories, with the exception of two cases that designated their account as mentor, would have expected a low value to be placed on the source – in contrast it was overall one of four sources attributed high value scores by some 60% of the cases.

Having identified the cases which attributed high value scores, the stories of those cases were re-examined in an attempt to pinpoint the mentoring contributions that could be
attributed to each corresponding source. As could be reasonably expected the results identified a range of mentoring contributions that could be attributed to each source. When tabulated it could be seen that each entrepreneur had placed a high value on the mentoring contributions of at least one source. With the exception of four cases, the entrepreneurs in this study (n=32) indicated high value for the contributions of four or more sources which between them would have provided a range of mentoring contributions irrespective of whether the entrepreneur considered themselves to have had a mentor or not.
Chapter 7: Discussion and Implications

REVISITING THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The driver for this research was an interest in understanding what the nature of mentors and mentoring might be when viewed through the lens or context of the entrepreneur. Whilst mentoring has been examined extensively over some two decades, and moved into the research domain primarily as a consequence of the early seminal work of Kathy Kram (1985), the majority of that research has focussed on the concept of mentoring within the work or organisational setting and very little applied to the world of the entrepreneur (Waters et al. 2002).

This primary driver to answer the overarching question relating to what is the nature of mentors and mentoring for entrepreneurs lead to the research questions which shaped the initial conceptual framework, namely:

For entrepreneurs who are founder owner-managers of small to medium enterprises:

• What sources of assistance do they acknowledge as providing help, in particular during the start up and growth phases of their business?
• Are any of these sources designated as mentors?
• Why are these sources considered mentors – what is the nature of the mentoring received?
• What is the value attributed and nature of the mentoring received from sources of assistance other than those designated as mentors?

PERSONAL LIMITATIONS

At this point it must be noted that at the outset my rationale for setting out to find some answers was based more on personal curiosity and intuition than factual, however, understanding this to be the case added weight to my decision to start afresh and allow the mentors and mentoring to unfold from the stories of the entrepreneurs. However, the lens that I applied to looking at mentors and mentoring from the entrepreneurs’ context would likely have been tinted by the literature that dominated mentoring research of the two decades since 1985. As such, although trying to look anew, comparisons were undoubtedly drawn with mentoring interpretations to that date. Again, while acknowledging this as a limitation, it is also a strength in as much as it lead to the questioning and re-questioning of what I was interpreting in the stories. An example of this was the notion of ‘reciprocity’ which is beginning to feature in the more recent mentoring literature but which has a somewhat different manifestation in the context of the entrepreneurs in this study.

A second personal limitation was the unforeseen interruption that occurred in the writing of this thesis. Whilst personally confronting and challenging to deal with, the time taken for recuperation from illness was in itself an unwitting attribute to the relevance of this study, for the literature which emerged in parallel with the recommencement of the final stages of the research justified and gave confidence to both the topic and the processes followed. In stimulating and adding to that literature and resulting in their publication: The handbook of
mentoring at work, Ragins and Kram (2007) confirmed the preponderance of research in the years to the turn of the century had largely focussed on the work and organisational settings, and that new lenses needed to be applied to examine mentoring afresh in relation to context. Additionally Ragins and Kram (2007), through collating the opinions and works of others, also recommended greater use of qualitative methods to support research to capture the essences of mentoring. Likewise, the publication edited by Allen and Eby (2007) also confirmed that to this point the concentration of mentoring research has been into three primary areas named as youth, student – faculty, and workplace mentoring. The works of the many authors cited within both publications (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Allan & Eby, 2007) reinforced the need to open up future research to look across fields, disciplines and contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of mentoring. As a person who tends to view a glass as half-full, and whilst the reasons for the pause in writing were not to be wished on anyone, there was perhaps a silver lining.

**REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Remaining true to the iterative nature of the research and strategic frameworks established at the outset of this study, Chapter 6 explored, outlined findings and built on those findings as the two parts of the chapter unfolded. As such, findings were both noted and in some instances discussed along the way. This was as much a ‘thinking aloud’ on my part as it was to lead the reader through the iterations. For the purpose of this section, those findings will be reviewed and discussed in greater detail, following the order of the four research questions.
THE SOURCES OF THE MENTORS

Question 1: What sources of assistance are acknowledged?

Literature pertaining to the personal support networks of entrepreneurs would lead to the expectation that the entrepreneurs in this study would draw on a number of sources of assistance including mentor, business associates (including clients and suppliers), trade associations, or personal affiliations, and a moral support network of family and friends (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Carsrud et al., 1987; Hisrich, 1998; Birley, 1985a, 1985b; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004). These references, together with the input of entrepreneurs during the preparatory phase of this research, informed the compilation of the list of sources of assistance which comprised the survey instrument.

However, as this research aimed to better understand the nature and values of mentors and mentoring, at least for the entrepreneurs in this study, it was felt essential to allow each case (n=32) to outline the sources of assistance they had called on, particularly in the founding and growth periods of their ventures, and for the mentors to naturally emerge from those sources (Gartner, 2004; Kram & Ragins, 2007). The overall result reflected the list of sources compiled for the survey, with the addition of ‘other businesses’ and an additional ‘other’ within the category ‘specific expertise’.

THE MENTORS

Question 2: Are any of the sources considered mentors?
The mentors that emerged from within these sources, for the 23 cases that were identified as having designated mentors, were grouped into the categories of family; allocated mentors, early employer or work colleague; specific expertise; successful business people; peers; employees; and other companies.

Expectation generated from the previously cited authors (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Carsrud et al., 1987; Hisrich, 1998; Birley, 1985a, 1985b; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004) that family would be an, if not the most, important source of assistance was confirmed. Ten cases (n=23) designated a family member as a mentor, including one case designating two mentors from this source category. Seven of the cases were female and in each instance the mentor was their husband or partner, or father in the instances of those not in a relationship. The three male cases designated father, uncle, and brother-law, but no male designated his wife as a mentor. This raised the question of why do wives designate their husbands as mentors but not vice versa, and was partially discussed in Chapter 6 and will be revisited again later in this discussion.

Six of the 13 women choosing to designate a mentor had been allocated a mentor as part of a business program; two of the 10 men designating a mentor did likewise. The female cases had representation from each of the four countries in the study; the male cases were both from the UK. Two Canadian female cases participated in a business program specifically for women whilst the total remainder (eight) female and male cases were from mixed programs. Whilst it is tempting to speculate that the women in this study were more drawn
to formal programs than the men, there is not the data to support such a conclusion. However, what was apparent, and will be discussed elsewhere, is that four of the eight women did not consider their allocated mentors to ‘be a mentor’.

Where the females indicated a leaning towards husbands/partners/fathers as their primary mentor, the males showed an inclination towards people they considered as ‘successful business people’ and ‘peers’, with six of the ten male cases designating mentors nominating individuals from within these categories. Whilst this somewhat reflects the literature relating to the support networks of male and female entrepreneurs (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Carsrud et al., 1987; Hisrich, 1998; Birley, 1985a, 1985b; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004), it does not necessarily indicate the overall composition of the networks being different. In fact, when the sources of assistance were revisited through the survey, to determine the mentoring contributions that could have been made by the various sources for each case in this study, there was little to indicate any notable difference in the overall networks of the male and female cases. This corresponds with the findings of the National Foundation for Women Business Owners (1994b, 2001) who suggest that there are more similarities than differences between female and male entrepreneurs, including in their network composition.

The addition of ‘Other businesses’ to the sources designated as mentors is worthy of discussion as it points to the use of inanimate sources of mentors and mentoring. The reason for not including ‘Other businesses’ with ‘Successful business people’ was because
the mentoring was not gained through interaction with individuals or, as in having a role
model or shadowing, following the behaviours or observing the characteristics of particular
people. Rather, it was described as observing the effects of management decisions and
processes as indicated by the bottom line performance of various public companies which
informed and set benchmarks for the case in question. As is observed later in this chapter,
in commentary on the sources of mentoring, the one inanimate source ‘Books etc’ in the
survey list, encompassing resource materials and technologies, is amongst the most highly
valued sources of assistance for the entrepreneurs in this study. Whilst generally regarded
as just sources of information, the mentoring contributions of inanimate sources, as valued
by the entrepreneurs in this study, warrants further research as being aware of and learning
to initiate the contributions from such sources may well be a valuable asset transferable to
both the business and work environments.

USE OF THE TERM MENTOR

When exploring the stories of the entrepreneurs, a number of elements revealed themselves
in relation to the term ‘mentor’ itself.

Frequency

One of the first outcomes of this research was the finding that not all cases in this study
chose to designate a mentor, with 23 of the 32 cases doing so and the balance declining.
Closer examination of the stories of the 23 cases revealed that, in actuality, only 20 of these
cases could really be considered to have designated a mentor who assisted them in the
business context. Mention was made, in particular by a number of males, that a father or
older relative had been their mentor ‘but only in the moral sense’, meaning the guide responsible for setting the foundation of behaviours and standards now ingrained in the entrepreneur, and against which she or he judged themselves and others. This predisposition or mental picture of the mentor as ‘wise elder’ (Levinson et al, 1978) is perhaps one of the reasons why the term mentor was not applied freely by the entrepreneurs in this study. In other words, if an individual did not match up to this ‘wise’ or at least ‘very special’ person the term was generally not one that would be naturally attributed. It is also interesting to note that only one case mentioned receiving ‘mentoring’ – this was attributed to a source (in this instance a group of fellow entrepreneurs co-located in one building) that was not designated as a mentor. For the entrepreneurs in this study, it could be perhaps be interpreted that mentoring was associated with mentors and that assistance from other sources was not consciously designated as mentoring.

_Spontaneity_

Spontaneity, or rather lack of spontaneity, in the use of the term mentor also gives insight into whether the word sits naturally in the lexicon of the entrepreneur. Only 20 of the total cases (n=32) used the term mentor spontaneously, that is, used the word to designate assistance from a particular source without it being introduced into the conversation by me. A further eight cases used the term late in the interview to designate a previously discussed source as a mentor after responding to the question: _Would you call any of the sources you have mentioned a mentor?_ Four did not use the term at all and declined to designate any source a mentor when asked. Moments of hesitation and contemplation were noted when the above question was asked. This was interpreted both as stopping to think about the
meaning of the word as well as reviewing assistance received and deciding if the term was appropriate to apply. It was also interpreted as being indicative of the lack of fluency in the use of the term by the entrepreneur – that is, it did not naturally ‘roll off the tongue’ and also gave a sense that the term was generally applied retrospectively. By allowing the term to emerge from the stories, and then using questioning techniques and the opportunity of completing the survey to review sources of assistance identified by the entrepreneur, it became apparent that the term is not applied lightly by the majority of the entrepreneurs in this study.

**Geography**

Of all the stories, the cases from Canada and the USA were more likely to contain a spontaneous use of the word mentor. This notion of a possible geographical connotation was reinforced when considered in tandem with the finding that eight of the thirteen combined Canadian and US cases (i.e. North American) designating mentors, applied the term to two or more sources. All bar one case from the ten combined UK and Australian cases designated the term to only one source. Given that only three of the total eight Australian cases in this study chose to designate a mentor, and only one of those male, this may well point to what has recently been flagged in the literature, that is, the notion of mentors and mentoring may not have the same application in different countries (Clutterbuck, 2007; Kram & Ragins, 2007). Whilst this is perhaps readily obvious and indeed common sense for quite culturally diverse populations, it has perhaps not been sufficiently considered within the English speaking world, with some exceptions (Clutterbuck, 2007). With the greater part of the mentoring literature having its origins in
the USA there is justification to consider a future study which would concentrate on particular geographical regions. In the context of this study, the term mentor could perhaps be assumed to be more freely used and more generally applied to various forms of developmental assistance in the lingua franca of the USA. This more liberal or ‘generic’ use would be in contrast to the term’s more traditional definition of ‘wise elder’ and may well explain the reason for so few Australian cases choosing to designate a mentor in the context of their business life.

**Specificity**

Regardless of geographical considerations, it would appear, at least for the entrepreneurs in this study, that applying the term mentor to a source of assistance is not done lightly and indeed when allocated someone called a mentor, as eight were as part of a business course, there would seem to be an in-built expectation of what that person would comprise. Rather as leading a horse to water doesn’t mean it will drink, giving an entrepreneur a mentor does not mean they will consider them a mentor.

Literature pertaining to the pairing of mentors and protégés has examined the successes and breakdowns of dyad relationships (Kram & Hall, 1996; Heimann & Pittenger, 1996; Scandura, 1998; Lyons & Oppler, 2004; Eby et al., 2004; Allen et al., 2005; Eby 2007; Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007) but from the stories in this study, when the person nominated as a mentor didn’t match with a preconceived notion of a mentor, the entrepreneur preferred to almost instantly disengage or at the very most just enjoy the individual’s company for the duration of the program. In other words, the entrepreneur did
not even attempt to seek out the values within the allocated mentor and which may have been useful to the entrepreneur, thereby closing off a possible useful resource. Presumably the disengagement by the entrepreneur would in most instances be easier than for someone, say, in a workplace mentoring scheme where to admit to not valuing the allocated mentor could potentially jeopardise career prospects. The entrepreneur, having invested in a course would want to gain maximum value from both their financial and time commitment, could disengage without fear of penalty at any point. It would be interesting to consider whether, had the allocated mentor been given the title of ‘general resource’ or some other less specific name, the entrepreneur would have mined that resource to find benefit.

When combined, the implications of the findings relating to the term would suggest that, in the future development of programs and literature aimed at entrepreneurs, use of the word mentor will need careful consideration.

**THE MENTORS’ MENTORING**

*Question 3: Why are these sources designated as mentors – what is the nature of the mentoring received?*

**MENTORING CONTRIBUTIONS**

Whilst as noted in the previous section the sources of assistance echoed the networks of entrepreneurs outlined extensively in the literature, allowing the nature of the mentoring attributed to the mentors for the entrepreneurs in this study to emerge from the stories and provided valuable insights.
The descriptions that emerged from the stories provided a view of mentors and mentoring that had both similarities and differences to the views expressed in the mentoring literature. One of the most significant findings of this study was the transactional nature of the mentoring attributed to the designated mentors. Transactional in this instance is a term coined for this study to define the recognition of assistance given by the mentor and the recognition of the value placed on the assistance received, by the entrepreneur. This recognition and appreciation would appear to be at the essence of the decision of the entrepreneur to designate the term ‘mentor’ to a particular source. It could possibly be argued that the ability to ‘transact’ and the awareness of the exchange of ‘value’, as in the knowing what is needed and the seeking out and acquisition of resources (in the broadest sense of the term), is precisely what defines an entrepreneur (Timmons & Spinelli, 2004). In some instances the transaction might to all intents and purposes appear to be one-way (that is, from the mentor to the entrepreneur), however the recognition of a contribution of worth having taken place is what is intended to be captured in the resultant notion of ‘mentoring contributions’. Mentoring contributions describe what may be attributed to and result from the transactional interactions of the entrepreneur with their designated mentors.

The early literature describes the mentor as performing mentoring functions (Kram, 1985; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Scandura & Ragins, 1993; Noe, 1998) with more recent literature describing mentoring to comprise a series of mentoring episodes (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007) which can be undertaken either with a mentor, and/or as independent
episodes with a variety of sources, and which in total comprises the mentoring for any one individual. The use of NVivo software, which allowed for a sharply focussed look at mentoring through the lens of the entrepreneurs, enabled subtleties in the nature of what takes place to emerge through this study. It was this ability to focus that resulted in the naming of what was observed as ‘mentoring contributions’.

To recapitulate, for an entrepreneur in this study to designate a particular source as a mentor, the mentor would need to have made, and be acknowledged as having made, a number of mentoring contributions. The contributions are identified as a contributing action performed by the mentor that are recognised and valued by the entrepreneur. The contributions fall into five clusters, identified by the verb that denotes the action of contributing (to give; to be; to assist; to ensure; to demonstrate). A summary framework of the mentoring contributions outlined in Chapter 6 is presented in the following table (Table 36).
Table 36: Summary framework of mentoring contributions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Mentoring Contribution</th>
<th>Description of Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Confirming</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>An emotional relationship which allows a range of engagement from a literal ‘shoulder to cry on’, to a tacit understanding (by the entrepreneur) that someone believes and has confidence in their ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>An overt expression of enthusiasm, challenging the entrepreneur to new levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>The ability to lift the feeling of self-worth and self-confidence in the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Corporeal</td>
<td>Sounding board</td>
<td>An individual who acts as an active ‘listener’ to ideas and issues, but who may or may not provide feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role model</td>
<td>An admired ‘other’ with one or more attributes the entrepreneur desires to emulate. Includes the notion of ‘wise elder’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountable other</td>
<td>An individual to whom the entrepreneur elects to report their activity and progress. Referred to as the ‘headmaster effect’ or a ‘non-executive director’ without actually being one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Experiential</td>
<td>Sharing experiences</td>
<td>A two-way exchange of information without either party necessarily undertaking the role of ‘advisor’ to the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing expertise</td>
<td>The provision of knowledge, experience, or advice with or without a request for assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening up opportunity</td>
<td>The ability to make introductions and/or gain entry to otherwise closed networks, new business, and/or new thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attributional</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>The willingness to be contacted and respond to the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>The recognisable competence, status and good standing of an individual. Trustworthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>The ability to be on call or at hand for the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Affinial</td>
<td>Affinity</td>
<td>To have affinity. To be recognised as having undergone similar experiences or at a minimum demonstrate empathy with the world of the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was noted and commented on in the findings of Chapter 6 that Clusters 4 and 5 emerge as important clusters of mentoring contributions for the entrepreneur. In the instances of the allocated mentors who were not considered mentors (not-mentors) by their entrepreneurs, it was an obvious lack or failing, in the ability of the allocated mentor, to make (or at least perceived not to be able to make) the corresponding mentoring contributions that was at
the root of an entrepreneur’s disenchantment. This observation has implications for the
development of mentor programs, and the selection and matching of mentors, to support
other learning experiences such as business programs for entrepreneurs. The implications
relate to 1) naming the source of assistance a mentor as certain (tacit) expectations will be
set up within the entrepreneur of the contributions the individual will make, and 2) ensuring
the individual chosen as mentor has the ability to contribute clusters 4 and 5 when matched
to a particular entrepreneur. It is suggested that, irrespective of the business and
management competencies of an allocated mentor, unless the individual is able to
demonstrate a track record in being in business for themself, or at the very least have a
history of successful relationships assisting other entrepreneurs, they are likely to struggle
with convincing the founder of a small to medium size enterprise that they are able to
understand the world of the entrepreneur.

Aside from the examples of the allocated not-mentors described previously, applying the
concept of mentoring contributions to the stories relating to accountants also supported the
importance of clusters 4 and 5 in the designation, or not, of the term mentor. Two
entrepreneurs named their accountants as mentors. By identifying the mentoring
contributions of the two individuals, the stories were interpreted to mean each made the
majority of mentoring contributions as outline in Table 36. Interestingly, both accountants
were in business for themselves and each took the time to familiarise themselves with their
corresponding entrepreneur’s personal and business goals and aspirations. In contrast, most
other entrepreneurs’ stories identified significant dissatisfaction with their accountants, with
many changing that source of assistance more than once. Rather as for the allocated not-
mentors, the entrepreneurs expressed frustration with the (at least perceived) lack of affinity
with the world of the entrepreneur, meaning no matter how skilful the accountant, and how
high the value placed on the need for their expertise, the fit was never going to be
comfortable.

Whilst it is not to be expected that an accountant should be a mentor, an understanding of
the mentoring contributions valued by entrepreneurs such as those in this study, has
interesting implications for opportunities in the provision of such professional services.
Likewise it would again suggest that, certainly if using the term mentor as a title for a
person within a program for entrepreneurs or for any person assigned to provide one-on-
one assistance, communicating the nature of mentoring contributions as valued by the
entrepreneurs would result in significant benefits to all parties.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

Much discussion and research has addressed the characteristics of entrepreneurs (Sexton &
Bowman, 1988; Bygrave & Hofer, 1991; Timmons, 1994; Vesper, 1994; Hisrich, 1998;
Timmons & Spinelli, 2004). The main conclusion of the literature would be that
entrepreneurs, when viewed collectively, are more like each other than they are different,
particularly when compared to non-entrepreneurs. Within the context of the entrepreneurs
in this study, two particular attributes stood out, firstly the entrenched sensitivity relating to
reciprocity, and secondly the tacit knowing of the need to communicate and in particular to ask for help.

**Reciprocity**

As mentioned previously, the notion of reciprocity is emerging within the mentoring literature with the joint concepts of reciprocity and mutuality applied to the developmental relationships that benefit both those who provide and those who receive mentoring (McManus & Russell, 2007; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Allen, 2007). This relational mentoring (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007) is a concept only recently introduced to account for the mentoring that occurs in a non-traditional/hierarchical relationship and accommodates, for example, peer mentoring. Whilst the benefits to the mentor were not explored in this study, there was some evidence to suggest there was some benefit for the mentor. In many instances the mentor would appear to have taken an interest in the entrepreneur, suggesting they received benefit (satisfaction) from the provision of mentoring contributions. With the possible exception of some of the mentoring that occurred between peers, reciprocity from the literature’s perspective (Miller & Stiver, 1997; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; McManus & Russell, 2007), namely the giving and receiving of mentoring and/or exchange of benefit, was not evident in this study. The exception perhaps could be found in the stories of two women who, having described their husbands as their primary mentor particularly at the start of their business, went on to describe that mentoring relationship to be more reciprocal once the business had matured.
Reciprocity, in this study, is interpreted to be the conscious giving back in some way, but not necessarily just to the individual designated as mentor, in recognition of the mentoring contributions and value received. Whilst there was appreciation expressed to the designated mentors for the mentoring contributions received and efforts made to acknowledge and thank those concerned, reciprocity took more the form of the entrepreneur understanding it was their role to assist others when appropriate and possible. Again, this seemingly inherent trait of ‘transacting’ comes to the fore and is interpreted as the entrepreneur understanding the need to give in order to receive, or colloquially ‘what goes around, comes around’. This may well be a point of difference between how entrepreneurs attract and receive mentoring in contrast to those within an organisational context where an understanding of how the world of business goes round is not core to employees’ roles.

**Communication/ asking for help**

Related to the previous section, was the recognition by each entrepreneur in this study that, no matter how difficult at the outset, the ability to communicate effectively and to ask for help had to be developed, although for some it would appear a natural asset. The literature makes reference to ‘developmental networks’ (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Chandler & Kram, 2005; Dobrow & Higgins, 2005; Molloy, 2005), and ‘developmental initiations’ (Higgins, Chandler, & Kram, 2007). A developmental network refers to the composition of networks, meaning the group of people ‘who take an interest and action to advance a focal individual’s career’ (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p.268) and draws on the social network theory described elsewhere. Developmental initiation is a more recent dimension still open to exploration, relating to the kinds of behaviours that may influence the initial interactions
between individuals and their source of assistance and which effects the ultimate composition of the developmental network. The proposition being that the higher an individual’s level of developmental initiation, the more frequently they seek out assistance, advice, help or feedback (Higgins et al., 2007). It could be said that all the entrepreneurs in this study displayed high developmental initiation tendencies, evidenced by their articulation of the importance of being able to seek out and ask for assistance as well as the activities (such as communications courses) they undertook to improve their competence and confidence. In turn this would also suggest that, providing there is an awareness of the essential nature of this attribute, such skills can be taught or at least improved. This ability to increase an individual’s level of developmental initiation has implications for providing assistance through programs for entrepreneurs, and also general development programs. With respect to entrepreneur programs it may well be a better investment to work on increasing the individual’s level of developmental initiation in order that they may seek out their own sources of mentoring contributions, if not mentors. Given the earlier comments relating to difficulties in allocating mentors in such programs, this could be a more effective means of providing assistance with benefits for the longer term.

OTHER MENTORING

Question 4. What is the value attributed and nature of the mentoring received from sources of assistance other than those designated as mentors?

Whilst an entrepreneur may or may not designate a particular source as mentor, the values attributed to the assistance received from a range of sources, as assessed through the
inclusion of a survey to conclude the interviews comprising this study, gave good insight into the mentoring contributions accessed for each case (n=32). Given the spread across the clusters of contributions it could be wondered why, particularly in the cases of those entrepreneurs declining to designate a mentor, more sources hadn’t been designated as mentors. It was the results of the survey and the tabulation of the mentoring commitments against the high valued sources that illuminated why perhaps the women named their husbands as mentors, but none of the men their wives. The difference appeared to be the prior expertise of the husband that the women drew on in the founding years of the company. The men had by and large founded the company, although the wives in many instances subsequently played a significant role in the day to day operations of the business and in which case they were perceived more as equals.

Interestingly the finding that no friends were mentors but mentors did become friends, could be argued to be counter to the general vision of how an entrepreneur uses her or his immediate personal network for assistance and entrepreneurship as a social activity (Vesper, 1992; Gartner et al., 1994; Hisrich, 1998). For the entrepreneurs in this study friends were exactly that, friends, to be enjoyed outside the business context.

This brings the discussion full circle, that is, despite receiving and valuing mentoring contributions from a number of sources, the term mentor is not lightly applied by the entrepreneurs in this study. It may well be that, from the mentoring literature perspective various sources of assistance identified by the entrepreneurs could be interpreted as being a
mentor, however, from the viewpoint of the entrepreneur the term either just doesn’t sit naturally or, in the instances of the Australian entrepreneurs, the word mentor would not appear to be part of their day-to-day vocabulary.

It may also be posited that the very nature of the entrepreneur as independent, focussed and driven (Timmons, 1994; Beattie, 1999; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004) does not lend itself to admitting the need for help. This study would tend to indicate otherwise, as the two attributes of reciprocity and communication/asking for help identified as being common to the entrepreneurs in this study, would suggest they are well aware of the need for assistance. One aspect unable to be controlled for in this study was the positive and negative affectivity of respondents, that is the tendency for individuals to generally attribute high or low values to assistance received (Turban & Lee, 2007; Dougherty & Dreher, 2007); this could possibly have contributed in the instance of the four entrepreneurs attributing high value to only one or two sources of assistance. The stories for these entrepreneurs would however indicate they were all active seekers, receivers and acknowledgers of help from others they may just generally not attributed high scores to anything!

**LIMITATIONS**

Aside from the being unable to control for the positive and negative affectivity of individual cases, a number of additional limitations need to be noted. Firstly, as stated in the methodology, would be the interpretation of the selection criteria by four individuals,
each in different countries and in particular their interpretation of ‘success’. Efforts were made to minimise potential differences through the use of written criteria and telephone discussions, however undoubtedly there would have been variations. Factors such as the size, profitability and age of the business were not controlled and neither was the age of the entrepreneur. Combined, these elements add to the richness of the data but limit the generalisability of the research.

A second limitation relates to memory. As the criteria for selection included each entrepreneur having been in their business for a minimum of three years, there was the inevitability that the stories told were always going to rely on memory, which can be both coloured and lost over time. In some instances the entrepreneurs were describing a time period of some length and whilst efforts were made to focus the stories onto particular periods, as with all stories, essential elements may have not surfaced and others elaborated. The use of the embedded survey and time-graph, developed during the preparatory phase of this study, were included into the interview process to allow opportunity for review and corroboration, however the very nature of story-telling would also limit the generalisability of the research.

A third limitation was that I was the sole researcher. In common with other such solo works, benefit may have been gained from the addition of co-researchers. As this research was exploratory in nature, the rigour applied to the selection of methodology and conduct
of analysis was largely felt to overcome this limitation. However, it is nonetheless noted as a limitation of this study.

Personal limitations have also been outlined elsewhere, particularly relating to the ‘tint’ that may have been applied to the lens as a consequence of reading and experience. The shading was minimised through the use of NVivo software to organise and examine the transcripts, allowing me to be ‘surprised’ by the content of the stories, and the use of corroboration data from the survey also drew attention back into focus. Nevertheless, what attracted me to the research could also be considered a limitation.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study was exploratory in nature. The objective was not to develop theory but rather to construct a useful description of the nature of mentors and mentoring viewed through the lens of entrepreneurs. The implications therefore are confined to some practical application to programs to assist entrepreneurs and indicative contributions to new thinking in the field mentoring generally.

However, a number of opportunities for future research emerge as a result of this thesis. Firstly, an international study related to the definitions, application and general use of the term mentor would be invaluable in providing clarity of its meaning to entrepreneurs. Secondly there is an opportunity to explore the application of the mentoring contributions framework (Table 36, p. 239) to assistance provided to entrepreneurs, particularly in
examining the relationship from both the mentor and entrepreneur’s perspective. And thirdly, the insights gained which resulted in the development of the mentoring contribution framework could be viewed from the mentoring at work perspective to ascertain the relevance of the clusters, and in particular the attributional and affinial contributions.

**CONCLUSION**

When viewed through the lens of the entrepreneur, the concepts of mentors and mentoring take on different hues to those presented through the historical and emerging literature relating to mentoring at work, and add colour to understanding the nature and value of assistance for entrepreneurs. These hues and colours have largely been captured through starting afresh, and the insights that have emerged may be attributed to the use of NVivo 7 software which enabled detailed exploration of the data.

The study has revealed that, as interpreted through the stories of those cases designating mentors, there are specific aspects which determine the assistance valued from mentors. This assistance is transactional in nature and is defined in this study as mentoring contributions. The framework of mentoring contributions developed as an output of this research provides a foundation for understanding the nature of a mentoring relationship for an entrepreneur, and contributes a different insight for both the mentoring and entrepreneurship literature. Of particular note was the emergence of the ‘Attributional’ and ‘Affinial’ mentoring clusters, terms coined specifically to represent something at the core
of the entrepreneurs’ stories and which were interpreted to be the essence of their decision to designate someone a mentor.

Applying the concept of mentoring contributions to the various sources of assistance drawn on by the entrepreneurs in this study, the value of the contributions of the various sources can be revealed and provide an overview of the developmental network valued by an entrepreneur.

The two attributes of reciprocity and communication/asking for help, evident for each of the entrepreneurs, would suggest that a further study of the apparent high developmental initiation tendencies of entrepreneurs would be of benefit. Of particular value would be finding ways to increase those attributes in nascent entrepreneurs, so that they might seek out their own sources of mentoring. In turn, understanding how entrepreneurs, as individuals, take responsibility for attracting and receiving mentoring contributions may well assist in informing those involved in workplace mentoring with its increasing trend towards developing autonomous workers.

**IMPACT**

This research was stimulated by personal curiosity. It is only fitting therefore to conclude by reflecting on the impact of this study and the journey undertaken.
For me the impact of the work has been threefold. Firstly I believe the research has justified a re-think of the generic terms ‘mentor’ and ‘mentoring’. In particular, the relevance and appropriateness of the terminology as applied in the field of entrepreneurship.

Secondly it has highlighted the notion of what constitutes mentoring needs refreshing; for example, the identification of ‘other businesses’ as a mentor source warrants further investigation.

Thirdly, the notion of mentoring as a contribution has added clarity to what underpins successful ‘mentoring’ relationships. Enabling entrepreneurs to recognise and articulate this tacit concept may better equip them and those assisting them with a meeting point of mutual benefit.

I look forward to continuing the journey.
REFERENCES


Appendix A: Summary of participant-observations

Observation 1.

The word "mentor" has many different interpretations.

The use of the term "mentor" is often ambiguous. Words used interchangeably with "mentor" include: adviser, counsellor, role-model, coach.

The terms "mentor programme" or "mentor scheme" are vicariously applied to activities related to matching an experienced person with a less experienced individual (or group) in order for one to benefit from the experience of the other. The service of the mentor is generally provided voluntarily and free of charge, a feature which generally distinguishes this type of programme from those utilising counsellors or advisers (although this does not exclude voluntary contributions within some counsellor programmes, or individuals receiving payment for mentoring services).

Most responses to the word "mentor" however, included the expectation of some sort of personal relationship or "chemistry" to be present in order for the mentor-protégé relationship to work. This was noted as a particular expectation of the protégés who also believed that a mentor would take a holistic interest in their development.

Those individuals who described having a successful mentoring relationship implied that the mentor not only gave them guidance and advice but also took an interest and challenged them in all aspects of their development as a person, rather than concentrating specifically on the task at hand. In most instances, the mentoring relationship had not been established through a mentor programme but had been the result of a gradually developing interest and respect between two individuals.

In contrast, however, it was noted that in many partnerships formed through a planned mentor programme, the relationship between mentor and protege was often impaired through conflicting expectations regarding the meanings behind "having a mentor" and "being a mentor". This was particularly evident in matched relationships in business related programmes and correlated closely with my own experiences.

The confusion (and ultimately frustration and dissatisfaction) stemmed largely from the aims of the programme to provide a mentor to act as adviser and/or counsellor, whereas the expectancy of the protégé was that the mentor would, by definition, take a more holistic view.
**Observation 2.**

*There are at least three types of mentoring.*

1. Informal mentoring

Informal mentoring is characterised by being mentor driven (mentor chooses protege), not formally structured, individualised and often long term.

2. Self-selected mentoring

Self-selected mentoring occurs when an individual identifies a need for a mentor, consciously and systematically seeks a mentor(s) and controls the duration of the relationship.

3. Planned mentoring

Planned mentoring is generally systemised, may be individual or group oriented and usually short term.

Within the business environment self-selected mentoring presumes an individual

- is able to recognise, define and understand their personal needs
- has access to a network from which to target a potential mentor
- has the skills and confidence to make an approach.

Whilst planned mentoring might be the most practical approach for providing business mentoring assistance through business support mechanisms it was noted that in general, the planned mentoring model was more successful when applied in an organisational context, that is, where the purpose of the programme was to provide senior support to encourage the development of more junior members. The main aim being to not only pass on skills and knowledge but also the cultural traits and expectations of the organisation.

Traditionally, however, business mentor support has focussed on the business strategy and yet it is widely acknowledged that in a small owner-managed business the individual is the business. There is a need to link personal development to the strategic development of the business. This links closely with observation 1, that is, the definition of the mentor who takes in the holistic relationship perspective would be applicable, whereas the adviser/counsellor role may in fact be deficient.
Observation 3.

The key to maximising the chances of success for a planned mentor programme is the care taken in the programme design.

Success, here, is defined as achieving maximum benefits and satisfaction for both the protege and the mentor while at the same time achieving the desired outcomes of the programme in general.

It was observed that the majority of planned mentor programmes relied on matching the mentor and protege through utilising a perceived needs analysis, that is, the protege stated what they felt they needed and then was matched with a mentor who had been assessed as possessing that knowledge.

An assumption was made that a transfer of knowledge would take place based on one individual needing information and the other possessing that information.

The greatest chance for success occurred when the programme addressed the following elements

- the programme was custom designed by clearly defining and communicating the programme objectives and goals
- operationally defining the term "mentoring" and if necessary renaming to express the context of the term e.g. business mentoring
- ensuring mutual benefits for mentors, protégés and the organisation
- ensuring the programme was protege driven
- providing training as necessary for mentors, protégés and programme coordinators
- ensuring mentoring was only one of many tools and not a panacea by
  - linking the programme to existing services
  - complementing the programme with other (existing) training

Observation 4.

The essential element of a successful mentoring relationship is the ability for both the mentor and the protege to be:
• conversant with the objectives and goals of the programme
• familiar with the goals and needs of the protege
• aware of differences in mentoring and learning styles and able to identify their own preferred style

Despite careful matching based on the needs of a protege and the knowledge of the mentor, many mentoring relationships were judged to have either not succeeded or have achieved less than the anticipated results.

Mentors were often perceived as being either "too dominating" or, conversely, not providing enough direction or structured help when needed.

Likewise, mentors commented that protégés were often reluctant to listen or, conversely, remained overly dependent.

Ideally, both mentors and protégés would be able to identify their preferred "style" of giving and receiving information and would be able to "style shift" to achieve a common working ground at different stages of the mentoring relationship.

**Observation 5.**

*Good mentors are a scarce resource.*

*Consideration should be given to the suitability and readiness of a potential protégé before initiating a mentoring relationship.*

Having a mentor is not for everyone. Participants in a planned business mentor programme have usually been allocated a mentor at the conclusion of, or in conjunction with, a programme of training, or have applied to a business organisation for assistance with solving a particular business problem. Discussion with mentors would suggest that some form of screening process should take place to ensure the mentor option achieves the best fit in terms of meeting the needs of the client.

**Observation 6.**

*Mentor programmes should draw upon a broad range of mentors.*

Many mentor schemes utilise the time and expertise of retired executives. Whilst an undoubtedly valuable source, reservations are expressed regarding the dependence of some
programmes on the services of this group (retired executives being predominantly white, male, senior managers).

Women in particular expressed dissatisfaction as a result of feeling "patronised". Although not a specific consideration of this project, it is wondered whether clients from minority groups would also feel alienated.

Additional doubts were expressed by both men and women regarding the capabilities of managers from large organisations to be empathetic with the goals of the small business owner.

These observations are reinforced in a 1993 evaluation of the services provided by the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) (USA):

- clients, especially women and minorities have reported SCORE counsellors' insensitivity to them
- clients have reported SCORE counsellors' lack of basic knowledge
- SCORE management believes all SCORE counsellors should have consistent, uniform professional development
- counsellors must keep up to date in a highly technological world and participate in continuing education as they did in their past life
- executives and business owners change paradigms when becoming counsellors. Counselling clients requires a new set of skills

(SCORE Counsellor Professional Development Programme, National SCORE Office, Washington DC, 1993, p7.).

Observation 7.

Training and development for mentors is essential.

The origins of providing business support and training are rooted in a world which no longer exists. Today, environmental turbulence and workplace diversity requires everyone to be a learner.

In more stable times coaching and counselling skills were sufficient, now individuals must be willing to ask questions, listen and be open about what one doesn't know and acknowledge the need to learn.
In addition to technical knowledge, those working as business mentors need to be co-
learners with their clients i.e. there is a need to learn the values, needs and perspectives of
clients in order to cross age, gender and racial boundaries.

**Observation 8.**

*There are a number of issues related to the provision of business mentoring services for
women.*

Women are not a minority group - neither are they a homogeneous group.

As more women become aware of self employment as an option there is a need to be aware
and understand the implications of diversity. Age; employment status and experience (if
any); skills and qualifications; race; social and cultural training, all impact on the readiness
for the enterprise option.

Many women expressed the belief that they have qualitatively different interactions with
business resource providers than their male counterparts. In many instances, the women felt
they were being "patronised", "misunderstood" or "stereotyped incompetent". This was
particularly stated with regard to male business counsellors and mentors.
Appendix B: Case Selection Criteria

Guidelines for case selection

Purpose of the study

To identify the sources of assistance accessed by entrepreneurs, particularly during the start up and growth phases of their business.

Number of cases required

8 cases, ideally 4 male and 4 female

Selection criteria

Each case must:

- Be a clearly identifiable founding entrepreneur, who is still active in their business
- Have been in business for over three years and have demonstrated moving past survival and into one or more phases of growth
- Have paid employees
- Be acknowledged as ‘successful’ by their peers and within local business circles

Ideally:

- There will be a balance of service and manufacturing enterprises

Information for the entrepreneurs

- The interview will take up to 3 hours to complete
- It will be recorded
- It can take place at a place of their choosing
- Cases will be allocated ID’s – no names or company names will appear in the research
Appendix C: Copy of Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case ID</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive information of founder (at time of study)</td>
<td>Descriptive information of business (at time of study)</td>
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<table>
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<th>Gender of founder</th>
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<td>Age of founder (years)</td>
<td>Type of business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of Education</td>
<td>No. of employees</td>
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These questions provide the opportunity to reflect on the stories told by each the entrepreneurs assisting with this research. The questions revisit the sources of assistance and support which the entrepreneurs may have used during the start-up and growth phases of their business, and the frequency of use and the value attributed to those sources.

Q1. The first question relates to frequency. On a scale of 1 (very infrequently) to 5 (very frequently), how frequently would you have sought or received assistance, advice or support from the following sources. If you have never used that source we can enter a score of zero (0).

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<tr>
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<th>Very frequently</th>
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281
Q2. The second question relates to value. On a scale of 1 (very little value) to 5 (very high value), what value would you attribute to the following sources of assistance, advice or support. If you have never used or don’t value that source at all, we can enter a score of zero (0).

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Q2. Comments / Observations

Summary notes
Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for your time today. It is really good to meet you.

I believe (name of contact) has explained my interest, and as you have agreed to spend time with me today you have at least an inkling of the purpose of this interview.

However, let me start by giving you a bit of background so that you feel comfortable with what we will aim to achieve.

I am a student at the Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship which is at the University of Swinburne in Melbourne (Australia). I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis.

I am interested in getting a better understanding of the sources of assistance entrepreneurs, such as yourself, have used to gain help and support along the way. I am particularly interested in the start-up and growth periods of the business.

I would like you to tell me the story of how you started and grew the business to where you are today. I am particularly interested in the sources and types of support that occurred for you on your journey.

Towards the end of our time together I would like you to respond to some survey questions - these will allow us time to reflect on your story and to score the frequency of use and the value attributed to various sources of assistance.

I believe (name of contact) indicated the interview will be recorded? The purpose of this is so that I can use the transcript to go through your story when I return home. If it is OK, I will start the recorder now (start recorder; note time).

Personal and business background

Perhaps you could start by giving me a snapshot of your background and how you came to be in the business. For example, what were your reasons for going into business?
**Accessing assistance**

You have described how you started- could you elaborate on how you gained or sought assistance at that time, for example who or what did you find to be of help and the sort of help you received.

To help jog your memory – some entrepreneurs have found it useful to doodle on a graph like this *(show example)*. They draw the ups and downs of the business from its origins to where it is today and it helps them to reflect on what happened and where they sought or received help along the way. It doesn't have to be perfect - it is more a way of you helping to guide me on your journey, and for you to use it as a memory jogger. This is a blank one we can start with *(put fresh template on table)* - we can go backwards and forwards in time as you remember. If you don’t find it useful just stop using it at any stage.

What would you say should be your starting point? *(hand over pencil)*. It might be easier if I come and sit alongside so that we are both looking at it the same way up - it that OK with you? *(move to sit alongside)*.

**Prompting questions**

*(Type of questions to be used to clarify or question if needed)*

- Could you describe in a bit more detail the assistance you received?
- Where did you find or receive assistance at this particular point (point to graph)?
- You said you found XYZ person to be really helpful, what was special about their help?
- Earlier on you spoke of *(source of assistance)* as a mentor, could you describe why you used that term?
- Earlier you spoke of *(source of assistance)* as a mentor – would you call this *(source of assistance)* a mentor too?

If term not used:
- Some people have used the term mentor – would you call any source of assistance that you have described a mentor?

**Introducing the survey instrument**

That has been fascinating - thank you so much for sharing your story with me. Just so that we take a final opportunity to reflect, this is a list of sources of assistance other entrepreneurs have indicated they have used. I heard you make mention of many too.
The purpose of the list (slide survey to where entrepreneur can read and see the score entered) is to get an indication of how frequently you may (or may not) have used a particular source, and what value you would place on the assistance received.

I will read out the questions and then you can give me a score to enter (complete survey) - (use prompting questions again if needed).

Conclusion

Thank you so much – I have really enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your business. I look forward to remaining in contact. (turn off recorder).
Appendix E: Example Copy of Time-graph
## Appendix F: Case Profiles (32)

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**Snapshot of founder:**

A mother of two, who graduated in home economics and turned her interest for recipe testing into a successful business. Starting out as a consultant after a period of being ‘a stay at home mom’, she would assist companies in training staff or setting up facilities to test in house. At the same time she returned to university to take a Masters degree specialising in adult education and was never without at least three or four part time jobs.

The combination of consulting, teaching and presenting seminars gave her good exposure and built a reputation, and her decision to set up in business eventually resulted from two clients encouraging her to set up her own testing facility and guaranteeing her their business.

Continuing to teach in the mornings and work in her business in the afternoons she self-funded the setting up of the business and sought out the assistance of a business manager met through previous employment. This person was employed full time to set up, run and manage the business bringing expertise the founder realised she did not posses.

Full time engagement in the company only eventuated when the business manager moved away. As a result of coincidence and encouragement, two other components were added to the business which became profitable entities in their own right.

As the businesses grew she enrolled in a government program for women entrepreneurs and she described this as the point at which she perceived herself to be in business, as opposed to ‘playing at business’.

At the time of interview all three aspects of the organisation were growing successfully, and while she believed that no one person could replace her in the business she had reached the point of feeling free to be away from the office when she chose. She was happily settled with a new partner who gave his time and support to her and the business and she remained in frequent contact with her ex-husband who continued to encourage her endeavours and pass along business whenever possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>1 FT ; 3PT</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

Having left school and travelled to live in Europe for a year, 2CF returned to Canada, married, had two children and settled down to raise her family. After separating from her husband, she got a job to support herself and her four and five year old daughters.

With a job in a media production company she went to university to undertake a marketing program, and it was here that her energy and enthusiasm was noted and she was offered employment.

After a series of positions in industry, none, by her own admission lasting more than two or three years, she took a year off and enrolled in a career counselling program. Part of the program involved interviewing people in different industries and it was at one such meeting that she was given an insight into computer graphics.

Talking herself into a sales and marketing position with a typesetting and graphic art company ‘right across the street’, she refused traditional employment but undertook a consultancy role with the company providing her with office space and resources.

This start lead to her eventually setting up business from home, later growing into her own office premises and evolving into a company specialising in art direction for promotional materials. At the time of interview, one daughter had joined her in the business.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case ID</th>
<th>3</th>
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<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
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<td>University</td>
<td><strong>No. of employees</strong></td>
<td>29 FT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

A hobbyist as a kid, 3CM was always ‘fixing stuff’; instead of playing baseball he was building circuits in the basement. Once at university he founded the business that was to form the basis of his company – he had identified a niche in the marine industry and researched opportunities to service equipment over the summer vacations and used the income to fund the development of his own products.

Still at university, he began hiring other engineering grad students to develop his ideas and he set up his first premises. Once graduated, in computer science and engineering he entered the company full time, continuing the service aspect to ensure cash flow for the development side of the business.

Self employed from the outset, 3CM considered himself to be in business as soon as he received the first payment for his work. Once in the business full time he took on a partner with the hope of expanding the company with additional expertise and at that point got more serious about what the business would be. While the service aspect was seen as lucrative, it was also considered a distraction from the main goal of design and manufacturing so the decision was made to concentrate on the end goal.

Riding out some ups and downs, but with always the end goal in sight, the company required significant debt capital in the early years. Through trial and error, experimentation with distributorships and finally employing his own sales personnel, the design and development has lead to niche product development and significant company growth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>4</th>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

Born in Cyprus 4CF undertook four years of training in design and pattern making. On completing her qualification her father invested in her first design business. Still young, she met and married, closed the business and followed her husband to Canada to enable him to undertake a business degree.

On arrival she found employment in the clothing industry but left after three months. Threatening to return home to Cyprus she first revisited the centre for employment for immigrants where her luck changed when she ran into a past colleague. After listening to the situation he assisted 4CF to refocus and ‘somehow get into another business of my own’. This business she described as ‘not big business, but good enough to change direction and start to do something nice’.

Starting with design skills and sufficient basic knowledge to run the business which paid the rent and household bills, she steadily grew the business for three years before her husband joined her as business manager. The growth in the company resulted largely from her recognition of the fickle nature of the fashion industry and the benefit of having a small number of large clients requiring product of a consistently high standard. Taking advice from an industry colleague she moved towards engaging large corporate clients.

At this point of significant potential growth, she considered taking on a business partner and committed to moving to larger premises. The partnership did not eventuate and working to control the increased business, she lives with the regret of losing her first child during this period. However, not having a partner, she made the decision to reduce the scope of the business and bought a new building which was the home for her well established company at the time of interview.
Case ID | 5 | Country | Canada
---|---|---|---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | M | Age of company (years) | 20
Age (years) | 55 | Type of business | Service
Level of Education | University | No. of employees | 9 FT

Snapshot of founder:

Original enrolled in law at university, a change of career direction resulted from a vacation job conducting interviews for a small research company. The company was physically small enough that he got to experience all aspects of marketing research and found it a pleasant environment in which to work.

Having already experienced working in a lawyer’s office 5CM began to look at ways in which he could contribute in a more positive way to social outcomes through research. Not liking the option of an academic career and seeking greater independence, market research became an attractive option.

Having completed further vacation jobs and internships, 5CM received several offers of employment prior to graduation. Accepting a position in a large corporate, he remained there until the organisation was bought out by a large management consulting firm.

Being amongst the group of young managers opposed to the buy-out he recognised the need to move on and secured office space within another company, contracting his services to them and securing his own clients.

Joined by his sister he eventually moved to his own premises, moving an additional two times to firstly expand and then contract his business to concentrate largely on government work. This move resulted in a more profitable, if smaller organisation and a means of contributing to social outcomes without the need to enter politics, a move he had seriously considered.

At the time of interview the business had opened a second office in another city.
Case ID | 6 | Country | Canada
---|---|---|---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | F | Age of company (years) | 12
Age (years) | 47 | Type of business | Manufacturing
Level of Education | High School | No. of employees | 7 FT ; 5 PT

Snapshot of founder:

Born and raised in South Africa 6CF began employment as a dancer, moving into the cosmetics industry as a result of her interest in make-up honed during her short stage career. Working ‘all sides of the counter’, in sales administration, design and testing she identified the need for a piece of equipment that would assist customers to produce the same results as professionally applied make-up, but at that time did not follow through with her idea.

Married and with children, and teaching arts and crafts to keep busy, the decision was made to move to Canada, which, by her own admission, was a very difficult transition for her. Eventually, when the children began school, she resurrected her idea and, supported by her husband, decided to see what she could do with it. Starting from a cardboard and string model, she developed the design and learned the rest of her manufacturing knowledge by persuading producers to show her the ropes.

Once successful, working from a home office but with manufacturing and distributing outsourced, the product model was refined and a second product developed for the US and other export markets.

Bored again and looking for new challenges, 6CF started a new venture consulting to start-up companies. A particular aspect of this new business was working with individuals to improve their communication skills in order to better articulate their needs and access assistance.

At the time of interview 6CF was working out of new office premises which housed both businesses.
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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>3 FT</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

Arriving from Germany with his parents at the age of 5, 7CM went to work with a commercial photographic firm for a short period before leaving for a working holiday in the UK for two years. Although initially returning to work for his previous employer, he had made the decision while in England to start his own business.

On reflection he admits he should probably have been more ambitious and aimed and planned for greater growth in the early years. However, a study of other related businesses, including the opportunity to purchase two going concerns, gave rise to the realisation that he could maintain better profitability by remaining conservative and without the headaches of managing a large staff. He chose to build a property portfolio rather than expand the business.

Once married his wife joined him in the business and continues to be his business partner.

The business grew by reputation rather than by marketing. Remaining focussed on his niche speciality of commercial photography including aerial work, quality of product and astute pricing ensured he attracted and retained major corporate clients.

Believing that what goes around comes around his business frequently contributes its services free of charge to charitable organisations.
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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
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<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>3 FT ; 3PT</td>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

Having started and grown a successful technology business, 8CM found himself ‘taking his eye off the ball’ and failed to spot how the competition would overtake him.

After the demise of this first business he went back to university to undertake an MBA. During this period he became involved in sharing his experiences with other entrepreneurs.

Starting out again, but on a much smaller scale, 8CM divided his time between running his new company and consulting to other technology start-ups.
Case ID | 9 | Country | USA
--- | --- | --- | ---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study) | Gender | F | Age of company (years) | 4 |
Age (years) | 48 | Type of business | Service |
Level of Education | University | No. of employees | 2 FT ; 2PT |

**Snapshot of founder:**

With an undergraduate degree majoring in philosophy and French, but with an interest in stocks and shares developed as a result of investing an inheritance from her grandfather, 9USF to an adult education course (which she described as ‘very fluffy’) to better understand the stock market. What she came away with was the realisation that she really needed accounting knowledge in order to understand financial statements.

Enrolling in college level accounting whilst at the same time going to graduate school French (which she thought would be her future livelihood) she found herself arriving home to check out what had happened in the market. So she quit her higher degree studies and set about finding a job in an investment company.

After being employed by two companies over a period of five years, she was encouraged to enrol in an MBA by her second employer with the advice that to go anywhere in the industry she would need the qualification and the letters after name.

Realising the course would take almost seven years to complete part time and not prepared to sacrifice that time from her husband, she gave up her highly paid job to go back to school. On graduation she found employment, and after changing companies and rising to the level of partner she eventually made the break to form her own business following the merger of the firm.

She described the decision as being natural, her grandfather and other relatives having succeeded in business had given her an appreciation for self employment and she had always thought she would set out on her own someday – it just happened earlier in her life than expected. For two years she worked from home with her husband agreeing to carry the financial responsibility of running the household for a period of two years.

In just under two years she moved to the premises she occupied at the time of interview and was running a highly successful investment service operation, employing the best qualified people she could find.
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<td>No. of employees</td>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

Trained in finance, but describing himself as ‘a peddler’, 10US M took 6 months leave of absence from his employment in sales and marketing in a leading edge audio-technology company, to buy his father-in-law’s failing business. Preferring the challenge of self-employment, he never returned to his job.

Re-inventing the business and working its way out of inherited debts and unforseen liabilities, has seen the company develop into a niche manufacturing enterprise, with products and markets far removed from its origins and roots.

Specialising in giftware, the ability of 10USM to communicate and seek out opinion and assistance has assisted the company to find unique opportunities for product development in a market dominated by large players and cheaper imports.

With his wife as a partner in life and in the company, the business operates for four ten-hour days a week. In agreement with employees, everyone enjoys long week-ends every weekend.
Case ID | 11 | Country | USA
--- | --- | --- | ---
| Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | F | Age of company (years) | 18
Age (years) | 56 | Type of business | Manufacturing
Level of Education | University | No. of employees | 21 FT ; 6PT

**Snapshot of founder:**

Born of parents who believed in the value of a good education, and with a mother who was only the second woman to get a law degree from her university, 11USF was raised in an environment where ‘there was always a sense you could do whatever you put your mind to’.

Moving with her husband to Boston when the children were five and three years of age, she enrolled in an MBA and gave birth to their third child. Encouragement from the faculty chairman resulted in 11USF and her husband combining their skills to start their own company.

The contributions of each were described for the husband as: ‘a scientific technological background so he was not afraid of any of that’, and for herself: ‘I had only worked in voluntary organisations …. organising different programs and projects … so I had some knowledge of how you pull a team together to go forward’.

The business was founded on the adaptation by her husband of an existing technology. Unsure that they could build a company with such a specialised product, 11USF was teaching to generate income during start-up as well as administrating and marketing the new company; during this period she described herself as being ‘on 100% overload’.

At the time of interview, the business was in a growth phase, reaching out to new markets and had been profitable for over ten years.
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<th>Case ID</th>
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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
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<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>7 FT ; 1PT</td>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

Describing himself as of Lebanese descent and identifying the Lebanese as independent small business people, 12USM was raised in an environment where ‘the independence of having your own business was always with us from the beginning’.

Going through college and qualifying as a CPA, he found himself in the corporate world ‘never quite figuring out what it was I wanted to do. If you are a CPA and you don’t want to start a CPA practice, what do you do?’

Eventually he seized on an idea for a related business which would combine his CPA knowledge with providing assistance for retirement planning. He self-funded his move, literally walking out of employment one day and starting in business for himself the following Monday in the office space provided by a colleague. For the first two years he was able to use the resources of the host business which ‘took a lot of the overhead off my back’.

Adept in the financial side of the business, but lacking in sales experience, it was initially a slow road building up a client base. An initial experience of taking on a partner in the business was not successful and resulted in an amicable parting of the ways, but determination and a methodical approach to building up the practice made him appreciate he was ‘a good outside guy. If I had a good inside guy I would be better off’, eventually finding a good match.

Having separated prior to the start of the business, the main family connections were his two brothers who continue to remain close and a main sort of support, even now the business is well established and flourishing.
Case ID | 13 | Country | USA
---|---|---|---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | F | Age of company (years) | 15
Age (years) | 49 | Type of business | Service
Level of Education | College | No. of employees | 16 FT ; 4PT

Snapshot of founder:

This business emerged as a consequence of 13USF identifying that her husband was being cheated by his then business partner. Believing that her husband should go and work for somebody else, the realisation dawned that they had all the contacts from the previous business and they should set up in their own venture. The new business started in the garage of their house, where they stayed for two years.

Expanding the business by buying another going concern, the company rapidly expanded into new premises, a time described as ‘scary’. Joined initially by their daughter, who helped out by looking after the house duties while in college and later entered the business, the family now includes the son and son and daughter-in-laws.

Weathering the ups and downs of tinkering with different product ranges and moving from selling to everyone to identifying areas of specialist customers, 13USF has steered the business into a stable future.

Without the benefit of a college education in her early years she put herself through business school followed by a range of other business courses – all at night. Crediting her early learning and interest in politics to one of her first jobs which was working with the executive secretaries for the State Senate she toyed with the idea of entering politics, ‘I always thought I would go into politics – and then I thought, nah, forget it’.

At the time of interview the business was entering another growth phase and another ‘scary’ time for 13USF who was beginning to work on a retirement plan for herself and husband whilst securing the business for her children’s future.
<table>
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<th><strong>Case ID</strong></th>
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<td>University</td>
<td><strong>No. of employees</strong></td>
<td>15 FT ; 2PT</td>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

14USF describes herself as having a ‘background and undergraduate degree in sociology and I graduated college equipped to do nothing but be a keen observer’. Being able to type, she secured her first job as a secretary in a hospital where they did medical research and became more and more interested in that area.

Understanding she couldn’t get anywhere without further qualifications she went to graduate school in public health. Advised by her father to take the science major rather than the administration focus ‘because you can always go and do administration but you can’t go the other way’, she was encourage to progress beyond a masters degree and undertake a doctorate, ‘so times were good’.

Whilst at graduate school she met a person who was to become her second husband and with whom she would eventually set up and start a company specialising in a specific field of public health research, education and publishing.

The business was initially built upon the research contracts 14USF had underway when the company she was working for closed. During the two year period of working with the company that ceased business, 14USF had also identified an opportunity to start a summer training programme in their field of specialisation. Despite being discouraged by others, the combination of research contracts and summer training program resulted in ‘starting the business, not exactly planning to start a big business’.

Now completing work on research projects with national and international significance, 14USF is committed to staying in the business in order to fulfil her husband’s dream of editing a research journal, ‘I have to keep the business going so he can have his dream come true’. 
Case ID | 15 | Country | USA
--- | --- | --- | ---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | M | Age of company (years) | 3
Age (years) | 45 | Type of business | Service
Level of Education | University | No. of employees | 5 FT; 7PT

Snapshot of founder:

15USM spent the first fourteen years of his career running human service agencies, ‘large ones, small ones, start ups, turn around, all designed to advocate for and work with poor people and disadvantaged kids. Having done that for a long time I got cynical of what I was trying to do. I was getting tired, my kids were getting older and I needed to perhaps make more money. So I went into the for-profit world’.

With a degree in Clinical Science and hearing from others that perhaps his generalist skills learned ‘on the job’ were not the best preparation for entering the corporate world, 15USM decided a good transition would be to go into newspapers. Newspapers were seen as a for-profit community based business that impacts on the lives of the people living in the community, just as human services. Having inherited some money from his father and researched a number of options, he negotiated and subsequently purchased an interest in a company which with a published three weekly newspapers.

On becoming a partner in one of the papers, 15USM set about turning around and rebuilding the newspaper. Unable to purchase the company outright he left with the intent of buying a paper of his own. Instead he was asked to join a large firm in their public relations area and stayed for five years and it was there he met a colleague with whom he set up his current business.

The new business was based around the ethos of the two men who both wanted to run a profitable enterprise but do so by making a difference. Combining their complementary skills and seeking out key independent consultants, they aimed to build a niche business assisting large corporates to audit all aspects of their operations and evaluate the impact responsible practices have on certain financial dividends.

At the time of interview, the company had developed an auditing tool which was being trialled in a number of organisations and aimed at assisting businesses to quantify social responsibility against financial performance. This tool was leading the next stage of growth for the business.
Case ID | 16 | Country | USA
---|---|---|---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)  
Gender | M | Age of company (years) | 17  
Age (years) | 54 | Type of business | Manufacturing  
Level of Education | University | No. of employees | 30 FT

**Snapshot of founder:**

A passion for flying and initial training in the UK as an engineer resulted in 16USM starting up a small business making instruments for flying, whilst enrolled at Harvard Business School. On completing his degree he went full time in his business and took on his first employee. ‘Talk about a small business – this is really small. I never got above $300,000 a year but what was interesting about it was we actually became the largest in the world doing this. We exported all over the place’.

Not satisfied with the opportunities for growth and with a passion for technologies generally, 16USM sold his initial company and set about building a new one which developed technologies to solve problems associated with the need for cooling systems in computers. ‘We wound up growing like weeds’ with, at one stage, two of the largest developers comprising 100% of the business; ‘…a very dangerous position to be in …’.

Hit by the first Tech Crash of 1991 ‘…it was an interesting time ….. I mean, lose to 50% of your business in six weeks is pretty damn devastating. Few companies survived that cut back. We damn near didn’t’.

As a result of a strong research focus to his business, 16USM was able to survive the crash and had new developments to offer in the reshaped landscape, eventually growing his business back to and the exceeding its original capacity.

He attributes his ability to survive and innate fiscal conservatism to his experience of observing his father’s business demise. He thanks his father for showing him what not to do.
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<th>Case ID</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Type of business</strong></td>
<td>Man. / Service</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. of employees</strong></td>
<td>6 FT ; 5PT</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

Trained as a journalist but employed as a copywriter and PR consultant, 17 UKM was made redundant as a result of a major down-sizing in the industry generally. Offered a four day a month contract with a voluntary overseas organisation, 17UKM provided services that were a mix of publishing and PR.

As the number of projects and clients increased he essentially became a subcontracted copywriter for London design agencies, carry out his business from a purpose built home office.

After a period of four years working from home, the businesses reached a peak where it needed to either build a design resource or merge. After trying several permutations 17UKM merged with a design consultancy based in the area and had been used at various times as a subcontract copywriter. In the words of 17UKM ‘It was a venture of mixed fortune’.

Having formed a partnership and sliding into debt the two principals employed a consultant to identify key issues and efforts were made to find a way forward. The outcome was that 17UKM’s partner resigned the partnership, and 17UKM became an independent company again.

Carrying many of the issues personally ‘… and probably taking a lot of them home into the marriage which has broken up since…’, this period is described as ‘…isolated in terms of where I could actually resolve issues’.

Eventually after reaching out for assistance, the business stabilised and at the time of interview was back to its best capacity and anticipating yet another need to change.
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<th>18</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Level of Education</td>
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<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>2 FT</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

With a marketing background and working for an international group in the UK for 5 years, 18UKF saw an opportunity to work with internationally based companies to provide marketing services for their UK operations. She offered her services back to her original employer and freelanced to other companies, gradually building a portfolio of clients that, with one exception, were still her clients at the time of interview, some ten years later.

With no background in business, she embarked on her venture because she ‘thought it was a good idea - always wanted to do it’. Although there was a period which she describes as ‘an overlap’ where she continued to consult to and work from her previous employer’s premises, her external work prompted her to make the break and set up a home office.

Very soon she realised this was not an ideal situation and, knowing the local business enterprise centre offered subsidised office space, she quickly wrote her first business plan (a requirement of selection), successfully secured space, and immediately put her plan away in a drawer.

Finding the environment restrictive and unable to connect with other businesses in the facility at the level of business achievement she had set for herself, 18UKF moved to separate rented accommodation and finally into a building which she converted into business facility and separate living premises.

Although able to communicate easily socially and in her work, openly admitting she was often called on to provide informal advice to others, 18UKF had found experiences of networking through business associations frustrating, drawing most of her information from books. With the passing of her father, she had been actively seeking a replacement ‘mentor’, a search that was still in progress some seven years later.
Case ID | 19 | Country | UK
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<td>No. of employees</td>
<td>1 FT ; 13PT</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

A teacher by profession, 19UKF started out ‘not working in a serious way because I had my family’. Selling their house and moving abroad, only to find the experience not to their liking, the family returned to the UK and had to get a large mortgage to purchase a house in a market which had seen the values of property rise significantly during their time overseas.

With a large family they settled for quantity rather than quality and 19UKF found herself back teaching to support the house payments. Returning to teach in a primary school, having previously taught secondary students, she found herself becoming increasingly interested in how young children learned language.

This interest, which she described as ‘a pet project and at the same time I thought I would combine that interest with earning a living’, resulted in the establishment of a language school for young children ‘… when I had no business knowledge. All I knew was how to add up’. With a design background she set about developing teaching materials, using the initial profits to firstly ease herself out of her employment in a school to teaching only for her school, and then to increase the number of people teaching for her to allow time for materials development.

At this stage her efforts were recognised by winning a small business award. Part of the prize was a program of courses with the Open University and for the first time she received some formal business training.

Passionate in her vision to grow the business she continued to develop the range of materials, translated them into three languages and expanded the school into a number of locations.

Understanding that she wanted to concentrate on the development and publishing side of the business, she undertook a route to franchise the operation. It was during this time that she encountered people who she found more hindrance than help. At the time of interview she was determinedly pursuing her objective and had at last found a connection to move her forward.
Snapshot of founder:

Looking at her life and deciding she had everything money couldn’t buy but few of the things money could, 20UKF was married with three children aged ten, eight and a one year old baby and wanted some real money. Primarily at that time she wanted a new car. It was a time where a lot of people in her social circle were doing extremely well running their own businesses ‘so there was a little bit of a touch of envy as well’. Having come from a background of working class parents who at one stage been extremely wealthy entrepreneurs, 20UKF took her idea of buying into a fashion-retail franchise straight to her father.

Encouraged by her parents to go into a similar business in her own right and guided by her father, 20UKF opened one store and had purchased her new car outright at the end of the first year.

With success going to her head she in turn franchised her operations only to find that, over a period of years the business grew in both turnover and profit and she was not longer having fun or the time to commit to her family.

Not foreseeing the falling stock market as a sign of trouble to come for her business, 20UKF continued to carry on with no real understanding of businesses principles - to this point she had achieved success without them. It was only when her previously amicable bank manager started to talk to her in a language she could no longer understand that she realised she needed advice beyond her parents.

Acceptance into a university business program led to many changes. Putting her new found knowledge to the test and returning her business to an even keel ‘…things seemed to be going very well but I was so bored. I just wanted to die’. So, encourage by her allocated mentor 20UKF applied and got a position which used a combination of her business experiences, business knowledge and a natural aptitude to ‘act’, and delivered management training programs.

The result in her own words was ‘.. there is no doubt it has taken my eye off the ball of my business’. At the time of interview she had returned to once again build up the operations, this time with a view of selling – but not before buying her dream car.
### Case ID: 21

<table>
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<tr>
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#### Descriptive information of founder (at time of study)

| Gender | M |
| Age (years) | 50 |
| Level of Education | University |

#### Descriptive information of business (at time of study)

| Age of company (years) | 8 |
| Type of business | Man. / Service |
| No. of employees | 17 FT ; 9PT |

#### Snapshot of founder:

An interest in avionics saw 21UKM start his career in the armed forces. It was during a long posting in South East Asia that 21UKM started his first business editing and publishing a pop music journal. ‘I was one of those people who was only allowed to work for so many hours per day, so from 1pm every day I had nothing to do and that was an anathema to me…’.

Linking up with a Chinese printer he built from scratch a magazine that grew to have the fifth largest distribution world-wide. As it burgeoned he became less involved, particularly when questions started to be asked about his second income stream and local taxes.

As a boy, his father had always encouraged him to play golf and a chance conversation on a golf course in Singapore and an invitation to a stranger to join him for a round of golf resulted in his second venture finding innovative ways of promoting and selling brand name golf clubs that manufacturers had difficulty in getting accepted into the market place.

Leaving the forces and finding it difficult for someone approaching 40 to find employment he returned to an engineering company that had turned him down for a position, asked to speak to the Board and, offering his services on a commission only basis, assisted in returning a significant profit to the organisation.

After moving from one company to another for a number of years 21UKM established two complementary businesses, one in the establishment and management of health care premises, in conjunction with his wife a nursing sister, and the second in the development of technologies to support independent living.

At the time of interview he was still playing recreational golf – always with the aim of winning.
<table>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

On completing his trade training and apprenticeship 22UKM had been invited to join his family’s business. Preferring to leave home and make his own way he moved to another area and worked for a variety of companies.

On the death of his father, he was requested to come home and run the family business. Again he declined but suggested he be allowed to wind up the venture and start afresh with his own business.

Although having never been involved in the management side of business, he learned quickly from the complexities of administering the closure of his father’s estate. Finding new premises and starting from scratch he found himself able to move relatively easily from the hands-on trade side of the business to being the owner-manager.

Running a successful enterprise, the next stage of growth was to decide on whether to consider franchising. He had enrolled in a university business program with the aim of feeling better informed regarding such decisions.
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

A record number of firsts (first to graduate in business studies from her college; first female management trainee in a large international company; only female in her class doing her Marketing Institute qualifications) all achieved while working full time, demonstrates the tenacity that 23UKF invested in her early career. Major cutbacks in employment saw her made redundant… ‘I had a large gin and a small cry, and then I felt better’.

Among other competencies, 23UKF was fluent in several languages so she saw an opportunity to apply her marketing and language skills and offer her services to an export company, designing and translating their product brochures. Believing if she could do it with one company she could do it with others she made an appointment for a consultation with the local business enterprise centre but preferring to spend her small amount of money on a holiday than stay and write a business plan, she left or a period in Spain.

Having given further consideration to her ideas, she turned to her father for advice. Starting from home she had success in business, but little success in finding and retaining staff … ‘at that time I looked up psychological profiles of me to see what it was in me that was making all these people leave. I know what it is in me that makes all these people leave. It is what makes me an entrepreneur as well. You know? If you can’t stand the pace, get out of the kitchen!’ Settling on an assistant whose response was to laugh when shown the profile at interview, that person was still with her at the time of interview.

The business subsequently grew significantly and moved to independent premises and most work is sub-contracted to independent contractors, a solution which has overcome the need to continuously replace employees.
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**Snapshot of founder:**

Merging two businesses into one just prior to the time of interview, 24UKM was again looking to grow his business in the design, production and installations of household fittings.

Starting out as an apprentice carpenter, 24UKM worked his way up through the trades ranks into management, eventually achieving the position of regional manager. Always at the back of his mind however, was the realisation that while he was paid a good salary, he wasn’t making money and the only way to change that was to work for himself. ‘I left that company after 12 years with all the knowledge I picked up from them so I will always be grateful to that company and decided to do my own thing.’

Walking away from his job, but with no preparation other than talking to previous clients in his home town, 24UKM set about starting his own venture. Gradually branching into two businesses both associated with his name, and with his son now employed in the business with him, 24UKM had recognised the need to gradually separate his personal identity from the company brand in order to allow either a legacy for his son or a saleable venture for his retirement. This next growth phase was underway at the time of interview.
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<td>20 FT; 2PT</td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

25AUSF’s working life began as a secretary, a career that lasted for 20 years. During this period she worked in different countries ‘I just worked to travel basically’, and eventually ‘ended up in the US, married and with a child and found there that secretaries weren’t, as I grew older and greyer and not as trim, secretaries are not treated well’.

Setting out to find herself a new direction she started training in early childhood education. This was in Washington DC. Initially starting her studies full time, but finishing them part time due to the need to generate income for the household when her husband lost his job, she finished her qualifications and began a small child care business in her home.

Eventually she returned home to Australia, for the first time in ten years, although to live in a new city.

For the first six months she networked her way into the state childcare industry, undertaking voluntary work, looked at every childcare facility she could find and got to meet people in training accreditation positions.

Accepting a position in a large child care centre in order to learn the administrative requirements of such a business, 25AUSF set about finding premises and weaving her way through the ‘bureaucratic stuff’, thinking it would take about nine months. Two and a half years later, she opened the doors to her first centre and three years after that her second. At the time of interview she was looking forward to consolidating the niche she had established for her centres, with their emphasis on multi-cultural learning and languages, and giving some thought to franchising.
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**Snapshot of founder:**

After completing a traineeship as a printer and working for the same company for three years, 26AUSM ‘… left the trade and mucked about for six months and did truck driving and things like that’.

Returning to his trade he joined a company where he met his future business partner, a man ten years older and with a senior position in the organisation. Informally sharing his thoughts of buying his own business and when asked what he was going to do, 26AUSM replied ‘…funnily enough, I am thinking of buying a chicken farm!’ Admitting that he too was looking for a move, his colleague suggested they look at the possibility of starting a venture together in a business which would combine their skills.

At the time of interview, some eleven years after starting and running a successful print business, and despite finding a specialist niche in printing fine books, 26AUSM was again contemplating the future of the business with his partner.

With the constant pressure and expense of technology upgrades and increasing competition from off-shore publishing facilities, 26AUSM was given serious consideration as to what his next venture might be.
Case ID | Country
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27 | Australia

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Snapshot of founder:

Danish by birth, 27AUSM completed a four year apprenticeship in radio and television prior to enlisting in the Technical Corps of the armed forces. Because of his prior training he entered as a sergeant and remained for three years and credits this time for expanding his communications knowledge. During this period he also undertook university courses towards a degree but, finding it too boring, made the decision to go to America with a mate on completion of his commission.

Landing in Sydney and gaining employment with the Sony Corporation, he describes this as a ‘… huge period of my life.

Persuaded by an inventor to assist him translate his idea into a commercial reality, 27AUSM eventually left employment, took a colleague technician with him and started his first venture. Working out of their garages and supporting themselves by mowing lawns and landscaping, the business gradually grew. The partnership however did not and 27AUSM bought his partner out and went on alone. Realising that relying on one product was a recipe for disaster, 27AUSM developed a second product for a company who remains a client to this day.

Despite now formally being established with his own company, 27AUSM has always considered himself to be in business. ‘I have always been in the electronics business. I have always done R & D. I have always designed product, made things. So there is some sardonic streak in me that forced me to be a wheeler/dealer I think. In fact I have always been a wheeler/dealer…’.

Understanding his weakness for taking risks with new ideas which at one time almost cost him his house, 27AUSM now has two very separate businesses, one concentrating on the core developments for markets developed from the original electronics business, and a second company to handle opportunistic inventions. Diversifying the products and markets within the core business to cover for unforeseen seasonal downturns in sales, 27AUSM was looking at freeing himself from the day to day business declaring ‘I want to climb Mount Kilimanjaro for instance before I get crutches and a wheel chair.’
Case ID | 28 | Country | Australia
---|---|---|---
Descriptive information of founder (at time of study) | Descriptive information of business (at time of study)
Gender | M | Age of company (years) | 22
Age (years) | 52 | Type of business | Service
Level of Education | High School | No. of employees | 1 0FT ; 1PT

**Snapshot of founder:**

Returning from overseas with five children and with insufficient income coming in from her husband’s employment as a teacher, 28AUSF was unable to get out into the workforce to make money.

At home her greatest problem was people coming home unexpectedly and the house in a mess, so she got to thinking it would be wonderful to have someone fly in and do the housework. Knowing nothing about business she put an advertisement in the paper and set up a list of on-call cleaners and then followed with a second advertisement for clients.

Without leaving the house (she didn’t own a car) she started up the business, not realising she had to be registered and only finding out about her error when an employment agency called asking if she had an employment agent’s license. ‘This was my first knowledge that there was any sort of red tape associated with running a little business.’

Growing quickly; the business went from one room in the house and then down the garden into a big shed and began running it as an office. Describing those early years as ‘just an interest’, the business expanded rapidly to the extent that initially, almost all she earned was spent on child care.

As the business became more and more profitable 28AUSF moved her office firstly into the city CBD, because that was what she thought was expected of a well established business, and then into newly purchased premises in the suburbs.

Describing the business as still growing, and with aspirations to continue on a growth pathway, at the time of interview 28AUSF ‘s comment to other women was to ‘... think big, think that you want to be rich ..... because all of those little home industries can be made bigger.’
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<td>No. of employees</td>
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</table>

**Snapshot of founder:**

A trained tradesman specialising in vehicle panel and paint, 29AUSM took leave from his employment to travel overseas. Realising he would never get rich working for someone else he set himself the goal of starting his own business on returning home.

Having found a place suitable for a workshop, he was supported initially by his landlord who allowed him to pay on a month-by-month basis and provided him with second-hand equipment while he found his feet.

After successfully finding his place in the market 29AUSM described his position at the time of interview as ‘I’ve grown, but I’m sitting for the moment’.

Sitting however was not what he was actually doing. Competitive by nature and nominating his mother as the source of his natural drive, 29AUSM always wanted ‘... even from my school and in sport I have always wanted to be in the first three, I didn’t want to be in the last ten or whatever.’

This love of sport and his high achievement in the martial arts saw him start and run a karate school as second business in parallel with his first venture.
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**Snapshot of founder:**

With a first degree in mathematics 30AUSF ended up working in market research. While interesting, it wasn’t very challenging ‘... so that certainly wasn’t going to be my career.’

Moving from the east to the west coast of Australia provided her with the opportunity to re-think future directions. ‘So I suppose I did the thing that most people did – just poured through the newspaper and applied for everything that was around.’ That process resulted in a technical research position in medicine. ‘So I did that for a little while. And then I realised I really liked the medical area.’

Not wanting to spend another ten years studying medicine, 30AUSF enrolled in a program that would allow here to research in a specialist area of reproductive medicine.

This move was to see her firstly set up in private practice but eventually to take over a private research facility, partnering with a medical director.

Running as a medical research institute the facility is a private operation housed within a public hospital. Liking the business focus 30AUSF has been considering enrolling in an MBA, but at the time of interview was reluctant to embark on yet more long term study.
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**Snapshot of founder:**

31AUSM described his entry to business as being ‘... thrust upon me one day ... I was made redundant.’ Working as the marketing manager for a British subsidiary of a large Belgian company 31AUSM found himself being in the position of being unemployed but able to contract his services back to his previous employer.

Operating initially as ‘a one man band and making heaps of money’, he developed the urge to move to Australia. Despite the two years of operating as a sole trader, 31AUSM assumed that his future was in an employed position. Job focussed, he wrote to a lot of Australian companies seeking a position.

Serendipitously, an application to what he thought was a public relations company turned out to be a case of cultural mis-translation but the company 31AUSM had applied to said they had been thinking of starting a PR side to their business. Out of this came the opportunity to ‘... set up a business with somebody with a bit behind me’.

The new company was established and ‘... so we boomed along and we grew without applying any real management disciplines........ and we got very big. At this stage the business was a partnership.

Hitting the bump in the road called a slowing economy, the company scaled down for a period, only to emerge leaner and far more profitable.
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<td><strong>No. of employees</strong></td>
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**Snapshot of founder:**

Beginning her interview by saying ‘... I think probably I was born pushy’, 32AUSF described her need for always ensuring she has ‘spare emergency money’. It has been a philosophy that has driven her approach to business.

Trained as an occupational therapist (thereby rebelling against her father who was insisting she pursue a career in law) and moving into sports management, 32AUSF first experienced her preference for working away from the public medical sector when she travelled on the international circuit managing an elite athlete. It was this that gave her the taste of doing something well enough to be a world first and the experience of ‘... how ugly it is to lose when everything is on the line.’

The idea for her business eventually came from a surgeon passing comment about only being able to get a particular product from overseas and why wasn’t someone making it locally. ‘It was like this little bomb went off in my head.’ Within two and a half months she had started the company that at the time of interview was competing internationally and winning national business awards.

Describing the early days, 32AUSF outlined her peers as the biggest hurdle for her company. The ‘tall poppy syndrome’ was alive and well and she had to develop strategies for bypassing and then winning over her detractors.

When speaking about how her knowledge has changed her approach to business she chose to highlight lag time, citing her experiences working with second and third year medical students in Singapore, knowing that the investment will be returned when they become registrars in hospitals and use her products by choice.

Her horizons are now five years, expanded from her initial expectation of five weeks.