

ENTREPRENEURIAL CROSS-MENTORING EXPERIENCES FROM GERMAN/AUSTRIAN PROJECTS

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Demographic change and globalization made the “war for talents” a strategic issue in Germany and highlights the fact that women have been an underestimated potential as leaders. Concurrently the idea of supporting entrepreneurial climate gained momentum and also drew attention on women. In this context mentoring is seen as means not only to qualify female managers but also to overcome gender related disadvantages in entrepreneurial settings. We present two German/Austrian cross-mentoring projects, focusing on female mentorées in which the specific effects of cross-mentoring for both, mentors and mentorées become visible. Characteristics of entrepreneurial mentoring as a specific form of cross-mentoring are lined out and the specific potential of cross-mentoring is analyzed. Based on this we suggest “Entrepreneurial Cross Mentoring” as a fresh approach.

DOMAIN OF THE STUDY

Following the myth, Telemachos, son of Odysseus, was educated by a scholar called Mentor in a very ideal way. But mentoring had female roots even then – however “under cover”. The “clear-eyed watching goddess Athene” helped Telemachos in critical situations in the shape of Mentor: “Pallas Athene came near to him, in shape and with the voice of Mentor. She turned to the youth and spoke: ‘In the future you will appear neither cowardly nor foolish...’” (Odyssey, Second Canto, line 267-270). She encourages Telemachos to prevail against the cheeky suitors of Penelope and helps him to start his most important journey and to succeed. Until today the word mentor stands for people who are respected and educated and who accompany and recommend young people responsibly. In German “Bildung” rather than “Erziehung” is connected with mentoring. “Bildung” means education and learning executed on initiative of the learner. It focuses on the process of holistic development of individuals by life-long learning in relations (Schiefer, 1998: 63 – 64). Concerning economy, mentoring is used as a tool to build up a referral system for leaders based on recommendation and support between an experienced leader and a junior protégé or mentoré.

“... the mentor identifies the protégé as representative of his or her past, whereas the protégé identifies the mentor as representative of his or her future.” (Ragins, 1997, p. 494)

Considering this, mentoring obtains aspects of “Sozialisation” (specific pattern of adaptation). The meaning of “Sozialisation” focuses on fitting into society on base of conscious and unconscious

processes lead by expectations and control-activities of partners. "Sozialisation" is characterized by incorporating values, norms and rites of the organizational culture (Schiefer, 1998, pp. 64 – 65). In this sense mentoring helps the mentoring pairs to balance autonomy and conformity.

Functions of Mentoring

Ragins distinguishes two primary types of functions which mentoring might provide (1997, p. 484 see also Kram, 1985 and Scandura, 1992). Career development includes e. g. coaching, providing challenging assignments, and protection. Psychosocial roles focus on personal support, acceptance and counseling. She includes role modeling into that area but concedes that it might be a third factor, distinct from personal support. De Janasz, Sullivan & Whiting distinguish role modeling as a specific function and relate the "Who am I"? – question of developing identity to the process of finding a fit between identity and career directions (2003).

Classic mentoring concepts focus on the mentorés' benefits (e.g. Kram, 1988, Bell, 2002), nevertheless mentors are also gainer of the relationship, especially on the psychosocial level:

"Yet a two-way flow of kindness, respect or giving can return much to the mentor." (Shea,1992: 66).

How much and what will return to the mentor depends on the diversity of the relationship and specifics of the situation, as Ragins shows just as she identifies different outcomes on the mentorés' side (1997, Ragins& Scandura, 1994, Ragins & Scandura, 1999, Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Career development effects (i.e. received compensation) will be reduced in relations, in which members of minorities are in the mentor's role. Thus, mentorés are well advised to work with a majority mentor pursuing a "strong tie strategy" (Brass et al. 2004, p. 799). On the other hand, role modeling and psychosocial functions are supposed to be stronger in homogenous relationships and in informal mentoring. Being member of a minority, forces the mentoré to choose a minority member as a mentor and do that informally, if psycho-social functions are the main goal. In addition to that, mentorés' outcomes are supposed to be stronger in homogeneous relations in which majorities are involved. That means, given the fact that minority status of the mentoré cannot be changed, in each case the outcome will not be optimal for minorities. Benefits of formal programs are higher for men than for women and the effectiveness has been reported as being low especially for female mentorées with male mentors (Ragins & Cotton, 1999, Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000).

Reflecting on these contradictory considerations, mentorés belonging to minorities find themselves in a dilemma that can only be solved by many different mentoring relationships, each of them providing a specific result. "Developmental alliance" (Hay, 1997) interpreted as long-term relationship between equals can be one of the mentoring relations.

Consequently de Janasz, Sullivan and Whiting suggest building "Intelligent Mentoring Networks":

“In sum, mentoring has become an effective means for coping with organizational change. A collection of mentors is invaluable, providing different perspectives, knowledge, and skills while serving multiple mentoring functions.” (de Janasz, Sullivan & Whiting, 2003, p. 81)

Mentors, having reached different career levels, are not meant as a series of unrelated individuals but supposed to form a dynamic network in which synergies can be realized “... to promote success and satisfaction in these complex and changing times” (de Janasz, Sullivan & Whiting 2003, p. 88). Caruso suggests also to deviate from the concept of a closed one-to-one relationship and to interpret mentoring as “a dispersed social activity” (1992, p. 77) including exogenous sources as well as sources within the organization:

“Mentoring relationships triggered by a protégé may cut across traditional organizational structures, functions and hierarchies. The totality of these relationships, rather than any one of them, might reasonably be viewed as the protégé’s mentoring relationship. The process and the substance of the relationship may be affected by the organizational structure and culture.” (Caruso 1992, p. 81)

Generally mentors gain a sense of generativity, satisfaction and fulfillment from their relationship with mentorés (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Taking a closer look, we find differences in outcomes due to their power position and the relation’s level of diversity (Ragins, 1997, Ragins, 1999).

Minority mentors are supposed to feel higher fulfillment when being a mentor to members of their own identity group and even more than majority mentors in each of both combinations. That means that on the psychosocial level minority mentors receive a high level of satisfaction. This effect does not continue on the level of peer and organizational recognition which is supposed to be related to the mentor’s career. Best results are found within the group of majority mentors in homogeneous relationships. If career functions dominate psychosocial functions in business mentoring, that bias will induce or strengthen a tendency to homogenous reproduction. Supporting similars might be the first choice of majority as long as the organization will not deliberately set signals against that tendency and shows recognition of “diverse” (cross-) mentoring. That tendency cannot be compensated just by setting up formal programs, as Ragins and Cotton show (1999), but requires a cultural environment which is characterized by valuing diversity (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Recently Allen and Eby showed the moderating effects of perceived similarity and duration of the relation on learning and quality of mentorship reported by mentors (2003). Following these results, one further requirement is that mentorship relations should be given enough time to overcome initial difficulties related to perceived dissimilarity.

Ragins proposes that mentors involved in diverse relations will gain a deeper understanding of differences and similarities and develop specific skills in diversity management. From that point of view learning of the mentor is highlighted. Conway suggests using mentoring as means of developing intercultural competence, an international perspective to form international networks (Conway, 1998, p.144): Additionally the effect of revitalizing interest in work and creative energizing are underlined (Murray, 1991).

Effects of mentoring are not limited to the relationship itself but extend to the organizational level and beyond. Higher commitment to career, bonding and development of talented individuals often are the reason why corporations use mentoring deliberately as a means of human resources management (Nemanick, 2000). The results of learning processes on both sides give rise to various benefits for the organization (Murray, 1991, Megginson & Clutterbuck 1995). Mentoring can be interpreted as a specific form of personnel development that produces connections to relevant actors, improved insights, and management competences in mentors and mentored. Moreover, some mentors are able to contribute to a cultural change towards an open, diversity-valuing organizational climate. This requires a supportive culture, thus being seen "... as both a prop and a reflection of culture." (Caruso, 1992, p. 122)

Thus, we can identify certain benefits of mentoring in respect of the involved individuals and the whole organization but have to study under which conditions the desired outcomes can be ensured.

Cross-Mentoring in Transition

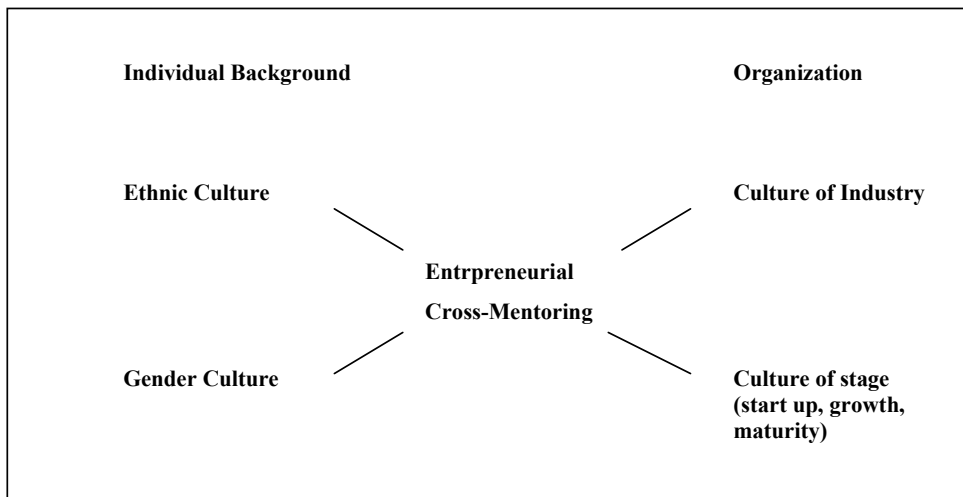
The term "cross" signals that this type of mentoring relationships crosses borders. These borders can be crossed on many organizational levels. Crossing corporations' borders is executed in classic external mentoring, which is assessed as becoming more important in future because of increased mobility and the necessity of lateral career moves between organizations (Ragins, 1999). For entrepreneurs in their start up phase that type of mentoring is the only one they can get access to.

We extend the concept of external mentoring to other forms of border crossing such as borders between identity groups, represented by gender, age, culture, nation, sexual orientation and physical abilities. Crossing these identity borders challenges both partners in a specific way. Thomas argues, members of the same identity group "...tend to develop similar world views" (1989: p. 159) and therefore require and meanwhile foster the ability to change perspectives together. Not every mentoring partner wants to reach this benchmark. That is why cross-identity-group mentoring and cross-organization mentoring go together as our good practices presented beneath will show.

Entrepreneurial mentors transmit rules and norms (of industries, of specific national economy) to their mentored, model styles of thinking and acting as well as they build contacts to relevant persons in business, politics, media, science etc. Furthermore, they are encouraging and give emotional support. Thus, entrepreneurial mentoring provides the classical functions of mentoring in specific forms particularly concerning career function no longer being focused on individual outcomes but rather on the prosperity of the mentored's business.

Characteristics of cross- (organization and/ or identity group) mentoring relationships are the following ones:

- "Otherness" of both partners is perceived as a resource and therefore kept maintained. Conformity is neither valued nor wanted. The mentored will not be moulded but engaged in learning – he or she leaves the role of a "patient" and reaches that of an "agent":

Figure 1: Cross-Mentoring: Building Relations between Cultures

“It is fundamentally different to view a person as an agent and not just as a “patient” – A person’s actions come to the fore: how she acts or refuses to act, and her motives for choosing one action over an other.” (Peter, 2003, p. 17)

- Both enter new rooms. They learn to utilize well known terrain but discover as well unknown space, i.e. decision making latitude while sharing experiences in the world of the other.
- Tension will emerge, because to resolve deep-level differences requires learning on both sides (van Vianen et al., 2004). Both have to work on conflict solution for shared views and values, considering social structures of constraint (Pete, 2004). The mentoré is given a “voice” to articulate his or her position more clearly as it often practiced in internal mentoring (Caruso, 1992). These tensions are also assessed as resources to initiate thinking in new ways and changing perspectives (Thomas, 1999).
- During the ongoing mentoring process, perspectives are supposed to change. Especially the mentor as the experienced and may be the individual with more routines is challenged to question his or her proven methods and rituals, while the mentoré is not just adapting but discussing the mentor’s practices.

Cross-mentoring in that sense needs a specific, supporting culture that reduces risks to mentor a member of a different identity group, especially if this group is perceived as less powerful in comparison to the own group. Such a diversity-orientated culture gets rid of prejudices and fosters openness and learning. In addition to differences, *perceived* similarity is necessary as a base on which shared meanings and trust can be built. Moreover, a long enough duration of relation is an important requirement to overcome initial difficulties of perceived dissimilarity (Allen & Eby, 2003).

We consider cross-mentoring as especially important with focus on three groups of performers. First, the development of entrepreneurs requires cross-mentoring between corporations. In this case cross-gender might or might not be appropriate considering the role-model function on the one hand and career functions on the other hand. Therefore, we will discuss two good practices representing both types below. Second, cross-mentoring is an important means to support female managers facing a glass-ceiling in their organizations (Ragins, 1999). Third, experienced leaders are a target group of cross-mentoring considering their potential to design and carry out new business strategies.. Awareness of cultural differences and an improved ability to cope with these differences concerning national cultures, gender cultures or corporate culture is a main task for each of the performers mentioned here (Papstein 2005a). Thus, we will discuss the potential of relationships deliberately matched under consideration of the mentor's learning in the closing part of this paper.

MENTORING IN PRACTICE: OVERVIEW ON THE ANALYZED PROJECTS

We give a short overview on the background of both mentoring projects and underline their characteristics. Then we describe features, processes, and results of these cross-mentoring projects in order to show on which experiences we base our conclusions.

Recently, demographic change requires new forms of “war for talents” as a strategic issue in Germany (Engelbrech, 2003) and highlights the fact that women have been an underestimated potential. Concurrently the idea of supporting entrepreneurial climate gained momentum and also drew attention on women. The German report of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2003 focused a special issue on women entrepreneurs stating:

“Potentials of starting enterprises by women are not realized yet by far. By a better use of the female potential to start up an enterprise a fresh impetus to innovation and employment could be given.” (Sternberg, Bergmann & Lückgen, 2004, p. 44. Translated by authors)

In this context mentoring is seen as means not only to qualify female managers but also to overcome gender related disadvantages in entrepreneurial settings, taking into consideration,

“... that entrepreneurship breeds entrepreneurship both at the individual level (see the positive impact of the presence of a role model in the family) and at the regional level” (Wagner 2004a: 10).

Mentoring programs should broaden and enhance the steps already taken by women entrepreneurs to develop their business. The relevance of role-model function in Germany is supposed to be extremely high for women entrepreneurs in order to overcome a gender-specific difference in risk aversion which is seen as a culturally bounded important reason not to become self-employed (Wagner 2004b, Wagner/Sternberg, 2004). That is why the close relationship to a successful entrepreneur in a trusted atmosphere provides young entrepreneurs with role-models, builds self-confidence and support in situations characterized by uncertainty. Therefore, mentoring programs focusing on women entrepreneurs recently became an important part of German and European entrepreneurial policy.

Thus, programs had been set up, supported by German and Austrian authorities as well as by European Union to foster women entrepreneurs by mentoring projects. In Germany 472 coaching initiatives, activities and projects have been created by and for women entrepreneurs (BMFSFJ, 2002). We analyze two “Good Practices” in which the authors had been involved and therefore can directly provide information and insights.

These two good practices are chosen because of their aptitude to be a model for future cross-mentoring projects not only targeting on women but also on men. Both are cross-business mentoring programs. MAP has been working cross-national as well as cross-gender and matched entrepreneurs with company owners and managers. Therefore MAP shows the highest degree of diversity in relationships while TWIN corporate cross-approach focusses particularly on entrepreneurs.

Table 1: Analyzed Projects

Project	National	Cross-borders	Female Mentorées	Male and Female Mentors	Female Mentors	Entrepreneurs	Managers
TWIN	Germany		At least 1 year of experience as entrepreneur,		At least 5 years experience as entrepreneur	Mentorée and Mentor	
MAP		Germany/Austria	1 to 5 year s of experience as entrepreneur,	Entrepreneurs and managers		Mentorées And Mentors	Mentors

ENTREPRENEURIAL MENTORING: GOOD PRACTICE TWIN

Features

TWIN means “two women win”. The project had been set up in 2001 by the Käte-Ahlmann-Foundation (related to the German Association of Women Entrepreneurs) and the Organisation for Innovative Employment Promotion. The project was financed by the Minister of Economy and Work of North-Rhine Westfalia and started in the Ruhr region which is characterized by a high unemployment rate and the need for structural change. During the initial project period of 24 months TWIN matched and accompanied nearly a hundred couples of young female entrepreneurs (at least one year after start up) and experienced female entrepreneurs. In 2004, TWIN overcame its status as a state project and works today all over Germany, financed primarily by private donations of female entrepreneurs and secondarily by fees.

The goal of TWIN is to support and stabilize the success of the young female entrepreneur. Sustainability of young firms, improvement of the entrepreneurial culture in Germany and strengthening of readiness of women to start an entrepreneurial career are goals related to the project which show that not only internal functions but also external ones had been taken into consideration.

Finding Mentors and Mentorées

Twin accepts only female mentors because of the program's focus on role-modeling. Mentors mostly come from the German Association of Women Entrepreneurs and have at least five successful years as entrepreneurs. Today, many of them have mentoring experience since about 80 percent of the mentors of the initial project phase agreed to be a mentor again. The new volunteers present themselves by way of a company portrait and are personally interviewed by the coordinating officer. These entrepreneurs volunteer as a mentor to a younger female entrepreneur on base of intrinsic motivation as evaluation results show (see below).

At first mentorées had been found by the way of presenting the project at regional information sessions and as a result of sending flyers to multipliers (e.g. consultants). Today, TWIN is well-known in Germany and applications come spontaneous from all parts of the country. The prospective mentorée has to present herself and her enterprise and should disclose her wishes and expectations. If the project manager gets the impression that expectations are not adequate or the enterprise is endangered, the young entrepreneur is rejected as a mentorée but sent to a consultant or coach.

Process

The foundation matches the mentorée with an appropriate mentor, avoiding by this potentially competitive situations. Thus, the partners normally will work in different business sectors. Both are invited to a common meeting in which information will be shared and goals of the relation fixed. At the end of the meeting, the mentor and the mentorée decide to start mentoring or to look for another partner. If they agree, both parties sign a contract in which confidentiality and voluntariness of the mentor's work are stated.

The mentoring relation is supposed to last for one year. If problems emerge, it can end earlier and be replaced by a different pairing. Two particular person had been installed to get in touch with mentors and mentorées, each one specializing on one group. If the process proceeds at least four personal meetings will take place. The first should be in the mentorée's office. Complementary telephone calls and emailing will be used to communicate. Mentorées are supposed to take the initiative to contact mentors.

Meetings do not only take place on an one-to-one level. Mentorées organize a "Stammtisch" (round table) and build their own network. The project-manager offers meetings twice a year in which presentations of experts concerning issues of common interest are integrated.

The initial project had been accompanied by an academic evaluation team. Questionnaires had been filled in at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the relation. A selected group of mentors and mentorées has been interviewed by phone. TWIN plans to reveal a long-term evaluation which shall analyze the outcomes emerging on a long term basis. That evaluation material shows positive effects of the project.

Results

The project results can be summed up citing the project coordinators:

- “TWIN made relations grow in which both partners won [...]
- TWIN made visible successful and experienced women as entrepreneurs who take over responsibility for the next generation.
- TWIN made a network grow that connects old and young and shows that entrepreneurial experience can be shared.
- TWIN made visible an entrepreneurial culture in which giving and taking, trust and openness are natural and success is a shared goal.” (G.i.B., 2004; , translated by authors)

Both, mentorées and mentors showed a high degree of satisfaction with the program. Only one mentorée answered that her expectations had not been met. Nevertheless, five mentors of 27 persons answering to the evaluation questionnaire in a first evaluation felt rather not satisfied with their mentorées. Differences in the interpretation of entrepreneurial role and engagement form a background to this. That point makes clear how important shared goals of the relationship are. Moreover, the relevance of shared values has to be noticed. The mentors show a distinct attitude towards entrepreneurship characterized by high commitment, priority on the enterprise, and long working hours. Seeing themselves primarily as role-models, some of the mentors wish to transfer their values. Thus, a desire to set up an enterprise as a part-time job has not been tolerated. On our opinion that could make sense but needs not to be reasonable in each case. As Moore shows, life and success of women entrepreneurs is extremely diverse (2000). That diversity should be secured and not destroyed by mentoring. In preparing mentors, matching the point of openness towards different patterns of entrepreneurial action should be stressed.

We cite some of the comments of the mentorées that show positive outcomes on the management competence and the prosperity of the business (career level) as well as psychosocial outcomes and role-modeling.

Some comments place particular emphasis on mentor’s business competences as an important part of the relation:

- Professional competence of my mentor
- Knowledge about business sector
- Trust, competence, sharing experiences
- Shared visions concerning managing the business.

High importance is given to the personal relation between mentor and mentorée :

- She inspired, no “to-do rules”
- The incredible empathy of my mentor
- Commitment of my mentor, sharing experiences.

- It was no “teacher-student relation”. Even if I probably did not know that much, I never got the feeling to be small and stupid.
- Merciless openness.

Mentors functioned as role-models as the following comments show:

- It is a benefit to have these women as role-models.
- It has been a benefit in personal as in business life.
- Many things have been lighted up in a new manner; I am profiting from my mentor’s experience and new horizons are continually opening.

On the mentor’s side trustful atmosphere, openness of the mentorée and the feeling to be useful dominate the reported impressions. Mentors value intelligence, problem-solving competence, personality of the mentorée and quality of the relation. Some of the comments show that learning had been a two-way-process:

- Openness and honesty of my mentorée who shared success with me.
- Valuing of both positions.
- Sharing experiences descending from different business sectors.
- Learning to know a completely different style of working and living.
- Mutual trust, my advice has been accepted but scrutinized.

Apparently, these mentors gained from the program a sense of fulfillment but also benefited by having a fresh view on their own business.

The mentors have been asked to assess TWIN as a program. The following comments indicate intrinsic motivation of the mentors. Generativity, sense of satisfaction to successfully volunteering, and a feeling of fulfillment are evident.

- I got the feeling being of use, they need advice from an “oldie”.
- To pass on experience and know how.
- Socially and from a feministic point of view important project.
- Because female networks are important.
- To vitalize a culture of support between women
- It is a pleasure for me to support young women entrepreneurs to build up their firms.

Conclusion

TWIN shows that cross-mentoring in the sense of cross-organization can produce good results on all functional levels. Second, it is apparent that not only mentorées gain new insights, but also mentors. One and probably the most important one of TWIN’s strengths is the optimal pool of female mentors related to the Käthe-Ahlman-Foundation. An other strength

is the conscientious selection of mentorées that prevents mismatching on the value-level in most cases. Concurrently, that leads to a certain limitation of the program. Evidently, there exists a particular image of entrepreneurship that evidently does not cover all facets of female entrepreneurship patterns. An improvement could be to deliberately search for mentors having followed individual paths themselves distant from the mainstream in order to offer a more diverse range of mentors.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MENTORING: GOOD PRACTICE MAP

Features

MAP is the abbreviation for “Mentoring as an Instrument of Personnel Development”. As a joint activity of the Bavarian Ministry of Employment, Integration of Families and Women and the Austrian Ministry of Economics and Employment, MAP has been co-sponsored by means out of the European Fund of Regional Development (EFFRE). Four non-profit organizations and one small enterprise acted as matching agencies. The Project lasted from 2002 till 2005.

MAP worked with two target groups: first, women who wanted to re-enter working life as employees after a career break, and second, women who started small businesses.. The basic mission of MAP is to improve the awareness of the hidden treasury of women’s work force in rural regions. The goal was to build up a support network to provide services for female entrepreneurs. In the following outline we report about the results of the project for female entrepreneurs.

The cooperation between mentors and mentorées focussed on the subject of “customer acquisition”. The premise was: “When one has customers one has market potential”. Customer-centered mentoring should stimulate to attract to new customers for the mentore s business and utilize customer acquisition as business strategy rather than a superficial PR tactic.

The mentors chosen for MAP are women *and* men from every state in Germany and Austria. The mentorées chosen for MAP are enterprise founders, i.e. women who ran their business one year after filing of their trade registration but have been no longer in business than five years. Thus, MAP is a pilot project for crossing organizational as well as national and gender borders.

Finding and Briefing Mentors and Mentorées

In the participating rural regions, where there was no infrastructure for training and counseling entrepreneurs, MAP had many difficulties to find mentorées. Excessive advertising in news papers and informing every regional business network helped to bring this project to public notice. The opportunity to get into a relation with a mentor was so unexpected for the female entrepreneurs that they needed to be encouraged to participate in MAP. The mentors were easily found because many experienced business managers and business owners eagerly volunteered to support the MAP target group.

The German matching agency provided the mentoring pairs with two facilitators. One was the advocate of the mentorée’s needs, the other one was the dialogue partner for the mentor’s demands. Every match offered was the result of a discussion between the two facilitators. Greedy expectations on the side of the mentorées (“a mentor is the one who helps me to break through

with my business”) and attitude to dominate by knowledge on the mentors’ side (“business strategies useful in global player organizations can be used as well in rural regions”) could be minimized through this intervention.

A total of 80 matches has been organized by the Austrian and German matching agencies.

Process

To strengthen the self awareness of the mentorées MAP facilitators tested carefully how mature their business ideas were for the markets they wanted to attract. Testing criteria were: First, how easy can customers get access to the services, second, which solution packages are actually offered (no single products and services), and third, how does the business idea create a new meaning of service. Mentorées learned to get a realistic picture of their market position.

While putting emphasis on the preparation of the potential partners, the actual matching has been quite easy. A written contract between mentorée and mentor included a commitment which described the level of customer centric approach the mentoring partnership should have.

Results

Due to the pioneering character of the project the mentoring partnership lasted in most cases not longer than six months. According to evaluation documents the MAP mentorées argued that they used their first experience with mentoring to clearly formulate their needs. After this first mentoring experience most of them felt ready to apply for a further mentorship. Short term mentorships forced the MAP mentors to find as quickly as possible a balance between the content level and the personal level.

A third of the matches have been cross border matches, showing cross-cultural differences even between neighbored nations. The German mentorées mentioned, how wonderful it was for them to talk about their private life situations as well as about business strategy. They thought that their Austrian mentors were more relaxed in switching back and forth between business and small talk. The Austrian mentorées were impressed by the intensity of strategic thinking of their German mentors.

A quarter of the matches show a male mentor and a female mentorée. Many mentorées demanded a male mentor. They thought that business is still a man’s world and were happy to learn from a successful idol. Other mentorées demanded a female mentor to feel free to talk about anxieties and feel more relaxed not to have to fight for respect.

Three quarters of the matches have been made between different industries. The mentorées out of the service category “adventure and tourism” dominated the sample. The ideal match, from the MAP point of view, was the match between contrasting industries. The reason is that in this case mentor and mentorée are not trapped to talk about the limitations and pitfalls of a common market. They are forced to think in terms of new business opportunities. The German matching agency in charge defined eight basic service categories which do not represent product branches or industries but the knowledge domain from which good solutions are invented for customers.

- Living: Designing furniture, buildings, living communities
- Knowledge sharing: Retrieving information, distributed and e-learning
- Staying health: Prevention, rescue, self controlled health
- Creating Jobs: new Organization models
- Safe communication: Data recovery, personal protection, facility management
- Experience without regret: Traveling
- Property: Money saving
- Mobility: Transporting, easy access to goods and people advice

Conclusions

MAP evaluation is based on six hypotheses:

The first hypothesis was that mentors prefer to use real work projects when working with mentorées. MAP mentors gave as feedback that they loved to work on a clear focus, in our case the customer acquisition. Mentors pointed out that they liked the professional preparation to understand the mentorées business idea in advance. For them this kind of briefing helped the mentorée to focus very fast on appropriate routes of business development. To find the right test of courage gave them a hard time, but inspired them to analyze their own way of doing business

The second hypothesis was that mentorées have an easier entry into their chosen markets when mentors teach them how to build and maintain business partnerships. In fact, MAP mentorées appreciated when they were invited to visit the mentors business communities.

An other important way of trust building was reported by those MAP mentorées who learned from their mentors how to negotiate the exchange of resources in a business partnership. They accepted the fact that doing business on their own is much harder than starting in a strategic alliance. For some MAP mentorées this point of view triggered an understanding of doing business. They wanted to remember it for their future business activities.

The third hypothesis was that mentorées choose a faster track for their business development trough the customer centered approach because they 1. identify new customer groups, 2. discover the unique core of the competency they offer and 3. implement product and/or service standards that are not so easily matched by the competition. MAP mentorées reported that mentors who insisted on defining the most beloved customers out of mentorée s perspective helped them to make a mind shift which ended up in consequently tailoring their whole business offer to customer needs.

In saturated markets mentorées' businesses find their position in market niches. Sometimes the struggle to find and keep the niche hinders the entrepreneurial appeal of entrepreneurs, for example they loose faith in their ability to combine products and service in a new way. Mentoring helps them to keep track and overcome moments of doubt.

The fourth hypothesis was that mentorées who enter a mentorship after their first stage of professionalising their business take the most valuable impulses. MAP mentorées who have been in an early stage of business development reported less satisfaction with the inputs of their mentors compared to mentorées who have managed first waves of roll back.

We see mentoring as a “kings’s and queens discipline” of business relationship. A mentor is not just a confident, who assists to take a next step and choose direction. MAP results teach us that this powerful instrument of communication is of excellent use if mentorées are willing to work on extraordinary tasks.

The fifth hypothesis was that mentors who chose a mentorée out of a business sector important for their own business become motivated to create new services for their own customers. Surprisingly MAP mentors reported that mentorées who worked in different industries also taught them to think about new customers and business fields.

The sixth hypothesis was that mentorées who had been matched from a totally different industry in comparison to the mentor’s industry helped to inspire mentors to think in terms of markets and not of branches and their norms and limitations. MAP mentors mentioned in the interviews frankly that the best internal motivator for them to participate in MAP was the fact that the mentorées challenged them to rethink their own understanding of business success.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing two mentoring projects in Germany and Austria several lessons can be learnt.

Corporate cross-mentoring focused on mentorées outcomes, on psychosocial as well as on career development, makes it possible to reflect a companies’ personnel recruiting strategies and on the “war for talents”; enhancing productivity of management. Entrepreneurial cross-mentoring produced psychosocial effects emphasizing the aspect of role-modeling and showed important results on the improved management competence, especially on the strategic thinking and acting on the mentorée’s side. These projects found out that tangible effects on the mentor’s side can emerge as a result of cross-mentoring providing mentors with fresh insights concerning other organizations, markets, cultures, and challenging him or her to reflect on their own routines and attitudes.

Cross-mentoring can and must learn from diversity studies and diversity management in enterprises. The demographic key dimensions of diversity like gender, ethnicity and race, sexual orientation, age, and disability are today the ingredients of a best practice personal development policy of great places to work at and have become well established in these enterprises. However, diversity does not end with demographic characteristics: “Diversity refers to *any* mixture of items characterized by differences and similarities.” (Thomas, 1996, p. 5) Consequently, German enterprises extend diversity management from identity groups to organizational groups (Hansen, 2003).

We suggest combining performance oriented mentoring (using the experience of the diversity based mentoring programs) with result oriented mentoring (like cross industry mentoring). This approach can integrate research of other knowledge domains like intercultural learning, growth of

enterprises etc. Internationally organized mentoring by transnational matching agencies can provide global players as well as small and medium sized firms with deeper insights in cultural requirements, improving their marketing as well as HRM. This changes the leaders' understanding of the consumers' needs and their understanding of the employees' needs in a globalized world (Papstein 2005b).

The cross industry mentoring approach completes the needed mixtures of diversities by helping enterprises to get further information on unknown markets as well as being challenged to reflect the home market, both processes being a base for creating market value. Furthermore, matching cross stages of firms' lifecycles trains managers of mature enterprises learn from young and small enterprises. As well business newcomers are valued much more for their brave initiatives to invent new products and services. Business contacts to high potential firms can be built and initiative of aware managers in mature organizations can be revitalized by cross-mentoring.

In our opinion, cross matching helps to create market intelligence, an attitude highly needed in a globally minded society and economy. Therefore, the ability to understand and cope with diversity in organizations and in their relevant markets should become a deliberate goal of mentoring programs. In these programs, matching criteria should consider individual traits and affiliation to specific identity groups but should also match between different stages of enterprise growth development, between core-markets and corporate culture.

If diversity management skills are important, two stages can be helpful, starting with a heterogeneous relationship to rise awareness and continuing with a homogenous relationship with the goal of skill building in security (Roberson, Kulik & Pepper, 2001). If the knowledge of new markets respective cultures or building relationships between young and mature enterprises are dominant aims, demographical dimensions of diversity might be integrated or avoided. That depends on experience and abilities particularly of the mentor and the features of the program.

The next decade of business mentoring should feel free to expand the concept from personal development of mentorés and diversity management to the development of entrepreneurial attitude, intercultural respectively inter-industrial skills and market intelligence in both partners. In a world that challenges people to think globally and act locally mentoring should be developed to become a powerful tool of intercultural dialogue between industries. Such use of mentoring can bring fresh air to bundle the efforts which have been brought up in the networks for different interest groups of diversity.

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