



Interreg Europe



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# WSX ENTERPRISE MENTOR- NET

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*WSX Enterprise/Hampshire/UK*

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## What is it?

## Business Mentoring- Direction- Support- Results

*‘A business mentoring service that helps business owners and directors support their own development and that of their business’.*

<https://www.wsxenterprise.co.uk/programmes/growing-your-business/mentoring/>

## **The problem addressed and the context which triggered the introduction of the practice**

- Set up in 2010 to provide a business support service through mentoring for SMEs in Hampshire, (support that wasn't available through any other low-cost route at the time).
- To provide a low-cost mentoring support service previously unavailable for start-ups/SMEs who were stuck and/or needed an independent but experienced and confidential ear and sounding board.
- Providing guidance and advice to help and encourage clients with the decision-making process to develop their business.

## How the practice reach its objectives and how it is implemented

The mentor-net scheme & different branded versions of the scheme are delivered by WSX Enterprise who have three main roles:

1. To attract, 'recruit' and manage mentors with the relevant background and experience
2. To market and promote the Mentor-Net scheme at every opportunity through the relevant stakeholder and business networks
3. To follow up leads/enquiries, match and set up the individual SME with the most appropriate Mentor.

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## Programme 1

Core' mentoring – 6 paid sessions, plus an initial session free of charge - an opportunity for the mentor to understand the business issues a client is facing and for both to determine if the relationship will work.

Currently £600 payable in monthly installments for 6 x 2 hour monthly mentoring sessions.

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## Programme 2

Branded Scheme: Stakeholders normally pay the cost for other different versions of branded schemes e.g.

Hampshire Cultural Trust, Air Land & Sea sector scheme,  
Inspiring Enterprise,

Aldershot Enterprise Centre offer of 6 free mentoring sessions as part of the package for new tenants. Worked with 26 businesses.

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## Main beneficiaries/stakeholders

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Any start up/early stage/SME; no sector or size band eligibility criteria

Business Support Stakeholders looking to use a branded version of the Mentor-Net service – i.e. draw on existing expertise

### Main Stakeholders:

WSX Enterprise – resources

**Volunteer Mentors** - from a wide range of backgrounds/sectors – highly experienced, running their own business to large multinational corporations at senior level.

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## Bank of Volunteer Mentors

All have a desire to give back something of what they've learned during their careers.

- No direct financial reward
- ✓ Expenses
- ✓ Development  
Support
- ✓ Seminars – Training Opportunities
- ✓ Vetted system



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## Funding, People & Financial Resources

- Staff
- Led by our CEO – day to day administration undertaken by Support administrator funded by WSX Enterprise, < 1 day a week.
- Promoted by WSX staff during natural opportunities & social media
  
- Systems & Processes needed:
- Recruit, select & induction of volunteer mentors  
Development
- Matching process, match the mentor to the client, monitor mentoring support & capture feedback etc.
  
- Volunteer Mentors
- Bank of mentors from different sector/business backgrounds

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## Why Good Practice

- ✓ Provides a public sector gap in the market for mentoring
- ✓ Highly experienced bank of volunteer mentors.
- ✓ Very good feedback & testimonials from clients
- ✓ Provides an additional branded version of the business support scheme for stakeholders
  
- ✓ Business benefits have ranged from better-managed businesses to increasingly confident leadership, **mentoring** is a very valuable and cost-effective way to develop business skills, and to address day-to-day and longer-term challenges.
  - WSX Mentor Net has mentored **> 500 businesses** since the programme started through successful mentor/client relationships
  - Have seen many businesses go from strength to strength.

## Challenges

- Although there are a huge amount of commercial coaching schemes, mentoring is still relatively low key, but has become more common place – lot of it free.
- uncertain economic climate, little if any conventional business support has led to low take up of the mentoring scheme, - despite low cost.  
Promotional activities - bottom line – starts up reluctant to pay for any service
- Getting regular updates on how the mentoring relationship is progressing, meetings held etc. - can be difficult.

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## Transfer Potential

- Practice, systems and processes easily transferred to other regions.
- Possible cultural issues regarding recruitment of volunteer mentors – who aren't paid for their time, so can be difficult to attract/recruit volunteers able to provide their services free of charge and from all age groups.

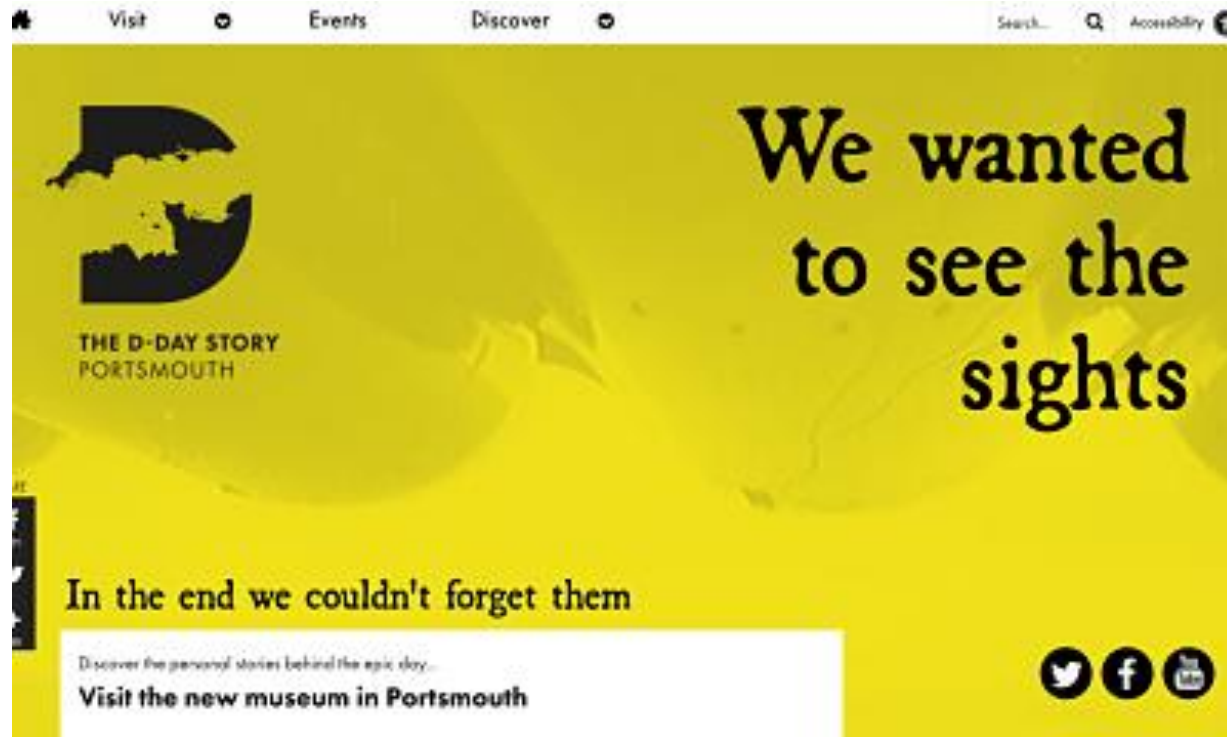
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- Steve Royffe –Mentor-Net Programme Mentor
- Background/Experience.
- Approach – Tools & Techniques
- Challenges

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- Steve Royffe –Mentor-Net Programme Mentor
- Successes
- The D Day Story



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- Steve Royffe –Mentor-Net Programme Mentor
- Mentoring – Future