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Reverse mentoring pilot concludes

A cross-sector pilot has “smashed unconscious bias”, writes *Rebecca Wooding* of ACE’s Progress Network.

Like all the best ideas, reverse mentoring is a simple concept. Turning the traditional mentoring model on its head, experienced colleagues are mentored by members of staff from either a younger generation, background or experience.

While many schemes focus on generational issues, such as differing understanding of technology and emerging business trends, reverse mentoring can also be used to help companies break through unconscious bias, reduce discrimination and positively improve workplace diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity or age.

Unlike in a conventional mentoring scheme there is mutual benefit to both the mentor and mentee. Whilst the mentee learns new skills and perspectives, the mentor gains valuable insights into company culture, business strategy and can tap into years of industry experience. All are key skills and knowledge for strengthening and diversifying the future of the work place.

A nine-month reverse mentoring pilot, which has just concluded, brought together 11 pairings across seven ACE member companies. The participants from Arcadis,

Welsh Assembly, Andy Falley.

Finally, on 24 April, Progress Network Scotland organised an informal “pre-launch” networking event at Brodies in Glasgow. The event galvanised interest in Scotland before a more substantial full launch event later this year.

Progress provides the opportunity to establish a strong network across the sector, share views and ideas, develop new skills and hear from influential organisations and people in the industry. Members are early career professionals in the industry across the full range of disciplines, including: civil, structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, lawyers, architects, accountants, project managers, cost consultants and more.

The Progress Network is enabled by ACE but managed by its members. Those interested in joining are encouraged to get in touch at aiyer@acenet.co.uk.

Anil Iyer is chief operating officer at ACE.



BWB, Mott MacDonald, Peter Brett Associates, Max Fordham, Tony Gee and WSP shared their experiences with the wider group over the period.

There is huge potential for reverse mentoring in our industry. It can help at an operational level and encourage the uptake of new technology and ideas, but it also has the capacity to help with career progression for the emerging generation of employees and can help us to bridge the industry’s skills gap. We found that our pilot had strengthened participant companies, allowed leaders to look at their organisations in new ways and had completely smashed pre-existing unconscious bias.

The full findings from ACE’s nine-month reverse mentoring pilot will be presented at the upcoming **Skills Summit** on 6 June 2018 at Marriott Grosvenor Square, London. A report with recommendations will also be produced to help other companies interested in introducing their own reverse mentoring programmes.

Rebecca Wooding is vice-chair of the Progress Network, ACE’s group for emerging industry leaders.

European CIO Conference

The second European CIO conference takes place on 20 June 2018 at the Royal Academy of Engineering, Prince Phillip House, London. The two-day event brings together the sector’s IT leaders with experts from the world of technology to discuss the major issues facing the sector, including digitisation, big data, and their impact in changing business models. Bentley Systems are the founder sponsors of this conference, alongside BST Global.

The keynote speaker is Eric Charran, chief architect of data and artificial intelligence at Microsoft. He will explore the innovative technologies powering the digital transformation and share his experiences of artificial and ambient intelligence, machine learning, advanced analytics and implementing these

technologies with clients across the globe.

Other sessions will feature speakers from international sector leaders including CMD Smith, Dar Group, Mott MacDonald, Multiconsult, Ramboll and WSP. Clients and technology providers will also discuss the issues from their perspective, while breakout sessions will allow attendees to drill down to topics of particular interest.

In between the full programme, there are ample opportunities for networking and a VIP evening dinner will take place at Le Balcon in St James’. This two-day conference is a must-attend for c-suite executives working in IT and digital delivery for large-scale infrastructure projects.

Tickets for this year’s European CIO conference are available now from www.acecio.co.uk

