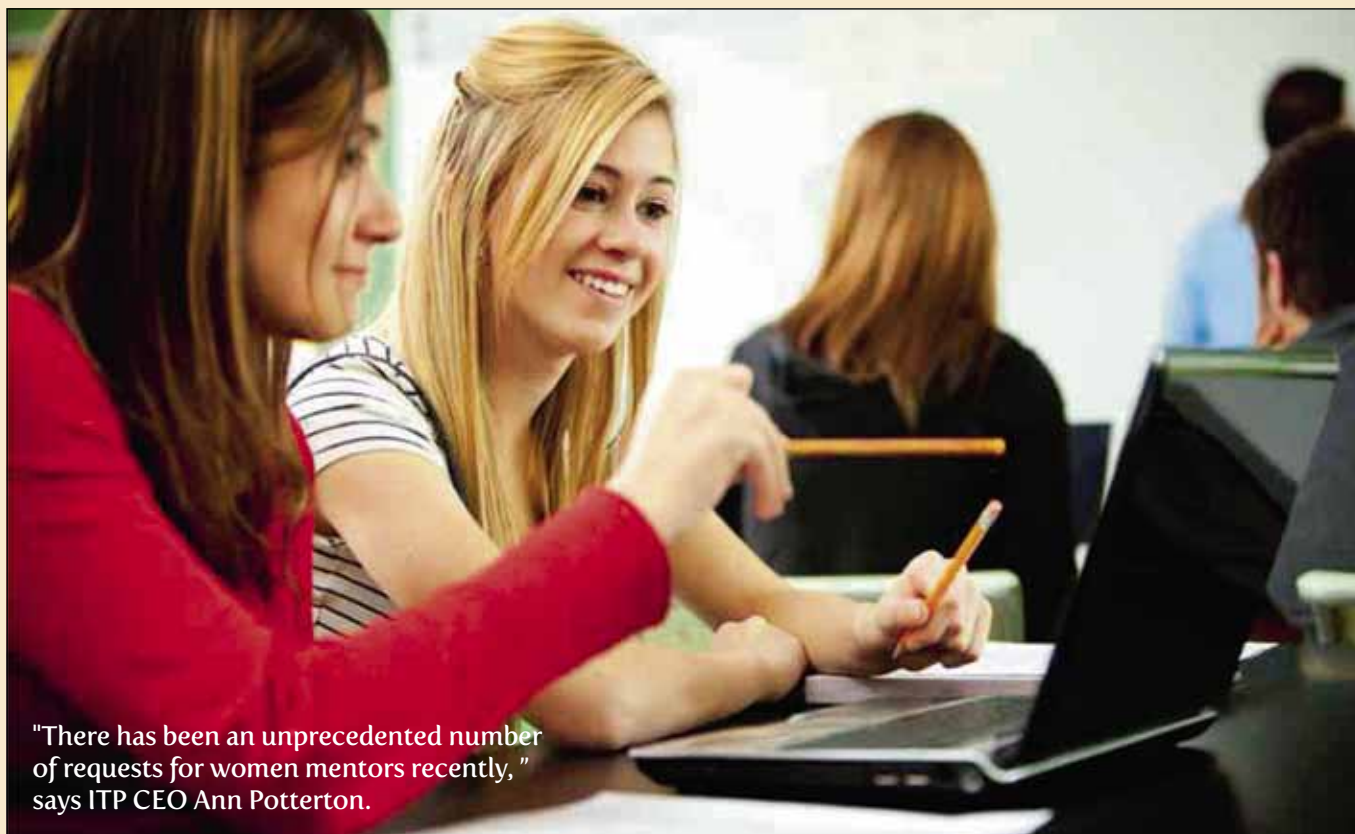


CALL TO ACTION:

TIME TO STEP UP TO MENTORING

Bringing in new blood to the telecoms industry – and then getting the best out of them – is a priority for the Institute of Telecommunications Professionals (ITP). ITP's new Chief

Executive, Ann Potterton, explains the value of mentoring, outlines how the programme works, and calls on members to get involved.



"There has been an unprecedented number of requests for women mentors recently," says ITP CEO Ann Potterton.

Mentoring is now a buzz word, with the likes of X-Factor and American Idol showcasing professionals taking contestants under their wings to nurture their talent. Similarly, entrepreneurs continue to plunge into TV's Dragons Den, hoping to surface with a mentor who will bring their connections, wisdom and funding to bear on their business venture.

Within the telecoms industry, the concept of mentoring is equally exciting, and something that the Institute of Telecommunications Professionals (ITP) has been championing for over five years, as Ann Potterton, ITP's new Chief Executive, explains.

"There are so many benefits for mentors and mentees when they are

engaged in a well-managed programme like the one that the ITP has been running since 2006," she says. "We are approached by people who want to be mentored at different stages in their careers, as well as by experienced mentors who want to give something back to the industry."

In the IT and telecoms world, attracting new talent has never been more important. With limited access to university places or funding, there is a need to enable newcomers to the sector to have the opportunity to learn from industry experts with vision and experience.

"Mentors report a great feeling of satisfaction watching their mentee grow and move on," says Potterton. "The mentee, meanwhile, gets a great start on their way up their chosen

career path. They grow in confidence using their mentor as a sounding board for new ideas. It's a genuinely symbiotic relationship."

Robert Adams, PSTN Project and Signalling Platform Manager, BT is a case in point.

"Having joined BT as an apprentice and being mentored by a number of individuals over the course of my career so far, I know just how beneficial the process can be," he said. "The ITP programme provided the chance for me to give something back. For both mentees that I've mentored I enjoyed the process immensely, allowing me to develop my own interpersonal and coaching skills whilst the mentee progresses. The cross-industry nature of the ITP programme is great



Ann Potterton

and provides the opportunity for both members of the relationship to gain insight into areas they would not necessarily see on a day to day basis.”

ITP has a clear process for matching professional skills with raw ambition, and once the mentor and mentee have been matched, it continues to play a supporting role.

“There has been an unprecedented number of requests for women mentors recently, so any experienced IT/Telecoms professionals who would like to work with a mentee should contact us. We'd be delighted to hear from anyone who wants to get involved,” she says.

WILL LYTTLE - MENTORING CASE STUDY

Will Lyttle was already a high achiever when he decided to join the ITP's mentoring scheme; he was ITP's Apprentice of the Year 2010, certified in Prince2 and had taken up a new role at BT Openreach.

“I really wanted to get clear career guidance and network with some very well-connected industry experts. I thought that the ITP mentoring programme would help me achieve all of that,” says Will. “I was looking for someone from outside BT who could give me a general overview, from a senior level, of what other avenues I could explore in the industry.”

Will, who achieved his BT Higher apprenticeship in 2010 and continues to study for his honours degree in engineering, was matched with mentor, Steve Tomkins, Head of International Roaming, Telefonica O2. Steve has

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

MENTEE

- Cross-industry mentoring
- Improves professional networks
- Confidential environment to seek advice
- Support in new job role
- Professional development, form of achievement
- Broadens skill sets and knowledge
- Provides a different dimension to current job role
- Outside perspective
- Improve self confidence
- Improve career development & prospects
- Stability during times of change

MENTOR

- Volunteer mentors entitled to six months free membership
- Opportunity to share skills & expertise with mentees & help develop individuals
- Enhance leadership & management skills
- Communication & listening skills
- Satisfaction through contributing to someone's development
- Wonderful opportunity to improve own learning

For further information about how to get involved with the ITP's mentoring programme, please contact Katy Bland on 01932 788861 or at mentoring@theitp.org or visit www.theitp.org

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Mentor Adrian Rham, Head of Applied Technology Centre (ATC)

Mentor Adrian Rham, Head of Applied Technology Centre (ATC) "I've been involved with the ITP Mentoring Programme for several years now," he says. "The initial training was well structured and provided an excellent overview of the mentoring process. Since then I've found involvement in mentoring very rewarding. Particularly challenging is striving to help people who are in different phases of their careers. It's always good to be able to help people a little and, with appropriate planning, I've not found the time commitment required difficult to manage."

Mentee Roger Bray, Production & Service Integration Manager, BT Operate

"Having a mentor has helped me immensely by having an unbiased and independent view on my career. It has helped me to gain a clearer direction in my professional life and identify what I would like to work towards in my next role. I now set aside time each week, fitting around my work commitments, to review my personal development plan and complete these actions. After my extended sick leave my confidence was low, through mentoring this has improved greatly and consequently I have been complemented several times on my interaction and involvement at team meetings. I would never have applied for the 'Managing Successful Programmes' course without the guidance from the ITP mentoring programme."

almost 40 years of experience in telecoms having started his career as a BT Apprentice.

Under Steve's guidance, and with regular face to face meetings and conference calls, Will created his personal development plan by identifying realistic short and long term goals in his career. The process of working with Steve has helped Will become more aware of his current skill sets and those skills he should develop to achieve his aspirations.

“One of the many benefits of working with Steve has been that my self-confidence at work has really

improved”, said Will. “I’ve got a real sense of direction in my career now – I’ve joined the BT Management Academy and I’m working towards a Level 1 Management position too.”

Steve is delighted to work with Will. “I found working together as part of the mentoring programme very rewarding. Offering guidance and sharing my experience with someone who wants to develop and learn certainly fits with my original intention to give something back. My own experience of the structure of the ITP mentoring programme has been excellent,” he says.