

Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program: Evaluation

Final Report

Submitted to

WorkInCulture

Submitted by

Nordicity

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1. Introduction

In this section, Nordicity presents the objectives of the Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program evaluation, followed by the methodological approach and steps taken to achieve those objectives.

1.1 Assignment objectives

In September 2011, WorkInCulture (WIC) launched its pilot Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program in partnership with the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC). The program aimed to identify senior talent from growth-oriented companies in the creative industry sectors (books, magazines, film/TV, commercial theatre, music, interactive). Once identified, this person was matched with a mentor from the creative industries and other sectors as appropriate to their needs. Throughout the course of the engagement, WIC provided coaching and workshops to ensure the establishment of solid working relationships. WIC's Program Director monitored the teams' progress over a period of 12 months of one-on-one mentoring and provided interim coaching as necessary.

The short-term desired outcome of the pilot project was for participants to emerge with enhanced entrepreneurship skills to help them to grow their businesses and commercialize their creative content in an increasingly global, digital world. As part of this project, WIC engaged Nordicity to conduct an evaluation of the pilot program and report its findings.

The findings reported in this evaluation are intended to help WIC assess this pilot program and to refine its mentorship project for future iterations by:

- Assessing the impact of the Mentorship Program on the creative industry companies that use the program (i.e. the mentorees); and
- Describing and documenting the delivery of the program by WIC.

Though this was a pilot program, with limited funding and a small sample cohort, the results of WIC's mentoring program are consistent with outcomes from other more extensive mentoring programs such as the MaRS Advisory Network.

1.2 Approach and methodology

Nordicity developed a phased approach in consultation with WIC in order to deliver the above-stated objectives. The approach is illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1 Nordicity's approach



“No one to turn to”

“Working for a small company, there is often no one to turn to with a long history in the industry so my mentor was able to provide valuable perspective that I might not have learned otherwise.”

Mentoree, 2012

- **Best practice identification and literature scan:** In addition to a literature scan of available mentor program evaluations, Nordicity interviewed Angela Pugh, the program manager of NESTA's Creative Business Mentorship Program (on which the WIC program was partly modelled). Ms. Pugh provided Nordicity with her perspective on the successful measurement and tracking of the NESTA mentorship program.
- **Development of the evaluation framework:** Based on its research, the above-described interview with the NESTA project manager and its knowledge of skills in the cultural industries, Nordicity developed an evaluation framework for the mentorship program. The framework includes indicators such as confidence levels, business networks, future outlook and quantitative results (e.g., new hires and new products launched). The full framework is available in Appendix A.
- **Design and deployment of three surveys:** To gather the framework data, Nordicity designed and deployed three web-based surveys over the course of the program: 1) *entrance*, 2) *mid-point* and 3) *exit*.
 - The *entrance* questionnaire asked mentorees to describe their current comfort-levels and aptitudes with various business activities (e.g. financial planning, digital marketing, etc.). The results from this survey form the foundation of the baseline data to which Nordicity compared the *exit* survey results.
 - The *exit* questionnaire asked mentorees to once again document their comfort-levels and aptitudes with the same business activities presented in the intake survey. Additionally, it asked mentorees to report on measurement criteria including new hires, strategic decision-making or structural changes to their firms that can be attributed to the Mentoring Program.

The *entrance* and *exit* survey questionnaires were delivered solely to mentorees.

- The *mid-point* (or "pulse-check") survey was designed to ascertain how participants felt about the communication level and administrative aspects of the program. Accordingly, the *mid-point* survey was delivered to both mentors and mentorees, just beyond the halfway point in the program. Summary results were presented to WIC at the *entrance* and *mid-point* stage.
- **Interviews with mentors:** Nordicity interviewed four mentors to complement the information gathered through the surveys of mentors and mentorees. To gain an understanding of their experience participating in the program, WIC wanted to ascertain the mentorship benefits experienced by the mentors (commonly known as reverse-mentorship).
- **Interviews with WIC:** As a pilot project, Nordicity and WIC agreed it would be wise to track and measure the execution of the program. In this way, key insights and recommendations could be captured for potential future iterations of the program. To this end, Nordicity interviewed WIC program managers to give them a chance to reflect on the how they allocated their time, problem-solved through issues as they arose, and what they might approach differently the next time around.
- **Analysis and reporting:** To analyze the survey results, Nordicity assigned scores to the rankings and compared mentorees' entrance and exit responses. In terms of attribution (i.e., the extent to which the positive and negative impacts can be ascribed to the mentoring program), Nordicity attributes the impacts to the mentoring experience if mentorees

volunteered a correlation. The testimonial boxes throughout this report help to illustrate the mentorees' perspectives on attribution.

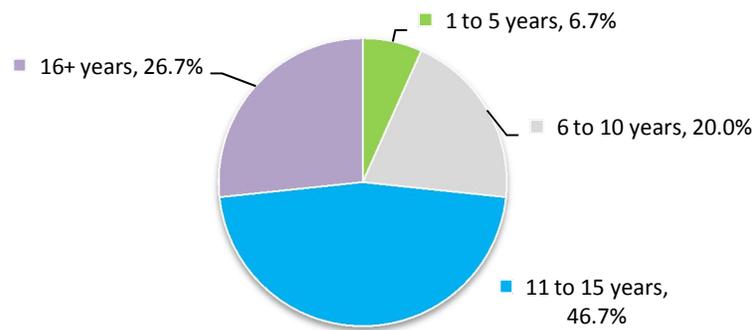
Nordicity provided summary results of the entrance and mid-point survey questionnaires to WIC. This document reports on the exit survey for the first time, and therefore enables the presentation of before and after comparative results

1.3 The mentorees

Fifteen mentorees entered WIC's Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Project. Thirteen mentorees were successfully matched with mentors from both within and outside each mentoree's cultural industry sub-sector. Of those 13 matches, 10 completed the year-long program. The "drop-out rate," in other words, was close to 25%. That being said, one of those matches was terminated due to illness and another because the mentoree's work situation changed into a role less compatible with the program. In other words, only one of the 13 matches (8%) was truly terminated due to non-compliance. WIC's approach to troubleshooting and problem-solving is summarized later in the report, including elements it would introduce to future iterations of the program to improve mentoree engagement.

The mentorees were an experienced group as depicted in the chart below.

Figure 2 Question: How many years of professional work experience do you have?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2011

As Figure 2 illustrates, the majority (74%) of *mentorees* had more than 11 years of professional experience upon entering the leadership mentoring project. Approximately 27% of mentorees had 10 or fewer years of experience. This cohort of mentorees is perhaps more experienced as compared to some other programs such as MaRS and NESTA.¹ The experience-level of the WIC mentoree cohort may be important to keep in mind in terms of interpreting the results in the following sections.

¹ The MaRS Advisory Network requires that clients be early-stage organizations and does not specify a minimum amount of work experience. "Want to become a MaRS client?." Retrieved Jan 2013: www.marsdd.com/working-with-mars/application. NESTA's Creative Business Mentor Network requires that a mentoree business have been in operation 18 months or more and is not an appropriate resource for start-ups. "FAQ's: Creative Business Mentor Network." Retrieved Jan 2013 from: nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/creative_economy/creative_business_mentor_network/assets/features/faqs_cbmn

2. Mentoree Benefits of the Leadership Mentoring Program

Two primary components of the program evaluation framework were aimed at assessing the impact of the program on 1) Confidence levels, and 2) Access to business networks. The results of the survey analysis are reported in the sub-sections below. In some cases, responses to open-ended survey questions have also been included for additional context.

2.1 Confidence levels

As described in the approach and methodology section, Nordicity and WIC tracked changes in levels of confidence in various skills areas. Research such as NESTA's evaluation report shows that it can be difficult to capture other more quantitative indicators such as new hires, increased revenue or cost savings over the course of a single year. Confidence levels, on the other hand, are a more practical and revealing indicator to measure in the short term and in terms of the direct impact of the mentor program.

Mentorees were asked to rate their confidence level in various skill areas on a scale of "Not at all Confident" (assigned a score of one) to "Extremely Confident" (assigned a score of five). The broad skills area categories were:

- Business and leadership skills
- Sales and marketing skills
- Creativity and innovation skills.

Respondents were asked to answer with particular focus on their confidence with these skills as they related to their cultural media business. The numbers reflected in the charts that follow represent the delta, or *change* in score from the mentorees' self-evaluations at the entrance and exit stages of the program.

2.1.1 Business and leadership skills

Business and leadership skills, as suggested by the title of the mentorship program, are urgently needed in the cultural and creative industries. It has been posited that some cultural industry leaders with artistic backgrounds must develop financial, Human Resource (HR) management and other skills far later in their careers as compared to other industries.² Organizations such as WIC work directly to develop, and facilitate the development, of business and leadership skills in Ontario's cultural industries.

The business and leadership skills indicators included in the evaluation framework were:

WIC Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program

"I have made great strides in association management skills, board relations and governance, membership relations, strategic planning, demographic change management."

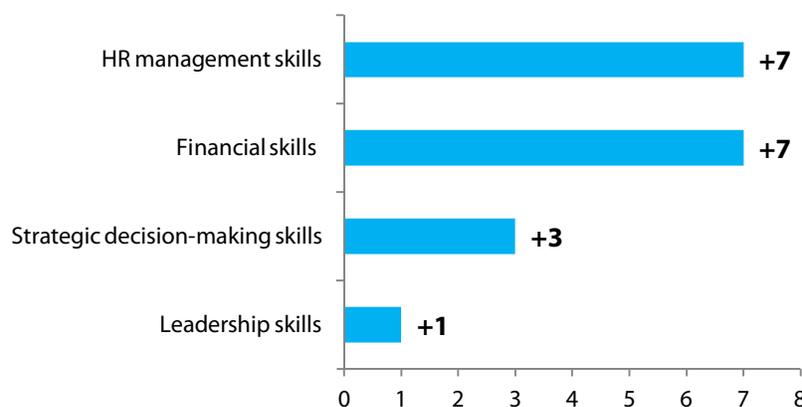
Mentoree, 2012

² "Ontario Entertainment and Creative Cluster Skills and Training Roadmap" (February 2011). Prepared by Cultural Careers Council Ontario (CCCO) in association with Nordicity and Digital Theory and Presented to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

- **Strategic decision-making skills** (e.g. decisions that affect the future of a business);
- **Leadership skills** (e.g. managing a team);
- **Financial skills** (e.g. budgeting, raising capital, managing cash flow and interacting with possible funders and/or investors); and,
- **HR management skills** (e.g. hiring and firing, career planning and goal-setting).

According to the survey results, and depicted in the figure below, mentorees experienced increased confidence levels across all four business and leadership skill sub-sets:

Figure 3 Business and leadership skills, mentoree self-evaluation



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

From the results presented in Figure 3, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees' exhibited the largest increase in confidence levels in "HR Management" and "Financial skills."
- While still a positive effect, the program had less of an impact on increasing confidence in strategic decision-making skills and on leadership skills.

The relatively lesser increase in leadership skills may be related to a range of factors. For example, as described above, the mentorees were an experienced group. Three quarters possessed over 11 years of professional experience. As such, for many, the greatest leaps in confidence, solely related to confidence in leadership skills, may be behind them. For others, it could also be a question of personal diffidence as certain individuals may be hesitant to overtly self-evaluate as strong leaders.

WIC Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program

"I learned that licensing my products can be relatively easy, and is mostly a sales effort with contract/legal details. I also learned several new ways to get a good deal on investment (getting good terms) and how to go about looking for and finding such opportunities (better than the average VC deal)."

Mentoree, 2012

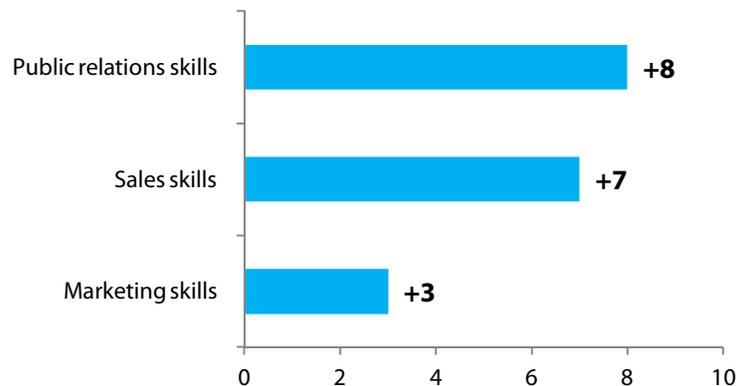
2.1.2 Sales and marketing skills

In an increasingly global marketplace with rapidly changing audience demographics (and the technology to reach audiences), cultural industry business require top-notch sales and marketing skills. The three sales and marketing skills indicators included in the evaluation framework were:

- **Marketing skills** (e.g. setting objectives, writing and executing a marketing plan, evaluating outcomes)
- **Public relations skills** (e.g. networking, writing a press release, media outreach)
- **Sales skills** (e.g. negotiating a deal or partnership, closing a sale)

According to the survey results, and depicted in the figure below, mentorees experienced increased confidence levels across all three sales and marketing skill sub-sets:

Figure 4 Sales and marketing skills, mentoree self-evaluation



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

From the results presented in Figure 4, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees departed the program feeling the most confident about their “Public relations skills” followed by their sales skills.

2.1.3 Creative and innovation skills

Creative thinking skills and the capacity for innovation are increasingly vital skills for cultural industry leaders to possess. In a rapidly changing cultural industry landscape, agility (i.e., the ability to problem solve and manage change) will be key factors in the success of businesses old and new. The three creativity and innovation skills indicators included in the evaluation framework were:

- **Capacity to innovate** (e.g. problem solving, trend-spotting)
- **Creative skills** (e.g. core content creation, creative thinking)

WIC Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program

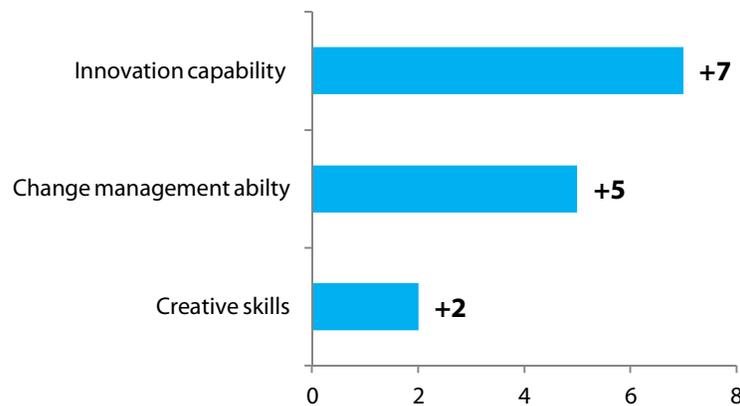
“The mentoring program was exceptionally helpful, and gave me the confidence to steer my organization through some extremely difficult circumstances.”

Mentoree, 2012

- **Change management ability** (e.g. coping with new business dynamics and frameworks - internal or external)

According to the survey results, and depicted in the figure below, mentorees experienced increased confidence levels across all three creativity and innovation skill sub-sets:

Figure 5 Creativity and innovation skills, mentoree self-evaluation



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

From the results presented in Figure 5, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees exited the program feeling the most confident about their capacity to innovate and their abilities in change management.
- The program had the least effect on mentorees' confidence in their "Creative skills." This result may reflect the fact that this group of mentorees is already very creative and was not looking specifically for creative skills building. In fact, many mentors and mentorees were matched across cultural industry sub-sectors in order to respond to the mentorees' specific needs as stated in the application process.

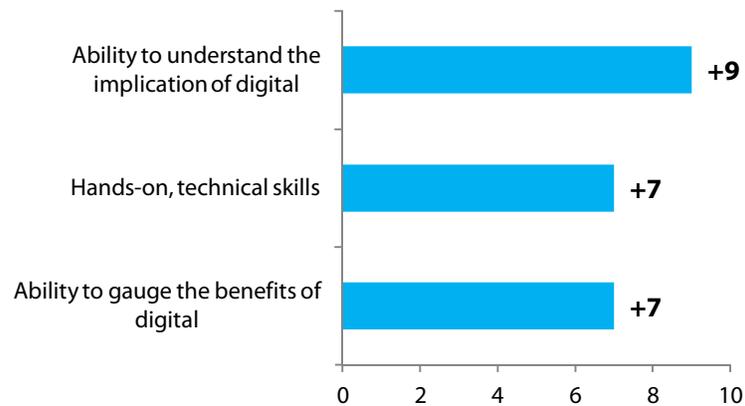
2.1.4 Digital skills

Strong digital skills (and confidence in one's digital skills) are not only important in and of themselves, but also in that digital permeates all aspects of "Business and leadership", "Sales and marketing" and "Creativity and innovation" today. Consider, for example, online marketing through social networks, customer relationship management tools or the ability to maximize the rewards of new online financial systems such as CADAC (Canadian Arts Data / Données sur les arts au Canada). With this reality in mind, the three digital skills indicators included in the evaluation framework were:

- **Ability to understand the current and future implications of digital technologies on a business** (e.g. new business models, value chain shifts as a result of digital transformation)
- **Ability to gauge the benefits of new digital technologies** (e.g. social media for business, cloud-based computing and user-generated content)
- **Hands-on, technical skills** (e.g. comfort accessing myriad online resources, conducting research online)

According to the survey results, and depicted in the figure below, mentorees experienced increased confidence levels across all three digital skill sub-sets:

Figure 6 Digital skills, mentoree self-evaluation



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

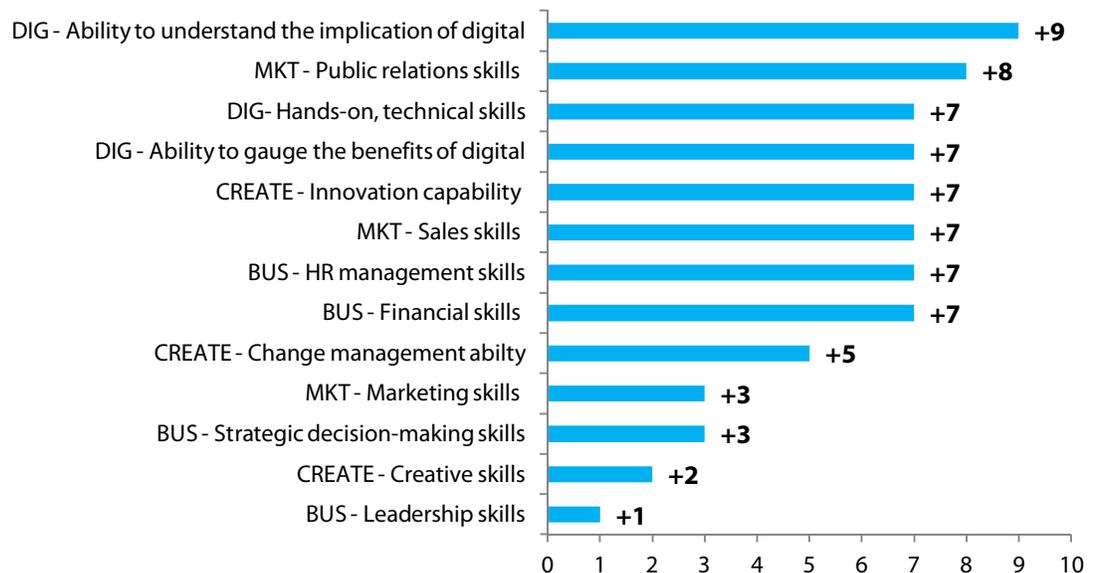
From the results presented in Figure 6, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees departed the program feeling the most confident about their “Ability to understand the implication of digital” and indeed, this skill sub-set experienced the biggest increase of all the skill areas surveyed.
- The program also had a positive impact on mentorees’ confidence in “Hands-on technical skills” and “Ability to gauge the benefits of digital.”
- Overall, confidence in the digital skills areas experienced the biggest impact of all three measurement categories over the course of the program.

2.1.5 Confidence levels - summary

It is also useful to examine the skill areas as whole, separate from their measurement categories, as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 7 Summary of mentoree skills confidence, self-evaluation



From the results presented in Figure 7, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees experienced a boost in confidence in all skill areas across all measurement categories between the start and finish of the program.
- “The ability to understand the implication of digital” experienced the greatest effect of all the skills areas surveyed.
- “Leadership skills” experienced the lowest change in confidence of all the skill areas surveyed, though a positive impact was evident.
- With regard to measurement categories overall, the greatest effects were experienced in confidence in the digital skills category, followed by sales and marketing. The lowest effect on confidence levels was experienced in the business skills measurement category.

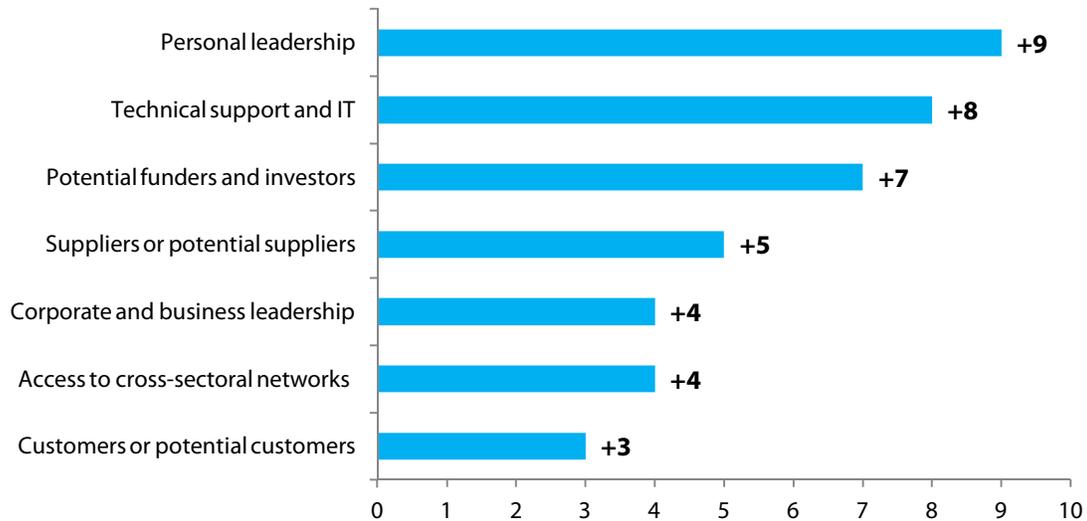
2.2 Access to business networks

WIC and Nordicity recognize that entrepreneurs rely increasingly on their personal and professional networks for business development (including introductions and sales leads), industry trends and insights on the competitive landscape. As a result, mentorees were asked to evaluate their access to networks at the beginning and end of their participation in the program. Respondents were asked to rate their access to personal and professional peer groups on a scale of “No Access” (assigned a score of one) to “Great/Easy Access” (assigned a score of five). The following example was provided to help respondents answer more easily: “If you have a question or dilemma in one of the following areas, how easy is it for you to contact someone who might be able to help (by phone, email, social network, or in person)?” With this example in mind, respondents rated their access to networks in terms of various business needs.

As with the previous section, the numbers reflected in the figure below represent the delta, or *change* in score from the mentorees’ self-evaluations at the entrance and exit stages of the program.

According to the survey results, and depicted in the figure below, mentorees experienced increased access to networks over the course of their interaction with the cultural industry mentorship evaluation program.

Figure 8 Access to networks (mentoree self-evaluation)



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

From the results presented in Figure 8, one can draw the following conclusions:

- Mentorees' network access with regards to "personal leadership" experienced the greatest increase of all the business needs. This result is particularly interesting when one considers that mentorees reported the lowest impact in leadership skills confidence but the greatest increase in personal networks was related to personal leadership.
- Mentorees' access in terms of "Technical support and IT" as well as "Potential funders and investors" also experienced significant increases, though the latter is still one of the lowest-served needs in terms of access to a support network;
- Though not a business need *per se* access to cross-sectoral networks is increasingly a key success factor in the cultural industries. Mentorees experienced a slight boost to their "Cross-sectoral networks" access.
- Mentorees' access to "Customers or potential customers" experienced the lowest increase over the course of the mentorship program.

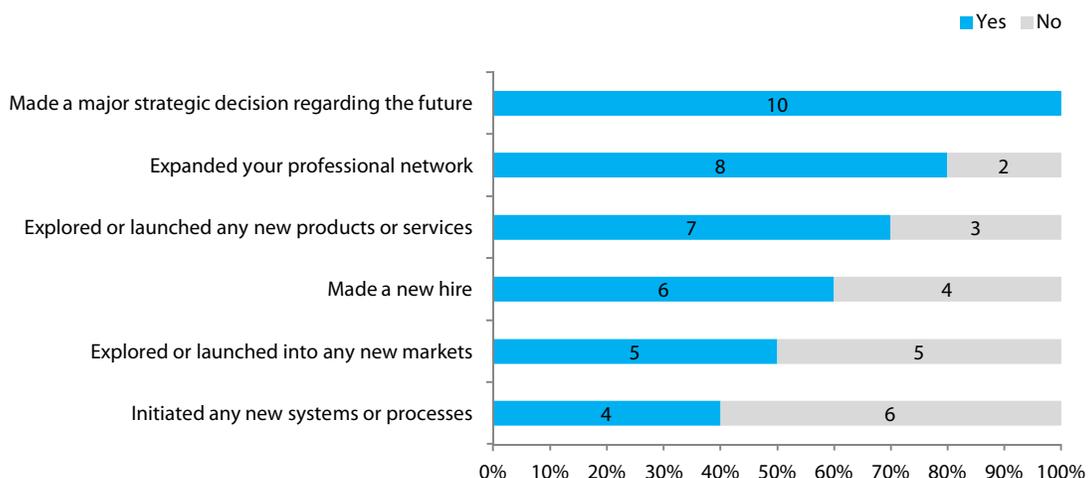
One survey respondent reflected that meeting the other mentors and mentorees involved in the program was in itself thought-provoking, "It was great to connect with people running many cultural organizations. There are many ways to collaborate with them on projects."

3. Quantitative Impacts and Outcomes

Assessing the quantitative impacts of a program such as the leadership mentoring program is a challenge for two primary reasons. First, for many small businesses a one year timeframe is too short to observe any great changes in revenue or headcount. The second difficulty relates to attributing the changes (e.g. increased revenue, new market development, new hires etc.) directly to the program. As described in the introduction to this report, Nordicity has had to account for attribution qualitatively, based on mentorees' feedback and voluntarily ascribing attribution to the experience of participating in the program. In many cases, such feedback is highlighted in grey boxes throughout the report.

Despite the attribution and timeframe challenges, however, Nordicity did ask mentorees to report on decisions, hires, company growth and/or contraction that occurred since the beginning of the mentoring relationship. The results from the exit survey are depicted in the figure below.

Figure 9 Quantitative impacts of the leadership mentoring program (mentoree self-evaluation)



Source: Nordicity survey to mentorees, 2012

From the results presented in Figure 9, one can draw the following conclusions:

- All mentorees (100%) reported making a strategic decision regarding the future.
- 80% of mentorees reported having expanded their professional network over the course of the program.
- Some 60% of mentorees made a new hire. Of those businesses that hired new staff, headcounts rose on average 13% (in some instances, new hires were made but the overall headcount stayed the same).

In the following sub-sections, Nordicity highlights the types of actions undertaken by mentorees over the past year.

Describe a major strategic decision you made in the past year

"We decided to seek funding for a huge organizational transformation project. The funding application was successful, in part as a result of the mentoring project."

Mentoree, 2012

3.1 Made a major strategic decision regarding the future of their business

Every one of the ten mentorees reported making “a major strategic decision regarding the future” of his or her business over the course of their involvement in the mentorship program. When asked to elaborate on the types of strategic decisions they made, mentorees described the following decisions:

- **Changed suppliers:** *e.g.* Changing a distributor or hiring an outside sales force;
- **Expanded programs/offerings:** *e.g.* Initiating new lines of business, developing national events (vs. local) as well as new academic partnerships;
- **Assessed new sources of revenue and/or funding:** *e.g.* Increasing efforts in fundraising and sponsorship, exploring new revenue streams including international partnerships and government funding such as the Canada Media Fund;
- **Recognized skills gaps:** *e.g.* Deciding to look for a business partner;
- **Re-focused on core business offering:** *e.g.* Renewed focus on developing IP rather than service-work for clients;
- **Conducted major strategic review:** *e.g.* Undertaking a complete strategic and operational overhaul of organization, including revamp of all existing areas of business and introducing new ones as well as exploring exit strategies.

3.2 Explored or launched new products, services or into new markets

Some 70% of respondents reported exploring or launching new products or services in the past year, while 50% had explored or launched into new markets. When asked to elaborate on the types of products, services and markets they were exploring, mentorees reported exploring and/or launching the following:

- **New access to consumers:** *e.g.* Developing direct to consumer retail capacity;
- **New forms of content creation and/or new content distribution methods:** *e.g.* Exploring new types of digital content such as user-generated, launching a new imprint and increasing frequency of audience outreach;
- **New capacities:** *e.g.* Increasing editorial, publicity and event coordination skills.

3.3 Initiated a new system or process

Some 40% of mentorees had initiated new systems or processes over the period of the mentoring program.

Describe new content or services launched in the past year

“We announced the launch of a beta version of our product at a conference and found several interested clients for it... We attended animation conferences and met with about 200 producers, broadcasters and distributors to gauge interest levels and make the connections for future sales efforts.”

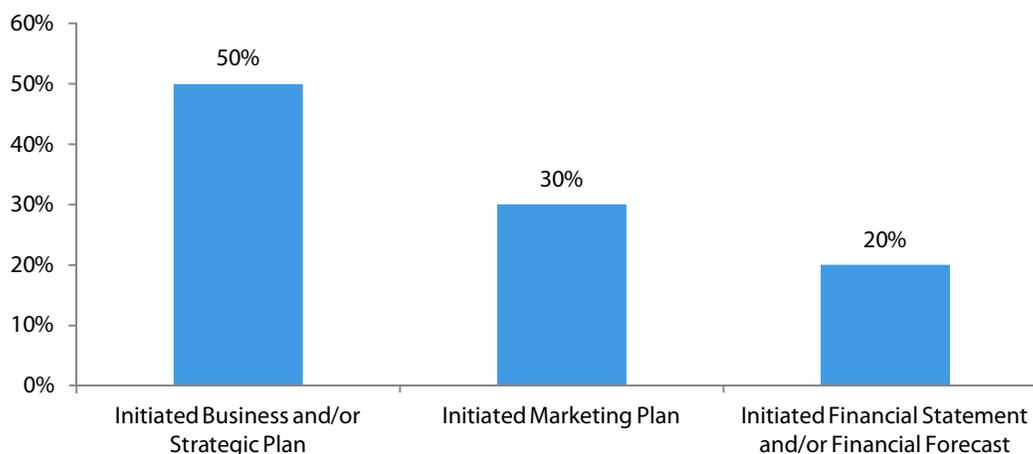
Mentoree, 2012

- **Refreshed an online presence and experimented with social media:** *e.g.* Introducing Twitter and Facebook feeds to the website and adding a daily social media post to maintain fresh content. Others reported developing a new website as well as exploring customer relationship management tools.
- **Enhanced search engine optimization (SEO) capabilities:** *e.g.* Exploring stronger keyword tagging and Facebook advertising.
- **Initiated new HR processes:** *e.g.* Reviewing staff meeting structure, staff communications strategies as well as performance review structures.

3.4 Initiated or completed a new business, marketing or strategic plan

According to survey responses, some 40% of mentorees also reported initiating (or completing) a new business, marketing or strategic plan over the course of the program. Of those respondents, the type of plan initiated is depicted in the figure below.

Figure 10 Plans initiated over the course of the mentorship program



As depicted in the figure above, half of those respondents reported initiating or completing a new business or strategic plan, approximately a third initiated or completed a marketing plan, while just 20% reported initiating or completing a financial statement or forecast over the course of the mentoring project.

The entrepreneur's dilemma

"The mentoring program helped me realize that it is difficult for just one person to do *everything* that needs to be done to develop and grow a business.

It also made me realize that I am very good at launching a business, not so good at operating it and making it financially viable."

Mentoree, 2012

4. Mentor Benefits for the Leadership Mentoring Program

In order to ascertain the benefits experienced by mentors, Nordicity interviewed four mentor participants in the Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program. All four mentors had been involved in mentoring and/or coaching in some respects prior to participating in the WIC program.

These four mentors (and their matches) represented the broad spectrum of WIC's bespoke matching approach. For example:

- One mentor was in the same industry as his mentoree (music), but at a multi-national company. The mentoree, on the other hand, was leading a micro-independent label;
- One mentor had no cultural industry background but was an expert in the strategic management skills in which his mentoree needed guidance and advice;
- One mentor possessed unique knowledge of the Canadian television broadcasting landscape, urgently needed by the entrepreneur trying to launch her projects in Canada;
- One mentor held a similar role to his mentoree, and in a related, though distinct aspect of the Canadian publishing industry. This mentor, however, had over 20 years of experience to bring to the partnership.

In many ways, the interviews revealed that the benefits experienced by mentors were wide-ranging and somewhat unique to the nature of the match. This variety of experience is likely to persist in future years and may also be related to the bespoke matching approach. Nonetheless, Nordicity has summarized the benefits reported by mentors below:

- **Music mash-up:** "Working with [my mentoree] forced me to get out of my silo of digital marketing. My mentoree oversees all aspects of his label. I have worked in the business for so long but not at the grassroots or independent level. In preparation for meetings I found myself ramping up my knowledge of physical manufacturing, talking to colleagues, asking around for advice to understand a bit of everything. Otherwise, what would I be bringing to meetings? This homework was useful for him and cool for me. In our particular case, we were so well-matched and I think that helped a lot."
- **Cross-sectoral match:** "Our match was unusual in that I was I don't have much experience in the cultural industries. I brought more general business skills and strategic planning to the table. There were some advantages to coming from outside the industry but it also required a lot of time for my mentoree to educate me about the music business. On the other hand, it was useful to go through the options and ideas in discussion and my mentoree followed up on quite a few of the suggestions. Overall it was terrific for me to learn about his business and his industry. While perhaps not a reverse-mentoring experience in effect, I benefited especially from the formal mentorship training provided by WIC. A longtime career coach (informally speaking), I found the early information sessions provided by WIC to be enormously helpful."
- **Creativity meets business:** "The benefit to me, number one, was seeing a different approach to a mentorship. I think one of the key ingredients was the time WIC spent pairing mentors and mentorees. As a result, you wound up with somebody, based on my experience, somebody I really enjoyed working with. For me the benefit was making a connection with someone who really impressed me. While I had the business knowledge she needed, she offered some pretty interesting feedback on some story ideas I have been working on. A good meeting of creative and business perspectives."

- **Experience challenge:** “A benefit for me was that because my mentoree was exceedingly bright and experienced, when I had a point of view and he would challenge it. In this context I really had to think hard about why I thought a course of action or a point of view was valid or reasonable. Our sessions compelled me to go back to my library and the work I have drawn on over the years. It was like a refresher course in certain areas that I have not had to think about in some time. I got a lot out of the exercise of trying to figure things out.”

For one mentor-mentoree match, one very tangible benefit arose from the engagement through WIC. When the mentor learned that his mentoree’s current office lease was expiring, the mentor offered the newly opened up space in his offices. As a result, the mentoree is now a tenant of the mentor, both organizations have benefited from the sharing of costs, and there are certain synergies for the staff as the two organizations have a lot in common. As the mentor described it, the co-location was an unintended outcome but certainly a positive one. Notably, all four mentors interviewed will remain in touch with their mentorees.

Lasting connections

“My mentor was terrific, and although we met only a few times, our relationship will continue into the future -- it's good to know I can ask for advice at any point. She confirmed that I'm on the right track and offered substantive conversation about how best to proceed.”

Mentoree, 2012

5. WIC Project Management Outcomes

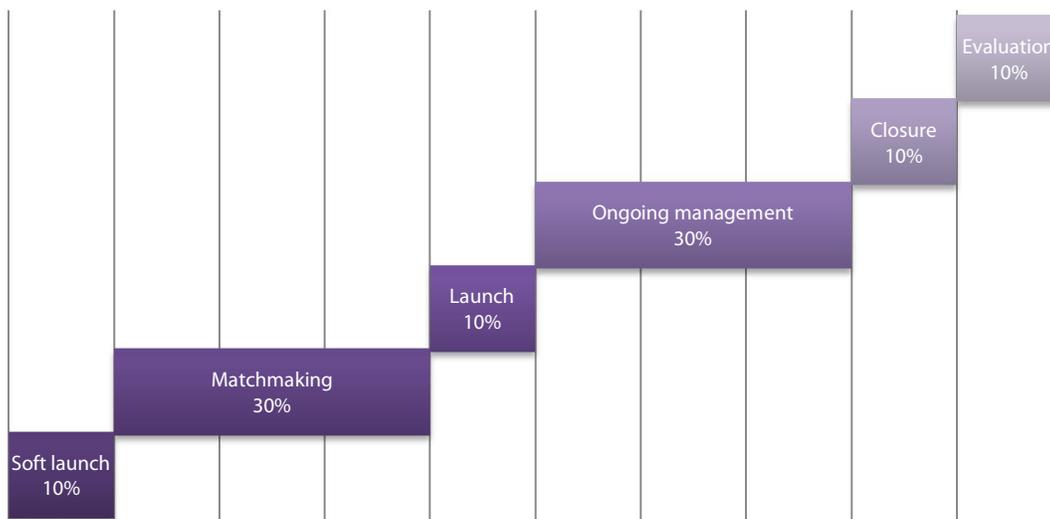
In addition to measuring or evaluating the effects of the pilot program on its mentorees and mentors, WIC also captured certain transferable insights with regards to the project management of the mentorship program process. This section outlines the level of effort and basic tasks involved in each phase of the program, as well as key learning from the design, implementation and evaluation of the program. WIC's hope is that the knowledge gained and shared in this section will be a supporting factor in both future iterations of the program as well as its ongoing sustainability.

This section of the report also includes select project management impressions derived from responses to the pulse-check survey deployed to mentors and mentorees in spring 2012.

5.1 Project phases and level of intensity

The figure below depicts WIC's impression of the level or intensity of effort it devoted to each phase of the project. The main tasks and calendar timing of each phase are summarized following the illustration.

Figure 11 Level of effort for WIC Project Management team*



*The visual below does not currently reflect how certain phases overlapped (e.g. Phases 1 and 2).

Phase 1: Soft launch and mentoree recruitment (April to July 2011)

- Developed and applied finishing touches to program design;
- Promoted program in order to solicit mentoree applications/recruit mentorees;
- Vetted mentoree applications, including face-to-face meetings and prioritization of skill area needs;
- Established evaluation framework in partnership with Nordicity.

Phase 2: Matchmaking (July to December 2011)

- Located mentors through personal outreach and networking, in order to match according to mentoree needs;
- Matched mentors to mentorees (bespoke mentor/mentoree matchmaking);
- Set-up initial matchmaking meetings.

Phase 3: Official launch (October 2011)

- Planned and conducted Workshop 1 - this workshop set the tone and expectations for the engagement and ensured all participants were on the same page. In future, attendance will be compulsory;
- Circulated top tips sheet (WIC sent out a “top ten tips” sheet tailored to every phase of the program *e.g.* launch, goal-setting, closure etc.);
- Deployed entrance survey.

Phase 4: Ongoing management (October 2011 to September 2012)

- Planned and conducted Workshops 2 and 3 (in future iterations Workshop 2 would be cancelled);
- Monitored matches and supported them through troubleshooting and problem-solving;
- Circulated top tips sheet;
- Deployed mid-point survey.

Phase 5: Closure (September to November 2012)

- Planned and conducted Workshop 4 - the closure workshop (this workshop allowed participants to provide feedback to WIC as well as to bring the mentor-mentoree relationship to a close in a professional manner);
- Deployed exit survey.

Phase 6: Evaluation/transferable insights (November 2012 to January 2013)

- Analyzed survey results;
- Reviewed evaluation report;
- Identified insights and transferable learning;
- Provided funder with final report and evaluation report.

5.2 Transferable insights

WIC’s transferable insights are those elements of the program it would approach differently and processes it would introduce in future iterations of the program. There were three program elements WIC would manage differently in the future. These elements are:

- 1) The mentor recruitment and matching process;
- 2) The contractual obligations between mentors and mentorees, and;

- 3) The recognition for mentors.

At the end of this section Nordicity has also summarized WIC's impressions on troubleshooting for future iterations of the program.

5.2.1 The mentor recruitment and matching process

In terms of program elements WIC would manage in a different way, its main, and overarching finding was that the recruitment of mentors to match mentorees' needs (*Phase 2*) required a much more intense effort than WIC had predicted. WIC believes the additional time and effort arose from two main factors:

- a) Although it has access to a wide network of cultural professionals, WIC did not have a mentor roster in place per se. In this way it was starting from scratch both in terms of promoting a pilot program and asking for a year-long commitment from in-demand individuals.
- b) WIC's objective was to run a bespoke mentoring program whereby mentors are matched specifically to the needs of the mentorees. In practice, the hunt for the appropriate, "perfect-fit" mentor was often arduous. For example, WIC placed no limits on the number of attempts to create a match. In the case of the two mentorees who WIC was unable to match with mentors, it was not until WIC had approached more than six different candidates that it called a halt to the process. In the future it would place a lower limit, such as three, on the number of attempted matches. The process of matching could also be smoother in future if mentorees were challenged to further prioritize their needs during the application process. In the pilot project, WIC spent valuable time performing the prioritization exercise on mentorees' behalf in order to find an appropriate mentor.

In terms of recruiting additional mentors for the roster, it should be noted that in interviews, all four mentors interviewed reported their motivation for participating as, "I was asked" either by Diane Davy at WIC or by Nordicity. Not all mentors were personally connected to WIC but it is certainly very helpful to be able to draw from the organization's network where possible.

WIC believe that some of the time spent customizing the mentor and mentoree match could be reduced in the future if WIC developed and maintained a roster of potential mentors. Fortunately, one outcome of this project is that WIC now aims to develop a standing roster of mentors with a wide array of skills and expertise. WIC would not, however, adjust the bespoke nature of the matches (in that matches are driven by the needs of the mentoree).

5.2.2 The contractual obligations between mentors and mentorees

A second important learning for WIC is the importance of establishing certain contractual obligations for the mentor and mentoree. Three of the thirteen matches did not complete the mentoring program and that while changed circumstances were a problem for some (i.e. illness and job change), WIC believes these breakdowns may also have been due in part to a misunderstanding of the value of the experience on the part of the mentoree. For example, some mentorees displayed a lack of understanding about the shared obligation of the mentoring experience – that is to say that the *mentoree* must drive much of the engagement, even though it is the mentor who is, for the most part, sharing his or her knowledge and experience.

It should be noted that most mentors and mentorees reported that the level of management, support and contact with WIC was "just right" – neither too restrictive nor too open as to be aimless. This

perspective was evident in interviews and in the “pulse-check” survey results summarized in Section 5.3. Nonetheless WIC believes some mentor-mentoree arrangements may have been too loose and will examine the language included in its contract agreement, initial recruitment material and “top tip” sheets for clarity on the level of responsibility for each person involved.

5.2.3 Recognition for mentors

In the future, WIC would endeavor to do more to recognize the contribution of the mentors in its program. This open, though non-monetary, recognition would ensure that the mentors are rewarded for the effort they have put into the project and would also support the development of a mentor roster. Mentor benefits such as expanded networks and other recognition could also help the growth of the roster and create added value for mentors. Indeed WIC is also investigating ways in which to recognize the work of the mentors more openly by drawing on the models established by Canadian Women in Communications as well as Women in Film and Television – Toronto and MaRS.

5.2.4 Troubleshooting and problem-solving

In addition to ongoing management and administration and pro-active check-ins, the mentorship program occasionally required WIC to get involved in troubleshooting and direct partnership support. A very small number of the matches proved to be somewhat problematic relationships.

Over the course of the program, WIC checked in regularly with mentors and mentorees. In a few cases, a check-in would reveal an issue between the partners. It is important to note the importance of the pro-active monitoring. It is difficult to predict whether mentors or mentorees would have volunteered their concerns had WIC not connected with them in the first instance. Communication would take place at first on email and then WIC would have a phone conversation with each party. After the phone conversation WIC would lay out in writing (over email) the new approach agreed upon in order to resolve the issue at hand. If necessary, a face-to-face meeting was also conducted. In two cases, this approach revived the mentor-mentoree relationship (in one case temporarily due to illness and circumstances beyond WIC’s control). A certain level of attrition is to be expected and WIC would not amend its approach to troubleshooting. However, as stated previously, WIC would emphasize the obligations for both parties more clearly in the initial stages to help manage expectations and encourage the commitment of both parties.

Long-term accountability

“This was a fantastic opportunity to take a step back from operations on a regular basis and think through what I was doing, as well as following up on persistent challenges. Often, I find the challenge isn't coming up with a good idea or canvassing possible solutions for a problem, but following through effectively once I've done so.

The advantage of this longer-term program structure is that I've had a chance to follow through with my mentor, and to revisit challenging issues in a way that's extremely helpful - it provided a kind of professional development accountability, along with all the particular tips and insights, problem-solving and long-term planning.”

Mentoree, 2012

5.3 Pulse-check survey results

While the section above summarizes WIC's perspectives on how the program might be improved in future years, Nordicity can also provide some context for how the participants perceived WIC's program management. In April 2012, Nordicity and WIC distributed a "pulse check" survey to mentors and mentorees to ascertain their views. Nordicity provided a summary of the results of this survey to WIC in May 2012 and has included them in Appendix C.

Based on the responses to the survey³, and as depicted in Figure 11 and 12 below, Nordicity found that WorkInCulture:

- communicated the workload involved (in either role) effectively and accurately, and continues to communicate effectively with mentors and mentorees;
- provided the necessary tools and guidance for strong mentor-mentoree relationships.

In addition, communication between mentors and mentorees functioned well.

³ Of the 13 responses, 7 (56%) were mentors and the remaining 6 (46%) were mentorees

6. Summary

By all measurements, the *WorkInCulture Cultural Industries Leadership Mentoring Program* pilot has been a success.

Mentorees reporting increased confidence across a variety of skill areas as well as expanded networks; many explored new markets, launched new products and services, or initiated new business and HR processes. How much of these improvements and initiatives can be attributed directly back to the program is not precisely quantifiable, but testimonials show that from the mentorees perspective, a direct link was often perceived. While leadership skills appeared to experience the lowest benefit of the

For the pilot project *mentors*, benefits included not only the positive experience gained from their participation but also new approaches to mentoring as a whole, thanks to the support and training provided by WIC and its partners. Most mentors and mentorees reported that they will remain in contact.

For *WIC*, much was successful in terms of the management and administration of the program but the team would make important adjustments for future iterations. For example, WIC has already begun to develop a roster of mentors to address the enormous amount of time devoted to matching mentorees and mentors in Phase 2. In fact, in its current mentoring project, WIC has also already begun to implement and incorporate the knowledge captured in this report.

Although WIC does not possess a large enough operating budget that would allow them to continue the program, its reputation around mentoring expertise is growing. In fact, WIC was recently asked to manage a third mentoring pilot directed towards arts facilities managers and is applying the knowledge it gained over the course of this pilot program.

Timing is everything

“The timing of my opportunity in this program was uncanny. I and my organization were at a significant turning point and had it not been for this program, we may not have even begun to start moving through the organizational change we were entering at the time. We are only at the beginning of the change but the skills I have gained as a result of this project have been absolutely essential to my ability to lead my organization and make important choices and difficult decisions.

In some ways, it was the sheer fact of having a dedicated sounding board for my process. In others, being able to seek advice from an expert who could provide critical perspective was key. Overall, the mentorship process has had a strong impact on my confidence level, though I still have to work hard to practice the learning I have acquired.”

Mentoree, 2012

Appendix A: The Evaluation Framework

The table below presents the evaluation framework to measure the effects of mentoring program.

Table 1 The evaluation framework

Indicator Category	KPI	Source
Hard data (quantitative results)	New hires	Exit survey
	Strategic decisions made	Exit survey
	New markets/products explored	Exit survey
	New key contacts made	Exit survey
	New systems/processes initiated	Exit survey
	New business or marketing plan initiated/completed	Exit survey
Confidence Level	Financial skills (e.g. budgeting, raising capital, etc.)	Comparative
	Marketing and promotion skills	Comparative
	Aptitude for innovation	Comparative
	Digital skills (e.g. using social media)	Comparative
	HR and personnel management skills	Comparative
	Creative skills (i.e. core content creation skills)	Comparative
	Ability to make sound strategic decisions	Comparative
	Sales ability	Comparative
	Leadership skills	Comparative
	Managing change	Comparative
Networks	Access to peer groups	Comparative
	Access to technical support	Comparative
	Access to business advice/support	Comparative
	Access to potential funders	Comparative
	Access to suppliers	Comparative
	Relationship with customers	Comparative
Future Outlook	Change in business outlook (% growth)	Exit survey
	New target markets (e.g. China)	Exit survey
	New target customer groups (e.g. youth)	Exit survey
	Change in business outlook (% growth)	Exit survey

Appendix B: Entrance and Exit Survey

6.1 Basic Information

1) Please provide the following contact information.

Your responses will remain confidential. These questions are only to protect against duplicate entries.

- Name
- Company
- Email

2) May we contact you for further information if necessary?

- Yes
- No

6.2 Confidence Level

In this section of the survey we ask you to rate your confidence level in various skill areas. Please answer with particular focus on your confidence with these skills as they relate to your business as well as in terms of how the level has changed since you began to participate in the Cultural Industries mentorship program.

6.2.1 Business and Leadership Skills

3) How confident are you in each of the following Business and Leadership skill areas?

- Leadership skills (e.g. managing a team)
- Strategic decision making skills (i.e. decisions that affect the future of your business)
- Financial skills (e.g. budgeting, raising capital, managing cash flow and interacting with possible funders and/or investors)
- HR management skills (e.g. hiring and firing, career planning and goal setting)
 - Not at All Confident
 - Not Very Confident
 - Somewhat Confident
 - Very Confident
 - Extremely Confident

6.2.2 Sales and Marketing Skills

4) How confident are you in each of the following Sales and Marketing skill areas?

- Marketing skills (e.g. setting objectives, writing and executing a marketing plan, evaluating outcomes)

- Public relations skills (e.g. networking, writing a press release, media outreach)
- Sales skills (e.g. negotiating a deal or partnership, closing a sale)
 - Not at All Confident
 - Not Very Confident
 - Somewhat Confident
 - Very Confident
 - Extremely Confident

6.2.3 Creativity and Innovation Skills

5) How confident are you in each of the following Creativity and Innovation skill areas?

- Capacity to innovate (e.g. imaginative problem solving, trend-spotting)
- Creative skills (e.g. core content creation, creative thinking)
- Change management ability (e.g. coping with new business dynamics and frameworks - internal or external)
 - Not at All Confident
 - Not Very Confident
 - Somewhat Confident
 - Very Confident
 - Extremely Confident

6.2.4 Digital Skills

6) How confident are you in each of the following Digital skill areas?

- Ability to understand the current and future implications of digital technologies on your business (e.g. new business models, value chain shifts as a result of digital transformation)
- Ability to gauge the benefits of new digital technologies (e.g. social media for your business, cloud-based computing and user-generated content)
- Hands-on, technical skills (e.g. comfort accessing myriad online resources, conducting research online)
 - Not at All Confident
 - Not Very Confident
 - Somewhat Confident
 - Very Confident
 - Extremely Confident

- 7) **Please describe (if applicable) any impact the cultural industries mentoring program has had on any skill areas not covered in the questions above.**

6.3 Networks

Entrepreneurs rely increasingly on their personal and professional networks for business development (including introductions and sales leads), industry trends and insight on the competitive landscape. This section of the survey focuses on your personal and professional networks, particularly in terms of how they have changed since the beginning of your participation in the Cultural industries mentorship program.

6.3.1 Access to Peer Networks

- 8) **How would you rate your access to peer groups, both personal and professional, as it relates to the following business needs? For example, if you have a question or dilemma in one of the following areas, how easy is it for you to contact someone who might be able to help (by phone, email, social network, or in person)?**
- Personal leadership (e.g. personal development, mentorship)
 - Corporate and business leadership (e.g. running your organization)
 - Potential funders and investors
 - Technical support and IT
 - Suppliers or potential suppliers
 - Customers or potential customers
 - No Access
 - Little Access
 - Some Access
 - Good Access
 - Easy/Great Access
 - Not Applicable

6.3.2 Access to Cross-Sectoral Networks

- 9) **How would you rate your access to expertise from outside your sector? In other words, if you have a question or dilemma, how easy is it for you to contact someone who might be able to help (by phone, email, social network, or in person)?**
- No Access
 - Little Access
 - Some Access
 - Good Access

- Easy/Great Access
- Not Applicable

10) Please describe (if applicable) the impact the cultural industries mentoring program has had on your networks that is not covered in the questions above.

6.4 Quantitative Indicators

In this section of the survey we are asking you to report on decisions, hires, growth and/or contraction that may have occurred since you began your mentoring relationship. Please note that your responses may not necessarily have anything to do with decisions you discussed during your mentoring experience.

11) Since September 2011 have you...

- Hired any new staff or grown by headcount?
 - What was your headcount in...?:
 - Headcount in September 2011:
 - Headcount in October 2012:
- Made a major strategic decision regarding the future of your organization or association
- Can you describe the type or scenario in which you made a major strategic decision since September 2011? (e.g. decision to restructure departments or operations, take on new sources of funding, initiate or terminate lines of business etc).
- Explored or launched into any new markets?
 - You did? How so..?
- Contemplating launching in a new market
- Examining feasibility of launching in a new market
- Testing products or services in a new market
- Have launched in one new market
- Have launched in one new market and exploring additional new markets
- Explored or launched any new products or services?
 - Please describe the new product or service you have launched since September 2011.
- Expanded your professional network?
 - You did? To what degree...?
- Initiated any new systems or processes?

- Please describe the new system or process (e.g. HR, admin, marketing, sales) you initiated launched since September 2011.
- Initiated or completed any new business plans, marketing plans or strategic plans?
 - Which of the following plans have you initiated or written since September 2011? (Please check all that apply). Business and/or Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan, Financial Statement and/or Financial Forecast

6.5 Future Outlook

In this section we ask you to look ahead at the coming year for your organization or association.

12) In the next 12 months do you anticipate...?

- Your business to grow?
 - You do? To what degree...?
- Launching in any new markets or territories?
 - You do? To what degree...?
- Targeting any new audiences or developing a new customer base (e.g. a new demographic)?
 - You do? To what degree...?

13) Please describe (if applicable) any other changes you anticipate will occur in your business activities in the coming year, and not covered in the questions above.

6.6 Feedback

Please feel free to tell us more about your experience in the WorkInCulture Cultural Media Mentorship Initiative and how it has had an impact on your work.

14) Is there anything further regarding the impact of the mentoring process that you would like to share? For example, how would you summarize the impact of the mentoring program on your capacity and outlook, in your own words?

15) If appropriate, would you mind if we included an excerpt of your feedback in the mentorship section on the new WorkInCulture website?

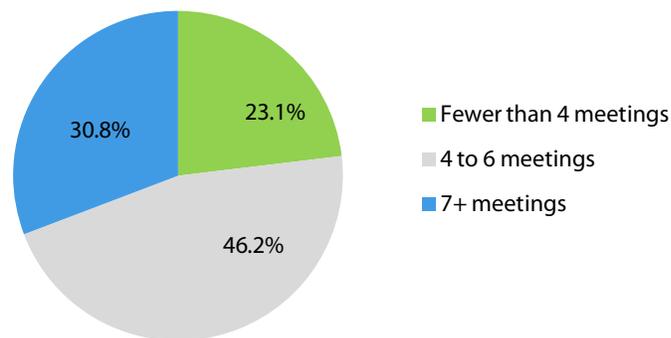
16) Would you participate in a Cultural Industries Mentorship program again in the future?

Appendix C: The Pulse Check Survey Results Summary

On April 26, 2012, Nordicity and WIC distributed a “pulse check” survey to mentors and mentorees. Nordicity provided a summary of the results of this survey to WIC in May 2012 and has included them below for interest.

- Of the 13 responses, 7 (56%) were mentors and the remaining 6 (46%) were mentorees

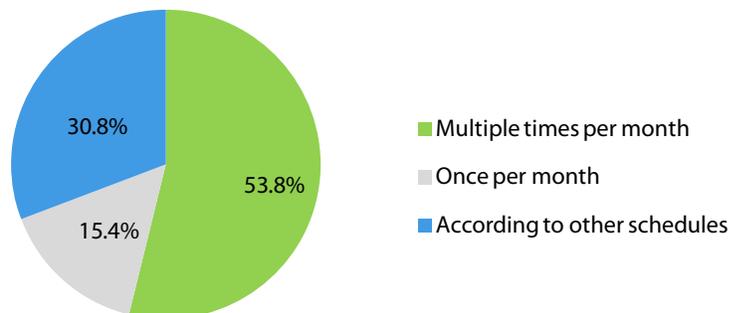
Figure 12 Question: How many times have you met with your mentor/ee since the start of the program?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- Most mentors and mentorees have met between 4 and 6 times since the launch of the program

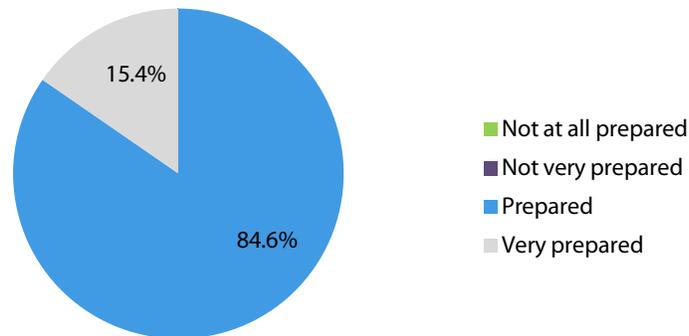
Figure 13 Question: On average, how often do you meet with your mentor/ee?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- On average, most mentors and mentorees (54%) reported meeting once per month, with 2 (15%) having reported attending multiple meetings per month

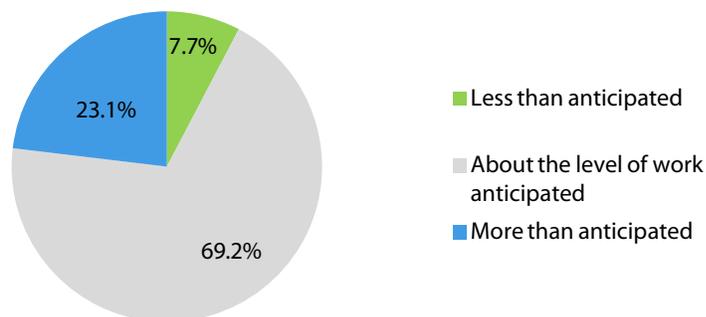
Figure 14 Question: How would you characterize your level of preparedness for meetings with your mentor/ee?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- The majority (85%) of mentors and mentorees described their own level of meeting preparedness as “prepared”
- Not one respondent self-reported being “not at all prepared” or “not very prepared” for meetings with their mentor or mentoree

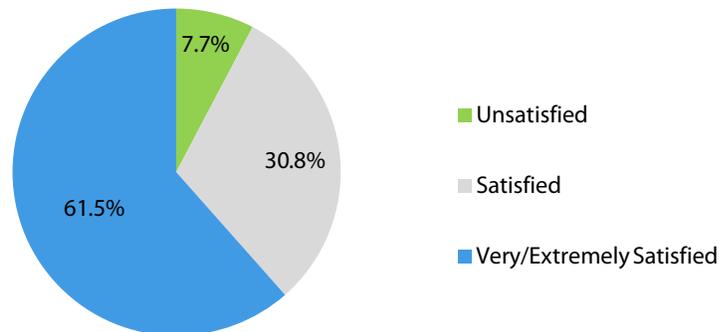
Figure 15 Question: How does the level of work compare with what you had anticipated?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- The majority (69%) of mentors and mentorees characterize the intensity of effort and work as “about the level of work I had anticipated”

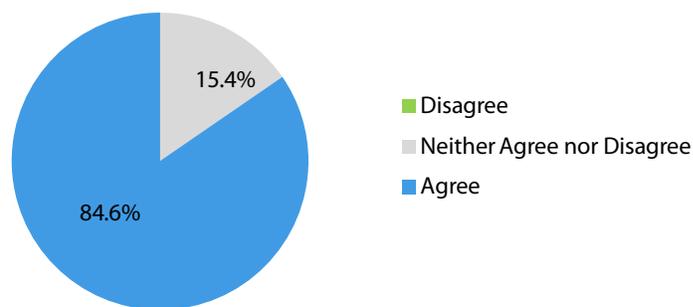
Figure 16 Question: How satisfied are you with the level of communication you have with your mentor/ee?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- The majority (61%) described themselves as “very” or “extremely” satisfied with the level of communication they have with their mentor or mentoree
- An additional 4 (31%) described themselves as “satisfied” with the level of communication
- According to the pulse-check survey results, and depicted in the figure below, the majority (83%) of respondents agreed with the statement “WorkInCulture has provided sufficient guidance and tools for me to carry on my role as a mentor or mentoree.”

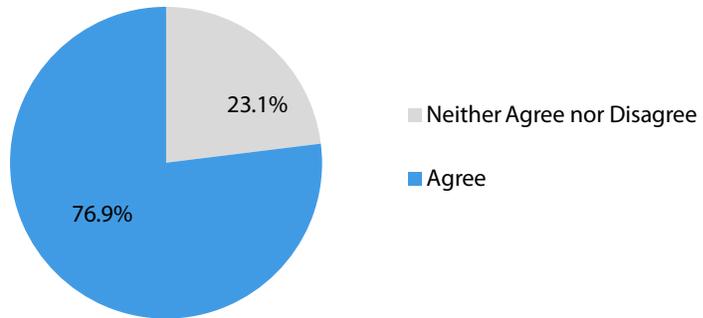
Figure 17 Question: Do you agree with the statement, “WorkInCulture has provided sufficient guidance and tools for me to carry on my role as a mentor or mentoree”?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012

- According to the pulse-check survey results, and depicted in the figure below, the majority (77%) of respondents agreed with the statement that “the frequency of communication from WorkInCulture has met my expectations and needs.”

Figure 18 Question: Do you agree with the statement, “The frequency of communication from WorkInCulture has met my expectations and needs”?



Source: Nordicity survey to mentors and mentorees, 2012