



Introduction

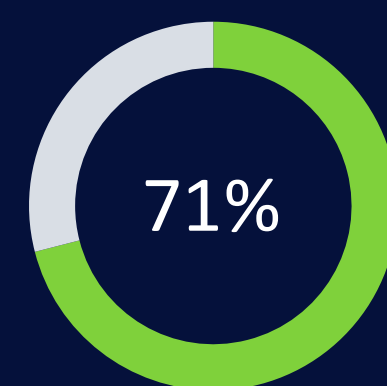
Telenor, a 170-year-old telecommunications organisation with 11,000 diverse employees spread across eight different markets, aims to implement a reverse mentorship programme that is employee-driven and inclusive for all, rooted within their four Telenorion core behavioural values. In response to the rapid technological advancements in the industry, this strategy seeks to enhance employee motivation, productivity, and upskilling, ultimately impacting profitability, talent retention, and the employer-value proposition. The Balanced Architects (TBA) propose the implementation of an employee-driven, 'hands-off' knowledge sharing solution, aligning with the organisational strategy, additionally being cost-effective and offering speedy implementation. The initiative, 'CONNECT', encompasses philosophies of reverse mentorship (deliberate reversal of the power dynamics inherent in conventional mentorship), by placing the employee firmly in the driver's seat, allowing them autonomy to choose, according to their objectives, the type of connections (mentoring options) at any given time. This aims to promote 'in the flow' learning, driving a culture of learning throughout the organisation, motivated by employee engagement and participation in an environment which is completely inclusive and psychologically safe. Furthermore, the initiative promotes the democratisation of knowledge-sharing by enabling co-creation between employees and the organisation, ensuring inclusion across hierarchical, generational, cultural, and neurodiverse dimensions. A structured 5-step implementation plan has been designed to embed 'CONNECT' into daily workflows, cultivating a sustainable learning culture, enhancing innovation, talent retention, and competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving industry landscape.

Critical Analysis

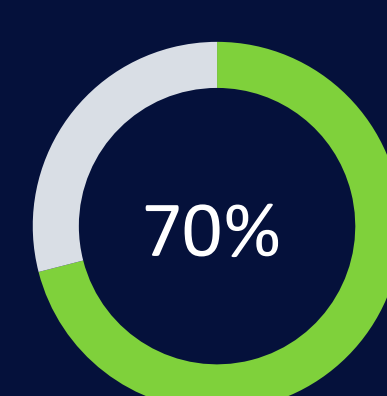
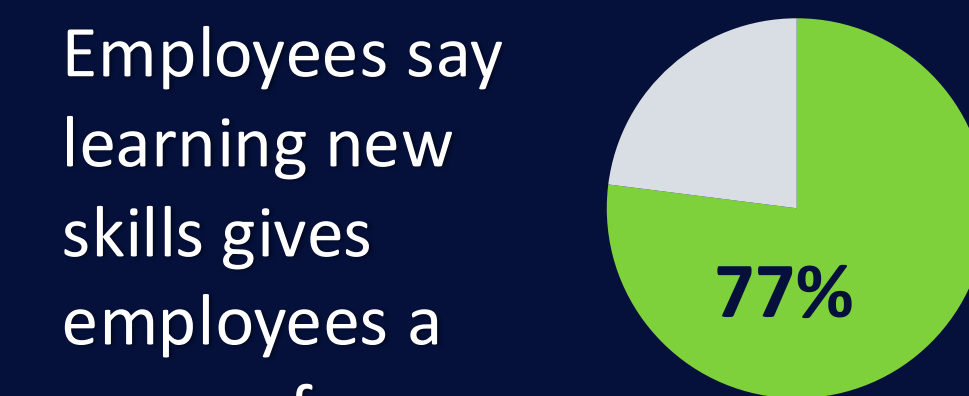
Strengths

Opportunities

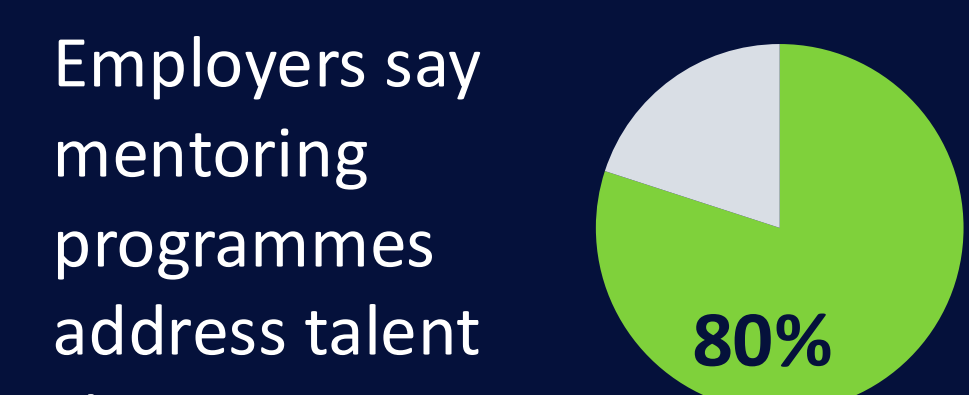
Bridges generational gaps and encourages cross-level collaboration	Clarifying objectives and setting clear expectations
Creates collaborative, inclusive, and psychological safety culture	Overcoming resistance to change, and institutional boundaries
Enhances employee retention and strengthens employer value proposition	Navigating cultural differences and ensuring inclusive knowledge-sharing
Unlocks implicit knowledge to drive competitive advantage	Strengthening implementation/organisational support
Drives productivity, motivation and ROI through upskilling	Embedding mentorship into workflows to overcome time constraints



Employees want regular updating of skills



Employees say learning improves connection to workplace



(TalentLMS, 2024) (LinkedIn Learning, 2024), (Mentorcliq, 2025)

Contextual Theory

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is most effectively executed through social communication (Fernie et al., 2023), including networking and mentorship (Bresnen et al., 2003; Huang & Newell, 2003). The mentor aim "to support and facilitate the realization of the Dream" (Levinson, 1978, p.98), refers to the mentee's future vision. Mentoring, (all varieties), is rooted within social networking theory (Fuhse, 2015; Daly, 2010), the umbrella term encompassing social learning theory (Albert Bandura, 1997), and social development theory (Vygotsky, 1980). The core concept of this knowledge culture being continuous transformation (Pedlar et al., 1997). In the flow learning allows for continual learning to take place anytime (Bersin, 2018), a collective responsibility, and part of the visible culture (Tupper & Ellis, 2023), encompassing both "just-in-time" (JiT) learning (Brandenburg & Ellinger, 2003), and longer-term relationships, ensuring symbiosis among *on-the-job* and *social* learning.

Knowledge Sharing

Employee Engagement

Organisational Support

Employee Engagement and Motivation

Self-determination theory (SDT), ensuring the following three needs are met, ensures greater motivation and engagement in individuals. Competence - mentoring promotes personal development and an increased sense of competence (Crespi & Lopez, 2023). Autonomy - individuals who self-nominate for L&D interventions generally exhibit higher motivation (Kodwani & Kodwani, 2021). JiT Learning empowers employees to assume autonomous responsibility for their growth. Relatedness - Johnson and Scholes' Cultural Web, identifying organisational heroes who serve as role models, creating a sense of belonging and encouraging open communication (Johnson & Scholes, 1992).

Organisational Support

Despite an 'employee-driven' effort, the organisation's responsibility is to establish an environment conducive to learning, exemplify psychological safety, and integrate reflection and ongoing evaluation into the process. Perceived organisational support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), are interconnected constructs. Telenor can practically demonstrate this through encouraging inclusion (Ragins & Kram, 2007), open communications (Caesens et al., 2018), providing supportive leadership (Jindal et al., 2024), and recognising and rewarding efforts (Hasan et al., 2023). Page-Tickell (2022) advocates promoting an embedded culture of learning through the use of reflective practice, feedback, and celebration of initial successes through storytelling (Johnson & Scholes, 1992), and, additionally, continual evaluation (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). This promotes trust, which shapes relationships, and unleashes acceleration of innovation, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving (Stephenson, 2008)

Recommendations

WHAT

Knowledge Sharing Initiative "Connect"

It is recommended that a branded initiative, "Connect," be created to foster a democratised culture of continuous knowledge sharing and mentorship. This initiative should introduce various types of mentorship - including reverse, flash, peer-to-peer, and traditional mentoring - to ensure flexibility and inclusivity for all cultures and diversities, fostering an environment of curiosity, collaboration, and mutual growth.

WHY

The need of a "hands off" approach

Self-driven learning. Employees stay engaged when they control their learning, making mentorship a natural, ongoing process.

Cost-effectiveness. Reduces administrative effort and optimises resources by leveraging internal knowledge-sharing.

Inclusivity. Breaks down hierarchies and barriers, ensuring mentorship is accessible to all employees.

HOW

Through a learning culture and digital enablement

1) CREATING A LEARNING CULTURE

Goal. Psychological ownership, motivation, and engagement to ensure knowledge sharing becomes a natural part of work. Foster a culture of voluntary mentorship by encouraging self-nomination, leveraging organisational heroes as role models, and using storytelling to highlight its benefits. Sustaining engagement through organisational support and recognition. Foster an environment where senior employees are open to learning from juniors, ensuring cultural adaptability by promoting mentorship across diverse backgrounds and communication styles.

2) CREATING A DIGITAL SPACE

Goal. A space for efficiency, automation and accessibility. Create a centralised mentorship space within the LMS/LXP, offering Just-in-Time (JiT) learning with micro-courses, and employee generated content. Ensure inclusivity by making mentorship accessible to all employees, integrating it seamlessly into daily workflows. Collect feedback to track engagement and continuously optimise the programme. As a best practice, using AI tools can automate suggested mentor-mentee matching, and make it an even more "hand off" experience.

5-STEP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

WEEK 1

1 PLAN "CONNECT"

- Define clear goals
- Create materials (posters, videos, branded content)
- Identify employee heroes (change agents) to lead, from across entire organisation

2 CREATE THE SPACE

- Develop short micro-learning courses on how to be a mentor/ mentee, and benefits of knowledge sharing
- Survey employee preferences online
- Create centralised knowledge-sharing platform in Oracle (LMS/LXP) for self-generated content (skills)

WEEK 2

3 INTRODUCE "CONNECT"

- Release a short, engaging video explaining the program, using HEROES
- Showcase why mentorship benefits both mentors and mentees
- Use motivational and bias-free language that aligns with the BPS ethical guidelines

WEEK 3

4 ENGAGE AND MOTIVATE

- Integrate mentorship into existing processes and routines
- Allow employees to self-nominate as mentors/mentees
- Align with ongoing leadership development programmes
- Storytelling to feedback successes

ONGOING

5 EVALUATE AND CELEBRATE

- Encourage continuous reflection
- Monitor engagement with surveys & analytics
- Incorporate into feedback sessions (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually)
- Communicate transparently across the organisation

Reverse Mentoring

Addresses the understanding that knowledge and abilities are not only determined by age, experience, or seniority (Nagi, 2020).

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Bidirectional, and distinctly reciprocal among individuals at comparable career stages (Dickson, et al., 2021; McManus & Russell, 2007).

Flash Mentoring

Brief exchanges (Mangan, 2012), to pass on relevant knowledge (USAID, 2014) and provide additional opportunities for relationship development (Siocon, 2025).

Traditional Mentoring

Typically led by a more experienced person, facilitating the less experienced individual's development (Dahlberg & Byars-Winston, 2019).