



FACTSHEET

What is Reverse Mentoring?

First popularised by former GE Chairman Jack Welsh in the late nineties, Reverse Mentoring has often matched more senior and older colleagues with younger, junior colleagues. Recently reverse mentoring has evolved to comprise senior leaders being mentored by a more junior colleague who, from a diversity and inclusion perspective, is different from them in some way, and therefore experiences their career differently.

Whereas traditional mentoring is centred on the development of junior mentees, in reverse mentoring both the mentor and mentee are provided with an opportunity to learn from each other. The focus of reverse mentoring is to increase the mentee's inclusion competencies; however mentors are simultaneously provided with the opportunity to learn from their mentee's experience, knowledge and skills so it can be considered as a career development opportunity for both parties.

What are the benefits of reverse mentoring?

Reverse mentoring is an effective way to build genuine awareness of the barriers faced by BAME employees. Organisations and leaders can demonstrate their commitment to race equality by taking time to get to know employees they may otherwise have no interactions with. By building an understanding of their mentee's point of view, reverse mentoring can challenge established hierarchies and foster a culture where all experiences, skills and ideas are leveraged. Successful implementation of reverse mentoring improves BAME engagement, overall experience and retention.

Benefits for senior mentees

- Mentees become change agents who harness candid and honest feedback shared by their mentor to influence wider leadership and challenge unhelpful practices
- Reverse mentoring provides a tangible opportunity for leadership to *walk the talk* when it comes to inclusion, directing culture change through leading by example





- [66% of BAME employees felt their colleagues were not comfortable talking about race](#). Being reverse mentored improves confidence through building awareness about experiences and barriers faced by BAME colleagues
- Mentees develop their ability to lead diverse teams. Reverse mentoring is a way to build Business in the Community's recommended [inclusive leadership competencies](#) of adaptability, developing diverse talent and building inclusive relationships.

Benefits for junior mentors

- By taking part in reverse mentoring, mentors gain visibility as role models to other BAME employees
- Mentors broaden their network by building mutually beneficial relationships with senior leaders
- Reverse mentoring is a unique knowledge sharing opportunities, providing mentors with a unique insight into leadership roles
- Reverse mentoring provides a platform to shape the leadership addresses diversity and inclusion issues

Next Steps: BITC Recommendations

BITC recommends that CEOs and Non-Executive Directors lead the way with reverse mentoring. Taking part in reverse mentoring enables Non-Executive Directors to bring a different perspective and feed back very candidly to the wider board some of the issues and challenges shared by employees. Diversity task forces or steering committees can also be paired with mentors so that they can use their conversations to help steer change more effectively.

Work in partnership with BAME Employee Resource Groups (ERG)/ Networks to deliver a reverse mentoring programme. Mentors can be sourced through the ERG/Network and through talent mapping high-potential BAME employees. This will foster engagement as well as development/progression opportunities for BAME talent. Alternatively, seek line manager nominations and select mentors through a competitive application process.

