



CAREERS MENTORING PROGRAMME CASE STUDY

Lesley Reeve from FISCAL Technologies

Lesley Reeve is Co-Founder & COO at FISCAL Technologies, a company which provides accounts payable forensics software for companies to protect spend and reduce risk.

She is living proof that a journey you go on in your career needn't be linear – she started out as an assistant to a team of shoe designers, before working in the travel industry where she built up her technical skills. She co-founded FISCAL Technologies in 2007, and now says: "I'm 53 and feel I've been most successful in the last 20 years of my career. Running FISCAL for the last 15 years has seen me perform to the best of my abilities."

Lesley puts her ability to succeed in a variety of roles down to a 'can-do energy' which she advises her mentees to 'bring every time to each role as you can learn everything else.'

What makes a good mentor?

Somebody who is engaging, who can encourage open conversations, and provide scenarios and experience to situations. And also to be able to challenge people, especially children, to think slightly differently and build confidence in their communication.

Why are you a good mentor?

I'm looking at engagement - finding different ways to bring out the best in them. For example, this session we looked at CVs. I brought in two real CVs and asked them what was good and bad about them, and which one did I hire and why? It was interesting, seeing their individual

assessments of the same CVs. Only one got it right – I hired both! So by bringing a real-life scenario from the workplace and encouraging interaction I got them to think slightly differently. Like you would in the real world, not as you would in an exam.

How are sessions going?

The group are definitely getting something out of it. They've picked up a lot in our CV chats on what makes an early careers CV stand out – should you put a picture on (yes), should you talk about hobbies (yes), should you use examples to back up statements like 'I'm well organised' (yes). In short - don't be shy, but keep it simple.

They also had plenty to say about goal setting and the 'purpose' of doing so. The group concluded it helps you stay focussed on the result you are trying to achieve. Creating short-term goals helps you stay on the journey. I gave commercial context and said that we use Objective Setting tool in business and a popular framework called OKR's (Objectives and Key Results).

What do you want your mentees to take away when they leave?

That it is ok to fail – there are always other routes, always a solution, always another door. And you're going to be presented with lots of doors, so don't be afraid; open them all, and find people that help you to open those doors.

And remember that it's not about skills in the early days, it's about bringing to the table great attitude, energy and willingness to learn that will make you stand out.