



Swarovski Case Study

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Founded in 1895 in Austria, Swarovski designs, manufactures, and markets high-quality crystals, genuine gemstones, and created stones as well as finished products such as jewelry, accessories, and lighting. Now run by the fifth generation of family members, the Swarovski Crystal Business has a global reach, with approximately 2,560 stores in around 170 countries, more than 25,000 employees, and revenue of about €2.33 billion in 2014.

Together with its sister companies, Swarovski Optik (optical devices) and Tyrolit (abrasives), Swarovski Crystal Business forms the Swarovski Group. In 2014, the Group generated revenue of about €3.05 billion and employed more than 30,000 people. The Swarovski Foundation was set up in 2012 to honor the philanthropic spirit of founder Daniel Swarovski. Its mission is to support creativity and culture, promote well-being, and conserve natural resources.

The pilot internal mentoring program was initiated and launched by Petra Lockhart,

Global VP for Learning and Development and sponsored by Anna Cocca, Global Finance and Administration HR Business Partner. Pockets of mentoring and examples of informal mentoring were already in place at Swarovski, but they had not yet established a shared approach to mentoring across the businesses. Both Lockhart and Cocca were clear from the start that the approach to mentoring at Swarovski was to be at the developmental end of the spectrum rather than sponsorship. This decision was informed partly through a desire to support the development of senior leaders within the organization in the role of mentor, to enhance their leadership skills, and support their own self-reflection journeys.

According to Lockhart, 'Mentoring helps us develop our trust and confidence in leaders, support our women in leadership agenda, our leadership culture and philosophy, and our skills enablement'.

The team encountered very little pushback from colleagues globally regarding launching

the program. The US launch was slightly delayed because the region was going through a major reorganization. While on a visit to Hong Kong, Petra Lockhart shared an update on the mentoring pilot in Europe with Francis Belin, Senior Vice President Greater China, Consumer Goods Business, and he was keen to support a program he believed in and to trail blaze in his region. He has subsequently spoken very highly of the program and is an active ambassador for mentoring. In 2016, the European Senior Vice President of the Consumer Goods Business will also join the program representing his region. This sponsorship of the mentoring program by senior individuals across the business has greatly influenced the success of the program.

The team was clear that it needed external support to establish a robust program with a strong learning element and chose to work with The Conversation Space, who helped them to design the program and to run and support all the key learning elements.

PILOT 2014

The pilot in June 2014, which involved eleven mentoring pairs across Europe, included line-manager briefings, design and delivery of both mentee and mentor workshops, supporting materials, and action-learning telephone follow-up.

Mentees were selected from an identified high-potential talent pool, giving specific focus to encouraging and supporting women in leadership, while not excluding men from taking part. The main criterion for choosing mentors for the pilot was high commitment to the project. It was a key aim of the program design that mentors would become the ambassadors for mentoring and this, along with their high level of seniority, has been one important element in getting additional people on-board.

Following four months of planning and design, the program launched and offered the following key areas of support:

- Initial support for both mentors and mentees through highly interactive and challenging workshops.
- Ongoing action-learning sets as an approach to offer mentors facilitated and peer supervision.
- Mid-point reviews for all mentees.
- An informal evening event for all new mentees and mentors to meet before mentees find out who their mentors are. This provided an opportunity for participants to network with others from across the different functions and hierarchies within the organization.
- Creative thinking around how to inform participants of their match, including handwritten cards and careful timing.
- Providing all mentees and mentors with their own reflection journal from the start of the process. Program sponsors modelled these themselves and attended all training.
- Providing full briefings for all line managers of mentees, including a live Q&A session.
- Sharing the story at every opportunity, across both business and support functions.
- Sharing example evaluation questions for Swarovski to run this aspect of the program internally.

ROLL OUT 2015 AND BEYOND

The global roll-out began in Asia Pacific in February 2015 with another twelve mentoring pairs, and this followed the same format as the pilot, with the program sponsored by Francis Belin, Senior VP Asia Pacific.

The second Europe cohort rolled out in April 2015, with more than double the number of mentoring pairs than in the pilot, and the second Asia Pacific cohort launched in summer 2015. Continued roll out is planned with the launch of the first Mentoring@Swarovski program in South America in spring 2016 and a further two cohorts in Europe, in Switzerland and Austria.

As part of building sustainability for the program, and shifting it to be supported internally, a Train the Trainer (TTT) event was held in April 2015. Ten internal human-resource and learning-and-development

practitioners were supported over two days to take on the role of internally supporting the mentoring programs at a regional level. This group continues to meet to share good practice and maintain the community of mentoring practitioners.

Evaluation

The internal team at Swarovski managed the overall evaluation of the scheme using the Kirkpatrick model (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006) as a baseline and ensuring measurement took place at both levels 1 and 2, as follows:

- Happy Sheets after the initial training – to support Kirkpatrick level 1.
- Action-learning sessions with mentors and mid-point calls/meetings with mentees, which have also started to include some aspects of action learning – to support Kirkpatrick level 2.

The feedback has led to some small changes to the launch-workshop content, including the use of more experiential exercises and more transparency on the matching process.

The evaluation approach for 2016 will be to:

- Send out an online survey to both mentors and mentees.
- Use the Employee Engagement Survey and cluster mentors and mentees into separate groups in order to analyze their level of engagement, enablement, and confidence in leaders.
- Analyze mentees' career progression – for example, in taking on new roles or lateral moves.

Challenges and lessons

Some eighteen months on from the pilot, there are almost 100 participants actively involved in the mentoring program. So far, there has been a 100 percent roll over of mentors, all of whom have taken on a new mentee, and around two thirds of mentees

have been promoted or have taken on extra responsibility in their role. There is a substantial waiting list to become both a mentee and a mentor, with 30 percent of mentees' line managers expressing an interest to be actively involved in the program.

The great success of the pilot provided a strong business case to ensure enthusiasm and buy in for a speedy global roll-out.

The greatest challenge for the program was geography. The program is global, and, with one of its core ambitions being to grow the one-to-one mentoring relationships, the ability to connect in person and get face-to-face time was important. Swarovski met this by supporting mentoring pairs to meet face to face at the end of each of the launch training workshops for initial conversations and by encouraging pairs to find opportunities to meet when traveling for business. The majority of pairs who were separated by distance have been able to meet face to face at least twice, and they ensure they stay in regular contact through video conferencing, phone calls, and apps such as WhatsApp.

It was also interesting to note that, as the program has grown, with numbers soon to exceed 100, Swarovski chose to support the mentoring through regional HR hubs and has continued to match 'by hand', using local knowledge. They consider this to have a huge advantage over the use of mentor-matching software, which they decided would offer lower success rates for initiating strong and lasting mentoring relationships.

The team at Swarovski and The Conversation Space felt that the following worked particularly well for this scheme and contributed to its successful outcomes:

- 1 *Choice of program owner is critical* – having the global head of L&D and global head of HR had huge impact on launching, getting buy-in for and supporting the mentoring.
- 2 *Select your mentors carefully* – ensure they are eager to be involved and have influence to spread the word. If you can, include senior sponsors as mentors.

- 3 *Support your mentees and your mentors along the journey* – the more energy you invest in continuing the conversation after kick-off, the more dividends you will reap.
 - 4 *Support global programs both centrally and locally* – both for more successful matching and for ongoing troubleshooting.
 - 5 *Make it enjoyable!* – The energy and enjoyment that Lockhart and her team have built into the program and openly shared about the mentoring is contagious and has created a culture of desirability.
- Hold TTT events, focused on how to facilitate and deliver action learning effectively.
 - Hold further TTT events on delivering-learning workshops.
 - Launch the mentoring program in North America.
 - Run at least six new waves of trained mentors and mentees (three in Europe, one in Asia Pacific, one in Latin America and one in the US).
 - Look into reverse mentoring.
 - Expand the program to the retail population (through the new Swarovski Retail Academy).

The future for mentoring at Swarovski is to build on the success encountered so far. This will involve rolling out the program in other regions, expanding it into other sectors in the business, and continuing to develop people internally to support and manage the programs. Key initiatives are:

REFERENCE

Kirpatrick, D.L. and Kirkpatrick, J.D. (2006) *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.