

McCarthy Mentoring

Newsletter: Winter 2009

Dear friends

As the days grow colder, darker and shorter, we are providing a punchy upbeat Winter newsletter focusing on some of the fabulous people we work with – mentors, mentees and clients.

We talk to Sally Macdonald, the dynamic Managing Director of the **OrotonGroup** who has turned the business around since 2006. Senior people at OrotonGroup have worked with a number of our mentors during this time, Sally tells us why.

James O'Loghlin will be a familiar face and voice to many of you through his work on ABC TV's New Inventors and the evening show on ABC Radio in Sydney and regional NSW, you may also have met him in his days as a stand-up comic or briefly as a commercial or criminal lawyer.

In addition to his work as a presenter and broadcaster, he has just written a book on balancing your life and has recently joined us as a mentor. We talk to him about his career and how he has turned work life balance talk in to action.

In this edition we are introducing a new column that will soon be a feature of our website that we hope you will all contribute to. '**What should I do?**' offers case studies from mentees and responses from mentors to people's dilemmas.

We hope sharing these problems and insights will assist other mentors and mentees in developing their own strategies to manage issues around their careers, leadership, recognition, negotiating and communication.

Our **One2One Mentoring Guides & Mentoring Cards** are into their second print run and are now sold directly from our office and can be purchased on the website www.mccarthymentoring.com.

Best wishes,

Sophie

Must Read



[One2One: How to be a valuable mentor](#)



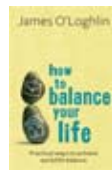
[One2One: How to be an effective mentee](#)



[The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work](#)



[Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives](#)



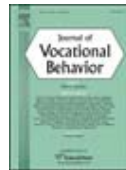
[How to Balance Your Life](#)



[Pay, Power and Position](#)



[Managing Your Career in Uncertain Times](#)



[Who Gets a Mentor?](#)



[Society at a Glance 2009](#)



[The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring](#)

Click on a title or an image to buy the book or download the document.

Pay, Power and Position

Beyond the 2008 EOWA Australian Census of Women in Leadership

The good news from EOWA's recent report released on 17 June is that once women have been appointed to boards, they are as influential as men. Among the 89 individual women holding ASX200 board seats, 49.4 % are chairing at least one board committee, compared to 32.9 % of male board directors. However, the pay gap at executive management between men and women is still dramatic and in some positions (CEO and Finance) women earn less than half of their male equivalents. To read the complete report [click here](#).

1 Million women

Wendy has recently become an ambassador of **1 Million Women** - A campaign of daughters, mothers, sisters and grandmothers - Committed to protecting our climate, our communities and our future, leading change for the better.

Their goal is to inspire 1 million Australian women to take practical action on climate change by cutting 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the main greenhouse pollutant causing global warming. Every woman who joins has a personal goal to cut 1 tonne of CO₂ from their daily lives within a year of joining the campaign.

Our mentors

James O'Loghlin



James O'Loghlin is the host of the **The New Inventors** on ABC TV and **Sunday Evenings with James O'Loghlin** on ABC Local Radio in Sydney.

He has been a stand-up comedian and a criminal and commercial lawyer. He is also a mentor and has recently written a book called "**How to balance your life – practical ways to achieve work/life balance**".

James, why did you write this book?

I have lots of friends who have interesting jobs but the common factor amongst many of them was that they did not have enough time away from work, particularly with their children, so I wanted to write about how people can perhaps reorganize their life so that they can keep doing their work as well as they are doing it -and still find it as satisfying -but somehow grab an hour or two back each day. It seemed to me that there was a gap between many people having a desire to do this and the same people not quite knowing how to practically go about doing it.

It's something we all tend to put in the too hard basket. People often say 'it would be great if my 50hr a week job was a 44hr a week job' but they don't seem to know how to make it happen. So I wanted to write a practical strategic book advising people how they could make it happen.

You suggest a number of strategies for people to find more time in their day to do the things they really want to do... What are your own work life balance secrets?

Well I am a bad example because I work in the media. I have unusual work hours anyway but I try to make that work for me. What I have tried to do - particularly since I have had children- is to have my head down the minute I walk in the door to work and to work as efficiently and productively as I can. For example, rather than have a 15 minute chat in the tea-room with someone, I am aware that doing that means that I have to spend an extra 15 minutes at work and it may sound a bit hard hearted, but I would rather spend those 15 minutes at home with my family. So I try to be very efficient when I am at work.

Most of the jobs I have had have not been not shift work. They have been jobs where you get measured not on how long you are at work but on how well you get your work done, and so I focus on getting the job done as efficiently as possible in the shortest time possible without sacrificing quality. I always focus on the opportunity cost of NOT working efficiently i.e. The longer it takes me to do a task, the longer I have to stay at work and the less time I get to spend with my family. I find if you focus in on the opportunity cost it is a great motivator to get more work done each hour.

Then there is working out when I work. There is a lot of work I can get done at home after the kids have gone to bed so rather than watching American crime shows at night I would much rather get home earlier and spend more time with the kids while they are still awake, then do some more work after they have gone to bed.

And I think this is an important one, really practicing switching on when you get to work and switching off when you leave. The more you practice doing that the better you get at it.

And work out how to maximize your use of time through the day. For example if you are travelling from A to B in a taxi or on the train you can plan to read something you need to read for work on that journey. It's important to work out how you can use the whole of the working day in a productive way, because that will make your working day shorter.

Most people strive to combine earning money with some level of fulfillment in their work, have you achieved this?

Yeah, I think I have, though not on purpose. My first career move was going from being a corporate lawyer to being a criminal lawyer which resulted in a huge potential loss in future income. I have only really made decisions on what I have thought would satisfy me and I have been very lucky in that my decisions have led to positions where I have been able to earn an income. I know a lot of people have to make really hard decisions between doing what they want to do and earning an income.

In the 1990's I did stand-up comedy for years where I'd drive out to places I never heard of before and got booed off stage and never get paid a cent and I did that dozens and dozens of times. So now that I am earning an income doing that sort of stuff well it feels like I am getting my own back. When I decided to move from corporate to criminal law, when I decided to leave law and focus on stand-up comedy, these were not decisions I made for economic decisions, they are not necessarily decisions a financial adviser would advise. But at the time I didn't have dependants, and let's face it, we spend more time working than we spend doing anything else except maybe sleeping and I don't want to spend that large a section of my life being bored

You suggest that many of us are unimaginative and passive about work and that a little bit of creativity and some negotiating could lead to more flexible work conditions. Can you explain how you have done this?

I guess work/life balance has always been a priority for me. Even when I started as a corporate lawyer I knew I wanted to get in, do my job, then get out to live the rest of my life. Every night I stayed back at work was one less game of tennis I would play. Everything is a trade off. The more you work, the less time there is there is for something else.

Is finding balance really as simple as doing a regular audit of our lives like we do with our cars, finances and teeth? Why do we not intuitively allocate time to something so important and do something about it?

Well yes, in my book I suggest the first step is to do an audit, in which you ask yourself 'How much time do I spend at work?', 'how much time of that time do I spend actually working?', 'how much time do I have for my hobbies and interests?', 'how much time do I spend with my family?' and then on a separate piece of paper list how you would like to change things. List how much time you would like to spend with your family and then start getting realistic and thinking about what type of tinkering you can do to get a bit closer to the life you want to be leading.

I think about these things all the time. I am always thinking 'is there a better way to do this?'

Maybe I am very easily dissatisfied but I think we are too meek and we don't always realize that we all have a range of choices we can make. Some people have more than others, but we all have some choices

Your book offers tactics to work smarter and be more productive in a shorter time... some of the suggestions to save time include: being less friendly, more focused, having lunch, ignoring office politics, delegating office social events.... You propose that ultimately your boss wants you to do the job and office chit chat and schmoozing clients is all icing on the top...is this realistic for people who are ambitious?

Every workplace is different and everyone has to work out for themselves how single minded they want to be about ambition. If you write a list of the things you want and if all that is on the list is 'be successful at work' then you would focus purely on work. But most people will have other stuff on the list. If you do have other things on the list then it becomes about prioritizing, and working out how much of one thing on your list you are prepared to sacrifice to achieve something else on the list. It's all a trade-off. For example you might think 'I will give up 2 evenings a week away from my family to focus on schmoozing because it may benefit my career'. Or you might think, 'I don't even know if going out and having drinks and dinner with work people IS going to help my career. Maybe it will a bit, but it's not worth the sacrifice of all that time away from my family so I am not going to do it'

In your 18 years of working post university you have had about 5 careers - commercial lawyer, criminal lawyer, standup comic, TV and radio presenter and author – some simultaneously. What has been the most exciting? Was this a balanced time of your life?

The most exciting time was when I was simultaneously learning how to be a criminal lawyer by day and a comedian by night and it was exhausting. I had work/work balance, in that when I got sick of being a lawyer I could focus on being a comedian and vice versa. What I found was that the thing about ambition is that you are so focused on getting somewhere that you just don't enjoy the ride. I think that's the only thing I regret; that I didn't spend more time enjoying the ride.

What's career number 5?

I am very happy with 'The New Inventors' and radio so I have no plans.

You speak very personally about parenting and how you think you've become a better person from the experience. Do you think the world would be a better place if we all worked part time and spent more time with our kids?

Well that was the dream. If you look back 50 years people were talking about how computers would increase our productivity to levels where people could work less, but it hasn't happened. We have decided as a nation that we want to take those productivity

gains not in the form of decreased working hours, but in the form of increased pay. 50 years ago a 5 day week was standard, and today it is still standard.

I think that if you ask a lot of people what they want more of, they would say time with family. But there are ways of achieving it. For example many who live in the city could decide to move up the coast and halve the size of their mortgage and their travelling time, and thus create lots of opportunities for them to spend more time with their family. I think most of the time we think we have less choice than we actually have. We need to selfishly look at our lives and examine what we have and what we want more of. One of the things about Australia in 2009 is that a lot of people are very comfortable and it's pretty damn good but that doesn't mean we can't make it better.

What do you like best about being a mentor?

It is a wonderful experience because you form a relationship with someone, and they can come to be quite open with you about their life, and you have an opportunity to help that relationship grow and help them bounce around some ideas for changes they may want to make to their lives to make it better. It can be very lonely when you are wrestling with big questions and trying to make important decisions that will affect the rest of your life by yourself. So it is a privilege to be in the same room as someone who is openly confronting some big and small questions that are important to them and helping them get to an answer that they think is best for them. Sometimes talking to someone can allow you to see something from a different angle or to things more clearly or to see complexities that you weren't previously aware of. I think one role of a mentor is to help people to continue to wrestle with these questions.

If you could have a mentor who would it be and why?

It would be someone who shared their experience insofar as it was relevant to my dilemmas, and who helped me stumble toward my own answers.

Our clients

Sally Macdonald

Managing Director, OrotonGroup

Sally Macdonald has turned around the OrotonGroup in well under three years. After working as a consultant for four months in the company she was offered the role of CEO when it announced a \$9.4 million loss for the 2006 financial year. In June 2009 it is a very different story. The company is now headquartered in a Waterloo warehouse and in March posted a net profit of \$12.5 million for the year ended 24 January 2009.

OrotonGroup is a leading premium retailer of two much loved brands in



Australia and New Zealand - Polo Ralph Lauren and Oroton. The Group employs approximately 600 people and operates ~ 60 stores, several Oroton licensee partners and a premium wholesaling business.

Sally, you have an MBA from Harvard, have worked in the US with Boston Consulting and Banana Republic, you are married, have three children and since 2006 have been Managing Director of the OrotonGroup. What is the key to your success?

Well firstly I guess it depends on what you mean by success? I don't see myself as successful because of my role at OrotonGroup or because of having an MBA. But I do enjoy my life today and so for me that is success. I guess if there's any key for me – it's to constantly question how you like spending your time and make decisions based on that basis – to do more of what you love and less of what you don't. To be thoughtful and really present in your life I think is important. Otherwise I still think plain hard work goes a long way – but it shouldn't feel too hard if you are enjoying the process.

What do you love about your job?

I love many aspects – definitely the speed of change of the marketplace, and the product development process would be two favorite parts.

You have offered many of your senior team external mentors over the past three years. What was the initial motivation for doing this?

I think if you can align people's personal or life goals with the business goals then you have a really happy and winning team. I like that the mentor program is very tailored to that individual so it's not a one size fits all kind of training solution. It is also very personal as let's face it – we are people at work not zombies. The right mentor will prompt one to be more thoughtful – to analyse work behaviours, decisions – and to be open to change.

Have the aims of the mentoring program changed?

No. I think every mentor program has a different set of objectives depending on the professional involved. Sometimes it might be about managing a new boss or specific work challenge. Another might be to learn more about communication styles or to overcome some deep seated insecurity or personal issue that is affecting work performance. More often than not it can just be helpful to have a trusted and usually much more experienced person alongside to talk through issues with.

What do you see as the benefits for the mentee and the organisation?

More confidence, more focus, and an increased level of business maturity or perspective.

How does the organisation measure success from this kind of program?

We don't try to measure it on a quantitative basis but rather I catch up with mentees and mentors to discuss from their perspective what progress is being made. I guess overall though, as a general philosophy we are happy to invest in good people at OrotonGroup and help them when there isn't a traditional and direct benefit to the Group. The long term benefits however I do think will be higher retention and employee loyalty and alignment with our company goals.

Have you ever had a mentor? Formally or informally?

Yes I have had many informal mentors but not ever any formal ones... everyone is different though – so I do think some people really benefit from a more formal programme like the one we run with McCarthy Mentoring.

What was the best part of the MENTOR experience?

It's like any relationship in some ways – connecting with someone closely and learning from them – but I think where the mentor experience may be different is that it is a very safe and non-political environment to voice and explore different ideas and approaches and talk through blockages.

Were there particular issues you wanted to address with a mentor?

No, not that I can recall, but in general I probably tend to be very open with business problems or issues as they arise and glean information from a variety of people and sources.

If you could choose your own mentor who would that be and why? Geography not being an issue.

Hmm. That's a hard one. I guess I would selfishly choose someone who I think is amazing and just want to meet - such as Barack Obama, or Malcolm Gladwell who is a writer I like with a great brain. If I had to be serious, then probably a global retail business leader such as Bernalt Aldt who runs LVMH, or Micky Drexler who really understands brand building at all levels having turned around j crew in the USA.

Our clients

Indigenous Arts Philanthropy Mentoring Program

For the past three years McCarthy Mentoring has worked with Artsupport Australia to provide mentors 10 Indigenous arts organisations across Australia. The program has been made possible by a special grant from the Australia Council Strategic Initiatives Program.



Mentors have worked with these organisations to assist them to become more sustainable and increase revenue through philanthropy. For many mentees and mentors this has involved working closely with the boards and senior management to promote the fundraising function and there has been very hands-on assistance with business planning, marketing, governance and human

resource issues.

Overall the mentors are trusted advisers and a valuable resource outside of the organizations, who can offer a different perspective and experience to solving issues that arise.

By late 2008 the program had facilitated over \$3.3 million for Indigenous arts across Australia. Figures for 2009 will be released later this year.

The Indigenous arts organisations are:

■ **Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation, Sydney, NSW**

Performing arts organisations (or companies):

Kurruru Indigenous Youth Performing Arts, Port Adelaide, SA

Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation, Perth, WA

Ilbijerri Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-operative, North Melbourne, VIC

Visual arts organisations (or companies):

Desart, Alice Springs, NT

Euraba Artists & Paper Makers, Boggabilla, North West NSW

(Separate Category i.e. Publishing companies):

Magabala Books, Broome, WA

Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) Press in Alice Springs, NT

and some that combine visual and performing arts:

Tandanya, The National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide SA
Mirndiyan Gunana Aboriginal Corporation (formerly Woomera Aboriginal Corporation),
Mornington Peninsula, QLD

Artsupport Australia will host a special Indigenous Arts Expo on the afternoon of 11 November 2009 to showcase these Indigenous arts organisations, mostly coming from remote and regional Australia. Mentors will be involved in the preparation of the displays and/or performances to an invited audience of major national trusts, foundations, philanthropists and other potential donors.

Please let us know if you or your organization would like to be represented in the audience at this unique occasion.

What should I do?

Mark's Dilemma

Mark is a young executive at a global pharmaceutical company. He has been at the firm for 7 years and is in his early 30s. He has a background in sales and marketing and has been a strong performer, recently beating his peers to win the firm's top sales accolade for the year.

The company Mark works for is struggling in Australia due to some legislative changes, however globally the company is surviving the Global Financial Crisis well. Mark has been offered a move overseas. It would be a promotion but he wants to stay in Australia. He has never lived or worked overseas and is not especially enthusiastic about travel as he thinks Australia is the best place in the world.

Mark is married to Laura who is a primary school teacher and has been teaching at the same school for the past 6 years. They don't have children at this stage but are planning to in the near future and they want to be near family when that happens.

To complicate the decision making Mark has discovered that his company had been overcharging Medicare services for drugs and the MD responsible for his promotion was at the centre of the scheme. Although the company has addressed the issue with the relevant authorities it is possible that the matter will become public and Mark may be seen as a party to this.

Mentor Comments

Issues to consider

Should Mark stay with the company in Australia he is at risk of being identified at worst as a party to unethical and illegal practices and at best of not being aware of what was happening in his company. Even if this does not become public in the short term he has this information to live with.

If he accepts the overseas job offer there will be a corporate assumption that he will be a long term player in the company. Also there will be issues to resolve around Laura's career and the right time to have a family.

How should a mentor take Mark through these issues?

I would ask Mark to tell me where in his ideal world he would like to be in five years? What would his professional and personal life look like for him to feel happy and successful?

As I listened to his responses I would be guiding him to identify his commitment and loyalty to the company and asking him if he feels disappointed in the behavior of his MD.

Does he see this incident as one off and forgivable or as part of the way business is done?

I would be also be asking him to think about being a citizen/employee in a global company. Is that achievable without the experience of travel and work overseas?

If he accepted the overseas assignment does he assume he would continue to work for the company when he returns to Australia and does that delay his and Laura's decision to be parents?

After this session I would give him the one2one mentoring cards to take home and clarify his thinking. Ideally Laura would also use them so that at our next session he would be able to identify which topics he wanted to discuss.

I am confident that Mark will make the right decision.

Events

Perth: Mentor Workshop, Wednesday 5 August 2.00 – 3.30pm, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Perth.

Sydney: McCarthy Mentoring Spring Lunch, Tuesday 29 September 12:30 – 2pm, Union Club, Sydney.

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Please [send us](#) your news, articles and feedback for the next edition

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