

A view from the top: reflections from the mentors

At a recent IR Society Mentoring Programme dinner, Anna Hartropp spoke with senior IROs about the merits of signing up – either as a mentor or mentee.

Whilst enjoying the London skyline from the 24th floor of Tower 42, senior IROs got together over dinner at the end of February, as part of the IR Society's Mentoring Programme. Free-flowing discussion ranged from Donald Trump to AI, and the dissemination of news flow in the IR industry.

Reflecting on their participation in the programme as mentors, there was recognition of IR continuing to be 'a lonely place' for professionals working in small teams and the programme therefore helping to provide a ready-made network for mentees and mentors. The programme's events are designed specifically for both the mentee group and the mentors, and reflect the type of discussion or insight each group wants to acquire.

Validation from the experts

From this year's intake, there was a collective view that mentees were exploring ideas and using their mentors well. Some using them as sounding boards and to bounce ideas off, and others to provide them with confidence, or to help answer questions they felt they did not have the avenues to explore elsewhere.



Anna Hartropp runs a specialist investor relations search business.

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It was felt unanimously that IR in practice at times needs validation, regardless of the level in someone's career, and having a mentor or access to a small network of IR people provides this.



The IR Society's Mentoring Programme 2025 in partnership with Anna Hartropp Limited.

There was also agreement that it is hard to define what 'normal' IR is and that it is an industry that is constantly evolving. Having a resource of views and insights from other individuals in the industry, whereby heads and directors of IR can share their own IR experiences in a confidential setting, supports IR professionals in this evolution.

Continuing demand for 2025

Perhaps one part of the programme that hadn't been anticipated by the mentors themselves, was how valuable it was to have their own opportunity to get together and discuss pertinent issues. Such discussion (under the Chatham House Rule) provided an important opportunity for them to also discuss and reflect on a range of investor relations issues, as well as share experiences of the mentoring programme itself.

When asked how they would want their mentees to sum up the mentoring experience, attendees agreed upon these word descriptions: 'networked', 'a confidante', 'trusted' and 'objective'.

Many of the mentors repeat the programme and this year's participants appeared to feel no differently, which is testament to the success of the programme and the value both parties get from it.

Applications for the 2025 programme for both mentors and mentees are open on the website and will close on Friday 11 April. The new programme will begin with the introduction of mentees to their mentors in the week commencing Monday 5 May. Visit the careers and mentoring section of the website for more information. ■



The Mentoring Programme dinner and view from Tower 42.