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# Apollo Project Submission Form

## Lloyds Banking Group: Breakthrough Mentoring

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### Overview

#### (a) Description of Initiative

Breakthrough is the women's network established by Lloyds Banking Group to promote, develop and retain female talent. It forms an integral part of a bank-wide gender strategy designed to ensure the equality of men and women in the workplace by reducing the divide in senior positions and ensuring that women are equipped with enough support, knowledge and resource to optimise their potential.

An important element of the network is its mentoring programme which imposes no eligibility criteria and is open to women at all levels of their career, in all business divisions and geographical regions of the bank. Both male and female mentors are actively sought and encouraged to ensure awareness of the programme is disseminated as broadly as possible to effect an inclusive, bank-wide initiative. This diversity and inclusiveness are fundamental elements of the programme which aims to support all women to be the best they can, whatever their personal goals and circumstances.

The programme operates around an online database where mentors and mentees register and complete a profile highlighting key facts together with specific areas (career progression, confidence building or work-life balance to name a few) where support can be given or is needed. Mentees are then matched either by self-selection; at one of the programme's many networking events or (upon request) by a member of the Breakthrough Mentoring committee.

Members also benefit from a diverse range of resources including bespoke mentoring handbooks together with the plethora of events referred to below.

#### (b) Description of Organisation

Lloyds Banking Group is one of the world's largest banks employing over 100,000 people working for household names such as Lloyds Bank, Halifax, Bank of Scotland and Scottish Widows. Breakthrough Mentoring spans these and other brands across the group, including colleagues in all business areas from retail branches to head office to support services.

Diversity is the biggest strength and the greatest challenge of the programme. Membership has risen exponentially over the past year and the focus this year is firstly to ensure that the current mentor/mentee relationships embed and are given the necessary support to flourish and secondly to expand the programme's numbers and geographical coverage. The programme's alignment to the bank's management strategy is evidenced by Group Chief Executive, Antonio Horta-Osorio's role as mentor for three senior women, a clear indicator of the Group's commitment to gender diversity.

#### (c) Communication

Breakthrough Mentoring communicates to members through various mediums. A quarterly newsletter publicises key issues and complements the programme's events. National events enable members throughout the country to dial in (on 300 telephone lines) and listen to relevant mentoring presentations and participate in Q & A sessions.



## Strength of Business Case

One of the fundamental aims of the programme was to help achieve the Group’s goal of women forming 25% of the Lloyds board by 2015 and to be a leader on gender diversity in the UK. The Group recently extended this commitment, pledging to ensure 40% of senior roles are filled by women by 2020. We aspire to make Lloyds a dynamic, forward-thinking environment creating success internally and retaining talented women and see Breakthrough Mentoring as performing a vital role in meeting these aims.

## Innovation

(a) Traditionally, banking has been a male dominated sector. One issue we have observed as a result of this gender imbalance is that many women in the industry appear to lack the confidence of their male counterparts to approach more senior colleagues to act as mentors.

Given this cultural barrier, we felt it imperative to take an innovative approach to developing a programme aimed at optimising female talent. Our goal was for the programme to be as accessible and inviting as possible with an emphasis on creating dynamic, fun and interesting events to encourage female colleagues to pluck up the courage to participate. Social events organised outside the formal work environment have proved a particularly effective tool in expanding membership and engaging both mentors and mentees in experiencing the benefits of the mentoring relationship.

To solve the problem surrounding approaching a mentor, we developed the concept of ‘Speed Mentoring’. Using speed dating as a model, mentors and mentees rotate around the room discussing their issues followed by networking drinks. This forum is an excellent way to break the ice and facilitate the sharing of knowledge in an easy, fun environment.

‘World Café’ is an innovative concept where mentee groups circulate around 5 different tables, each with a facilitator (a mentor) who leads discussions on a topic, for example, “how to be a good networker”, “tips for a good presentation” and “how to deal with difficult

conversations”. The discussion is recorded on paper table cloths so each group can build on the previous groups’ ideas. The discussions are summarised to the wider group and included in a follow up document circulated after the event.

The inaugural Mentor of the Year Awards 2013 recognised the amazing efforts of mentors without whom such a successful programme could not have been created. Nominations were requested from each of our 8 regions and judged by a senior panel with prizes awarded to the victorious mentors. Pairings were also interviewed for a special edition of the Breakthrough Mentoring newsletter.

(b) We would advise other organisations to grow organically, expanding gradually to help build confidence and trust in the initiative. Feedback is also invaluable to ensure the programme is adapted in line with its members’ and the business’ needs.

## Outputs

(a) Accountability: Breakthrough Mentoring is led by Lesley Wan who reports to Helen Rose, Co-Chair of the Breakthrough network. Lesley is supported by a committee of colleagues from areas all over the bank, all of whom undertake this work voluntarily in addition to their day job.

(b) Qualitative Results: The speed of growth, scale of membership and success stories emanating from the mentor/mentee relationships is evidence of the positive change in opinions and culture within the bank and the importance of schemes of this nature.

(c) Quantative Results: Membership has grown within just over a year from.c.1,600 to 9,000. Other business areas within the bank are citing our programme as “best practice” and have requested our assistance in setting up similar initiatives. External organisations have also approached us with the same request.

**Helen Rose & Lesley Wan**  
**Breakthrough Mentoring**  
**Lloyds Banking Group**  
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