

Set Up A Mentorship Program

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The mentoring partnership is an agreement between two people to share experiences and expertise toward helping with personal and professional growth.

What does it take to be a mentor?

- Mentors need to have the desire to share what they have learned during their careers.
- Mentors must be willing to spend time with the mentee to develop a good working relationship that is trusting and honest.
- Good mentors must be able to offer a reality check when necessary.
- They must be willing to work with the mentee to develop an Individual Career Development Plan in order for her or him to achieve short and long term goals.

What does the mentor gain?

- Mentors get a chance to talk about their successes and past challenges, which can provide personal satisfaction.
- Mentors have an opportunity to practice their interpersonal and management skills on an ongoing basis, which can help her or him succeed even more.
- Mentors are often recognized as positive role models and are sometimes sought out by others.
- Many mentors find that being in a mentoring partnership helps them expand their own horizons and keep them in touch with what's going in other areas of the organization.
- Mentors will often say that they gain as much as they give.

What are the mentee's responsibilities?

- Mentees must be willing to learn.
- They must be able to accept constructive feedback.
- Mentees must be willing to "stretch" to try new things and take risks.
- They must be able to identify short term and long-range career goals and accept that those goals may change.

What does the mentee get out of it?

- Everyone is ultimately responsible for her or his own career, but it can be very helpful to have someone to talk to who can provide a listening ear and share what they've learned and what has helped them to be successful.
- Mentors can provide valuable direction and clarification at times of confusion or doubt.
- Mentors can help mentees figure out what they need to do to fill in the gaps between where they are now and where they want to be in the future.
- Mentors can provide a different perspective.
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What are the different types of mentoring?

- **Natural Mentoring** is when one person is talking with another and the conversation helps move him or her forward.
- **Situational Mentoring** is usually short-lived and happens for a specific purpose because something has come up that requires consultation.
- **Supervisory Mentoring** is help from one's supervisor. It is very important, but there are some drawbacks:
 1. The supervisor may not be a "subject matter expert" on the topic at hand or for future career direction.
 2. Supervisors are often very busy and they may not be able to devote equal time to all supervisees.
 3. Some people are not comfortable exhibiting vulnerabilities in front of their supervisors for fear that it will negatively affect their performance evaluations.

Suggest That Your Organization Develop a Formal Facilitated Mentoring Program That Includes Mentorship Training and A Process To Carefully Match Mentors and Mentees.

Formal facilitated mentoring programs are structured programs in which an organization matches mentors with mentees. They may target one special segment of the organization whose career development may be lagging behind the others to help that group advance further. They may assign mentors to mentees and monitor the progress of the mentoring connection.

Review The Mentoring Program and Its Progress

1. Plan to commit to a one-year partnership. It takes awhile to develop the trust and rapport necessary to begin working on identifying goals and an action plan to achieve them.
2. Plan to discuss a “no-fault” termination clause, in which either party can back out if it’s not working for them.
3. Plan to have a six-month check-in point to evaluate how it’s working for each person.
4. Monitor the necessary training needs that emerge and make them happen.

Hint:

*Keep it out of the chain of command if possible. A mentoring partnership is often more effective, open, and honest when the partners are not in the same chain of command.

It’s best if there is a two-grade level gap. Exception: when the best mentor in a situation is someone at the same level or even lower because of their experience and expertise.

Your First Meeting

The session should take place in person. If that’s not possible, then email or telephone will due. The following should be discussed:

1. The mentee’s expectations.
2. The mentor’s expectations.
3. Agree to meet at a private, neutral setting to minimize the status differential.
4. Work out the details: logistics, boundaries of the relationship, and confidentiality.
5. Plan how and when you’ll re-evaluate progress.
6. Begin building a rapport.

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