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MENTORING AN ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP SKILL

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Abstract:

Mentoring is the pairing of an experienced or skilled person (mentor) with a person who would like to improve his or her skills (mentee). The mentor acts as a role model and supports the mentee by sharing knowledge, resources and advice to help them improve their skills. Mentoring can happen in different ways. For example, it can be as simple as an employee showing another how to complete a particular task. Or, it can be more involved where employees commit to long-term mentoring relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is an essential leadership skill. In addition to managing and motivating people, it's also important that you can help others learn, grow and become more effective in their jobs. You can do this through a mentoring partnership, which you can arrange within your organization or through a personal or professional network, like the Network. Should you become a mentor? And what do you need to consider before setting up a mentoring relationship? In this article, we'll highlight some things a mentor does and doesn't do, and we'll help you decide whether mentoring is right for you.

Why Mentoring?

Mentoring is an effective way to help employees improve their essential skills, and it doesn't require a lot of resources to be successful. It can also reinforce strong relationships among employees, support a learning culture in the workplace, and increase productivity. There are also many benefits for the mentee and mentor

This table contains benefits for the mentee and mentor.

Benefits for the Mentee	Benefits for the Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved skills• Increased self-confidence• Increased motivation• Increased job satisfaction• Increased productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased opportunities to share skills and knowledge• Increased opportunities to develop leadership skills• Increased job satisfaction• Increased sense of value in the workplace

Becoming a Mentor and Is Mentoring Right for You?

Mentoring can be a rewarding experience for you, both personally and professionally. You can improve your leadership and communication skills, learn new perspectives and ways of thinking, advance your career, and gain a great sense of personal satisfaction. To learn more about the advantages of mentoring, see

Mentoring: A Mutually Beneficial Partnership.

Even if you understand the benefits of mentoring and it sounds like a great idea, you have to decide whether it's right for you. To explore your reasons for mentoring and whether you want to take this type of commitment further, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you want to share your knowledge and experience with others?
 - Do you enjoy encouraging and motivating others?
 - Are you comfortable asking challenging questions?
 - Do you want to contribute to other people's growth and success?
 - Are you prepared to invest your time in mentoring on a regular basis?
 - How will mentoring contribute toward your own career goals?
 - How will mentoring add to your sense of contribution and community?
 - What type of person do you ideally want to mentor? Can you describe the professional and personal qualities of this person? Do you want someone from the same profession or the same career path?
 - In what areas are you willing to help? Are there any areas that you don't want to go near?
- Clarify your reasons and motivations for becoming a mentor. When you meet a prospective mentee, this will help you assess your compatibility.

MENTORING ACTIVITIES

The following activities are simple and practical ways to improve essential skills through mentoring. They are suggestions and can be tailored to meet the specific needs and goals of the mentee.

THIS TABLE CONTAINS MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Essential Skills	Activities
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for the mentee's opinion about an article in a company publication (e.g. newsletter). • Review workplace memos together. Ask the mentee to identify words or acronyms he/she does not understand and discuss them.
Document Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss important workplace documents together (e.g. WHMIS, fire procedures). • Provide guidance on how to complete commonly used workplace forms (e.g. timesheets, schedules).

Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the mentee to practise writing memos or emails to co-workers and managers. Review together and provide feedback. • Suggest learning resources that can help with writing skills development (e.g. workbooks, training sessions).
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how numeracy is relevant to the mentee's work tasks (e.g. scheduling, estimating the amount of time a task will take to complete). • Ask the mentee to prepare an agenda for a meeting, ensuring that enough time is allocated to each agenda item. Review together and provide feedback.
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate effective oral communication skills for the mentee (e.g. invite the mentee to attend a meeting that you are leading). • Encourage the mentee to participate in activities that will enhance his/her oral communication skills (e.g. leading staff meetings, speaking with a co-worker about a particular issue, handling customer complaints). Provide feedback.
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss ways to improve the company's operations or policies. Encourage the mentee to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed ideas. • Ask the mentee to talk about a problem he/she is facing in the workplace. Talk about possible solutions and the strengths and weaknesses of each.
Working with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the mentee to participate in group activities (e.g. volunteering, working groups). • Watch and listen to how the mentee interacts with others. Provide feedback.
Computer Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest learning opportunities to improve computer use skills (e.g. training sessions). • Help the mentee search the Internet for information relevant to

ROLE OF A MENTOR:-

1. Teaching new skills and promoting intellectual development.
2. Serving as guide to acquaint the junior individual with the values, customs and resources of the professions.
3. Being an exemplar for the protégés to emulate.
4. Providing counseling and moral support during times of stress.
5. Fostering personal development by believing in the protégé.
6. Supporting and facilitating the protégé's life's dreams and goals.
7. Sponsoring the protégé for advancement.

STEPS IN MENTORING

1. Initiation :-

The mentoring process begins with a meeting between the mentor and protégé. The initiation phase consists of:

- a) Profiling protégés and deciding on the match for effective behavior modeling.
- b) Familiarizing protégés with corporate functions and smoother initiation.
- c) Avoidance of mentor-manager role-conflict and forging closer ties with protégé.

2. Progression:-

As the mentor protégé relationships begins to crystallize, the mentor provides coaching and counseling. Regular meeting helps to forge the relationship. The progression phase consists of:

- a) Extending the concept to the peer-level through fortnightly mentor- protégé meetings and assigning of buddies.
- b) Reinforcing the formal and informal learning through need based meetings.

3. Assimilation:-

The mentor goes on to build close ties with his protégé. The protégé may even discuss his personal problems and receive help on how to solve them and to integrate better into the organization.

4. Integration:-

Buddies are attached to the protégé. Drawn from peer-groups, they act as communication bridges whenever there are gaps because of age difference between the mentor and protégé.

IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The richness and value of mentoring important relationships are important in the development of young managers. A mentor performs all types of elucidation to his protégé from job content to personal counseling, from drawing up a dress code to teaching table manner etc. Mentoring is a valuable tool for developing self-confidence. The importance of mentoring relationship is:

1. Teaches and advices and protégé gains knowledge and assessment skills.
2. Models and protégé as he gains competency and confidence.
3. Coaches and guides, the protégé gains problem solving and decision making skills.
4. Facilitates & counsels, the protégé gains communicative and collaborative skills.
5. Inspires and influences, the protégé gains humanistic values and creative ideas.
6. Motivates and leads, the protégé gains hands up skills and becomes expert.

CONCLUSIONS:-

Mentoring is essentially an emotional kind of support provided by an experienced persons to younger people through teaching, coaching, counseling and guide and so on. While organizational training

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takes care of knowledge base and the skills of the young manager, mentoring compliments it with personal instruction in the intricacies of operating in the organizations. It reduces training times, ensures individual attention to problems and make the learning flexible rather than structured.

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