

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a relationship which gives people the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process.

Typically, it is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced employee. It is based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

## WHY IMPLEMENT A MENTORING PROGRAM?

Mentoring is an effective strategy which can contribute significantly to the career development of employees.

There are more good reasons to consider a mentoring program:

- ❖ mentoring is a relatively easy to administer strategy which can improve the self-esteem and job competitiveness of employees,
- ❖ mentoring is an effective method for the transference of professional, technical and management skills and knowledge,
- ❖ mentoring focuses on developing employees' skills and potential, and can thus enhance the diversity of the workforce to reflect client groups,
- ❖ mentoring benefits all concerned — the organization, the mentees, mentors and other employees — by increasing the skills, flexibility and knowledge of all participating employees, and
- ❖ mentoring is conducted in-house and so can meet the particular needs of an organization.

## BENEFITS OF A MENTORING PROGRAM

Structured mentoring programs can offer the following benefits to mentees, mentors and organizations.

### ***BENEFITS TO THE MENTEE***

- ✓ Increased skills and knowledge,
- ✓ Increased potential for career mobility and promotion,
- ✓ Improved understanding of their roles in the organization,
- ✓ Insights into the culture and unwritten rules of the organization,
- ✓ A supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated,
- ✓ A smoother transition through management levels,
- ✓ A powerful learning tool to acquire competencies and professional experience,
- ✓ Potential for increased visibility,
- ✓ Networking opportunities,
- ✓ Development of professional and self-confidence,
- ✓ Recognition and satisfaction, and

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- ✓ Empowerment.

### ***BENEFITS TO THE MENTOR***

- ✓ Opportunities to test new ideas,
- ✓ Enhanced knowledge of other areas of the organization,
- ✓ Renewed enthusiasm for their role as an experienced employee,
- ✓ Challenging discussions with people who have fresh perspectives ,
- ✓ Satisfaction from contributing to the mentee's development,
- ✓ Opportunities to reflect upon and articulate their role, and
- ✓ Improved ability to share experience and knowledge.

### ***BENEFITS TO THE ORGANIZATION***

- ✓ Improved delivery of services through more informed and skilled staff,
- ✓ Application of knowledge gained from mentoring,
- ✓ Reduced recruitment and selection costs as a result of higher employee retention,
- ✓ Progress towards equal opportunity in the workplace,
- ✓ Improved communication between separate areas of the organization,
- ✓ Support networks for employees in times of organizational change,
- ✓ Managers with enhanced people management skills, and
- ✓ Successful mentees often become mentors and better people managers.

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTORING**

The following best practices will help you develop an effective, sustaining mentoring program in your organization.

1. Design the mentoring process to ease organization pain: link to business goals of the organization (e.g. succession planning, new employee induction, leadership development, knowledge transfer, etc.)
2. Make sure it's the right time! Use a readiness assessment to determine if your organization is ready to embrace and support mentoring process
3. Senior management are committed for the long haul – they become mentors in the program
4. A coordinator-facilitator role is used to coordinate recruitment, selection, training, communication, follow up and evaluation
5. A systemic approach is used: all the organization's supervision and appraisal practices, training, and other accountabilities and supports for employee learning are aligned with the mentoring practices and the learning of the mentee
6. Talk it up! A comprehensive communication plan is designed to publish results, enlist participants, sustain commitment, and share success stories.

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7. Development plans for mentees and clear agreements for mentor-mentee relationship are in place – includes ‘no-fault conclusion’.
8. Confidentiality is honored.
9. Mentee’s manager has input on development plan.
10. Mentors are mentored and supported in their own learning.
11. Orientation and training is provided to mentors and mentees.
12. Mentors provide a high impact learning experience to the individual learner.
13. Incentive/recognition is provided for mentors.
14. Mentor exchanges and mentee exchanges are held.
15. Process is monitored and evaluated. Metrics for success are determined up front during the assessment and design stage.