

The Value of Mentoring at All Levels of an Organization



In the business world, mentoring has been recognized as a practice to nurture the talents of up-and-coming employees. The primary purpose of mentoring is professional development. A successful and respected professional (referred to as the mentor) works with another professional (referred to as the protégé) who seeks to grow and advance in the organization.

The mentoring role is instruction by example. While the catchwords for coaching are “inspire” and “motivate,” the catchwords for mentoring are “instruct” and “guide.” It is the mentor’s job to teach new skills and explain different outlooks. Typically, that’s how the “star performers” will align their career aspirations and goals with those of the organization. Mentoring is all about giving people broader outlooks, and more things to consider.

Effective mentoring programs also provide organizations with a number of advantages, including:

- Projection of a strong and positive employer brand.
- Effective succession planning.
- Greater employee loyalty.
- Increased retention.
- Promotion of underrepresented candidates.
- Advancement of talented individuals.

Focusing on the entry level of an organization, research has shown providing a mentor who can offer insights into the corporate culture, who can explain the organization structure, and who can help the new employee understand why things get done the way they do is a major contributor to increased productivity and lower turnover.

In today’s workplace, research across a wide range of professions demonstrates that employees who are involved in mentoring relationships have higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of commitment to their organization. Ideally, employees (protégés) should perceive mentoring as an organizational priority of executive management. As a developmental approach to workplace learning, mentoring should be viewed as a way to sponsor educational and training projects, activities, and experiences that benefit both the staff and the organization.



Studies consistently show that employees who have mentors have high retention rates and are more productive than those who do not. A well-designed mentoring program at the mid-career level can help employees moving up rather than on and save companies from recruiting costs and the loss of leadership development.

Later in one’s career, a mentoring relationship is one way to formalize the knowledge transfer process. Particularly, as employees near retirement age, it is important to encourage mentoring relationships. These employees are often eager to mentor younger employees because they do not want to see the knowledge they helped to develop lost when they retire.

By providing feedback in such areas as job performance, relationships, technical information, and role expectations, the mentor passes on lessons learned throughout his or her career. As a result, mentors come to feel that they have had an opportunity to “make a difference” and have made a real contribution to their professions, their organizations, and their own lives.

Last, consider the value of launching a mentoring program in your organization. It can be a complicated process. The organizational environment plays a significant role in the development and nurturance of mentoring relationships. Whether the organization is small or large, for profit or nonprofit, there are key characteristics that create a favorable organizational environment for mentoring:


- Organizational focus—having a positive culture with a shared understanding of the company’s purpose and objectives.
- Skill development—emphasizing training and development within the organization.
- Organizational design—dealing with conflicting work schedules, time demands, and physical proximity.



The goal of a mentorship program should be to improve the work effectiveness and enhance the probability of an employee’s success. Successful mentorship programs aid in developing the growth and strategic direction of the organization through succession planning. Effective mentorship programs also aid in the development of leaders while simultaneously fostering healthy work relationships.

By investing time to carefully construct mentorship programs at all levels of the organization, employers will ensure that they are able to serve employees’ training and development needs effectively while also meeting internal growth and strategic needs.

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