

Successful and Rewarding Mentoring

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Abstract -- In this poster session, I will define mentoring and the benefits for both the mentor and the protégé. I will present different types of mentoring programs and include tools and worksheets. The framework of the poster will be as follows: What is Mentoring: A mentoring relationship consists of a pair of individuals working together in order to achieve specific objectives for skills growth and development. The pair consists of an individual who has skill, knowledge and experience that the other individual has a need to acquire. The two types of mentoring are natural mentoring and planned mentoring. Natural mentoring occurs through friendship, collegiality, teaching, coaching, and counseling. In contrast, planned mentoring occurs through structured programs in which mentors and participants are selected and matched through formal processes. How do you get started? Potential mentors are recruited from various sources including corporate, professional, and religious communities, as well as neighborhood citizens. Nominations for mentors are sought formally and informally through flyers, posters, mailings, and word-of-mouth. Types of mentoring programs and their purposes? Mentoring programs generally serve the following broad purposes: Educational or academic mentoring helps mentored youth improve their overall academic achievement. Career mentoring helps mentored youth develop the necessary skills to enter or continue on a career path. Personal development mentoring supports mentored youth during times of personal or social stress and provides guidance for decision making. Examples of mentoring programs: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America Help One Student To Succeed One Hundred Black Men, Inc The National One-to-One Mentoring Partnership MentorNet National Mentoring Center Resources for Mentors and Protégés (websites and publications) Worksheets to define roles, goals, meeting objectives and track successes.

Historically, mentoring has been defined as a “sustained relationship between a youth and an adult” (Mentoring)⁴. However, today’s definition of mentoring has evolved to include all types of individuals and programs. In this document, I will further define the mentoring relationship and the benefits for both the mentor and the protégé. I will also present different types of mentoring programs, provide additional resource information and sample worksheets to assist you in defining roles, goals, meeting objectives and tracking the success of your mentoring relationship. It is my hope, that after reading this document and reviewing the attachments that you will be ready to start your mentoring journey and will enjoy a “Successful and Rewarding Mentoring” relationship.

Mentoring is a relationship between two people - a mentor and a protégé who work together to achieve specific objectives for growth and development. Mentoring is sometimes referred to as a partnership due to its mutually beneficial relationship. Mentoring is a sustained relationship that requires continued involvement between the mentor and the protégé.

A mentor is someone with specific skills and abilities that they can share with a protégé. A mentor is “simply someone who helps someone else learn something that would have otherwise been learned less well, more slowly, or not at all”. A mentor can teach a skill, provide career advice and guidance, or simply be a trusted advisor providing personal development guidance. The benefits that a mentor receives in this relationship include: personal satisfaction from the give back process, reinforcement of skills and knowledge, respect and admiration from one’s peer, and an opportunity to demonstrate management and leadership skills.

A protégé is someone that seeks guidance and direction from a mentor with experience and expertise that they can learn and benefit from. In career mentoring, often they are looking to further their career by having a relationship with a person of experience, prominence, or influence. In personal development mentoring, a protégé is usually looking for someone to support and guide them through times of personal or social stress.

There are two types of mentoring, natural and planned. Natural mentoring occurs through friendships, colleges, teachers, coaches, extended family members and counselors (Building Blocks of Quality Mentoring Programs)¹. Natural bonds can be made between individuals that seek guidance and those that have the life or career they seek. Often they come from the same backgrounds and have faced the same challenges. These informal relationships are often on an as needed basis and driven by the protégé’s needs.

Planned mentoring occurs through structured programs. These programs are usually sponsored by corporations for career growth with specific goals and objectives. However, there are many formal programs offered through academia, church groups, court-mandated and various other social organizations.

Today the internet provides access to hundreds of mentoring resources and organizations. Below is a sample list of organizations:

- The National Mentoring Center, <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/>, is one of the preeminent national training and technical assistance providers for mentoring programs

across the United States. Created and funded primarily by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- MentorNet, www.mentornet.net, is a non-profit program that pairs post-secondary women students studying engineering, science and math with professionals who work in industry for one-on-one mentoring relationships conducted via email.
- Women's Executive Network (WXN), <http://www.wxnetwork.com/>, is an e-mentoring program that matches girls aged 16-19 with members of the Women's Executive Network to provide role models and help with career decision making.
- The Kean University Women into Science and Technology (WIST), <http://turbo.kean.edu/~wistproj/>, is an outreach program to support and mentor high school girls in science and technology.
- The WomentorSM Group, <http://www.womentor.com/>, is an organization that guides women in their role as mentors.
- **Business mentors R us**, <http://businessmentorsrus.com.au/index.html>, specializes in mentoring programs, and mentoring training for the public and corporate sectors.

Research studies have contributed increased numbers in college enrollments and higher scores on standardized test scores for youths participating in mentoring programs (How Mentoring Helps)². Corporations, such as IBM, find that mentoring programs provide a disciplined approach to managing and developing a skilled workforce and promotes the rapid integration of new employees into their organization and culture (Mentoring Guide)⁵.

While natural mentoring forms on it own, planned mentoring programs require action to get started. These programs often advertise through mailings, email, publications and word or mouth. You can visit the website for organizations you are interested in or contact your HR department, local school administration, and your area chamber of commerce or the internet to request information on mentoring programs. Since the mentors are volunteers there is always an overwhelming need and often mentors will have several protégés.

Matching mentors with protégés is a very crucial activity. The first step of the matching process is typically done through a questionnaire. The protégé will provide skills or specific goals, while the mentor provides a description of their skills and accomplishments. This is usually followed by an interview where the mentor and protégé discuss what they would like to achieve from the relationship. Typical questions would include:

1. Reason for requesting a mentor/protégé:
2. Are you aware of the time investment? 1-2 hrs per week; 3-12 month's duration.
3. Do you have a career development plan?
4. What are your goals for the mentoring program?
5. Describe your ideal mentor.

If the parties agree to pursue the relationship a formal agreement is then made. The agreement will outline: meeting times, short term and long term goals and expectations. A sample agreement is provided in appendix of this document.

The mentoring relationship needs to have a foundation of respect and trust. Both the mentor and protégé must feel that they can speak openly and frankly. Situations could arise where a protégé

needs to express uncertainties and need encouragement and guidance without feeling judged. This foundation will enable open conversations.

Remembering that the protégé is ultimately in charge of their career and personal life, a mentor must be willing to get involved in another person's life. The mentor must be able to provide guidance on all crucial career decisions that affect their protégé. A mentor must be genuinely interested in their protégé's success. The protégé will recognize a lack of interest on the mentor's part and may conclude that his career is not important to their mentor and cannot rely on their guidance.

Both the mentor and protégé must be willing to commit to the time required to maintain a successful mentoring relationship. A mentor who is good at time management and delegation is adept at finding creative ways to carve out time for the mentoring relationship. If the situation allows for it, the protégé can often help by taking on some of the mentor's work load.

A key skill required for both the mentor and protégé is effective communication. Frequent personal interactions via email, telephone or face-to-face is necessary for a successful mentoring relationship. Effective communication and active listening promotes understanding. You must give your protégé your full attention. Don't take other calls or check your watch, be aware of your body language. You must also be patient and not form an opinion or response until the protégé has finished speaking. Enforce understanding; clarify any points that may be unclear.

Feedback is critical to the success of a relationship. Feedback provides status of where we are and where we need to be. Don't avoid giving negative feedback. Guidance is needed most in difficult times. Provide enthusiastic praise about what your protégé does well and honestly discuss areas that need improvement. If your protégé senses you are holding back, they won't trust you to be honest.

Appropriate ways of providing feedback involve:

- Meeting frequently
- Providing information and guidance, not advice
- Being honest, but kind
- Being clear and unambiguous
- Confronting effectively, when necessary

Relationships do not last forever whether they are successful or unsuccessful, and when the time comes you need to end the mentoring relationship.

Some relationships are unsuccessful. A mentor may not live up to expectations or the protégé does not work on the goals as originally agreed. The mentoring relationship agreement can easily be reviewed to ease the termination process. Either party should feel free to end an unsuccessful relationship without harmful consequences. They should not feel compelled to continue because of the mentor's authority.

There are also occasions where a mentor and protégé just don't get along. Their meetings are combative and unproductive. In most cases, the relationship should end, although the mentor may offer continued help on individual questions.

Successful mentoring relationships can end for several reasons, the mentor retires, the protégé or mentor changes careers, it could be a planned program with an end date or the protégé outgrows the mentor. Often when the goals have been reached, discussions begin to lack new ideas and direction and the relationship should come to a close.

Generally, both Mentors and protégés have made large investments in the mentoring relationship and ending mentoring relationships positively can be done by:

- Agree to a no-fault conclusion
- In some cases, Identifying a new mentor
- Prepare for a transition at least three months ahead
- Review frequently where the relationship has reached
- Emphasize the mutuality of the learning gained
- Celebrate the successes of the relationship
- Encourage protégés to become a mentor in turn, when they are ready

Using the worksheets, provided in the appendix of this document, will guide you through accessing the success of your mentoring relationship, in particular the evaluation form. It will assist in reviewing whether the goals and desired outcomes have been met. Typical questions that the protégé and mentor should consider at the close of a relationship include:

- What did we expect to achieve?
- What did we actually achieve?
- What else did we learn on the way?
- How will we use what we have learned in future mentoring relationships?
- Is the protege now better placed to develop his/her career?
- Is the protege now more confident about his/her abilities?
- Would the protege be now able and happy to become a mentor?
- Are both parties happy with the conclusion of the relationship?

As stated throughout this document, the mentoring relationship requires the time and dedication of both parties; however, the rewards are tremendous. Mentors tend to feel a great sense of satisfaction from fostering growth and development of their protégé. They are able to improve the development of their own skills and increase the respect of their colleges and management through the dedication to the relationship. It also enhances their coaching and leadership skills and provides a broader view of their organization and the world. Along with unlocking their career potential, protégés are able to increase their skills in a risk-free environment increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. Often their visibility and recognition is increased and they are able to easily learn their organization's culture. Mentoring is by far the most rewarding relationship for both the protégé and mentor both professionally and personally. Several forms have been included in the appendix of this document to help guide you through your mentoring relationship. I encourage you to utilize them, or others, to keep your goals and actions focused. If you are not a mentor or protégé, I encourage you to take the first step today!

Works Cited

1. "Building Blocks of Quality Mentoring Programs" Mentoring Canada 23 March 2002.
http://www.mentoringcanada.ca/training/Mentors/Modules/1_2_categories.html
2. "How Mentoring Helps." Mentor 2005.
http://www.mentoring.org/caring_adults/about_mentoring/how_mentoring_helps.php
3. "Mentee Goals Revisited." CCC/The Mentoring Group 2004.
http://www.mentoringgroup.com/html/idea_36.htm
4. "Mentoring", Consumer Guide (OERI) Oct. 1993: vol 7.
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/mentor.html>
5. "Mentoring Guide." IBM 2005. <http://w3-3.ibm.com/hr/careerplanner/ment0084.html>

APPENDIX

Mentoring Agreement

The following Agreement outlines the mentoring partnership between:

_____(Protégé)
_____(Mentor)

This agreement will begin _____
Estimated completion date _____

General Objective

Indicate the key objectives to be achieved:

Skills Objective

Indicate the specific skill or area of expertise that will be the focus of improvement during the relationship.

Skills to be developed	Current skill level	Desired skill level
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Describe the primary role of the mentor:

B. Describe the primary role of the protégé:

Measuring Success

A. Indicate how and when progress will be reviewed and evaluated.

B. Indicate how you will measure the success of the relationship at the end of the agreement.

Meetings

Indicate the frequency, nature, location, and duration of the meetings, as well as the responsibility for setting the agenda, scheduling, and following up.

Confidentiality

Outline the understanding you reach about the confidentiality of information shared.

Relationship

A. Indicate the values and principles that will guide this relationship.

B. Indicate how you will build and maintain an open, trusting relationship.

C. Indicate what guidelines you will use to determine if the relationship is "off track" and the steps you will take to get it back.

I agree to abide by the terms of this relationship.

Mentor's Signature/date_____

Protégé's Signature/date_____



Readiness Checklists

If you can respond "yes" to each of the following statements, you are ready to become a protégé and meet the challenges of a mentoring relationship.

Protégé Readiness Checklist

1. I understand the mentoring process. ☐ yes ☐ no
2. I understand the roles and responsibilities of a protégé, am ready to perform the tasks assigned and can give and receive feedback as defined in this program. ☐ yes ☐ no
3. I will take responsibility for setting agendas and meetings with my mentor. ☐ yes ☐ no

Mentor Readiness Checklist

1. I understand the mentoring process and can offer coaching and guidance. ☐ yes ☐ no
2. I understand the roles and responsibilities of a mentor, am ready to perform the tasks assigned and can give and receive feedback as defined in this program. ☐ yes ☐ no
3. I am able to provide coaching and the opportunities that transfer experience, skills, and knowledge. ☐ yes ☐ no

Additional comments:

Mentoring Action Plan

This Mentoring Action Plan outlines how you will accomplish your mentoring goals. For each goal, list what the protégé and mentor need to do to help the protégé accomplish that goal. Decide how you will measure success.

Bear in mind that a sound Plan will incorporate goals and objectives that are **SMART** (Mentee Goals Revisited)³:

Specific: "Pitch 3Q results to Division Director and staff" -- NOT "Get experience in presenting to senior management."

Measurable: What yardsticks can you use to measure your increased competencies?

Aligned: Goals should be aligned with your department, business unit and IBM's business goals.

Reasonable: Don't set yourself up for failure. Be realistic about what you can get done.

Timely: Specify a time for completion of your objectives.

Skill Definition	Current Skill Level	Required Skill Level	Protege Actions	Mentor Actions	How to Measure
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Mentoring Evaluation Form

Take a few moments to close out your mentoring relationship by completing an evaluation. It assesses the value of the mentoring process and identifies area for improvement.

1. The agreement between you and your mentoring partner defined goals for developing experience, skills, and knowledge through mentoring. To what extent did you achieve these goals?

1 low	2	3	4	5 high
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Comments:

2. Estimate the number of hours you spent implementing your Mentoring Action Plan:

_____hours/week

3. Is your mentoring relationship being ended before the agreed-upon completion date?

Yes / No

Comments:

5. Would you recommend the mentoring to others?

Yes/ No

Comments:

6. What lessons have you learned? What would you do differently?

Comments:

7. Do you feel your overall relationship was a success?

Yes/ No

Comments:
