

The Importance of Mentorship

By Erik Hillesheim

A perspective from Gen Y/Z on why we all need to help our youngest members move up the career and leadership ladder

My whole life, I've tried to look beyond athletes or individuals who choose to advance their career illegally. The same applies to business executives who have committed fraud or personally benefitted from unethical transactions. It's hard to see how anyone who plays by the rules can succeed in such a cut-throat world. When trying to analyze areas in my professional life where I've found success, I was surprised when I found the key to success sitting in my own lap. Mentorship is the one true practice that will ensure success in your business.

The importance of mentorship between a superior and a new employee is often overlooked in the business world. Companies hire new employees expecting them to sit through a day of "AB Company Crash Course" and hit the ground running the next day. It simply doesn't work like that. A relationship between mentor and mentee can be one of the most successful ways to ensure employees are performing to the best of their abilities throughout their transition into a role. For associations, mentoring new members into the organization can likewise ensure that these younger members contribute to the vitality of the association.

This relationship is not only very beneficial for the new employee, but also the business. The potential benefits of the mentor, mentee and company are quite impressive. Here are just a few of the benefits.

Mentee

1. **Increased knowledge:** The more knowledge that can be shared about the company, the ins and outs of the position, and each individual's preferences, the more effective the new employee will be in his or her position.

2. **Networking:** The new employee should be given the chance to meet everyone in the office. Not only will introducing them to co-workers make them feel like they belong, it will also give them the perception of promotion, positively impacting their work ethic.
3. **Comfort:** By creating a relationship that extends beyond the professional lives of a superior and a newbie, the newcomer will be willing to reach out for help in a lot of scenarios that he or she potentially wouldn't in normal circumstances.

Mentor

1. **Becoming a Teacher 101:** Although they most likely didn't go to school to learn how to teach, all managers are required to be professors of their practice and industry. Having a mentorship will help you more effectively and efficiently train new employees.
2. **Breaking bad habits:** Where would your company be if management held every single employee "best practice" that they learned 20 years ago dear to heart? By training in new employees with the shiny company policies, managers will be more likely to review how they go about their daily work, tidying up some areas where they may have become lax.

Company

1. **Employee Retention:** Employees like companies that invest in them. By instilling confidence in the new employee and showing that your organization cares about their success, they are much more likely to remain part of your team.

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2. **Comprehensive Training:** While some new employee training programs claim to be intensive and all encompassing, no one-week training crash course will be as effective as a training program that keeps checking in on participants week after week. This relationship will allow you to shape employee performance continually as they grow within the company.
3. **Motivated Employees:** This relationship will allow new employees to find a niche within the company and get them more excited about their roles. This will create a vested interest in the company's success. Sparking this enthusiasm will create an employee base that comes to work smiling instead of one that punches in grumbling about how full their plate is.

There are many other benefits that are less tangible and often small enough to dive under the radar when thinking about the benefits of mentorship. Implementing a solid

mentorship program within your business (or within your association) will ensure success for the mentee, mentor, and the organization as a whole.

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