

7 Ways to Put Mentoring to Work at Your Organization

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Mentoring is a powerful tool because its foundational purpose is to help people triumph. Based on this premise, there are seven ways that any organization can employ mentoring to drive its own goals while contributing to its people.

1. **Recruiting** – Many people consider mentoring to be an employee benefit. Knowing that someone will be waiting for you as you walk through the door on your first day at work to act as your wingman instantly makes new employees grateful to their employer, and they haven't even gotten their first paycheck! As such, having a mentoring program can definitely garner favor for the company during the recruiting process.
2. **On-Boarding** – A buddy system is just a mentoring program with a grade school name. It was nerve-racking to start first grade and it's just as nerve-racking to start a new job. It's no wonder that attrition of new employees is so high in the first year. If your new employees don't get connected to their colleagues right away, there is a good chance that they will feel 'left out on the playground' and leave the company prematurely. What a waste of the company's time and money! Instead, assign a mentor as part of your on-boarding process and help your new employee feel like he's part of the in-crowd. You are guaranteed to see your new employee attrition rate decrease.
3. **Cross-Functional Development** – Too often employees get silo-ed in their departments and their positions. The sales people are intensely focused on selling products, the marketing people are focused on marketing efforts for the products, and the finance people are focused on the cost of goods for those products. Now if only they talked to each other, they might be able to sell more, market better, and pay less for it all. Structuring your mentoring to ensure that people from different functions are engaging in peer-to-peer mentoring will generate more well-rounded employees and a more well-rounded bottom line for the company.
4. **Productivity** – Research conducted by ASTD shows that training an employee on a new task will increase his productivity by 24% but add mentoring to that training and his productivity will increase by 88%. The practical impact of this is as follows: without training, that new task will take the employee one hour to accomplish; with training that same task will take 45 minutes; with training and mentoring, that same task will only take 7 minutes. That's the impact of mentoring. Training shows an employee how to do something, whereas mentoring is one employee sharing with another mistakes, lessons learned, advice as it relates to how to do that something. Inevitably the mentee's productivity will increase from mentoring.

5. **Leadership Development** – This is where Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda from *Star Wars* show up. If you want to develop your high-potential employees to assume bigger roles, have them mentor with someone who has already gone down that path. The more seasoned employees will share with the high-potentials advice, stories, mistakes, lessons learned, resources, and connection. The seasoned employee's network will by association open up to the mentored employee.

6. **Diversity and Inclusion** – A diverse workforce has the potential to be more productive and profitable than other workforces, but without an inclusive culture, that potential is sabotaged. A mentoring program is an important tool in the inclusive initiative because by its nature, it is an example of an inclusive environment. Structuring a mentoring program with a diversity and inclusion strategy will introduce employees to other employees who hold diverse skin colors, lifestyles, experiences, and perspectives from them. Building an inclusive culture starts with these connections.

7. **Succession Planning** – In the mid 1980s, Starbucks Company looked around and realized that the employees who had started the company and who now stored the company's intelligence in their skulls were going to be retiring soon and taking all that brain power with them. Starbucks launched their mentoring program for the sole purpose of capturing that knowledge before it walked off to the Early Bird Special. By implementing a mentoring program, Starbucks fostered the knowledge sharing that the company and the non-retiring employees needed for the sustainable success of the company.

About LifeMoxie!

LifeMoxie! Corporate Solutions offers innovative solutions to train and develop your up-and-coming talent. The LifeMoxie Corporate Mentoring Program combines a customized, on-line mentor-matching mechanism with hands-on personalized introductions and Mentor/Mentee trainings and education to sharpen mentoring skills. As a result your mentoring initiative creates powerful, effective mentoring relationships among your employees.