

## **A Review of Formal and Informal Mentoring: Processes, Problems, and Design**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviews the literature of formal mentoring programs in organizational settings. Additionally, the components of mentoring, how it works, and how it can be implemented in an organization is addressed. Further this paper also proposes that formal mentoring is possible in organizations. Formal mentoring will be shown to be less effective than informal mentoring. Furthermore, it will be shown that formal organizational mentoring can be effective to meet the needs for all employees to have the opportunity to be mentored, to learn from the wisdom, experience and mistakes of others, and to increase the protégé's career opportunities.

### **Introduction**

Mentoring is a relationship. It is a relationship between the mentor and the protégé. Mentoring is defined as a one-to-one relationship in which an expert or a senior person voluntarily gives time to teach, support, and encourage another (Santamaria, 2003). The term mentor came from Greek mythology from the name of an old man who Odysseus left in charge of his home and his son, Telemachus, while he went on a ten-year journey. Mentor helped the boy become a young man and on occasion saved his life. The concept of mentoring relates to emotional support and guidance usually given by a mature individual to a younger person called a protégé (Successfulmanagers.com, 2004).

There is much refining of the definition in the recent literature on mentoring. According to Zachary (2002), mentoring passes on knowledge of subjects, facilitates personal development, encourages wise choices, and helps the protégé to make transitions. In other research it is stated that most of the literature primarily

examines mentoring in relation to individual career development, with the mentor as a friend, career guide, information source, and intellectual guide. This review promotes mentoring with peers, where those in the mentoring relationship are colleagues. Both participants have something of value to contribute and to gain from the other. Participants in peer mentoring have been known to achieve a level of mutual expertise, equality, and empathy frequently absent from traditional mentoring relationships (Harnish & Wild, 1994).

Another broader definition of mentoring is someone who helps a protégé learn something that he or she would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all if left alone (Bell, 2000). This is different from the traditional definitions of mentoring where mentoring is a relationship where a superior, subordinate or a peer can share knowledge, wisdom, and support. In an organizational sense this researcher states, "All mentors are not supervisors or managers. But all effective supervisors and managers should be mentors. Mentoring must become that part of every leader's role that has growth as its primary component" (Bell, 2000, p. 2).

## **Mentoring Components**

Mentoring has a number of components. There is the mentor, the protégé, the relationship, and the atmosphere in which they operate. This atmosphere could be the organization, friendship or family. Defining these components is essential.

### **The Mentor**

The mentor's role includes the following:

- to identify career goals of the protégé,
- provide career advice and guidance, encourage their career and personal development to the fullest, share own insights into the organization, provide suggestions on activities and information that would benefit the protégé's growth, and
- recommend pursuits that will develop specific areas in the person's professional advancement, and assist the employee by being a reference and advocate (Air Force Personnel Center, 2004).

Throughout the literature the mentor is described as being an advisor, counselor, confidant, advocate, cheerleader and listener. The mentor should be confident, secure, sensitive to diversity, and be a good communicator.

Jacobson and Kaye (1996) examined mentoring successes and failures to learn from past problems and to enhance learning opportunities. Some specific mentor roles that emerged follow:

- A mentor's role is to promote intentional learning which includes developing people's capabilities through instructing, coaching, modeling, and advising, as well as providing stretching exercises.

- Mentors should share their failures as well as successes through discussing and analyzing the realities of the organization.
- Mentors should be storytellers, sharing their real-life stories. These provide valuable insights and can establish rapport with the protégé.
- Mentoring is a synthesis of ongoing events, experiences, observations, studies, and thoughtful analyses.
- The mentor and protégé are in a joint venture of sharing responsibility for learning.

The U.S. Department of Transportation Mentoring Handbook (2004) states that a successful mentor is characterized as supportive, patient, and respected, a person who wants to share their experiences, and who facilitates personal and professional growth in the protégé. On the surface the protégé is the person mentoring is geared towards. But notably, a mentoring relationship can be as much for the mentor as the protégé.

Informal mentoring is the natural coming together of a mentor and protégé. This is done in friendship, through personal and professional respect and admiration from each to the other. It is usually a long-term relationship. Formal mentoring differs from informal mentoring in that the organization develops a program and process for mentoring to take place. The relationship is usually short-term (one year) formally, with the hope it will develop informally over the long-term. The mentors are volunteers, or should be, but they are still chosen. The protégés are assigned or strongly encouraged to participate. The protégé and mentor may or may not voluntarily choose each other (Cotton, Miller, & Ragins, 2000). Most research states the mentor should not be a supervisor, but some research is beginning to counter that theory. In a formal mentoring program, there are certain processes and activities that should take place to give the relationship the best chance for success, a point for later discussion.

To summarize, the mentor is seen differently, depending on the organization. The prevailing view is that in most cases the organization sees the mentor as a senior person with much experience. In military and government settings the mentor is seen as either a supervisor or a senior officer. In academia the mentor could be that senior person or a peer, but most of the literature states the mentor should not be a supervisor. The mentor would still be a person who is experienced and has knowledge and wisdom to pass on. Therefore, a mentor can be anyone who the protégé sees as having experience, knowledge, or wisdom of value to them. Feldman (1999) found that the term “mentor” has gone from meaning intense, exclusive, multiyear relationships between senior and junior colleagues to also include a wide variety of short-term, low intensity interactions with peers, slightly older workers, and direct supervisors. The options of who can mentor are wide. And, the mentor should be someone chosen by the protégé, who has a connection with the protégé, someone with whom a relationship can be built. This will be discussed later.

## **The Protégé**

The next component of mentoring is the protégé. The protégé has an important role in mentoring, analogous to the role of the follower in the leadership relationship. The protégé must know what he or she wants and shapes the overall agenda for the relationship. The protégé must be open in communicating with the mentor. And the protégé must establish priority issues for action or support. The protégé must not expect the mentor to have all the answers or to be an expert in every area. The protégé must solicit feedback, and come prepared to each meeting to discuss issues (Ohio Women's Business Resource Network, 2004). Some of these points seem to be more the role of the mentor. But, they are not. The protégé must take responsibility for the relationship. In one program the results indicated the protégé should continue to have responsibility for selecting the preceptor (Benson, Morahan, Richman, & Sachdeva, 2002). The important fact is that the protégé is involved in the relationship as an active partner. Passive completion of tasks is not the goal of mentoring or how mentoring should occur.

## **The Relationship**

The next component is the relationship between the mentor and the protégé. Without a relationship where each person values the other, and makes a connection with the other, the quality of the mentoring will be lessened. In the relationship the mentor and the protégé should understand that the mentor's advice may not always work. Mentors provide options as well as direction. Most importantly, privacy and confidentiality must be maintained. The mentor should listen more than give advice. The protégé should not be dependent on the mentor (Kellam, 2003). Finally, the mentor should be secure in accepting the success of the protégé.

The protégé should come to the mentor in an equal partnership. In the relationship the mentor and protégé should not set too many goals. The process of goal setting is as important as the goals or the achievement of those goals. The relationship should work for the mentor and the protégé. If not, it should be terminated. How a formal mentoring program is developed, how the participants are trained, and how the relationships are made have an impact on the relationship's success. In one study it was found that individuals without mentoring experience lack a realistic preview of the relationship, and consequently may overestimate the costs and underestimate the benefits associated with being a mentor. The anticipated outcomes of being a mentor may affect the decision to become a mentor (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Excellent individuals may choose not to participate as mentors. This could also be true of protégés. The relationship may be undermined before it has begun. The formal mentoring program organization must be aware of this, especially in its initial stages.

## **The Organization**

The last component of formal mentoring is the organization, the atmosphere in which mentoring takes place. It is usually assumed the organization is supportive for a formal mentoring program to exist. This is something that cannot be assumed or left to chance. The organization must be an active participant. The organization is not to enter into the privacy of the mentoring relationship; rather it should develop mentors and protégés through training and education. It should provide the time and resources necessary for the personnel to participate. The organization should, through coordinators and committees, constantly evaluate the processes, be available for intervention, help, and correction. The feedback from participants has a direct impact of the attitudes of future mentors and protégés. In organizations where there is a high rate of mentor/protégé failures, norms of trust are less likely to develop, collaborative behavior and teamwork are less likely to occur, and there is likely to be higher levels of age-discriminatory attitudes and behaviors (Feldman, 1999). The organization must have the mentoring program high on the priority list, with adequate resources and training, or not enter into a formal mentoring program.

## **Informal Mentoring**

Informal mentoring is a natural component of relationships that occurs throughout the society, in the workplace, as well as in social, professional, and family activities. Informal mentoring occurs in a relationship between two people where one gains insight, knowledge, wisdom, friendship, and support from the other. Either person may initiate the mentoring relationship, the mentor to help the other, the protégé to gain wisdom from a trusted person. Cotton and Ragins (1999) found that informal organizational mentoring is more beneficial than formal mentoring. Informal mentors provided higher amounts of several types of career development functions, including coaching, providing challenging assignments, or increasing protégés exposure and visibility. Informal mentors were more likely to engage in positive psychosocial activities such as counseling, facilitating social interactions, role modeling, and providing friendship. One result of informal mentoring is that protégés were much more satisfied with their mentors than protégés were with formal mentors. These differences may be attributed to the underlying differences in the structure of the relationships. Informal mentoring relationships develop because protégés and mentors readily identify with each other. The mentor may see one's self in the protégé and the protégé may wish to emulate the mentor's qualities. Finally, in informal mentoring the protégé and mentor are selective about whom they wish to approach for a mentoring relationship; it can last for years (Nemanick, 2000). Informal mentoring is a strong and valuable tool for developing an employee. It occurs in a relationship that is voluntarily formed by both persons. It is friendship first, learning and career second and third.

## **Formal Mentoring Programs**

Formal mentoring programs are pervasive. The literature studies formal mentoring, its effectiveness, and many of its aspects. There is also literature in the form of mentoring handbooks and business journal articles. Many people may not have the opportunity to develop a mentoring relationship in an informal way. The organization has an investment in all its members and must develop each employee to the greatest extent possible. This is why formal mentoring programs are developed and operated within organizations. Formal mentoring is not as powerful as informal mentoring in some ways, but it is a process the organization should still pursue. The benefits are too important to pass up. The organization should develop a mentoring program that is well thought out and implemented, with adequate resources.

There are benefits of mentoring for the protégé, the mentor and the organization. Mentored individuals tend to enjoy more advancement opportunities and higher wages than their non-mentored counterparts (Nemanick, 2000). For the protégé one paper noted a number of positive factors. People tend to relate more readily and positively to peer assistance than to supervisory direction. Mentoring provides a non-threatening environment for learning and growth to occur. Also, mentors and mentoring have a positive and powerful impact on professional growth, career advancement, and career mobility for the protégé. Mentoring promotes six things a person moving into a management or leadership role must learn: (a) politics of the organization, (b) norms, (c) standards, (d) values, (e) ideology, and (f) history of the organization. This leads to increased job satisfaction (Williams, 2000).

There are also benefits for the mentor. Mentors share and take pride in their protégé's accomplishments, mentoring invigorates and renews their commitment to their job and their profession, and a legacy of the mentor is left (Williams, 2000).

The benefits for the organization are both tangible and intangible. The organization benefits with more employees successfully completing their probationary periods. The mentoring creates enthusiasm, camaraderie, and professionalism, and impacts positively the entire culture of the organization, promoting organizational values, norms, and standards (Williams, 2000). Perrone (2003) states that mentoring should be seen as a critical element in helping the organization achieve its strategic goals. The reasons for establishing a mentoring program must be linked to an organization's business goals. A benefit for the organization is that it gets a leadership team ready to accomplish its objectives (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). Mentoring improves employee performance, increases commitment to the organization, improves flow of organizational information, and supports leadership and management development (Navy Mentoring Handbook, nd).

Lawrie (1987) promoted mentoring for organizations by noting that it is in the organization's best interest to foster high-quality mentor-apprentice relationships when the shaping of the learner's attitudes is important. Skills, of course, can be

learned from one's mentor. But perhaps more importantly sometimes a frame of mind or set of attitudes can be learned most powerfully when one is an apprentice. Rigorous analysis of mentoring programs in national organizations indicates that, like informal mentorship, structured mentoring is effective in integrating new employees and enhancing their career success and work satisfaction (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). Mentoring is too beneficial for it not to be formally implemented in an organization. Informal mentoring will always occur. The goal is for formal mentoring to promote mentoring in an informal way throughout the organization. It can change the culture of the organization into a mentoring culture. If the people believe that mentoring is important to the organization, mentoring can become important to them.

### **Problems Associated with Formal Mentoring**

A number of sources exist that generally address formal mentoring and its problems, and other research that addresses specific problems. Beehr and Raabe (2003) studied formal mentoring versus supervisor and coworker relationships from the perspective of the mentor and the mentee. There were three factors present with the mentors. They were relatively high in the organizational hierarchy, at least two levels above the mentee, the organization sponsored the mentoring as an official formal program, and job satisfaction was evaluated. The researchers used the Leader-Member Exchange theory to evaluate the data from supervisor relationships versus mentor relationships. This theory is based on the concept of social exchange, providing a parallel between mentoring and leadership processes. In this study it was determined that the mentors were not the mentees' direct supervisors, allowing for a separation between the two roles. The study also noted that much of the previous research does not differentiate between mentors who were or were not supervisors. The mentoring dimensions in this study are psychosocial support, career development, and role modeling. The leadership/supervision dimensions are contribution, affect, loyalty, and professional respect. The Beehr and Raabe study's overall purpose was to determine the strength of the relationship between the formal mentor's and mentee's perceptions of their relationship with each other and to compare mentor-mentee relationships with supervisor-subordinate relationships and with coworker-coworker relationships in relation to mentee outcomes.

The results are not good for formal mentoring. The Beehr and Raabe (2003) indicated a surprising result was that mentoring did not play a significant role for any of the outcome variables. This contradicted their expectations and was different from some previous findings. Two practical implications the authors identified from this study were that mentors and mentees should be required to spend more time together than the minimum two hours per month as is the case in the programs studied. Supervisors or coworkers should be chosen to perform mentoring functions. They are naturally closer and appear to have some advantage in terms of impact on the mentees in the present study. This is of great significance to the formal mentoring programs. This study further suggests that formal mentoring by superior non-supervisors is not effective, in regards to mentees' attitudes (job satisfaction,

turnover intentions, and organizational commitment) as most programs are designed. The authors also state mentoring-type functions performed by supervisors (or even coworkers) might be more effective than mentoring by someone else.

Cotton, Miller, and Ragins (2000) studied the effects of marginal mentoring, the type of mentor, and quality of relationship and program design on work and career attitudes. Their study supports much of Beehr and Rabbe's (2003) findings, but they do give some hope for formal mentoring. They note that a substantial portion of mentors may simply be marginal, meaning they disappoint the protégés or may not meet some or most of the protégés' developmental needs. Studies that compare mentored and non-mentored individuals only are based on group averages that may mask the differences in relationship satisfaction. The authors go on to compare formal and informal mentoring. Their study determined the following:

- Mentoring is good if the mentoring, formal or informal, was highly satisfying for the protégé.
- Informal mentoring was better than no mentoring.
- Formal protégés who reported being in highly effective mentoring programs reported more positive career and job attitudes than formal protégés who reported being in less effective programs.
- Protégés in effective mentoring programs reported more satisfying mentoring relationships than protégés in ineffective programs.
- Programs whose purpose was to promote protégés' careers had a significantly stronger relationship with attitudes than programs whose purpose was to orient new employees.
- Programs with guidelines for frequency of meetings were more effective.
- Programs where the mentor voluntarily entered the relationship were marginally more effective.
- Protégés whose mentors were in other departments were significantly more satisfied.
- Good mentoring may lead to positive outcomes, bad mentoring may be destructive, or in some cases may be worse than no mentoring at all.
- Even the best designed program may not compensate for a pool of marginal mentors.

These two studies have many implications for formal mentoring programs. It is agreed that informal mentoring with a good mentor is the best kind of mentoring. So should an organization only be concerned with informal mentoring? No. A formal mentoring program is beneficial if it promotes informal mentoring and involves good mentors. The goal of a formal mentoring program should be to promote the protégé's career and to create a mentoring environment in the organization where informal mentoring is increased, because informal mentoring is the most effective. These ideas and theories should not be seen as formal mentoring program eliminators, but rather they should be considered as program health and effectiveness red flags for the ongoing program and as points to be considered in the development, implementation, and ongoing assessment of any formal mentoring program.

To address Beehr and Raabe's (2003) conclusion that supervisor/coworker mentoring is more effective than formal superior mentoring, a second tier of relationships should be built into the formal mentoring time period. This tier could be a formal supervisory assignment, task, evaluation, and review program parallel to the formal mentoring program. This would promote extenuating interaction between the supervisor/coworker and the protégé where informal mentoring could take place and be promoted through training and experience in mentoring. Informal mentoring would increase and an increase of mentoring in the organizational culture would similarly occur through effective mentoring training and education for the entire organization. Of course, this is an under-studied academic field.

The next study did look at just such a two-tiered mentoring program in an academic medicine mentoring demonstration program during reorganization. It involved identifying effective faculty precepting and mentoring. Benson, et al. (2002) conducted a two-tiered program mentoring study. It compared and contrasted precepting and mentoring. The study showed the program design was important. The program was two-tiered, participation of mentors/preceptors was voluntary, and mentors were independently selected by the junior mentees. The faculty participants in this program perceived they were more productive, had initiated more projects, and were more focused on their work. This study also identified a trend towards increased retention of minority faculty. Both junior and senior faculty involved in the program believed the time spent was valuable and had a positive effect on their professional life.

Kram (1985) identified conditions that impede constructive mentoring. Potential mentors may be opposed to the concept because they never received mentoring, or they are experiencing career blocks that extinguish the desire to promote junior colleagues. Potential protégés may be skeptical if they do not trust senior managers' motives, if they do not respect the competence and advice of senior colleagues, or if they do not have the attitudes and interpersonal skills to initiate relationships with potential mentors. Senior management resistance can stem from a results orientation that overrides interest in people development objectives.

Methods to overcome such obstacles have been identified (Kram, 1985). The human resource development professional should establish a sequence of programs and organizational changes that support rather than force the mentoring process. Failure to define objectives and conduct a diagnosis can promote resistance among those who should benefit from the process. Kram notes that taking time to involve organizational members in a collaborative approach pays off. It is evident that many organizations could fall into the trap of needing a mentoring program, doing good research, but not involving the members of the organization in its development, before implementation (forced upon the organization). Planning, engagement, and collaboration are needed throughout the organization for a mentoring program to be successful.

## **Building a Successful Formal Mentoring Program**

The literature on formal mentoring is mostly from consulting groups, with a small amount of research on the design of the program. Many formal programs are in place and operating. Much of the literature identifying what a formal mentoring program should be is more anecdotal and less academic. Again, this shows the need for new studies into the structure of a formal program related to its effectiveness. The following is a compilation of both types. First, it is important for an organization to audit and fine-tune one-on-one training under a number of conditions. Mentoring can be justified if failure of on-the-job consequences is serious, and is justified where the shaping of the learner's attitudes are important (Lawrie, 1987).

Mentoring is also about creating a learning experience for the protégé. The American Society for Training and Development conducted a human resource development survey to determine how learning occurs in organizations. The question was, "How does learning occur in your company?" The following are the results.

- 95% - Formal in-house training
- 83% - Teams
- 79% - Formal off-site training
- 71% - Coaching or mentoring
- 71% - University programs
- 69% - Continuous improvement
- 66% - Individual development plans
- 58% - Feedback
- 55% - Best practices
- 42% - Job rotation
- 38% - Focus groups
- 18% - Quality circles
- 12% - Other

The implications are many. But one is important for this review. Mentoring is a way learning occurs in 71% of the companies surveyed (Benson, 1997).

### **Planning and Organization**

In reviewing the literature, common themes are apparent for developing and establishing a mentoring program. The first component is to identify goals for the program, including a strategy. Perrone (2003) states that a well-defined mentoring vision has the capacity to serve as a guiding mechanism for future mentoring efforts. In addition, senior management as well as others responsible for the mentoring system must come together to design strategy, define objectives, and plan the implementation of such programs. The purpose, short- and long-term goals, and who to focus on as mentors and protégés must be determined. As it has been stated

throughout this review, any formal mentoring program should have the ultimate goal of promoting informal mentoring as a strong organizational cultural component. Organizational goals may include improving employee retention rates, enhancing the match between employees and jobs, increasing employee job satisfaction and loyalty, facilitating the professional growth of protégés, and teaching organizational culture, values and standards (Williams, 2000). More ideas for the planning of a mentoring program include, taking at least six months to plan the mentoring initiative and get “buy in” and linking the mentoring program goals to the mission and values of the organization is also important. If you do not, the efforts will not be taken seriously and will fail. Start small by focusing the effort on a group in the organization. Two good targets are new hires and budding leaders. Do not do everything yourself. Create a dynamic task force that is excited about mentoring. Do not reinvent the wheel. Good materials for designing a mentoring program exist and you can hire a quality consultant. Plan a great deal of structure in the program, and evaluate everything you do (Phillips-Jones, 2003).

The next area is to identify who will administer the mentoring program. It is necessary that a coordinator be assigned to oversee the program development and to monitor the ongoing program. Also there should be a committee to develop and monitor the program. This committee **should** be comprised of senior personnel and the targeted mentoring group.

### **Input and Collaboration**

This moves into the next area of concern, input and collaboration in the area of program development. In one study where a mentoring program was started at a university library, at the initial organizational presentation of the program, the library faculty asked why more people were not asked for input before the program was implemented. The mentoring committee was surprised by the negative reaction the program received. The other concern faculty raised was why mentors should be saddled with one more obligation when their workloads were already full (Kuyper-Rushing, 2001). This example shows a significant need for input from supporters, as well as less than enthusiastic members before implementation, and preferably during development.

In the Lansing Police Department’s mentoring program input on organizational goals came from all members of the organization. The mentoring coordinator conducted a series of focus groups, including supervisory and non-supervisory personnel, from every area of the department, as well as individuals from the academy and police union. These sessions provided critical, substantive input on every aspect of the proposed program. Every officer with three or more years completed a survey to provide feedback on a mentoring program, including any potential barriers to implementation, accessibility, and acceptability. Sworn personnel with fewer than three years completed another survey designed to elicit positive and negative experiences they had encountered during their probationary year with the department. All focus groups and surveys were anonymous. Mentoring

cannot succeed without support from all levels of the organization, especially senior management. Senior management support includes policy statements, allocation of financial resources, active recruitment by and involvement of administrators in the program, inclusion of mentoring as a consideration for promotion, and public speeches by administrators about the progress and accomplishments of the program (Williams, 2000).

United Defense identified the implementation solution for their new mentoring program and then conducted a series of buy-in orientations. The solution was developed by five senior managers, and then it was sold to the organization. In the implementation phase a cross-section of the organization oversaw this stage. An evaluation of this pilot program has not yet been completed (mediapro.com, 2004). It seems reasonable, however, to assume that the organization should have involved a cross-section of the members and used focus groups for the development. Buy-in meetings are perceived as the-decision-has-been-made-and-you-will-come-along meetings. By having input at the beginning, many problems are alleviated or lessened later on. Complete organizational input and involvement in the development process is critical for a successful mentoring program. Even more important is the support and participation of the administration of the organization. This provides the solid foundation for formal mentoring success.

### **Selecting Mentors**

The next area of development for a formal mentoring program is the selecting and training of mentors. This critical function is well documented in the literature. The three basic questions include:

- Who should the mentors be?
- How does the organization select them?
- What is their role?

The best mentors are not necessarily your best employees. Mentors need to exhibit flexibility and good interpersonal and counseling skills. Mentors can be selected from two groups. The first group includes individuals who are already functioning as mentors. They probably have the right motivations and probably have become pretty good at it. The second group of new mentors can be nominated by the leadership of the organization. All people who are to be trained as mentors have to be “winners.” They must be good at their jobs, respected throughout the organization (with administration and workers), and they should have the skills, beliefs, and values you will be trying to instill in the learners. They should have two crucial attitudes. First, they should like teaching, guiding, and training. And, they need to be able to tell you a story from their careers in which a mentor put them on the right track (Lawrie, 1987). All potential mentors should be invited to participate. A personalized letter from the department head and the administrator of the protégé group to these individuals should be used for the invitation (Benson, et al., 2002). All mentors must be volunteers. This invitation to potential mentors should be well

thought out, take time, and include input from many. The best mentors may not be obvious and the obvious mentors may be the worst.

The mentor should use a transformational leadership style in working with protégés. This style has been shown to be associated with increased protégé receipt of mentoring functions (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000). Transformational leadership occurs when one or more engage others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. The leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. According to Burns, this results in a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. A mentor's use of laissez-faire leadership was found to be negatively related to the protégé's receipt of mentoring functions (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000). The mentor who engages the protégé and transforms the protégé based on the protégé's needs is an effective mentor. The mentor should be focused on the protégé's personal and career development, not on the completion of organizational tasks. Specific organizational needs and task completion can be addressed through a preceptor who is a supervisor/coworker, and this can be a complementary program to the mentor program. It must be reiterated, the formal mentor must not be a supervisor, which is not to say the supervisor cannot be or should not be an informal mentor.

### **Training Mentors**

All mentors should receive formal training. Organizations should develop training according to their own unique needs. However, quality training provided by a qualified professional remains paramount to program success. The training should cover mentoring history, participant roles, success factors for pairing mentors and protégés, practical hints and suggestions, and general expectations mentors and protégés have of each other. Training should also include an overview of the program structure, guidelines, policy, goals, and evaluation criteria. The **heart** of mentor training is communication. A communication expert should conduct this part of the training (Williams, 2000).

Mentoring program training sessions are primarily for protégés and mentors. They should, however, also include the protégés' superiors. Each member of the organization has a mentoring role and mentoring responsibility (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). The roles may be formal or informal, but all should have training. Furthermore, research suggests that protégés, mentors, and the protégés' managers should participate in formalized training programs emphasizing mentoring concepts and skills. They also stress to not let people off the hook. If they have to miss the training event, have a back-up session for them supplemented with self-study materials and coaching. Another suggestion is to form joint protégé and mentor training with trust building exercises (Phillips-Jones, 2003). It is important to not try and turn mentors into sophisticated training people like yourself. If you do so, even

unconsciously, it will backfire, and they will become overwhelmed and subsequently fail. Training with mentors involves three steps. First, the mentor should make a careful diagnosis of what the learner's job is now and what it is likely to become. Second, a real assessment of what the trainee has yet to learn is done by the mentor and the trainee, and they collaboratively build a learning plan. Third, you help them develop a set of behavioral milestones that will signal the protégé, not the mentor, that learning is taking place. These are things the protégé can do as a result of the mentor relationship that they could not do before (Lawrie, 1987).

An organization should provide thorough mentoring training for all members. Specific training should be included for the mentor, the protégé, and the protégé's supervisor. Communication and interpersonal skills training are paramount for the mentor. The administration must fully support the training aspect with time and resources. If the training is not complete, the mentoring will be weak, causing formal mentoring program failure.

### **Pairing Mentors and Protégés**

Mentors and protégés can be linked up in different ways. Formal mentoring relationships usually develop through the assignment of members to the relationship by a third party (Cotton, et al., 2000). Pairing is based on the goals of the mentoring program. In one study the mentors volunteered and all members of the new faculty were encouraged to become protégés. The protégés developed the relationship with the mentors (Benson, et al., 2002). In another study a mentor advisory team and the program coordinator paired protégés with mentors. Mentors did have some input, but the coordinator made the final decision. In this study the coordinator examined the strengths of the mentors and consulted protégés about their career goals. The mentor and protégé should meet to discuss their needs and wants. Personalities should also be considered for mentor-protégé pairings (Williams, 2000).

Mentors, protégés, and superiors need agreed-upon program parameters. Much of this is done in the planning stage with input. The length of a partnership is usually six months to one year. The frequencies of meetings between the partners are agreed upon, as well as the specific activities of each participant and the evaluation. Rewards, financial or symbolic, may also be specified (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). The mentor and protégé must respect each other. They need to have compatible values and career goals which yield a comfortable open communication atmosphere. Basic mentoring activity is listening to each other, caring about each other, and cooperatively engaging in mutually satisfying ventures. This allows the transfer of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors based on a level of trust. Trust is the most important dimension of a successful mentoring relationship. Without mentor/protégé trust no amount of structure, guidelines, and effort can make the relationship succeed (Williams, 2000). The content of the relationship is confidential and each participant is required to respect that confidence. A suggestion for a formal pairing plan is to have the mentors be selected, but serve voluntarily, and the protégés be a specific group (new employees or new leaders), with the protégés selecting a mentor

from the official mentor pool. This would allow the organization to select mentors, the mentors to volunteer, and for the protégés to have some choice in mentors.

### **Implementation**

At this stage the mentor begins the mentoring of the protégé by performing a variety of functions. The first function is a “career” or professional function. The second is a “role modeling” function where the protégé learns what appropriate behaviors are. The third is the “psychosocial” function where the mentor serves as a friend and confidant. And the last function is a “political” function. This is where the protégé learns how to acquire influence (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). The mentor and the protégé are each responsible for the effort required for a successful mentoring relationship. The mentoring team must communicate on a regular basis, beyond the program requirements, be open in communicating to each other, set the agenda for each meeting, come prepared each meeting to discuss issues, and be honest about expertise (Ohio Women’s Business Resource Network, 1997).

### **Monitoring Participants**

It is important for the mentoring coordinator to check on progress, encourage the participants, and make sure the relationship is working. The coordinator is an impeller, liaison, and the administration’s representative. The coordinator monitors the relationship and helps the parties to bear fruit, meets one-on-one with the participants, and publishes a monthly newsletter to provide mentoring tips, program updates, and spotlights on particular participants or occurrences (Williams, 2000). It is important that the coordinator have a relationship with all the protégés and mentors to head off problems before they become severe. These relationships are not to betray confidences, but to point out problems. Identification of any serious issue needs the coordinator, mentor, and the protégé to be involved in addressing the issue. The coordinator must also maintain confidentiality.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the program is critical. It determines whether to consider the protégé an exceptional candidate, whether to prolong or change the program and its components, and to evaluate the mentors for future involvement. Results can be assessed by evaluating behavioral changes, comparing costs, and doing a cost-benefit analysis (Benabou & Benabou, 2000). Kram (1985) states that evaluation of training and development efforts includes pre- and post-tests as well as long-term follow-up with participants and control groups. These tests can be interviews, questionnaires, and surveys to reveal participants’ attitudes toward mentoring, their understanding of the mentoring process, and their perceptions of the organizational climate. In the Lansing Police Department Mentoring Study, year-end protégé and mentor surveys examined assimilation into the department, acquiring and enhancing skills, identifying career goals, and success in completing their probationary periods. Besides the mentors and protégés, others were surveyed concerning the impact of

the program including issues such as the protégés' conduct, appearance, and attitude (Williams, 2000). Any evaluation process must be developed in the planning stage with input and collaboration from the entire organization. The process should also be very clear to the participants in the orientation. The evaluation process can compare one year's group of mentor/protégé teams from beginning to end and it can compare one year's group of teams against another year's group.

## **Conclusion**

Formal mentoring programs are seen by organizations as necessary programs to implement. Organizations that have formal mentoring programs include AT&T, Clairol, Colgate-Palmolive, duPont, Dow Jones, Eastman Kodak, Exxon, Liz Claiborne, Motorola, New England Telephone, Johnson & Johnson, Pacific Bell, Pitney Bowes, Proctor & Gamble, Federal Development Bank, U.S. Department of Transportation, the Navy, the Air Force, the Air National Guard, Agilent Technologies, Intel, and Southwest Airlines (Benabou, 2000). The literature is diverse in identifying the components of successful mentoring. However, research is lacking in comparing the components of a mentoring program with outcomes. Research identifying formal aspects of mentoring for success is needed.

At this time, it is widely agreed that mentoring is good for the organization, the protégé, and the mentor. A formal mentoring program must take the best of informal mentoring and institutionalize it. Ragins and Scandura (1999) identified the possible importance of a formal mentoring program for developing future mentors, and developing an organizational mentoring culture. Organizations that actively develop protégés are likely developing future mentors. If an organization seeks to develop mentoring relationships as part of the organizational culture, it may need to take a proactive role in reaching potential mentors who have not been in a mentoring relationship. Such organizations may also promote the development of mentoring by including them in performance appraisals and career development programs.

This review indicates that mentoring is important for the organization. At this time mentoring should be formalized, using best practices, while supporting informal mentoring through education and training. The reason for the formalizing of mentoring is not to replace informal mentoring, but to promote mentoring as an important part of the organizational strategy. Formal mentoring can be improved through academic research of formal mentoring programs. This subject is in an area that crosses many disciplines where academic resources should be allocated to identify reality. There are enough organizations with mentoring programs with history and data for this research to use.

Maxwell (1998) identifies mentoring as empowering. He states that a key to empowering others is belief in people. According to Maxwell, empowerment is powerful not only for the person being developed, but for the mentor. Empowering others makes you larger. His protégé wrote to him to express appreciation and gratitude. The individual suggested the best way to show gratitude was to pass on

that gift to other leaders in his life. Mentoring occurs naturally as a powerful activity for passing on wisdom and knowledge from the wise to the naïve, resulting in protégé success and mentor fulfillment. Organizations need to capture some of the power of mentoring to create greater organizational success.

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