

**UNDERSTANDING MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP FOR AN EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROGRAM**

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**Abstract:**

Human Resource (HR) is a vital function in any Organization. It is responsible for managing and developing work force, ensuring that the company has right people in the right roles and they are motivated and stay engaged. However, in today's fast-paced and ever-changing business environment, HR leaders are facing a new set of challenges. The term VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) has been used to describe this new reality, and it is having a significant impact on the way HR operates. In this new reality (VUCA)environment, System of effective mentoringwillprovide Organizational work-force ample confidence to face the newer managerial challenges. One of the most significant benefits of having a mentor is that you get to learn from someone with more experience than you. Your mentor has likely gone through similar challenges and obstacles and can offer you advice on how to overcome them. The purpose of mentoring is to help mentees tap into the knowledge of those with more experience than themselves and learn faster than they would on their own. It's also an opportunity to grow their network and connect with leaders rather than only their peers. Mentoring keeps you up to date on what young talent in your field is learning and where the industry is moving. Through mentoring, you gain experience in leadership and management and develop your communication skills as you describe industry norms and technical information. In addition to being prepared and committed, the mentor-mentee relationship must be built upon certain factors including: Trust and respect, Open and truthful communication, Flexibility and understanding of other perspectives.

The goal of a mentor/mentee relationship is to achieve personal and professional objectives. It is important that the mentor delivers constructive feedback and that the mentee actively listens,so thatthey can learn at the highest capability. In the light of the above facts, this paper tries to explain the Mentor-Mentee relationshipand examined the ways to start an effective mentoring program.

Key words: Mentor, Mentee, Mentoring program

**Introduction:**

**Mentoring:**

David Clutterbuck& David Megginson, in their book: Mentoring Executives and Directors (1999) stated that mentoring is an “off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.” CIPD mentioned that mentoring is basically to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague uses his or her more excellent knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a more junior or inexperienced member of staff. In 2004: Luecke mentioned that mentoring has proved to facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge and endorse professional standards. Suzanne Faure defined Mentoring as a “supportive learning relationship between a caring individual who shares his/her knowledge, experience, and wisdom with another individual who is ready, willing, and able to benefit from this exchange to enrich their professional journey”. Therefore, mentoring can be defined as professional learning related to transfer of knowledge and professionalism between an experienced, knowledgeable employee and less experienced, knowledgeable employee. Many of the definitions in professional mentoring are due to the kind of professional mentoring applied at the academic level, including the process of helping the individual to make the right professional decision in the academic choice, and thus the profession appropriate to his preparations, abilities, tendencies, preparation, and enrollment.

Both Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) defined Mentoring as a process in which an experienced professional plays the role of a mentor who provides support, assistance, and guidance to a less experienced person as a mentee, and steers his or her career progress. Pertin in 2011 defined mentoring as the professional relationships in which a qualified individual (Mentor) assists another less experienced person called mentee in developing challenging knowledge and skills which can promote personal and professional growth. According to Marquardt and Loan (2006), mentoring can be defined as the “Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work, or thinking.”

Marquardt and Loan tried to explain the relationship as a kind of support provided by one person with the necessary expertise and knowledge to someone else who lacked it in through an individual link created through regular communications over a specified period. However, according to Megginson and Clutter buck (2005), mentoring connects to recognition and development of chances for an individual which can be long-term procedures, in which the objectives might change but are always determined by the mentees. Mentoring definitions have been examined, debated by scholars (Allen and Eby, 2010). Mentoring can be a life-altering relationship primarily when directed towards professional development (Hezlett and Gibson, 2005). Mentoring is often relevant 'when learners are making transitions at critical points in their lives, and mentoring may be associated with the selection, career and personal development, career and private support, and change.

Similarly, Shula and Blanchard (2001) mentioned that mentoring involves supporting people in identifying and defining the needs of their development and setting their personal goals and objectives; encouraging self-governing learners by the way of activities such as: allowing them to talk and raise their complexities, and challenges; help them to reproduce their thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and beliefs, and to observe difficulties from various perspectives; encouraging and guiding them in independent solution and analysis of their opportunities and problems; supporting the settlement of issues by embracing an integrated approach, and enabling them to become effectual in decision making. Mentoring is mainly select capabilities possessed by the employee as a whole, working on sponsorship, and directs the employee to the proper methods and tools to achieve the Advantage of them. Therefore, mentoring is a long-term collaboration between the Mentor and mentee (The employee) relationship.

#### **Mentor:**

One of the first remarks of the term: "mentor" was found in Homer's 'The Odyssey'. A wise man named Mentor was given the task of educating Odysseus' son Telemachus. Odysseus wanted to entrust the upkeep of his kingdom and his son to a wise and trusted mentor (Irby, 2016). The Merriam Webster dictionary defines a mentor as a guide. A mentor is an older individual with more experience who can help advise another employee's development. The mentor's role is to guide, to give advice, and to support the mentee. A mentor can help an employee (mentee) improve his or her abilities and skills by providing guidance and advise through assessment, and observation based on experience and skills gained over years. The American Psychological Association (APA) defined two main functions for the mentors: work-related guidance and development and serving as role models. Therefore, Mentors can provide professional expertise and advice to other individuals called mentees.

There are many roles and responsibilities of the mentor in any organization. One of the most traditional roles of a mentor is to help the new employee quickly understand the organization's culture. But the primary purpose of using a mentor is to help the continuing employee develop in their current position and become fit for new jobs and career opportunities. Mentors are also can help in assisting an employee, further to a specific task or area of responsibility, to quickly learn what they need to know to succeed in their job and role. A mentor can also serve as a sounding board as the new employee absorbed into the organization. As we can see from the above definitions and tasks of the mentors developed by researchers and centers interested in development and training, there are many views and descriptions of the role of the mentor, but all include actions such as support, guidance, facilitation, and empowerment.

Hence we can conclude that the most important role of the mentor is to provide guidance, advice and counseling (Parsloe, 1999). In conclusion, most authors and studies highlight that the most significant role of the mentor is to provide guidance and advice. These roles are substantial in terms of development, training, and mentoring. These skills can help this mentee to review and identify strengths, set goals, and study opportunities. Later these roles are reflected in the mentee as follows: skills development, planning, and implementation of their professional development. Help them set high but achievable goals, make realistic plans, monitor progress, provide feedback, and provide a role model (Evans, 2005).

Mentors must have many qualities, because mentoring as a training relationship requires specific characteristics that must be available in the mentor, including good intelligence, integrity, ability, professional attitude, and standards. Such qualities will help the mentor to meet the expectations of the mentee (Karam 1995). The mentor should also have other characteristics such as strong personality, flexibility, enthusiasm, desire to share knowledge, negotiation skills, and ability to give and receive various responses, evaluation, reporting, and goal setting (Fisher, 1994). We note from the above characteristics that, it must be available in the mentor and both are mainly concerned with competence and experience but at the same time depends on the right balance between personal qualities and knowledge of the organization in which the mentoring relationship occurs.

Mentoring is an excellent commitment to time, patience, and listening and communication (Wilson, 1990). It is, therefore, the duty of an excellent mentor to always encourage the mentee based on what they feel comfortable in participating, understanding what may be partly self-evident for what the learner is trying to achieve. Sharing your experiences, successes, and failures will lead to the breakdown of the walls and encourage the trainee to reciprocate. Moving to professional and straightforward activities together, such as scientific talk, can help build a more confident and trusted relationship.

**Mentee:**

When thinking about the mentoring relationship, the focus is always towards the mentor and neglect the role of the mentee in this relationship, although it is the most essential element in this relationship since the relationship was initially established for him/her or more specifically for the development of professional or personal and provide him with a resource to help achieve his professional aspirations (Danzger, 2001). Researchers have identified several factors to attract mentee to such mentoring relationships, including but not limited to: providing a range of ways to help the mentor to reach a profitable end to both parties, focus on the clarity and transparency of the daily reality of the work, communicate with the mentor or direct manager about the areas that the counselor needs For the success of a mentoring relationship.

To be included in a mentoring relationship is an opportunity for both participants (Mentor and mentee), and as a result, it is important to be thoughtful. Some basic foundations of what makes the ideal mentee are: (1). Enthusiasm to learn, and willing to test new challenges (Robinson, 2001). (2) Ability and willingness to work as a team player. (3) Patience, open-minded to feedback and new ideas, viewing it as an opportunity to improve his/herself (Saul, 2004). (4). be a risk-taker. (5) Have a positive attitude. (6) Appreciative of the help and the trust given by the mentor, and (7) Ability to manage the relationship by establishing the first contact and by continuing the relationship (Heinz, 2003). However, Robbins (1991) adds that to enhance the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship, both parties should be on-time. The mentee should accept the mentor's advice, be honest, inform the mentor of his or her relevant training and employment experience, ask clarifying questions, and then listen carefully.

In conclusion, the mentee should have a sincere interest in developing a personal and professional relationship that supports career development or increase of professionalism. The mentee should ask for mentoring and invite the first communication with the mentor to set the goals and objectives of this mentoring relationship. These goals and objectives must be well prepared and relevant to career development. The preparation must be through seeking specific advice and guidance. The mentor will lead this relationship, but the mentee must use active listening skills, take notes when needed, and ask the right questions with a purpose. The mentee must take the initiative to ask for feedback. This feedback is significant for professional growth and a stronger career path. The mentee should accept the honest and even aggressive feedback as it will allow the mentee to improve and help to move towards fulfilling his potential. The successful mentoring relationship occurs if the mentee is open-minded to new ideas and suggestions, and asks for specific details about any issue faced in this relationship. The mentee always has to consider all advice or recommendations or commitments receive, appreciate for every form of assistance, and respect the mentor's time. One of the most positive attitudes of the mentee has to have during this relationship is to be careful not to interrupt and to respect the format, the opportunities, and the limitations of the relationship and always act respectfully towards the mentor. The mentee finally is responsible for the follow-up with the mentor after the end of the mentoring relationship to keep in touch, share progress, and feedback to the mentor in order to show more appreciation.

**Relationship between Mentor and Mentee:**

Mentoring is one of the provisions of the career development process in any institution and is therefore treated as a catalyst for career success; hence the mentoring relationship is significant in the progress of the career ladder, employee productivity, and professional competence. It is also important to note that understanding of the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee sides, and the variables contained in this relationship contribute to the success of the relationship, or the effects of mentoring reflects on the productivity of the individual, job satisfaction, professional improvement, and personal development (Straus, 2009). The key to establishing a successful mentoring relationship includes creating a relationship of trust, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, establishing short and long-term goals, using open and supportive communication, and collaboratively solving problems. For any mentoring relationship related to succeeding, certain factors must be available to help strengthen the association, its continuity, and eventual success.

Initially, this relationship needs to build mutual trust between the mentor and the mentee to add a spirit of cooperation and the ability to exchange opinions, solve problems, and study different aspects. In specialized research pertaining to coaching and mentoring, Kutilek& Earnest state that a well-established environment for trust sharing is essential to better identify the mentor – mentee relationship. Determining the roles and responsibilities of mentor as one of the parties to this guiding relationship is also important because it has a significant role in explaining the course of the relationship and the part of each party in terms of receiving or giving notes, and the questions to be asked in this mentoring relationship, which must take into account different aspects and include multiple possibilities. These questions can be about the role of both the mentor and mentee; the most appropriate and effective types of mentoring for the mentee; the appropriate times for meetings, and other questions directly related to the progress of the pilot process. Short-term and long-term goals must also be set to achieve them during these relationship goals (Podsens& Denmark, 2000).

The mentee's objectives and the experience of the mentor are often the most important and the most valuable in setting such goals. A mentoring relationship must be characterized by some qualities and skills that must be available on both sides. These characteristics may mostly cover the properties of the router. Some of these characteristics of the mentor: active listening skills, the ability to provide constructive comments, and the ability to open a door for open and supportive communication of this process. As for the mentee, he must have desire to continue this relationship, accept criticism, take notes and work to review it and accomplish what he can achieve from it, the ability to develop the appropriate plan to solve the outstanding problems and achieve the goals. A positive mentor-mentee relationship is highly recommended for a mentee's development, especially in professional growth, and in having a clearer career path in the organization. Positive relationships require a healthy trust environment, time commitment, respect from/sides, information sharing, right communication channels, well-defined objectives, and proper plans to solve the different issues through this relationship.

### **How to start the Mentoring programme:**

Hiring the right candidate for the job is a good start, but you can do more to keep your company running efficiently. People want to learn, evolve and be inspired. As your employees grow and maximize their potential, so does your organization. If you want your employees to grow, your support is crucial. You can provide training and the necessary support. Creating and maintaining a mentor program is ideal for fostering the development of your staff and improving their performance. In this article, you can learn how to create an effective mentor program.

#### **1. Communicate your expectations**

People need to understand the meaning of mentorship in order to benefit from a mentoring program. Reflect on the reasons why you want to start the program. It should respond to a need in your company. For example, a mentorship program can:

- Contribute to the acclimation of the newly hired employees
- Develop management and improve leadership skills
- Increase the retention rate of the employees
- Provide a transfer of knowledge from retiring employees to other staff
- Improve customer service

You should find out what being successful means for your employees. Then, define the goals of the program. Is it a learning program for a future task or a new position? Is the objective to develop employees on a personal level? Explain what you expect from the mentors and the mentees.

#### **2. Select the mentors**

You need to select the right mentors for your mentorship program. You need people who enjoy helping others achieve their goals. Here are the qualities you can look for when you make your selection:

- **Enthusiastic:** Good mentors are passionate and sincere. They want to help. Their passion pushes them to mentor because they feel rewarded when the people they train become successful.
- **Excellent listener:** Good mentors take time to listen to the employees, and they set aside any other duties during their meetings. They can give space for reflection.



- **Respectful:** While effective mentors certainly influence mentees, they don't force the mentees into anything. They don't try to control the actions or emotions of others. They should show empathy and not be judgmental.
- **Expert:** The right mentors will possess the skills and talents that are suited to the program's goals. They will be experts on the subject they teach.

Once you select your mentors, you can inform them about the goals of the program and the benefits they will bring to the organization.

### **3. Recruit the mentees**

First, you can let people know about your new mentoring program. Post announcements and share good reasons to participate. There is usually a natural enthusiasm among the personnel toward mentoring, but not always. Employees are sometimes worried about the time they should invest in the program, in addition to their daily duties. It is your task to generate enthusiasm. There should be a promotion at stake to motivate the employees to volunteer. Also, talk to them and communicate the potential benefits of the mentoring program. Let your employees know you see potential in them and that you want to help in their careers.

### **4. Match mentors and mentees**

To correctly connect mentors with their mentees, you should consider the expertise and objectives of each employee participating in the program. Be careful not to neglect their learning styles and backgrounds. Is there a need for encouragement, teaching of concepts or for a more hands-on approach? Once you define the objective, it is a good idea to have the participants' input in the matching process by having them provide a list of their top three preferred matches. This can be helpful in avoiding personality conflicts. A mentor-mentee relationship should be meaningful and constructive.

### **5. Specify how the mentorship program will work**

You can create a structured program, but you may want to keep aspects flexible. You can decide how to organize meetings, define how often participants meet, and choose a location that works. Also, verify that the mentors are available to meet in person. They may have a heavy traveling schedule, for instance, so the program should adapt. It is possible to organize regular phone or video conferences, as long as it suits both the mentor and mentee.

### **6. Referee**

You can designate someone to monitor the mentor-mentee relationship. This person's task is to ensure that the mentor chooses activities that benefit the mentee and the company. It can be the administrator of the program or the participant's supervisor, as long as the person is neutral to the mentorship pair. For the smooth conduct of the Program, involvement of Top management is vital. It won't work if you just select participants, set goals and leave them be. A productive mentor program requires attention from the company leaders.

### **7. Set rules for confidentiality**

The mentor/mentee pairs should trust each other. The mentees should be able to confide their concerns without any fear of them being disclosed. Both parties need to agree that if anything illegal or contrary to the company's policies should occur, disclosure would be mandatory.

### **8. Provide guidance**

With proper direction, the mentoring relationship will maintain its focus and momentum. Therefore, structure and guidance during the mentorship program are crucial to its success. You can provide your participants with a goal and an action plan. It helps to get the program ignited and gives them an objective to reach. Secondly, your mentors should receive mentoring best practice guides and access to necessary resources. Then, there should be a timeline with dates when both have to report on their progress. To conclude....In this Dynamic, rapidly changing (VUCA) environment, Productive and positive mentoring is an excellent approach to improve the quality of your workforce. Like all worthwhile pursuits, it requires planning and follow-up. It is not only a question of proper selection and matching of participants; it requires constant training. The mentors and mentees need to stay focused on the program's goals throughout the mentoring process in order for the program, and the company, to reach its full potential.

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