



MENTORING PROGRAM

..... toolkit

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EVERY LEADER DREAMS OF HAPPIER EMPLOYEES WHO CAN DRIVE THEIR BUSINESS FORWARD

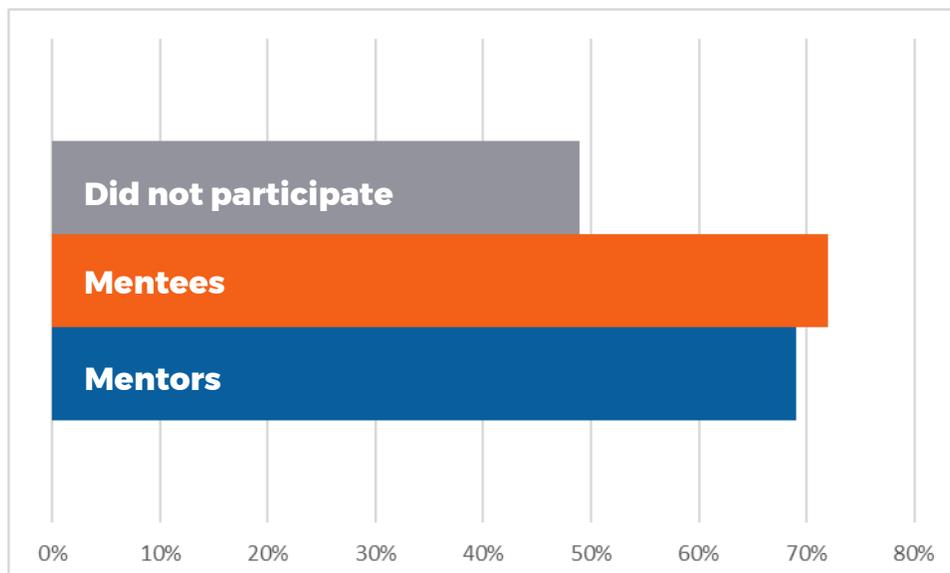
According recent [Gallup](#) survey results, one of the main factors that impact whether an employee is happy on the job is his or her relationship with coworkers. One way small businesses can help foster positive relationships between employees is by developing a mentoring program.

A mentor is an individual in the workplace who shares his or her knowledge and expertise to help another employee grow professionally. Informal mentor relationships may occur naturally in your organization. However, formal mentoring programs can be valuable tools for recruiting, retaining, and developing top talent in all positions. Mentoring programs benefit not only the mentees, but also the mentors and the company as a whole.

[Sun Microsystems](#) conducted a study that looked at data from more than 1,000 of its employees over a five-year period and found that its mentoring program had positively benefitted everyone involved. According to the study, 25 percent of employees who participated in the test group had a salary grade change, compared to only 5 percent of employees who did not participate. Also, mentors were promoted six times more often and mentees were promoted five times more often than those not in the program.

Retention rates were also higher-**69 percent** for mentors and **72 percent** for mentees, with a **49 percent** retention rate for employees who did not participate in the mentorship program.

Employee Retention Rates After Establishing a Mentoring Program



THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring programs offer many benefits to everyone involved, from mentees, to mentors, to the company as a whole.

Benefits for the Mentee

Mentees can achieve the following benefits through a mentoring program:

- **Skill development**—Mentors teach mentees the skills and qualities they will need to succeed, along with familiarizing them with the company's protocol and procedures. This, in turn, can teach mentees how to do their jobs more efficiently.
- **Continual growth**—Mentors provide ongoing feedback to their mentees and teach them how to take constructive criticism and apply it to their jobs. This type of feedback can feel less intrusive than regular performance reviews and employees may respond better to it as a result.
- **Networking**—Mentoring allows employees to build a professional relationship over a period of time and teaches them about the value of networking.
- **Talent development**—By providing mentees with the skills and support they need to succeed, mentees will be more prepared to advance to new positions within the company and to take on leadership roles.



Benefits for the Mentor

Mentoring programs can also reap significant benefits for the mentors themselves, including the following:

- **Self-Worth**—It gives mentors the opportunity to help someone else out, which may increase mentors' self-worth.
- **Reinvigorate Career**—It helps mentors re-energize their careers, which may increase their commitment to your company.
- **Leadership Development**—It allows mentors to fine-tune their communication and leadership skills, which can be valuable as they continue to grow in their own careers.

Benefits for the Company

In addition, there are significant benefits that can be realized by your company:

- **Retention**—Mentoring helps employees feel more engaged in their work and more in control of their careers. Employees will feel like the company cares about them and may be more loyal as a result—in turn, reducing turnover-related costs.
- **Recruitment**—Advertising a mentoring program can help recruit qualified candidates and establish yourself as an employer of choice within your industry.
- **Productivity**—By learning from a mentor, employees have the skills they need to do their jobs effectively, which can increase productivity and reduce the number of errors made on the job. Employees may also feel more confident in their work and spend less time second-guessing themselves.
- **Company Culture**—By encouraging employees to build positive relationships with one another, a sense of cooperation and teamwork will be felt throughout your company.

DESIGNING A MENTORING PROGRAM

Just as every mentoring relationship is unique, formal mentoring programs are likely to differ substantially between companies. You should design your program to match the needs of your employees, your company culture, and the company goals you hope to achieve. Here are the steps you can take to design a mentoring program that works for your company.



1. Establish Program Objectives

Every organization has their own set of needs as well as distinct mission, vision, and values. If you are aiming for higher millennial retention rates, your program will be structured differently than if you are trying to develop leaders, teach a specific skill, or simply welcome new employees to your organization.

Once you establish your main goal, decide exactly how you will measure the success of the program. For example, do you need to hit a specific retention rate, see increased employee engagement, or have a certain number of employees skilled in a particular area.

2. Determine Mentoring Relationship Structure

Consider the following options to determine which mentor connection best fits your business:

- **One-on-one mentoring:** This is the most common type of mentoring program. In this program, a tenured employee is paired with an entry-level mentee.
- **Group mentoring:** This may be utilized when tenured employees are limited. Entry-level employees connect with tenured employees in a small group setting versus one-on-one.
- **Up mentoring:** This program involves an entry-level mentor providing a fresh perspective for a tenured mentee.

Once you choose a relationship structure, you will need to decide how often you would like mentors and mentees to meet. At the beginning of the relationship, it might make sense for them to meet weekly, and then bi-weekly after the first few months.

You also need to decide how long the mentorship relationships will last. It is recommended that they last at least six months to provide the most benefit to all parties.

3. Decide Who Will Participate

Choosing mentors and successfully pairing them up with mentees is one of the most critical pieces of any mentorship program. Not all employees are well-suited for the roles of mentors or mentees. The mentor-mentee relationship is not going to be exactly the same for each group. Take time to pair employees who have the potential to both benefit from the relationship and match people by interests and what they hope to achieve. Use the worksheet on the next page to help with pairing. Have both mentors and mentees complete the questions.



Also, make sure that mentors and mentees know they have an out if the match just isn't working. Set up a way for employees to get out of the mentorship relationship and find another match without hurting anyone's feelings. Consider checking in with both parties soon after the relationship begins to make sure that things are on the right track. If there are serious issues, don't hesitate to rematch the pairs.

MENTOR PAIRING WORKSHEET

Describe your mentorship program hopes:

What does mentorship mean to you?

What characteristics make an ideal mentor?

What characteristics make an ideal mentee?

What's the one thing you would like to get out of being in a mentorship program?

How would you prefer to communicate with your mentor/mentee?

Describe your career hopes:

What are you passionate about?

What are your greatest strengths?

Where would you like to grow in your career?

What career challenges are you facing? How would you benefit from a mentor?

One year from today, what would you like to be doing in your position?

What is your ultimate career goal?

4. Establish Expectations for Participants

Once you decide who the mentors and mentees will be, you need to set expectations and establish metrics for holding all parties accountable. Have each participant sign an acknowledgement form (examples on pages 8 and 9) to make sure everyone starts out on the same page.

Some additional things to consider:

- Explain the benefits for mentors and mentees and make sure everyone understands why the company has invested the resources in the mentorship program.
- Be up front about the time commitment involved. If a mentor has a big project or deadline coming up, it may not be the best time for them to participate.
- Be clear about who the mentor and mentee can come to with concerns about the partnership or the program.
- Make sure everyone understands how often mentors and mentees are supposed to meet and what the structure of those meetings should be. Allow for some flexibility based on personalities, goals, and individual schedules.



Mentor Meeting Guidelines

The first meeting between a mentor and mentee will be led by the mentor. However, after the first meeting the mentee is responsible for determining the agenda. By assigning the agenda task to the mentee, it allows them to carefully consider the importance of various topics. Mentees should send the agenda in advance to allow their mentor to plan for the discussion.

Please note, the agenda should not be complicated. However, the agenda needs to be purposeful to keep the discussions on track. We recommend that mentees follow this agenda:

- Update: (Past) Mentee will follow-up and provide any feedback from the last meeting.
- Hot Topic: (Present): Mentee, introduce what topic or topics you would like your mentor's assistance with.
- Next Meeting: (Future) Mentee and mentor decide on the next meeting time, scheduled events they might like to attend together, and possible action items to complete before the next meeting.

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The mentoring program has the potential to build relationships and improve employee engagement for all participants. The following are the expected mentor responsibilities. Please initial each expectation and sign at the bottom.

As a mentor I will strive to:

- Encourage and support a new employee in my field
- Establish close, professional relationships
- Challenge myself and others to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Share my knowledge
- Meet weekly and check in as needed
- Go to continuing educational events such as meetups, webinars, lectures or other professional career events together

I plan to discuss the following with my mentee:

- Career development subjects that will most benefit his or her career
- Career options and professional preparation
- Career dreams and life goals
- The realities of the workplace
- My work
- Technical and related issues
- How to network
- How to manage work and family life

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

- Disclosing our conversations to others
- Meeting in non-public places
- Sharing intimate aspects of our lives

By my signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand and agree to the mentor expectations as described above.

Mentor Signature: _____

MENTEE EXPECTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The mentoring program has the potential to build relationships and improve employee engagement for all participants. The following are the expected mentee responsibilities. Please initial each expectation and sign at the bottom.

As a mentee, I will strive to:

- Take an active role in my own development
- Work to establish close, professional relationships
- Challenge myself and others to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Set my goals
- Be open about my professional needs
- Come to each meeting prepared with any follow-up assigned tasks
- Seek out and recommend continuing educational events such as meetups, webinars, lectures or other professional career events that my mentor and I can attend together

I hope that my mentor and I will discuss:

- Career development subjects that will most benefit his or her career
- Career options and professional preparation
- Career dreams and life goals
- The realities of the workplace
- My work
- Technical and related issues
- How to network
- How to manage work and family life

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

- Disclosing our conversations to others
- Meeting in non-public places
- Sharing intimate aspects of our lives

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand and agree to the mentee expectations as described above.

Mentee Signature: _____

CONCLUSION

Mentoring programs at work are an effective way to help people progress further in their chosen careers. When employers support employees and allow them time at work to take on the role as a mentor or a mentee, it increase employee engagement. Engaged employees are more productive, dedicated and are focused on getting things done because happy people mean business!

If you have further questions, please feel free to reach out to our People Strategy team at 1-800-748-5102 or humanresources@helpside.com.

The PDF versions of the sample documents in this toolkit can be found at www.helpside.com/mentoring-toolkit.