Mentoring

Confessions of a Skeptic

Douglas L Holt, Ph.D.
Senior Manager Chemistry and Sensory Science
Dr Pepper Snapple Group
Origins of The Idea

- French prehistory
- African – it takes a village
- Homer’s Odyssey
- French court

Adapted from: http://www.canr.msu.edu/vanburen/what's%20mentoring.html
Applications of the Idea

- Teacher – Student
- Adult – “lost” child
- Monk/Nun – novice
- Seasoned professional – junior colleague
Variations on the Idea

- Reverse mentoring – technology
- Cross discipline – Life coach

as your life coach, i am hereby giving you the advice to always dress like a jimmy buffett fan to actualize your full earning potential
Definitions of the Idea

- Developmental assistance offered to a colleague (protégé) by someone more experienced (mentor) in the particular development area. The protégé relies on the mentor’s guidance, knowledge and experience to gain greater skills, perspective, performance and/or achievement for the future.

- “Mentors are the people we wish to emulate; those people who pull us to new heights and push us to reach ever higher.” Dr. E. Chambers*

Acting on the Idea – Learning About Each Other

- Tell your mentor/protégé a little about yourself (interests, hobbies, background, etc.)
- Describe your “professional” style
- What non-related work experiences are you most proud of?
- Summarize your career and its progression.
- Describe your current job, and key areas of responsibility?
- What do you most enjoy about your work?
- Where from your work do you derive the most satisfaction?
- What are your top three professional strengths?
- Describe the development area that you want to strengthen?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- What experiences have helped you grow the most?
Issues with the Idea

- Not enough time
- Poor engagement
- No tangible benefit to the mentor/protégé
- Lack of support for process
- Can’t be structured
Pitfalls of the Idea

- Good mentors are hard to find
  - Can supervisors/managers be good mentors?
Bosses

- Focus on achieving the objectives of the department and the company.
- The manager assigns tasks, evaluates the outcome, conducts performance reviews, and recommends possible salary increases and promotions.
- Hold significant power over employees’ work lives
Most employees demonstrate only their strengths and hide their weaknesses in the work environment.
Mentors

- Focus on developing the protégé professionally and personally.
- Do not evaluate the protégé with respect to the current job, do not conduct performance reviews of the protégé. Do not provide input about salary increases and promotions.
- Create a safe learning environment, where both can discuss issues openly and honestly, without worrying about negative consequences on the job.
Working the Idea: Mentor’s Role

- Encourage protégé to take ownership of their development.
- Allow the protégé to drive, facilitate and coordinate the relationship
- Share your career story and key lessons learned.
- Be a role model
- Give and ask for feedback often.
- Maintain confidentiality in your relationship.
- Guide protégé to make their own solutions
- Make it easy to meeting regularly
- Continually evaluate the relationship
- Introduce your protégé to your network
Because the roles of manager and mentor are fundamentally different, structured mentoring programs should never(?) pair mentors with their direct reports.

Pitfalls of the Idea

- Good mentors are hard to find
- Potential protégés don’t want to admit need for guidance
- Does business trump mentoring?
- Natural or Structured?
Working the Idea: Protégé’s role

- Initiate, coordinate and drive the relationship
- Share history and discuss goals to be accomplished
- Be specific and clear about what you want
- Facilitate discussions on how to accomplish goals.
- Be open to learning
- Give thoughtful consideration to advice/suggestions
- Discuss outcomes
- Be open to accepting and giving feedback
Pitfalls of the Idea

- Good mentors are hard to find
- Protégés don’t want to admit need for guidance
- Does business really come first?
- Natural or Regulated?
Rewards of the Idea

- Deep, satisfying relationships in an increasingly shallow social milieu
- Passing on of collective wisdom; tacit, implicit organizational knowledge; “lore”
- Engaged mentors and protégés provide creative “juices” to the business at hand
Final Idea: Pay it Forward

“Mentors help us achieve our goals, but they also help us realize that we must become mentors to promote personal and professional success for ourselves and others.”

ibid. Dr E. Chambers
Some Internet Based Ideas

- http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Articles/mentoring.html
- http://www.management-mentors.com/
- http://leadership.nasa.gov/
Dedication –
To My Mentors

- Dr. C.W. Dill, TAMU
- Dr. M. Zeece and Dr. R. Wehling, UNL
- Dr. William Stringer, UMC
- Jerry Carpenter, UMC
- Dr. Don Osborn, UMC
- Dr. Hildegarde Heymann, UCD
- Tammy Rossochacki, IFF