

Mentoring for New Employees

Mentoring can be an effective way to assist new employees in integrating into an organization. New hire orientation and job training are vital elements in the acclimation of the employee to the company culture and the processes and procedures necessary for successful job performance. Yet, the ongoing support of a mentor can be the lynchpin that enables an employee to transfer this knowledge to the day-to-day work environment. A mentor can be a much needed flotation device to help new employees as they learn to swim. A mentor can be a manager, peer, someone on the team, or someone from a different team.

My goal here is to give some very actionable, practical tips in creating a Mentoring program that will benefit newly hired employees in an organization. If the New Hire Training and Onboarding of an organization isn't terrific and thorough, mentors can help fill in the gaps. This can be providing essential information, introducing them to resources, and giving tips about the culture.

Some Tips for Implementing an Effective Mentoring Program

Here are some things to think about when beginning a mentoring program:

- If possible, give a new employee a say in assigning his/her mentor. A good partnership is essential to a successful mentoring program.

- Define the roles of the new employee and the mentor in this relationship. The mentor will likely act as a resource, providing advice when appropriate and answering questions.
- Define contact guidelines. How often will they meet? Will it be by phone, email, or in person? Who will initiate the contact?
- Define the length of the relationship. Will it be 2 months? 4 months? 6 months?
- Recognize and reward mentors for their investment of time and expertise in the organization. This will take additional time.

Tips for an Effective Mentoring Relationship

Here are some suggestions that will help a mentor build rapport with the new employee:

- Affirm and validate the new employee whenever possible. Build on their strengths.
- Actively listen and be sensitive to feedback.
- Keep commitments to the new employee.
- Help the new employee to see all sides of a situation when needed.
- Challenge the new employee to think. Don't always give the answers.
- Share your knowledge and wisdom.
- Introduce the new employee to others that might be helpful to know.
- Be in contact more frequently in the beginning, to build the relationship and to be available to answer multitudes of questions.

Considerations in Selecting a Good Mentor

When choosing mentors for the organization, here are some qualities to look for in potential candidates:

- Willingness to share knowledge and spend the time.
- Competency in their current job.
- The ability to inspire.
- Good communication skills.
- Ability to give balanced feedback.
- A team player, who doesn't need all the credit.
- Good business ethics - will follow policy where appropriate.

We have discussed how to choose a mentor, manage the relationship and implement a mentoring program in a team or organization. Mentors can be an integral part of a new hire's experience and can assist veterans as well in managing their development and career. Many people have benefited from a mentor in various stages of their work life. Providing opportunities and guidelines for these relationships can help individuals and the organization can benefit as well.

Bio:

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productive faster. She facilitates in the US and abroad, in a classroom and via webcast.

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