

# Turning Managers into Leaders: The Art of Mentoring

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*If I hadn't had mentors, I wouldn't be here today. I'm a product of great mentoring, great coaching... Coaches or mentors are very important. They could be anyone--your husband, other family members, or your boss. Indra Nooyi, CEO of PepsiCo*

## INTRODUCTION

As we continue to realize significant global economic growth, the ever-increasing value of human and intellectual capital indicates that organizations need to focus on identifying, attracting and developing future leaders. The identification of employees with leadership potential is a continuing challenge for many organizations (Zachary, 2012; Pieper, 2004). As a result, finding managers with the potential to become leaders is a continual process that requires creativity, pervasiveness, and determination. "A most important component of the mentor's job description is dedication and attention" (Laughlin & Moore, 2012, pp. 38-39).

The rewards of mentoring can be significant for the mentor, protégée and the organization (Bawany, 2014). Learning how to recognize and reap those benefits, as well as ensure a successful strategic transition from manager to leader using the mentoring process, is a powerful tool in today's organizational environment.

## What Is Mentoring?

Many organizations have recognized the value of mentoring. David Brown, manager of mentoring services at the New Zealand Institute of Management, stated that "Most of the successful business leaders or other role models of society that we admire today have probably, at one time or another, a genuine mentor to thank for their success" (Birchfield, 2008, p. 7). Likewise, individual and organizational development recognizes mentoring as a critical tool for career growth and professional enhancement (Zachary, 2012).

A mentor is defined as one "whom you have learned new knowledge, skills, principles, wisdom, or perspectives that have made an impact on your life" (Chang, 2008, p. 79). Mentoring provides the opportunity for the protégé to generate success in new roles and situations along with providing coaching, insight, and protection (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Wasburn & Crispo, 2006). Understanding how to

effectively incorporate these ingredients is the challenge facing organizations while providing support and opportunity for the protégée to gain an insider's perspective into the organization.

Mentoring offers a depth of contextualization to provide effective leader development that includes entrepreneurs. Sullivan (2000) stated every entrepreneur needs a mentor. Recognizing that the entrepreneur's ability to learn may be acquired through experience, mentoring could be "tailored to meet the needs of individual entrepreneur's development" (p. 163). Sullivan's research posits experiential learning is critical for the entrepreneur. Learning needs to be entwined with the entrepreneurs' goals and strengths. Previous studies have used metaphors such as war, passion, or journey to represent the goals of entrepreneurs (Clarke & Holt, 2009). Entrepreneurs are constantly learning as they lead, grow and expand their businesses and start new ones. Mentoring provides a resource to enhance the learning experience (Kutzhanova, Lyons, & Lichtenstein, 2009).

## **History of Mentoring**

The origins of mentoring can be traced back to Greek mythology where Odysseus enlisted a trusted advisor named Mentor to care for and educate his son while he was away fighting the Trojan War (Stone, 2004). The word mentor then evolved into a general term for a wise and trusted individual. Stone (2004) further explained that originally mentors were perceived as protectors, which gave rise to "the medieval term protégé — literally, the 'protected one' — to describe the mentee" (p. x). As generations advanced through history, mentoring became known as an exchange of knowledge and experience between senior and junior level individuals to foster career and professional growth (Shea, 2001; Kram, 1985; Hunt & Michael, 1983).

Famous mentor-protégé relationships can be found in almost every profession, including athletics (Basketball coach Phil Jackson mentored Michael Jordan), entertainment (Tina Turner mentored Mick Jagger), the arts (Haydn mentored Beethoven), science (Sigmund Freud mentored Carl Jung), literature (Gertrude Stein mentored Ernest Hemingway), and politics (George Wythe mentored Thomas Jefferson). Mentoring has been a part of every culture as well. It is described in religious tomes and has been featured in television sitcoms and movies. Formalized mentoring within organizations was first observed in the twentieth century.

Beginning in 1931, The Jewel Tea Company (now Jewel Companies) assigned a senior manager as a mentor to each MBA who entered the organization during the beginning of the protégé's career (Russell, 1991). Because managerial development programs at this time were limited to job-rotation and training programs, this structured and formal mentoring approach to managerial development, though unique, was not replicated until later in the century. The 1980's brought about a rapid expansion of formal mentoring programs. Formal mentoring program growth was triggered by the increased literature focus on the effectiveness of informal mentoring relationships and the growing support for the critical importance of developmental relationships in career development (Douglas, 1997). Over a thousand corporations like Johnson and Johnson, Allstate, NCR, Apple, Proctor & Gamble, AT&T, IBM, IRS, Merrill Lynch, Federal Express and Jewel Companies have implemented formal mentoring programs (Russell, 1991; Zey, 1991). Mentoring growth within organizations at this time were motivated and influenced as a result of the turmoil of the change caused by an increased focus on technology, affirmative action, the needs of a growing diverse workforce, labor shortages, global competitive challenges, and management development (Kram & Bragar, 1991; Zey, 1988).

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