Chapter 14

Use of the Evolutionary Conscious Model to Sustain a Formal Mentoring Program

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ABSTRACT

Formal mentoring programs, whether occurring in profit making organizations or existing within non-profits, have had a colorful history. Many professionals have been involved as a mentor, a mentee, or else have known individuals who were involved in a mentoring program. Whether participating on an informal basis, or engaged formally in a program arranged by an organization, not everyone who has experienced a mentoring program has a success story to tell. Based on that observation, and data collected from mentoring program failures, program challenges and successes, and research into current literature, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight a mentoring model created to assist organizations with their attempt to encourage the successful development, retention, and recruitment of professions into their organization. With this in mind, the search for the perfect mentoring model continues.

INTRODUCTION

The heart of a formal mentoring program is the relationship between the mentor and mentee. What has become apparent both through survey data analysis, observation and actual experience is that if the partners in a mentoring relationship are not compatible, the structure of the program is weakened. Due to this focused importance of a strong base, a mentoring model has been created

that applies an approach which assists individuals in developing a partnership empowering them not only to establish individualized learning, but to encourage growth between them and the program's coordination, evaluation, and sustainability. Use of this approach has led to the creation, development, and the naming of the evolutionary conscious model. There are four components to this model: the partnering process, program coordination, evaluation, and sustainability. Expectedly, the objectives of this chapter are: 1. to summarize the use of the evolutionary conscious approach used in the partnering

process; 2. to relate this approach to the other three additional components of program coordination, program evaluation, and program sustainability; 3. to assist organizations with their attempt to help their professionals acquire the knowledge, skills, and motivational measures for further successful career leadership development, and 4. to present alternative insights for organizations in order to achieve a successful mentoring program.

BACKGROUND

In order to better comprehend this particular mentoring model, there are a few points that need to be understood. The first critical piece relating to the acceptance of this particular model as it unfolds is the existence of a mentoring definition and the mandatory acceptance and agreement of this meaning by all who have a role in this program's process. Depending on the field (teaching, nursing, business management, government, etc.) the roles of the participants, especially that of the mentor are varied. A few examples of these roles include mentors assuming the role of models, counselors, advisors, teachers, nurturers, friends, and sponsors. Other organizations choose to add descriptors such as experienced and trusted advisor, or a protector that guides and supports. In any case, this created model suggests that mentors serve as a nurturing, role model; they teach, sponsor, encourage, counsel and befriend; they promote professional and/or personal development; and that there exists an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé (Anderson & Shannon, 1995, p.29).

The second point necessary to this model's acceptance is the acknowledgement that mentoring can indeed serve as a viable career development strategy for individuals as well as becoming an employee recruitment and retention organizational strategy. Regardless of the organization, succession is a fundamental administrative component

of planning, and mentoring can play a huge role in the process. "As vital to a vision of where the organization is--where it is going, when, and the impact of changes, service, products, and so on--is the element of who will lead it in the future and who is presently being trained to direct it and thus ensure its continuity" (Curran, 2003, p.35). Armstrong, Allinson, and Hays (2002) drew from three separate sectors (law and order, health, and engineering) in their research and found that as a development tool, "the mentoring process is clearly a critical element in building effective careers, and research continues to report benefits" (p.1129). Golden (2006) in her dissertation survey found that of 193 public library directors to a survey, 118 (61.1%) have indeed applied mentoring as a career strategy to enhance their own career development (p.209).

For those organizations that perhaps do not possess a mentoring program, Golian and Galbraith (1996) conclude that those organizations can at the very least, encourage the mentoring process as a developmental tool by "fostering a climate conducive for informal as well as sponsored mentoring relationships" (p.112). According to Pugh (2001), "Senior managers, working in mentoring roles: can bring a sharper focus to the thinking of mentees; can compensate for the diffused activity that may exist in management in flexible organizations; can play important roles as anchors; and can combine the skills needed for management while demonstrating political awareness and networking (p. 169).

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS OF THE CREATED MODEL

Purpose of the Model

This model is primarily built based on the creation, development, survey analysis, and observation of three mentoring programs. This author has

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