

Mentor Ink Newsletter™

MentorInk is the online publication of
Corporate Mentoring Solutions Year 16 Issue 2 February 2002



About our lead item



Distance Mentoring

Thinking about a distance mentoring program? First, read through this month's results of our Mentoring Scorecard Survey (page 2) then, should you want some brief encounters with actual distance programs and some tips on how to best strategize for your own program launch or your own relationship... check out our brief article starting on page three...

More about what's in this issue:



Mentoring Connections-Mentorat Canada Conference: Report

Hundreds attended, dozens of presentations, an amazing amount of positive energy and creativity generated. For more details, see inside...



Feature Program

From time to time, we give brief capsule descriptions of mentoring programs. Looking back on our electronic files, we see we haven't done this for a while... so we have a program description which should be of interest to readers...



The Mentoring Timeline

Here's a feature of longstanding for MentorInk Newsletter. It seems to be pretty popular so we've inserted another for this issue with more to come in the future...



Mentoring Scorecard Survey - Conclusion

In previous issues we reviewed information from ScoreCard -- on the value of participation in a mentoring program, popularity of different program types, program size, ratings and so on. Now we are ready to wrap up this look at mentoring...

About the next issue (March 2002):



5 Mentoring Trends

Five-part series based on the work done at Corporate Mentoring Solutions to assess what is having an impact on worklife as it is reflected in mentoring programs. Part 1: Demographics.

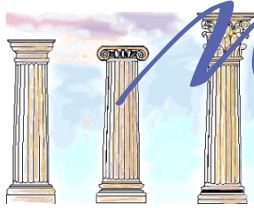
*Experience is the name
everyone gives to his mistakes.
~ Oscar Wilde*

From the Editor

Past issues have carried every thing & any thing mentoring-related with a focus on programs. Happy reading to all.

Your editor: *Marilynne Miles Gray*





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Mentoring ScoreCard 2001 Conclusion

In previous issues we reviewed information from ScoreCard -- on the value of participation in a mentoring program, popularity of different program types, program size, ratings and so on. Now we are ready to wrap up this look at mentoring.

Question 9: Rate the program

Respondents were given five options to select from a pull-down menu as follows:

Rating =	Excellent	VGood	Good	Fair	Poor	No answer
%age	9.5%	23.8	47.6	19	--	--



Question 10 : Describe limitations of the program.

Respondents were given options to select from a pull-down menu. Some options had additional bracketed details to clarify; for example "program concept not clear (objectives, selection criteria)". Totals will be more than 100% since respondents could select more than one item. In addition, respondents could also enter items of their own in a text box.

<u>limitation</u>	<u>%</u>
• program concept unclear (e.g. goals, selection criteria)	38.1
• lack of publicity	9.5
• no information session	23.8
• mismatching (by Co-ordinator)	14.3
• partners finding time to meet	38.1
• expectations not clearly outlined	28.6
• lack of training	28.6
• finding time to attend training session	19.0
• training didn't address needs	4.8
• tools didn't match needs	4.8
• lack of monitoring	33.3
• time required to monitor matches	19.0
• distance mentoring*	28.6
• few objectives met satisfactorily	14.3
• short time frame for mentoring	4.8
• weak evaluation process	4.8
No limitations cited	9.5%

All of these programs were rated as "Good".

* see Lead Story for more...

Commentary:

It came as no surprise that "lack of time to meet" was cited often in our survey. As far back as the early 1980s, this was one of the top three limitations cited by participants. However, with experience and

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Mentoring Connections - Mentorat Canada Conference

Toronto... January 17 through 19, 2002... the energy is electric. This is the place to be for networking, to find out about the many flavors of mentoring programs, to savor new ideas.

Conference organizer Akela Peoples and her Women in Motion Career Education Committee themed the event under four tracks: Best practices, New trends, Training and Program design and implementation. More than 300 enthusiastic attendees came. Well-known broadcaster and author Pamela Wallin and Olympic cyclist Curt Harnett were two of the keynoters who added light yet thoughtful tones to the conference. Co-sponsors, HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada) and the Counselling Foundation of Canada emphasized the notion that "mentoring is alive and well!"



Marilynne Miles Gray of Corporate Mentoring Solutions presented on "5 Mentoring Trends, 5 Strategies". Of note is the large number of programs and attendees interested in entrepreneurship mentoring programs. This emphasis has been more than ten years in coming to prominence. [One of the very first such programs developed in 1990 in North Vancouver.]

Throughout the conference, other groups circulated word of other (more localized) mentoring conferences being staged throughout 2002. If you wish more news:

mentorcanada.ca

This has been a conference well done.

Feature Program: Time Inc.

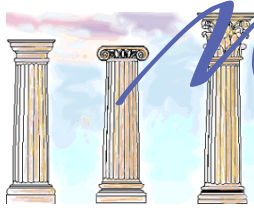


Operating out of New York City, Time Inc's mentoring program pilot for its production group is currently using the OMS

Online Mentoring System for selection and matching purposes. In addition, the *Mentoring Style Indicator* will be used during the Lunch and Learn session.

This 12 month career development program has two objectives: facilitating career pathing and doing more in-depth studies of production.

Administrator Valerie Hamilton previously worked with CMSI when she was Co-ordinator for Winthrop Pharmaceutical's three-year leadership mentoring program.



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Mentoring ScoreCard 2001 Conclusion Cont. from p2

research, we have learned creative ways to deal with this problem. Applying what we know, in turn, has allowed partners to reach more goals even as they take less time to do so.

Fundamental to building and sustaining a program is the fact that concepts be fleshed out, understood, supported, shared widely, clarified, justified -- all done in alignment with organizational goals -- to name a few factors. Most dismaying is the fact that so many respondents cited "program concepts unclear".

One surprising feature of this survey was the high placement of lack of monitoring. This points to the possibility that there are programs launched and never followed thereafter for problems and success stories. It also suggests that Co-ordinators require suitable support to monitor -- the sort of thing that the OMS System does with its Progress Reports feature.

If you should have any questions about the Mentoring ScoreCard 2001, send an e-mail to Solutions@mentoring.ws. Look for future surveys in the year 2002 -- you are encouraged to participate!

This survey is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those MentorInk subscribers and CMSI website visitors who have chosen to participate. The results cannot be assumed to represent either the opinions of CMSI in general or the mentoring professionals community as a whole.

CMSI Sales Associates

Live in Australia, New Zealand or the UK? If

- you are in the mentoring field or
- know of someone with a mentoring background and wish to work with the leading online mentoring product, OMS™, please give us a call, send us an e-mail to discuss the opportunities or visit our website.



Lead Story -- Distance Mentoring

Take a look if you haven't already -- almost 30 percent of respondents to our Mentoring ScoreCard survey cite "distance mentoring" as a limitation of their respective programs. This is a newer reality -- only a few years ago, distance mentoring would have represented less than five or ten percent of programs.

A definition: partners operate under one or more conditions -- they may meet initially or they may never actually meet face to face but in either case, contact is carried out via the phone, the internet (e-mail, video-conferencing) rather than via regular face-to-face meetings. Immediately, you can imagine some of the barriers put in the way of relationships.

Can it work? One of our clients, the Women's Foodservice Forum, with a 5-year track record for their distance mentoring program says an unequivocal "Yes!" Not only are partners spread across the USA but they are in different organizations. In fact, *because* it was distance mentoring some partners said they added an extra measure of commitment to the relationship.

Then there are distance programs that didn't work. In one case, a large communications group had mentors and proteges located in the east coast of the USA or Europe. Their Final Report is filled with comments like these: "we're in different time zones which made it hard to talk"; "I didn't know what I was to do", "I didn't feel needed." This may have been a case of developing a distance mentoring program just to say it was being done.

Any suggestions?

Four immediately come to mind to start you thinking in the right direction...

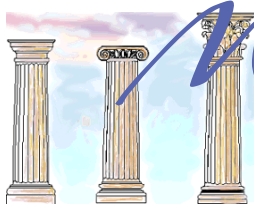
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The Mentoring Interest Profiler™ (MIP)

Here's a starting point to answer questions such as: "How many of our staff are interested in mentoring?" or "What type of mentoring do our staff desire -- formal or informal?" The MIP is our web-based survey tool to be used organization-wide to determine the interest in mentoring. And it's FREE to appropriate organizations!

This 7-question survey takes approximately only a few minutes for respondents to review and complete. Your organization receives a Report of the results as well as all of the raw data for analysis. *MIP* charts and graphs contain a wealth of detail. If your organization is interested in how well it has been received by users, and would like to see a sample report for the *MIP*, please contact sales@mentoring.ws.





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Distance Mentoring (Cont. from pg. 3)



Principle #1

Body language / voice tone will be restricted or absent so consider how is to be conveyed at a distance. For example, when the mentor wants to emphasize support and encouragement which is quicker and easier to convey in person by smiles or other nuanced gestures.

Partners must take even more care than usual to separate what is known (fact) from assumptions and inferences. Distance mentoring relying in particular on e-mail requires partners take extra care in wording their messages. All of this takes longer than would be the case in face-to-face interactions and loses a good deal in the "translation".

So, increased sensitivity to clarity and comprehensiveness and an understanding of technical limitations are the order of the day. For example, e-mail Q&A interchanges -- explanations given in response to a question -- need to be as complete as possible because follow-up questions are delayed in a way that doesn't happen face-to-face, with video-conferencing or over the phone.

Principle #2

Think "unique" and "individual". Determine what the protege needs and that person's styles -- for example through mentoring tools such as the *Protege Needs Inventory*, *Mentoring Style Indicator* and *Mentoring Compatibility Indicator*. Make certain both partners are clear as to why this important, what the benefits are, how these will be used and so on.

Principle #3

Since life doesn't stop for distance mentoring, flexibility and understanding are required. Encourage partners to develop reasonable and practical plans.

Don't encourage overcommitted people to be part of the program -- it just doesn't work. Anyone who commits to being in the program and the partnership but who then fails to make scheduled meetings loses the value of the mentoring; it doesn't contribute in the way s/he intended, and adds an overall negative tone because it "speaks" volumes to the partner. Everyone likes to be valued so failing to reply or meet sends a message which says: "I don't value you. You (and the program) are not worth my time."

Quality distance mentoring requires a timely response. One of the potential weak spots is frustrating delays in responses between partners. This is one factor which has prompted certain groups to develop tele-mentoring systems to help proteges ask simple questions of qualified people without any waiting. In my estimation, for several reasons, this can't be considered mentoring in and of itself but it is one of the roles mentors can and do fulfill and if technology can help, why not?

Principle #4

Even distance mentoring programs aren't simple training events. The program has to be appropriate for the overall goals and should be in alignment with the organization's mission and objectives. Everyone must benefit -- the organization, the mentor and the protege. And, those silly time zones do count (unless you're a charter member of the flat earth society).

Getting some perspective...

Don't be put off by the earlier-cited statistic that 30% of programs reportedly found distance mentoring to be a limitation. Behind every statistic there often is a really good and doable set of solutions. How else to account for such variable results? Think about it. Long, hard and carefully please -- it's people's lives and careers that are involved, aren't they?

Mentoring Timeline™



Alan Walker (d. April 2001) - **mentor** to African American students during more than 25 years while a physics professor at Stanford University. His contribution to science? The halo of hot gas from the sun is so energetic that it shows light at the extreme end of the spectrum outside of what can be seen by conventional photography. In 1987, he came up with a solution and produced the first detailed shots of the sun's outer atmosphere showing explosions of heat and light which, to that point, were invisible to scientists.

As a tribute shortly before his death, colleagues called Walker "Hokule'a", after the "guide star" used by ancient Polynesians to help them navigate home to the Hawaiian Islands.

(Source: *Discover* Jan 2002).