

MentorInk Newsletter

...the online publication of Mentoring Solutions Inc. Year 19 Issue 1 January-February 2005



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Insightful reading: Working With Emotional Intelligence - Conclusion

Last issue the focus was on empathy, as befits the mentoring theme. This issue, the focus continues, and moves into the realm of politics. (cont. page 2)

Mentoring Timeline© - celebrates a special event (see page 2)

Take the Mentoring Interest Profiler (see page 5)

ELearning and Mentoring “Enterprises that confuse document management with tacit knowledge management may eventually pay dearly.” (see page 3)

Mentor Answers FAQs©: What are the problems in creating a knowledge sharing culture? Your organization is getting more serious about this? No more lip service? Mentor says: “Let’s look at the typical blurb that pops up in your internet search on the subject.” Mentor analyzes it and offers a few cautions (continues on page 4)

From the Virtual Mentoring Library© While *MentorInk* typically doesn’t focus on non-adult programs, this one is interesting in that it features an online mentoring portal. (continues page 3)

Mentor Muses© On career derailment
(see page 4)

Upcoming:

Insightful reading: Dark Age Ahead - pt 1

Mentoring Timeline

How the Mentor Can Help -
third article in the series

30-Second Test



Special Announcement:

Mentoring White Paper #1 - *Success to Significance* is now available free at www.mentoring-solutions.com

“For some, success is accidental, not intentional. However, success however achieved is not enough. It’s crucial to create a legacy of significance.”

This insightful and out-of-the-box thinking contained is designed to encourage organizations to take some next steps.

Details page 2, under Mentoring Timeline.

From the Editor:

Past issues have carried everything and anything on knowledge sharing using mentoring and coaching to support blended learning.
Happy reading for another year.

Your editor:
Marilynne Miles Gray





MentorInk Timeline 1986

In 1986, at the First International Conference on Mentoring held in Vancouver, British Columbia, the several hundred delegates who attended decided that they wanted a mentoring newsletter. By early 1987, *MentorInk* was born!

Since that time, on a regular basis, up to nine times a year, MentorInk has been sent out to thousands of individuals (who subscribe for a whole host of reasons), and program coordinators (who in turn relay it to program participants).



Right from the start the publication was not the typical tips from readers and how to nuggets. Certainly, those have been seen on these pages. No, our intent was to expand beyond that approach, to delve much deeper and thus offer some out-of-the-box content.

As a result, responses to our newsletter have always been interesting, never dull. They've ranged from protest: "How could you suggest Leonardo da Vinci would ever have needed a mentor?" to congratulatory: "Our participants need to see article X. Real food for thought." to helpful: "Regretfully, I'm leaving the post of program coordinator at our company but I'm going to make sure the new person receives your newsletter and passes it along."

*"If you can imagine it,
You can achieve it.
If you can dream it,
You can become it."
-William Arthur Ward*

As we move into a new year, we look forward to further developing concepts for the 2006 Conference -- which will be a celebration of 20 years since the first conference. As part of year 19, Mentoring Solutions is releasing a series of White Papers plus an updating of our Survey of Mentoring Surveys (first released as a five page article in 2002). ##

Insightful reading:

Emotional Intelligence - The Conclusion

"A finely tuned ear is at the heart of empathy."

So says Daniel Goleman in his chapter on Social Radar.

Citing Carnevale and colleagues estimates, used by the US Department of Labor, he notes the total time spent in communication breaks down as follows:

reading and writing	22%
speaking	23%
listening	55%

For **mentoring** relationships to develop and flourish, some of Goleman's stress on the importance of good listening and empathy, again, like so many other activities, comes across as motherhood. We all wearily say: "*We've heard this before!*" Of course, if we all followed these concepts, not only would the world be a much better place, but also we wouldn't need to repeat ourselves as to the value of listening well.

In summary, here are six implications:

- **Point 1:** The listener (either the **mentor**, or the protege or both) comes across as indifferent or uncaring when the skill hasn't been taught or acquired or practised. If someone appears unapproachable, others become less communicative.

- **Point 2:** People "*who seem easy to talk to are those who get to hear more.*" This supposes the "easy-to-talk-to-person" wants to hear more.

- **Point 3:** "*The mark of having truly heard someone... is to respond appropriately even if that means making some change in what you do.*" As Goleman admits, the lengths to which one has to accommodate is controversial.

- **Point 4:** Old stereotypes don't always hold true. Goleman gives the example of a random survey of buyers about sales reps they viewed as trustworthy and empathic. Contrary to expectation, the fast-talking extrovert didn't necessarily get nominated. The same can be said of stereotypes of **mentors** -- there is no ideal mentor. What matters most for the mentor is that "*I felt needed. I was able to give.*" For proteges, the essence is: "*I got the help I needed. Someone cared.*" How this happens is likely to be exceedingly variable.

- **Point 5:** "Empathy can be used as a tool for manipulation." Goleman labels this "pseudo empathy" noting that many of us have safeguards against this artificiality. Again, citing a piece of

cont. p. 5



From the Virtual Mentoring Library[®]:

Mentor Foundation's Global Celebration

The Mentor Foundation is an international institution which fights against the use of drugs by the young. Established in Geneva, Switzerland in 1994 as an independent, privately funded, apolitical organization it is dedicated to preventing substance abuse amongst young people. The organization's prevention work brings families, schools, religious groups, out-of-school youth programs, sports clubs, law enforcement, mass media, governmental organizations (including collaboration with the World Health Organization and United Nations International Drug Control Program) together. The President of the Board of Trustees is H.M. Queen Sylvia of Sweden, while members of the Board include Queen Noor of Jordan, Garry Kasparov, Nino Cerutti, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and others.

The Mentor Foundation in 2002 went global with its newest program -- the Mentor Internet Portal. Launched in Los Angeles, the Portal is a centralized knowledge and communication platform providing high quality information on drug prevention for a global audience.

*There are no shortcuts
to any place worth going. ~Anonymous*

The Mentor Foundation gives international awards. For example, Mentor Achievement Award 2003 was won by "KETHEA Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals" of the Greek Prevention Department, a project focusing on children of primary school age. By making teachers and parents more sensitive to drug related issues and by educating them, the program improves the school environment and reduces the number of racist and hostile incidents.

The 2003 Prevention Award for an innovative and promising project went to Goals for a Better Life run by the Colombianitos Soccer Club. Soccer's popularity is tapped to encourage young people to leave the street life behind and to succeed in the classroom. The coaches provide the players with a strong role-model, and the game provides them with new ambition and alternatives to life on the streets.

The Award contains a prize sum of Euro 100,000 for further project support and one year of mentoring support by a Mentor Foundation Ambassador. ##

E-Learning and mentoring

Text, by itself, is not enough for capturing the secrets, unwritten rules, experiences with corporate-specific strategies, candid asides, and the bigger overview of what really matters in this place at this time. There is a huge gulf between tacit and explicit knowledge and the value of each has a different impact on the organization.

Tacit knowledge is what runs the corporation. Emerging from it is what the client pays for — not standard documentation, which sometimes can be downloaded from numerous sites.



What e-learning is not

E-learning can be both a push and a pull technology. It is not the passive delivery of one way learning.

As a system, it becomes a mechanism to both deliver and receive knowledge and record this centrally.

When tacit knowledge is purposefully captured and made available as a resource (rather than staying private), it then has some capital value. For corporations, e-learning is not simply a useful medium delivering learning one-way. It will, in time, be a potent mechanism for crystallizing and leveraging rich and coveted knowledge.

The role of electronic mentoring programs

Mentoring is not a one-day course, though many treat it this way. They fall into the trap of creating huge repositories rather than carefully crafted systems. This is why it is common to see mentoring "courses". A corporate-specific mentoring system permits three important improvements:

- a higher degree of accuracy than is possible manually
- a more systematic approach and
- more comprehensive record-keeping and relationship support with audio files, video clips, and text.

It can capture the insights and expertise of staff. A system makes this available across the company along with feedback/response evaluations which encourages additional insights, contact names, ideas, experiences, knowledge and so forth.

For information on **Colaboro**, the first and foremost mentoring management system online, contact Mentoring Solutions at: **1-877-955-0314**



Ask Mentor:

Q: What are the problems in creating a knowledge sharing culture?

A: There are some quite standard aspects such as: failure to recognize and accept the need to change the culture; lack of support and participation of senior management; and lack of alignment between the knowledge sharing goals and the vision of the organization. Recently, it has been claimed that “alignment” and “lack of alignment” are some of the more overused buzz words of 2004. This having been noted, Mentor wants to focus on failure to closely examine existing communities that are practicing knowledge sharing and to then understand how this sharing happens.



Mentor underscores the importance of this latter issue by the picture of the watering-hole with its wide variety of creatures: giraffes, elephants, warthogs and impalas. The sharing happens on different scales, at different times. Some will go without and some will keep others at bay, to wait a turn.

Now, translate this into human terms. Who does the sharing? What is shared of corporate value? What is lacking? Is the sharing done as well as it could be? What gaps occur?

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do.” ~ Mark Twain

Some organizations are willing to just let the water hole or water cooler culture be the primary way that knowledge is shared. But it’s too risky and uncertain an approach. The five questions above can’t be answered and they are five important pieces of information. Otherwise, why do we have electronic systems developed simply to find out what we know and what we don’t know? ##

Mentor muses: On career derailment

The Centre of Creative Leadership recently analyzed data gathered from ratings for 21,000 managers, over 200,000 inputs from bosses, peers and colleagues. The research asked those identified as “successful” about three key career events in that made a difference in how they manage and lead.

The ability to lead employees was rated as the most important leadership quality (identified by 87% of the 21,000 bosses). Seven additional skills were endorsed by the majority of bosses such as: resourcefulness, decisiveness, and ability to build and mend relationships.

Interestingly, while career management was judged to be least important, too narrow a functional orientation is a major career derailer. Apparently, staff are not great at deciding what is important for performance. Not being able to manage one’s career well and having too narrow a functional orientation were positively correlated. Singled out was the importance for staff to appreciate their respective strengths and understand what these are in order to leverage them. If appears these managers felt staff were spending too much time working on skills when this was not needed. [Mentor wonders what these managers were doing in the mean time.]

Five primary reasons:

The analysis suggests why and how people derail in organizations.

1. Inability to change or adapt [Mentor says: Take note all those of you who resist change].
2. Problems with interpersonal relationships -- can’t get along with others /have difficulty working with others.
3. Failure to build and lead a team [Mentor says this finding might be taken with a grain of salt. People who have trouble selecting and building a team might need training in this area -- this is not an easy task. Similarly, those who often hire people who are just like themselves might be unaware of this tendency and its downsides.]
4. Failure to meet business objectives -- people who haven’t followed up on promises and/or who are self-promoting.
5. Too narrow business experience -- those promoted in a single function and who have not seen/taken an opportunity to learn more about the business and understand what causes the broader organization to be successful.

To this list, we add the derailer Mentor has written about in the past: being too strong-willed and not taking sound advice.

[Source: Richard DiGeorgio for HR.com]



Insightful reading: Emotional Intelligence - The Conclusion

from p. 2

research by Eber, the author claims manipulative people are poorest at being empathic in contrast to highly trusting, the-glass-is-half-full people who are much more attuned to feelings.

• **Point 6:** The potential to empathize is insufficient. A lack of empathy may be intentional because some people want “to resist the urge to help.”

Having noted that “there may be some wisdom in tempering empathy, particularly when it comes to allocating tight resources in an organization.” Goleman goes on to remind readers: “When we identify too strongly with someone else’s need, we are more prone to go to extremes in helping them, even when that decision harms the collective good.”

It is his suggestion that while those with little power are normally expected to be sensitive to the feelings of those in power, the reverse is not typically so. Lack of empathy is a means by which power holders assert authority. A series of studies over twenty years reveal a negative correlation between empathic ability and holding power. Admitting that this may be less the situation currently especially with the emphasis on team building.



On giving advice:

Goleman makes reference to “psychologizing” -- the tendency to spend time theorizing as to the roots of a problem. Superficially, psychologizing masquerades as empathy even as it dismisses a problem and avoids doing anything about it. Richard Boyatzis claims relates to managerial mediocre performance.. Top performers listen and understand feelings of others, offer advice and do not impose their own diagnosis of what lies behind the problem.

However, here’s a caution based on our research over the decades: don’t fall into the in-a-hurry trap of thinking Boyatzis is giving a formula: listen+understand+offer advice = top performance. He isn’t. It’s merely a generalized description of what he thinks characterizes top performance.

Now, here’s the caution: never offer advice without first asking permission. Why? You avoid the pattern of prematurely jumping in with a solution. Too-hasty solution-giving will not empower others. Every time we’ve given a Mentoring Solutions workshop, attendees admit that advice-giving is a much loved behavior (even if it wasn’t asked for or appropriate!)

As part of Gray’s 6-Step **Mentoring Process**, the mentor finds out if equipping is needed by the protegee before empowering him or her. Advice may or may not be appropriate.

As Dr. William A. Gray, President of Mentoring Solutions Inc. points out:

“For mentors to be effective today, they must equip and empower proteges to be successful. If proteges are only equipped with what the mentor knows, this can produce “clones” who think and act alike. This might have been alright in the 1950s when the goal was to produce an “Organization Man.” Today’s proteges need to be empowered to use what they know to make innovative contributions that “add value” to themselves and give competitive advantage to their organizations. Equipping and empowering are both necessary today. One without the other is incomplete and inadequate. That’s why a new kind of Mentor-Protege relationship is needed.” ##

Next issue: Dark Age Ahead by Jane Jacobs.



squeezed for time?

Know “How many of our staff are interested in mentoring?” or “What type of mentoring do our staff desire -- formal or informal?”

The Mentoring Interest Profiler® (MIP) is our web-based survey tool that can be used organization-wide to determine the interest in knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, coaching for specific skills and so forth.

This brief survey typically takes two to five minutes for respondents to 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.

Want to use the MIP? Call us today to discuss your challenges and how we can help. **1-877-955-0314**