

# Mentor Ink Newsletter™

MentorInk is the online publication of  
Corporate Mentoring Solutions Year 16 Issue 3 March 2002



## About our lead item



### Five Mentoring Trends

When nothing of note on mentoring trends turned up in books, on the internet or in the popular literature, what started out as a simple piece of research last year, escalated, yielding some very interesting results...

## Other features:



### The Intelligent Thinkers Guide to Mentoring (new series)

Why training? Why train mentor-protégé partners together? We offer 7 reasons...

### *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 call, or send us an e-mail to discuss the opportunities or visit our website.



### The Mentoring Timeline

Here's a feature of longstanding for *MentorInk Newsletter*. Here's another for this issue with more to come in the future...



### High tech flypaper:

Last month, one of our features was on distance mentoring. Here's a supplement with caveats and further advice on e-mail etiquette...

*Goal look daunting?  
Yes, but nothing that comes easy  
is of much value, is it?  
~ anon*

## About the next issue (April 2002):



### 5 Mentoring Trends

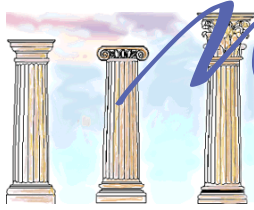
Technology: second of a series based on the work done at Corporate Mentoring Solutions to assess what is having an impact on worklife as it is reflected in mentoring programs.

### *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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## Five Mentoring Trends Part 1

Several weeks ago, when I presented at a mentoring conference on the topic of trends, there were lots of heads being scratched, dropped jaws, and – the greater number – who later told me: “*You made lightbulbs go on in my head.*” My response is sheer gratitude that audiences are open to seeing new possibilities. For those interested in what’s shaping our world the better to serve clients and program participants, it makes sense to pay attention to trends drawn from a wide set of sources.

So, what are the sources for my five suggested trends? Clients; monitoring of a dozen websites our company subscribes to; books, and journals in areas such as economics, technical development, finance, healthcare, education, media; messages from the tens of thousands of people who visit our website on a monthly basis, conversations with others in the mentoring field plus surveys Corporate Mentoring Solutions has conducted since early 2000.



Since these trends are more complex and interconnected than space permits in *MentorInk*, here is a brief overview of those five making most impact (or which will likely have an increasingly strong impact) on mentoring programs. Some trends you may be able to anticipate, like the first, but several of the others come out of left field as the saying goes.

### Trend 1: Demographic –

Tell a North American twenty-something that every 7.5 seconds a baby boomer retires and they start salivating. Job prospects! Promotion opportunities... great! The mental calculators were clicking when I offered that particular statistic at the conference. [It’s a smaller number than might be supposed at first.]

From the perspective of the about-to- retire-generation, it takes on a different cast. Think brain drain. With large numbers of managers and leaders exiting their respective fields, there is unprecedented need to develop replacements through mentoring. The “however” in this scenario is that these replacements typically need to be technically astute staff with wide experience in all parts of the organization that understand the value of intellectual capital and

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## High Tech Flypaper- Further thoughts on e-mail for distance mentoring

Lindsay Van Gelder, technology columnist labels e-mail “high tech flypaper”.

Huh? You say. Here’s the insight. Everything sticks to it and can be deadly. It shouldn’t be simplistically equated with memos, post cards, telephone chatter. It’s too easy to be careless because on the surface it seems to cost nothing and the distances involved are unmeasured and not obvious.



Word is that e-mail is evolving into the world’s number one means of communicating. It’s routine around offices to follow a conversation by a request to “e-mail that to me”. Estimates are that in the USA alone, 1.5 billion e-mails are sent each day. On any given day, office staff receive dozens of wildly varying work-related importance. Thus, the deluge contributes to the inclination to downgrade the care with which e-mails need to be treated. And it has added rather than subtracted from our workload. One number kicked around is two hours per day extra. Who needs that?

Suggestion 1: send only what is necessary to your mentoring partner.

Stories abound of those who click the “reply to sender” button without thinking. There is no retrieval key. Once it’s gone, it’s gone. And the wrong message is relayed on and on and on all over the world though that wasn’t the original idea. Thus, the comparison to flypaper.

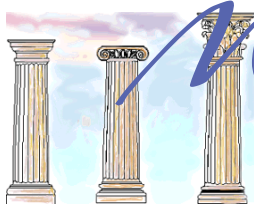
Suggestion 2: If you want something to remain confidential, probably it’s best not to send it via e-mail. Mentoring is about being proactive and intentional so it’s acceptable and important to clarify what and when information is to be kept confidential.

Suggestion 3: If someone comes into your office, it’s rude to be reading e-mail while trying to carry on a conversation. Your attention can’t be in two places simultaneously.

Suggestion 4: Avoid sending chain mail letters, writing in ALL CAPITALS, messages without names and salutations, massive files. Doing this probably doubles the chances you will send the recipient a virus to say nothing of the time wasted opening or downloading material that isn’t necessary.

Suggestion 5: Avoid humorous word play -- it’s so

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## 5 Mentoring Trends Cont. from p2

emotional intelligence.

Roller-coaster economies also influence the demographics of our mentoring programs. One decade there aren't enough workers, thus our programs gear to bring more people on board faster and better – mentoring programs for new hires and retention, for instance. The next decade, cutbacks leave “orphans” and we develop programs to deal with this scenario. To complicate this picture, there is the push to do more with less. As a consequence, multi-purpose programs are designed to mentor fewer staff to do more with a strong emphasis on their flexibility rather than on specialization. When particular fields heat up, as has been the case for technology, and we have many young college and university graduates entering the workforce, mentoring programs are developed to jump start the process of bringing them on board then quickly showing them how to sell current products, invent new products, take over the running of the company and so forth. In sum, programs can't afford to be super-simplistic the way they were ten or more years ago.

Further, I suggest this demographic thrust places the burden on program designers to sense the shifts in current demographics and be prepared to re-design to accommodate to changes over time. This may mean multiple programs run simultaneously. More of this with one of my next trends.

NOTE: This trend analysis is not scientific and reflects the research and opinions of Corporate Mentoring Solutions.

*“The guy who invented the first wheel, he was an idiot.  
The guy who invented the other three, he was a genius.”  
~ Sid Caesar, comic*

## The Intelligent Thinkers Guide to Mentoring: Part 1

According to a Deloitte & Touche survey - 75% of Gen Xers claim “mentors are very important for personal career growth”. According to a 1998 Louis Harris & Associates survey, 61% of respondents who say their employers “provide formal mentoring opportunities” say they are very likely to remain in their jobs for the next five years. Ask some corporate leaders (who have themselves experienced the benefits of an informal mentoring relationship) about purposeful use of this powerful process to create significant and sustainable competitive advantage for their own firms, and you might get hesitancy.

Most likely the response is: “We do not know how to take the best of the informal and blend it with the more purposeful, formal approach.”

In a time of severe technical talent shortages (with no end in sight) a co-ordinated mentoring program is, quite simply, essential and the intelligent thing to do. It may well be the best employee recruiting and retention strategy going, for corporations. And we DO know how to do it -- by training.

Why training? Dr. Betsy Alleman (1989) found evidence that training through mentoring programs led to more mentoring taking place than where mentors were not trained. This said, there still is resistance even with copious evidence dating back to the late 1970s as to the value of moving away from old ways (no training). What arguments can be



mustered to get would be participants to get serious about training in the same way they accept training for far less complex activities?

At CMSI, we have used a mixture of approaches, one of which is through brief scenarios, three of which follow as illustrations:

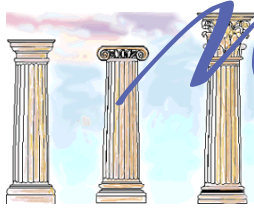
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## The Mentoring Interest Profiler™ (MIP)

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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## The Intelligent Thinkers Guide (Cont. from pg.3)

**Scenario 1:** Every now and then, along comes a very special type of prospective participant for the co-ordinated (formal) mentoring program. The arms are folded across the chest to signal an Attitude with a capital A. On the surface, this soul isn't open to new learning or self-development. The one-sided conversation starts like this: Prospect: "What can you possibly teach me about mentoring that I don't already know?"

**Scenario 2:** It's 8:15am. People have gathered in the room, anxious to start the Mentoring Program Training Day. Five minutes to launch and room is dotted with "orphans" -- people still waiting for their partners to appear ... people they may have not even met. By 8:30, the room fills and the training begins except for two "orphans" whose partners never appear -- no explanation, nothing. Imagine how they feel. What thoughts are going through their heads? People are uncomfortably aware of the empty seats. What message does this send to the organization? the partner? colleagues?

**Scenario 3:** It's one day before the Mentoring Program Training Day. One of the partners (often the mentor), calls the co-ordinator to announce: "I'm too busy to attend." or "Mentoring's just like any other program. Just send me the training booklet. My partner can fill me in when we get together." What attitude does this model for others?



Maybe you (the reader) are a mentor, a co-ordinator, or a protege. You too may question the benefits of being trained together. Knowing the following seven reasons, will give you more awareness of the value to be gained.

**Reason 1.** You're going to work together anyway so why

delay and why reinvent the process yourself? The training day offers immediate insights via a mentoring process successfully used by thousands around the world. Partners who attend on their own tell us "simulated partnership" isn't particularly effective and is an inefficient use of time.

**Reason 2.** Joint participation in the launch session psychologically and visibly confirms the importance of your partner just by the fact that you are present and willing to work as a team. Even if you've worked with thousands of others, your partner is a unique individual. Honor that by giving them time during the training day.

**Next issue:** Even more reasons appear in The Intelligent Thinkers Guide to Mentoring Part 2

## E-mail (Cont. from pg. 2)

easily misunderstand. As noted last month, e-mail lacks intonation, facial gestures, body language and thus can be interpreted several ways (possibly to your detriment). Is your mentoring partner there to give you feedback on your humor? -- probably not.

Suggestion 6: Yes, you have a mentor (or a protege) that doesn't make it an occasion to play to the masses and brag. Don't drag out your Blackberry during Act 1 of the office meeting or over a beer at the local watering hole while with your buddies. Just not done, old boy. Seems one graceless soul did just this during an elegant party. The hostess finally had to take time out from her social duties, e-mail him from her office and tell him to put his "silly toy away or leave".

Feel free to e-mail this on to mentoring colleagues.

(Source: *National Post*, Feb 2/02)

## Mentoring Timeline™



Unquestionably still Canada's most prominent and highly-respected architects, at age 77 Arthur Erickson could have retired years ago. Like Frank Lloyd Wright who designed New York's Guggenheim Museum in his 80s, Erickson says: "The great thing about age is that you don't care." With creations featured in *Architectural Digest*, and recent designs still flowing from his board -- for example Tacoma's Glass Museum (at the behest of glass great, Dale Chihuly), Erickson is probably still remembered best for his revolutionary Simon Fraser University concept. On being an apprentice: "getting fired from all the best architectural firms in the city". His **mentor?** artist B.C. Binning. **Binning was also** a patron for whom Erickson designed a home (long since a national historic site). Amongst his many accolades, we've selected just one from the past: in 1986, Erickson was given a "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the American Institute of Architects (Source: AIA; Vancouver Sun, Jan 26/02).