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Mentor Muses on:

Toolmaking: Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon & Homo Sapiens



Until recently, I had not equated the "tool-making" Corporate Mentoring Solutions is involved in -- putting its paper and pencil mentoring tools online (and inter-linking them so that results from one tool appear at a later date in another tool) --with ancient "tool-making".

(con't on page 3)

Benchmark 2000® Results - Part 3- Documenting the Need

Q: What is the Documenting the Need Component? (33 programs responding)

Documenting the need for your program and getting support for it [at all levels]

We've always said that it's important to show the need for a mentoring program. In fact, it's one of the first questions we ask of clients. "Why a mentoring program?"

It must be noted that some organizations believe mentoring programs are there to solve just about every problem going. Not so.

The belief that mentoring programs can be canned and rolled off the shelf is counter productive. So, did our survey takers agree with us? Read on to find out.

Q: What questions did we ask?

• How important is this task to you / your organization? Only one program out of 33 did not bother to carry out this task. It may be that this organization already knew they had a need via a previous, internal survey.

Of the remainder,

- 3.1% said this was not important;
 - 9.4% moderately important
 - 84.8% important
- (72% of respondents gave it the highest priority with a 9 out of 9 on the scale)
- Average importance score = 8.2 out of 9



From the Editor:
Welcome to *MentorInk Newsletter™*. Past issues have carried everything and anything mentoring-related with a focus on mentoring programs. Happy reading to all.
Your editor:

Marilynne Miles Gray

How difficult/easy is this task?

- Difficult = 21.9%
- moderate = 40.6%
- not difficult = 37.5%

How satisfied /not satisfied are you with your results?

- Not satisfied = 12.5%
- moderate = 31.3%

(con't on page 2)



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the online monthly of Corporate Mentoring Solutions Volume 15 Issue 3 March 2001

Benchmarking (cont.)

- satisfied 53.1%

Number of people on this task:

- 1 to 2 = 67.6%
- 3 to 6 = 19.4%
- 7 to 10 = 6.5%
- 11 or more = 6.5%



Number of hours on this task:

- 1 to 5 = 16.1%
- 6 to 10 = 45.2%
- 11 to 15 = 9.7%
- 16+ hours = 29%
- Average number of hours spent on this task: range from a low of 8.6 to 11.4 hours.

Commentary:

As with previous component tasks reported in earlier issues of *MentorInk* (selection, matching), this task consumes the better part of one or 2 full work days. This is to be expected for a "high touch" program such a mentoring.

- Question: Did your organization document the need for its mentoring program? If not, why not?

MentorInk Quiz

Is there an ideal mentor or protégé personality?

- Yes based on the idea that _____
- No, based on the idea that _____
- Does not matter because _____
- Unsure.

Read next month's issue for some answers.

Mentoring Myth #5:

Myth: "We can afford to take several years to work out the bugs in our mentoring program."



Reality: Over the years, we've encountered two different mind sets on mentoring programs.

One mind set, which is the **developmental mind set**, believes that it should take several years to develop and debug something like a mentoring program.

No one denies that mentoring programs must be unique to the organization and will be, of necessity, complex. The design and planning phase for the program takes time. Those of us who have been designing programs for decades know and call upon a large store of research available on how to make a program work to a high degree of success from the outset.

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Keep in mind that as your organization takes time to work out the bugs, people are damaged by unmet expectations, unfulfilled goals, mismatches, unclear guidelines and so on.

At Corporate Mentoring Solutions, we have relied for years on field-testing, surveys, participant interviews, wide reading of the literature and hard work to develop an approach that combines the best of informal mentoring with what we know about successful planned mentoring. #





Mentor Muses (con't from page 1)

What a revelation it was when I saw the progress represented by their efforts. Truly this age and all its electronics is a marvel!

By looking back 20-plus years (spent by Corporate Mentoring Solutions) developing mentoring tools, I spied just how primitive the situation was back in 1978 and how this has altered over the centuries.

To be candid, to a Bronze-age soul like myself, twenty plus years is but an eyeblink.

That being said, I propose there has been a 3-stage period of tool-making in the mentoring field.

Stage 1 Matching: Centuries ago, as a protégé, your choices were nil or very restricted. Matching was on the basis of availability to work with an uncle or grandfather, apprenticed to a neighbour, an experienced workman in the trade (or its guild equivalent). The notion of this person being your mentor was likely not thought of.

Yours was a match made to meet a specific long-term goal. Your opinions and feelings were not considered relevant as the family was indebting itself on behalf of the learner (you) for a period of years. Thus, it was vital for you to succeed and probably carry on a tradition within your clan or family. As a consequence, expectations were high. The older generation counted on the money your skills would bring in. Consult your wishes on the match when their economic could be risked? I think not. So it was in my day and that was in the 1600s. My protege (the grandson of Louis XIV) was not consulted on his match with me. Fortunately, we got along very well indeed. If we had not, too bad.

Unlike the current era, there was a clearly-marked career ladder, even if this was often quite a limited and short ladder. Certainly, my protégé knew what his destiny was and could not argue against it. On the plus side, career ladders were known and often regulated. Today, career ladders are often missing, unclear or rapidly shifting. That, many don't regard as a positive situation.

In sum, in this first era, by modern standards, matching was very crude, even non-existent. Perhaps I can term it "Neanderthal"? We have

Mentor Answers FAQs™

Q: *Mentor, is there a difference between peer coaching and mentoring?*

A: Mentoring is sometimes confused with peer coaching. However, unlike mentors and protégés, peers are equal by definition. This means peer A cannot greatly facilitate the personal development of peer B because A hasn't had enough experience to gain sufficient wisdom to guide B's journey.

Moreover, peers who hold similar ranks in the organization cannot greatly facilitate each other's career advancement because they do not have enough power to sponsor the other person's promotion to a higher position.

Further, peer A won't have sufficient insight into the politics and unwritten rules -- peer A is still learning those him/herself.

Nevertheless, some knowledgeable peers can help one another improve skill performance through coaching. The large number of capable peers available, in contrast to higher-ranking mentors, suggests that peer coaching can provide a viable solution to the transfer of training problem in business and industry, in schools and hospitals, and wherever employee training is being offered. #

"Skill to do comes of doing."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

come to expect that things were always thus.

Recently, one Program Co-ordinator was exclaiming in exasperation how long it took to "match" program participants without realizing that in the past, there was no way to match except by guesswork. Matching in the past has been fraught with errors and uncertainty. This, I know is one reason Corporate Mentoring Solutions has spent much time to develop a better means for matching with greater assurance of success and objectivity.

[Next issue: Stage 2 matching - Cro Magnon](#)