

Press Release

OMS Online Mentoring SolutionsTM 1.5 Professional

May 1, Dr. William A. Gray, President of CMSI announced completion of 16 months of alpha and beta testing with the OMS and the release of version 1.5 Professional.

Dr. Gray notes "With our recent conversion to Microsoft SQL Server, we have increased speed and scalability such that we can handle large programs in excess of 1000 participants."

According to Jon Zimmermann, IT Manager for CMSI, "Quarter 4 will be the release date for OMS 2.0, a highly innovative system for Internet use or as an Intranet. There are added features to facilitate both informal & formal programs with an enhanced user interface."

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At a comparable cost with less effort (as indicated in the Benchmark 2000 Mentoring Program Survey), the OMS far outstrips the 6 other conventional mentoring approaches (such as: e-style bulletin boards, group mentoring).

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Words that MatterTM

The "R" Word

The word for this issue is "random" but could as easily be: You've-Got-To-Be-Kidding! Describing jaw-dropping, plain, out and out bad program recommendations from "mentoring" sites on the Internet. For this issue we'll focus on the concept of "random" matching.

We all suspect (or know) there are mentoring program vendors claiming experience and longevity that they can not substantiate. Take their advice and you could well have some major problems. Unless you don't care that they have "stretched the truth" about their credentials and their experience. More of this later. Caveat emptor.

Back to "random" matching that appeared on the Internet in the past few weeks, in a mentoring vendor newsletter. I'm not certain whether I wish to laugh at the idea or cringe: "put-all-names-into-a-hat and let's see what happens." This along with the claim that this approach works as well as any other method -- letting mentors, proteges or coordinators make the match. (cont. page 2)

2 PowerPoint Presentations Available:

- OMS & CMSI vs 6 Conventional
 - OMS 1.5 The Overview
- are available to companies interested in moving their programs forward. Send an e-mail to receive your complimentary PowerPoints today.

From the Editor: Welcome to MentorInk Newsletter
This month we feature:

- Benchmark 2000© Results - Part 4 Monitoring
- Fenelon's Shopping List

Next issue (June-July 2001):

- Benchmark Results - Part 5 - Past issues have carried everything & anything mentoring related with a focus on programs.
- Happy reading to all.

Your editor:

Marilynne Miles Gray

The "R" Word (cont. from page 1)

Let's use our brains for a moment. It takes only

- a basic knowledge of how mentoring actually works
 - a little logic and
 - some insights into human nature
- to see how off-base this "random" idea is.

First. Mentoring always has been and always will be based on careful, not random, matching.

Second. Imagine the disbelief and anger when participants discover the basis for the match. Think of the frustration at knowing needs will not be met and expertise not put to use due to the randomness of matching. In a complex, highly technical world, one does not expect a mentor these days to be able to be all things to all people nor will the proteges accept just any old match that happens along. We can do better than this.

Third. Put yourself in the shoes of an eager, energetic protege (mentee, associate or whatever other term your program applies who wants to undertake some personal/career development. This person believes in the power of mentoring. Being educated and a relatively sophisticated participant in the "learning scene" this protege isn't about to waste time. This person has very specific needs and very strong attitudes about how this should be done to best effect. The same can be said for the mentor.



Participants and Coordinators will wonder why, with decades of experience and research put into solutions like the OMS, organizations are not taking the professional route and using approaches that work to best effect?

For decades Corporate Mentoring Solutions has worked to develop, test and refine matching tools and approaches for participants whether at the newer hires, career development or leadership level. The OMS 1.5 offers 3 ways to match participants using proven tools: Needs-Expertise [Protege Needs Inventory]; compatibility [Mentoring Compatibility Indicator] or both. These tools are available in versions for newer hires, career development, executive development AND are customizable such that a particular organization's competencies can be added to further refine and guarantee the success of the match.

Bottom line, there are objectives that everyone wishes to reach and how better to do this than by using our heads instead of our hats? Which approach is more likely to have won awards for mentoring programs and to have very high success rates -- All the matches drawn at random out of a hat? Or the OMS?



Lack of real experience explains anyone advising deliberate randomness in mentoring. Elect to follow this route? Cross your fingers and hope for the best. As said earlier: Caveat emptor. And please hide your hats. ##

Mentor Muses on: Toolmaking: Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon & Homo Sapiens Conclusion

Once the concept of the mentoring program came into existence there were any number of concomitant developments. The word program is defined as "conscious planning of many aspects" including selecting and so forth. As a counterpart, truly informal mentoring had none of these elements. Whatever happened, happened. Training would not have been anticipated long ago let alone undertaken. Selection was almost always the mentor prerogative.

For mentoring programs, early matching was based on a knowledge of the prospective partners. The down sides of this approach: only very limited numbers can be matched in this way and the outcomes are uncertain. This keeps the program exclusive -- not a desirable status these days. Eventually, when there was fallout from this approach. Some opted to move to "team mentoring" and "groups" to cope with this lack of insight and expertise.

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As we gathered data by field-testing program concepts, demands from participants led us to create instruments and then field-test them. This would yield faster and more objective matches. Recall though that 20 years ago, there were no mentoring program tools. The concept was totally innovative.

Some people still deny that one can match participants let alone use mentoring tools. The claim is that doing this smacks of "forcing partners to be together." Of course, this mixes two separate things -- developing reasonable, careful and democratic guidelines by which a program operates, with the whole concept of observing how and why people can work amicably and productively together, then developing tools on this basis. Relationships in a mentoring program can be considered utilitarian. Respect and collegiality, one hopes, are axiomatic. Friendship is a potential but not required element. ##

Benchmark 2000 Mentoring Survey

Q10 Monitoring (23 responses)

This question covers monitoring each protege's progress working on needs/goals after initial training and includes tasks such as: phone calls, emails and face to face discussion.

- Importance of this task/component: No program indicated that this was not important = 0% moderate = 8.7% important = 91.3%
Average rating = 8.2 out of 9
- Difficulty of doing this task: difficult = 39.1% moderate = 43.5% not difficult = 17.4%.
- Satisfaction with the outcomes or results: One program did not indicate a satisfaction level. Of the remainder, 18.2% were not satisfied moderately satisfied = 50% satisfied = 31.8%. Of this latter group, no group gave this satisfaction level a 9 out of 9 rating.
- Number of people involved: 1 to 2 = 78.3% 3 to 6 = 13% 7 to 10 = 4.3% 11 or more = 4.3%
- Number of hours needed: 1 to 5 = 13.6% 6 to 10 = 22.7% 11 to 15 = 18.2% 16 or more hours = 45.5% The average number of hours: 11.2 hours to 13.2 hours for this task.

The fact that close to half of the programs needed 16 or more hours to carry out this task reflects that fact that program monitoring is carried out over time and is typically one for each pairing.

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In sharp contrast, the Online Mentoring Solutions' Progress Report Function eliminates the tedious, time-wasting parts of Monitoring & Tracking, replacing them with helpful, no-time-wasted activities via interlinked information.

With the OMS, it is possible for proteges to link personal information so they can reach more goals faster.

This tool provides feedback to the Coordinator who can then deploy time better. This tool gives selective feedback to mentors. This latter feature is a great way to encourage repeat mentors -- something which is a challenge for mentoring programs. And this is only 3 of the many benefits of one tool in the system.

For a tour of the OMS, or to see a copy of data showing the time-savings available through the OMS, e-mail your request. We'll be happy to save you lots of time. ##

Fenelon's Shopping List

Interviewer: Thanks Fenelon, for doing this interview. What do you suggest a protege (or mentor) look for in a partner?

Fenelon: You want a shopping list? Hmm.. there are any number of them available. Good, useful and well-worn. Perhaps you would prefer more unexpected suggestions to develop one's skills or career more profoundly? Move to a higher level?

Interviewer: Absolutely. You, of all people, have long and very high level experience as the mentor to a future King of France.



Fenelon: The Duke would have succeeded Louis 14th - The Sun King - had he not died in his early 20s. Bright and very likable lad.

But to continue. First, partners must be flexible. That is, they must be willing to tackle the task at hand in new ways. For my part, I was a mentor in an age which prescribed deadly dull and boring lessons. To enliven my classes, I reworked The Odyssey into a much more upbeat classic so the Duke would absorb how one ruled wisely and well without falling asleep.

Interviewer: Did it work?

Fenelon: My book went into 30 printings in many languages in a few short years. History says my new approach fundamentally changed education. Yes, flexibility works. What the King did when he read my Odyssey... well that's another story. ##