

# MENTORINK™ NEWSLETTER

... the online publication of Corporate Mentoring Solutions  
Year 17 Issue 6 July-August 2003



## Happy birthday MentorInk first issued July 1986



*A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labours of other men, living and dead and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received.*

*- Albert Einstein*

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Books

#### Mentoring and *Intellectual Capital* - Part 2

Thomas Stewart's *Intellectual Capital* deals with many things including concepts that will have an impact on making mentoring (and coaching) choices. While he does not explicitly label it this way, read on to see some of the implications. (see page 5)

#### Mentoring Gen Xers - Conclusion

In this issue, Tapping potential and several insightful ideas about mentoring Gen Xers.... (see page 4)

#### From The Virtual Mentoring Library©

Reinvention.. (see page 4)

#### From the field

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#### Another Mentoring Myth... (see page 2)

#### Mentoring Timeline:

When a mentor recommends that a young man set off on a sea voyage, no one would have predicted the changes to come as a result... (see page 2)

#### About our cartoon

Some years back, we published a series of quarterly journals called *Mentoring International*. At that time, *MentorInk* was an insert. What you see of the right is one of the cartoons (Volume 5, Issues 2/3 - Spring / Summer 1991).



## FUTURE ISSUES

- Mentoring Timeline
- Mentoring and Intellectual Capital - Part 3 - Around the water cooler
- Calculating coaching costs
- On luck Part 2

### 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 Timeline© 1831 A.D.

*Darwin's Mentor* (by S.M. Waters and E.A. Stow) is a biography of one of history's towering figures.

As noted in the book, it's too easy to overlook contemporaries who were also notable. John David Henslow (founder of the Botanic Garden in Cambridge) was an academic with a strong yen to travel that never materialized. It was he who urged his pupil, Darwin, to go on the *Beagle*. Neither realized at the time how this simple voyage would change the world and how we think about our place in it.

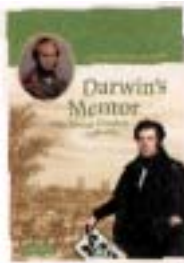
In a letter to botanist Joseph Hooker, Darwin gives voice to his doubts about a biography of Henslow: "*The equability and perfection of Henslow's whole character, I shd think would make it very difficult for anyone to portray him.*" High praise indeed from a very influential person in his own right.

In his years at Cambridge (1828-31), while studying for the clergy, Darwin is swept up by beetlemania. His cousin, William Darwin Fox, teaches him the art of hunting for rare insects. Fox also introduces Charles to a *mentor* who changes the course of his life. Reverend John Stevens Henslow [1796-1861], a 32-year old professor of botany, becomes his idol and role model. Darwin spends so much time with Henslow that he is called "the man who walks with Henslow." For Darwin's mentor, like other ordained naturalists, studying nature is studying God's work.

Henslow hosts parties for young naturalists to network with senior men of science. Darwin is thrilled to hear them "*conversing on all sorts of subjects with the most varied and brilliant powers.*" One of the most brilliant of all, geologist Reverend Adam Sedgwick, takes Darwin on an excursion to explore the hills of Wales. Eager to impress, Darwin learns to identify geological strata on his own. Sedgwick will later become one of the harshest critics of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Like other geologists of the day, he is no biblical literalist -- he accepts that Earth is ancient. Yet to him the notion that living species evolve is blasphemy.

For six months, Darwin plans a "naturalizing" trip to the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa, with friends from Cambridge. Then, suddenly, his hopes are dashed when one of his would-be travelling companions dies.

Only days later, Darwin gets a letter from Henslow, who has recommended him to Captain Robert FitzRoy for a two-year voyage around the world. Henslow writes: "*[T]here never was a finer chance for a man of zeal & spirit ... [Capt. FitzRoy] wants a man (I understand) more as a companion than a mere collector & would not take any one however good a Naturalist who was not recommended to him likewise as a gentleman ... [I recommend you] not on the*



(cont. on page 4)

## Mentoring at the HR Forum

The *Event Catalog* for May 7-10th Richmond Events HR Forum on the Adonia ocean liner leaving from New York is "weighty" I think as I pick it up. Dutifully, I sign my SARS-free document and board. Just as well, the weather is calm if drizzly and overcast. This is a working cruise.

My schedule is full. I have to give two talks (on *Mentoring Trends*) and spend all meals at the Press Table answering questions and finding out what's going on in human resources the world over. Sometimes talk turns to how the wait staff are "coming along" because we know they are gearing up for a big cruise only a few hours after we leave -- all 800 or so of us. It's a natural topic given our interest in people and their development.

Retired General H. Norman Schwarzkopf delivers the opening address in motivating fashion -- *From the War Room to the Boardroom: Leadership in Difficult Times*. Several days later, in much more relaxed fashion, Sir George Martin reminisces about creativity and his days with the Beatles.

In between are all sorts of sessions to top us up professionally and I opt in to ones on creativity (a favorite topic of mine), change management, and corporate culture. I even squeeze in a session or two with the marketing contingent which is also sharing the boat with those of us in human resources. It's a young and energetic crowd keen on talking about how things are done with one another especially with those who've "*gone down that road already.*"

To make certain there's no excuse to gain weight, I walk up and down instead of taking the elevator. That translates into 9 flights of carpeted stairs from the deck I normally need to work on to Level 14 (actually Level 13 but we all know why it's not called that...) to see how my colleague Ian Frazer is faring with his work on board.

Saturday morning, we sail back into port past the Statue of Liberty. It's sunny. Time to head home for next steps.



## Myth: It's luck that ...

By now, *MentorInk* has (over a decade and a half) been printing short articles on myths with an emphasis on those that can do damage to the mentoring program and to relationships. Here's the myth we're about to explore: **Myth - it's luck that gets a mentor. Being in the right place at the right time...**

In the next few issues, we'll consider some interesting research to accompany what we've been teaching about this myth. First, to define terms. "Chance" which is a totally random phenomenon like winning a lottery is not the same as "luck". Just the same, intrigued by a preliminary study showing some people are "lucky" on a repeated basis, Dr Richard Wiseman, a psychologist at the University of

(cont. on page 5)

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## From the field

It's valuable to read about ideas in fields other than one's own. Cross-fertilization of ideas has been immensely important in the field of mentoring. Here's one to read:

According to the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives (GWSAE), "*mentoring has an exceptional impact on the legacy aspect of any organization by providing continuity from one generation of leaders to the next*" in terms of values, goals, and missions. Done well, the mentoring process can help an organization do away with aspects of the culture that have become counterproductive while keeping the best. Those who have lived through important events and milestones can share lessons extracted -- especially with newer staff who can't yet appreciate the import of such events.

The GWSAE's perspective on mentoring is nicely encapsulated in the story of one organization that introduced a list of seven strategic goals to its staff. Listed on posters throughout the workplace, and referred to frequently in staff meetings, this list was just that, a list until one mentor found a way to make it real.

He happened to be a developer of the list of goals. Along with most of the staff, his protégé never had a full appreciation for the strategic goals until the mentor shared stories of how the final list came into being -- the long nights of debates and discussions by upper management, the wordsmithing and agonizing they went through to come up with the ideal set of goals. The protégé saw things from a fresh perspective. From mere words on paper, they became a labor of love. [Source: adapted from *Executive Update*, 1999]



## From the Virtual Mentoring Library®

The Virtual Mentoring Library has been around for some years. Its role is to retrieve material from the archives for valuable review. From time to time, it's important to remind ourselves that we don't want to (a) reinvent wheels or (b) make "new" claims today that have already been substantiated by a number of researchers in the past.

No matter whether it's labelled *mentoring* or coaching, when speaking of the broad, life-altering relationships and process, it's been tracked for quite some time. Every now and then it becomes clear that some don't know how far back discussions of mentoring in management go -- since the 1970s. Hundreds of books and articles have been written on mentoring (typically the term employed), describing the benefits.

Here's only a few of hundreds of instances. The career success of individuals has been often attributed to having a mentor (e.g., Collins & Scott, 1978; Roche, 1979; Willbur, 1987). Mentoring has been related to career outcomes for proteges such as salary and career satisfaction increases, promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990, 1982; Fagenson, 1989; Koberg, Boss, Chappell & Ringer, 1994; Whiteley). Wilson and Elman (1990) report employees who receive mentoring learn the ropes and unwritten rules faster and more effectively than those without the benefit of mentoring. Kram's research (1980) indicates that mentors provide both vocational and psychosocial career support.

Studies also point to reduced turnover as another possible organizational benefit of mentoring. Scandura and Viator (1994) found a negative relationship between mentoring and intention to leave the organization. For these and other reasons, mentoring is considered a component of an effective training and development process in many organizations (Burke & McKeen, 1989; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Zey, 1988; Scandura, 1992).

## Mentoring Timeline (cont. from page 2)

*supposition of yr. Being a finished Naturalist, but as amply qualified for collecting, observing, & noting any thing worthy to be noted in Natural History ... Don't put on any modest doubts or fears about your disqualifications for I assure you I think you are the very man they are in search of."*

Darwin later writes: "*I was instantly eager to accept but my father objected, adding: 'If you can find any man of common sense, who advises you to go, I will give my consent.'*"

During the voyage, Darwin ships his fossils and other collections back home, and his fame as a naturalist-explorer begins to rise. Henslow, urges, "*Send more bones ... Every scrap of Megatherium skull you can set your eyes upon.*"

In later years, Darwin notes: "*The voyage of the Beagle has been by far the most important event in my life and has determined my whole career; yet it depended on ... such a trifle as the shape of my nose. I have always felt that I owe to the voyage the first real training or education of my mind.*"

Once home, Joseph Hooker, Darwin's admiring friend, acts as confidant, and sounding board. Hooker helps Darwin hone his thinking about natural selection, but he is not shocked by its basic premise. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* is arguably the most important work in the history of biology. At the end of his life, Darwin remembers with some pride, "*It was from the first highly successful. The first small edition of 1250 copies was sold on the day of publication, and a second edition of 3000 copies soon afterwards.*" [Source: *New Scientist*, October 2001 & PBS website]

*"It was when I found out I could make mistakes that I knew I was on to something." - O. Coleman*



## Mentoring Gen Xers - Part 3

### Tapping Potential

In some fields, the belief has been that staff are lucky to have jobs, that paycheck and an annual bonus are recognition enough. Younger, highly entrepreneurial employers, recognizing staff have personal lives and new values, reward -- well -- differently. Need more be said? Most readers have likely read about interesting developments in the workplace. Play rooms. Pool tables. Paint ball sessions.

Experts suggest the following 3 be considered:

1. Emphasize work-life balance. Make this clear in interviews and training programs, and make it a value of your organization. Keep aware of this issue. Some companies are serious about promoting pride in work and aim to create a spirit of teamwork. Work with employees to make jobs more fulfilling if this is an issue. Enjoyment and sociability not part of your organization's culture? Then the likelihood of attracting or retaining Gen Xers is decreased. When they see people toiling in dead-end, dull, uneventful jobs they think: "Not for me!" Remember, Gen Xers will be the next lot of superintendents and managers.
2. Value differences. Apply policies and guidelines, for the most part, following the spirit of the law, not just the law. For example, making office hours more flexible to account for personal time and productivity rather than time on the job.
3. Tell potential hires what day-to-day responsibilities entail. One of the most common reasons Gen Xers leave jobs is a misunderstanding of what a job requires.

A few ideas:

One important Gen X value is being part of a team. A host of activities can foster this: set team goals, not just individual ones; turn staff meetings into a learning forum (to learn more about business priorities and work problems, as well as technical information); use team-oriented language; support and encourage the most appropriate of their pursuits; attend nonwork and community events together; provide business updates every 4-6 months.

Baby boomers invented the resume. Like those who went before them, Gen Xers evaluate work in terms of resume worthiness. The older generation might ask, "Why train them for our competitors or for other fields?" More recent thinking is to ask, "What happens if I don't train and develop them, and they stay?"

Of course, develop career plans and mentoring programs because Gen Xers, like the rest of us, want to know what they can do, how soon, which opportunities and challenges will expand horizons. And they want it now!

Fundamentally, what characterizes a particular generation is little different from those who went before. With aging, new technologies, new demands and responsibilities, people tend to adapt and rethink priorities. Even so, they bring with them new positions on how organizations are run. ~~

## Myth: It's luck that gets you a mentor

(cont. from page 2)

Hertfordshire, set out to investigate the impact on people's lives of chance opportunities, lucky breaks and being in the right place at the right time.

He completed a ten year survey of 14,000 UK residents (aged 18-84) having initially only asked people to indicate which part of the UK they were from and answer the question: "Are you a lucky person? That is, do seemingly chance events tend to consistently work out in your favour? Do you tend to be in the right place at the right time, or often accidentally meet people that have a positive effect on your life?"

Overall, 12% of those questioned classify themselves as "very lucky" with just 9% indicating that they are "very unlucky". Respondents were also asked to rate their level of extroversion, intuition and optimism. It seems lucky people self-reported being more extrovert, intuitive and optimistic than the unlucky.

An additional part of the survey involved over 100,000 people from 10 countries rating their luck. After many experiments and ten years of work, he now believes it is possible to become luckier. His investigation eventually focussed on how to respond to things in life that can be changed. Obviously some events can't be avoided. He also accepts that he can't increase an individual's luck factor in relation to specifics, such as a single lottery.

**NEXT ISSUE: Lucky Experiments**

*"By the time a man asks you for advice, he has generally made up his mind what he wants to do, and is looking for confirmation rather than counseling."  
- Sydney J. Harris*

## Mentoring Statistic of the Month

A survey of women in corporate leadership pointed to "lack of mentoring" as a barrier to their advancement. In fact, 46% of women of color respondents noted this. Strategies deemed most effective by CEOs to support and enhance women's advancement to senior management include:

- \* Giving women high-visibility assignments (74%)
- \* Ensuring that succession planning incorporates gender diversity (54%)
- \* Instituting formal mentoring programs (44%)
- \* Holding managers accountable for women's advancement (41%)

(Source: *Women in Corporate Leadership: Progress and Prospects*, 2001)



## on Intellectual Capital - Part 2 Making mentoring choices

It's a saying around our company: "Around the water cooler, knowledge is being shared and transferred. The problem is that most often you don't know what's being shared; you don't know how much or what the 'experts' know; and you don't know how much more the learners need." That's one reason to spend time, energy and resources on using mentoring and coaching to grow, transfer, manage and retain knowledge.

While shifting to a new thought about recognizing tacit knowledge, Thomas Stewart points to the supremely successful example of Bolles' *What Color is Your Parachute* - predicated upon the notion that people know more than they realize. People accumulate skills, information and experiences, internalized to the point that they become oblivious to the fact. In our company, we call this being "unconsciously incompetent" because, until this knowledge is brought to the surface, recognized, honed and carried forward into new fields of endeavor, it's impossible to become consciously competent. Mentor must be consciously competent -- that is, able to relate to others what they know and how to carry it out.

Stewart points to the fact that we and our organizations operate by rules of thumb, mind sets, unwritten rules, and unconscious values. Clearly, this is the stuff of mentoring. It's quite common to discover protege-learners chose to find out the unwritten rules over and above or in addition to the "hard", explicit knowledge. As he notes: "Some of it [tacit knowledge] conflicts with explicit knowledge... Some of it describes major business issues... Much of it exists in the uncoded talents of experts."

Much of this hinges on make decisions based on beliefs and assumptions, values and principles adopted by the organization that will shape how business is carried out by people. This, then, is the tacit knowledge often sought by learners because. It is automatic, requiring little or no time for

thought. This being the case, Stewart sees this as an overall virtue since everyone is on the same page knowing "instinctively what the customer wants and how to mobilize to deliver it."

The challenge for the mentor is to describe, model then help the protege-learner to channel this tacit knowledge. If you doubt this, see to what degree you could succinctly describe for a novice in your field "how business is really conducted around here". Stewart adds, "tacit knowledge... can be wrong; it's hard to change; and it's difficult to communicate." Being unexpressed, it goes unexamined in many cases. He uses as his example Deming who had to go to Japan to find minds receptive to the notion that the cost of poor quality greatly exceeds the cost of excellence. Business leaders in the USA already knew this but would not listen until Japanese manufacturers began shipping competitive quality goods overseas.

Tacit knowledge is oral, created and shared around the water cooler. "Tacit knowledge spreads when people meet and tell stories or if they undertake a systematic effort to nose it out and make it explicit." And e-mail can't do the job -- it has to be face to face "otherwise it can't be examined, improved, or shared." The cycle is: identify, make it explicit, formalize it, leverage it, encourage it.

Stewart rightly lists two key activities related to investing in knowledge management. First, the need to separate knowledge from noise -- done by having a strategy in hand. "My knowledge assets are not necessarily useful to you, nor are my company's", he notes. Simply passing on knowledge for the sake of doing it is not useful or focused. Though readers may wonder at Stewart's seemingly simplistic caution, it is worth keeping in mind organizations have been swept away by flavor of the month concepts.

**NEXT ISSUE: Around the Water Cooler**

*"Be a leader yourself; for every leader starts by first leading himself."  
- Norman Bethune*

**FREE**

## 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 that can be used organization-wide to determine the interest in mentoring.

This 8-question survey takes approximately two 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? Qualified organizations can contact our Sales staff -- Troy Opper, Ian Frazer or Wayne Robinson -- to discuss your challenges and how we can help.

