

MENTORINK™ NEWSLETTER

... the online publication of Corporate Mentoring Solutions
Year 17 Issue 5 May-June 2003



IN THIS ISSUE

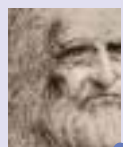


Books

Mentoring and *Intellectual Capital* - Part 1

For those in the mentoring field, Thomas Stewart's *Intellectual Capital* contains an interesting take on networks and networking... (see page 5)

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



J

The Alphabet According to Mentor

The letter J - *Just-in-time mentoring*

People often wonder what was the impetus for mentoring programs as we know them today? Back in 1988 in an eight page article called "The Legacy of Mentor", co-authored with Fay Head, I wrote... (continued on page 2)

Mentoring Gen Xers - Part 2

In this issue, we consider motivation... (see page 4)



Mentoring Timeline:

We've covered musicians and sports figures lately. Now it's time to see the world with a comfy sweater and gentle words for children... (see page 2)

CMSI 2003 City Tours

CMSI is undertaking a series of city tours.
Future venues are:

✓ Honolulu August 23-26th



✓ For information about additional cities to be visited by CMSI staff and local Sales Associates -- please call.

From The Virtual Mentoring Library©

Our files are opened once again after a long hiatus... (see page 2)



Press release

Colaboro 2.2 (see page __)



FUTURE ISSUES

- Mentoring Gen Xers Part 3
- The Alphabet According to Mentor
- Mentoring and Murphy's Law
- Intellectual Capital: Part 2 Making Mentoring Choices
- Mentoring Timeline
- Mentoring at the HR Forum

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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From the Virtual Mentoring Library©

It's been too long since *MentorInk* contained an excerpt from our Virtual Mentoring Library. We're now about to rectify such oversight...

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 counter-productive 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]

The Alphabet According to Mentor

Just-in-time mentoring:

"Why then, during the twentieth century, has there been a resurgence of interest in mentoring? Research suggests that the resurgence of mentoring may be attributed to several different factors: the desire of the individual to be more than just a cog in the wheel; the need for companies to reduce employee turnover and to attract the best candidates for the position; the legislated ethic that minorities and women deserve a place in the upper echelons of corporations and institutions; the recognition that perfectibility, as an ideal, just won't work; the failure of institutions of higher learning to guarantee automatic success."

At the time I wrote those words, I was thinking also acutely aware of the vast quantity of research already under our company's belt pointing to the need for just-in-time mentoring programs. Logic asserts that if a person isn't already in an informal mentoring relationship, when a need arises, it is next to impossible to conjure up a mentor outside of a program.

I know there will be some who will wish to reject this assertion. As an instance, they will point to "deep" one minute mentoring conversations they have carried out in an elevator with someone -- including complete strangers. Based on real life interviews with thousands of Americans, I can readily refute the myth that "a mentor's always at hand just when you need one."

Ah ... it's sad when people are so willing to short change themselves and settle for virtually anything when more meaningful life can be had. Possibly they still don't understand all the reasons mentoring programs were invented.
[Source: *International Journal of Mentoring* Vol 2 No. 2]



Mentoring Timeline© 1968 A.D.

Ernie Coombs, aka Mr. Dressup, died last year (2002), just one year before his **mentor**, Fred Rogers (right) of Mister Rogers Neighborhood fame. He specialized at university in early childhood development, beginning his career as a Presbyterian minister with a charge to work with children and families through television. Rogers launched a kids television show in 1954 as an unseen puppeteer for The Children's Corner at WQED. Coombs and Rogers met in Pittsburgh in the early 1960s and continued to work together. Then, Rogers accepted an offer to do his own 15-minute show in Canada where he asked Coombs to join his as a team. Rogers brought his show back to Pittsburgh in 1968 and went on with 33 years of shows. For his part, Coombs' show lasted a mere 29 years.

Coombs later said he owed his career to Fred Rogers. "*He taught me so much about children's TV that you can't learn in a book. He was definitely a mentor.*" Those who knew both men said they weren't acting a role -- they were genuine gentle father-figures carried over to other shows like Sesame Street in which Big Bird uses gentle tones to speak to kids (despite the fast pace and multiple characters).

Rogers' message remained a simple one: love yourself and love others. He said "*We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.*" His famous sweater now resides in the Smithsonian as a legacy.



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Press Release

Corporate Mentoring Solutions (CMSI) Introduces Latest Version of Colaboro™ April 25, 2003

Victoria, BC, April 25, 2003 – Corporate Mentoring Solutions Inc. is pleased to announce the release of Colaboro™ version 2.2, their second generation online Mentoring Management Solution™. Continuing the development of their line of online mentoring products, Colaboro™ 2.2 brings additional functionality and features -- mentoring initiative creation and control for both Formal/Coordinated as well as Self-Direct Mentoring Initiative™ programs.

"I'm pleased at the incredible reception to Colaboro," says CMSI President Dr. William Gray. "Our research and product development roadmap, augmented by many interesting features suggested by our users over the past few months, has allowed us to produce a significant advancement for the marketplace."

Aimed at organizations with issues regarding successful delivery of mentoring initiatives for issues such as employee retention, succession planning, and development of intellectual capital -- Colaboro is designed to be flexible enough to fit virtually any number participants, centrally located or geographically dispersed, with multiple or single mentoring pools.

"A truly incredible mentoring tool", says American Institute of Architects Team Vice-President Helene Dreiling. "We anticipate providing significant benefit to our members through the use of Colaboro in our Mentoring Journey project."

Those familiar with the challenges and rewards of mentoring initiatives will appreciate new developments. Colaboro™ 2.2 contains such advancements as: Participant assessment; a more robust SQL database platform to handle significantly larger numbers of simultaneous users; greatly increased ease of installation which results in a less costly setup and configuration for clients. Many of CMSI's previous generation product users are scheduled to convert to Colaboro™ during the remainder of 2003.

Colaboro™ allows an organization's existing mentoring initiatives to be rolled out to all members of an organization, rather than limiting participation to just a few -- thus avoiding the label of "exclusivity". For those initiatives emphasizing competency-based development of staff, Colaboro™ is structured to support virtually any competency set while at the same time the well-tested CMSI's standard competency set of General Business Competencies which users may use stand-alone, mix with their competency set(s), or replace with their set(s).

About Corporate Mentoring Solutions Inc.

CMSI is a privately held corporation based in Canada that supplies online mentoring management software to government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world. With several thousand active users, CMSI holds a commanding share of the online mentoring management market.

CMSI provides innovative solutions for today's business challenges, by combining time-proven mentoring practices with our state-of-the-art Colaboro™ online Mentoring Management System™. By providing just-in-time mentoring™ options for individual development, organization mentoring initiatives can be implemented in ways that align with and support the organization's mission and goals.

For further information, visit www.mentoring.ws.

or contact

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Mentoring Gen Xers - Part 2

Getting it right

Mentors, take note: this generation is not inclined to follow rules blindly so want to know significant operating decisions are tied to a clear direction and set of values.

Like the rest of us, Gen Xers can be critical about how resources are aligned, how and where training is applied, to whom and why rewards are distributed and which strategies are developed.

In addition, Gen Xers have little patience for incompetent leadership. Their impatience with incompetence breeds a desire to see results immediately. They believe age, titles and seniority have to relate to competence and contribution. And like many of us, Gen Xers can be cynical. Their pointed criticism comes out of deep conviction that they can do it better (even if they can't). Mentors may have a challenge in terms of explaining the role and need for diplomacy.

For this generation, doing things the way it's always been done is a non-starter even when it comes to current organizational structure. To respond appropriately, mentors and proteges might want to jointly look at it in light of the fact that organizations need some level of stability. Who has authority, who has power and why? If change is necessary, how does this come about without too hastily throwing the baby out with the proverbial bath water?

As noted already, Gen Xers want to do things faster and with more efficiency. The flip side is to avoid alienating workers from other generations. There is a need to be aware of and respect the differences and values each brings to the organization. Training based on awareness and skill is a must for any company that desires to leverage these differences for future organizational effectiveness. Mentoring being a

*Adversity is the first path to truth.
- Byron*

process and relationship based on reciprocity, is excellent for developing sensitivity to past, present and future.

Motivation

According to some researchers, Gen Xer typically will think, "Why should I have to learn something the hard way when my experienced manager already knows it?" Mentors step forward at this teachable moment.

If your field is one with many members who believe in "paying your dues", and "learning the hard way" have been the norm, there are hurdles to overcome in terms of developing the mentoring mindset at large. And, this mindset will also have to change to attract and retain top-quality Gen Xers.

For example, Gen Xers may prefer to learn through computer-based training rather than years in the field, and this will be difficult for many seasoned employees to accept. It will be essential to make a good, persuasive case for the

need to do real life application as an adjunct to and extension of technology. That's one of the reasons our firm developed Colaboro to be an adjunct to mentoring interchanges, not a replacement. The financial investment is relatively low because a company uses available company resources.

*Mentoring should be like
paintings by the Old Masters...*

Great

Spending time with Gen Xers to help them gain skills, insight and experience will help with retention. Mentoring fosters continual feedback that Gen Xers cherish. However, there is a catch: Gen Xers typically want to be mentored in a way that doesn't dogmatically tell them what to do. Good mentors will incorporate some of the protege's experiences into the learning process. On the flip side, there are times the mentor must confront (indecision, Gen X incompetence, etc.) but this is a different issue.

As with most employees, the "do as I say, not as I do" approach will not work with Gen Xers. They are observant and critical— inconsistency gets noticed. With each requirement and behavior desired, if you are a mentor, examine your behavior and see how well you meet those demands. If it seems in keeping with the learner's personality and attitude to learning, allow Mr or Ms. Gen Xer to make noncritical mistakes and learn from them. Many leaders attribute their greatest lessons learned to situations where they performed inadequately. Others note that they learned much from the mentor's negative experiences or modelling (unfortunately). In this vein, it's vital to note that the best learning is reflective, developing the ability to understand why. It's of no use for the learner to merely say: "I wouldn't do it that way" and not be able to say why. So, for the sake of development, painful as it may be, the aim is to work towards thinking at the next level: "I wouldn't do it that way because...".

Next issue: Part 3 - Tapping potential and several insightful ideas about mentoring Gen Xers.

*Excellence comes with making more
knowledgable choices.
~ Thomas A. Stewart*



Intellectual Capital - Networks and Networking

Conferences are marvellous providers of travel time (to and from the event) to do catchup work-related reading, or in my case, rereading followed by time to digest all the ideas inside the pages. As it was I had lots of time routing from the west coast to Washington, DC.

Market Access International' invited me to speak on Trends and Mentoring at "Innovations in Human Capital Management" mid-March. I toted along Thomas A. Stewart's *Intellectual Capital*. When I first opened this best-seller more than a year ago, I was quite skeptical about the importance of intellectual capital. Stewart won me over.

Now, I have a different, more experienced view. My marginal notes say I was interested in the impact of intellectual capital on investors, tacit knowledge and management. These issues are still of interest but readers will want to know how some of these subjects translate into the personal arena? Further, how can these ideas, all good, be used by those not in an organization of the sort Stewart describes -- large, global, well-populated with much intellectual capital?

Stewart says human capital is the "*capabilities of each individual required to provide solutions to customers.*" How to do this? Communities of practice (COP) are, to paraphrase, where it all happens. Three traits distinguish COPs from others. To read the description is to think "**mentoring**".

1. They have a history working one with another over time.
2. Relationships self-organize, forming around a goal, enterprise or value-added activity.
3. Learning is shared informally, on an egalitarian basis and not in classes or through book reading per se.
4. Not every group becomes a learning place.
5. Such groups perform two key tasks -- knowledge transfer and innovation.

Unlike people who work on teams and project groups who must work to a deadline for which they are accountable, COPs are free of this. In sum, they benefit from networking on a grand scale.

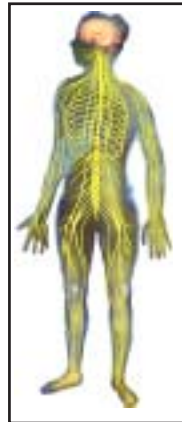
Stewart cites research: rigorous managing of such groups can destroy them. The better route? Create conditions that encourage such activities so the naturalness isn't killed then monitor results. Like facilitated mentoring done well, given conditions to help it along, COP can flourish.

Communities of practice differ from other "informal" means of networking within the organization. Reading Stewart made me think of five "shapes" of networking. (1) It's clear people often attend a "networking event" to mentor-hunt. Objectively considered, as a method to achieve results (quickly, effectively and frustration-free), this is hit and miss. It's possible some people see this as free and only costing some time and effort but it's still like gambling rather than planning.

(2) We depend on electronic networks that, as Stewart notes, "*subvert managerial authority*". This encourages the junior employee to ask for less help from their seniors and to

dig "through data on the net or [ask] colleagues in their peer group." He admits that the hierarchy and senior executives still have a value by adding knowledge that the regular network doesn't necessarily give access to -- experience and expertise.

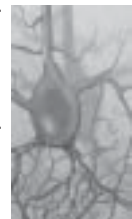
The typical diagram for networking in most people's head



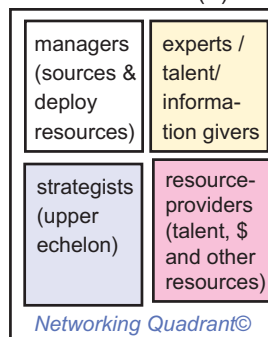
may well be a (3) spider web -- simple to understand and universal. However, unlike (4) the network of the human body shown here, spider webs don't associate strongly with notions of differentiation and intelligent central command. Networking to locate a mentor informally (outside of a program) and/ or more formally using an online system like Colaboro is conscious consideration (the brain), then purposefully applied as needed in a focused way (e.g., move the arm).

The diagram of nerve cells (5) shown below with multiple layers suggests the potential complexity of networking. The

importance of the goal is suggested by the thickness or thinness of the connecting fibers. One nerve connects to another of like purpose, yet, overall, the nerve is capable of serving useful purposes for other bodily functions it communicates with. We all know what happens with a failure to communicate. .



Rather than use the old hierarchy concept of networking upward (or laterally) by position in the organization, seek out people according to four career types. For this purpose, I've developed a 4-quadrant diagram. Network to find (A) managers who know the skills needed and



where they will be most useful (B) experts who know how to do the exotic and arcane (C) strategists who can give the helicopter view of the organization or (D) resource providers who can advocate.

This approach could well be a more purposeful approach than simply dropping into a networking event in the hope of meeting someone who might become a mentor and it's more useful than

depending on a "friendly connection" to suggest a name.

So, back to the opening sentence. Conferences are great. This one got me re-reading *Intellectual Capital* for its applications to the world of mentoring and to the overall notion of networking.

[Source: Thomas A. Stewart, *Intellectual Capital: The New Wealth of Organizations* (Doubleday, 1997)]

Next issue: Part 2 - Making Mentoring Choices