

## The Value of a Mentor for Employee Coaching

It can be a two way street for mutual benefit.

The manager is a mentor in one of the many facets of management. He indoctrinates the new hire in the operations and other functions of the business, and he works towards the development of all individuals. While a good manager is a mentor, a good manager can improve his employees' development by assigning an additional mentor. The benefits are many.

Assign a mentor for coaching - The mentor has the special job of day in and day out coaching of an assigned individual. He acquaints the new individual with the operating instructions of the quality company. One company even had a 'lessons learned' manual with numerous illustrations of before and after operations that have passed the test of time. A new hire can gain much from this coaching. It has the effect of coaching the new person about what tends to work and what constitutes a waste of time. The mentor is the 'go-to' person when questions arise.

Hire the very best - One particular new hire recently earned his master's degree, and his thesis was in a new area of interest to his colleagues. While his mentor was coaching him, he was also coaching and teaching his mentor. His mentor came up to speed and started applying the new technology. This got the attention of other experts in the company, a large Fortune 100 enterprise. In succeeding months, a major customer became aware of the new technology, who applied it in a greater application. This was synergy in action. The new hire has since earned his PhD, and he is a major factor in the company.

The mentor trains the new hire - There is much the new hire learns beyond the academics of the university environment. He needs coaching on the organization of work and documentation as a starting point. Another requirement is coaching on the landscape of the office and factory environments. The mentor answers questions about who are the key players in the plant. The mentor knows the layout of office and plant facilities. Another coaching area is on helpful resources in the office in terms of software and experts. One important element that the mentor can impart is a feel for the details of the type of work at hand. Research over the years by experienced coaches leads to shortcuts that can be imparted to the new person. 'Rules of thumb' are collected over the years, and the new person can learn from them.

With good hiring practices, a company with a mentor program can benefit by the two way street of mentoring and coaching individuals, who have shown good promise of bringing benefit to the company.