

## Facilitating Protégé Career Development through Skills of Mentors

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### Abstract

The success of protégé contribution in any organisation today depends more on the type of relationship that an organisation establishes with the support of mentors. Research shows that individuals who are mentored have an increased likelihood of career success as a result of the targeted developmental support they receive. Mentors serve as trusted and significant advisors, providing a sounding board for day-to-day issues encountered on the job and alternative perspectives on issues in terms of both problem identification and problem solving. Mentoring can take on different forms. There are many ways through which mentors can improve the effectiveness of mentoring process. Qualities of mentors, Roles of mentors and Mentoring methods which already have contributed for protégé career development. In this paper author is making an effort to assist human resource department on how in near future protégé career development can be spoken through the new skills of the Mentors. By practicing new skills mentors in organizations can facilitate healthy relationship between the levels of management and in turn try to achieve individual goals and organisational goals. In this piece instigator has made an exertion to bring out new skills effective mentors should contemplate upon to facilitate protégé career development.

**Keywords:** Counseling, Protégé, Career development, Self-Disclosure.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's challenging business environment, employee development has never been more important as a means to maintain a competitive advantage and keep employees engaged. Studies are now projecting massive employment turnover in the coming years and its evident organizations are not working to mitigate this risk. Studies further show attributes such as career development and internal mobility are significantly important to a growing majority of today's global workforce. Tackling the issue of employee engagement has been and remains a top priority for many organizations. There is a need to reflect on the experience relating to career development and make the employees be owners of that process, and provide multiple pathways for growth. Here comes mentoring and mentoring practices, how through mentoring skills mentors can facilitate protégé career development and organisational goals. Some of the facts published also show how days to come mentoring becomes key for organizational success.

- Most Fortune 500 companies see mentoring as an important employee development tool, with 71% of them having mentoring programs. Source: Terri A. Scandura, Management Professor and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Miami
- 76% of Fortune's top 25 companies offer mentoring programs. Source: Fortune Magazine
- 71% of Fortune 500 companies use mentoring to assure learning occurs in their organizations. Source: Association for Talent Development (ATD), formerly *ASTD* (American Society for Training & Development)
- 96% of executives say mentoring is an important development tool. Source: Accountemps, a division of Robert Half
- 75% of executives point to mentoring as playing a key role in their careers. Source: ATD
- 44% of CEO's list mentoring programs as one of the *three* most effective strategies to enhance women's advancement into senior management. Source: ATD
- Managerial productivity increased by 88% when mentoring was involved, versus only a 24% increase with training alone. Source: ATD
- More than 60% of college and graduate students listed mentoring as a criterion for selecting an employer after graduation. Source: MMHA The Managers' Mentors, Inc.,

### Fundamentals on Mentoring

Gorman says, *"Best companies are figuring how to engage top performers by helping them map their career paths and develop desired knowledge and skills."*

Mentoring brings a person looking for initial guidance and direction (the 'mentee') together with

another who can help provide this (the ‘mentor’). They work collaboratively to get results. It’s been defined as “an alliance of two people that creates a space for dialogue which results in reflection, action and learning for both” (Rolfe, 2006).

Mentoring is typically a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced employee which is based upon encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

A mentor is seen as a “wise guide” who doesn’t necessarily have to be an expert in the field of interest, but is able to ask useful questions that help the mentee explore their situation. Being a good mentor is more about *asking the right questions*, rather than giving the right answers.

Mentoring helps the mentee approach situations with confidence, having talked through the various options and possible consequences.

Mentoring must be voluntary to ensure that participants are committed to the mentoring process.

Mentoring can only be based on a supportive relationship. Without a common understanding of that relationship, any mentoring involvement will not succeed.

A successful mentoring relationship is based on mutual trust and respect, willingness to learn and share knowledge, openness and supportiveness, constructive feedback.

In some cases, established relationships may not exist in a formal mentoring program. Mentors from outside the mentee’s usual network may be needed to meet the learning objectives of the mentee. Time and effort must be spent to identify a mentor that will meet the needs of the mentee and to establish a mutually rewarding relationship at the beginning of the mentoring association. The term Protégé is originated from French. A protégé is someone who is sponsored and promoted by someone who is more experienced and influential. The relationship tends to be long term, with the pair working closely together or frequently checking in with each other. Career Development is the process of moving from one level to another in ones career through continuous acquisitions of authorities and responsibilities, Higgins, M. C., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). This can be achieved by facilitating employee career through continuous coaching, mentoring and counseling, Orpen, C. (1995).

#### **Why skills of Mentor a basic prerequisite?**

Companies often invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruiting talent but then stop there and miss the opportunity to get the best return on their hiring investment. Mentoring is one of the most effective strategies as a standalone program or as part of an existing workforce development program. Roles, qualities and skills of mentors in the processes of facilitating protégé career development really compel the management to scale upon in terms of investing on mentors. Skill Acquisition is the science that underpins movement learning and execution and is more commonly termed motor learning and control (Williams & Ford, 2009). It’s important to note that you won’t master skills overnight. In fact, some of the skills are ones we’ll all be working on throughout Mentor lives. That said mentors who embrace skills sooner rather than later are the ones who experience the most success in their mentoring relationship. Challenge here is to identify the skill which distinguishes skills of mentor with that of skills of counselors, skills of leaders and so on. In this regard an attempt has been made by the authors to identify the most important skills that mentors should acquire, learn and continuously strive to ponder upon improving mentoring effectiveness.

#### **Skills required by Mentors to facilitate protégé Career Development**

##### **Offer Effective Counseling**

There exists a developmental model of counselling which not only focuses on protégé learning experiences, but seeks to connect protégé’ academic interests and skills with their personal and career ambitions. Many of the tools and resources used in a mentoring relationship that overlap with those used in career offices include self-assessments, online resources related to majors and careers, goal-setting exercises, and learning experiences outside the organizations (e.g., shadowing or volunteer opportunities, on-campus involvement, and externships/internships). Counseling models differ depending upon who is providing the assistance. Some organizations—usually smaller, maintain the traditional, decentralized model of Mentor advising. Larger institutions, lacking the capacity to assign a Mentor member to every protégé, have moved to a centralized professional advising model, whereby professional staff is employed to teach protégé to plan and manage their career development. This is the skill which mentors have to learn and practice on a need basis. There is a huge gape which needs to be addressed to cut down this gap, because you cannot afford to bring external counselors to bridge the skill gap of mentors. The bulk of organizations use a shared structure combining the professional advising model with the decentralized Mentor advising function. Many organizations of all sizes have added a peer advising function as well, training upper class protégé to guide their younger counterparts in course selection, transition to protégé life, and career choices.

Career counselling is a major role of a mentor. Career strategies and tools used with protégé include facilitating educational career panels and networking events, providing occupational information via technology,

taking career treks to businesses and organizations, and providing self-assessment tools and one-on-one career counseling relationships. Interventions, such as role playing and solution-focused therapy, are valuable tools used by the counseling profession. Role playing is often used for practicing interviews, preparing to talk to employers, and learning how to address potentially uncomfortable conversations. Solution-focused therapy, developed by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg in the late 1970s, is a goal-directed counseling theory that can be particularly effective for counselors, mentors, advisers, and professionals providing support for protégé at various developmental stages. A mentor also offers academic counselling to a mentee. Academic coaching refers to skills-oriented learning relationships in which a helping professional is “coaching” a protégé to improve in areas such as goal setting, time management, and study skills. Strategies used in academic coaching include asking initial assessment questions, using worksheets to practice skills such as time management, and creating an individualized action plan. While somewhat comparable to academic coaching, career coaching is primarily focused on vocational goal setting, job-search strategies, and practicing skills such as interviewing and crafting a networking pitch. It is seen that formal methods of counselling are more effective than informal methods. Best practices for formal mentoring programs include incorporating frameworks and structures to maximize the likelihood of success for both mentoring partners. These include articulating beginning and end dates for the mentoring relationship, providing training or orientation to the program, offering resources and support for the mentoring partners such as a handbook or guidelines, and providing some structured oversight to the relationship to ensure that mentoring partners understand the expectations and follow through. These structures distinguish formal mentoring programs from informal mentoring relationships, which can occur at any time and often without oversight.

No matter the type of relationship, effective mentoring involves intentional conversations focused on the mentee’s growth and development. Mentors ask thought-provoking questions, practice active listening, provide objective feedback and guidance, and model effective behaviors. The mentoring conversation asks the mentee to articulate the problem/issue/situation that he or she is working through, identify goals and concrete action steps, work through those goals and actions, and reflect on key learning moments. While mentoring uses many tools and resources, such as action planning tools and self-assessments, it is, at its heart, all about the intentional conversation and skills of mentors which facilitate the protégés career development through counseling effectively.

### **Nurture Creativity**

Everyone has something special and unique to offer. For some people, the uniqueness is more obvious than for others. Nevertheless, mentors should attempt to awaken the creativity and innovation that each protégé possesses. They should nurture their protégés dreams and help them realize their special potentialities. Extensive research programs suggest that having a mentor correlates significantly with various measures of adult creative achievement. Sponsors or patrons nourish independence and creativity while intervening in the social system to prevent the hampering of protégé creativity. In this mentoring context, originality is endorsed, and often persists as an aspect of the protégé’s adult professional identity.

The appeal of a mentor in nurturing creativity is analogous to the actions of a midwife. A mentor offers a protective sanctuary in which creativity is first recognized. As protégés take risks or generate new ideas and innovative strategies, mentors applaud these efforts. They listen sincerely to tentative proposals and ideas, and they ardently resist opportunities to ridicule and reject. Nurturing creativity also requires the mentor to temper idealism and dreamful expansiveness with the wisdom of experience and the discipline of reality. This is difficult dance for no one really knows another’s ultimate potential. But outstanding mentors are on the side of being flexible and affirming especially when protégés are just getting started and their creative potential is unknown. Who is better than a mentor to nurture creativity? Mentors themselves typically are creative. They model creativity by pursuing unusual solution to problems, questioning accepted standards in the field and displaying energetic excitement in the face of challenge. They are first hand exemplars because mentors have imbibed the skill of nurturing protégé creativity.

### **Provide Correction**

No one is unadulterated. That’s why even the sharpest protégé can benefit from constructive criticism. Failing to offer correction when it is needed is a disservice to the protégé. The omission reflects the mentor’s incompetence, disinterest, or avoidance of conflict. Good mentors offer critical but constructive appraisals and point to methods of correction. Moreover it is the skill of mentors on how they make protégé feel the optimistic view of correcting self.

The mentor is sensitive to the protégé level of development, tempering criticism with an appreciation of the protégé’s confidence and capacity for constructive response to correction. Early in the mentorship, effective correction should be preceded by a healthy dose of affirmation and encouragement. As a mentorship seasons and the protégé develops, confrontation may become more direct, less buffered, and the protégé will not feel as

threatened. Mentors do this precisely without harming the intentions of protégés, because the only objective of any mentor is to facilitate the protégé career development. This becomes a skill of mentor because they have to deliver the same without affecting the unethical or unprofessional protégé behavior. Protégés vary in their understanding of what is ethically acceptable or in their commitment to behave ethically. In an effort to achieve rapid success, the overzealous protégé may cut ethical corners such as by lying or taking credit for work done by others. In confronting a protégé unethical behavior, mentors offer an essential service to the profession and to the protégé. The reputation of the profession is spared as are serious consequences for the protégé. Provoking a protégé may surface some pain, but it shows caring. On the other hand, avoiding a confrontation may spare the protégé some pain but causes greater vulnerability to costly errors and unchecked dysfunction. Mentors who really care and mastered the skill of providing protection will confront difficult performance.

### **Narrate growth and development**

A protégé needs a guide to give discourse, to depict the protégé's development and change. Nobody is more qualified to portray the protégé's expert development and self-improvement than a mentor. Innocent and overpowered, the protégé can create exclusive focus seeing just the obstacles yet to be cleared while neglecting the points of reference and advance in the rearview reflect. Prepared and attentive, the mentor can loan the "comprehensive view" see, causing the protégé to welcome the separation secured and in addition the landscape ahead. Having his or her voyage described, particularly points of reference accomplished and abilities required, permits a protégé an incidental chance to enjoy little picks up and acknowledge great work. To describe viably, trainers must be purposeful, attentive, and minding. Mentors see even humble picks up in certainty and execution and depict these to the protégé. They note proficient accomplishments and discover roads for perceiving and notwithstanding commending them. Mentors call attention to dangers taken and name competency where they watch it. Mentors additionally put minor misfortunes and disappointments in context, itemizing the bigger picture of advancement and achievement. Assembling these story aptitudes empowers protégés to increase reasonable valuation for how far they have come and a target full scale perspective of their expert advance. This is where mentors exhibit their skills in facilitating the protégé career development process.

A lateral advantage of an account approach is the fortifying of tutoring bond. The mentor presumably will be the main individual in the protégé's life who sets aside opportunity to precisely and positively recognize career development and change. This instruction capacity fabricates protégé regard, improves certainty and fortifies the tutor protégé organization together. Great portrayal shows minding and responsibility. Mentors who describe well everlastingly hold an uncommon place in the lives of their protégés. They recount the genuine story of development, change and advancement a story that will dependably be carved in the scares of protégés.

### **Self-Disclosure when appropriate**

Credible self-disclosure can possibly make more powerful adapting, more important, more significant change, and a more continuing bond than some other mentor intervention. Now and then Mentors skillfully uncover imperative bits of their own history, for example, basic defining moments in their advancement. Sometimes they disclose their own feelings of concern, anxieties and battles. Obviously they share their victories too. In any case, protégés can be profoundly affected when they hear the less stylish side of the mentor's close to home story. Self-disclosure can be a wellspring of support. Protégés can find that achievement does not come without battle, and their mentor is a living case. Prepared and mindful mentors likewise are open to unveiling how the mentorship influences them and what they esteem most in the protégé. Such disclosure models mindfulness and an ability to be credible in the relationship.

Since self-disclosure can upgrade closeness and association in a relationship, it is not shocking that protégés in many fields rate the eagerness to self-disclosure as a standout amongst the most vital qualities in a mentor. At the point when mentors share important encounters or emotions, they indicate being genuine and they show self-investigation. At the point when self-disclosure is keen, mindful, and adapted to normalizing the protégé's involvement, it can be groundbreaking. Self-disclosure conveys genuineness; it Meta communicates interest in and watching over the protégé.

Extraordinary mentors abstain from offering themselves as authority models (the individuals who have vanquished difficulties and affliction and who no longer experience the ill effects of shortcoming, dread or falling flat). Rather, they are models of adapting (the individuals who hold a decent measure of blemish yet figure out how to adapt adequately through intelligence horrendously obtained). The distinction is just this: fitting self-disclosure is accomplished for the career development of the protégé, while unseemly disclosure is accomplished for the delight of the mentor. Self-satisfying and self-disclosure is gone for improving one's stature according to a protégé.

### **Accept increasing friendship**

As a protégé creates and a mentorship seasons, the great mentor invites and appreciates an inevitably shared and

collegial companionship. Commonly shared view, confidence and warmth in the long run leads to accepting increasing friendship. In spite of the fact that advantages relate fundamentally to the protégé during the early periods of the mentorship, later periods of mentorship might be set apart by progressively correspondence. As the protégé's certainty and freedom increment, the mentorship may advance into a relationship that goes up against new measurements. Explore affirms that protégé's locate this shared support as fundamental piece of mentoring. The experience of giving and getting in a sheltered mentorship readies the protégé's to end up associates to their mentors and to others. Commonality obliges readiness to give and go up against the part of the mentor. Mentors skillfully self-disclosure, exhibit warmth and genuineness, give proof of trust in the protégé by offering them support in high-stake undertakings and they give access to essential individual and authoritative data. Commonality likewise requires getting, an ability to appreciate the protégé and recognize delight in the developing collegial bond. While regarding the individual limits expected to keep up an expert relationship, secure mentors permit themselves to see the protégé as a lesser partner. The mentor starts to appreciate the common premiums, passionate association and synergistic vitality that bloom from interest in the mentorship. Most protégé resembles the collegiality that rises up out of a developing relationship. Not all protégé's, however discover this move agreeable. Some protégés hold actually unbending or socially progressive perspectives of seniors in the process of their career development. Some protégé's hold such profound romanticizing of their mentors that they couldn't envision themselves having anything of substance to offer. In these cases mentors must be touchy to the requirements of the protégé. They basically can't hold similar desires of collegiality for each protégé nor anticipate that commonality will create at a similar pace in mentorship. However it is here the skills of mentors which take a call in establishing healthy friendly relationship.

### **Teach Faceting**

"Don't put all your investments tied up on one place." This counsel applies to different territories of life too. Peculiarly, unreasonably few mentors offer comparative exhortation to their protégé's with regards to outlining their profession course. Different strands of wellbeing exploration demonstrate that individuals with a breath of premiums and time ventures are better balanced and stronger even with difficulty. At the point when a man's life contains more than a solitary facet (e.g work, monetary accomplishment) he or she is said to be "multifaceted" and similarly preferable off over the independently engaged associate. It is basic to work on faceting in one's close to home life and supportive to do likewise in the realm of work. Excellent mentors comprehend that the protégé whose lone outlet is work is not well arranged forever and that the protégé who practices just in one centered region of work is badly arranged for a vocation. If there should be an occurrence of unexpected occupation misfortune or vocation finishing sickness, the profession just protégé is candidly dejected and confounded. Having put little in family, connections outside to work, or engrossing pastimes and recreational inclusion, this individual does not have the faceting to change and push forward. Additionally, the protégé who rejects chances to grow new claims to fame or practice new methodologies turns out to be occupationally underestimated and helpless when associations change or look for development. This will act has a barrier for protégé career development. So how does a mentor help a protégé get to be distinctly faceted? There are two essential strategies. To start with, get some information about the expansiveness of a protégé's life advantages and associations. Exhibition of intrigue and worry in a protégé's exercises, leisure activities and vital connections outer to work conveys certifiable enthusiasm for the entire individual. Such favorable asks broadcast an esteeming of multifaceted ways of life. Without damaging security or getting to be distinctly nosy, the mentor demonstrates honest to goodness enthusiasm for the protégé as both a man and a lesser expert. This mentor conduct says to the protégé: "the greater part of your life responsibilities, associations, and interests are vital. Keep in mind work is just a single cut of you are."

### **Conclusion**

When the focus is on improving protégé career development in the long run traditional skills will reshape to new set of skills that mentors are forced to adopt. In this regard through literature review and continuous expert's interaction from industry and academia authors have made an effort to identify the new skills that mentors should ponder upon to facilitate protégé career development. By implementing these mentoring skills systematically and at regular intervals, corporation can promote mutual learning to challenge and stimulate protégés at all levels within the organization. It becomes the sole responsibility of Mentors to sharpen these new skill sets, which make the mentoring process effective in this ever changing competitive and technology driven humanity.

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