



Developing a Mentoring Culture in Your Organization By The Francis Group

How would you like to have someone to help you in a difficult situation or with a certain skill? Or someone just listen to you without criticizing or telling you what to do?

With today's dynamic and rapid-fire changes in how we do the business we do, organizations everywhere are working not only to keep up with the technological changes, but also, to keep in touch with the heart of their organizations...their people. Technology may change the tools with which we work, but it is our people, who sustain the substance of how we work, how we live into our core principles and values.

History of mentoring

Mentoring began in ancient Greek mythology when Odysseus asked his friend "Mentor" to take care of Telemachus, Odysseus' young son. Over the next twenty years, Mentor helped Telemachus grow into a fine young man and the pride of his father. This selective, one-to-one, long-term relationship became the model that was followed through to modern organizations. Today's organizations need mentoring more than ever before, mentoring that reaches everyone, not just a select few people.

Benefits of a mentoring culture

- **attract and retain the brightest employees**
- **get new employees productive in significantly less time**
- **have improved operational communications**
- **maintain higher quality and productivity**
- **sustain higher employee morale**
- **build leadership skills in everyone**
- **accomplish better decision making**
- **lower absenteeism and turnover**
- **transfer information and assimilate changes more effectively**
- **accomplish more with less**
- **improve business products and services**

Developing a mentoring culture

Developing a mentoring culture is not the same as developing a mentoring program. Programs start and stop, come and go. A mentoring culture:

- **is an on-going way of living and working each day**
- **is the organization's life-blood**
- **defines and continuously refines the best practices of doing business**
- **is self-perpetuating... building, growing, evolving, improving and driven by the employees**

An organization that has a mentoring culture means everyone is personally and professionally invested in ensuring the company's best outcomes and results. Employees make it happen and keep it alive and healthy.

Cynthia Francis, President, Francis GroupLLC: *"Almost everyone comes to the first workshop with skepticism and doubt and a "show-me" perspective. What actually happens is that no one "shows them!" They show themselves what they're capable of accomplishing by themselves and with each other. They realize that they are at the center of their spheres of influence and support. Then their spheres overlap with each other to strengthen the whole organization. Once this is realized, the organization experiences an exponential growth in each and every employee. Each person becomes a mentoring advocate in the mentoring culture.*

The process of developing a mentoring culture starts with a series of workshops in which essential effective mentoring skills are taught. It's the employees who make the choice to use these mentoring skills to help themselves and each other. It may sound simplistic, but actually, like any living breathing organism, a mentoring culture is really multifaceted and dynamic...and so worthwhile for all aspects of the organization... from employee morale to increased bottom-line results."

Clara Thompson, Sr. Executive Director of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities in the Greater Delaware Valley, including Philadelphia and surrounding states and counties, is championing mentoring in her organization: *"Mentoring is not a program, but rather a way for each of us to live each day in support of each other, our customers and our Core Principles. Mentoring has helped us ~~we~~ check ourselves against our Core Principles everyday, in every thing we do and with everyone we touch. And when we find ways to improve ourselves and each other, we use our mentoring skills to connect, strengthen and be better than we were."*

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