

Mentoring and Delegating Strategies

Karen Lusk Smith

Coordinator of Member Services

AASBO

May 6, 2021

Mentor

- In an organizational setting, a mentor influences the personal and professional growth of a mentee. Most traditional mentorships involve having senior employees, mentor junior employees, but mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior than the people they mentor. What matters is that mentors have experience that others can learn from.

Mentoring

- A mentor can help employees make strategic choices, feel confident in their positions, and grow their skills professionally.
- However, mentoring doesn't need to be limited to new recruits. Anyone can benefit from mentoring, regardless of their age or position.
- Mentoring also strengthens the company by increasing employee's skills and empowering them to make better choices.

Mentoring

- Career Mentoring for Employees
- High-Potential Mentoring for Leadership
- Diversity Mentoring/Delegating Strategies
- Reverse Mentoring
- Mentoring Circles
- Goal Setting Discussions

Career Mentoring

- Job mentoring is one of the most common forms of mentorship that companies provide. An employee is typically assigned a mentor who is not their direct supervisor but serves a similar job function. This mentor might have been in that employee's position before and will pass on their knowledge to make the onboarding process easier.
- This type of counseling directly addresses the role of a mentor in the workplace. Along with management, a mentor can help an employee develop skills and exceed company expectations. This mentor sets employees up for success and provides resources that otherwise wouldn't be there.

High Potential Mentoring

- If a company doesn't provide mentoring for every employee, it might create a mentorship program for team members who have high potential to become leaders. One of the main benefits of a mentor program is succession planning. If a leader is about to retire, then a company can prepare a lower-level employee to step into that position. Many companies invest in succession planning even if their managers and executives don't have plans to leave. This protects the company in the event of an unexpected leave of absence or firing.
- Mentoring can also be used as an incentive or reward for high-potential employees. It encourages them to stay with the company in hopes that someday they will get promoted.

Diversity/Cross-Train Mentoring

- Diversity mentoring is a tool used to retain employees. It can be used to expose employees to new skills and ideas they otherwise wouldn't use. For example, if an employee masters a job, that individual might receive training on the tasks of others. This way, if an employee gets sick or leaves, the other team members can step in and handle the work.
- Diversity mentoring is a protective measure by companies, similar to leadership mentoring for succession planning. It ensures there won't be drops in productivity if employees leave unexpectedly. This type of mentoring can also help managers better understand their team members' day-to-day work.

Reverse Mentoring

- Reverse mentoring is a new form of mentoring gaining traction across the country. It's the idea that supervisors mentor employees, but employees also mentor their supervisors. Employees can provide feedback on what they need from their supervisors to become more effective in their positions.
- There are many benefits to mentoring management. Employees can get better at their jobs because their leaders are more effective. Plus, staff members have a space to offer feedback where they otherwise wouldn't. Supervisors can apply this feedback across all team members and learn how to improve their careers. Supervisors can use different types of reverse mentoring depending on company size and type. For example, you might want to offer anonymous reverse mentoring through an assistant. This way, employees can feel safe when offering their opinions without fear of retribution.

Mentoring Circles

- Mentoring doesn't need to be an individual activity. Some companies form mentoring circles to allow intradepartmental networking and growth. These circles could be as simple as monthly brown-bag luncheons and discussions or system professional development team meetings. These circles are common in women mentoring programs, where female employees in a (typically) male-dominated work environment support each other and share experiences.
- Mentoring circles can also help with upskilling. When team members across departments get to know each other, they can learn their different skills and needs, making them more effective when it comes to collaboration and teamwork.

Goal Setting Discussions

- Regardless of the type of mentoring employees receive, they can always benefit from goal-setting discussions. These are conversations where you talk with team members individually and learn what they want to do with their careers . Too often, supervisors will put employees on a path or have expectations for them that contrast what their team members want. These employees might not be interested in that path of growth and have other plans.
- Treat each employee as a unique individual and help create a path for that person. Yearly reviews create the perfect opportunity to give expectations for the coming year. Use the time to reflect on the past years growth and the direction you see that individual moving on the team.

Mentoring/Delegation

- Mentoring in the workplace starts at the top. If you prioritize mentorships and personal growth, then your employees will value them, as well. Consider the different types of mentoring your individual employees need so you can help them grow and make better decisions.
- Understanding the benefits of delegation is relatively straightforward. Knowing both how and when to delegate is significantly more difficult! In that context, the real job of any leader is to identify what style of leadership a follower needs for a given situation.

Delegation

- Delegation is the assignment of authority to another person (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities. It is the process of distributing and entrusting work to another person. Delegation is one of the core concepts of management leadership. The process involves managers deciding which work they should do themselves and which work should be delegated to others for completion. From a managerial standpoint, delegation involves shifting project responsibility to team members, giving them the opportunity to finalize the work product effectively, with minimal intervention. The opposite of effective delegation is micromanagement, where a manager provides too much input, direction, and review of delegated work. Delegation empowers a subordinate to make decisions. It is a shifting of decision-making authority as well as responsibility for the results from one organizational level to another lower one. However, a certain level of accountability for the outcome of the work does remain with the person who delegated the work to begin with.

Delegating

- Leadership styles are usually situational. It can depend on the task, the individuals or team's capabilities or knowledge, the time and tools available, the experience of the team and the desired results.
- A delegating leadership style is a relationship behavior approach to leadership where a leader empowers an individual to exercise autonomy. Employing this approach entails providing the individual with the big picture, then trusting them to deliver agreed-upon results.

What a delegating leadership style looks like:

- The leader:
 - Turns over control
 - Provides the “big picture”
 - Allows the individual to make task-related decisions
 - Monitor's activities
 - Reinforces results
 - Remains accessible

Key Indicators of when to use a delegating leadership style:

- The individual:
 - Consistently performs this task at a high standard
 - Can operate autonomously
 - Is committed to and enjoys performing the task
 - Keeps key stakeholders informed of task progress
 - Shares both good and bad news
 - Is aware of their task-related competency and skill

Delegating Strategies

- Learn to accept help. Effective delegation requires you to place trust in others and accept input. ...
 - Categorize priorities. ...
 - Know when to delegate. ...
 - Study your team. ...
 - Assign decision-making authority. ...
 - Give clear instructions. ...
 - Explain your reasoning. ...
 - Check in. ...
 - Provide and seek feedback. ...

Benefits of Delegating

- Supervisor Benefits
 - Reduced stress
 - Increased trust
 - Improved time management
- Employee Benefits
 - Professional knowledge and skill development
 - Sense of achievement
 - Develop self esteem and confidence
- Organizational Benefits
 - Increased productivity and efficiency
 - Promotes teamwork

Sources

- Wikipedia, Mentorship, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/mentorship>
- Smartbiz, “Mentoring In the Workplace: Best 6 types of Mentoring”, blog 2020, <https://resources.smartbizloans.com/blog/employeemanagement/mentoring-in-the-workplace-best-6-types-of-mentoring>
- The Center for Leadership Studies, “What is a Delegating Leadership Style”, blog post, 2020, <https://situational.com/blog/what-is-a-delegating-leadership-style>
- Wikipedia, Delegation, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/delegation>

Karen Lusk Smith

Coordinator of Member Services

AASBO

karen@asbo.com

205-616-1604