

# Importance of Mentoring Meeting Kit

## MENTORING

Dictionary.com defines a mentor as a wise and trusted counselor or teacher. While that definition sounds like a formal and structured relationship between two people, that isn't always the case. Often a mentor at work is just someone who you are able to seek guidance or expertise from. They are someone who has a lot of experience with a certain task or job and are willing to help younger or less experienced coworkers. Many companies understand the importance a mentor can have for a new hire and have an established program to make sure new hires have a mentor on the job. There are a lot of benefits from having a mentor at work.

## THE ADVANTAGES OF MENTORING IN THE WORKPLACE

Mentoring in the workplace is a two-way street that benefits mentor and mentee. More importantly, for companies, it can help elevate the quality of work, increase productivity, shore up employee retention and create a more positive work environment. If you don't have a mentor program at your workplace, it's probably time to start.

Workplace mentoring is a cost-effective way for existing, well-trained employees to provide guidance and knowledge to less-experienced employees. The mentor is typically not the direct manager or supervisor of the mentee, and the outcomes differ, depending on the goals of the program.

The mentor helps the mentee develop new skills, become better problem-solvers, get acclimated to the work environment, and have an example to look up to. For the mentor, it is a way to practice leadership and development skills and may help them advance within

the organization.

## BENEFITS OF A MENTORING PROGRAM

Mentorship programs benefit employers and their employees in multiple and visible ways:

**Employee Retention:** The mentor experience positively influences job satisfaction among new employees. The addition of a mentor program helps to create a positive work environment, and a higher level of employee satisfaction leads to improved retention.

**Diversity:** Diversity and inclusion are significant challenges for organizations too. Mentoring programs can help promote diversity in leadership by encouraging the sharing of opinions, knowledge, and ideas throughout an organization.

**Mentor Skills:** It's expected that the mentors are improving the skills of the mentees, but what professionals may not realize is that the mentors are also improving their skills through knowledge sharing.

## TYPES OF MENTORING

There are three broad areas of mentoring:

- **Peer mentors** – often the best approach for a new employee, this is someone to introduce a mentee to organizational culture and show them the ropes.
- **Career mentors** – where the mentor also serves as a coach, and as a kind of internal advocate who helps the mentee meet their professional goals.
- **Life mentor** – a sounding board who can help us integrate our professional development with our larger life journey.

## KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

# PROGRAM

Mentoring must be **personal and not bureaucratic**.

Pairing an employee with the right mentor is the trickiest aspect of mentoring. Some organizations use algorithms like those used by dating services, while others go for more random methods. The most effective programs give participants some input or choice—for example, suggesting three possible mentors and then letting the employee choose.

**Clear expectations are also essential.** Mentees should understand that it is not an automatic path to promotion, but instead an investment in their personal and professional growth. Mentors should know that their time is valued and that the benefits of mentoring are reciprocal.

Finally, suggested format or structure is helpful to get the mentoring relationship off the ground. If it is not part of a regular, ongoing conversation, you will never achieve the rapport necessary for successful mentoring. On the other hand, it is wise to allow the pair to customize their arrangement in a way that best suits them both.

## FINAL WORD

If you do not have a mentor at work, think about reaching out more often to experienced coworkers around you. It does not have to a structured relationship or even defined as a mentor/new hire relationship. It can just be looked at as being able to approach someone to get guidance or advice when needed. If you are an experienced worker, look to help those coming up behind you.