

August 2010 | Volume 1 Issue 4

Mentoring Matters is a bi-monthly e-letter focusing on best practices that motivate, inspire and grow individual and organizational mentoring excellence.

In our last issue we discussed [The Mentoring Cycle](#). This month's issue focuses on **Seeking, Selecting and Recruiting a Mentor**. We've chosen to focus on this topic because we believe that how you go about choosing a mentoring partner really matters! Seeking, selecting and recruiting a mentor takes thought and preparation if you are going to make the most of your mentoring relationships.

In the Beginning

Plato said, "The beginning is the most important part of the work." We agree. We also recognize getting started is often the most difficult part. The best way to get started is to begin.

Readiness to Learn

Ask yourself if mentoring is something you really want to do. As our colleague, [Esther Orioli](#), President and CEO of Essi Systems reminds us, "you gotta-wanna" is a prerequisite to success. Mentoring is a commitment and without it, mentoring never happens in a good way. Before you can be open and honest with another person, you need to start with yourself.

Meet Sarabeth, Carl, and Nick

MEET SARABETH

It took a year-end offsite with her team for Sarabeth to realize that she had become complacent about her own development and allowed herself to fall behind. The offsite facilitator asked each team member to share a new insight, practice or learning that made a difference to them over the course of the year. One by one team members highlighted a significant "aha" or turn-around skill; the responses were powerful. Almost to a person, each attributed his or her growth to working with a mentor. Sarabeth struggled to identify any growth or significant learning and nothing came even remotely close to the substantive experiences of her colleagues. Sarabeth couldn't believe that she had become so focused on getting the job done, that she lost sight of her own growth and development. She saw how easy it had been to get caught up in the day to day, but how the others, working with a mentor, had kept at least one eye focused on their own growth and development.

MEET CARL

Carl started working for his company when it was a small training organization with three employees. Five years later, that small company had been sold to a large publishing conglomerate and Carl was running a department of 25 trainers and developers responsible for new products and quality. Carl's close personal relationship with the president had made it easy to discuss issues and make decisions. Now Carl rarely had a chance to interact with his old friend. He found himself rehashing pros and cons, over-deliberating



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August Blog Topics:

[A Little Self Awareness
Goes a Long Way](#)

[Selecting a Mentor](#)

[Looking for a Mentor? Try
Networking](#)

[Popping the Question](#)

and second-guessing his decisions. Carl was floundering and realized he needed the advice and support of someone who had been in similar shoes and been more successful at making the transition to "the big leagues."

Both Sarabeth and Carl had gaps in their learning that drove them to seek a mentor. Learning is the purpose of mentoring. It is why you do it. It is how you do it. And, it is what you get for doing it.

Whether you are a mentor or a mentee there are [certain questions you need to be prepared to answer](#) to determine your own readiness to engage in a mentoring relationship.

SELECTING A MENTOR

When the choice of a mentoring partner is thought out, mentoring partners are more engaged, enthusiastic and satisfied. It is easy to get drawn into a relationship because someone is very charismatic and has an engaging personality. Look beyond initial impressions and identify specific criteria or you may end up passing up an incredible learning experience with someone who is very wise and talented and committed to your growth and development. [Finding the Right Mentor Can Bolster a Career.](#)

MEET NICK

Nick made a list of what he was looking for in a mentor.

- Someone from outside the company. (He didn't want to share the details of his conflict with his CEO with anyone inside the company.)
- Someone who had either been in his shoes as a COO, or, as a CEO (This person would need to be someone who knew what it was like to make hard decisions and work with the COO to execute them.)
- Someone who had a track record of motivating folks from the floor (This was one of the issues he was also grappling with.)
- Someone who would be accessible. (Given his crazy schedule and constant travel to three plants in three different states)
- Someone who would bring energy and enthusiasm.

He looked over his list and realized that he had a lot of needs and they weren't all created equal. When he prioritized them he realized that the perspective of the CEO and accessibility were the most important criteria for him.

Nick considered his previous boss - a CEO not unlike his current boss who tended to micro-manage, but had responded well when Nick pushed back - and then rejected him as a mentor because of his lack of accessibility. He mentally scanned his LinkedIn connections as well as the people he had met during his business trips. He immediately recalled an executive leader named John he met at a recent tradeshow. Nick regretted that he hadn't followed up after their meeting, but instinctively felt John would make a good mentor for him. He reviewed his list of criteria and it validated his hunch.

FOLLOW THE STEPS

Nick was deliberate in his choice and used criteria to test out his decision. An objective measure minimizes personal bias and focuses on end results. Our [Decision Making Matrix](#) includes eight steps for identifying a mentor. The criteria you develop and their order of importance can inform your conversation and inquiry when you approach a prospective mentor. Whatever your situation, you are essentially asking someone to make a big commitment of time and energy to guide you in your development. You need to be clear about what it is you are looking for.

**October Issue:
Mentoring Conversations**

Initiating Conversation

Deepening Conversation

**Engaging Critical
Conversations**

Closing Conversation

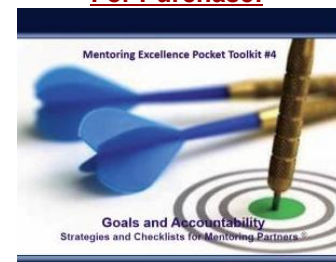
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- Learn directly from mentoring experts.
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- Learn proven strategies to facilitate your mentee's learning.
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- Receive a signed copy of The Mentor's Guide and one of our Mentoring Excellence Pocket Toolkits.

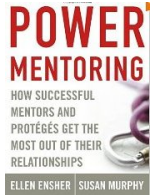


Mentoring: Raising the Bar on Performance
Chicago, Illinois
October 19, 2010

Register Online here:

<http://www.centerformentoringexcellence.com/chicagoregistration.php>

Recommended Reading



In [Power Mentoring](#), Ellen Ensher and Susan Murphy give illustrative examples of how to create a connection with a mentoring partner based on insights from fifty of American's most successful mentors and protégés.



[Help Is On The Way](#). Learn how senior leaders can benefit from working with a mentor.

A Note to Our Readers:

We believe that leaders cannot be effective without a strong and ongoing commitment to mentoring excellence. This belief, our passion for mentoring excellence, and our extensive experience in the field with organizations led us to create the Center for Mentoring Excellence. At our virtual center, www.centerformentoringexcellence.com, you will find mentoring tools and resources, expert advice and a forum for sharing best mentoring practices. We hope that you will visit us there and let us know how we can continue to help you raise the bar on mentoring in your organization.

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