



IGNITING MENTORING FOR A NEW BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

develop, reciprocal learning, support diversity, build collaborative partnerships, transfer knowledge

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AS UNSETTLED ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS ON LEVERAGING THEIR CAPABILITIES TO WITHSTAND THIS DIFFICULT TIME, ONE CRITICAL ASSET NEEDS TO BE FRONT AND CENTER:

“ THE TALENT OF THE ORGANIZATION.”

WHY MENTORING NOW?

From the economic crisis, a new business landscape will emerge with innovative organizational strategies, competition, structure, systems, roles and responsibilities. Many of these transformations will be significantly more effective. Savvy organizations will seize the opportunities provided by the economic downturn to build stronger leaders through the experiences of managing recovery. (No wonder the Chinese symbol for crisis is danger and opportunity combined!)

Structuring work assignments to learn "on the spot," aligning mission critical projects with development

SURVIVAL OF MANY ORGANIZATIONS MAY BE DETERMINED BY HOW FULLY THEY UTILIZE THEIR TALENT TO RIDE OUT THE ECONOMIC UPHEAVAL AND LEAD THE RECOVERY. THIS MAY NECESSITATE SHARPENING FUNDAMENTAL TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR A NEW AND DIFFERENT BUSINESS LANDSCAPE. IGNITING THE MENTORING PROCESS CAN BE AN IMPORTANT STRATEGY FOR WEATHERING THE ECONOMIC STORM AND PREPARING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE. IN FACT, THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENTORING IS NOW MORE COMPELLING THAN EVER.

needs, and providing forums for leaders to share their experiences are valuable approaches that will be strengthened. The current business scenario also demands a new set of core leadership competencies including - managing uncertainty, dealing with ambiguity, and leading with strategic agility. Promising talent has the greatest opportunity to develop these competencies if they are part of a collaborative learning experience.

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In today's weakened economy, it is a business imperative to engage and retain strong talent for recovery and future growth. If talented employees are engaged during the organization's downturn, there is greater likelihood they will stay when the economy recovers.

Mentoring partnerships play a vital role in building loyalty and commitment. They ensure that employees understand the business strategy and have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the recovery. Mentors help identify challenging learning assignments that broaden knowledge and develop skills that contribute to an upturn in the business. Mentors aid in extending connections and networks of employees and thereby provide a crucial link to an organization's competitive advantage -- people -- and increasing productivity and, ultimately, profitability.

During an economic crisis, talent is often lost to layoffs or other job opportunities. When talented employees are forced out, or quit, valuable organizational knowledge walks out the door with them. The cost of losing this knowledge can be tremendous.

A viable strategy for transferring organizational knowledge is through peer or reciprocal mentoring. Working collaboratively, mentoring partners have an opportunity to mutually learn different facets of each other's assignments, projects, or roles. Older workers can share their expertise and history, as well as their lessons learned. This approach provides a process for transferring critical information and ensuring it is retained for the future.

CASE FOR IGNITING MENTORING

The emerging business landscape necessitates a dynamic mentoring process that is available in a variety of shapes and sizes to fit the needs of an organization, its mentors and their partners. With organizations moving at an accelerated pace to capture new opportunities - and obsolescence moving at the same fast pace - the mentoring process will require an "on the spot" and "just in time" approach. Furthermore, a multi-generational workforce will demand mentoring approaches that create inclusion and diversity and support quick transitions to different assignments while new skills and knowledge are acquired.

Employees will be encouraged to seek mentors up, down and across the corporate ladder. Group, multiple, peer, reciprocal, reverse, cross-cultural and generational, new hire, virtual/remote, and one-on-one mentoring processes will replace the traditional "high potential only" paradigm to

support the new business landscape.

Mentors bring their unique experiences and expertise to the partnership. Key to this is ensuring that mentors fully utilize their strengths to build confidence and comfort with the process. Four key roles and associated behaviors will be critical to the partnership:

GUIDE: Somewhat like the Sherpa guide leading the expedition on Mt. Everest, mentors warn their partners of the pitfalls ahead and share their hard-earned lessons and experience. They:

- Demonstrate or model different paths and warn of potential pitfalls.
- Share strategic perspective of the organization and "world of work."
- Help partners reflect on their attitudes, skills, style and patterns of behavior and whether these facilitate or hinder their success.
- Ask thought provoking questions that challenge partners to think, analyze and probe deeper and differently.

ALLY: Everyone needs someone "on their side" who can see issues from their perspective and therefore offer relevant guidance. This role is especially critical when change is rampant in the organization. They:

- Create a risk-free climate in which partners can safely confide, vent frustrations, share difficulties, and seek insight.
- Assess behaviors and help partners seek feedback on reputation.
- Talk straight with partners -- in a neutral and non-judgmental manner that is candid and honest.
- Provide genuine and "on the level" feedback to spur personal development.

CATALYST: The best mentors are enablers. They spark ideas, discussions and insights that would be absent without them. They:

- Engage partners in the learning process and help them see their future in the organization with a new insight and vision.
- Help seize unanticipated opportunities for learning.
- Listen and encourage discussion of ideas, perspectives and creative concepts.

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ADVOCATE: Because organizations are politically complex, mentors can promote the work and ideas of their partners to help them garner attention and support from others. They:

- Champion the ideas and recommendations of partners so visibility and exposure are gained.
- Facilitate opportunities for specific learning experiences and connect partners with others for development.
- Use influence to bring partners' ideas to others for implementation.

This emerging business landscape will demand that mentoring processes be closely aligned with organizational strategies, fit systemically, and drive results.

The case for mentoring is more convincing today than ever before. Mentoring is directly linked to productivity and profitability. If these changes are implemented, mentoring will provide a foundation for multifaceted learning in a complex and changing work environment to meet fast paced learning requirements. It must hold a critical place within an organization's talent management process.

Finally, mentoring needs commitment and accountability from senior leadership to ensure payoff. From the words of author Max DuPree, "In the end, remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Dr. Beverly Kaye is an internationally recognized authority on career issues, employee engagement and retention in the workplace. As Founder and CEO of Career Systems International (CSI) and a best-selling author on workplace performance, she has worked with a host of organizations to develop and deliver cutting-edge, award-winning talent management solutions.

CSI has been a game changer in the learning and development industry since its inception when Dr. Kaye wrote the ground-breaking book *Up is Not The Only Way*, which established career development as an area of practice and CSI as the foremost authority in the industry. Later, Dr. Kaye cowrote the best-selling book, *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay*, which is the basis for CSI's highly successful practice in employee retention and engagement.

Bette Krakau has extensive experience as an organization development consultant in the areas of leadership

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