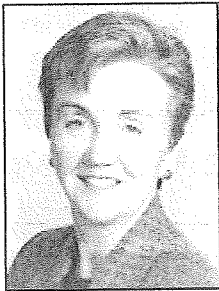


WITI LEADERSHIP

Inspire and Be Inspired: 20 Mentor / Mentee Activities
By Marian Cook



As I mentioned in a [previous article](#), I mentor a young man with his goals of building skills and expertise in finance, presentations and strategy. By being so clear and thoughtful, as his mentor it has been easy to construct a productive relationship. I have included him in finance and Vice President level projects. I have shared business books and articles. I have included him in senior level meetings that otherwise he would not attend. It is a joy to help him grow, and I am learning from him as well.

I have set up mentoring programs in several companies including my current one. Often people don't quite know what to do with their mentor or as a mentor when they get together. Creating a Mentoring Action Plan is key and was covered in an earlier article. In brief, the simple and logical steps are:

1. Define Your Top 3 Mentoring Goals

2. Create a List of Learning Activities.

3. Set a Timeline

The second item - create a list of learning activities - can flummox some. Whether a mentor or mentee, below is a list of activities to consider as you plan your time together.

Mentor / Mentee Activities:

1. Discuss mentee's growth areas and tentative plans for working on them. Discuss how feedback will be given and received, and what, if anything, either would like to avoid doing.
2. Mentee assignment: Write down the picture of a perfect week. What are you doing, where are you living, how do people talk about you? Discuss these discoveries and what you can learn/apply from them.
3. Mentee can regularly brief Mentor on a book addressing career development / another skill set that mentee is reading independently. Mentor and mentee can also read the same book together throughout the year. Communication, personality style, conflict, creativity, organization -- the subject matter can be determined by the mentee's particular goals for growth during the relationship.
4. Discuss any generational differences that may come into play in the workplace.
5. Conduct informal networking by introducing mentee to at least two people who could prove helpful to their careers. Before, provide tips on issues to address or avoid, and review afterwards.
6. Invite mentee to one of Mentor's key meetings. Debrief with mentee afterward.
7. Exchange and discuss potentially useful articles.
8. Review and discuss a letter, proposal or other document written by mentee.
9. Discuss a quote that has certain meaning or inspiration for each.
10. Discuss any cultural values that each of you hold onto. Has culture come into play at all in adjusting to the work setting?
11. Mentee can invite a Mentor to a presentation s/he is delivering or a meeting s/he is facilitating (with permission from mentee's supervisor). Debrief afterwards, or in the next session.
12. Discuss some of the "unwritten rules" each of you had observed or learned about success in your organization. How has this differed from other organizations? What other lessons have been learned?

13. Communicate about what you have appreciated about your mentoring relationship with one another and thus far. This type of "check-in" can only be done in a note or e-mail.

14. Share/lend books, tapes, CDs.

15. Discuss: how would your competitors or critics describe you?

16. Discuss: What keeps you up at night?

17. If mentee agrees and there is no conflict, have lunch with mentor, mentee and his/her supervisor.

18. Mentee can identify risks, difficulties or stress s/he is facing in the next few months (deadline, conflicts was premises, fears, etc.), and plan with mentor way to minimize them.

19. Discuss a situation of interpersonal conflict or miscommunication that the mentee has experienced or successfully avoided.

20. Prepare for the end of your formal mentoring relationship: take stock of lessons learned, directions taken, and what is still needed to be accomplished.

Need more ideas? Check out a source for this article: Philip-Jones, Linda, (2003) "75 Things to Do with Your Mentee: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You Can Try."

Marian Cook is currently the head of IT for a midmarket healthcare market leader of products, services and education for the pathology market. She leads the 100 person IT division and has a major Oracle R12 implementation underway. Among her many accomplishments she was once the Network Director for WITI Chicago and is currently on the Chicago's Mayor's Council of Technology.