Innovative Mentoring Practices at Workplace
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Abstract:

Mentoring programs are increasingly common in organizations nowadays. If mentoring is done well, the long term impact of mentoring can offer life and career changing benefits to both parties.

A mentor in the workplace is someone who is capable of providing guidance to a less-experienced employee, the mentee. A mentor can be an employee of the same company, or perhaps a professional from an outside company. Either way, the mentor assumes a role model position as someone willing to share their knowledge, skill and expertise to give help and advice for the long term benefit of the mentee, and the entire company.

Key words: Mentor, mentee, mentoring, protégé, mentoring relationship

Introduction:

Mentoring consists of a long-term relationship focused on supporting the growth and development of the mentee. The mentor becomes a source of wisdom, teaching, and support, but not someone who observes and advises on specific actions or behavioral changes in daily work.

As employees enter new organizations, job roles, and career stages, they often turn to more experienced colleagues for advice and support. This provision of advice and support from experienced to inexperienced employees is referred to as mentoring. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that employees who receive mentoring at work are better compensated, more likely to be promoted, more satisfied with their jobs, and more committed to their careers than their non-mentored counterparts.

Stages of mentoring

Mentoring relationship includes various stages some of which are described as follows:

- an initiation phase: which reflects the start of the relationship, and during which the mentor prescriptively directs the mentee;
- a cultivation phase: where mentorship functions are better established and maximized, and where the mentor guides/persuades the mentee, so they may begin to collaborate, with the mentor ultimately confirming the mentee’s ability through full delegation of tasks;
- a separation phase: phase in which organizational and/or psychological changes within one or both mentoring parties decrease the relationship’s fruitfulness; and
- a redefinition phase: where the relationship ceases to exist or evolves into a new form, such as friendship.

Within these mentoring phases, specific mentoring activities can include:
• counseling (listening; encouraging; identifying and evaluating problems);
• coaching (helping acquire particular skills and knowledge);
• tutoring (instructing on subject/s);
• sponsoring (finding the appropriate network or position for a protégé);
• advising (matching students' academic interests with their career aspirations); and
• befriending (developing informal supportive relationships)

Review of literature
Historically, mentoring relationships have often been informal connections sought out by the mentor or mentee. However, in recent years a growing number of organizations have implemented formal mentoring programs in an attempt to assist employees in developing mentoring relationships. The primary difference between formal and informal mentoring relationships is that organizations sanction and initiate formal relationships, while the employees involved initiate informal relationships.

Despite the growing popularity of formal mentoring programs, some research suggests that those in formal mentoring relationships do not receive the same benefits as those in naturally forming, informal relationships. This may be because mentors and mentees paired by organizations are not as well suited to one another as are pairs who meet through natural social attraction in the workplace. Although many argue that ensuring a good match between mentors and mentees is important, few scholars provide specific recommendations as to how organizations should pair mentoring partners to achieve positive outcomes.

Data source:
This research paper is mainly based upon secondary data from different reports, published articles, websites, e-books and published books also. On this basis analysis is done in the paper.

Relevance of mentoring at 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.

• A Better Career Path For the Individual: For the mentee, the benefits of having a sage, trusted mentor can be innumerable. Particularly at the outset of a career, learning the ropes from someone who's been there, done that, is extremely valuable for success and advancement. A mentor can teach about the responsibilities specific to a job role or the state of an entire industry. He can also teach about the ins-and-outs of a company's organizational chart, policies, practices and business methodologies. If a young person is willing to be a sponge for a mentor's knowledge, he can set out on a long, successful career path.

• Rewards for the Mentor: Imagine having a young protégé who listens to your every word and works diligently to please you. Mentors can take pride – and a bit of credit – in the work of their mentees. Young workers who are truly dedicated to their careers and their mentors are willing to come in early, stay late and produce the
best-quality work they can. With an open mind, mentors can also learn much from their charges. For example, a business woman with a long career might not understand the benefits of the internet as much as a digital native. She can stay sharp and ahead of the curve, even if she’s decades older than most other employees in the company

- **A Multi-Generational Company Culture**: As mentor and mentee develop their own relationship, they help create and perpetuate a positive company culture that combines the best qualities of the individuals, regardless of their age. Maybe an older worker has a terrific work ethic and arrives early every day to accomplish tasks in a timely manner. What a great role model! But that younger worker probably brings passion and enthusiasm to the workplace., which is a great reminder to love what you do.

- **Connecting an Expansive Network**: Another reason it’s great to have a mentor is that it connects the mentee to a professional network, to which he might never have been exposed. Personal introductions are powerful career collateral, especially for someone just starting out. But a mentor can also write a recommendation for their mentee’s LinkedIn profile for all the world to see. And he can send out invites to corporate trainings, employee mixers and industry conferences that will help his protégé connect to the right people.

- **Reducing Stress and Anxiety**: Less-measurable but still important is how having a reliable sounding board in the office can reduce job anxiety and stress. We all make mistakes and we don’t always meet our own goals. When that happens in work, it can be extremely worrisome. After all, this job is your livelihood. But a mentor can help you see the bigger picture, can help make you understand that a single mistake isn’t going to cost you your career and can help you improve what you do in the workplace so those mistakes become fewer and fewer.

**Implications & recommendations**

- Lack of mentee’s interest in mentoring: mentees may feel sometimes in formal mentoring think not interesting. It may be because mentor is focusing on only some of the mentees.
- Lack of open-ness: Mentee may not be able to clearly discuss the issues or problems he/she facing in his life( may be work or personal life). He may be hesitant in discussing these types of issues.
- Mentor may not be able to sought out the issues mentees’ are facing because the mentor and mentee may be from different professions.
- Lack of top management support: lack of top management support due to limited availability of resources may be the another implications in implemention of mentoring.

**Conclusions**
Although there is anecdotal evidence of mentoring’s positive role in others’ lives, there is a general lack of convincing empirical evidence that mentoring programs make a positive difference. From the above discussion and going through the various mentoring mentoring programs followed in army forces, all india radio, google and many other companies it can be concluded that mentoring programs should be arranged more frequently in the work place formally as well as informally. Individual mentoring should preferably be given. Mentees should be made comfortable during mentoring sessions. He should not feel hesitat. In addition, it is clear that no one mentoring program fits every situation.

REFERENCES: The data for above research paper is collected from following secondary sources:

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