



The Mentor Effect: Strategies For Leveraging Your Success

We all have our opinions about the seemingly endless parade of recent corporate restructuring, downsizing, consolidations and mergers. In some cases, the change proves positive for the newly aligned company, and often the change bodes well for the marketplace. Regardless of one's opinion, we can all agree that there is a residual impact on individuals. By that I mean the out-placed employees, as well as the workers left to deal with corporate upheaval. Can such change be viewed as opportunity, or is it merely chaos? And, whom can we turn to for clarity?

That is where **The Mentor Factor** comes into play. Mentors play a dramatic role in making the difference between being prepared and blind-sided. Therefore, continuous effort to tap into a wise resource—or resources—is critical for all of us. It is highly advantageous to cultivate several such relationships, whether internal to your organization or industry, or in the business world in general.

Why? Mentors can provide timely advice and links into other career opportunities when you just got downsized. Likewise, when you are one of the “lucky ones” who survived the last round of layoffs, it's good to have perspective from someone who can help you manage the inherent changes proactively.

Either way, the objective is to keep the center calm and the circumference moving forward on an expansion course. Mentors can provide calm when your workplace is riddled with chaos. They can help you to identify sound strategies in challenging political scenarios. At the least, they can provide a sounding board that is objective and constructive.

At times, you may be fortunate enough to have a “dedicated mentor,” one who is engaged on an in-depth basis in your learning and development. But don't dismiss the value of several “contributing mentors,” who can only dedicate time to your development periodically or infrequently.

Finally, don't forget that being a mentor offers as much satisfaction as being mentored! Not only is being a mentor a great boost to your confidence, you will learn, stretch and meet worthwhile challenges you never expected.

Develop an “Ideal Mentor Criteria”

Know what you are looking for so you will recognize it when you see it!

You might include:

- Aligned Values
- Ethical Practices
- Industry Knowledge
- Strategic Connections
- Shares Information
- Enjoys Teaching
- Directs Constructively
- Believes in You!

Where Do I Find a Mentor?

Look for common interests:

- Industry Associations
- Community Organizations
- Universities
- Continuing Education Classes
- Industry Publications
- Within Your Company

Define & Commit to Roles

- Define the Scope of Commitment
- Define Mutual Benefits
- Define Simple Goals
- Review Progress Periodically