

Professional Mentoring – A Tool for Workplace Diversity

As the worldwide economy becomes more strained and the demand for expertise in the workplace increases, people will be relocating from different cultures and countries, in order to provide for their families and establish careers. Individuals will be spending the majority of their waking hours side by side with men and women they wouldn't normal associate with in social situations. But, professional mentoring is a tool for workplace diversity, so a unique group of people can work well together in promoting business goals.

An Important Question

How can mentoring help with diversity and inclusion in organizations? Probably the best way to explain how mentoring is of mutual benefit to both new and current employees. Consider the following scenario:

A disabled employee joins a workplace. However, this individual has a speech impediment and walks with jerky and uncontrolled movements. To the casual onlooker, this person probably appears to need a lot of extra help to complete the same tasks as his/her equal.

Due to the company policy of mentorship, a current employee is selected to mentor this individual and help him/her build connections and become an engaged and productive employee. Hesitant at first, the mentor may be apprehensive, having not been around a disabled worker before this point.

Nevertheless, during the process of mentorship, with the goal of inclusion in the organization, the mentor probably learns more than the new employee. For instance, the individual has a Masters in Business Administration and graduated at the top of the class. He/she has a family at home, with the same needs, goals, and desires of any other worker in the company.

Multiple Answers

Although it may sound trite, the old adage, "you can't tell a book by its cover" holds true. Here is where professional mentoring is important. In order to accomplish the goal of building connections across people, differences have to be put aside, in favor of how each individual can contribute to providing a product or service that benefits the consumer.

Every person has something to contribute in order to increase workplace productivity. It is important to be able to work with peers and bosses from diverse backgrounds. Disabilities, sexuality, ethnic background, or any other personal differences should not adversely affect whether the job gets done well and in a timely manner.

Naturally, individuals have work and personal relationships. Sometimes, the two intersect, sometimes not. It all boils down to having a respect for coworkers, regardless of the differences. It does not mean everyone agrees nor has the same cultural values. Nevertheless, professional mentoring can help everyone learn to work well together, and possibly use those differences to promote the business and improve productivity, rather than working in a tense and uncomfortable environment.

In summary, the business world is now an exercise in diversity and acceptance. Individuals relocate from differing cultures and countries to provide for themselves and their families. Everyone has

differing value systems based on ethnicity, sexuality, culture background, disabilities and more. But, it is essential to use professional mentoring as a tool for workplace diversity, in order to increase employee productivity and remain competitive in a more challenging economy.

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About the Author

Cecile Peterkin, a Certified Career Coach, Corporate Mentor and Speaker, started ProMentoring to help businesses leverage the mind-share of retiring Baby Boomers and senior managers, and transfer it to the next generation of leaders. The program enables these rising leaders to garner first hand business knowledge and expertise through the development of a rewarding one-on-one relationship. For more information on ProMentoring and the benefits of corporate mentoring programs, contact Cecile at 1-866-486-4112 or visit <http://www.ProMentoringInc.com>