The Importance of a Good Mentor

Professional Mentoring

The importance of mentoring relationships becomes evident as we recognize the value of networking and maintaining relationships throughout our professional career. The value of a good mentor is immeasurable when it comes to learning the tricks of the trade as well as becoming connected to those in the know and possess the ability to hire.

A mentor can help to alleviate much of the frustration interns and new employees often feel in their first few months on the job/internship. By sharing their insight and knowledge of both the company and the industry, new recruits in the field can be spared a great deal of stress which is often felt by new employees/interns when acclimating to a new work environment. A good mentor can advise and support the intern or new employee and help avoid an unnecessary resignation due to feelings of incompetence and isolation.

A successful mentor demonstrates and upholds the values and ethics of the profession they represent.

Good mentors introduce their new recruits to others within the organization and industry. They will offer support and assistance until you feel comfortable in the work setting. As time goes on, professional mentoring often becomes a two way street and offers benefits to both parties.

Top 10 Qualities of a Good Mentor

Learning the Ropes from a Professional in the Field

A good mentoring relationship provides new employees as well as interns with someone that will share their professional knowledge and expertise in the field. A good mentor is available to answer any questions relevant to the job. Good mentor-mentee relationships are a two way street; consequently, if you want a good relationship with your mentor, become a good mentee. This requires a genuine interest in your mentor and a willingness to do what it takes to become successful as an intern or new employee in the field. Following suggestions and recommendations as well as reading all pertinent literature available in the field is a good way to show your mentor that you are committed to being successful and that you take your career and responsibilities seriously.

A good mentor possesses the following qualities:
1. **Willingness to share skills, knowledge, and expertise.**

A good mentor is willing to teach what he/she knows and accept the mentee where they currently are in their professional development. Good mentors can remember what it was like just starting out in the field. The mentor does not take the mentoring relationship lightly and understands that good mentoring requires time and commitment and is willing to continually share information and their ongoing support with the mentee.

2. **Demonstrates a positive attitude and acts as a positive role model.**

A good mentor exhibits the personal attributes it takes to be successful in the field. By showing the mentee what it takes to be productive and successful, they are demonstrating the specific behaviors and actions required to succeed in the field.

3. **Takes a personal interest in the mentoring relationship.**

Good mentors do not take their responsibility as a mentor lightly. They feel invested in the success of the mentee. Usually this requires someone who is knowledgeable, compassionate, and possesses the attributes of a good teacher or trainer. Excellent communication skills are also required. A good mentor is committed to helping their mentees find success and gratification in their chosen profession. Overall good mentoring requires empowering the mentee to develop their own strengths, beliefs, and personal attributes.

4. **Exhibits enthusiasm in the field.**

A mentor who does not exhibit enthusiasm about his/her job will ultimately not make a good mentor. Enthusiasm is catching and new employees want to feel as if their job has meaning and the potential to create a good life.

5. **Values ongoing learning and growth in the field.**

Mentors are in a position to illustrate how the field is growing and changing and that even after many years there are still new things to learn. Anyone that feels stagnant in their current position will not make a good mentor. When starting out in a new career, people want to feel that the time and energy they spend learning will be rewarded and will ultimately provide them with career satisfaction. Good mentors are committed and are open to experimenting and learning practices that are new to the field. They continually read professional journals and may even write articles on subjects where they have developed some expertise. They are excited to share their knowledge with new people entering the field and take their role seriously in teaching their knowledge to others. They may choose to
teach or attend classes to further develop their knowledge and skills. They enjoy taking workshops and attending professional conferences provided through their membership in professional associations.

6. **Provides guidance and constructive feedback.**

One of the key responsibilities of a good mentor is to provide guidance and constructive feedback to their mentee. This is where the mentee will most likely grow the most by identifying their current strengths and weaknesses and learning how to use these to make themselves successful in the field. A good mentor possess excellent communication skills and is able to adjust their communication to the personality style of the mentee. A good mentor will also provide the mentee with challenges that will foster professional development and a feeling of accomplishment in learning the field.

7. **Respected by colleagues and employees in all levels of the organization.**

Ideally mentees look up to their mentors and can see themselves filling the mentor’s role in the future. Mentees want to follow someone who is well respected by colleagues and co-workers and whose contribution in the field is appreciated.

8. **Sets and meets ongoing personal and professional goals.**

A good mentor continually sets a good example by showing how his/her personal habits are reflected by personal and professional goals and overall personal success.

9. **Values the opinions and initiatives of others.**

A mentor who values others is also someone who works well in a team environment and is willing to share his/her success. A good mentor appreciates the ongoing effort of the mentee and empowers him/her through positive feedback and reinforcement.

10. **Motivates others by setting a good example.**

The ultimate success of being a good mentor…

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