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Mentoring: The Forgotten Strategy in a Competitive Recessionary World

Posted: October 11, 2009, 11:43 PM by Ray Williams

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By Ray B. Williams



Many small to medium sized companies have become so successful that they have been "corporatized," a term coined that describes the feeling of professionals working in those companies that makes them feel like "cogs in a wheel."

In an article the **Harvard Business Review**, authors Thomas J. Delong, John J. Gabarro and Robert J. Lees argue that the remedy for the corporatized phenomena is for those companies to institute a program of mentoring. While the need for mentoring was once more commonplace during good economic times, it has slowly disappeared from many organizations during the growth of the global economy and fierce competition and specifically during the recession. The mentoring relationship can serve a critical role in an employee's career, skill development; and is a key to retaining talent and a fundamental way by which the organization can shape leadership.

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Workplace mentoring usually takes place between two individuals--one, the older more experience person and the other, the younger, less experienced individual. Mentors typically provide career related support which includes visibility, networking, coaching and sponsorship as well as psychosocial support by developing the protégés sense of identity, competence and effectiveness, sometimes including friendship and role modeling.

A research study conducted by professor Christina Underhill at he University of Memphis, where she examined all the research conducted on mentoring in the past 25 years showed the organization benefits from mentoring by enhanced organization attractiveness and recruitment, reduced employee turnover, increased organizational learning, and employee productivity and socialization.

The selection of a mentor is critical to the program's success. The research by DeLong, Gabarro and Lees showed that good mentor: Is someone who is absolutely credible and whose integrity transcends any messages; tells the protégés truthful things they may not want to hear; interacts with the protégés in ways that the protégés wants to become a better person; helps the protégés feel secure enough to take risks; helps develop the protégé's' confidence to raise above their inner doubts and fears; supports the protégé's' attempts to set and achieve audacious but attainable goals; and present challenges and opportunities the protégés might not have seen on their own.

The Vancouver Board of Trade initiated the Leaders of Tomorrow program, in which young university graduates, who want to be involved with the Board of Trade, are matched up with experienced business and professional mentors. Feedback from the both the protégés and the mentors involved in the program have indicated it has been a huge success.

Given the challenge and potential conflicts between the generations--Baby Boomers and Generation Y in particular--the promise of a beneficial and low cost initiative such as mentoring can be a smart organizational strategy.

Ray B. Williams is Co-Founder of Success IQ University, and President of Ray Williams Associates, companies located in Phoenix

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by rossbean

Oct 12 2009

9:43 AM

Our civilization's practical social, economic, scientific knowledge is mainly possessed by the people (successful problem solvers) in our organizations.

Books may provide general theory but, successful problem solvers have dealt with the diversity of practical reality which demands a far greater understanding of external influences not covered by narrow theory. This is why many highly educated academics, with impressive paper accomplishments become complete and utter inept failures when placed in a practical, results oriented environment.

Mentoring (inter-generational transmission of knowledge) is discouraged for this very reason, by forces that seek to control and change social perceptions of reality, to make us more docile and controllable slaves. Proven knowledge is an impediment to this.

This is the exact same reason that the family (basic unit of social organization) had to be destroyed by changing its legal environment (definition, upsetting balance of power between spouses, making cooperation impossible, a relationship of legal licenses to prey by spouse) so the family became unworkable, a poor survival choice.

Families used to be how children learned (were mentored) the crucial survival values of: cooperation, trust, division of labor, work ethic, respect for others, live and let live, etc. "Social Engineers" deemed the family an impediment to achieving their "new, improved mankind".

This is also why rebellion against civilized values is socially encouraged in youth and lack of respect for our older citizens (vast repository of practical knowledge) is encouraged. This is also why media portrays scientists and engineers as clueless "geeks".

When an organization such as Nortel is taken down and disbanded by predators, all of the organizational knowledge is LOST.

Communications is also a threat to slavers, since the dissemination of objective knowledge is THREAT #1. Nortel was VERY GOOD at communications It had to go.

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Bill Ross

(Electronics Design Engineer)

Former Nortel technophilosopher, insider witness of Nortel's murder (excessive taxes, brain drain, bean counter myopia, outsourcing made it impossible to

make an honest buck, management coerced to fraud for organizational survival.

RIP, Nortel, civilization next.

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