Every effective leader is inevitably a mentor—a coach who strives to raise the competency level of his employees. Leaderonomics has comprehensive coaching and mentoring programmes to help individuals develop relational skills that build a strong mentor-mentee relationship. Through this workshop, participants will learn about the different types of mentoring relationships while setting mentoring goals and strategies to achieve intended results within and outside the organisational life. Participants will also learn influential traits and qualities of successful mentors to create the right mentoring dynamics for a win-win relationship. To find out more, e-mail training@leaderonomics.com

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A Demand For Leaders Through Mentoring

By AMANDA CHUA
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TDY/EN and Juanita are two very different people. Juanita, one of the senior directors of a development centre based in the UK mentors Steven, a mid-level manager based in the local office here in Asia Pacific. Juanita has spent 20 years in this multinational company while Steven just passed the nine year mark. Despite their differences, the two have formed a strong mentor-mentee relationship based on a common goal that they share, an ardent desire to learn from one another and become the best at what they do. Steven had the opportunity to learn from Juanita, who strives to raise their organisation’s success and sustainability through mentoring. Juanita has spent 20 years in this multinational company while Steven just passed the nine year mark. Despite their differences, the two have formed a strong mentor-mentee relationship based on a common goal that they share, an ardent desire to learn from one another and become the best at what they do. Steven had the opportunity to learn from Juanita, who strives to raise their organisation’s success and sustainability through mentoring.

Leadership Coaching and Mentoring

Leaders have been passionate about coaching and mentoring. As such, three of the seven principles of sustainable leadership emerged from their study points towards the value of mentoring in sustainable leadership.

1) Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustained learning where the primary responsibility of any manager or organisational leader is to ensure learning within the company or team is sustained for greater employee output.

2) Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others where leaving a lasting legacy is not just grooming the successor for your role but also distributing leadership within the organisation by developing and sharing your legacy.

3) Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources which finds the best way to identify, attract, retain and develop the cream of the crop leaders with the opportunity for them to network, learn from and support each other through coaching and mentoring.

The “leaders teaching leaders” approach through mentoring gives leaders the opportunity to work together across departments, cultures, backgrounds and generations within the company. Additionally, mentoring addresses employee’s support needs to grow and develop in line with Gallup’s Sixth element of Great Managing (Q6: element of Great Managing is the recognition that 20% of effective leadership development is achieved through leadership of others.

Leaders develop wisdom by having admired someone in a leadership position and emulating their leadership styles.

Like the story of Steven, his relationship with Juanita started because of an assignment. The company believed that, by having experienced mentor can bring immense value to your personal development and career as they provide different perspective which could be a blind spot, while mentoring boosts your career success to the next level through empowerment.

The 70:20:10 model approach by Carol Dweck for Creative Leadership recognises that 20% of effective leadership development is learnt from developmental relationships via feedback and working with, and observing, role models. Mentoring relationships do not need to happen as a result of a formal company-wide mentoring programme. Not many have had the privilege of having someone invest in and facilitate their career development.

Longer than not, most professionals experience informal, intermittent mentoring experiences at different points in their careers. Informal mentoring relationship developed organically with someone outside the organisation can be more successful where your leadership style, individual differences and needs have been taken into account. Having admired someone in a leadership position and emulating their leadership styles could also be one way. It is fulfilling, if not more rewarding, when you become a mentor and do the same for others yourself. Many mentors are inspired by their personal positive experiences with mentors and they pay it forward by intentionally becoming oneself.

They identify a few high potentials and greatly invest their time and effort to their growth and development whereby they see their mentee’s success as their own which, in turn, raises the next generation of leaders.

As a personal beneficiary of this, I have had individuals who invested in my life in my adolescent years and career mentors at work like my manager and COO who made me the person that I am today and to whom I attribute much of my success.

The impact they have made on my life is profound, from instilling the right values to form my character and worldview in life and at work, to gaining insightful views on how to navigate my career in the organisation.

My previous manager was a natural developer and mentor who showed genuine care and interest for my career development and well-being, which was the key contributor of towards the success of my promotion within a year.

My mentoring relationship with my COO, who is also a successful woman in her own right, offered me insights in seeing the organisation in a bigger picture and from a bird’s eye view which helped me to better align my organisation’s vision and mission. I was also able to glean insights from a woman’s perspective on how to be successful.

Developing Leaders Through Mentoring

Developing relationships with coaches and mentors is source of learning for leaders. Leaders develop wisdom by seeking advices and counsel from those who are more experienced. As an organisation, it is important to ask these questions:

- Is value attached to mentoring within and outside of the organisation?
- Are leaders expected to accelerate the talented individuals through the organisation to their optimum levels of performance?

One of the ways to address this is for leaders act as coach and mentor for their teams which could lead to more initiatives that builds a stronger company. Like the story of Steven, his relationship with Juanita not only led to a few key-cost-savings initiatives through cross-departmental collaboration, facilitated by the mentoring relationship which allowed him to take a bigger picture and different view to improve the company further.

It is no surprise that Steven got promoted the next year and passed on this mentoring legacy within his team, all thanks to the benefits of mentoring.