

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – BE A MENTOR

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Mentoring - everyone's talking about it. And everyone agrees it's important. SMPS recently launched a special initiative, Mentoring Pathways, to encourage mentoring. And they're not alone - other organizations are emphasizing the value of one-to-one mentoring among their members.

It's clear that protégés receive benefit from linking with mentors. Formal mentoring programs have no trouble finding eager participants - all of them prospective protégés. **Selling mentors, however, is a bit more challenging.** Successful people are busy. And real mentoring requires a commitment of at least two hours a month.

If you're an experienced professional - a leader in your firm - maybe you should consider taking on the role of mentor. You know the benefits to the protégé, but what's in it for you?

According to mentoring expert, Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones, protégés aren't the only ones who get something out of the mentoring experience. "Mentors are often the real beneficiaries," says Phillips-Jones.

So, what's in it for you the mentor?

- **As a mentor, you will learn from your protégé.** They have knowledge you don't have. They may teach you something to help you be more productive. You could learn how to use a new computer program. You'll probably improve your people skills. For certain, you'll learn more about yourself.
- **You will have the opportunity to give something back.** At some point in your early career, you probably received some mentoring from someone and didn't have a chance to show your gratitude directly. This is your chance to reciprocate.
- **You may receive recognition from peers and superiors.** Effective people development shows real leadership. Other leaders appreciate someone who knows how to recognize and groom talent.
- **You may get some extra work performed.** Remember how you worked extra hard for your mentor? Your protégé will probably work extra hard for you, too.
- **You will have the chance to review what you know and to validate your accomplishments.** Teaching something requires you to reframe what you know about the subject so that you can pass it on effectively. You may find that you've accomplished much more than you had realized.
- **You will probably feel good.** The emotional side-effects of mentoring are legion. When you see the positive effect you are having on your protégé, you can expect to feel pride and satisfaction.
- **You may reap a future payoff.** When protégés are successful, they often reward their mentors. Future reward is probably not your motivation, but it happens.
- **You will be helping your firm.** Mentoring employees can help give your organization a real recruitment edge and shorten learning curves. Your mentoring will probably add to your protégé's job satisfaction, as well as his/her loyalty and commitment to the firm.