



Mentoring Match Program

Why is the Formal Mentoring Match needed?

Many SMPS members would like to offer or obtain help with career enhancement issues and do not know who to talk to about these issues. SMPS encourages applications from participants who represent the full range of diversity of SMPS. The Program is aimed at providing these individuals with access to mentors with whom they would not otherwise meet or connect. It will provide participants with matching, training, and support for one year.

What are its goals?

- To affirm the commitment to people and their development at every level.
- To foster cross-organizational communications, and share institutional knowledge.
- To meet the needs of mentees for career enhancement information and advice, and of mentors to develop skills and see different viewpoints.
- To improve mentees' ability to do their jobs well by providing them with new information and perspectives, as well as their own career options.

Who will be eligible?

Every SMPS Member can be a mentor or mentee, as long as you have something to offer, and something to gain. The Mentoring Committee welcomes applications from all SMPS Members, but particularly those who have had less informal mentoring than others, and those who have not traditionally thought of themselves as mentors.

What is expected of mentors?

Only a willingness to take time to serve, and the ability to listen, offer suggestions, and maintain confidentiality are required. Pairs should take at least one hour per month to meet. A mentor may be an employee at any level or in any occupation, as long as the person is willing and committed to work with a mentee. A mentor is simply a good listener who offers information, ideas, support, and feedback. Their role is to make suggestions and recommendations, not to tell the mentee what to do.

What training will be provided?

To be determined.

In addition, quarterly training on career enhancement topics will be provided throughout the year.

What can my mentor do for me?

Facilitate your progress toward mutually agreed upon career goals. Your mentor can help you see what to do for yourself, but s/he is specifically prohibited from talking directly to your supervisor about you or being your formal advocate. That's your job.

What will I get out of the Program as a mentee?

What everyone can gain is a caring, objective outsider who can help you see yourself and the organization more clearly. Beyond that, the results depend a great deal on your goals. If you want to evaluate your career options, you will probably gain a range of information that you didn't even know



existed, contacts in the fields you are interested in, and insight based on objective feedback from an interested but objective colleague. If you are ready, you will end the year with a career goal and a sense of direction. If you already have a career goal in mind from the start, you will probably gain a strategy, skills in marketing yourself, a more realof your possible choices, and support to take a risk.

What will I get out of the Program as a mentor?

Although most mentors volunteer because they want to help somebody else define and reach goals, they usually report that they also gained skills and perspective for themselves. Mentees often bring in useful information, and show mentors who are supervisors how it feels on "the other side of the tracks." By asking the mentee questions about future plans and careers, a mentor often finds that some self reflection is in order as well. A person who feels plateaued or burned out often sees how far s/he has come in discussing issues with the mentee. Mentors improve interpersonal skills, especially listening and feedback.

How many people can participate?

As many as we get.

How will the participants be selected?

The mentees will be chosen by lottery. Everyone who submits an application by the deadline will be considered. Mentors will be chosen by looking at the mentees' needs and who would fill them best on the basis of the applications. First, the mentee applications will be checked to ensure that each question has been answered fully.. If the applicants are divided equally among the three categories, the Committee will proceed with its plan to choose ten of the mentees from each category. The correct number will be chosen by lottery from each category. Alternates will be drawn on the same basis.

How will matches be made?

Application forms provide mentees an opportunity to ask specifically for the help they need and to identify their goal in the mentoring relationship; mentors respond to corresponding questions about the skills, knowledge, and perspectives they would like to share. On that basis, the Committee proposes matches outside the direct chain of command (so that a mentor would never be a second or third level supervisor). The individuals meet at an opening event, and arrange a first trial meeting to evaluate whether the match is workable. Following the meeting, each individual notifies the Committee of whether they are willing to work together, and rematches are made if necessary.

What if I'm not comfortable with my mentor/mentee?

The purpose of your first official meeting is to determine whether there is a match between what the mentee needs and what the mentor has to offer, looking specifically for compatibility of goals and expectations, the logistics of meeting, and personalities. When you have met, each of you will notify your Committee Contact about whether you feel you can work with the person you've been tentatively

assigned. Don't be afraid to say you don't think it will work; no one can really tell whether a given match will "click" until the two people have met and talked. If you feel stymied later in the process, talk directly with your mentor/mentee about the issues; the next step is to talk with your Committee Contact about a possible rematch.

How long does the Program last?

Pairs will meet formally for one year.

How much time can I spend with my match?

Up to one hour per month of official time is allocated.

How can I participate if I am outside Atlanta?

Experience in other programs shows that matches where both parties are in the same location have a much better chance of working well for both parties. However, highly motivated people can make a mentoring relationship work using the telephone and e-mail once the pair has met and established an initial connection. Your chances of success will be greater if you encourage others in your geographic area to apply, so that if you are randomly chosen as a mentee there will be mentors available in your area.

What if I'm not selected?

Selection is not based on merit; it is done by lottery and to reflect the pool of applicants. Please attend the Mentoring Lunch and Learn Series, and consider taking the class in "Everybody Needs Mentoring." Mentoring is a state of mind as much as anything. Approach your daily situations asking yourself, "With whom can I share what I know or how I think? Who might be able to assist me?" You can begin many mentoring connections; it doesn't have to be just one person.