

# **Importance of Mentoring for Leadership Development – A case study of Public Sector**

**K. Praveenkumar**, *Research Scholar&Retd GM-HR, School of Management Science,JNTU, Hyderabad,India*

**Dr Ch.S.Durgaprasad**, *Director, Vignan Jyothi Institute of Management, Hyderabad, India*

**Dr Varanasi Madhusudhan Prasad**, *Professor of Management, College of Business Administration, Al Yamamah University, Riyadh-11512, Saudi Arabia.*

---

Date of Submission: 06-06-2022

Date of Acceptance: 21-06-2022

---

## **I. Introduction**

Globalization has already brought in lot of radical changes in several national economies including that of Asia. In India, along with technological break through in the areas of information technology, banking, services and biotechnology, one has been experiencing radical changes in the introduction of many new management processes.

Along with other leadership development tools and techniques, mentoring has evolved as a very powerful process. During the pandemic and post pandemic industry has realized the importance of mentoring and coaching for grooming leaders in their industry.

Twenty first century is an era of liberalization and it is also the era of leadership. Traditionally, business cultures across the world have different ways of grooming new incumbents into family, organizations and institutions. In recent times with fast growth in technology, growing population and breaching away of the joint family system, traditional grooming, has helped in integrating and developing employees to not only perform their current roles effectively, but also develop their potential as leaders and heads of businesses and institutions. Mentoring and coaching assume significance in this context.

Today's technology-based society and the vast influx of new information make leadership development a necessity. Many of the world's finest and most successful leaders have trusted mentors. Mentoring has emerged as a means to cultivate leadership skills of current and future leaders. Mentoring has a rich history and harbors immense learning potential, which is supported by the theories and concepts of prominent researchers and philosophers such as Vygotsky, Rogoff, and Bruner. Mentors take on various roles and, like chameleons, transform their roles to fit the needs of their mentees, including becoming coaches, supporters, counselors, educators, and sponsors. The benefits of both mentors and mentees are extensive, ranging from increased self-esteem, awareness, insight, and professional skills to reduction of stress. While the benefits to mentoring are immense, personal and societal constraints such as time, incompatibility, and inadequate training show that engaging in mentoring takes immense time, effort, and commitment in order to obtain the desired results.

*Key words: Mentoring, Coaching, Leadership Development, Facilitation, Commitment and transformation*

### **Definition of Mentoring and Coaching**

Collins English Dictionary defines mentoring as “wise or trusted advisor or guide”

In the famous Greek classic by Homer, when Odysseus, King of Ithaca sailed off to fight Trojans in 12th century B.C, he left his son Telemachus in the care of a wise, experienced man named mentor so that Telemachus could grow up to be a wise ruler. Mentor had to be father figure and combine the roles of guide, coach, teacher, counselor and role model in order to guide his Protégée. Protégée(or mentee as used in this article) is derived from the French verb, protégé, i.e to protect.

In other words, mentoring is an effort by an elder of another (or a set of) significant person in one's life who influences the person's overall growth and development. Hence, development and protection have become core themes of mentoring for decades.

Mentoring is a relationship and a set of processes where one person offers help, guidance, advice and support to facilitate the learning or development of an another person (Lewis,1996).

According to Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995), “Mentoring has been defined in the modern context as an offline help by the person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.

***Objectives of Mentoring***

Though mentoring could have many valuable objectives the well accepted ones are :

- To grow and develop as a holistic person
- Establish and develop relationships based on trust
- Higher job satisfaction leading to enhanced commitment to the organization
- Role modeling for enhanced effectiveness
- Setting behavioral norms for employees or a target group
- Provide inputs for career management
- Facilitation in meaningful options/action plans for opportunities in life
- Low cost knowledge and higher cross –functional exposure
- Be a forum for strengthening emotional well being of the mentor and mentee
- Working towards a lasting value addition relationships

***Differences between Mentoring and Coaching***

Mentoring is very often confused with other individual development process. While training, counseling, listening, coaching and helping all are subsets of Mentoring, it is helpful to distinguish among them.

In particular, the roles between coaching and mentoring often appear blurred and the definition given below brings some clarity to this problem.

Goldsmith et al.(2000) have done extensive preparation and research for Coaching and mentoring globally and define “Coaching is a behavioral approach of mutual benefit to organization in which they work or network. It is not merely a technique or onetime event; it ‘s a strategic process that adds value to both the people being coached and also to the bottom-line of the organization”.

Managers who assume the role of coach immediately begin to invest their time and energy in their people. This focus to produce a wining performance is called Coaching.

Comparison of Mentoring and Coaching:

Mentoring	Coaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long -term for the organization</li> <li>• Evolving and Developing capabilities of young professionals, mostly fresher’s or new entrants</li> <li>• Driven by the Mentor, Mentee and Organization</li> <li>• Helps in self –discovery and realization with inputs from mentors from time to time.</li> <li>• Help, support and feedback from mentor received.</li> <li>• Focus on the scheme</li> <li>• Group with individual care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually short-term focus</li> <li>• Pointed feedback</li> <li>• Develops specific skills</li> <li>• Driven by coach (focused help, support and feedback received from Coach)</li> <li>• Shows where one could have improved &amp; how to plan for improvement</li> <li>• Focus on outcome</li> <li>• Individualized Competency Development</li> </ul>

Though the distinction between mentoring & Coaching is fairly clear, in many ways, coaching appears to be a sub-set of mentoring.

**II. Leadership Development Through Mentoring**

Many large organizations have been following different approaches for their programmes for leadership development. While some of them have been evolving and adopting Global leadership Models followed by Career Management initiatives, many others have been planning focused training programmes. Job rotations, collaborations with premier National and International B-schools, as well as short job assignments are overseas study visits are also being recourse to.

In the current decade, there appears to be a lot of interventions, supplementing Leadership development though the process of mentoring. This is because, in many organizations employees are retiring and there appears to be gap between the competency requirements and existing levels. It is to bridge this gap that we can use Mentoring techniques.

Over the past decade one finds increasing use of Mentoring; and, recently, of coaching too. While mentoring is being used for bridging the gaps, induction of newcomers to the organization, enhancing their commitment, motivation and prosperity, coaching is largely focused on building individual competencies, more so at senior levels.

### ***Mentoring scheme***

Some critical points for implementing mentoring schemes could include:

- Diagnosis & Scheme Design,
- Purpose, Objectives and Coverage
- Anchors, Facilitators and Champions,
- Appreciative workshop for Champions,
- Selection of Mentors & Protégée's,
- Workshop for Mentors & Protégée's,
- Sharing of Best Practice,
- Review Mechanisms, and
- Get-togethers for strengthening the processes.

### ***Mentoring in India***

These concepts have existed in India since ancient times and our epics and history is replete with powerful examples of coaching and mentoring. Chanakya was a Mentor to the famous emperor Chandragupta Maurya, Krishna to Arjuna in the Mahabharata, Narayan Das as Mentor to Tansen the great singer, the traditional of the Gurukul and many more examples of famous personalities like Dronacharya, Lava Kusha and Valmiki.

Mentoring in India, though is relatively new, but seems to be popular in corporate sector in a big way. Readers may be aware of young CEO/Business Heads being mentored for assuming top positions quickly by veterans.

With globalization, more and more Indian companies appear to be emphasizing the need for developing global managers; hence the increased need for Mentoring in addition to the focused management development. However, this in no way appears to be substituting other leadership development efforts like E-MBA, Career and Succession Planning, Job rotation and long-duration assignments or Management Development Programs at reputed management schools.

Coaching appears also to be part of many leadership development exercises through 360 Degree Feedback facilitator has extensively followed up the sessions with one on one coaching with senior and middle level executives and found this experience very useful and value adding to the individuals too.

While many large and medium sized corporates are promoting mentoring schemes, training all concerned can led to smooth transition for young professionals as well as their retention.

### ***The mentoring mechanism***

A typical mentoring program constitutes four participants:

- a. The Mentee
- b. The Mentor
- c. The Line Manager
- d. The external Facilitator/Coach

#### **A. The Mentee**

Mentee is the employee who is a fresher or relatively younger professional who could benefit from the process. The mentee may be new to industry, city or his role in the organization. The organization identifies certain skills that are deficient in the mentee that requires immediate improvement. The participation by most mentees is voluntary, though in many cases it is formalized system. The mentee get speedy self-development.

#### **B. The Mentor**

Mentor is a person, having higher experience and competencies. The organization selects this person who has demonstrated superior skills in the areas the Mentee is lacking and also who has a positive approach to transferring these skills. Normally, mentors are seniors and not immediate superiors, away from the department where the mentees are posted and at least two or three levels higher in the organization, providing opportunities for the young professionals holistic development. The mentor also benefits by understanding newer developments, rejuvenating himself and strengthening his people management and leadership skills.

#### C. The Line Manager

Normally this is the Mentees immediate superior and they are invited to support the mentoring process for strengthening the transition and competencies of the young professional as well as the stability. In some cases, they also act as Mentor. However, this is not always a preferred situation and must be evaluated on a case –to –case basis. The line manger benefits by empowerment and supplementing colleague development by additional skilled resources.

#### D. The external Facilitator

Normally this individual is an expert from outside the organization, who has the domain expertize in mentoring, helping behavior as well making schemes happen with required preparations and training. This individual is also responsible for the efficient management of organizations mentoring programme and has to coordinate meetings between the mentors and mentee’s in addition to periodic progress reviews. Many places, this facilitators help in the smooth transition of the schemes to internal facilitators & coordinators.

#### ***Challenges for Mentoring***

Some of the important challenges facing the mentoring process are:

- Changes of power structure,
- Evolution and self development of leaders in the organization(empowering vs. not trusting),
- Mental blocks to this powerful process, coping with positive feelings,
- Quality of relationship, rapport, value and time between the mentor and mentee,
- Balancing diversity (cultural) and dependency or otherwise.

#### ***Suggestions for effective Mentoring scheme***

While mentoring is clearly a desirable intervention, for making the Mentoring process more effective some of the essential support systems that may be needed are:

- A Good developmental HRD Frame work for the organization
- An open and friendly atmosphere for positive and negative feedbacks
- Empathy, Understanding first, then mentoring should be done
- Encourage initiatives among members, appreciate and reward good performance
- Incorporating principles of Change Management
- Mentoring should be in-built in job processes requiring people to work in teams
- Problem/Crisis Resolution
- To realize the mentees dream
- Training of Mentors and Mentees

#### ***Relationships beyond work and its many faces for coaching and mentoring***

Any growth of an individual involves exploration, experience, learning, reflection and action leading to overall development. This growth can happen internally to Self by Self or with the help of another person or another set of persons.

For generations, human beings have benefited by guidance and support from parents and elders supplemented by others in the family, neighborhood, friends, other professional colleague’s, well-wishers, seniors and other societal well-wishers.

The basis of any developmental relation is interest, mutuality, collaboration, trust, empathy and genuine love. While the person getting help out of a relation needs to seek this out, it becomes equally important for the person giving help, guidance and support to understand the need and provide as per the requirements. Acceptance is a critical key to this relationship.

For both mentoring and coaching, helping forms a basis of this valuable relationship. More and more Leaders, HRD professionals and Psychologists are becoming aware of the significance of helping and how to strengthen this competence as a value.

While the strength of mentoring lies in the mentors specific knowledge and wisdom, in coaching it lies in the facilitation and development of personal qualities. The coach brings different skills and experience and offers a fresh perspective a different viewpoint. In both cases one–to–one attention is the key.

### **III. A Case Study Of Public Sector**

A reputed Miniratna company operating in central India and having more than 2800 Executives of different functional departments with a profitable business track record. The company recruits Management Trainees regularly for jobs of technical and non-technical roles. Upon joining of the trainees, they will undergo a structured induction training for two weeks that is mandatory and focused on the following:

1. To familiarize with company business, operations, technology and environment.
2. To acquaint the new entrants with company's different policies, procedures, regulatory compliances.
3. To make them understand the work culture of the company.
4. To orient them on the role and expectations of the company.

#### ***Mentoring Scheme for trainees:***

**Mentoring philosophy:** Mentoring process in the company ensures professional growth and development of new entrants and high potential employees for assuming senior leadership roles. In the process, the tacit knowledge and experience of senior leaders in the organization are transferred to the younger generation in the organization. Mentoring also helps building psychological contract with the new entrants which in turn ensure high retention ratio. Development of a pool of trained and committed mentors would be a key priority area of the organization.

#### **Objectives of the scheme:**

The primary goal of the scheme is the professional growth and development of new entrants as well as performance optimization of executives in critical roles.

The specific goals are:

- a) To support the new entrants in understanding the company's mission, vision, values and goals and integrating them with the company's culture.
- b) To facilitate transfer of skills and knowledge of experienced people in the organization to the new entrants.
- c) To provide support to the new entrants in locating and accessing resources and experts in the organization.
- d) To provide motivation for job performance, creativity and the acceptance of responsibility with confidence.
- e) To socialize and acclimatize the new entrants with the people, policies, programmes and procedures in the organization.
- f) To assist the new entrants to acquire technical expertise and behavioral competencies.
- g) To support executives in critical roles for performance and develop successors for critical positions.
- h) To optimize performance of below par performers.

**Organizational set up for programme implementation:** Organization wide support and commitment are essential ingredients to the success of the programme therefore the following institutional arrangement is set up at company level:

- a) Core committee : Core committee consists of Functional Directors of the subsidiary, who provide guidelines and periodically review the progress and impact of the programme. It provides direction and leadership to the programme.
- b) Chief Mentoring Executive : The General Manager (HRD) of the company, will be the chief mentoring executive who is responsible for the overall implementation of the mentoring programme. He/She will convene periodic meeting of the mentoring program. Managers to review the progress and present a half yearly progress report before the core committee. He/she will consider suggestions, recommendations and reports of the mentoring programme managers and give necessary guidance for effective implementation of the programme.

**Duration and frequency of mentoring sessions:** The mentoring session for a mentee will run for twelve months. Initially, the mentees and mentor should meet frequently but not less than twice a month. However, as the relationship progresses, meetings may take place less frequently. Such meetings will normally be held during working hours at the office facilities. Participation in the program requires that the mentee and mentor:

- a) Develop a mentoring plan
- b) Submit periodic progress reports
- c) Attend training sessions as and when announced.
- d) Meet on a regular basis and document the sessions
- e) Complete program evaluation forms

**Development of pool of mentors:** Applications are being invited internally from interested executives to play the mentor's role. After scrutiny, a pool of mentors may be selected for training, certification and appointment as mentors.

**Appointment of mentors:** Appointment of mentors would be done with the mutual consent of the mentor and mentee. The consent may be submitted in a prescribed format and after scrutiny of the same, the chief mentoring executive would recommend for approval of the respective functional director for the appointment. The level gap between the mentor and mentee should not be more than 2 grades (example: an executive in E3 grade can have a mentor of maximum E5 level).

**Mentor mentee ratio:** One mentor can have not more than 3 mentees at a time. Companies should put efforts to bring this ratio down to 1:2 by increasing pool of trained mentors on a regular basis.

**Mentor's orientation program:**

The company will organize one week training programmes for Mentor certification by inviting faculties from reputed institutions/companies. This training programmes is meant for development of mentoring skills so as to maintain a pool of mentors in the organization. At the end of the training Mentors are administered a questionnaire to assess their understanding on the mentoring process, so as to ensures that Mentors are equipped to nurture the mentees.

**Important benefits of the mentoring program:** a) The assessment of the program shown that majority of the executives were benefited from the program as per the objectives. b) The majority of the executives expressed that, it helped in development of collaboration with the departments in the organization. c) The scheme helped and contributed for the retention of the executives and reduced the attrition. d) The scheme helped the executives in their career development and choosing the required certification trainings/program.

#### IV. Conclusion

Leadership development has been the focus for years in India. But keeping in mind the changing business paradigms globally, organizations should institutionalize mentoring and coaching for the business to cope up with unpredictable changes around the globe. The most unique situation of pandemic has taught us a new lesson on how to manage a business during crisis when the senior leaders and other people in the organization are impacted. Mentoring and coaching have been proven as best practices for organizations to manage their talent. However, each sector of business/organization may adopt a different process, but mentoring and coaching should be mandatory to nurture the internal talent rather than hiring external talent.

#### References

- [1]. Bell, Chip R., Managers as Mentors, Magna Publishing, 2002
- [2]. Chapman, Tony, Bill Best and Paul Van Casteren, Executive Coaching-Exploding the myths, Palgrave, 2003
- [3]. David J. Veale, Jeffrey M. Wachtel, Mentoring and coaching as part of a human resource development strategy: an example at Coca-Cola Foods.
- [4]. David Megginson and David Clutterbuck, Mentoring in Action, Kogan Page, 1995.
- [5]. Finkelstein, L.M., Allen, T.D., Rhoton, L.A., 2003, "An examination of the role of age in mentoring relationships", Group and Organization Management, 28, 2, 249-81.
- [6]. Flourines, Ferdinand F., 2003, Coaching for improved work performance, Tata Mc-Graw Hill.
- [7]. Gallwey, Timothy, The Inner Game of Work, Random House, 2000
- [8]. Hewlett Packard Mentoring Programme, ASTD conference 1999,
- [9]. Jennifer Dzikowski Essays on Mentoring and Leadership Development, pp 351-360 | Received 01 Oct 2008, Accepted 27 May 2010, Published online: 06 Jun 2010
- [10]. Kaye Thorne, Personal Coaching, Kogan Page, 2001
- [11]. Landale, A., 2003 "Distance mentoring: a must have alternative to training", Training Journal, October, 32-35.
- [12]. Management Development Review, Volume 9 Number 6 1996 pp.19-24
- [13]. Marshal Goldsmith, Laurence Lyons and Alyssa Freas (Ed.) Coaching For Leadership, Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Fransisco, 2000.
- [14]. Peter Bluckert, The state of play in corporate coaching current and future trends, Industrial and Commercial Training Volume 36 Number 2, 2004
- [15]. Peterson, David and Mary Dee Hicks, Leader as Coach, Personnel Decisions International.
- [16]. Skiffington, Suzanne and Perry Zeus, Behavioural Coaching, Tata McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- [17]. Weistin, G. P. Schuele, K., 2003, "Practitioners as mentors", Journal of Accountancy, June, 39-44.
- [18]. Whitmore, John, Coaching for Performance, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2003.

K. Praveenkumar, et. al. "Importance of Mentoring for Leadership Development – A case study of Public Sector." *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 24(06), 2022, pp. 44-49