

Reverse Mentoring

Program Purpose

In a typical mentoring program, a senior member in the organization serves as a mentor to a more junior member. Reverse mentoring flips the relationship and has the junior member serving as a mentor to the senior member. This relationship will help the mentee gain new insights and perspectives from their mentor they may not otherwise have been exposed to due to traditional organizational hierarchy.

The goals of the reverse mentoring program are:

1. To empower junior members of the organization to share their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge.
2. To enhance the uses of technology (i.e., staying current with social media trends, understanding the programs that mentors use in their daily operations, etc.).
3. To understand different perceptions within the organization.
4. To help with staff retention.

The reverse mentoring program will benefit the organization by strengthening the relationships in the organization, living up to our values of humanity, inclusivity, commitment, courage, and resilience, helping to develop policies, and giving the organization fresh perspectives.

The reverse mentoring program will benefit the mentees by allowing them to learn new skills, helping them understand different perspectives, strengthening their relationships inside the organization, and allowing them to demonstrate their commitment to the organization.

The reverse mentoring program will benefit the mentors by helping them gain a voice, developing communication and problem-solving skills, sharing their experiences and expertise, and to build their network.

Mentoring Program Overview

Mentoring is most successful when:

- Regular structured interaction takes place;
- Confidentiality is maintained;
- Mentees have no supervisory roles with the mentor;
- Mentor and mentee can request reassignment without blame being assigned;
- Goals and expectations for the relationship are mutually set;
- The mentoring relationship occurs over a fixed timeframe, usually 1 year; and
- Mentor and mentee clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.

All successful mentoring relationships have a few key elements in common:

- Clear and honest communication;
- Realistic objectives; and
- A structured plan for success.

Communicating Clear Expectations

The (Business Name) strongly recommends that mentors and mentees clearly communicate expectations early in the relationship. Make this discussion a priority for the first or second meeting, so that each party understands the responsibilities they are agreeing to.

- Mentees should be prepared to tell their mentors what they would like to gain from the mentorship, and in what ways the mentor's help would be most greatly appreciated and beneficial.
- Mentors should be prepared to respond to the mentee about what they can work towards or promise, as well as identify potentially unrealistic expectations.

The (Business name) recommends that mentors and mentees jointly develop an action plan that focuses on achieving goals and objectives during the engagement. The achievement of benchmarks should be monitored regularly and reassessed when necessary. The plan should allow for at least 12 "significant discussions" to take place during the year. Significant discussions mean at least 30 minutes surrounding (Business name) culture, technology, work life balance, and other topics that the mentee is interesting in learning about from their mentor.

Role Responsibilities and Mentorship Objectives

The questionnaire should be completed by the mentee prior to the first meeting and discussed with the mentor to determine an action plan. Mentees should be honest and realistic about their needs and objectives, and mentors will need to recognize what they can deliver before committing to a particular outcome. The (Business name) recommends the first few meetings be spent building a relationship between the mentor and mentee in which both parties get to know each other beyond their professional experiences and career goals.

In the first quarter you should:

- Establish a list of ideas and topics that you want to discuss, as well as any activities that would be useful;
- Set up shadowing to allow the mentee to observe the mentor at work; and
- Create a schedule for your meetings.

Mentor and Mentee Program Expectations

- Complete questionnaire prior to being admitted to the program.

- Mentor shall initiate contact within the first two weeks of mentee assignment.
- Mentor and mentee shall meet either virtually or in person, and together set goals for future meetings. The questionnaire may be used as a guide.
- Stay connected through e-mails, phone calls, or meetings held virtually or in person.
- Be flexible in setting meeting dates but keep appointments as scheduled.
- Mentor and mentee must complete and return the final evaluations.
- Request reassignment if necessary.

Reverse Mentoring Questionnaire

Complete the questionnaire and submit to the human resources department.

Position Overview – This section provides an overview of your position

Name:

Job title:

Department:

Date started in this position:

How long with the organization:

Role and responsibilities:

Would you like to be: Mentor or Mentee

What is your preferred method of communication (i.e., virtual, in person, email, phone)?

Objectives and Experiences

What are your greatest strengths?

What areas would you like to develop in?

What are some challenges you are experiencing and/or trying to overcome in your current role?

Describe any unique experiences you have in your position (e.g., leading a project, etc.):

Describe your ideal mentor or mentee relationship:

About You – This section allows you to express who you are and what you need to succeed as a mentor and/or mentee

Describe yourself:

What would you like to be doing in 3 years?

What are your top passions in your personal life?

What does your current work-life-balance look like?

How much time are you able to commit to this and how will you balance it with your professional and work/life needs?

Putting it all Together

What does reverse mentoring mean to you as a mentor and/or mentee?