

Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring Guide

HOME

Welcome to the Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring Guide.

Introduction

“Staff counseling is a key factor in developing a positive workplace experience for the USACE staff.”

—LTG Flowers,
Commanding General,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

[The free QuickTime Player Plug-In — required to play the Commander’s video — can be found at:
<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>]

Research indicates that the statement made by LTG Flowers is supported by a majority of professional career counselors. The relationship between employee and supervisor is principal for a wholesome work environment. It is also an accepted fact that employees who are motivated and feel that they are a member of the team will better support the organization and work harder toward overall mission success.

The role of the supervisor has taken on even more importance as we move to the learning focused team environment inherent in the USACE Project Management Business Process (PMBP). In this environment the role of the supervisor is critical as the provider of people resources to the project delivery teams. Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that team members are adequately trained, have opportunities for learning, and are best positioned for success. Coaching, counseling, and mentoring are ways in which supervisors and managers can help team members maximize their potential.

It is these guiding principles that surfaced the need for a Supervisor’s Guide on Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring. This handy reference will deal specifically with coaching, employee counseling in the area of job performance or the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES), career development and Individual Development Plans (IDP), and Mentoring.

About This Guide . . .

Much has been written on the subjects of coaching, counseling, and mentoring. We can now easily search for more information and training resources on the Internet. The Internet is a good source, and you may find it helpful as a manager or supervisor; however, for those of you who work for the Army, it is preferred that you use the references in this guide that were developed and recommended by the Army and Department of Defense (DoD). This guide is organized into three (3) sections: (1) Coaching, (2) Counseling, and (3) Mentoring. References are linked at the end of each section for your convenience. These references will assist you by providing specific instructions and/or forms for applicable documentation.

This guide is to be used in conjunction with applicable Department of the Army, and Federal Regulatory guidance. It is in no way to be used as a substitute for applicable regulatory requirements. It is a quick reference and guide. Applicable supporting documents should be referenced for specific suspense dates and requirements.

COACHING

This section on coaching is a guide to emphasize the significance of being a good coach. It outlines the qualities of a good coach and how to be a successful coach. A good coach helps employees get to where they need to be. It is not enough to say you are committed to top performance. To have an effective team you must be an effective leader or coach.

The effective coach:

- takes the time to explain things
- understands the system and knows the people
- shows you how to become a part of the system
- listens and thinks about your needs
- knows what you are doing and gives regular feedback
- emphasizes why you are doing something, as well as how to do it.

Chances are you already know what it takes to be a good coach. If coworkers instinctively come to you for advice, ideas, or other support, you are probably coaching at a certain level. Coaching is valuable to the supervisor or manager for mission success. Skillful coaching will encourage and motivate employees to reach their highest potential. Coaching instills pride and confidence. No athlete could ever make the Olympics without a dedicated coach. Coaching is a process that will enable you to unlock the greatest potential of your staff, and realize your ultimate goals as a leader. Good coaching will enable you to establish a personal transformation in the work place that will foster a more productive environment and yield a tangible outcome.

Definition of Coaching

WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is the process of inspiring, encouraging, motivating, and instructing an employee to unlock his or her greatest potential so as to achieve their ultimate goal. The coach becomes the employee's personal resource and advocate. This helps the employee to grow professionally and personally.

Qualities of a Good Coach

1. Enjoys and gets a "kick" out of developing people.
2. Understands self and personal strengths as well as non-strengths.
3. Approachable and really cares about people.
4. Listens intently, knows how to filter out personal emotions, judgments, and conclusions.
5. Demonstrates personal integrity; walks the talk, tells the truth.
6. Unbiased and open to new ideas and ways of doing things, enabling the team's agenda and solutions to emerge.
7. Sets practical goals without making unrealistic demands.
8. Able to inspire, encourage, and motivate people to exceed their own expectations.

How to be a Successful Coach

Some leaders have a knack for knowing just how to bring out the best in their staff, unfortunately, some do not. If you happen to be one who has difficulty coaching and mentoring, here are a few tips to get you on the road to being a successful coach.

- **SEEK TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN BEST APPLY YOUR STRENGTHS AS A COACH.**
- **LEARN AND APPLY GOOD COACHING TECHNIQUES.**
- **CONSIDER YOUR OWN ACTIONS.**
What motivates and encourages you?
- **CLARIFY AND DESIGN YOUR STRATEGY.**
Coaching and motivating a team or an individual is difficult if you do not start with the end in sight.
- **LET THE INDIVIDUAL KNOW THAT HE/SHE MATTERS AND THAT THEIR CONTRIBUTION IS SIGNIFICANT.**
- **REWARD SUCCESS.**
Remember, rewards do not always have to be monetary; sometimes just saying “thank you” is sufficient.
- **KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR.**

More Coaching Tips

1. **BE A PARTICIPATING MANAGER.**
Get involved.
2. **MAKE YOUR EXPECTATIONS CLEAR AND BE REASONABLE IN YOUR APPROACH.**
Ensure that your team understands the significance of getting the job done.
3. **RECOGNIZE AND REWARD SUCCESS.**
Recognition does not always have to come in the form of money or a formal presentation. A word from you may be more meaningful.
4. **PREPARE YOUR TEAM.**
Provide training and other learning opportunities.
5. **EMPOWER.**
Allow the team the freedom to accomplish the mission in the way that works best for them.
6. **PROVIDE CLEAR OBJECTIVES.**
Be specific. State objectives clearly and identify ways to recognize them when they are met. Team members need to know when they are doing well and when there is room for improvement.
7. **LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN!**
Listen first and be open to new ideas. Don't always impose your ideas — the team may actually have a better solution.

Coaching Links & Resources

- DA Pamphlet 690-43 [<http://www.usapa.army.mil/cpol/dapam690-43/dapam690-43.html>],
A Supervisor's Guide to Career Development and Counseling for Career Program Employees, Chapter 7
- FM 22-100 [<http://www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/22-100/toc.htm>],
Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do

On-Line Coaching Course

For further training on coaching, you may want to enroll in the *Mentoring and Coaching Course* on the USACE Virtual Campus. It is available for anyone in the Corps, however, you must be registered to take the course.

TO REGISTER IN THE VIRTUAL CAMPUS:

Register now by going to the Registration Page [<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>]. Once there, fill out and submit the registration form. If you are USACE personnel, registration is immediate; otherwise, you will need to wait until you have been notified by e-mail that your registration has been validated.

After registration, you can enroll in the *Mentoring and Coaching Course* by returning to the Registration Page [<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>] and selecting the **Enroll/Go to Course** button.

- Project Management Business Process (PMBP) Virtual Campus
[<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>]

COUNSELING

This section of the guide involves staff counseling. You will be able to review the types of counseling, when you should counsel, counseling techniques, and the counseling process. You will also be provided some special tips in the form of “Do’s and Don’ts” in the counseling process.

Definition of Counseling

WHAT IS COUNSELING?

The dictionary defines counseling as follows:

Counseling is to consult; the act of providing professional guidance; advice given as a result of consultation; to utilize psychological methods or various techniques of the personal interview to guide in a constructive direction; an exchanging of opinions or ideas.

Any, or all of the preceding definitions may be appropriate for defining counseling. Counseling involves the long-term development and realization of the potential of an employee through the technique of advising. Counseling is done at every organizational level.

Many times counseling is tied to a situation involving substandard performance. However, counseling can be done in instances of superior performance, where the counselor recognizes the employee for his/her accomplishment and encourages similar success in the future. The type of counseling is based on the topic of the session. The “event” dictates the reason for counseling. The two major categories of counseling are event-oriented and performance/professional growth. Whether it is to advise the employee of right or wrong doing, the key to successful counseling for specific performance is to conduct it as close to the event as possible.

Types of Counseling

The type of counseling depends on the event or purpose for counseling.

Some events that may require counseling are:

- Performance Management: Counseling for specific instances of superior or substandard performance.
- TAPES: Total Army Performance Evaluation System
- IDP: Individual Development Plan
- Reception and Integration Counseling: Leader counseling when a new team member reports, identifies, and helps fix any problems or concerns relative to new duty assignment and lets them know the unit standards and how they fit into the team.
- Crisis Counseling: Used to get a subordinate through the initial shock after receiving negative news such as the death of a loved one.

Many times counseling is perceived as an adverse action. However, leaders conduct counseling to help subordinates become better members of the team, maintain or improve performance, and prepare for the future. As a manager or supervisor, performance and IDP counseling will certainly be among those that you will be required to perform.

Performance Management:

Performance management counseling is a valuable tool for supervisors and managers to use, particularly in situations where the performance of the individual or team is substandard. This type of counseling can be used to identify performance problems or obstacles, address performance-related strengths and non-strengths, and other factors contributing to the level of performance attained. Rather than dwelling on the past, the supervisor should focus this session on the team member's strengths, talents that need further development, and potential. The counseling session can result in the joint development of an individualized program and/or array of strategies designed to improve the substandard performance, as well as help to develop potential for future career development or advancement.

Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES)

One of your many responsibilities as a supervisor, is the interaction with your subordinates about their performance and its relationship to the mission. The Total Army Performance Evaluation System or TAPES is designed to improve total Army performance.

The TAPES performance management system is a systematic process that integrates performance, pay, and awards systems to improve both individual and organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of Army mission and goals. This guide will provide you with the tools and techniques necessary to conduct results-oriented counseling sessions.

TAPES

The TAPES is designed to improve total Army performance by communicating organizational goals, priorities, and Army values and ethics to employees. TAPES provides a venue for establishing individual expectations for performance that reflects organizational goals and priorities. In addition, it affords the opportunity for frequent discussions between the Ratee and the Rater about performance, expectations, professional development, and DA values and ethics. TAPES also provides an environment where all understand that they are important members of the Army team, employees are recognized for their achievements, counseled and assisted in areas in which they can improve, encouraged to take responsibility for doing things better and to support team endeavors, and challenged to develop professionally and to perform at their full potential.

The supervisor and subordinate have an initial meeting at the beginning of the rating period where job standards for the following year are discussed, agreed upon and finalized. During the performance year, the supervisor and subordinate will meet at midyear to discuss performance progress toward the standards. At the end of the rating period, the supervisor and the subordinate meet to discuss the annual written individual performance evaluation. The annual written individual performance evaluation provides supervisors and managers with tools for conducting systematic assessment of performance. The results achieved from this assessment provide the supervisor results with the information necessary to make sound plans and decisions concerning compensation, training, rewards, reassignments, promotions, reductions-in-grade, retention, reduction-in-force, and removal.

In addition, it provides a sound continuing basis for effective supervisor-subordinate partnerships in pursuit of common goals.

Army Reference for TAPES:

AR-690-400 [ftp://pubs.army.mil/pub/epubs/pdf/r690_400.pdf]

Where to Find Specific TAPES Topics:

TAPES	AR 690-400
Purpose	AR 690-400 // Pg. 1, Para 1-1
Objective	AR 690-400 // Pg. 1, Para 1-2
Responsibilities	AR 690-400 // Pg 1, Para 1-4
TAPES Components	AR 690-400
Written Performance Plan	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.a.
Annual Rating Periods	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.b.
Official Rating Chain	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.c.
Minimum Rating Period	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.d.
Special Requirements Performance Plans Ratings	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.e.
Written Performance Appraisals	AR 690-400 // Pg. 2, Para 1-5.g.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

It is a known fact that training and development enhances and improves employees' skills and knowledge and helps them to reach their full potential. It also ensures a work force that is capable of effectively performing assigned duties and accomplishing its mission.

INTRODUCTION

The IDP is a process that will guide both the employee and supervisor in planning and obtaining the necessary training to reach employees full potential. The IDP is a 5-year training plan that should be developed by employee and supervisor. It is not a contract or guarantee, but a commitment to work together for the common good of both the individual and the organization.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for a well-executed IDP falls squarely on the shoulders of the individual as well as that of the supervisor. The individual should continually improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities through self-development and training. They should participate fully in the activities and assignments prescribed in their IDP and should strive for a high level of work performance. The supervisor of career program employees should be familiar with their career development/management responsibilities.

PROCEDURES

A 5-year IDP will be developed for each USACE employee. The 5-year IDP should be developed using ENG Form 5055-R and in accordance with ER 350-1-420, appendix A. IDPs for employees covered by a career program should be developed in concert with the appropriate published training plans, i.e., Career Development for Acquisition Personnel; Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development Systems (ACTEDS) plans. These plans provide DOD and Army guidelines for training and development for careerist.

REFERENCES

The following references are provided to assist in the development of an IDP.

- Total Army Performance Evaluation System, Chapter 4302
(AR 690-400, Chapter 4302 [http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/r690_400.pdf])
- Civilian Personnel Career Management
(AR 690-950 [http://army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/r690_950.pdf])
- 5 Year IDP and Development Assignments
(Engineering Regulation ER 350-1-420
[<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/usace-docs/eng-regs/er350-1-420/entire.pdf>])

The Counseling Process

Counseling Process. When counseling a subordinate, it's important to follow a plan. A counseling plan will afford the supervisor with a defined strategy and provide organization to the counseling process. The counseling session should have a minimum of the following five steps.

- Identify the Need for Counseling: Quite often, counseling is required by an organization in support of the evaluation program. However, a supervisor may conduct a counseling session with a subordinate whenever the need arises for focused two-way communication aimed at subordinate development.
- Prepare for Counseling:
 - Schedule a suitable place
 - Schedule the time
 - Notify the subordinate well in advance
 - Organize the information
 - Outline the session components
 - Plan counseling strategy
 - Establish the right atmosphere
- Conduct the Counseling: Be flexible when conducting a counseling session. Often counseling for a specific incident occurs spontaneously as supervisors encounter subordinates in their daily lives. Such counseling can occur wherever subordinates perform their duties. Good leaders take advantage of naturally occurring events to provide subordinates with feedback. Even when you haven't prepared for formal counseling you should address the four basic components of a counseling session.
 - Open the session
 - Discuss the issues
 - Develop the plan of action
 - Record and close the session
- Documentation: Although requirements to record a counseling session vary, a supervisor always benefits by documenting the main points of a counseling session. Documentation serves as a point of reference between the subordinate and the supervisor to the agreed plan of action and the subordinate's accomplishments, improvements, personal preferences, or problems. A complete record of counseling aids in making recommendations for professional development, schools, promotions, and evaluation reports.
- Follow-up: The counseling process doesn't end with the counseling session. It continues through implementation of the plan of action and evaluation of results. After counseling, you must support subordinates as they implement their plan of action, Support may include teaching, coaching, or providing time or resources. You must observe and assess this process and possibly modify the plan to meet the goals. Appropriate measures after counseling include follow-up counseling, making referrals, informing the chain of command, and taking corrective action.

The Counseling Approach

Much has been written on the subject of counseling. Counseling approaches are as diverse as there are reasons to counsel. You do not have to be a psychiatrist or psychologist to learn and apply good counseling techniques. An effective leader approaches each subordinate as an individual. Different people and different situations require different counseling approaches. The approaches differ in the technique used, but they all fit the overall definition of counseling and contribute to its overall purpose. The major difference to the approach is the degree to which the subordinate participates and interacts during a counseling session. Whether conducting career or performance appraisal counseling, the best results can be achieved when one of the three following approaches is taken.

- NONDIRECTIVE

Nondirective is the preferred approach. Leaders use their experience, insight, and judgment to assist the subordinate in the development of a solution; focus on individual and organizational goals and objectives; and ensure that the subordinate's plan of action supports those goals and objectives.

- DIRECTIVE

The directive approach works best to correct simple problems, make on the spot corrections, and correct aspects of duty performance. The leader using the directive style does most of the talking and tells the subordinate what to do and when to do it. In contrast to the nondirective approach, the leader directs a course of action for the subordinate. Choose this approach when time is limited, when you alone know what to do, or if the subordinate has limited problem-solving skills. It is also appropriate when a subordinate needs guidance, is immature, or is insecure.

- COMBINED

The combination is as the term implies, the use of techniques from both the directive and nondirective approaches, adjusting them to articulate what's best for the subordinate. The combined approach emphasizes the subordinate's planning and decision-making responsibilities. The subordinates develop their own plan of action, with the leader providing assistance only when required.

Counseling Techniques

There is no one counseling technique that one would consider as prescriptive for all occasions. The most desirable approach is one that fits the action. The supervisor should always discuss alternative actions that the subordinate may take, but both the supervisor and the subordinate decide which course of action to take. The following counseling techniques, or combination of techniques, are suggested for use during an employee supervisor counseling session.

- RECOMMENDING
Recommend one course of action, but leave the decision to accept the recommendation to the subordinate.
- PERSUADING
Persuade the subordinate that a given course of action is the best, but leave the decision to the subordinate.
- ADVISING
Advising a subordinate that a given course of action is best, this is the strongest form of influence not involving a command.
- CORRECTIVE TRAINING
Teach and assist the subordinate in attaining and maintaining the standard. The supervisor gives the subordinate pointers on how to best obtain the required standards.
- COMMANDING
Ordering the subordinate to take a course of action in clear exact words. The subordinate understands that he has been given a command and will face the consequences for failing to carry it out.

Counseling Do's & Don'ts

Do:

- Know yourself and your strengths
- Know the person you are counseling
- Find a way to connect and engage with the person you are counseling
- Understand what motivates the counselee and their potential
- Recognize that each individual is unique
- Point out how the counselee has used/can use his/her strengths to make significant contributions
- Keep an open mind
- Strive to be objective
- Above all, be a good listener!

Don't:

- Be late for the session
- Fidget with your pen or loose change
- Answer the phone during the counseling session
- Write continuously during the session (it is OK, however, to take brief notes)
- Appear hurried, harried, or distracted.

Counseling Checklist

- Identify the need for counseling
- Select a suitable place
- Schedule the time
- Notify the subordinate well in advance
- Organize information
- Outline the counseling session components
- Plan your counseling strategy
- Establish the right atmosphere
- Open the session
- Conduct the session
- Discuss the issues
- Develop a plan of action
- Document the session
- Close the session
- Follow-up

Counseling Links & Resources

The following section provides more information on counseling as provided in FM22-100 [<http://www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/22-100/toc.htm>], *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do* - Appendix C, Developmental Counseling [<http://www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/22-100/appc.htm>].

Where to Find Specific Counseling Topics:

Developmental Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C
Characteristic of Effective Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-8
Respect for Subordinates	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-10
Leader Counseling Skills	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-14
Responding	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-21
Questioning	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-22
Counseling Errors	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-10
Leader's Limitations (Other Support Ser)	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-24 thru C-26
Types of Developmental Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-21
Specific Instance Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-28 thru C-31
Crisis Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-33
Referral Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-34
Adverse Separation Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-22
Performance Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-38
Professional Growth Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-42
Counseling Approaches	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-49-C-51
Counseling Techniques	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-42
Counseling Approaches	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-49-C-51
Counseling Process	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-55
Prepare for Counseling	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-57 thru C-74
Follow-up Leader's Responsibilities	FM 22-100 APP C, Para C-57 thru C-74

MENTORING

The objectives of mentoring DA Civilians are to prepare them to be the managers and executives required to meet future needs, to provide opportunities for employees to advance in their own careers, and to help meet affirmative action plans and ensure equality of opportunity for every employee.

The intent of mentoring is to enhance opportunities for employees with the requisite interest and potential to become part of the Army leadership structure. Sharing in the knowledge and experience acquired by a mentor over many years supplements the skills, knowledge, and abilities already possessed by the associates. The outcome will be that good employees become more competitive for advancement. Successful mentoring improves quality of access for Army employees.

The mentor serves as an objective confidant and advisor with whom the associate may discuss work related and other concerns related to career development and work planning. A mentor is not a “molder of clay,” he or she does not attempt to create a clone of themselves, but rather to serve as a role model and source of inspiration, information, and experience from which the associate can select qualities most likely to achieve success. The mentor is one who has achieved professional success, acquired self-confidence, experienced professional satisfaction, and wishes to share his or her experiences with a junior or less experienced employee. In order to maintain an effective mentor-associate relationship, it is suggested that the optimum ratio of mentor to associate is one to one.

There is no prescription on how to be a mentor. A mentor wears a lot of different hats. A mentor serves as a confidant, counselor, guide, and advisor. A mentor is a sounding board; a sharer of experiences and one that helps an associate set clear goals. A mentor is not one that makes decisions for an associate or provides a free ride to the top; nor does he or she become over accessible to the associate for minor problems or questions. The best procedure to follow as a mentor is one of common sense and respect.

Definition of Mentoring

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a collaborative partnership in which the mentor and the protégé take shared responsibility for the success of the relationship. Many times, mentoring occurs in a one-on-one situation in which a novice (the protégé) chooses a respected, experienced person (the mentor) to provide professional guidance over a period of years. A mentor helps associate see meaning and vision in what they are doing and serves as a role model who inspires, motivates, empowers, and helps individuals or teams learn to learn. A protégé is an individual or team who takes responsibility for his or her own learning and for applying that learning to accomplish goals and create win-win situations.

Mentoring is a challenging, yet rewarding experience for those involved. It requires special skills and giving of your time. As a mentor, mentoring requires dedication to both your project workload and the individual or team you are mentoring. The information provided will assist you in better understanding the relationship, requirements and role of the mentor. Mentoring can prove to be a dynamic and productive tool when properly orchestrated.

The History of Mentoring

Mentoring is not a new concept. It's an old idea ... that still works today!

In Book II of *THE ODYSSEY*, Homer introduces a character named Mentor, a trusted advisor and old friend of Odysseus, King of Ithaca. Before leaving for the Trojan War, Odysseus entrusts Mentor with the care of his household and the education of his only son, Telemachus. Wise and loyal, Mentor never betrays the King's trust, even though the King, having been gone for over 20 years, is presumed dead by the majority of the Ithacans.

[Homer, *The Odyssey*, contained in *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: William Benton, Publisher, University of Chicago Press, 1952), vol 4, p. 190.]

From this specific reference in Greek mythology, the word “mentor” evolved into a general term for any wise and trusted counselor. In his work on adult life cycles, Daniel Levinson describes the mentor's role as follows: “A good mentor is an admixture of good father and good friend.....[He/(She) is] a transitional figure who invites and welcomes a young man into the adult world. He/(She) serves as guide, teacher and sponsor. He/(She) represents skill, knowledge, virtue, accomplishment — the superior qualities a young man hopes someday to acquire. He/(She) gives his blessing to the novice and his Dream.”

[Daniel J. Levinson, Charlotte N. Darrow, Edward B. Klein, et.a., *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p.333.]

Why Mentoring?

Mentoring is an effective strategy which can contribute significantly to the career development of employees. Mentoring offers a way of building skills towards future career goals. It works best as one element in career development. Mentoring is an effective method for helping an individual realize their potential within the context of the organization.

The Mentoring Process

a. *Discuss mentoring objectives with the employee.*

One of the requirements for effective mentoring is a willingness of both the mentor and the employee to participate constructively. Supervisors must establish a climate of confidence in which discussion of strengths and weaknesses is accepted. A climate of trust, warmth, openness, and support is needed to facilitate growth. Such an atmosphere should foster commitment on the part of the employee, facilitate development, and build good interpersonal relationships. It is imperative that the protégé/mentee understand their strengths and use these strengths to maximize their potential. An understanding must be reached between the mentor and employee as to the developmental objectives and how best to achieve them.

b. *Prepare individualized mentoring plan.*

Although mentoring should be an ongoing process, it is beneficial to establish a plan that will provide a basis for the protégé/mentee's individual and professional development.

c. *Provide for follow-up procedure.*

The follow-up procedure is a periodic evaluation of the mentoring and development effort. This step is an important one, in that the mentor and the employee can evaluate the effectiveness of completed portions of the IDP. The evaluation of information can change the plan or redirect developmental efforts. The follow-up procedure provides information to the employee regarding where he or she stands and is a guide for the mentor to use in suggesting new learning objectives.

d. *Implement plan.*

Implementation can occur through training and other developmental opportunities. Mentoring provides guidance and monitoring of these experiences to ensure that the protégé/mentee has ample opportunities to develop their talents into strengths. The protégé/mentee should have ongoing access to the mentor. How much guidance is provided by the mentor is based on the protégé/mentee's learning needs, learning style, and accomplishments. Explicit direction is not always required, rather suggestions and questions that will clarify and help formulate or evaluate alternatives and perhaps furnish additional feedback information.

So You've Been Asked to be a Mentor

If you have been asked or are considering being a mentor, here are some things you should consider . . .

- a mentor should be a person with greater experience and knowledge
- a mentor should have a management style that brings out the best in the protégé/mentee
- a mentor's personal style should be compatible with and suit the needs of the protégé/mentee
- a mentor should understand his/her strengths and be willing to use them to help the protégé/mentee maximize their potential
- a mentor helps the protégé/mentee see meaning and vision in what they are doing
- a mentor serves as a role model who inspires, motivates, and empowers individuals or teams to learn
- a mentor needs to be a person who will enjoy helping others develop their talents
- a mentor plays a critical role in helping the protégé/mentee be productive and successful and enables their development personally and professionally
- a mentor should be willing to share their knowledge and experience openly and honestly
- a mentor helps groom the protégé/mentee for the next level of development
- a mentor should be someone other than the protégé/mentee's immediate supervisor, in order for the individual to expand networks, and to avoid potentially conflicting roles

Characteristics of a Good Mentor

1. A DESIRE TO BE A MENTOR

A mentor wants to help others by sharing insights, abilities, personal successes, and challenging circumstances from which he or she learned key lessons. But mentoring is more than passing on skills and war stories. The successful mentor also possesses the desire to inspire.

2. A GOOD ROLE MODEL

Actions speak louder than words. It is vital for mentors to live the values and characteristics they choose to instill in their associate.

3. SELF-CONFIDENCE

The successful mentor exudes a quiet, self-confident nature grounded in maturity. From such a foundation, the mentor is able to display integrity, patience, and candor while accepting imperfections in him/herself and in associate.

4. VISIONARY

The effective mentor sees beyond day-to-day tactical operations. A mentor has the ability to envision the larger scheme of things, where the team should be headed, and how the individual protégé and the protégé team fit into the big picture.

5. SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The most successful mentors know themselves well enough to know what they can readily give to a protégé, how far they are willing to stretch themselves, and where their own limits lie.

Seven Skills Vital to Successful Mentoring

The PMBP Mentoring and Coaching course also outlined seven skills vital to successful mentoring. Click on each skill to acquire more information.

- Building Vision:
 - Help the team realize it already has a vision. Everyone holds a vision within themselves.
 - Help the team understand why a vision is important.
 - Help the team get started.
 - Provide vision for inspiration, not for imitation.
- Building Trust:
 - Walk the walk
 - Be honest
 - Be open
 - Be available
 - Trust your protégé
 - Be yourself
 - Sponsor effective communication
 - Keep confidential information confidential
- Listening:
 - Eliminate blocks to listening
 - Pay attention to body language
 - Provide a supportive environment
 - Listen for understanding
 - Listen for possibilities
 - Listen for what's missing
 - Listen for commitment
- Providing Feedback:

Effective feedback is:

 - Timely
 - Objective
 - Motivated by a desire to help
 - Asked for
 - Balanced
 - Sculpted
- Thinking Synergistically:
 - Recognize the box
 - Suspend the box
 - See it from a different perspective
- Managing Change:
 - Recognize responses to change
 - Partner with those who embrace change
 - Enlist fence-sitters
 - Address resistance
- Empowering the Team:
 - Teach the mentoring relationship
 - Encourage use of diverse resources
 - Ask the deeper questions
 - Encourage continual learning
 - Support, don't save
 - Handle breakdowns
 - Transition to interdependence

The Mentoring Relationship

1. Mentoring can take place either:
 - within a formal program supported by the agency, or
 - between two individuals who agree to establish a mentoring relationship.
2. The reality of organizational life is that there are many people with various strengths — therefore, an individual may have more than one mentor to tap into all the strengths that are available.
3. Individuals may also establish a mentoring relationship by approaching a person who agrees to become their mentor for a specified period and purpose.
4. From the beginning, both parties should agree that either may end the arrangement at any time.
5. There is no formula for how often a mentee/mentor pair makes contact. The parties may choose to meet regularly, or they may prefer to meet when there is the need to focus on a particular issue. The parties may agree on a set time for each meeting, or they may be more comfortable with a less formal arrangement. These and other issues must be worked out by individual mentee/mentor pairs.
6. It is important that the mentee's supervisor be involved in the process and kept informed, so that she/he can contribute to the process.

The Successful Mentoring Relationship

A successful mentoring relationship is one in which:

- learning is occurring;
- self-awareness and understanding of potential increases;
- more focus on what you do well, and an understanding of blind spots of and areas you need to manage;
- development of a rewarding relationship between mentor and mentee;
- both the mentor and mentee are committed and are able to listen and be opened to new ideas;
- the mentor helps the mentee navigate through the organization;
- the mentor helps the mentee unlock his/her potential.

Mentoring: Everybody Wins

BENEFITS FOR THE MENTEE/PROTÉGÉ:

- increased skills and knowledge
- improved understanding of their roles in the organization
- insights into the culture and unwritten rules of the organization
- a supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated
- a smoother transition through management levels
- development of professional confidence and self-confidence

BENEFITS FOR THE MENTOR:

- renewed enthusiasm for their role as an experienced employee
- challenging discussions with people who have fresh perspectives and who are not already part of organizational thinking
- satisfaction from contributing to the mentee's development
- opportunities to reflect upon and articulate their role
- improved ability to share experience and knowledge
- enhanced knowledge of other areas of the agency
- opportunities to test new ideas

BENEFITS FOR THE ORGANIZATION:

- improved delivery of services through more informed and skilled staff
- reduced recruitment and selection costs as a result of higher employee retention
- progress towards diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace
- improved communication between separate areas of the agency
- support networks for employees in times of organizational change
- managers with enhanced people management skills

Mentoring Links & Resources

REFERENCES:

- *Mentoring for Civilian Members of the Force*
[http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/P690_46/CCONTENTS],
Department of the Army Pamphlet 690-46 Civilian Personnel
[<http://www.usapa.army.mil/cpol/dapam690-46/dapam690-46.html>]
- *Mentoring, What Goes Around, Comes Around*
[<http://www.onlinewbc.gov/docs/manage/mentoring.html>]
Online Article, Online Women's Business Center, Sponsored by Small Business Administration
- *Tips for Mentoring from The Mentoring Group*
[<http://www.mentoringgroup.com/mentors.html>] by Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D.

On-Line Mentoring Course

For further training on mentoring, you may want to enroll in the *Mentoring and Coaching Course* on the USACE Virtual Campus. It is available for anyone in the Corps, however, you must be registered to take the course.

TO REGISTER IN THE VIRTUAL CAMPUS:

Register now by going to the Registration Page [<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>]. Once there, fill out and submit the registration form. If you are USACE personnel, registration is immediate; otherwise, you will need to wait until you have been notified by e-mail that your registration has been validated.

After registration, you can enroll in the *Mentoring and Coaching Course* by returning to the Registration Page [<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>] and selecting the **Enroll/Go to Course** button.

- Project Management Business Process (PMBP) Virtual Campus
[<http://virtualcampus.usace.army.mil/humres/public/html/pm10info.htm>]